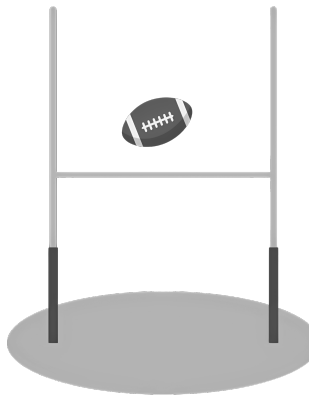


# “Pre-Coaching”



## The Aim of the Game

Some children need to be explicitly taught how to manage certain social situations. They might:

- Have trouble taking turns or losing games
- Feel the need to be the ‘boss’ and have trouble incorporating others’ ideas into play
- Not automatically understand their part in a situation when something has gone wrong, so might react strongly to being ‘in trouble’

The goal of pre-coaching is to teach/remind them of the skills that they need just before they step into that kind of situation.

## Why it Helps

Some children have more difficulty with ‘perspective-taking’ than their peers (putting themselves in someone else’s shoes). The good news is that we can teach these skills.

Other children are able to perspective-take, but can be impulsive in the moment and forget how to treat others. They’re more likely to have success after a recent reminder (so it is top of their mind).

## How to Do It

Just before going into the activity, get alongside the child for a ‘hui’ or ‘team talk’. If there are a few children who need similar coaching, or supportive peers, you can do it as a group.

Tell them exactly what is about to happen (what it will look like):

e.g. **"We are going to** go outside now and play football.  
**First**, you will just be kicking the ball between you and a buddy. **Then** we will be doing a game as a whole group".

Make sure to talk about any changes from the usual routine:

e.g. **"Today is a bit different from usual because** we will be on the courts instead of the field".

Let them know about choices they have, so they have 'think time':

e.g. "When we've done our warm-up, **you can choose** to join the whole group game **or** watch from the side".

Remind them about the specific skill you are working on:

e.g. **"We are working on** keeping our cool when the game doesn't go our way. If that happens, we know you will feel frustrated. How can we let that frustration out in a safe way?"

e.g. **We are working on** joining in. It can feel scary when walking up to a group of people. What can you say to them?"

Explain it more specifically if they can't remember the strategy:

e.g. **"Remember**, you could go for a run around the outside or the field, or you could pull out a little bit of grass and rub it in your hands" (whatever sensory strategies the child uses).

Remind them where they can get help in case of a 'hiccup':

e.g. **"If you need help**, you can come to me/go to the duty teacher/ask a peer mediator. They will be <say where>".