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Working With Children



## **Child Development & Sport**

## Scenario

You have applied for the post of the physical education officer you have received an invitation to attend an interview. The interview requires you to compile a report on Sport and children.

**Task one** – *identify, compare and critically analyse areas of child development across a range of different age groups, for example 0-5, 5-10, and adolescent 10-14 .*

In the early years of life Children grow at a very fast rate, at birth a baby is around a quarter of its full adult height. Another measurement on which we can compare is that a babies head accounts for a quarter of its height, while an adults head only counts for one sixth of there over all height.

The fastest growth of a child takes place in early childhood up the age of around six or seven, then in throughout puberty there is second period of growth until the child reaches their full height.

I will now split up a child's development by breaking it down into three separate parts 0-5, 5-10, and 10-14 years old.

### **0 –5 years old**

At this age children won't understand concepts such as practice, they will only start to identify with this upon reaching early adolescence. Young children learn through play, by using bats, balls and toys they will develop skills that they will use for the rest of there lives. At this age it is important that the sport played is purely for fun, enjoyment must come before winning.

Small children only usually have very limited skills because a persons nerve and muscular systems only reach full maturity in early adulthood, also activities such weight lifting are absolutely out of the question and should not be attempted until bone development is complete, this happens around the age of 17. With this in mind it is important to know how much a child can take, children do not cope with exercise as well as adults but usually have quite high energy levels, this makes them less aware of there physical limits. It is therefore important not to let them exhaust themselves. In the early years of development there isn't much difference between Girls and Boys, real differences between things like muscle bulk only clearly become apparent at puberty.

### Possible activities of 0 –5 year olds

- Gymnastics (tumbling)
- Hopscotch
- Playing Frisbee
- Jump rope
- T-ball
- Swimming
- Karate
- Tag
- Football with light small ball

- Dancing

### **5-10 years old**

At this age children should begin to realise the consequences of their actions, however it is common for children to find it hard to separate ability and effort. Children tend to weigh the productivity of an activity on the amount of hard work they put in, it is difficult to coach these children as it may not be wise to encourage them to try harder to do something. Even more so if they have some natural ability in the sport or activity. So it is important to let a child explore their limits while not pushing them beyond their natural abilities.

Patience is also an important factor with children, new tasks and game must be approached step by step allowing the children to learn and develop in their own time. At this age children will start to copy trends of people around them, this can be a good thing or a bad thing to happen depending on the role model involved. In the example of golf if a role model is angry on the course and throws his clubs around it is likely to encourage an impressionable youth to do the same.

Sport at this age must remain enjoyable with emphasis on fun, the children themselves will want to start competing against others to prove themselves, but it is important that winning doesn't become the sole purpose of playing sport.

#### Possible activities for 5 – 10 year olds

- Softball
- Inline skating
- Biking
- Kickball
- Basketball
- Football
- Field hockey/ice hockey
- Soccer
- Tennis
- Lacrosse
- Ice skating
- Dancing
- Gymnastics
- Easy hiking

### **Adolescent 10-14**

At this age children are beginning to rate themselves as well as accepting the judgement of people around. Children of this age also begin to understand better the importance of ability, but will still try harder to overcome a lack of it. Children at this age will also find their shortcomings hard to accept to combat this a coach must have understanding and support if they are to continue to play sport.

Also children of this age will start to understand the importance of practising their skills to improve, so some forms of training can be accomplished. At this age children start to go through stages of puberty, and clear definitions between the sexes will become apparent. Boys especially will become stronger than females although this progression can happen at different stages, for example muscle growth will vary in all children as will general growth which happen in stages, or growth spurts. Some adolescents are often quite independent, they need to be given time and space to work out their own reactions to sport. If pressured by a coach or teacher, adolescents are likely to react with anger and rejection

#### Possible activities for 10 – 14 year olds

- Base ball
- Soccer
- Hiking
- Wrestling
- Cricket
- And other more physically and mentally challenging sports

The age groups differ tremendous amounts both physically and mentally. Perhaps the biggest change happens when the child goes through the process of puberty. But the mentality of children changes constantly until they reach full mental maturity around the 16.

Both the physical and mental attributes of individual children dictates what sports they can play, but as I mentioned earlier children of opposite sexes can often play sport together at a young age because of the similar heights and weights they have.

#### Why areas of child development should be considered when teaching children in sport

By taking into account the different physical and mental changes of a child you can help provide support at every stage of development. You must also understand different areas of child development because by adapting rules and equipment to suit them you can create more realistic goals for them.

To know how different children can play sport is very important, you must be able to keep a sport interesting and hard enough to aid a progression in skill. But make the sport to hard or to easy for children and they will loose interest in the sport.

## Bibliography

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