

# KinderGolf™

...where learning golf is fun

## PreSchooler Golf

By **Donna Lee**, founder of KinderGolf

A young child's mind is a prodigious learning machine, capable of picking up skills and concepts at amazing speeds. Starting your child on sports is an exceedingly rewarding experience. The time spent together will strengthen the bonds that bind you both and help mould his character, values and life skills.

Teaching junior to play golf is a privilege and a responsibility since this is the chance to start him off on a journey that could last a lifetime. The challenge that comes with junior picking up golf, is sustaining his interest while at the same time keeping the game fun and exciting for him.

With the increase in number of resources, programs and camps for junior golfers, there is no lack of opportunities to get your strapping youngster out on the green. Here are some key fundamentals to getting him hooked on the game:

### First tee

Whether junior takes to the game depends on these factors:

*His willingness to learn*

*His interest in the game*

*A dedicated coach*

*His agility and aptitude for golf*

*The availability of appropriate equipment (in size, length, weight, etc)*

*The availability of a programme that suits him*

**"From my experience, most parents are often pleasantly surprised at how quickly their children can understand and execute a textbook golf swing or a consistent putting motion."** says Donna.



Naturally, young children have physical limitations, especially in the area of strength. What they lack in strength they make up generously in flexibility and agility – key attributes needed in learning the correct posture, motion and mechanics of golf. With the appropriate equipment and environment, a child can learn the proper fundamentals effortlessly.

### A nurturing environment

A nurturing environment is important for your child in his journey. Children can learn quickly with the help of parents in building "bridges" for them to explore the unknown. Teach your child sportsmanship – magnanimity in the glory of triumph and grace in the face of defeat.



Taking on the role of a sport educator means you have the responsibility to teach him the proper fundamentals and skills necessary for success in the chosen sport.

Imbue your child with a love and passion for the sport and work with realistic goals in mind. While some children will turn out to be the next swimming star or bowling great, do remember that a fun and enriching experience is fundamental to his healthy development. Be a role model and provide positive feedback.

Words can encourage or hurt a child, always use positive language. Do not chastise your child at a bad shot or miss. Saying things like, "that was a terrible shot! What's wrong with you!" discourages him and turns him away from the game. Instead, encourage him by saying, "You can do it. Let's try again. Nice follow-through. Now, let's take a shorter backswing and hit the ball closer to the flag."

Your calm, clear and consistent encouragement and advice will spur him to excel in the game. Emphasize on what he does well and not just on his mistakes.

Particularly for preschoolers, their objective should be to have fun and you can help him meet this objective by injecting laughter, lightheartedness and spontaneity into the game.

Vary the drills and exercises, with different colors, scoring systems, levels of difficulties, etc, to keep his interest in the sport.

Look for a good sports coach who does not pressurize but provides positive encouragement in guiding him through the

principles, concepts, lessons and drills to the game with passion.

Many times, the most effective teaching is knowing when to begin and how to end a lesson. **"Time permitting, work as often as your child wants. But not more. Do not make it a chore for your child. You want the child to have fun while develop a love for the game."** advises Donna.

### Safety first and foremost

In golf, the consequences of an accident can be grave. Keep your child in your line of sight at all times. When you're at the driving range make sure that he occupies the stall in front of you and not behind. Draw an imaginary line three feet in front of the spot your child is hitting from, and tell him never to walk in front of it. Also When you have a golf cart, make sure he does not drive the cart or sit alone on the passenger side.

Ensure that the place of practice is suitably free of hazards with equipment and teaching aids in proper working order. Lighting should also be suitably bright.

Inspect and maintain the quality of the sport equipment and aids periodically. Warped equipment will not only impede your child from executing the proper movement but can be a safety hazard by breaking off or flying out of your child's hands.

Repeatedly remind him that safety should come first and he should not take any shots or swings without knowing that the area is clear. Always make sure you have a first aid kit in the car and a basic knowledge of the how to treat some common injuries.

Make sure the both of you are dressed in appropriate attire for golf. For example, properly fitted golf shoes or left-hand gloves for right handed golfers, etc.

When hitting the green, always make sure he wears a cap and drinks enough fluids (the night before and during the game). Always apply sunblock (non-greasy, hypo-allergenic child versions) religiously during the game.

**"Lastly, but importantly, your child should be having fun, irrespective of the rate of progress he/she is making. All children, with their inert ability to learn, will progress and become better at their own time."** says Donna.

**"Take the fun out of the sport, and you'll take the child out of the sport."**