

Tips for Golf Instructors and Adults

Working with Junior Golfers ages 2 through 9

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Disclaimer:

Information is based on approximations. There are always exceptions of children doing different behaviors at different ages.

Resources:

- Patricia Donnelly, Ph.D. Eat Think Win! www.patriciadonnellyphd.com
- www.childdevelopmentinfo.com
- TPI Certified Junior Coach Manual © 2006
- www.parentfurther.com

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Age 2 (0-2)



Children in this stage... • learn by exploring with their hands and mouth • can find hidden things • learn how to use everyday objects • use a spoon • drink from a cup • comb their hair and start building a their vocabulary • begin to run, kick a ball and walk stairs with help by age 2 • imitate facial expressions • play in parallel with another child but not with that child • cry and shut eyes when a need is not met • giggle or smile when they want more of something • like active exploration • learn to start saying “NO!” • ability to ask for things and discover independence • short attention span • temper tantrums • separation anxiety (often acute) • imitate adults

What to expect in golf with students age 2... • juniors may put golf equipment in their mouths • be very quiet disassemble golf stations and move equipment around • grab clubs and bang around clumsily without precise motor control • find a place to play golf by themselves • be self-absorbed in exploring their task, move a golf ball to the edge of the hole and rake it in • place a golf ball into the hole • make a motion that resembles a swing but may have recoil or a fast and repetitive back-and-forth motion in an effort to move the ball • like running across the nice green grass and may not want to do what an adult wants them to do and continue with their task • may hit, fight or bite • will deliberately throw/drop equipment and watch it fall (start of cause and effect)

How to work with age 2 students... • show them Sportbaby Golf DVD • use colorful SNAG golf balls • use light clubs like Littlest Golfer First Set with molded grips • use SNAG launch pads instead of tees • make up a golf song or rhyme • teach from your hands and knees, squatting or kneeling at their height (if able) • use COLOR • make games out of the training aids (hats out of cones) • play fun music during golf or between golf stations • sit safely in a hula hoop • organize in small group settings with an adult helper present for each student and just get them out in the golf setting for a half hour • encourage dancing • keep things visual and concrete (not as verbal)

TPI Certified Junior Coach 2 Manual © 2006 notes for ages 0-5 • suggested 30 minutes of daily organized physical activity (monitor constantly and change activity when attention falters) • suggested 60+ minutes of unstructured active play (toddlers and pre-schoolers should not be sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time except while sleeping... TPI Junior 2 manual) • encourage basic movement skills, focus on improving basic movement skills • design activities that help children feel comfortable participating in a variety of fun and challenging sports and activities that are non-competitive and focus on participation • ensure that activities are gender-neutral and inclusive so active living is equally valued and promoted for all children



Ages 3-5

Children at this stage... • like imaginary play, name colors and understand simple counting • like being read to aloud • understand a basic concept of time • have an increased vocabulary • hop, climb, swing, somersault • stand on 1 foot at least 10 seconds (age 5) • draw circles • copy a square and some capital letters • learn how to use scissors • are frustrated with wanting to do something physically and not being able to do it yet • increase interaction with other children • like fantasy play and imagination (and sometimes can't distinguish between the two) • start dealing with conflict and problem solving (still emotionally) • may have wild tantrums or meltdowns in dealing with emotions • may develop fears • may do things wrong on purpose

What to expect in golf with students ages 3-5... • juniors can identify their colors in golf • play golf games that deal with simple numbers • may be very active during a golf activity with extra hopping, somersaults or bursts of running • can draw basic golf scenes with crayons • may get angry when told how to do something or being positioned physically by someone instead of doing it themselves • can be very chatty during class so expect delays in time (build in extra time for chatting) • like to tell stories about very irrelevant things • love praise • can be easily frustrated with lack of successful ball flight or holing out • short attention span • will probably not understand others' points of view (egocentric) • will exaggerate

How to work with students ages 3-5... • show them Sportsbaby Golf DVD (ages 3-4) or *Stick to Sports: Let's Play Golf* sticker book © 2011 by Nicole Weller • use colorful golf balls • use fun sticker rewards • use light clubs like The Littlest Golfer First Set and US Kids Club based on strength • use SNAG clubs (4-5 years old pending on height and strength) • warm-up with the Stretching Zoo (imitate animal sounds and movements) • use colorful and interesting equipment (like SNAG Snappers, tennis racquets, TAG Teach, ribbons, crawl tunnels, Velcro catching mitts, jumping sacks, balance beams, flags, paper towel rolls and much more) • organize into small groups with an adult helper each for ages 3/4 and 1 or 2 group helpers for ages 4/5 • have them express themselves with coloring (dry erase board or crayons on paper) • use animated facial reactions for the smallest achievement • don't focus on mistakes but reinforce the goal with excitement • use a tee flip to decide ties or who will go first • check on potty breaks before and during class • play I Spy to teach terms or golf-related words • use rhymes like "1-2-Show My Shoe" and check for bubble gum on the back shoe in follow-through • wonder if they can do something and challenge them to a game with goal windows (not just a cut and dry goal) • set up short, fun-filled and exciting sessions • don't worry about being technically perfect or correct at this stage • make in non-competitive • have children make up games with real or self-created golf clubs • use and encourage lots of imaginative play • use lots of fun motion (spinning, balancing, etc.) • use dramatic play • BE SILLY! • keeping learning visual and concrete (not verbal)



Ages 6-9

Children at this stage... • learn to read gradually • understand time more effectively • enjoy hearing about past times • can count to 100 by age 6 and multiply by age 9, engage both bodies and minds to help learning • dribble a ball with one hand by age 6 • learn to ride a 2-wheel bike • skillfully skip, catch and throw • like to move (are restless and wiggle) • practice balancing on various items and in high places • may have more conflicts with peers • can be argumentative when they lose • can be hard on younger siblings • are self-centered • may pout or worry and can have their feelings easily hurt (maybe someone “did it on purpose” and they feel victimized) • begin to learn mastery and competence • can have a period of industriousness and focus

What to expect in golf at ages 6-9... • children can read golf books • incorporate math into their games (score, addition, subtraction, multiplication, etc.) • engage in more advanced functional movement and motor skill activities • become concerned with fairness in golf games • spend time or pair up with a friend in class • demonstrate better balance at set-up and finish • engage in more competitive games • love doing things by oneself • start comparing self with others (lowers self-esteem if comparing self to more advanced skill children) • enjoy keeping personal bests and records

How to work with students ages 6-9... • start new golfers with SNAG equipment suited for their size and progress to suitable clubs in length and weight like U.S. Kids Golf equipment • use suitable functional sport specific skill and functional movement skill development activities • use math, reading and strategy solving skills in games • review core life skills like honesty, sportsmanship, sharing, integrity, etc. in teachable moments • mix various golf, fitness, rule, etiquette, terminology and play education into lessons • manage children in larger-sized groups based on their ability to handle shared attention of the instructor with other children • provide children with activities that can be masters (i.e. short putts, hitting oversized ball with high-lofted club) • emphasize personal goals versus comparing goals to other children • provide observation and imitating (not detailed verbal explanations) • incorporate lots of movement (constant movement at this age) • group with similar ability • avoid competition