



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

Behaviour Management

Good behaviour management and strategies to deal with misbehaviour are essential to carrying out a coaching session. Strategies aimed at conducting effective and safe sessions go a long way to preventing misbehaviour.

Common causes of misbehaviour

Inappropriate behaviour and/or a lack of interest and attention may be caused by:

- > insufficient equipment for group size
- > limited supervision and lack of interest shown by the coach
- > activities which are slow to start, due to too much talking by the coach
- > activities that run for too long
- > children waiting in long lines for their turn
- > activities that are boring and not challenging enough
- > unclear rules and expectations.

In other words, sometimes the coach's program, organisation or style can contribute to disruptive behaviour.

Strategies to prevent misbehaviour


- > Create a team atmosphere: be positive and encouraging and give feedback.
- > Ensure children have a clear understanding of rules, routines and appropriate behaviour. Manage inappropriate behaviour as soon as it occurs.

- > Understand pre-existing rules and routines, and what strategies and approaches work well with a particular group or individual.
- > Learn about any children with physical, behavioural, emotional or social problems.
- > Look for good behaviour and reward through praise and privileges.
- > Provide fun and variety, and high levels of activity.
- > Challenge more experienced children and make discrete allowances for those less skilled.
- > Use inclusive coaching practices, that is, adapt and modify coaching practices to ensure all children have the opportunity to participate.
- > Remember to use the CHANGE IT principle.
- > Plan activities that follow on from each other, thus reducing waiting time.



How to manage misbehaviour

The following table provides a suggested routine for dealing with misbehaviour. Ensure you are consistent and patient in following the suggestions as some misbehaviour may need time to correct.

<p>Misbehaviour presents</p> 	<p>Quietly correct</p> <p>Depending on the severity of the misbehaviour, it may be appropriate to address the behaviour in front of the group, to demonstrate the standards expected.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Do so without delay. > Non-verbal cues may be appropriate. > Join in and partner with the misbehaving child without comment. > Divert the child's attention. > Ask a skill-related question, such as: 'How is that serve coming along?' > Remind the child discretely of group rules and appropriate behaviour. > Address the behaviour of the child, not their character.
<p>Misbehaviour still an issue</p>	<p>The coach's next step...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Relate the problem back to team rules. > Explain how their behaviour is impacting others. > Ask the child: 'What are you doing?' and: 'Is this against the rules?'. Follow on with: 'What should you be doing?'
<p>Misbehaviour continues</p>	<p>Explain the consequences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Be polite, calm, brief and specific. > Do not use punishment, blame, shame, sarcasm or cause pain. > Do not ignore the child. > Forgive and forget. > Remove the child from the activity; use a time-out away from other children but close enough to supervise. > Provide an opportunity for the child to rejoin the group, if they agree to abide by the rules.
<p>Referral</p>	<p>> If the problem is not rectified, refer the matter to an appropriate person.</p>	

Non-participation

Children may not participate in activities for a number of reasons. As these reasons may not be obvious, understanding and patience are essential, to ensure all children feel they have an opportunity to get involved.

Identifying behaviours

Children may:

- > Refuse to participate in activities
- > Not agree to play certain roles as part of games
- > Make no effort or attempt to engage with other children

What you can do

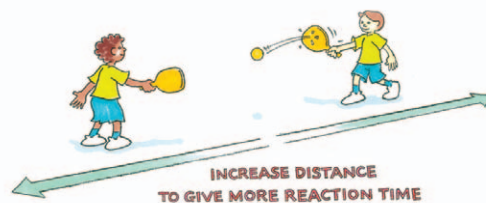
Once illness or injury or cultural considerations have been ruled out, simple changes to activities may help to encourage participation. Remember to address a child's behaviour and not their character, and be a good role model at all times.

- > Partner with the child to encourage their involvement in the activities.

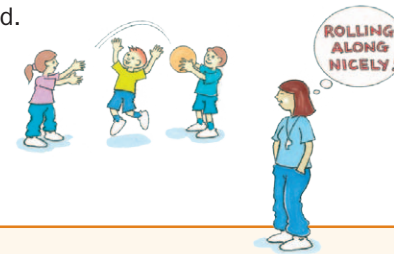
- > Ask one of their friends, or a more experienced child from the group, to encourage their participation in the activities.
- > Think of new and varied roles that can be played: for example, scorer or umpire.



- > Look for signs of interest during the activities, to invite participation.
- > Use changes that increase or decrease complexity of the activity to provide more opportunities for success.



- > Ensure the fun element is emphasised.
- > Create ownership by asking the child for a suggestion on how to improve or change the activity.
- > Provide encouragement once the child is involved.



Example:

After a five minute warm up, Sarah brought her group of children together to introduce the next activity: volleyball. Peter immediately tensed up and said, 'I don't want to play this game, I don't like volleyball'. The last time Peter played volleyball he was unable to serve the ball over the net, but the other children could. Peter wanted to avoid further embarrassment and so sat out.

After a quick one-on-one discussion with Peter, Sarah changed one of the game rules to allow children to serve from different spots around the court. Sarah made the rule for the whole group, not just Peter, so all of the children could choose the spot they felt most comfortable with to make a serve. After watching the game with this new rule in play, Peter decided to join in, and Sarah provided encouragement throughout the session.

