Nestlé Kids' Clubs Tennis Scheme, supported by Nestlé Trust and run by 4Children in conjunction with the Lawn Tennis Association, introducing children to tennis in a fun, enjoyable way.
Nestlé Kids' Clubs Tennis Scheme - bringing tennis to children in a fun and enjoyable way!

To mark its 40 years’ involvement in supporting grass roots tennis, in 2000 Nestlé Trust launched the Nestlé Kids’ Clubs Tennis Scheme (NKCTS). Since its launch, the scheme has been hugely successful in engaging children across the country in tennis activities. Research has indicated that clubs in the NKCTS are offering many thousands of children the opportunity to experience tennis activities in a fun and enjoyable way - over 30,000 children are playing at their out of school clubs at least once a week and we hope this impressive number will grow.

“When we developed the scheme with our partners - the Lawn Tennis Association and 4Children,” says Nestlé UK Chairman and Chief Executive Alastair Sykes, “our intention was to provide opportunities for children in after school clubs to partake in fun, physical activities, regardless as to whether they had access to equipment, traditional courts or any outside space.

“Five years later, the NKCTS has successfully reached thousands of children, and proved to be an excellent means of encouraging them to take part in sport and exercise.

“Nestlé Trust credits the success of the NKCTS to our partners at the Lawn Tennis Association and 4Children and thanks them for their continuing commitment to this unique, groundbreaking scheme.”

The centrepiece of the NKCTS is this ‘Tennis Activity Guide’ but, in addition to the Guide, registered clubs can apply for training for playworkers, coach visits, equipment and much more. Details of how to register are available from 4Children, call 020 7512 2100 or visit www.4Children.org.uk
Introduction

Introducing tennis into your activity programme is easier than you may think. Our *Tennis Activity Guide* is here to help you put it into practice. Tennis is a great sport to play in any out of school setting, as it needs very little equipment and can easily be adapted to the space you have available. It is also fun, energetic and easy to learn!

You may be familiar with the Nestlé Kids’ Clubs Tennis Scheme’s first activity guide, *Activity Guide for Playworkers*. The guide was so popular we decided to develop this second edition to offer you more activities and games that can be used and adapted to suit your setting and the number of children taking part. Each activity can be tailored for children of varying ages and abilities, providing hours of fun, enabling children to learn the basics of the game.

We have kept some of the old favourites from the first guide including the action packed ‘beans’ and ‘ball know-how’, introducing children to using a ball and racket. You will also find tried and tested relay games including ‘pick up and put down’, games to keep you on target, and games to cool down.

Use this Guide to help introduce tennis games and activities to the children at your setting – you never know, it may help to unearth a future Wimbledon champion!
Getting started

This Guide provides you with everything you need to run a practical tennis session lasting up to 30 minutes for young children and up to 60 minutes for older children.

Helpful hints

- Try to keep the groups small - if children are standing around for long periods of time, they get bored and tennis will become a chore.
- Keep instructions concise, to the point and be enthusiastic.
- Demonstrate the activity/skill before the children begin. If you are not confident demonstrating yourself, ask a couple of the children to show the group.
- Give the children enough time to play and to use the equipment.
- Move around the group, giving encouragement and ideas of how to improve.
- Ensure success for all - adapt the activities to suit the children.
- Give positive feedback and praise good effort.
- Always encourage fair play.
- Think about ways of progressing and varying activities.
- Enjoy and make it fun!

Food for sport, food for thought

Eating and drinking sensibly will ensure you are at your best before and during a game while also making sure your muscles are not too tired afterwards.

1. Drink lots of water before, during, and after exercise.
2. Carry small, healthy snacks to top up your energy.
3. Eat some bread, pasta, potatoes or rice at each meal. These foods give you energy.
4. Enjoy plenty of fruit and vegetables with your meals.
5. Don’t choose too many fatty foods - maintain a healthy, balanced diet.

During the session you can have the whole group doing the same activity (equipment permitting). Alternatively, you could arrange the activities in a circuit, with the children using each activity station before moving onto the next one after a set period of time.

Each of the sessions should start with warming up and end with cooling down - an essential ingredient of participating in sport and physical activity. Children should always be encouraged to do this as it will help to prevent any injuries to muscles and joints. Warming up is also a great exercise to get your mind focused on what you are about to do. Cooling down gives you an opportunity to review your activity and find out what the children enjoyed the most.

