



Beginner Tennis

Lesson Plan #1: Children 6 – 8 years

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Introduction – Before we get started, I invite you to view the link below that summarizes the various balls used for teaching tennis. When the appropriate type of ball is used for instruction and practice, skill development will progress faster. As children have more success with the skills, they will have fun learning the sport of tennis. May I suggest that a red ball is used for this set of lesson plans for optimal results.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KgRE3CLBV8k>

Second, your child should use a racquet that is an appropriate length for their age. The length of racquet guideline is:

19” for children 4-5 years; 21” for children 5-7 years; and 23” for children 7-8 years

Lesson 1

Start with a brief warm up. Have your child do some slow jogging with some arm circles followed by skipping. (1 minute)

- Have your child place the racquet on the ground and then pick up the racquet at the grip with their dominant hand. The racquet face should be parallel with the ground as well as the top of their hand as they hold the grip. (This is known as the forehand grip and we often refer to it as “shake hands with your racquet”.)
- With the forehand grip, have your child try to bounce the ball down with their racquet 5 times in a row. We refer to these as “Downs”. The ball should not bounce higher than their waist. Increase the number to 10 in a row and so on as they progress in ability. “Downs” aid in development of eye hand coordination, ball control and help build muscle strength in the forearm, wrist and hand.
- Now try to have the child bounce the ball down and then trap the ball between their non-dominant hand and the racquet strings. (repeat 10 times)
- Have your child stand about 6 feet from you. Toss the ball underhanded to them and have them trap the ball between their non-dominant hand and the racquet strings after the ball bounces. Keep practicing until your child is having success in getting 3 – 5 in a row. As their eye hand coordination develops, toss the ball to the left of them and then to the right of them so there is some movement as they go to trap the ball. Ball tracking is another aspect for tennis development.
- For a final exercise, with only a ball, practice a gentle baseball throw that arcs upwards with your dominant arm and play catch with your child. They may catch the ball after it bounces or catch the ball in the air. The throwing motion is good preparation for developing the serving motion.
- Time for a high five until next time!