

Managing Group Behaviour Positively

Encouraging cooperation and focus while keeping sessions fun and respectful

All kids test boundaries—that’s part of learning. But managing behaviour doesn’t mean being strict or stern. With a proactive and positive approach, Age Managers can create a group culture that feels calm, respectful, and enjoyable for everyone involved.

1. The Basics of Positive Behaviour Management

- Set clear expectations
- Use encouragement over correction
- Stay calm and consistent
- Focus on the behaviour, not the child
- Recognise effort, not just outcomes

2. Set Expectations Early

Start each session by reminding the group of a few key expectations:

- “We listen when someone is speaking.”
- “We take turns and help each other.”
- “We stay where our Age Manager can see us.”

Keep it simple, repeat often, and model these behaviours yourself.

3. Focus on the Positive

Instead of highlighting what kids shouldn’t do, notice and praise the behaviour you want more of:

- “Thank you for waiting so patiently.”
- “I really like how this group is working together.”
- “Let’s all do what Jordan’s doing—he’s listening and ready.”

4. Use Gentle Redirection

When a child is off-task or disruptive, try:

- “Can I get your help holding this cone?”
- “Let’s take a quick break together and then try again.”
- “I need you back with the group now—thanks for moving quickly.”

Redirecting attention or offering a responsibility often resets behaviour more effectively than reprimanding.

5. Avoid Power Struggles

Stay calm and keep your tone neutral. Avoid challenging phrases like:

- “Because I said so.”
- “If you do that again, you’re out.”

Instead, give clear options or restate expectations:

- “You can choose to play the game, or help me set up the next one.”
- “Let’s try that again the right way.”

6. Praise Publicly, Correct Privately

Whenever possible, address behaviour concerns away from the group. Keep your message short, kind, and focused on the action:

- “I noticed you weren’t listening during the explanation. Can you show me you’re ready now?”

Then look for the next opportunity to praise them when they do well.

7. Use the Group Dynamic

Sometimes the group is your best asset:

- Give a team goal (e.g. “Let’s see if we can all be lined up and listening in 10 seconds”).
- Celebrate when the group works well together.
- Call out team effort: “You helped each other out today—that’s what makes a great Nippers team.”

Final Thought: Be Firm, Fair, and Friendly

You don’t have to be loud or strict to manage behaviour—you just need to be clear, consistent, and kind. When kids feel respected and understood, they’re more likely to give that respect back.

