



Project DITEAM12

Diverse and Inclusive teams for children under 12

Competency of the coach: Knowing appropriate methods of motivating children



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Asociación
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European
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What will you learn today?

- How to motivate children ?
- Why is the skill to motivate children needed?
 - How do children, parents and coaches benefit from highly motivated children?
- How can this competence be achieved?

What is this competence?

Knowing appropriate methods of motivating children

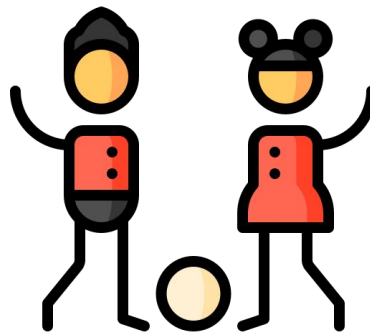


Definition

Motivation

...is defined as the reason or reasons for acting and/or behaving in a particular way;

...concerns those internal processes that give behavior its energy, direction, and persistence.



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Reeve, 2018



What is this competence?

Knowing appropriate methods of motivating children

Background

Extrinsic motivation: describes a behaviour that is displayed in order to earn external rewards or to avoid punishment for not doing it or for doing something else.

Intrinsic motivation: The motivation to do something derives from within the individual because the activity is naturally satisfying to the individual.

□ The coach should know about both, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and be aware that she or he can have a direct and/or indirect impact on both, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation.



What is this competence?

Knowing appropriate methods of motivating children

Background

Example for extrinsic motivation: A boy participates in sports activities (without complaining) because his parents promise him his favourite sweet dessert the next day if he participated without complaining about it or discussing if he really needs to participate.

Example for intrinsic motivation: A boy participates in sports activities because he likes the activity itself (running, throwing a ball etc...) and wants to be part of the team.

□ same action in examples (participation in sport activity), but different form of motivation (external reward vs. internal motivation).



- Why is high motivation needed?
How could children benefit from this competence?

Why is it important to motivate children?

- Lack of motivation can lead the participant to attend sport classes on an irregular basis or even to quit the sport.
- Children's intrinsic motivation starts at a very early age. However, a reward culture in sport and beyond has proven its success. Rewards can be acknowledging words for the participant's achievement, behaviour, effort and/or persistence from the coach. The coach can give the lead to a child during the game and give him/her the task to reward each child.
- Some children might be more prone to give up on task they are not able to do within just a few attempts. □ Therefore, motivating words that focus on other aspects than success (on persistence, behaviour or effort, for example) are important.



- Why is high motivation needed?
How could children/parents/ coaches benefit from this competence?

Why is it important to motivate children?

- A coach who motivates the child is needed to increase the chance that the child participates in and that the parents support the sport activity in the long run. Young children depend on their parents, and if the parents do not support participation, they will not let their child participate.
- A coach who motivates the child might be one of the major reasons why the child wants to participate in sport activities.
- A coach who motivates the child can be a person the athlete looks up to and who serves as a role model.
- Motivation has an impact on the children's self-confidence and supports their participation in sport activities.



What is this competence?

Motivating children with disabilities

Why might there be a difference between motivating children with and without a disability?

- a child with a disability might have a negative view on herself or himself [a child without a disability too, but children with a disability are more prone] (Hylton & Totten, 2013).
- A child with a disability is more prone to experience defeats in traditional sports. It might be harder to motivate him or her compared to counterparts without a disability as intrinsic motivation is lower in disabled children compared to children without a disability (Mooney, 2021).



- Why is this competence needed? How could children/ parents/ coaches benefit from this competence?

Motivating children
with disabilities

- It is important to support children's self-confidence and support their participation in sport activities.
- A study conducted in the DITEAM12 project (Kanfer et al., 2021) revealed that the number of children with a disability taking part in sport programs is rather low ([20210319-DITEAM12_report_final_2021_ERI_clean.pdf](#) ([scholaempirica.org](#)))
- increasing motivation could be a key element to include more children with a disability in sport activities in the long run
 - a motivating and motivated coach influences the child's emotions and feelings and is likely to increase the motivation of the child.
 - the coach might thus take some effort off the parents, as the parents are often the external drivers if the child is unmotivated. The child is more likely to express the wish to participate in the sport activity if the coach is a motivating person.

