



## Putting the FUN in Fundamentals

### More Than Tennis

Tennis Whizz is so much more than Tennis. It's the start of developing some FUNDamental motor skills that form the foundation of all athletic skills. No matter what sport your child is going to take up later in life Tennis Whizz is the best start.

As a principle of Long Term Athlete Development we know that the early years of life form the basis for how athletic a child will become. If you are inactive until you are 10 years old then research suggests you will be a couch potato in later life.

As renowned author Rae Pica writes in her book *Your Active Child*, "We don't wait until our child is in elementary school to teach them to brush their teeth, bathe or eat the right foods! So why should a child wait until school age to learn about physical activity?"



### Movement Skills

Children need to be active and learn to move well. So in Tennis Whizz we don't just teach tennis skills we also teach skills in three well established motor skill development categories.

- *Manipulations* – based on handling and using objects, we call this **OBJECTS**.
- *Locomotor skills* – developing movement from place to place in different ways. We call this **MOVEMENT**.
- *Non-locomotor* – helping children to learn to control their bodies. We call this **BODY**.

When a child can control their body, move effectively and manipulate objects they have most of the skills needed to play tennis. In fact they have the skills to play all sports.

### Growing and Developing

As a parent you may sometimes wonder why your child is finding particular skills challenging. Obviously children grow at different rates. In addition, size does not always reflect function. In the pre-school age group children develop rapidly but also some skills are not always possible simply because their bodies are not the right shape. For example, balance is often challenging simply because when you are this young your head is large in relation to the rest of your body and your arms and legs are relatively short, providing less width to your base of support.

Also there is a still a lot of other development happening as the brain refines its motor patterns. So the left and right side of the body are not always synchronized and they may find fine motor skills difficult. You will recognize this from watching your child write and draw. Gradually this becomes neater, smaller with more details. This pattern of development is exactly the same for all the skills we are developing.

### So What's a Parent to Do!

This is the easy part. You can't change growth patterns no matter how hard you try so relax, have fun and provide as many movement experiences for your child as you can. We will provide an exciting, fun environment every time you step on the court with Tennis Whizz and give you lots of take home ideas so you can keep it going way beyond the end of the lesson.

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