

# A Progressive Pathway - The Four Stages of Tennis Hot Shots

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## The Blue Stage (age 3 - 5)

The Blue Stage introduces children to tennis through games and fun activities. Children learn the basics of tennis including how to rally.

Court size: variable

Tennis ball: red ball (25% compression)

Recommended racquet size: 19-21 inches

Competencies:

- catch a ball with one or two hands
  - throw or strike a ball cooperatively to a partner
  - control the ball during a rolling rally with a partner
  - follow instructions and cooperate with others.
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## The Red Stage (age 5 - 8)

The Red stage is for beginners. The red ball is larger than a yellow ball and doesn't bounce as high (just 25% compression), making it a breeze for even the youngest players to hit it comfortably. The courts and nets used in the Red stage are much smaller making it easier for kids to move around and enjoy success.

Court size: 3 m × 8.23 or 6 m × 10.97 m

Tennis ball: red ball (25% compression)

Recommended racquet size: 21–23 inches

Red Stage 1 Competencies

- maintain balance while moving sideways and forwards
- catch and throw balls of various sizes
- commence a rally with a drop and hit forehand
- use a low to high action on both forehand and backhand
- volley the ball using a simple blocking action
- state when the ball is in or out of court
- follow simple instructions and apply basic feedback.

Red Stage 2 Competencies

- move quickly in different directions and stop on balance
- serve the ball over a net in a cross court direction
- use a low to high action on both forehand and backhand
- hit a forehand and backhand in a cross court and down the line direction
- volley the ball using a simple blocking action and correct footwork
- keep the score using a simple scoring system
- follow simple instructions and apply basic feedback.

Red Stage 3 Competencies

- move quickly in different directions with control and balance
  - serve a ball to land in “deuce” and “ad” service box
  - use a circular swing on forehand and backhand
  - return a ball using a forehand or backhand to target locations in both a cooperative and competitive activity
  - volley with racquet head above the wrist
  - use correct tennis scoring
  - compete with others in a fair, friendly and enjoyable manner
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## The Orange Stage (age 8 - 10)

After mastering the Red stage, children move on to the Orange stage where the ball bounces a little higher (50% compression) and the court is a bit bigger.

Court size: 6.4 m × 18.29 m  
Tennis ball: orange ball (50% compression)  
Recommended racquet size: 23–25 inches

### Orange Stage 1 Competencies

- move quickly in different directions and be able to stop on balance
- serve with a balanced and rhythmical service action
- begin using topspin on forehand and backhands and hit the ball with different speeds
- volley a ball after moving forward and performing a split step
- understand the main rules of the game
- show respect for opponents and officials.

### Orange Stage 2 Competencies

- run or sprint to the ball and use a sidestep to recover
- serve with a balanced and rhythmical service action and differentiate speed between first and second serves
- perform topspin on forehand and backhand and use slice on the backhand
- use a drop short, lob or passing shot
- approach the net at the appropriate time during a rally and volley the ball away from opponent
- give the best effort whatever the match score or situation.



## The Green Stage (age 9 +)

The ball used in the Green stage has a higher compression than the Red and Orange stages (75% of a yellow tennis ball) and children play on a full-size court.

Court size: 10.97 m × 23.78 m (full court)  
Tennis ball: green ball (75% compression)  
Recommended racquet size: 25–27 inches

### Green Stage

- react quickly and adapt footwork and movement patterns
- place the serve in different locations in the service box
- rally with varying height over the net, depth, speed and spin
- hit attacking balls or use defensive skills as required in a rally
- volley the ball in front of the body while moving forward and also hit a drive volley and overhead smash to different locations
- identify own game style and strengths and weaknesses
- play honestly and fairly and show good sportsmanship

