

Supporting Different Personalities

Practical tips for working with shy, energetic, distracted, or sensitive kids

Every Nippers group is filled with different personalities—some loud, some quiet, some independent, and some still finding their confidence. As an Age Manager, recognising and supporting these differences can help every child feel like they belong, and encourage their growth over time.

1. Why It Matters

- Kids feel safer and more confident when they're understood
- A one-size-fits-all approach can leave some kids behind
- Building trust with different personalities strengthens group cohesion
- You don't need to "fix" any child—just meet them where they are

2. Shy or Quiet Kids

What you might notice:

- Stick close to a parent or carer
- Reluctant to speak, join in, or try new things
- Seem anxious in group settings

How to support them:

- Greet them warmly and by name each week
- Give them simple tasks like holding equipment to build comfort
- Avoid forcing participation—let them watch until they're ready
- Pair them with a calm, confident buddy
- Celebrate small steps, e.g. joining a game, answering a question

3. Energetic or Restless Kids

What you might notice:

- Difficulty staying still or listening
- Constant movement, excitement, or talking
- May interrupt or distract others

How to support them:

- Give them a job (e.g. lead warm-up, carry gear, demo drills)
- Keep transitions quick and activities active
- Use positive redirection: "Can you help me with this?"
- Offer praise for moments of focus or teamwork
- Use physical games to channel energy constructively

4. Easily Distracted Kids

What you might notice:

- Drifting attention, looking around, fidgeting
- Trouble remembering instructions
- May miss key safety or activity points

How to support them:

- Keep instructions short, simple, and visual
- Check in one-on-one after group briefings
- Use names and light touch (e.g. gentle tap on the shoulder) to re-engage
- Break tasks into smaller steps
- Acknowledge effort, even if results vary

5. Sensitive or Emotional Kids

What you might notice:

- May cry easily or become upset over small things
- Strong reactions to being left out or making mistakes
- Sometimes withdraw when overwhelmed

How to support them:

- Use a calm, gentle tone—avoid raising your voice
- Validate their feelings: “That was tricky, and it’s okay to feel upset.”
- Provide reassurance and a safe adult presence
- Let them take short breaks if needed
- Focus on encouragement over correction

Final Thought: Every Child is Different

There’s no perfect behaviour or “ideal” personality. What matters is creating a space where every child feels supported, included, and able to grow in their own way. When you take the time to understand your Nippers, you build more than just surf skills—you build confidence, resilience, and belonging.