How can the coach motivate each child in an appropriate way?

Step 1 – Theory –



- Apply strategies of positive attention and communicate appropriately with children.
-
- Coaches should treat, motivate, pay attention to and communicate with all children equally, but with individualised approaches.
 - Each child needs different approaches. For some children, it might be important to be rewarded for their social behaviour, while it might be more important for others to be rewarded for their persistence.
 - It is the task of the coach to find out the best way to approach and motivate each child
 - Positive attention, in this context, means putting the focus on the child's resources, not the deficits.

How can the coach motivate each child in an appropriate way?

Step 2 – Practice –



- Practice role playing and games to support communication, praising and positive feedback to children.
- Ask the children for feedback, such as „What do you like best about being here in this sport class?“ to find out about their motivation.
- Find means to approach children who are unmotivated and guide them towards experiencing joy and success in sport activities.
 - The coach needs to create different definitions of success; each child should experience success

Examples how children could experience success through the coach's words:

“ You did not give up on the task and you tried it for 15 minutes. That's great.” (*success in persistence*)

“You threw the ball to Alex, Sandra and Moses during the game. You managed to include all your teammates in the game. Wow!” (*success in social behaviour*)

How can this competence be achieved?

Step 2



Focus on creating **positive sport experiences** for children

10 golden rules

1	be child-centred	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• listen to child• focus on what does the child want and need (not the adults!)
2	be holistic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• develop children as people first, not only as athletes• not just physical skills, but also psychosocial skills and capabilities
3	be inclusive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• serve all levels of abilities and motivations• no one-size-fits-all approach.• coach different kids differently• build positive relationships, enjoying and caring climates that keep children coming back
4	make it fun and safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• small proportion of children will become elite athletes, but all have the potential to become healthy active adults.
5	prioritise the love for sport over learning sport	

How can this competence be achieved?

Step 2



Focus on creating positive sport experiences for children

10 golden rules

6	Focus on foundational skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• young kids need to gain essential motor skills and learn basics of how to play games
7	engage parents positively	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• parents are not the enemy, but the biggest resource. Communication is of major importance
8	plan progressive programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• have short, middle, long term goals and destination point in mind. Failing to plan is planning to fail
9	use different methods to enhance learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• different coaching and teaching strategies can serve different purposes at different stages of learning and development
10	use competition in a developmental way	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• format and atmosphere of competitions is built around developmental stage of kids and considers their needs. Competitions can be a motivator.



How can the coach motivate each child in an appropriate way?

Step 3

While one child might want to focus on her or his strength, another child might want to improve in the area in which she or he feels weak.

It is the challenge for the coach to find out what the child wants and needs in order to reach high motivational levels for the child.

Therefore, knowing when to focus on the child's strength or/or weaknesses can be a factor in fostering motivation in the child.



Activities

Activities to achieve this competence

Practical exercise 1.

A little girl tells the coach at the end of the class that she does not want to participate in the classes anymore, but that her parents want her to come here every week.

□ How can the coach react appropriately?



Activities

Activities to achieve this competence

Practical exercise 1. Possible solution

- *Let the girl talk, optional: ask questions for more information*
- *Ask the girl to name at least one aspect that she likes about the sport activity*
- *Ask the girl what was her motivation to start with the sport activity and (optional) if this is still her motivation*
- *Ask the girl if she knows what would increase her motivation (for example: being in the same team with a specific child, playing with less rules..etc.)*



Activities

Activities to achieve this competence

Practical exercise 2.

A little boy tells the coach at the end of the class that he is not able to be as good as his peers and that the class is not fun anymore. He does not want to participate anymore.

□ How can the coach react appropriately?



