

KIDS AND SPORTS SKILLS

A Guide for Parents and Coaches: Understanding what to expect from kids at different ages.

Remember Mom, Dad, and Coaches...

I'm 4, 5 or 6 years old

1. I'll have a tendency to keep the ball once I get control of it. I'll likely run in a straight line, even if I am going the wrong way, and may not stop at the field boundaries.
2. I may be easily distracted by things around the athletic event, such as a neat frog, butterflies, airplanes, or whatever takes my attention.
3. There will probably be a big difference in my attention span between ages 4 to 6. At age 4, I may be unable to understand games or keep up physically with the 6-year-olds. At age 6 I will be more likely to understand the game basics and control a ball with my hands or feet.
4. Generally I will enjoy the physical activity. I may be content to just stand in the field and occasionally reach out for the ball if it comes close to me.
5. Teamwork is a difficult concept for me to grasp...I generally will have a "me" or "mine" concept of the game. My awareness of teammates for passing will often be difficult for me to attain.
6. Catching a ball is difficult for me, but generally I am able to make a catch before it bounces twice.
7. I am able to kick a stationary ball, but have difficulty kicking a rolling ball.
8. I have very little concern with winning or losing.
9. I may or may not appear to understand instructions from coaches. Remember; keep the instructions direct because I am unable to interpret vague or ambiguous statements.

I'm 7 or 8 years old

1. I am beginning to understand the team concept idea.
2. I am switching from the "me" and "mine" concept to realizing that teammates are present too.
3. Look, I've developed the ability to catch a gently thrown ball.
4. Most of the time I am able to dribble a ball continuously with my hands or feet without loss of control.
5. I am able to learn and understand the rules of the game.
6. From my point of view, playing the game is the major thing, winning is not a major concern.
7. I will accept instructions by my coaches but I need them to be direct and not ambiguous.
8. I may get overloaded by my parents/fans shouting instructions. Let the coach's coach - let them give me instructions.
9. I can become easily embarrassed by intense, negative criticism by fans/parents.

I'm 9 or 10 years old

1. I am able to maintain a dribble with hands or feet.
2. I am able to control a ball using a variety of body parts, i.e., a thigh or head in soccer, or a bump volley in volleyball.
3. I am able to consistently hit a thrown ball with a bat (as in baseball) or racquet (as in tennis or ping-pong).
4. Using my maturing motor skills, I am able to throw, catch, or kick.
5. I am able to use either hand or foot with competency.
6. I now have well established the team concept.
7. I may be easily embarrassed by intense, negative criticism and behaviors by adults.
8. I now can accept the instructions of coaches. I may be able, to some degree, interpret ambiguous directions, but receiving parental instruction at the same time as coaching instruction can confuse me.

I'm 11 or 12 years old

1. I am able to throw or kick a ball with accuracy and for distance.
2. I am able to hand or foot dribble a ball while keeping an opponent from stealing it.
3. I am able to develop offensive and defensive tactics in team games.
4. I am able to combine individual physical skills in a competent manner, such as leaping, rolling, weight transfer, hand/foot dribble, running, and throwing, etc.
5. While being guarded by an opponent, I am able to throw and catch.
6. I can accept decisions of game officials, even if I disagree with the call.
7. I understand that skill improvement requires input of practice time and effort.
8. I accept the instruction from coaches. I may even make my own modifications of coaching directions.

I'm 13 or 14 years old

1. I will combine different physical skills to a more competent level.
2. I have a tendency to practice skills learned in practice on my own.
3. My interest is growing in developing, improving, and maintaining body composition.
4. I know, and can describe, proper conduct for participation in sporting activities, including ethical and unethical behavior.
5. My taking part in physical activities has made me recognize long-term physiological and psychological benefits.
6. I am accepting of instructions by coaches, but may become angry at negative fan/parent yelling or instructions during games.