

# Tips for Effectively Coaching an athlete with APD and/or ADD

To most effectively coach athletes with an underlying disorder, a coach must be aware of possible disorders. Having knowledge of a disorder will help a coach better understand an athlete who is having problems listening and following directions in the pool. A coach must use outside resources in order to come to the best conclusion as to how to most effectively communicate with these athletes.

## Two of the main disorders:

- ◆ **Auditory Processing Disorder (APD)**- a neurological dysfunction that affects how a person processes auditory input. Processing of auditory information involves attention, detection, identification, comprehension, and memory of a signal. A child with APD has adequate hearing acuity. They can hear sounds. However, they have difficulty in understanding or making sense of what they hear.
- ◆ **Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)**- a neurobehavioral disorder of childhood. There are three basic types of ADD.
  - I. Inattentive Type: difficulty organizing or finishing a task
  - II. Hyperactive-Impulsive Type: impulsive, fidgety and talkative
  - III. Combined Type: symptoms of above two types are predominant in the child

## Common Attributes:

- 3 step directions are difficult
- HABIT and ROUTINE are IMPORTANT
- Having them repeat something doesn't mean they will remember it

*This handout is composed of excerpts from a longer article by Jan Curley, M.A., CCC-SLP. The full article is available at:*

[www.usaswimming.org/TipsforADD](http://www.usaswimming.org/TipsforADD)

## Tips to effectively coach:

- Communicate with parents
- Be clear & concise
- 1 step at a time; break it down
- Speak slowly
- Monitor athlete— do they look lost or confused?
- Visual aids are good
- Good catch phrases: “Look at the board”, “Eyes & ears”. Repeat until attention is there
- Get your athlete a swim buddy— they can follow someone else's lead
- Use all of their awareness (auditory, visual, and tactile)
- Try different strategies for different kids
- Give frequent & immediate consequences for a child's inappropriate behavior
- Find out if they are taking any medication or if they should
- Be compassionate towards these athletes; go the extra mile

**Youngsters with APD or ADD have many positive qualities and talents** (high energy, outgoing charm, creativity, and figuring out new ways of doing things) - **channel their high energy productively.**

