

Quality Standards for Kids Tennis Programs

INTRODUCTION

Quality Standards for Kids Tennis Programs is a joint initiative between Tennis Canada, the Provincial Tennis Associations (TC/PTA) and supported by the Tennis Professionals Associations (TPA). The goal is to raise the quality and consistency of children's tennis programs in an effort to provide positive experiences that promote life-long participation in tennis.

Why Quality Matters

Research has shown that a child's early experiences in sport can have a long-lasting impact on physical activity levels and continued sport participation as an adult. These early experiences are heavily influenced by a child's need for i) positive interactions with peers and coaches, and ii) the belief that they can develop skill.

Meeting these needs through high quality, relevant programming is critical to providing the positive experiences that motivate children to continue playing tennis. When kids keep playing tennis, everyone benefits. Children stay active and learn a game that can be enjoyed for life, Deliverers see improved retention rates and our collective goal to grow the game is achieved.

WHAT ARE THE QUALITY STANDARDS FOR KIDS TENNIS PROGRAMS

In recognizing the importance of a child's early experience in tennis, TC/PTA and the TPA have developed a research-based framework to provide Deliverers of children's tennis programs with resources to achieve quality programming.

These resources help Deliverers review, evaluate and improve their programs while strengthening credibility with parents and participants by clearly communicating program expectations. The framework applies to all levels of tennis programming, from recreational to elite, for children aged 6-12.

The framework serves to:

1. identify **Key Characteristics** of successful children's tennis programming
2. assist Deliverers in **Communicating their Commitment** to quality
3. provide **Self-Assessment** tools to measure success and strive for continuous improvement
4. provide **Training & Education** to Deliverers in the practices that lead to quality programs

Quality Standards for Kids Tennis Programs is not an accreditation. Rather, Deliverers will declare their commitment to deliver quality programming and use the available resources for continuous improvement and success.

THE QUALITY STANDARDS FOR KIDS TENNIS PROGRAMS FRAMEWORK

Components of the Quality Standards for Kids Tennis Programs Framework include:

1. IDENTIFYING THE KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF QUALITY PROGRAMS

There are many factors that influence a child's experiences in tennis but certain key characteristics are consistently observed in quality programs. These characteristics are based on the latest research in child health & development, the High Five National Curriculum, the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) and best practices of the most highly regarded tennis and sport programs in Canada.

The Six Key Characteristics of Quality Kids Programs are:

1. Caring Instructor
2. Making Friends
3. Active Participation
4. Appropriate Challenge
5. Opportunity for Skill Improvement
6. Fun

For detailed information on the specific behaviours and actions that lead to the Six Key Characteristics, please see the Self-Assessment Checklist.

2. COMMUNICATING A COMMITMENT TO QUALITY

Communicating your intention to deliver a quality program is important for several reasons:

- Gain recognition as a quality program in your community
- Improve communication with parents and participants with clear program expectations
- Educate parents and participants on the characteristics of quality programs so that everyone's goals are aligned

Several communication and informational resources are available to make conveying your commitment to *Quality Standards for Kids* easier. These resources include:

- Communication Tools
 - Poster outlining the *Quality Standards for Kids Tennis Programs*
- Informational Tools
 - TC/PTA and TPA informational website to be used as a link Deliverer websites
 - Other printed materials to support the 6 Key Characteristics of quality programs (i.e. pamphlets, etc)

3. PROVIDING SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Engaging in self-assessment is an important practice to review, evaluate and improve program offerings. The Self-Assessment Checklist builds on the Six Key Characteristics by identifying specific behaviours and actions that will lead to delivering a quality program. The Self-Assessment Checklist is a useful tool for tennis programs to measure success, identify strengths and weaknesses and strive for continuous improvement.

The Self-Assessment Checklist can be utilized by all Deliverers including:

- Certified Coaches (i.e. Instructors, Coaches, Club Pros)
- Supervisors (i.e. Head Pros, Camp Leaders, Community Recreation Programmers)
- Organizations (i.e. Clubs, Parks & Rec, Boys & Girls Clubs)

4. PROVIDING TRAINING & EDUCATION

Training and education materials have been developed to help program Deliverers create optimal tennis environments that meet children's needs. These materials are available through the following:

- Tennis Canada Certification Program
- Professional Development Workshops
- Professional Development Online Education
- Reference materials on the TC/PTA and TPA websites to outline the Quality Standards initiative and support learning about the quality standards

USING THE QUALITY STANDARDS FOR KIDS TENNIS PROGRAMS FRAMEWORK TO BECOME A QUALITY PROGRAM

Make Your Commitment

Use the 6 Key Characteristics and Communication tools to make your commitment to quality programming for kids' tennis by:

- Integrating the Six Key Characteristics into program delivery
- Communicating the program's commitment to *Quality Standards for Kids Tennis Programs* by:
 - displaying the *Quality Standards for Kids Tennis Programs* poster in a visible location at your facility
 - providing a link to the TC/PTA & TPA quality standards informational pages on your facility's website
 - including information about the quality standards in all program communications (i.e. brochures, flyers, websites etc)

Continue your Commitment

Commit to continuous improvement by pursuing the following:

- hire TPA certified coaches
- conduct background checks for coaches, volunteers and staff
- engage in on-going periodic evaluation of your programs using the Self-Assessment Check List
- consider the *Quality Standards for Kids Tennis Programs* professional development training

The link between early experiences in sport and continued participation is so strong that TC/PTA and the TPA encourage all Deliverers of tennis programs to consider the *Quality Standards for Kids Tennis Programs*. When a quality program is delivered, kids experience fun and success and they are inspired to stay involved in tennis. Let quality lead the way to grow the game!