Play safe

Here are some tips for playing tennis activities in a safe way - these can also apply to any active play session.

- Clothing - ask the children to wear appropriate clothing for the sessions, loose and comfortable.
- Footwear - appropriate footwear, with grip and support, should always be worn. Ensure that any laces are properly tied to avoid accidents.
- Discourage jewellery and watches as they can cause injuries.
- To prevent accidents, make sure that the playing area is clear from obstacles and don’t leave equipment lying around.
- Children should be made aware of their own personal safety and that of others in the group e.g. not swinging rackets wildly when near other people.
Let's warm up!

The following games are an ideal way to warm up...

**Hula hoop**

Each child has a hoop, or shares one between two. In pairs, practice jumping in and out of the hoop, running around the outside of the hoop, putting balls in and taking them out after a run from a marker 10 metres away.

**On command**

The children run around the room, with a nominated leader calling out commands such as: ‘touch the ground with your hand’, ‘change direction’, ‘jump in the air’, ‘shout out your name’, all the while running in a circle.

**Follow my leader**

The nominated leader chooses what to do with a ball, for example:
- Throw it in the air and catch it after one bounce
- Bounce the ball on the ground and catch it
- Throw the ball in the air with your left hand and catch it with your right
- Roll the ball along the ground towards a target.

Each member of the group should follow the leader’s instructions. Ask the children to think of other ideas and give everyone a go at being the leader.

**Empty the hoop**

Form four teams, each standing at different corners of a large square. In the centre of the square, position a hoop containing 20 balls. One child at a time from each team runs to the hoop and collects one ball, bringing it back to their corner. When all the balls have gone from the hoop then the teams can attempt to collect balls from each other’s corners. When one team has collected 10 balls, they are the winners.
Beans

This is an action game where children run around in an agreed area, listening for commands from the game leader. When they hear the words, they do the corresponding action, for example:

- **JUMPING BEAN** - jumping up and down
- **BAKED BEAN** - lying down on the floor ‘sunbathing’
- **RUNNER BEAN** - running on the spot
- **JELLY BEAN** - shaking your body
- **BROAD BEAN** - making your body as wide a shape as possible

How many more beans can you think of? What actions would you give them?

Stuck in the mud

This classic is a great ‘tag’ game. Why not make a list of the other tag games that are played in your setting and see if anyone can come up with new ones? One child is the ‘tagger’ and tries to catch the other players; once they are caught, they must squat down. To be freed, they must wait for other players to hop over them before rejoining the game.

**Make it different**

- Increase the number of ‘taggers’
- Alter the way the children move around the space e.g. hopping
Ball know-how

When introducing children to tennis, it is important to allow them to get used to playing with a ball and racket. If you don't have enough tennis balls, use sponge or foam ones instead. Try using bigger balls to help boost confidence of less able children or if you have younger children in the group.

If you don't have enough rackets for the whole group, ask the children to use their hands and to take it in turns using the rackets available.

Fried eggs

Equipment - 1 x ball and 1 x racket per pair

Players stand about four steps apart. One player throws and calls out one, two or three. The player with the racket must trap the ball with their hand on their racket after the specified number of bounces. If they miss, they must swap roles.

Make it different

- Players catch with only one hand after the specified number of bounces.
- Players use two rackets to trap the ball.

Two tap tennis

Equipment - 1 x ball and 1 x racket per pair

One player throws the ball up to around head height (being careful not to hit anyone!). The other player has to let the ball bounce before tapping it up in the air, letting it bounce again, then gently tapping it back for their partner to catch. Repeat 10 times and swap.

Make it different

- Increase the distance or try it over a net.
- Tap up with the forehand side of the racket, move round and hit a backhand.

Head, shoulders, knees and toes

Equipment - 1 x ball per pair

Playing over a barrier, players throw the ball and call out a body part. The other player has to catch the ball after one bounce level with that body part, before throwing it back and calling out a body part themselves. Players are working together to challenge each other, but not making it impossible by throwing too far or too fast.

Make it different

- Bump the ball with the racket level with the body part.
- Using hands, knees and feet, players try to strike the ball with that body part.

Tennis tips

Forehand: Hit the ball after it bounces on the dominant side of the body using a low to high swing. The palm (fore) of the hand should be pointed forwards at contact.

