

SECTION 11

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Guideline children grouping:

- Age 4 up to 5 - Play + discipline
- Age 6 up to 11 - Play + grading techniques
- Age 12 up to 15 - Grading techniques + responsibility
- Age 16 up to 18 - Grading tech's, preparing for adult classes

Some observations for different age groups

- Age 4 to 5 - Still finding chores exciting and fun. They welcome the chance to learn new skills and to develop existing ones.
- Age 6 to 8 - Enthusiasm may begin to ebb. They are beginning to crave independence, so any tasks you give them which encourage their independence will retain their interest
- Age 9 to 12 - Like continuity, so find some tasks they like which work well and stick to them. The reward system can still work but make sure they are aware of any consequences if they don't complete their tasks.
- Age 13+ Teens are capable of handling a lot more, but you may encounter a bit of resistance! It's also important to realise that they may be busy at school and with other activities, so don't apply too much pressure.

Adolescence is generally between 10 to 12 years of age for girls and 12 to 14 years of age for boys. This is the time in a child's life which can be the most traumatic, both physically and mentally. Coaches should be aware of what effects these changes can have on a child and how to recognise and deal sympathetically with their effects.

Application of Aikido Techniques when Teaching Children & Young Persons

It is BAB Policy that when applying locks, throws, other techniques or exercises on children and young persons** that care is taken to ensure that any such techniques are only used in a way that is considered reasonable and appropriate to the age, stature and ability of the child receiving these techniques. 'Against the joint' techniques or the use of 'pain' to achieve compliance is to be avoided as this concept is not appropriate for children.

Additionally, the application of locks and throws in training requires the consent of the child and is to be part of the teacher's explanation of the technique at the time it is being applied/taught. Consent by the parent of the child should be part of the membership application to the Association.

*** The law defines children and young persons
as being anyone under 18 years of age.*

Specifically:

The use of locks should be 'experience restricted' and introduced via a specific coaching methodology. The experience level chosen should reflect a child's age and ability to understand the concepts of empathy with their training partner ('just enough' and never to the point of pain or pain compliance). 'Experience' refers to both the number of training hours of the aikidoka and their ability to understand the implications of the application of any given technique.

All children receiving locks and throws should first be trained to 'uke' for those techniques and should know how to indicate 'submission'. Rules about the use of locks and throws should reflect practice at grass-roots level and should not be based on any 'elite' performance or participation in sport aikido. A coach should run sessions based on 'duty of care', specific risk assessments and should always be able to justify the training methods used. If locks are used in a sport/competition context then the rules should be simple, understood by all, and clearly set out and monitored by the Association.

The following parameters are strongly recommended as a **minimum** to be observed in children's practice of aikido:

- Locks may be applied by an instructor after the child has had at least 20 hours of practice. The instructor must have the technical skill and ability to apply a lock without requiring the child to feel pain to make it "work". Additionally, he should be able to communicate these skills to the child/young person.
- Locks may be applied by a child to an adult after the child has had at least 25 hours of practice. When used appropriately, this training method can help the child understand the principles of applying locks.
- Locks may be 'received' (child to child) after both children have at least 40 hours practice and then only to a level where pain is **not** required to complete the technique. Practice must be supervised by the coach to ensure there is full understanding by the children of the complexities and 'dangers' of this type of technique. Consideration must be given to the age, mental and physical maturity of the children practising together.
- Locks may be applied by an adult to a child after the child has had at least 50 hours of practice. The instructor should ensure that adults permitted to apply locks to a child understand how to apply locks without the need to inflict pain, and then only to a child who consents.

Duty of Care.

Coaches have a duty of care to treat children and young people with as much consideration as would be given by their schoolteachers and parents. The following are key points in the Coaching of children and young people:

- It is **mandatory** that all BAB members in close contact with juniors must be CRB checked.
- Coaches must be aware of and adhere to the BAB Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (BAB CPSP) at all times
- Young people under 18 years of age are allowed to practise on the same mat as adults subject to the BAB CP policy.
- When working with children aged under 5, the ideal Coaching ratio is one Coach for every 3 children, with the proviso that in unforeseen circumstances it may be increased to 1:4, subject to a risk assessment. When working with children aged 5 and over, the ideal ratio is 1:10 but this may need to be lowered in a class with a predominance of 5-8 year olds and could be increased to a maximum of 1:12 in a class of teenagers, subject to a risk assessment. However, in any group of children a Coach should never work alone; they should be assisted at all times by at least one other qualified Coach/assistant or volunteer adult.
- Parental consent is still a legal requirement up to the age of 18 years.