

WORKING WITH DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS

A way to play sports while having fun and learning a discipline of life.

Judo is not learned the same way at 4 or 12 years old. It's important to split the children into age groups, because the children will have different stages of development on physical, mental and social/emotional level. It's best to adjust your method and lessons according to the characteristics of the age group.

When you teach children, it's important to know the principles and characteristics of the children. In other words, you need to know how to act and talk with each group of children. Taking these principles into account, you need to understand which goals are achievable.

This will translate into a different annual program, where the children can learn different technical moves (both judo and non-judo). Some techniques might be dangerous for the younger children, but are suitable for the older ones. Also the younger children will not know all the concepts of moving yet. You need to be able to reflect on this and adjust your program so it's suitable for the age group. In annex F you can find an example of a year program.

The only thing that will be the same for each age group, is the moral code (the values of judo). From the moment you step on the tatami with the children, you will have to embrace/increase the values in each lesson of your cycle. You are the ambassador of the values. Each time you speak or show an exercise, realise that you are the example for the children.

For IJF Judo in Schools, we made three groups of children from four to twelve years old. We will give you a resume of the age groups. Of course, you are free to adjust to your reality. You can find more information about the age groups in our guidelines.



Physical features

| 4 to 6 years old | 6 to 9 years old | 9 to 12 years old |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Different experience and motor skills</p> <p>Difficulty with orientation (they don't know the difference right - left)</p> <p>They can't move and train for a long term (no aerobic capacity)</p> <p>They're able to recover very fast (no long break needed)</p> <p>Coordination skills are basic to learn more movements</p> | <p>Big difference (motor skills)</p> <p>Heat regulation of the body doesn't function optimally</p> <p>Fragility of the head and the neck</p> <p>Bone and neurological engine are not suitable for major loads and shocks</p> | <p>Big development differences between girls and boys (girls → puberty)</p> <p>Boys: Golden age to work at the coordination and technics.</p> <p>The desire to move for boys is high</p> <p>Girls: The desire to move is getting less</p> |

How can you respond to these conditions?

| 4 to 6 years old | 6 to 9 years old | 9 to 12 years old |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Differentiate</p> <p>Visual support, helps kids for a better orientation</p> <p>Work on both sides</p> <p>A targeted stamina training make no sense</p> <p>Short breaks</p> <p>Focus on coordination</p> | <p>Channel the energy</p> <p>Hydration breaks</p> <p>Attention with control technic on the ground</p> <p>Attention with ushiro-ukemi and technics backwards</p> | <p>Differentiate</p> <p>Pay more attention on technical details</p> <p>Don't push girls and boys to exercise together</p> |

Mental features

| 4 to 6 years old | 6 to 9 years old | 9 to 12 years old |
|--|--|--|
| <p>They can't concentrate for long term</p> <p>They're not able to screen well information</p> <p>Intrinsic motivation</p> | <p>Big difference (cognitive skills)</p> <p>Better able to concentrate and to be patient</p> <p>They are able to reflect and to improve mistakes</p> <p>More and more extrinsic motivation</p> | <p>Concentration is very good</p> <p>Focus is getting better</p> |

How can you respond to these conditions?

| 4 to 6 years old | 6 to 9 years old | 9 to 12 years old |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Distinct roles</p> <p>Rituals</p> <p>Short exercise sequences</p> <p>Short and distinct explanation</p> <p>Recommend only one of two points to improve</p> | <p>Longer exercise time</p> <p>Work on details</p> | <p>Increase the exercise time</p> <p>Technics of exercises can be more complex</p> |

Social/emotional features

| 4 to 6 years old | 6 to 9 years old | 9 to 12 years old |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Egocentric behaviour</p> <p>They react spontaneous and emotional, because their verbal skills are restricted/limited</p> | <p>Big difference (emotional skills)</p> <p>More able to integrate in a group</p> <p>More able to control the emotions (better linguistic skills)</p> <p>They are looking for a place in the group</p> <p>Time to build self-confidence</p> | <p>They want to have a say in matters</p> <p>They want more distance to the teacher</p> <p>Girls: They are afraid to fail</p> |

How can you respond to these conditions?

| 4 to 6 years old | 6 to 9 years old | 9 to 12 years old |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Frequent exercises, they can execute alone</p> <p>Exercising with a partner or in the group must be introduced</p> | <p>Focus on giving compliments</p> <p>Encourage them</p> <p>Exercise to build a group</p> | <p>To grant them a say</p> <p>Give them a possibility to choose</p> <p>Don't push them to show technics in the group</p> |