



# OFFICIATING CHILDREN

Children’s sport should be fun! Officials who are involved with children’s competitions should keep in mind that:

the social aspects of sport are highly valued by children

the focus should be on skill development and individual improvement, rather than winning, as the outcome.

## Children’s characteristics

Children’s social characteristics	Officials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerned with themselves</li> <li>• Learning social roles and skills</li> <li>• Learning how to cooperate</li> <li>• Come from different cultural and social backgrounds</li> <li>• Learning how to cope with winning and losing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote cooperation, teamwork and fair play</li> <li>• Reinforce the fun aspects of children’s sport</li> <li>• Provide a supportive environment and show sensitivity to individual differences</li> </ul>
Children’s level of understanding	Officials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning the best way to do things</li> <li>• Unable to process a lot of information at once</li> <li>• Do not do things automatically</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep instructions short and simple</li> <li>• Allow time for children to absorb information</li> <li>• Reinforce and praise when something is done well</li> </ul>
Children’s physical characteristics	Officials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very active</li> <li>• Lack fine motor control</li> <li>• Have different levels of ability</li> <li>• Growing rapidly</li> <li>• Less tolerant of heat and cold</li> <li>• Children develop at different rates, and there may be both early and late developers in any group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be aware of varying ability levels</li> <li>• Be aware that growth periods will alter a child’s coordination and skills</li> </ul>
Children’s personality characteristics	Officials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easily motivated</li> <li>• Wide range of reasons for playing sport</li> <li>• Sensitive to criticism and failure</li> <li>• Short attention span</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to what the children say</li> <li>• Be positive, compliment effort</li> </ul>

Note: these characteristics may vary among children.

