



ALL ABILITIES

The Basics of Inclusion

As a coach you have the unique opportunity to engage children of all abilities in footy. Including children with disabilities is not hard; it just requires awareness and flexibility. The tips below can help to include all children in footy. Remember, a good coach is an inclusive coach.

ATTITUDES MATTER

Coach's personal attitudes will have a real impact on the lives of kids with disabilities. Always be understanding, caring and empathetic

COMMUNICATE THOUGHTFULLY

Be aware of how you speak to parents about their child, don't make them feel inadequate or to blame. Be mindful also how you communicate with others about a child with a disability. How would a child feel if spoken about in this way? How would their parents and family feel?

IF UNSURE, ASK THE CHILD

If you're not sure how to modify an activity for a child ask the child for the best way for him/her to be successful. All children have their own unique strengths and abilities.

PARENTS KNOW THEIR CHILD BEST

No matter how much you know about a particular disability, parents know their child the best. It's always a good idea to talk to parents to find out the best way to communicate and work with their child. Parents can help you understand a child's unique strengths and areas they need more help.

You could ask questions like: What activities does your child enjoy the most? Are there any things they find particularly challenging? Are there things I can do to support his/her participation as much as possible? Are there situations that he/she finds stressful? Are there things that I can do to help your child understand or learn a new skill? What is the best way to communicate?

CHANGE THE ACTIVITY NOT THE CHILD

If a child is struggling with an activity, remember the problem is not within the child, it is with the strategy. For example, you might say: "you seem to have difficulty doing this drill. I think we chose the wrong size target to use, let's try it with a larger target."



CHANGE LOTS OF ROLES

Some kids may prefer to be the umpire, the coach's assistant, scorer, statistician, team manager, or announcer rather than play. Create lots of different roles so that everyone can be involved

CONSIDER HOW TO CREATE GROUPS

Consider what group is best for each activity. The whole group, small groups or groups of similar abilities.

PAIR CHILDREN WITH BUDDIES

Consider pairing a kid with a buddy to help them during activities. Older or more skilful kids can mentor others.

GET EXTRA HELP

Having more coaches, parents or volunteers involved can support kids who need individual help to play.

FIND THE ACTIVITY LEVEL THAT ENABLES SUCCESS

Provide activities where children can succeed and develop their self-esteem, particularly when a child first starts. Increasing the degree of difficulty slowly over time allows the child to continue to be challenged, without being disheartened.

HAVE THE SAME EXPECTATIONS

Don't lower expectations for children with disabilities. For example, if everyone is expected to pack up equipment at the end of the day, a child with a disability should also help. Be aware that they may need to be given a simpler or modified task

GIVE THE SAME TIME

Give kids with disabilities a similar amount of feedback, attention, and time as kids without a disability