COACHING IRELAND

OILIÚINT ÉIREANN

Coaching Ireland
Coaching Children Workshop Series:

COACHING CHILDREN SUCCESSFULLY IN SPORT: AN INTRODUCTION FOR COACHES

Factsheet 1

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COACHING CHILDREN SUCCESSFULLY IN SPORT
AN INTRODUCTION FOR COACHES

This factsheet aims to provide a supporting framework for the development of child appropriate sports and physical activity sessions. It aims to increase the understanding of children's reasons for joining and leaving sports and physical activities, children's developmental stages, appropriate coaching approaches during these stages and the importance of developing the whole child. Too often, sessions offered to children in sport and physical activity are scaled down versions of adult activities. However, children's needs and wants could not be more different from adults. To develop lifelong physically active individuals it is essential that coaches understand these needs and wants and help children to enjoy and feel passionate about participating in physical activity and sport.

JOINING AND STAYING
MAKING CHILDREN ACTIVE FOR LIFE

Why do children join and get involved in sport?

1. FUN and enjoyment
2. Be with friends
3. Be like mum and dad
4. Learn new skills
5. Feel more competent

Why do children not join or drop out of sport?

1. Too serious/adult like
2. Emphasis on winning
3. Internal competition/favourites
4. Pushy coaches/parents
5. Low confidence/competence

HELP CHILDREN ENJOY, LOVE AND STAY INVOLVED IN SPORTS:

- Emphasise the importance of personal/team development over winning.

- Create FUN activities that are pitched at the right level.

- Consider that you are working with children and not with adults.

- Make activities child not coach-centred.

- Involve children in decisions making. Give them choice and options.

- Emphasise the importance of learning.

- Increase cooperation between children.

- Reward effort.

- Consider the purpose of games and competition.
  Competitions are good as long as the right environment is created.

- Create success experiences for all. Ensure differentiation.

- Communicate and work together with parents.

HOT QUESTION:

How well does your coaching or club reflect children's needs and the reasons why they do sport?

LET'S GET REAL TASK 1 – WHY DO THEY COME?

"Questions wake us up. They prompt new ideas. They show us new place and new ways of doing things." (Michael Marquardt)

This task is designed to help you gather the views of the children you coach and their families with regards to their motives for coming to your sessions. It will give you information about what they like most about your coaching and your club and where they think improvements could be made.

Hand this questionnaire out to a few parents and get them to fill it in with their child.

Parent's Questions:

1. Why do you bring your child to our sessions/club?

....

2. What do you think your children get from taking part?

....

3. What do you like most about our sessions and our club?

....

4. Is there anything you would like to see more or less of?

....

Children's Questions:

1. Do you like doing sport? If so why/why not?

....

2. What do you like most about your coach?

....

3. What would you like your coach to do more/less of?

....

THE LIFELONG INVOLVEMENT IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY (LISPA) FRAMEWORK

Development is a Journey - Take each child you coach one step at a time.

What is LISPA?
The LISPA framework (Figure 1) is an inclusive framework which caters for all levels of physical activity and sport involvement. There are 4 main objectives of the framework:

