



Beginner Tennis

Lesson Plan #3: Children 6 – 8 years

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Introduction – Children should continue to practice “downs” and “ups” and increase the number of repetitions in a row before the start of each lesson. Remember to develop a good habit of doing a warm up such as slow jog, jumping jacks and skipping to warm up the body before the start of each lesson.

Lesson 3

- Have your child try to alternate the direction of the ball bounce with their racquet. Do a hit up, let it bounce, then bounce it down with the racquet and repeat 10 times in a row. Ball control is the key.
- Forehand review: Review the forehand grip with them and the last progression from lesson 2 (ready position, split step, turn and hit). Have them hit 10 forehands back to you.
- Two handed backhand (right hand instruction): We prefer to start all beginners with the two handed backhand as it is easier to learn. The two handed backhand stroke mirrors the forehand ground stroke and it is easier to make contact with a variety of bounce heights. Have your child pretend their racquet is a hammer while holding their racquet in their dominant hand (right). We refer to this as grip 2 or the “hammer grip”. With their non-dominant hand (left) use a forehand grip and place the non-dominant hand just above the dominant hand which should be in the hammer grip. The picture illustrates what the two hands should look like for a right-handed player.



- Have your child start in ready position, facing you, with their racquet in front of them, the racquet head up and the forehand grips for both hands on the racquet. Cue your child to take their split step and then turn. They should turn sideways with their right shoulder towards you and take their racquet back. As they take the racquet back with the left hand in the forehand grip position, they should let the right hand adjust to the hammer grip. Notice the right wrist is flat in the picture. When their racquet is back with the two hands we use the cue to take the racquet back to your “pocket on your back leg”. Underhand toss the ball to them and have them hit to you. Contact should be out in front of their front foot (right) as they step towards you and follow through should finish out in front and high. Repeat starting from ready position each time.
- Start your child in ready position and toss the ball alternating to each side of them so they can practice the forehand and the backhand. Please don’t forget to have them split step just as you are about to toss the ball. It is important that they are sideways with their front shoulder towards you as they swing forward for each groundstroke. Racquet starts back, racquet comes forward to contact the ball and finishes high out in front. We often reference this as a “low to high swing”.
- If they are having success, have them start from ready position and toss the ball to make them move to hit the ball. Child should turn after their split step, take some steps to hit the ball, stop and then step forward as they hit. Have them shuffle sideways back to ready position. Toss the ball to them at first in an alternating pattern then make it more challenging by tossing the ball randomly to the forehand or backhand side.
- That is the conclusion of groundstrokes! Good work! Next we will put this all together in practice.