

Handling Misbehaviour

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Behavioural problems can destroy the Leader's aim to provide enjoyable learning experiences. Most problems can be avoided if the sessions are well planned and a clear code of behaviour is established and reinforced from the outset. Player inattention, lack of motivation or disruption to others is generally a symptom that the program is not meeting the child's needs. This could be because the program from the child's perspective is:

- Poorly organised
- Lacking in variety
- Lacking in challenge
- Too challenging
- Too unstructured

AusTouch Leaders are likely to experience difficulties if they fail to maintain interest due to:

- Boring activities lacking variety and challenge
- Long-winded instructions and frustrating delays between instruction and practice
- Drills continuing for lengthy periods
- Players being left inactive
- Poor communication of tasks and poor structuring of practice drills
- Ignoring children's requests or need for assistance

A knowledgeable Leader who provides training sessions that yield fun, active participation and development of skills, and that allow all participants to achieve personal success, will not be confronted with disciplinary problems very often.

Guidelines for good discipline

AusTouch Leaders should try to really get to know all of their participants. The more that is known about a participant, the easier it is to cater for their needs and the better equipped the Leader is to select appropriate responses to avoid a dissatisfaction developing into a behaviour problem.

The following approaches will help to establish an environment where discipline problems are largely avoided and where the few discipline problems that may occur are well managed:

- Establish a code of behaviour at the first training session. Involve participants in discussing the code and make expectations explicit
- Explain the reasons for each rule and agree on the penalties for breaking them
- Develop clear expectations regarding attendance, punctuality, behaviour, sportsmanship and training standards at the meeting
- Inform the committee and parents of the codes and disciplinary measures that will be used
- In dealing with unsatisfactory behaviour, focus on the behaviour not on the individual as a person. Do not insult or embarrass a participant
- Discipline the individual responsible, not the whole group
- Intervene at the earliest signs of misbehaviour or disruption so participants can easily redeem themselves before things get out of hand and are less easy to resolve
- Early intervention strategies include issuing clear reminders of expectations, introducing a 'diverting' activity, inquiring if there is something wrong, discretely informing the offender that his/her behaviour is getting out of order, and other 'low key' reactions signalling that the behaviour has been noticed and that it should stop
- Discipline firmly, fairly and consistently and highlight / reward (praise) desired behaviour
- Consult players and seek their opinions regarding training and training schedules
- Talk the problem through with the participant and establish a commitment to an agreed set of behaviours
- If behaviour problems persist, involve the child and his/her parents in the discussion of solutions