1. Health benefits for participants throughout their lives.
2. The development of a positive attitude to sport and physical activity.
3. Development of physical literacy and movement incorporating the development of gross movement skills.
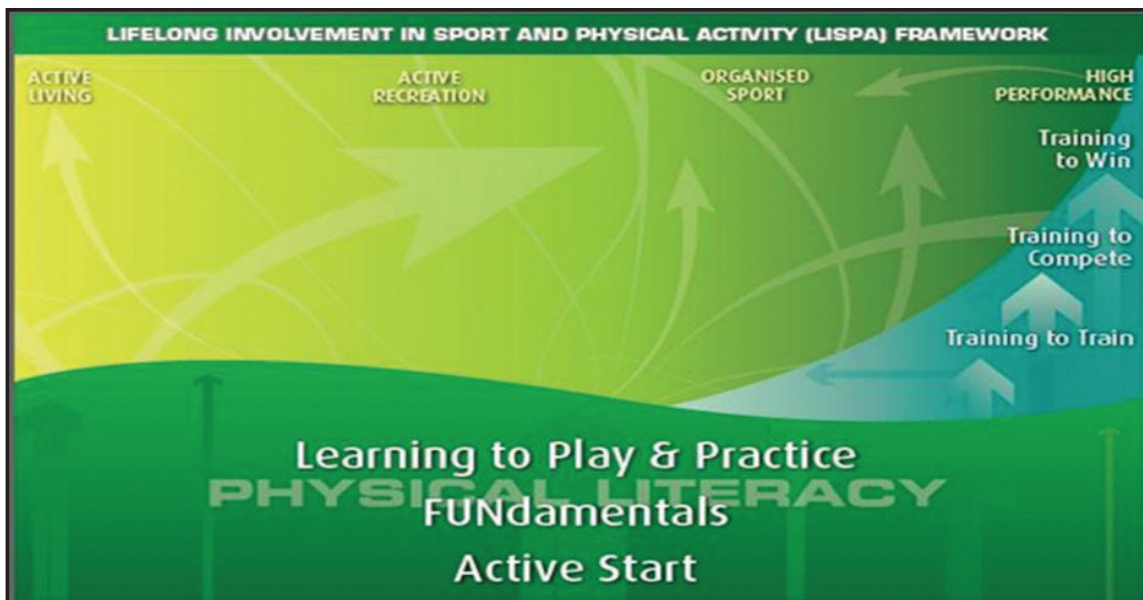4. Clear phases of development for performers.

Figure 1: Lifelong Involvement in Sport and Physical activity (LISPA)

The LISPA framework incorporates the following:

- An introduction to physical activity and sport should focus on Active Start and FUNdamental and Learning to Play and Practice phases for all. All three provide the foundation for both lifelong physical activity and performance in sport.
- There are many opportunities for continued involvement and further development in physical activity and sport.
- Individuals may choose to stay involved at a recreational level or choose to specialise in sport and progress to elite performance.
- The LISPA framework incorporates the long terms player athlete development (LTPAD) pathway.

Phases of Development:

This factsheet focusses on the development of children up to age 12. Therefore, the key phases of development that this factsheet focusses on are: Active Start, FUNdamentals and Learning to Play and Practice.

The first 3 phases of LISPA aid the development of Physical Literacy:

1. Active Start focuses on:

- Providing infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers with opportunities to participate in daily physical activity.
- Promoting movement, communications and the development of confidence and self-esteem.
- Unstructured physical activity and active play is recommended for toddlers and pre-schoolers.

2. FUNdamentals focus on:

- Developing a love of sport and physical activity in children.
- Developing fundamental movement skills such as running, jumping, throwing, catching and confidence in water.
- Getting children to experience the social and psychological benefits of being physically active.
- A positive, enjoyable and fun approach in a wide range of physical activities and sports is encouraged. It is recommended to use unstructured play and basic, appropriate and enjoyable games.

3. Learning to Play and Practice focuses on:

- Recognising that not all individuals will want to pursue organised sports.
- Encouraging children to remain active throughout their lives through:
- Emphasising the social and fun benefits that sport and physical activity participation offers.
- Further developing fundamental, but also sport specific skills.

HOT QUESTION:

How well does your coaching or your club work to the principles of the LISPA framework?

PHYSICAL LITERACY FOR CHILDREN

Just like reading and writing, children have to learn how to move!

"Physical Literacy can be described as the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life." (Whitehead, 2014)

Figure 2
The Multi-Skills Jigsaw
(Lara-Bercial,
Hetherington &
Hendrie, 2015)

The Multi-Skills Jigsaw

Multi-skills describe the building blocks which allow children to become confident and competent movers as well as games players. Movement skills that children have developed through a multi-skills approach will underpin the development of sport specific skills and tactics. This will foster children's transition through the LISPA framework.

The following three types of skills have been used to define what multi-skills are:
- FUNdamentals of Movement (FoM): referred to as the building blocks of safe and efficient movement. They include Balance, Coordination, Agility and Speed.
- FUNdamental Movement Skills (FMS): these are combinations of the FoM which produce a specific movement pattern (i.e. a kick, a throw, a jump, a spin).
- FUNdamental Game Skills (FGM): the generic skills involved in solving the recurrent tactical challenges that are shared between most games (i.e. use of space, tracking players, keeping possession, etc.).