Backhand: Hit the ball after it bounces on the non-dominant side of the body using a low to high swing. The back of the hand should be pointed forwards at contact, and players may find it easier to hold the racket with 2 hands for this.

Tap up: Hit the ball directly upwards as opposed to another player.
Relay frenzy

Relay games are not only lots of fun, they are important in building teamwork and confidence.

Pick up or put down

*Equipment - 1 x racket and 1 x ball per team.*

Each team stands in a straight line, one person behind another. The first player in the line runs forward over the starting line balancing a ball on their racket. They must run to a container - cardboard boxes, empty bins or ice cream containers are ideal - and drop in the ball. They then return to their team, giving the racket to the next player who runs to collect the ball and balances it back to the line. This continues until all the players have had their turn.

Slalom

As a continuation of 'Pick up or put down', set out some cones or obstacles. Each player balances the ball on their racket through the series of cones then back to the team.

Make it different

- Change the way the team has to move in and out of the obstacles, for example, bouncing the ball on the ground, up and down with the racket.

Tunnel race

*Equipment - 1 x ball and 1 x racket per team*

Players stand in a line one behind the other with legs apart to create a tunnel. The first player with the ball and racket hits the ball along the ground, between the legs of all their team. The player at the back of the line stops the ball and runs to the front, takes the racket and hits the ball through again. The game finishes when all players have hit through twice.

Make it different

- Players roll the ball rather than hit it
- Hit the ball holding the racket in a backhand position
**Bubbles**

**Equipment** - 1 x racket each player and 1 x ball per team

Players stand in a circle and face inwards. The first player hits the ball up and calls out the name of one team mate, who runs forward, hits the ball up and calls another team mate. The game continues until the team lose control and the ball goes out of the circle. The team must count how many hits they do before they lose control.

**Make it different**
- Players have to hit with the racket in their 'wrong' hand
- Players turn their back after they have hit so they can't be chosen until everyone has had a go

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**Spiral down**

**Equipment** - 2 x rackets and 1 x ball per team

Players stand in a circle and space out. The first player, carrying a racket and balancing a ball, slaloms through their team mates, weaving in and out until they get all the way back to their place. They tip the ball from their racket onto the racket of player two and player two begins to slalom around the circle. Player one passes their racket to player three, ready for the ball to be transferred from player two. The game is over when all players have had their turn and the team are sat down.

**Make it different**
- Players bounce the ball up or down with their racket as they go round
- Players balance the ball on the end of the handle

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**Target games**

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**Space stations**

**Equipment** - 1 x racket, 1 x ball and 3 x cones per player

Players stand three steps apart and put three cones on the floor at their feet. Players rally trying to hit the other players’ cones. If they hit a cone, they take it and add it to their pattern. The game is played until one player has all the cones.

**Make it different**
- Allow players to put the cones in different patterns
- Put the cones further apart
- Put an obstacle in the middle of the players to rally over
**Bounce ball**

**Equipment - 2 x rackets, 1 x ball, 1 x hoop or chalk circle**

In pairs, stand four metres apart without rackets and place a hoop in the middle. Player one throws the ball underarm into the hoop for player two to catch. Player two then repeats this action. After getting used to this, the same activity can be repeated using a racket. Try to keep the rally going.

**Make it different**
- Move players further apart
- Place the hoop on one side of an obstacle (net or cone and canes) and in front of one player
- Count how many hits you achieve
- Vary the number of points given for a direct hit into the hoop or with a bounce

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**Battle the bowler**

**Equipment - 2 x balls, 1 x racket and 1 x cone per player**

Players stand at either side of the hall or playground. A cone (you can use a tin or ball tube) is halfway between the two players with a ball balanced on top. The player with the racket serves the ball at the cone. The other player collects it, goes back to their place and bowls it at the cone. One point is awarded each time the ball is knocked off the cone and each time it is, the players change roles.

**Make it different**
- Make the player serving stand still and see if the bowler can bowl back between their legs
- If overarm serving is difficult, try underarm serving or overarm throwing

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**Tennis tips**

**Serve underarm:** Throw the ball up and swing the racket at it, from low to high, hitting the ball before it bounces

**Serve overarm:** Throw the ball up and hit it above the head using a throwing action
**Kiss a frog**

**Equipment** - 1 x racket per player, plus net and soft balls

Players space out and sit or kneel down in the court area, not far from the net. They are the frogs. One player is called the ‘Prince’ and one the ‘Pond Master’. The pond master throws the ball for the prince to volley back over the net towards a frog. If a frog can volley the ball, they are free and can become a prince. Count the number of balls taken to free all the frogs, then try to beat the score next time.