Activities

Activities to achieve this competence

Practical exercise 2. Possible solution

- *Let the boy talk, optional: ask questions for more information about his feelings*
- *Try to find out why the boy thinks that he is not as good as his peers. Make him name the specific task/skill he thinks of.*
- *Together with the boy, set the focus on different forms of success, such as persistence, being able to compete as a team, etc.*
- *Tell the boy where you see his strengths and what he is good at*



Activities

Activities to achieve this competence

Practical exercise 3.

How can the coach motivate a child who....

- 1. ...tells the coach that the task is too difficult and no fun?*
- 2. ...tells the coach that he or she would rather like to do something else?*
- 3. ...is frequently distracted and focuses on other things?*



Activities

Activities to achieve this competence

Practical exercise 3. Possible solution

1. *make the child aware of his/her improvement to fulfil the task (“you have improved so much already”), give him/her a similar but easier task*
2. *tell the child that another task/game will follow. Praise the child for his/her persistence and motivate him/her to maintain the persistence just a little longer (“You did great, but can you concentrate on this task for 3 more attempts?”)*
3. *give him/her a task where he/she needs to concentrate for just a short time period. Make him/her feel that you pay attention to him/her and communicate with him/her after the task or before the next attempt to do the task.*



Activities

Create positive sport experience – How?

- Please explain 3 different approaches or examples to create positive sport experience. Here is one example:

The coach adapts the task for the children so that every child succeeds. For example, every child is able to score a goal because the coach has adapted the distance between shot and goal to the child's individual capacities.

[hint: consider the 10 golden rules]

Activities



Think and write up to five reasons why a child would be motivated to play sports?

ACTIVITY HELP - Questions:

- Where does the motivation to play sports come from?
- What is the motivation to play sports?
- Why would a child **not** wish to play sports?
- Is motivation stable? Elaborate.

Activities [Solution]



Possible reasons for a child to play sports

Why do we exercise?	What is behind the motivation?	Example:
Fun, enjoyment	Intrinsic motivation	A child spontaneously does sports – they play football or learn judo out of sheer enjoyment
Personal challenge	Flo	A child can get “in the zone” when the sport optimally challenges their skill
Forced to do so or asked to do so by their parents	External regulation	A child does sports because their parents tell them to do so
Accomplish a goal	Goal	A child wants to win a championship
Health benefits	Value	A child does sport because he wants to be healthy
Inspiration	Possible self	A child watches a famous person (e.g. Cristiano Ronaldo) and wants to play football
Pursuit of a standard of excellence	Achievement strivings	A child runs track to be the fastest amongst hi/hers peers
Satisfaction from a job well done	Competence	A child masters a complex sport step by step and makes progress while feeling more confident (e.g. judo)
Good mood	Positive affect	A child is happy when playing a sport
Alleviate guilt	Introjection	A child plays a sport because he/she doesn't want to be excluded from friends
Relieve stress	Personal control	A child plays football after school
Hang out with friends	Relatedness	Playing sports is a social event for a child to enjoy time with friends



Good Practices

Examples of good practices in achieving this competence

- “How to motivate children: Science-based approaches for parents, caregivers, and teachers”
[How to Motivate Children: Science-Based Approaches for Parents, Caregivers, and Teachers \(harvard.edu\)](#)
→ although this article of the Harvard University does not name coaches as target, the strategies provided could be used in sports as well.
- The following video shows a wheelchair basketball session with motivated, happy kids: [Encouraging Movement and Exercise For Children With Special Needs - YouTube](#)
- Adapting a sport to kids with special needs might increase their motivation. Please listen to the interviews with the kids in the video: [Sense Rugby an inclusive sport for kids with disabilities - YouTube](#)
- “Motivating kids in sport - What is wrong with them?” [iCoachKids: Motivating Kids In Sport](#)
iCoach kids - this global coaching movement aims to provide child-centred sport environments for safe developmental experiences for every child.



Think/ Practice!

- What can the coach do to prevent the situation with the little girl (of practical exercise 1)?
- What can the coach do to prevent the situation with the little boy (of practical exercise 2)?