FoM, FMS and FGM are the foundation to build Sport Specific Technical and Tactical Skills (SSTTS).
- Sport Specific Technical and Tactical Skills (SSTTS): these are specific techniques and tactics that are needed for a specific sport (e.g. kicking a football and tracking players; please see an illustration of this in Figure 3).

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Figure 3 illustrates how the Fundamentals of Movement, Fundamental Movements Skills and Fundamental Game Skills build the foundation for Sport Specific Technical and Tactical Skills. For example, if a child cannot run he/she will most likely not be able to successfully take part in games such as soccer, basketball, volleyball, squash, badminton, rugby, or tennis. Similarly, if a child cannot throw, he/she will struggle to take part in sports such as cricket, softball, bowling, soccer, basketball, football, or rugby.

Benefits of the Multi-Skills Approach
- Fosters all-round development of each child
- Facilitates skill acquisition later in life
- Supports transitions to other sports or within sport
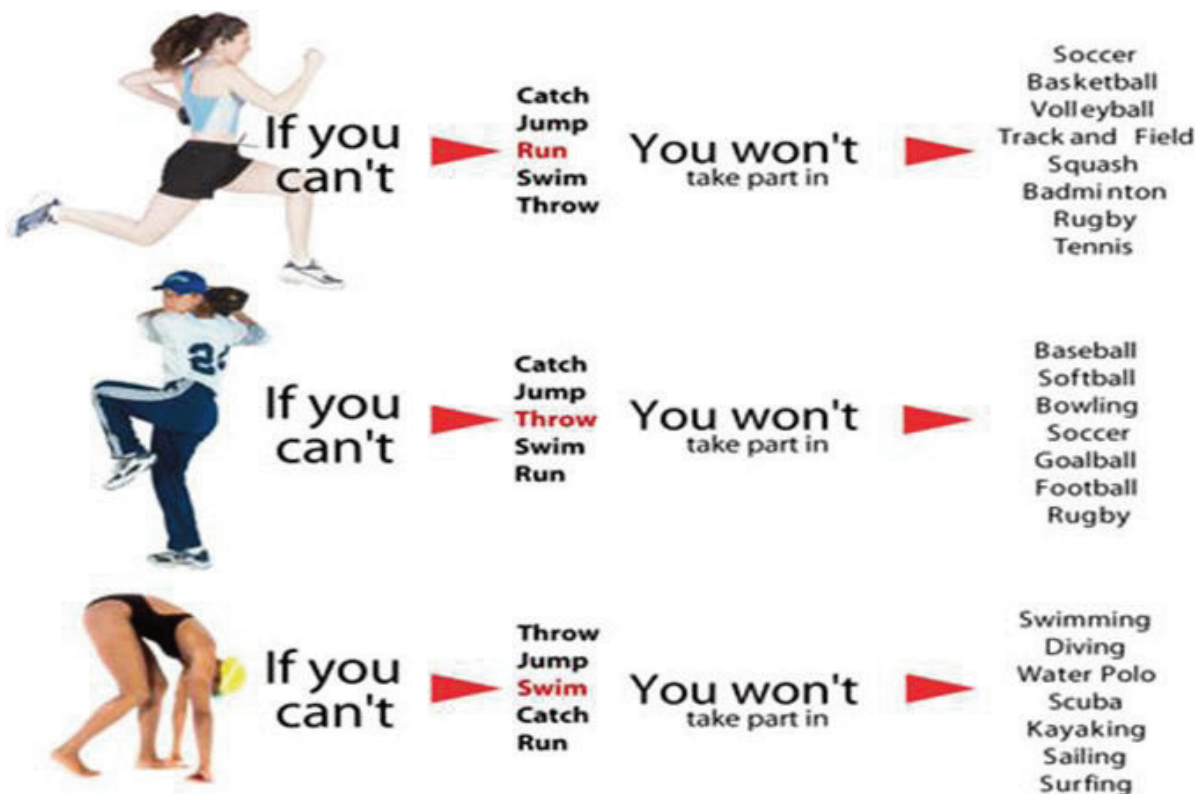- Prevents injuries and burn-out

Figure 3: FoM, FMS and FGM as the foundation SSTTS

HOT QUESTION:

What elements of the Multi-Skills Jigsaw do you focus the most on?

