



Cornerstone Psychological Services

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ADHD COACHING GUIDELINES

So, you have a child in a sport and the coach is concerned about his or her apparent lack of drive despite their good athletic potential. In other words, your child doesn't follow through with pointers and seems under invested in working hard. To help out, here are some tips as to how to approach this:

1. I would first discuss with your child that it will be important to **advise others of his/her ADHD** (i.e. teachers, coach and, even potentially in the future, his workplace colleagues) because this leads to better awareness and responsiveness. Subsequently, he/she can be better accommodated to meet his/her and others' goals (plus there are human rights associated with this).
2. Any information conveyed to the coach should **be held in confidence** by him/her.
3. **ADHD does mimic challenges with motivation** and can make someone appear to be lazy, careless or not invested. Those who work with these kinds of kids shouldn't take this personally. Your child needs some strategies/accommodations to help bolster his/her productivity and **not just be blamed**.
4. **Instructions should be modified**. These should be shortened and repeated. Also encourage your child to repeat back what he/she thinks he/she has heard to encourage more active listening and to help consolidate what was conveyed. Likewise, **encourage "self-talk"** during tasks to help remain focused.
5. Your child may need to **watch others in drills and practice first**, then participate to help better warm up to the expectations.
6. **Some opportunities for movement breaks** (e.g. pick up equipment, doing laps, etc.) might help keep his/her adrenaline going.
7. The coach is encouraged to **provide follow up exercises via text or email** (or a parent can take notes to assist with this even on a cell phone).
8. For specific skill development and drills, parents are encouraged to **take videos both of what is expected and how your child is managing** so your child recalls what needs to be done and then he/she can review his/her performance relative to the expectations. This gives more immediate and concrete feedback.
9. Use **some forward scheduling** so your child knows when to expect to practice and then reward him/her afterward with a fun activity (e.g. go for a movie, slushy or drive thru).
10. Sometimes **medication may need to be titrated for evening/weekend use** (parents are encouraged to talk to their child's doctor about this).
11. Children may need to **eat smaller healthy snacks and/or have protein drinks** to maintain their energy level as they may not be hungry with medication and this can impact their performance.

In closing, the ultimate goal is for a two-way "win". First, the adults around the child should consider levelling the playing field. In return, once it's fairer for the child to manage the expectations, he/she needs to step up to the plate and do his/her best to perform.

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