

Supporting Shy and Quiet Nippers

Helping quieter kids feel comfortable, included, and confident in your group

Not every child bursts onto the beach with confidence. Some are cautious observers. Others may be anxious, slow to speak, or hesitant to join in. These kids often need time—and the right kind of encouragement—to find their feet. As an Age Manager, your warmth and patience can make all the difference.

1. Why Kids Might Be Shy

- New to the beach, the club, or group settings
- Overwhelmed by noise, crowds, or attention
- Unsure of the rules, routines, or people
- Naturally quiet or slow to warm up in new environments

2. Signs of a Shy or Withdrawn Child

- Clings to a parent or hangs back during group activities
- Avoids eye contact or rarely speaks
- Takes a long time to join in or participate
- Looks anxious or uncomfortable in large groups

3. What You Can Do

- **Start with connection, not correction**
 - Greet them by name each week, even if they don't respond
 - Offer a small job (e.g. helping carry cones) to build rapport
 - Avoid pushing them into the spotlight or insisting they speak or perform
- **Let them ease in at their own pace**
 - It's okay if they just watch for a while
 - Stay nearby so they feel supported, not pressured
 - Gently encourage participation, but allow them to say no
- **Pair them with a buddy**
 - Choose a calm, kind child in the group to be their "welcome friend"
 - Stick with the same buddy for a few weeks to build comfort
 - Praise the buddy too—it reinforces a culture of kindness
- **Celebrate quiet wins**
 - "You joined the group straight away today—that was brave."
 - "I saw you try something new—well done."
 - Recognise the effort, even if it seems small

4. Things to Avoid

- Don't call them out in front of the group
- Don't label them as shy or make it a talking point
- Don't compare them to louder or more outgoing kids
- Don't assume they're not enjoying themselves—they may just be quietly observing

5. How to Include Without Overwhelming

- Use smaller group activities or stations
- Give advance notice of what's coming next
- Offer choices (e.g. "Would you like to try this, or help me watch the group?")
- Let them lead a quiet task (e.g. line leader, water bottle checker)

Final Thought: Quiet Isn't a Problem

Shy or quiet kids are often thoughtful, observant, and kind—and they make wonderful Nippers in time. With patience, gentle encouragement, and a little consistency, they will feel safe to join in, speak up, and shine in their own way.

