



Working with Our Athletes

Thank you for volunteering as a Team Mentor! Not only will you impact the life of our amazing athletes, but they will impact your life, as well.

Children with social, motor and communication difficulties may respond better to a different type of teaching approach. Ten tips are provided below.

1. Get the child's attention prior to giving instructions! Get closer, call their name, make eye contact, or lightly touch shoulder to gain attention.
2. Pair your words with visual supports! Use gestures, model and demonstrate what you are asking.
3. Keep activities moving, and short! Avoid long lines and delays between action and execution.
4. Engage children during "down time" (waiting in line, etc.), to keep attention and motivation strong. Play games, talk, or practice a skill!
5. Repeat yourself, and check for understanding. If a child does not answer you, don't stop and give up! Try using different language.
6. Recognize distractions, and work to be the most important presence for the athlete vs. trying to compete with other sights and sounds.
7. Provide more praise, in the form of smiles, cheers, thumbs up, then correction. Look for a 4:1 ratio of praise to correction!
8. Keep information short! Don't talk too long, or over-explain!
9. Partner athletes up to help each other.
10. Keep it fun!

Source: Kelly McKinnon, MA, BCBA

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PO Box 3766, Mission Viejo, CA 92690
www.spiritleague.org, administrator@spiritleague.org