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Safety and Spotting

Our coaches utilise 'spotting' which is physically assisting children where needed to optimise learning and safety.

Spotting

Spotting refers to physical contact between a coach and an athlete to facilitate skill development. This may take the form of a coach touching a child to indicate which muscles need to be activated, helping "shape" them when learning or mastering a new skill, supporting them during skills and drills, or catching them should they fall when performing a skill or drill. Spotting enables gymnasts to learn to perform skills safely, and gives them confidence to try new skills.

Spotting is NOT

- Unwarranted or unwanted touching of a child or young person personally or with objects (eg pencil or ruler)
- Corporal punishment (physical discipline, smacking etc)
- Initiating, permitting or requesting inappropriate or unnecessary physical contact with a child or facilitating situations which unnecessarily result in close physical contact with a child
- Inappropriate use of physical restraint

Withdrawal of consent

A gymnast may, at any time, withdraw consent for spotting. If consent is withdrawn the coach will try to find alternative methods for the gymnast to develop skills, but there may be some drills they are unable to participate in for safety reasons.

Communication

Where practical, coaches may communicate with gymnasts about how spotting may be performed – eg "I will place my hand on your tummy and back as I help you with your forward roll."

Safety

Safety of gymnasts is always a prime consideration, and if required, a coach will catch a gymnast who is in danger of injuring themselves in a fall during training.

Other physical contact by a staff member to assist or encourage a gymnast

At times, staff will be required to give practical assistance to a gymnast who is hurt or needs particular assistance or encouragement. Examples of appropriate physical contact are:

- administration of first aid
- supporting gymnasts who have hurt themselves
- non-intrusive gestures to comfort a child who is experiencing distress, such as a hand on the upper arm or upper back
- non-intrusive touch (eg congratulating a child or young person by giving a high-five or a pat on the upper arm or back). Staff should remember the importance of accompanying such touch with positive and encouraging words.