

YouthFirst

Coaches Learning About Youth Sports

The Sports Education and Leadership Program at UNLV

1st & 2ndGrade

"Strong leaders are strong communicators"

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-Jim Clemmer

Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication is the messages we send to each other without uttering a word. Nonverbal communication is organized into three parts: these are kinesics, proxemics and paralanguage. Kinesics is how our body language through physical appearance, posture, gestures, touching, facial and eye movements effect communication. Stereotypes are developed based on physical appearance. Many people hold a stereotype that fat people are more talkative, good-natured, and trusting while thin are more ambitious, stubborn,

and pessimistic. People also hold stereotypes based on race and gender. Remember that saying "never judge a book by its cover." Slumped posture is a sign of feeling low, fatigued, and inferior whereas erect posture states confidence, openness, and energy. When people are sad, they shuffle along, head held down and move slowly. When they are happy they show enthusiasm, walk rapid and have an erect posture. It is important to be able to recognize and distinguish gestures. Gestures are scratching head or folding arms across the chest. This usually mean puzzlement or a closed or competitive attitude. Touching is used to ex-



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Tip For Listening Effectively

- * Stop talking. You cannot listen while you are talking.
- * Concentrate on what the other person is saying.
- * Pay attention to nonverbal messages (facial expression, hand motions, or posture).
- * Let the other person know you are listening.
- * Give small verbal cues ("uh-huh," "I see").
- * Remove distractions if possible (food, reading material, pens, keys).
- * Listen for what is not said, so must as for what is said.
- * Listen to how something is said. The feelings related to the words may be very important.
- * Avoid thinking of your response until the other person has finished speaking.
- * Tell the other person what you have heard (to be sure this what was meant).
- * Ask questions when you do not understand.

Cont...Nonverbal Communication

press affection, to calm, or to interrupt. Handshaking is a common way to communicate by touch. Some believe that a weak handshake compared to a firm handshake, reflect that individuals personality. Proxemics is the space between you and the object of social interaction, and how you respond when another invades your space. There are four zones that define space for social interaction; intimate, personal, social and public. Also remember that many cultures have differences it what is determined acceptable distances for personal space. Paralanguage is the vocal components of speech. Paralanguage is defined by pitch, resonance, articulation, tempo, volume, and rhythm. How you say things can betray your true feelings, moods, and attitudes. Nonverbal communication is important because research has shown that the impact of are message is divided up into 7% verbal, 38% paralanguage, while 55% is body language. Nonverbal messages are more powerful than verbal messages when communicating our feelings and emotions, and often are more difficult to interpret accurately. See how well you can read nonverbal messages with the athletes that you coach. Practice your own nonverbal messages. To be an effective communicator, coaches must master the ability to have both verbal and nonverbal messages agree with each other.

How To Give Effective Feedback

Giving effective feedback is an important communication skill for coaches. Regardless of an athletes present level of ability, successful coaching depends on your feedback to motivate, challenge, direct and support players to improve their skills. Keep the following guidelines in mind as you and your players communicate with each other.

1. Be positive- Give positive, instruction based feedback. Consider how you would rate on a ratio scale of positive, instructional to negative feedback. You want the ratio to be 3:1 and not 1:3. The one should not be negative but constructive criticism. Have someone observe the quantity and quality of feedback you offer.
2. Be specific- Tell the athletes specifically what they did well. Your athletes need to know exactly what you are praising them for and they will be more likely to repeat it.
3. Don't wait- Give feedback as soon after the behavior or situation occurs. When an athlete does something well, tell them right away instead of waiting, they will be more likely to behave the way you want.
4. Be positive during learning- Give frequent and positive feedback when they are first learning skills. This will help build confidence to succeed. Once skills are learned, less feedback is needed.
5. Be sincere- Insincere feedback will hurt more than it helps. Players can sense when words are hollow.
6. Acknowledge effort and not results- Sometimes athletes will do all the right things but will not get the desired results. As a coach you still need to reward the effort.