# Appropriate Educational Goals

Appropriate educational goals are essential when developing the sporting and life skills of youth participants. Put simply, the activities chosen by a coach as part of an S4D training session should neither be too easy nor too difficult for participants and must always be ***adjusted to the personal and sociocultural context and background of youth participants*** in an attempt to manage diversity.

As always, bear in mind that there are five main principles and that S4D can only develop its full potential if all principles are taken into account and applied.

What may sound simple on paper can prove difficult in practice. A good coach is able to design a training session in a way that encourages and develops all youth participants equally, always considering their individual skill level and personal needs. In order to accomplish this, it is important to be aware of several key factors that determine the needs of youth participants.
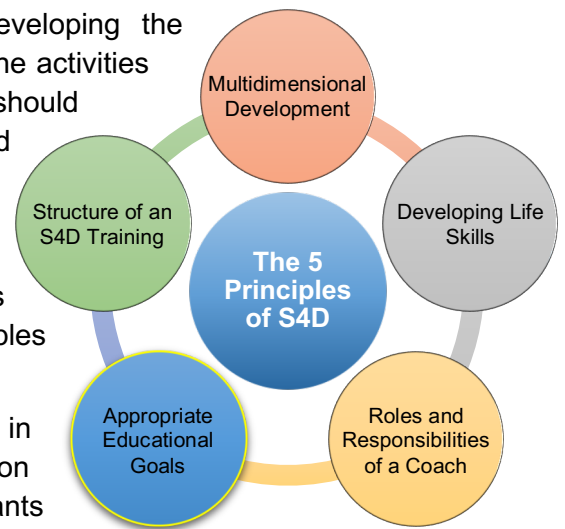
The **personal background** of youth participants influences their needs at every stage in life.

For instance, a youth participant with a violent temper may benefit from activities with a special focus on violence prevention. Traumatised child soldiers, on the other hand, may benefit from an entirely different set of life skills. A good S4D coach is aware of these personal circumstances and plans activities accordingly. The coach also needs to be aware that participants will have differing personal goals and should design S4D activities to help youth participants reach their full personal potential.

Personal background

Skill level refers to the *four dimensions of development* through S4D (cognitive, social, sport and physical).

Youth participants will be at different stages of development in terms of these dimensions and activities must be structured in a way that allows all participants to reach their full potential. This may include setting up different activities for participants with different skill levels.
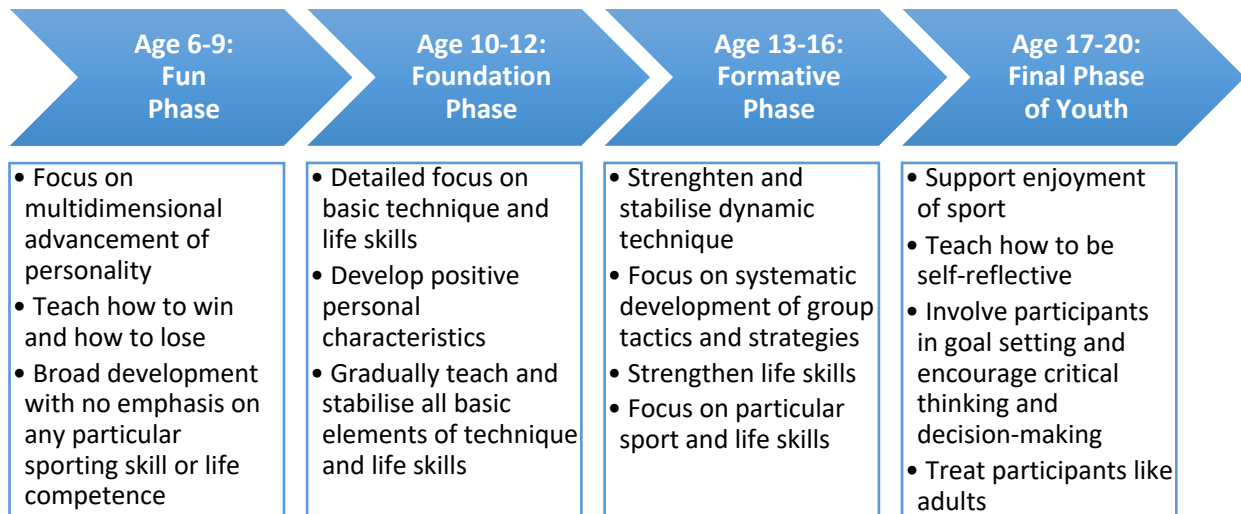
Skill level

The **cultural setting** of an S4D programme plays an important role in shaping it. Whether it is gender roles and relations, the culture of learning or how strict or flexible hierarchical structures are, the cultural setting will always have to be taken into account when developing S4D activities.

Cultural setting

The **age** of youth participants is one of the most influential factors governing their needs. Guidelines that outline fundamental characteristics and objectives of participants, based on common physical and mental conditions at different stages in life, can be found on the 'Sport for Development Resource Toolkit' website under: Tools For Your Practice – S4D Teaching and Learning Materials – South Africa – YDF Manual for Coaches, South Africa.

Age

In general, youth participants can be divided into four age groups with differing main objectives that a coach should know about.

Remember that **children of the same age can be at different stages of development** however in terms of sporting and life skills, and that key factors, such as personal background, always influence their needs too.

Age 6-9: Fun Phase	Age 10-12: Foundation Phase	Age 13-16: Formative Phase	Age 17-20: Final Phase of Youth
• Focus on multidimensional advancement of personality • Teach how to win and how to lose • Broad development with no emphasis on any particular sporting skill or life competence	• Detailed focus on basic technique and life skills • Develop positive personal characteristics • Gradually teach and stabilise all basic elements of technique and life skills	• Strenghten and stabilise dynamic technique • Focus on systematic development of group tactics and strategies • Strengthen life skills • Focus on particular sport and life skills	• Support enjoyment of sport • Teach how to be self-reflective • Involve participants in goal setting and encourage critical thinking and decision-making • Treat participants like adults

Examples of what an age-appropriate S4D training session in different sports could look like can be found on the 'Sport for Development Resource Toolkit' website under: Tools For Your Practice – S4D Teaching and Learning Materials – Namibia.

A coach should follow a certain set of guidelines to help determine appropriate educational goals, while taking into account all of the previously listed information. In order to develop successful training sessions, a coach should consider the following things: (These **guidelines are by no means exhaustive** or complete and should be expanded according to the personal needs and circumstances of the youth participants.)

- ✓ What are the participants' past achievements and personal backgrounds?

- ✓ What are the participants' current levels in terms of sporting and life skills?

- ✓ Identify sporting and life skills that will be addressed (for further information on this, see the basic course on *Developing Life Skills*)

- ✓ List the goals in order of their priority

Since participants will be at differing stages of development in terms of their cognitive skills, attention spans and endurance etc. depending on their age, a training session's time frame should be adjusted according to the demands and ages of participants.

As a general framework, coaches should try to adhere to the following recommendations regarding the **length of an S4D training session**:

90 minutes
Age 17-20
(Final Youth Phase)

80 minutes
Age 13-16
(Formative Phase)

70 minutes
Age 10-12
(Foundation Phase)

60 minutes
Age 6-9
(Fun Phase)