COACHING THE WHOLE CHILD

Developing Social and Psychological Skills is just as important as developing Physical Skills. When children take part in sport they are developing more than physical skills. Therefore, coaches have a responsibility to plan and deliver activities, sessions and programmes that, while perhaps having a very clear link to the development of physical attributes, also consider and provide room for the development of those other skills.

The whole child approach targets 5 key areas of development described as:

Figure 4: Whole Child Development Model

- **Physical Skills** are related to the development of bodily dimensions such as generic motor-control, strength, flexibility and the conditioning of the various energy systems.

- **Tactical Skills** refers to the child's knowledge of 'how to play the game'; the fundamental problems that have to be solved in the course of an activity to increase your chances of success.

- **Technical Skills** are the techniques and skills required to play a game/sport.

- **Mental Skills** relate to the child's ability to take in, process and give out information from others and the environment.

- **Personal & Social Skills** refer to development of the child's sense of self and his/her social context and the ability to function within such environment.

DEVELOPING THE CHILD THROUGH POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT (PYD)

Positive Youth Development (PYD) is a strength-based approach to the development of children and young people which sees people as 'Resources to be developed rather than problems to be managed' 'Not what they are, but what they can become'.

One of the most widely used conceptualisations of PYD is the 5Cs model developed by Lerner et al. (2005) and added to by Haskin (2010). This describes developmental outcomes for children and young people which when achieved seem to facilitate their growth and a positive transition into adulthood.

These Cs are:

Competence: Developing a positive view of one's actions (feeling and being capable of doing things that are valued by oneself and others).
Confidence: Having an internal sense of overall self-worth ('I am a worthy human being regardless of looks, ability, etc.') and self-efficacy ('I can do things').
Connection: Building positive bonds with people and the environment, will result in mutually beneficial exchanges and a sense of belonging to something bigger than oneself.
Character: Possessing a sense of right and wrong and of respect for societal and cultural rules with matching behaviours.
Caring: A sense of sympathy and empathy to others and of caring and being cared for.
Creativity: The ability of the young person to find their own solutions to problems, think for themselves and think creatively.

When the Cs are well developed, a final C emerged. This is the C of Contribution and it refers to the fact that children and young people who develop the Cs end up making a stronger contribution to themselves and their communities.

Being able to find own
solutions to problems

Being able to do things

Self Worth and Self Efficacy

Creativity

Competence

Confidence

Contribution

Caring

Connection

Caring for others and
being cared for

Character

Possitve connections
with people and environment

Respect for rules, sense
of Right & Wrong
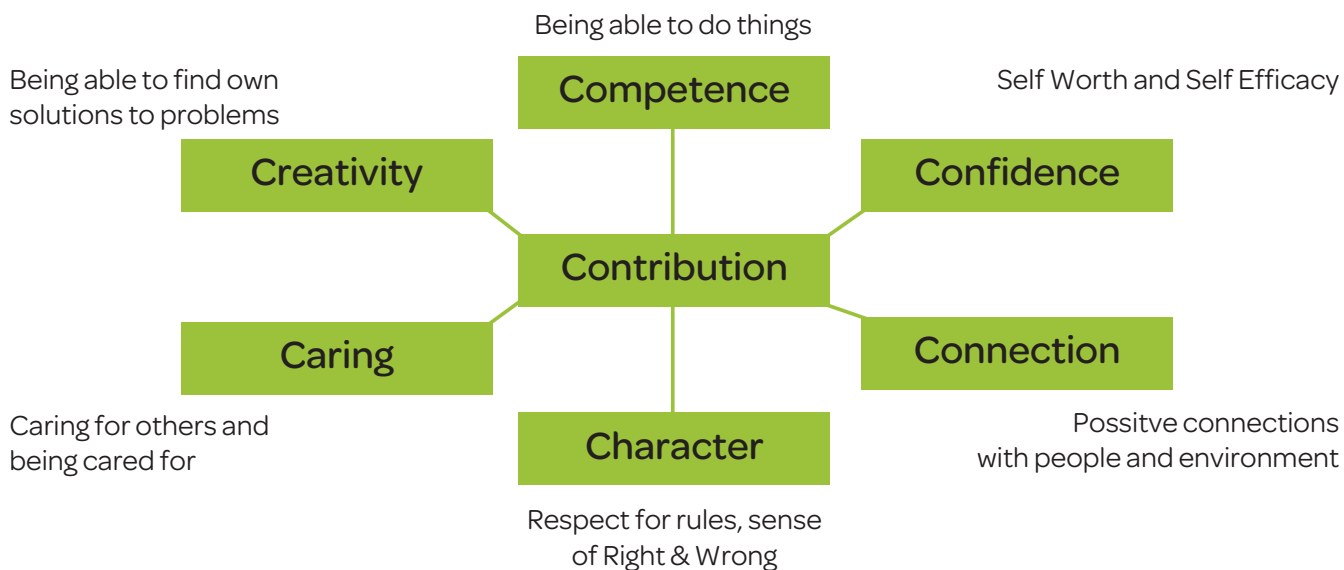
Figure 5: The Cs of Youth Development

