THE ARTE OF COACHING

THE COACHING FIELD GUIDE

FOR KIDS BJJ

3 BRAIN BREAK GAMES

that still teach grappling



READY FOR YOUR NEXT CLASS

A RESET. A PURPOSE. A BETTER NEXT ROUND.

Three simple games.
Clear player jobs.
Coaching that keeps
the learning alive.

CREATED BY

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THE IDEA

RESET THE ROOM. KEEP THE LEARNING.

A brain break can change the energy of a class without losing the grappling problem.

Choose one game, give each player a clear job and let them try. Your role is to notice what the rules create, then adjust the task when it needs help.

01

KEEP IT SHORT

Use a 2-5 minute block. Finish while the energy is still useful.

02

EXPLAIN THE JOB

Show the start, the target and what ends the round. Then play.

03

WATCH, THEN ADAPT

Change one constraint at a time: space, start, target or time.

BEFORE THEY PLAY

Prepare the equipment. Match partners thoughtfully.
Agree a stop signal and keep every round supervised.

Suggested starting group: ages 6-9. Adapt rules and challenge to the children in front of you.

GAME 01

CAPTURE THE CONE

ESCAPING + CONNECTION

Create a real escape while a partner learns to follow and stay connected.



SET UP

Place a cone just beyond the pair. Choose a safe ground position that matches your current class focus.

BOTTOM PLAYER

Escape the position, then touch the cone.

TOP PLAYER

Stay connected and prevent the touch.

30-45 SECONDS

One cone per pair

RUN IT

01

Set the problem

Start close enough for the cone to feel reachable after an escape.

02

Play a short round

Stop at 30-45 seconds, or as soon as the cone is touched.

03

Reset and swap

Change roles. Keep the same start long enough to see what changes.

CAPTURE THE CONE

SAY LESS. GIVE THEM A TARGET.

Find a path to the cone.

For the top player: "Stay connected as they move."

WATCH FOR

Does the bottom player create space before reaching? Does the top player follow movement, rather than freeze in place?

WHY THE TASK WORKS

The cone gives the escape a clear destination. A touch only counts after the bottom player has escaped the agreed starting position.

ADAPT THE CHALLENGE

MAKE IT EASIER

Begin from a looser pin so the bottom player has a realistic first opportunity to escape.

MAKE IT HARDER

Begin from a stronger pin, or move the cone a little farther away. Change only one thing.

If it is not working

If children can simply stretch to the cone, move it beyond arm's reach and make the escape part of the score.

SAFETY + RESET

Leave clear space between pairs and around the cone. No submissions, pressure on the neck or forced twisting. Stop if the position becomes unsafe; reset after every touch.

Ask between rounds: What helped you get free before you reached?

GAME 02

THE PEG GAME

GRIP AWARENESS + FACING

Notice grips, manage distance and recover to face a moving partner.



SET UP

Clip 2-4 large plastic clothes pegs to safe areas of each gi, such as the belt or lower lapel. Start standing, facing each other.

BOTH PLAYERS

Remove your partner's pegs while protecting your own.

THE SCORE

One point for each peg removed cleanly.

30 SECONDS

Large plastic pegs + gi

RUN IT

01

Show the target

Point out the pegs and agree the safe hand-fighting rules.

02

Keep it moving

Play for 30 seconds. Stay engaged with your partner.

03

Reset the pegs

Count, replace the pegs and change partners when useful.

THE PEG GAME

SAY LESS. GIVE THEM A TARGET.

Protect your pegs. Hunt theirs.

Another useful cue: "Can you stay facing your partner?"

WATCH FOR

Are children using grips to manage distance? Can they change angles and recover to face their partner after a turn?

WHY THE TASK WORKS

The pegs make the target visible. Keep the interaction close enough for hand fighting, rather than a chase around the mat.

ADAPT THE CHALLENGE

MAKE IT EASIER

Put pegs on easy-to-see, easy-to-reach areas at the front of the gi.

MAKE IT HARDER

Move one target to the side of the belt, while keeping the same round length.

If it is not working

If players run away, give each pair a smaller, clearly marked space. If they grab randomly, use one obvious target each.

SAFETY + RESET

Use large plastic pegs only; keep them away from the face, neck, hair and fingers. No takedowns, striking, face pushing or forceful yanking. Pick up dropped pegs between rounds.

Ask between rounds: What helped you stay facing your partner?

GAME 03

STEAL THE TREASURE

BALANCE + PROBLEM SOLVING

Stay connected, protect an object and find a way home under resistance.



ONE PAIR AT A TIME

Soft balls + one bucket

SET UP

Put soft balls in a bucket: the treasure chest. Seat the class safely around the edge and call two names for each round.

BOTH PLAYERS

Stay on hands and knees. Grapple for the treasure.

THE SCORE

Secure the ball and return it to the bucket.

RUN IT

01

Send the treasure

Place or gently roll one soft ball into clear mat space.

02

Let them solve it

The pair crawls to the ball, grapples and tries to secure it.

03

Bring it home

End when the ball reaches the bucket. Reset for the next pair.

STEAL THE TREASURE

SAY LESS. GIVE THEM A TARGET.

Secure the treasure. Find your way home.

Keep the problem clear: "Grapple your partner, not just the ball."

WATCH FOR

Are children connecting to their partner, changing direction and protecting the ball while moving toward the bucket?

WHY THE TASK WORKS

The ball gives the contest a shared target. The bucket adds a second problem: keeping control while travelling.

ADAPT THE CHALLENGE

MAKE IT EASIER

Start the ball closer to the bucket so the route home is shorter.

MAKE IT HARDER

Move the ball farther away, while keeping a clear route and the same safety rules.

If it is not working

If the game becomes only a tug on the ball, restart the pair closer together and remind them that safe grappling is part of the task.

SAFETY + RESET

Use a soft ball and a clear, supervised space. No standing, head-first diving, neck grabs or finger twisting. Stop for discomfort or a stalled struggle; reset away from walls and seated children.

Ask between rounds: How did you protect the treasure while moving?

SAVE THIS PAGE

ONE GLANCE. READY TO COACH.

The essentials to keep beside you on the mat.

01 CAPTURE THE CONE

GROUND START

Bottom: escape, then touch the cone.
Top: follow and stay connected.

30-45 seconds. Touch, reset, swap.

02 THE PEG GAME

STANDING IN THE GI

Both: remove pegs and protect your own.
Stay facing; keep hand fighting alive.

30 seconds. Count, replace, reset.

03 STEAL THE TREASURE

HANDS AND KNEES

Both: grapple for one soft ball.
Secure it and return it to the bucket.

One pair at a time. Score, reset, next pair.

EVERY GAME

Clear jobs. Safe space. Short rounds. One change at a time.

BETTER KIDS BJJ STARTS WITH BETTER COACHING.

You have three games.
Now build the coaching around them.

A useful game is a starting point. The next step is knowing what to notice, what to change and how to connect that moment to the rest of your class.

YOUR NEXT STEP

EXPLORE THE ARTE OF COACHING PROGRAM.

Ask Ellee about the program and whether it fits your coaching.

Created by Ellee Beckman

For coaches who want every game to have a purpose.