

# Coaching Youth 101

## MAKE IT GREAT

Positive experiences in play and sport are what keep kids coming back for more. The best experiences have a few things in common. They are:

- **Inclusive:** Involve and include every kid.
- **Active:** Less lecturing, more moving.
- **Appropriate:** Design for the right age and size.
- **Fun:** If they're smiling, you're doing it right.
- **Feedback-focused:** Set and track goals with kids.
- **Enthusiastic:** Go crazy with the cheers.
- **Well-coached:** Show some passion, have some fun and do the right thing.

Great experiences are everything. It's what kids will remember long after they've forgotten who won the game.

## TOP TIPS FOR A GREAT EXPERIENCE: THE 6 C'S OF COACHING

Want to know more about the keys to a great experience? According to experts, the 6 C's should get you on your way:

1. Build their **CONFIDENCE**
  - a. Acknowledge kids when they've overcome a challenge (like when they make a tough play or hit it harder than ever before). Be amazed. Ask them how they did it. Oh, and catch them being awesome when they think you're not watching.
2. Let them **CONTRIBUTE**
  - a. What's fun about always being told what to do? Kids want to feel like they're part of things and practice will be way more fun when they have a chance to CONTRIBUTE. A few ideas:
    - i. **Give every kid a job.** Being responsible for equipment, leading the cheer, demonstrating a skill, explaining a rule, choosing the warm-up. It really doesn't matter what the assignment is. Kids just like to be involved.
    - ii. **Keep them moving.** Change the rules of any game where kids get "out" or are sidelined while others continue to play. And always keep them moving while they wait their turn!
    - iii. **Ask for feedback.** Have kids share their favorite activities and moments.
    - iv. **Watch for kids** who've opted out and encourage them to get back in the game.

3. **CELEBRATE** their success

- a. It's important to show all kids that you are on their team by noticing and recognizing their accomplishments. Teaching all kids that their accomplishments are tied to their own effort is life-changing. Praise all kids more by Telling them you noticed, Labeling their achievement and Celebrating their success. TLC works especially well with kids:
  - i. **Tell it** – Tell them what they did (“John, you ran the whole lap. That’s amazing!”)
  - ii. **Label it** – Tell them what it is called (“Ashley, you just kept going. Way to hang in there!”)
  - iii. **Celebrate it** – Tell them how you feel (“That was awesome to watch, Jordan. I’m so proud of you. High five!”)

4. Give kids a **CHOICE**

- a. No one wants to be told what to do all of the time. Kids will be more involved if you give them a CHOICE. Here are a few ways to get you started:
  - i. Let kids have a say in what they do and how they do it.
  - ii. If you’re changing up the rules, ask kids for suggestions.
  - iii. If you’re doing warm-up activities, let them take turns choosing which ones the team will do.

5. Be **CLEAR** and **CONCISE**

- a. We all have a tough time listening to people drone on and on when they’d rather be doing something else. Imagine how kids feel. When it’s time to give instructions, be CLEAR and CONCISE. The result is more playing and less talking! A few tips:
  - i. Plan out your session and instructions in advance so you can be as efficient as possible.
  - ii. Use the 80/20 rule: Dedicate no more than 20% of the time to instruction; the other 80% of the time should be playing (they will figure it out!!).

6. **CONNECT** with kids

- a. You can’t make any of the 6 C’s happen until kids trust you. Find ways to CONNECT with them (and help them connect with each other too). Start here:
  - i. **Call every kid by name** (you’ll be amazed how far this goes).
  - ii. **Pay attention to kids’ moods** and let them know how much you enjoy being around them
  - iii. **Ask kids to talk** about what others did well.
  - iv. **Create pairs** (and always mix them up) for drills and warm-up; be sure to have each partner share what the other did well.