HOT QUESTION:
How could you and your club further foster Positive Youth Development and take a more holistic child development approach?

THE LINK BETWEEN THE WHOLE CHILD DEVELOPMENT MODEL & THE CS OF POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Fitting it all together

In sport, the development of the Cs is strongly linked to whole child development model. Each capability is not developed in isolation. Table 1 below illustrates how the various areas interact and support each other's growth. It brings the Cs to life and identifies ways in which coaches can contribute to the achievements of multiple outcomes for children. For example, a coach can increase children's physical capabilities and, at the same time, develop their creativity by running physical challenges in a problem solving environment (see area highlighted in yellow).

	Competence	Confidence	Connection	Characters & Caring	Creativity	Contribution
The Coach may:						
Physical	Use developmentally appropriate content for the session	Show how children are developing physically	Allow children to work with others.	Ensure children learn why and how to respect their bodies	Run phyiscal challanges in a problem-solving environamet	O U T C O M E
Technical	Use coaching skills appropriate to the development stage of the child	Providing good explanations and high percentage of success	Encourage participants to give feedback to each other	Develop participants to be able to practice for extended periods and understand why	Allow room for individual approaches to technical skills development	
Tactical	Develop tactical awareness alongside technical skills	Ensure tactical demands are understood and the necessary skill level is established	Support Chidrens understanding of roles and importance of others	Help children to appreciate how different positions or activities contribute to the overall outcome and accept their role	Support children as they create their own tactical solutions to problems	
Mental	Prompt a strong focus on the taks at hand	Provide good evaluative feedback and an understanding of failure and learning	Prompt a strong focus on the taks at hand	Allow children to explain and accept codes and rules	Set appropriate open tasks that support cognitive development	
Personal and Social	Support the child in identifying his/her strength and how they can benefit others in a social context	Praise the child effort and positive interaction with others	Create opportunities for the children to get to know each other	Encourage children to consider each other's well being and emotions	Allow children to develop their own games in small groups	

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LET'S GET REAL TASK 2
USING THE C SYSTEM IN YOUR COACHING

This task is designed to support you in the application of the C system in your coaching.

	What do I already do?	What else could I do?	What will I do to improve this month?
Competence Being able to do things			
Confidence Feeling good about oneself and capable of doing what is asked of you			
Connection Developing positive connections with people and the environment			
Character Having respect for rules and sense of Right & Wrong			
Caring Caring for others and being cared for			
Creativity Being able to find own solutions to problems			

LET'S GET REAL TASK 3
MY COACHING & MY CLUB – HOW CHILD PROOF ARE THEY?

This task is designed to help you think about how well your coaching and your club structure and policies support children's needs and wants.

Theme / Item	🙂	😐	☹️	I will continue to..	I will start to..	I will stop..
Consider children's needs and wants and plan accordingly.						
Cater for the holistic development of the children I coach.						
Foster positive development at personal and social level.						
Plan for the development of physical literacy.						
Provide opportunities to develop a broad range of movement and game skills.						
Puts children's needs before those of the club.						
Puts enjoyment and child satisfaction before winning.						
Regularly asks children and their families for feedback.						

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