**Make it different**
- Play the game with forehands rather than volleys
- Make the frogs catch rather than volley

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**Beat the goalkeeper**

**Equipment** - 1 x racket, 1 x foam or other soft ball, 2 x cones/markers to act as goalposts

Children work in groups with one hitter, one goalie, one feeder and the rest being fielders. The feeder bounces the foam ball to the hitter who attempts to hit the ball past the goalie standing between the posts. One of the fielders collects the ball and rolls it back to the feeder. Change roles after the hitter has had five turns.

**Make it different**
- Use bigger goals if the hitters are unsuccessful; smaller goals if they are scoring too many goals!
- Have two teams playing one another with each hitter having three turns

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**Up the Reds, Up the Blues**

**Equipment** - 1 x ball and 2 x rackets per pair, 1 x bucket, a pile of extra balls

Players stand in a circle, with their partner opposite them across the circle and a bucket in the centre of the circle. Pairs are either on the red team or the blue team. Players try to drop hit the ball from the edge of the circle into the bucket. If they get it in, they shout ‘Up the Blues!’ if they are on the blue team and their partner collects another ball from the pile. If they miss, their partner catches the ball and tries from their side of the circle. The total score for the whole team is kept.

**Make it different**
- With a hoop, roll the ball with your racket into the hoop
- Rally over the bucket and count the number of shots

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**Circle team pepper**

**Equipment** - 1 x racket, 1 x ball, 1 x hoop or chalked circle, 5 players

Four players stand to form a square and the fifth player stands in the centre in a hoop or chalk circle. Allow approximately ten metres distance between the players. Player one starts with the ball and bounces it underarm to the middle player, who hits it for player two to catch. Player two then bounces the ball back to the middle player, and so on. The activity continues until the ball is back with the first player. The game finishes when every player has had a go in the middle.

**Make it different**
- Introduce more players and form a circle
- Introduce more than one team, using this activity as a race
- This activity works just as well using hands rather than a racket
Using a net

**Elephant countdown**

**Equipment -** 1 x racket per player and a handful of soft balls, 4 players

Two players make a net by standing with their outstretched rackets touching. The other two players rally over the net and try to get as high a score as possible within a time limit. The players forming the net provide the countdown: ‘20 elephants, 19 elephants, 18 elephants...’ Swap roles and the new rallying pair have to beat the score of the others.

**Make it different**
- If you have three players, then one player can act as the net or hold up a hoop
- Rallies to only use forehands to help players move into the best position
- Make the net higher or lower

**Bulls-eye**

**Equipment -** 1 x racket per player, handful of balls, a net and a target

Working in pairs, players rally over a net, obstacle or chair. At the top of the net should be a target, which could be a balloon or just another racket balanced on the top. Players try to hit the target as many times as possible while rallying, in the time allowed.

**Make it different**
- Players must hit using only forehands, or alternate forehands and backhands
- Players try to rally for as long as possible but must not hit the target

**Rally duo**

**Equipment -** 2 x rackets, 1 x ball

Players rally in pairs over the net, keeping the ball going. The ball can bounce as many times as required.

**Make it different**
- As the players become more confident, allow the ball to only bounce once!
- Move the players closer or further away from the net
- Allow volleying
- Play ‘all change’. Once you reach the rally target, each player finds a new partner and attempts to achieve a new score.
- Play the rally game. The players attempt to get a rally of five, then take one step back and start another rally. This continues until the players have reached the back of the designated baseline.

**Tennis tips**

**Volley:** Hit the ball before it bounces using a blocking action

**Rally:** Hit the ball back and forth to each other
Four square slider

Equipment - 1 x racket per player, 1 x ball, throw down lines or chalk

Mark out a rectangle and divide it into four squares. Number the squares one to four. Put one player in each square. Hit from square four, upwards to any other square and the player in that square must hit it to one of the other squares but not where it came from. If a player hits out or misses the ball, then they leave the game and are replaced by a waiting player.

Make it different
- Players may only enter the game at square one, so when a player is out, the other players slide up to fill their place. For example, if player three misses, then two moves up to square number three and one moves up to square number two.

