

Quick Tips for Managing Groups

Bite-sized advice for Age Managers leading Nippers sessions

Whether it's your first season or your fifth, managing a group of energetic Nippers can be as rewarding as it is unpredictable. Here are some tried-and-true tips to help you feel confident, calm, and in control on the beach.

1. Start with Structure

Kids love to know what's coming next.

- Begin each session with a quick welcome circle.
- Give a simple run-through: "Today we'll warm up, play a relay, practice wading, then do a fun game."
- Use the same order of activities each week to build routine and familiarity.

2. Use Clear, Simple Instructions

Keep it short and visual.

- Break activities into one or two steps at a time.
- Demonstrate rather than describe wherever possible.
- Check for understanding: "Thumbs up if you know where the finish line is!"

3. Get Their Attention Without Yelling

Save your voice with smart attention-getters.

- Use a cue like:
 - "If you can hear me, clap once!"
 - "Hands on heads in 3...2...1..."
- Stand in a triangle (not a line) so you can see all faces.
- Pause and wait – silence often gets attention faster than shouting.

4. Keep Kids Moving

Idle time = distraction time.

- Always have a quick backup game or challenge ready.
- Split large groups into smaller rotations to avoid long waits.
- Use races, relays or mini-challenges to keep energy high.

5. Make Everyone Feel Seen

Kids thrive when they feel included.

- Learn names quickly – even just a few per week.
- Celebrate small wins: “You gave that 100%, well done!”
- Rotate leaders or helpers each session to build confidence.

6. Stay Calm in the Chaos

It’s okay if things don’t go to plan.

- If an activity flops, just pivot to something fun – like a game of “Simon Says Surf Style”.
- Take a breath, laugh it off, and model the kind of attitude you want from your group.

7. Debrief and Reflect

A quick end-of-session huddle goes a long way.

- Ask: “What did you enjoy today?” or “What was tricky but fun?”
- Remind them when they’ll be back, and say thank you for their effort.

Final Thought: You Don’t Have to Be Perfect

You just have to show up with a smile, give it your best, and remember—it’s meant to be fun for everyone, including you.

