

## IYCA Info for Staff

IYCA takes a holistic approach to youth training. The mindset is how can we best train all children (i.e. athletic, non-athletic, those on teams, couch potatoes and even those that coach children).

Play and fun are of utmost importance for training children. It is also necessary to consider the child's level of motor development, motivation and present skill level.

IYCA recognizes two core stages in motor development. The first is the critical period. During this period it is essential to develop certain skills otherwise, these skills become more difficult to develop (if squatting does not develop during the toddler years, it will be very difficult to learn as the child ages). Natural ability is taken away if it is not developed during the critical period. The second stage is the sensitive period. These stages may occur within a critical period. It is during this period that the child is most ready to develop certain skills.

Training programs for children must be FUN, involve PLAY, have VARIETY, include REPETITION, show UNDERSTANDING and allow time for MASTERY. Training will fail if it's boring, if you are impatient, if time for mastery is not allowed and/or if you choose to teach aggression before progression. "Value-based training focuses on short-term performance. Nothing is truly learned and there will be no long-term retention or change (boot/fat camps are a good examples). Principle-based training focuses on mastery and long-term performance. Progressions, concept knowledge and variations make up the foundation of this coaching technique.

Training is broken down into three stages of physical development. The first stage is for toddlers (2-4). They learn through games, exploration, and discovery.

The second stage is for young children (6-9). They learn through guided discovery. They need rules as boundaries. Coaching should be an outcome-based approach and skills should be learned through situational games. Multi-directional and multi-planar movements should be reinforced. They should be learning through trial and error.

The third stage is for older children (10-13). Coaching will still be outcome-based but external loading is beginning to be taught. Multi-directional and multi-planar movements are still reinforced but technical concepts are introduced. Reasons "why" are now explained so kids can retain and begin to apply that information.

The fourth stage is for adolescents (14+). These kids can be trained as adults (but pay close attention to developmental age). Training is form-based and directed while technical concepts are applied. Training should now focus on strength work (if basic movement skills are present), learning teamwork and cooperation within that structure.

Within each age group there exists four different types of a child athlete. Each type needs to be coached differently.

The first type of athlete is highly motivated/highly skilled. This child is more likely to overtrain so injury prevention is a greater concern. This athlete may also bore easily so it's important to involve him/her in the teaching process if there is a group (DELEGATE). This athlete could teach a specific exercise or help those kids who are not as skilled or as motivated.

The second type of athlete has low motivation/high skill. This kid is burnt out or afraid to fail. Non-verbal expectations are highly influential here so be sure to separate the skill vs. the effort given. Praise the skill and leave alone the half-hearted effort put forth. This child needs to be INSPIRED.

The third type of athlete has high motivation/low skill. Do not coach the energy here. This child does not need a compliment for not doing well. It's important to GUIDE this child, teaching correct form (9-10+).

The fourth type of athlete has low motivation/low skill. This child is insecure so do not single him/her out even with positive praise. This child must feel safe in your presence. You must DIRECT this athlete even in non-verbal ways and convey no expectations until he/she feels secure and doesn't want to stay in the background anymore.

Training for all ages and all types of athletes must be FUN. You must provide an emotionally safe environment. You must establish rules/regulations. You must demonstrate and explain what the exercise/game is and you must energize your athlete to help him/her perform. Principle-based training is the keystone to coaching our young athletes and to helping them secure their long-term physical health.