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Information for Parents

## Growing Court Growing Game

### Why a smaller court?

Imagine your child wearing full sized skis at the top of the black run, or playing football on a premiership sized pitch, trying to save a penalty in a full sized goal, hitting with a full sized golf club! Making the court area and equipment fit the size of the child is common place in most sports today. Tennis is not an exception!

If you play tennis, imagine if you made the court 1/3 wider and 1/3 longer! How would you cope playing on this sized court? What if I told you that the average height of a 7 year old is 2/3 their adult height! So asking them to play on a full sized court is not reasonable.

Most people who want their child on a full sized court as quickly as possible do it because they think that this will accelerate their child's progress. In fact it could do the opposite. Tennis is a game that requires a high level of coordination so using a slightly slower ball can help a child develop more skills, not less. Tennis is a game about hitting the ball somewhere, not anywhere! It's about making the ball do what you want it to, creating not just coping! Children who move too quickly through the court sizes and stages are likely to be unable to develop a tactical understanding of the game as they are using all their energies to just get the ball back over the net. Directing it becomes very difficult and hitting with any real purpose and control is usually very limited.

### In tennis children need to learn to use their skills to:

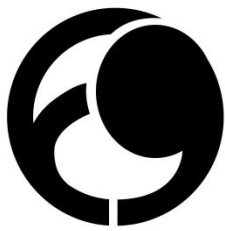
- Control **the ball**
  - Direct the ball around **the court**
  - Hit in such a way to make it difficult for **the opponent**
- Move them through too quickly and they'll struggle to do more than learn to cope with the ball!

### So remember that as your child grows and develops skills!

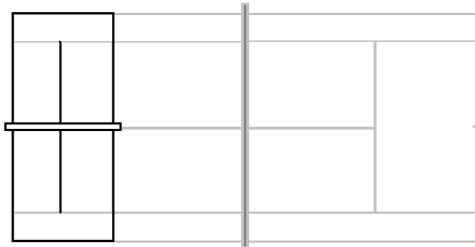
- Courts –**Get Bigger**
- Balls – **Get Faster**
- Equipment –**Gets Bigger**
- Matches – **Get Longer**

Don't rush it. They'll get there with good coaching, but each stage is the foundation for the next and we all know how important good foundations are in anything!

**Where Kid's tennis is evolving!**



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### The RED Court

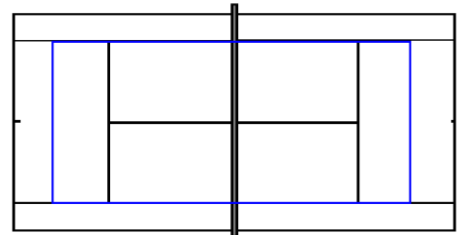
...is supposed to be 12m x 6m but the most practical way to lay it out on a tennis court is to play across the court using the singles sideline as the service line and the outside tramline as the baseline. This way up to 6 full red courts can be laid out on one court (assuming that the run back areas are also used)

At this stage players should learn basics like how to rally, serve, basic rules, scoring and understand how to win and lose a point. Player development models suggest using this court up to the age of 7 or 8 but there is no reason why older children can't start here if they are new to tennis.

### The ORANGE Court

...is the regular width of the full court but is only  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the length. The ball used here is the Orange ball, a low compression ball that is the same size as a tennis ball.

At this stage players develop some consistency in their strokes and learn to cope with a larger playing area. This will challenge them to cover the court and direct the ball away from the opponent. Equally here, with the added physical control and coordination that players have developed, the foundations of more specific technique can be started alongside the key athletic skills that are still so important at this age. This court size is recommended for children aged up to 9/10 years old but also for older children and even adults if they are just starting.



### The GREEN Court

...is the full sized court but the ball is slower than a regular ball, but is still designed for use on the full court.

At this stage players will need to spend some time getting used to the physical demands of covering this sized court.

**Where Kid's tennis is evolving!**