

HOW TO ADAPT GAMES & ACTIVITIES

It's always okay to switch things up to make practices more fun and increase kids' opportunities to move and engage. The goal is to meet kids where they are in their development – adjusting for their age, ability, experience, and individual needs.



CHANGE THE SPACE

You can always change the boundaries by making the field of play bigger or smaller. Create space boundaries that match skill level and developmental needs to maximize engagement, learning, safety, and fun. You can increase, decrease, widen, or narrow boundaries to adjust the level of challenge in an activity.

Need Ideas? Larger spaces may work better for older or more mobile athletes who can cover more ground. Smaller spaces provide more opportunities for participation and help younger children or those who benefit from clear, contained zones stay focused and engaged.

CHANGE THE EQUIPMENT

- Modify equipment to match kids' needs and abilities. This helps ensure fun, safety, and positive skill development.
- Make it easier by using larger, lighter, softer, or slower-moving balls and equipment.
- Make it more challenging by using smaller, heavier, abstract, or faster-moving items.
- Consider age, ability, and size. For example, basketball hoops can be lowered, soccer goals made smaller or sticks and racquets shortened.

CHANGE THE RULES

Yes, you can change the rules! Adjusting the game rules helps make play more inclusive, engaging, and developmentally appropriate. Try the “Rule of 3” – a simple way to involve more kids by adding 3 of something. For example:

- 3 passes before shooting a goal or basket
- 3 seconds of possession per player
- 3 steps maximum
- 3 feet between the defender and the ball
- 3 feet of space around the goal
- 3-goal games

These types of changes keep more kids involved and adjust the level of difficulty to meet their needs.

REMEMBER YOU CAN ALWAYS ADAPT ACTIVITIES BASED ON THE AGE, ABILITY AND SIZE OF KIDS PARTICIPATING.

Want more guidance after this course? Visit [USOPC.org](https://www.usopc.org) and explore the **Youth Hub** to learn how the **American Development Model (ADM)** and **Quality Coaching Framework (QCF)** resources help coaches provide more developmentally appropriate, inclusive, and engaging sport experiences for athletes at every stage.