Think/ Practice!

Solutions

What can the coach do to prevent the situation with the little girl (of practical exercise 1)?

- Talk about the motivation of each child with the parents and the child on a regular basis (separate conversation with child and parent(s))
- pay attention to each child's motivation and talk to those children who seem unmotivated before they approach you, the coach

What can the coach do to prevent the situation with the little boy (of practical exercise 2)?

- elaborate and define, together with the children, what success means and emphasise that there are different forms and areas in which children can be successful in sport activities
- do not emphasise achievement as the most important form of success, but persistence, behaviour and/or effort



Think/ Practice!

- Think of indicators that tell you, as a coach, about the success of your motivation methods.
- Please watch the video about wheelchair basketball from the “Good Practice” slides. What makes this sport programme successful? Why are the children highly motivated?
- Please watch the video about sense rugby from the “Good Practice” slides. What strategies does the interviewer apply to increase the child’s motivation?



Further resources

- [How to Motivate Your Young Athlete to Get Better | ACTIVEkids](#)
- Ciocan, D. M., Milon, A., & Mareş, G. (2017). Study Regarding the Motives of Children Participation in Sport Activities. In C. Ignatescu, A. Sandu, & T. Ciulei (eds.), Rethinking Social Action. Core Values in Practice (pp. 159-168). Suceava, Romania: LUMEN Proceedings <https://doi.org/10.18662/lumproc.rsacvp2017.15>
- John, J. Spencer, "A Positive Approach: Training Coaches to Build a Positive Motivational Climate" (2012). UNLV Theses, Dissertations, Professional Papers, and Capstones. 1468. <http://dx.doi.org/10.34917/3553640>
- [Sport Australia | Sport Australia](#)
- Wellbeing for Children: Motivation: [Wellbeing For Children: Motivation - YouTube](#)
- In this video, children talk about their reasons to play sports: [Kids Talk Sport: What do you love about sport? - YouTube](#)



Further resources

- This article studied a sample of older kids with an intellectual disability (12-16 years) and investigated their motivation for sport participation:

Pozeriene J, Adomaitiene R, Ostaseviciene V, Reklaitiene D & Kragniene I (2008): Sport participation motivation of athletes with intellectual disabilities. *Sportas* 3 (79), 69-75.
- The following website delivers a variety of resources for children and adults with a disability. “How to motivate kids with disabilities” is one article: [How to Motivate Kids with Disabilities](#)
- The following study presents barriers as well as facilitators to participation in youth; including the role of motivation.

Shields N & Synnot A (2016): Perceived barriers and facilitators to participation in physical activity for children with disability: a qualitative study. *BMC Pediatr.* 16:9.
- The following discussion focuses, among other topics, on “building motivation to exercise” for children with special needs: [Encouraging Movement and Exercise For Children With Special Needs - YouTube](#)



What have you learnt?

1. Explain the differences between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation
2. Explain how the coach can influence the child's motivation in a positive way
3. Name some reasons why the child might be motivated to participate in sports activities. How could the coach react to these reasons and promote them?



Sources

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Hylton, K. & Totten, M. (2013). Developing 'sport for all': Addressing inequality in sport. In: K. Hylton (ed.) Sport development: Policy, process and practice. Abingdon: Routledge, pp.37–79.

Kanfer S., Linares Gaustad T., Batista Espinosa F., Pastor J., Dumon D., Schomöller A., Veldin M., Peras I. Havrdova E., Bilanova T., Gonzalez Pineda M.D. & Fernandez Medina M. (2021). Current state of inclusion in sports clubs: [20210319-DITEAM12_report_final_2021_ERI_clean.pdf \(scholaempirica.org\)](#)

Mooney, M. (2021). Motivation in disabled schoolchildren: [Motivation in disabled schoolchildren - BelievePerform - The UK's leading Sports Psychology Website/](#) accessed on 20.05.2021

Reeve, J. (2018). *Understanding motivation and emotion* (Seventh edition). John Wiley & Sons