Swap

Equipment - 1 x ball and 1 x racket per player

Players move around controlling the ball, doing tap ups with a bounce. They must try to swap the ball that they are tapping up with a ball from another player, each time saying ‘swap’. The person with the most swaps at the end of the game is the winner.

Make it different
- Use different coloured balls and, at various times, stop the game and say ’if you have an orange ball you are a winner’

Rally me

Equipment - 1 x ball and 1 x racket per player

Players start in pairs about three steps apart. Rally to 10 and, as soon as they have finished, they must run off and find another player to rally with. Each time a player gets a rally of 10, they are awarded a point. The winner is the player who wins the most points, but must not rally with the same player twice.

Make if different
- Players must rally alternate forehands and backhands
- Change the number that the players need to rally to
Big Ball World Doubles

Equipment - 1 x net or barrier, marked out court area and a big ball

Players play doubles by throwing and catching over a net.

Make it different
- Players must do alternate catches
- Players must run back to the baseline after they have thrown

Mr Freeze

Equipment - 1 x ball, 1 x racket per player, net or barrier and court area

Hit the ball over the net and then stand still. The player on the other side catches the ball on their racket, drops the ball and hits it into a space, then stands still. The frozen player can only move once the ball is hit.

Make it different
- Play by hitting the ball straight back

Tennis rounders

Equipment - 2 x teams, 2 x rackets, 1 x ball, 1 x hoop, 2 x cones

Team A are hitting, Team B are fielding and one player is the bowler. The bowler throws the ball underarm to the first hitter, standing by a cone. After hitting the ball, player one then runs around the second cone and back ‘home’ - one run scored. However, they will be out and Team A loses one life if:

1. The ball is caught out by Team B or with one hand after one bounce
   Or
2. Team B gets the ball placed in the hoop before the runner from team A gets home.

After their turn, the first hitter returns to the Team A’s line, giving their racket to the third player waiting next in line. The second hitter should have already taken their place, waiting their turn. Once Team A has lost six lives, the teams change over roles.

Spaceship enterprise

Equipment - 1 x ball per pair and a marked area with a barrier in the middle

Two players stand on either side of the barrier. The aim of the game is to throw underarm into your opponent’s area, away from where the opposing player is standing. The ball is not allowed to roll or touch the area outside the court. The players take turns to start the rally with an underarm throw. First to win five points wins the game. The winner for the six games wins the match.

Make it different
- Use beanbags instead of balls
- Play the game with doubles or teams - make the area bigger as the teams increase in size

Cricket tennis

Equipment - 2 x rackets, 1 x foam ball, 1 x hoop or chalked circle and a designated area (netball court, indoor hall etc)

Two teams - with one hitting, one fielding, plus a bowler. The bowler throws the ball underarm to the first hitter standing in the hoop, who hits the ball back into the playing area. If the ball lands outside the area or is caught out by the fielding team (or caught with one hand after one bounce), the hitting team loses one life. If the ball lands in the court, one run is scored.

After their turn, the first hitter returns to the team line, giving their racket to the player waiting next in line. The second hitter should have already taken their place in the hoop, waiting their turn. Once the hitting team has lost six lives, the teams change over roles.
Cool down

Pro slow

Players space out and close their eyes. Without moving, they make the shape of the stroke that is called out: ‘serve’, ‘forehand’, ‘backhand’ or ‘volley’. Players must keep their eyes closed at all times and listen, making the movement as if their hand is the racket.

Make it different
• Give a prize to the person who can make their forehand swing last the longest without stopping

Survivor

Equipment - 1 x ball and racket per player

Players walk around balancing a ball on their racket. They then have to perform an action when asked.

FLOOD - lift the racket above your head
HURRICANE - spin 360°
FIRE - jog on the spot
EARTHQUAKE - jump up and down

All actions must be done without the ball falling off the racket. If it does, they lose one of their five lives. The winner is the player with the most lives left at the end of the game.

Make it different
• Add other actions, ask the children to suggest new actions
• Make actions into a sequence

Slow down

Start the group jogging in a given area for one minute. Ask them to change to walking pace before asking them to stand still with their feet apart, raising their hands above their heads, stretching as high as they can up on their toes. Get them to take a deep breath in and slowly breathe out.

Pick up the ball

Equipment - 1 x racket and ball per player

The children stand in their own space with the ball on the ground beside them. Ask the children to find ways of getting the ball up onto their racket without using their hands. You could get the group to work at this in pairs.