

How to Brief and Debrief Your Team

Starting with clarity and ending with gratitude

Why This Matters

A strong session is not only about what happens with the children. It is also about how well the adults around the session understand their role.

Briefs and debriefs help your team feel clear, supported and valued. They improve safety, reduce confusion and make it easier to keep learning together across the season.

What a Good Brief Does

A short, clear pre-session brief helps everyone know:

- **What the plan is.**
- **Who is doing what.**
- **What the conditions are.**
- **What the safety considerations are.**
- **What to do if something changes.**

Keep The Brief Short

You do not need a long speech. Most briefs can be done in a few minutes if they are focused and practical.

Brief before the children arrive where possible, or during a calm setup moment before the main session starts.

What To Cover In A Brief

A simple team brief should include:

- **The session focus.**
- **The key activities.**
- **Any condition or safety considerations.**
- **Who is leading which parts.**
- **Who is handling water safety, equipment or behaviour support.**
- **Any members who may need extra attention.**

Good Briefing Habits

Helpful briefing habits include speaking clearly, keeping the plan simple and giving people confidence in their role.

Make space for quick questions. It is better to clarify something early than fix confusion in the middle of the session.

During The Session

Briefing does not stop once the session begins. Good Age Managers keep checking in informally with their helpers as the session unfolds.

A quick word, a simple redirect or a shared observation can keep the session running smoothly.

Why Debriefs Matter

Debriefs are where teams learn, improve and feel appreciated. Even a two-minute conversation after pack-up can strengthen future sessions.

A debrief is also a chance to recognise effort. Most volunteers are giving their time on top of many other commitments, and a sincere thank you matters.

What To Cover In A Debrief

Keep it simple and practical. You might ask:

- **What worked well today?**
- **What felt hard or messy?**
- **Did any child need follow-up?**
- **Were the conditions a factor?**
- **What should we repeat or change next time?**

End With Gratitude

Do not underestimate the value of closing with appreciation. Thank people for their time, flexibility and support.

A culture of gratitude helps volunteers feel seen and makes it more likely they will stay engaged and keep helping.

When Something Did Not Go Well

Debriefs should stay constructive. Focus on learning, not blame.

If there was a problem, talk about what happened, what can improve and what support is needed. A respectful debrief builds trust and makes it easier to keep improving.

A Simple Brief and Debrief Formula

Use this quick structure:

- **Brief:** plan, roles, safety, questions.
- **Debrief:** wins, issues, follow-up, thanks.

Final Thought

A great Age Manager does not just run a session - they help people around them feel clear, capable and appreciated. Strong briefs and thoughtful debriefs are one of the easiest ways to make that happen.

