

Introducing Golf to Your Child the Right Way!

By Dr. Brandon Crouch

I can still remember scattered times throughout my childhood where I would join my dad at the course for a father-son golf outing. As I get older those memories become even dearer to me. If you make golf fun for your children and spend time with them you too may create memories that will last a lifetime.

Beyond the bonding and family time, I believe through playing various sports I



learned many life lessons. Golf was no exception. Golf teaches you to be honest to others, to be honest with yourself, to be respectful, courteous, and patient.

The first step is to introduce your child to the game of golf. To do this you need to make it interesting and fun for them on their level. If they are under the age of 10 then they will more

than likely not have a great desire to play 18 holes of golf. I also do not know many six year olds who would like to try hitting off the tee box to reach a flag stick 400 yards away.

Children love to have you play with them with games they can understand. In order to get them excited about golf you need to play with them and make it fun. Most youngsters love to have fun, short competitions with golf. They are great way to hold their attention and develop a greater interest in the game.

Before you start them playing the game of golf you will need a set of clubs that will fit your child. Most children golf club sets only contain a few clubs and are great for beginning. You can get a relatively cheap set at your local pro shop or golf retail store. If you do not have clubs that match up to your child's size they will have a hard time hitting the ball. (At this stage we are not too concerned with form or technique. They just have to be able to hit the ball!)

After you have the right size clubs for your child (your local pro can also help with this if you are unsure) then you are ready to play and have fun! Here are a few games that you can play that may grab their attention:

1. **The Putting Game:** (This is the easiest to play and best for all ages.) Take your child to the putting green and pick out a hole. Take turns seeing who can get it in the hole first at different distances. Take turns after each stroke. After you have made that hole then move on to another hole. To be fair you may want to start off one stroke behind.

2. **The Chipping Game:** (This is a little more difficult.) Step off the putting green a few yards and take turns chipping towards a hole. See which one of you can get it closest to the hole. The distance off the green will be determined by the age and level of play from your child.

3. **The Wedge Game:** (This is fun because you can score easily.) You will need about 10 plastic golf balls per person. Find a tree and lay out several items beside the tree such as your golf bag, a golf towel, a head cover, etc. The more you can put beside it the better. (It makes it easier) Stand at a distance that your child can hit a ball to the tree. Make up points for each item if you hit it. For example, give 2 points if you hit the tree and 1 point if you hit any other item around the tree. After you each hit add up your scores to see who wins!

4. **The Target Game:** (This one is challenging but fun!) You will need 2 plastic golf balls. Pick any target in the yard, such as a tree, swing set, a garden hose, or your golf bag. Rotate hitting the balls at the target, and the person that hits the target first gets a point. Pick another target, and repeat the process. It is a great exercise for developing target precision, distance, and touch sensitivity. It also provides a variety of targets, which keeps the child engaged.

It is really important that you find games and play at the level of the child. Remember to keep in mind that you are playing with them to introduce them to the game and to have quality time. You are not trying to really beat them. You have to make it so you win some and your child wins some or it will become frustrating and boring to the child.

Once your child reaches middle school and high school age and they have a real interest to play the game of golf, I recommend you connect them with both a golf teaching professional and a health-fitness professional who can develop their game. The golf pro will be great at helping perfect the swing, club fitting, and basic and advance instruction. The health-fitness professional will help to develop power, flexibility, stability, balance, and help reduce any physical limitations. If you can create great fundamentals early in life then you can build upon them as they get older.

Introducing your children to the game of golf can be beneficial for you and them. Quality time spent out on the course with your children can create lifetime memories for both of you. From a growth perspective, golf will teach your child many life lessons which can be applied off the course.

When introducing your child to the game of golf always keep in mind that it should not be about teaching lessons or fine tuning their swing. All you want to do is to see if they have an interest for the game of golf. Some will love it and some will not. Either way, do not force it upon them. Make it fun and you will not only gain wonderful family time with your child but you might also create a spark of interest that ignites a love for a game that they will love to play for a lifetime.

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