STICKS FOR KIDS
PROGRAM

SKILL CARDS

Golf Course Builders Association of America Foundation

sticksforkids.org
How to use your Skill Cards

The Let’s Play Golf plan includes 12 basic skills that need to be taught and/or reinforced during the practice session. These basic skills form the foundation the children in your golf clinics or lessons will use to fulfill their own unique and individual potential in golf in the years to come.

12 Basic Skills of Golf

1. Grip
2. Stance
3. Swing
4. Club selection
5. Hill lies
6. Sand shot
7. Short swing
8. Pitch shot
9. Playing from the rough
10. Putting
11. Chip shot
12. Reading the green

The Let’s Play Golf plan is based on a camp setting consisting of 5 days a week for 3 hours. The program you choose does not have to fit into this schedule. For example, you may choose to hold 1 1/2 hour clinics once or twice a week for 6 to 12 weeks. The objective is to make Let’s Play Golf format work for your program!

The content throughout the following skillcards was taken from Let’s Play Sports, Ltd., written by Jane Jindra-Parman and Mary Par.
DRILL: Participants follow directions to choose one of three grips and are able to pick up any club and practice so the grip becomes automatic.

TEACHING PROGRESSION
To use the Ten Finger Grip, open left hand with thumb and fingers together and palm up. (For left-handers reverse all instructions). Place club diagonally across the hand from the middle joint of the index finger across the heel of the hand. The hand closes over the club so that it is held with the fingers. The V formed by the thumb and index finger should point to the right shoulder.

For the Interlocking Grip, when the right hand is placed on grip, the right little finger is interlocked with the left index finger.

For the Overlapping Grip, the left index finger overlaps the right little finger.

COACH FOCUS
- Ten finger grip; usually used by golfers with small weak hands or short fingers. Make sure golfers don’t “choke” up on the shaft, used by beginners.
- Interlocking grip offers golfers a more solid feel.
- Overlapping grip is the most popular grip.

GOAL: To choose one of the three grips that is the most comfortable and best suits the individual.

Vocabulary Word Of The Day
Cup – Hole that the ball goes in
Skillcard #2

STANCE

Have golfers stand in a line facing each others’ backs. Coach stands to their left about 40 yards out. Coach will move to various places on the field as golfers change their stance to adjust to “target”.

TEACHING PROGRESSION

Stance – feet spread shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent, upper body bent at waist slightly. The feet, knees, hips and shoulders are parallel to the line of flight

Square Stance with both feet parallel with line of flight (direction you want the ball to go)

Open Stance with left foot a little farther from the line of flight than the right foot

Closed Stance with right foot farther away from line of flight than the left foot

Addressing the ball

• Pick club up and line feet up with an imaginary line

• Put club head on the ground in front of you. Arms should fall naturally from the shoulders

• Ready for swing

COACH FOCUS

• Lay club down on the ground with the shaft touching toes – square stance both toes touch club, open stance only right toe touches club and closed stance left foot over line right behind the line

• Have target picked out. Place club shaft down on ground even with toes. Club shaft should be a facing target

• With target picked out, place club shaft on ground even with toes. Club shaft should be a little left of target

• Keep “face” of club square with line of flight

• Keep proper stance

• Make sure golfers aren’t stretching arms out

GOAL:

To use the proper stance that best suits the shot.

Vocabulary Of The Day

Tee – an elevated wooden peg – to tee off from (Also known as ground where play begins)
Skillcard #3

SWING

Golfers assume stance and count “one, two, three” on backswing then again “one, two, three” on downswing and follow through. This will help develop good rhythm which is essential for a good swing.

TEACHING PROGRESSION

- Feet spread shoulder width apart with knees and waist slightly bent
- Golfers must look directly at the ball to start the swing
- Rotate shoulders and hips to the right which will start club head moving back
- Keep the left arm straight and the club head low to the ground
- Begin to cock wrists approximately halfway back on the swing
- At the top of the backswing the left shoulder is pointing at the ball
- The club should be far enough back to be parallel to the ground
- Start the downswing with the left foot returning flat to the ground
- The hips and knees move forward toward the target
- The weight shifts from the right side to the left side
- Wrists remain cocked until the arms are parallel to the ground
- As downswing continues, straighten the left side of the body
- As the club contacts the ball, there should be a straight line from he ball to the club from the hands to the left shoulder
- After impact, the right shoulder comes under, the head rises and the right arm becomes straight. Both arms should be extended as far as possible toward the target. Start turning the wrist and end with hands up above the head

COACH FOCUS

- Check for proper stance which is essential to start a smooth swing
- Check for smooth transition, keeping head from swaying and bending of left arm. Also, check for a good tempo
- Keep left heel flat on the ground, don’t let it come up
- Left knee points inward
- Check for upper body dipping when starting downswing, uncocking wrists and rushing downswing
- Start to straighten wrists and club as it swings down to make contact with the ball
- Keep eyes on the ball after contact
- The right heel will come up on follow through

GOAL:

To develop a smooth, efficient and consistent golf swing.

Vocabulary Of The Day

Whiff – a swing that misses a ball
Addressing the ball – preparation to hit
A. For grip checks, all golfers stand in circle with coach in middle.

B & C. For stance checks, all golfers practice stances in line approximately six feet apart driving range style facing each others back.

A. Grip Check:
1. Choose a grip that feels most comfortable. No swinging clubs. Coach will come through and check grips.

B. Stance Check:
1. Have golfers move into a line and have two golfers work together on stances. The coach yells out a stance and the golfer assumes that stance with his partner placing another club shaft on the ground touching their toes.
2. The golfers then stand back with club shaft still on ground and with the coach, check to see if it was correct.

C. Target Practice:
1. Each golfer will stand facing the other’s back 6 feet apart.
2. Coach will announce target and each golfer will choose proper stance and hit golf ball on coaches command.
3. Repeat this until all golfers have hit their group of balls (approximately 6 balls).
4. As a group, let all golfers go retrieve 6 balls and return to line of hitting. Move target and have golfers hit their balls towards it.
5. Repeat steps 2, 3, and 4 moving the target each time.

*Tips: Don’t put target too far away. Give golfers the opportunity to hit target area. Make sure all golfers stay put until coach tells them to retrieve balls.

Modified Play Rules

These rules are designed to encourage golfers to use skills just taught and not concentrate on other aspects of golf.
Skillcard #4

CLUB SELECTION

Coach will mark 25, 50, 75 and 100 yards on a field. Have golfers practice with different clubs. Start with driver or 3 wood and work through to pitching wedge or 9 iron. Minimum clubs for starter set: 3 wood – putter, 3, 5, 7, and 9 irons.

DRILL:

TEACHING PROGRESSION

Driver normally used when hitting off of the tee and for hitting long distances. Loft on driver ranges from 8 degrees to 10.5 degrees

3 wood and 5 wood are used off the fairway or off a tee when accuracy is needed. 3 wood normal loft is 15 degrees and 5 wood loft is 21 degrees

2 iron through pitching wedge are used from the fairway or tees on short holes

The further from the pin, the lower the number of the club is used.

The loft changes with the lowest loft being a 2 iron and the most loft a sand wedge. The lower the loft, the lower the trajectory. The lower the trajectory, the longer the distance on the shot

COACH FOCUS

• Check the understanding of the golfers as to when to use a driver

• Explain tees and etiquette involved

• Explain fairway’s mowed grass down the middle

• Discuss differences in loft and numbering system of irons comparing them to the length of the shot

• Explain loft is angle of club head

• This is achieved by practice on a driving range with marked distances or on a course during play. Knowing the distance of the shot combined with playing conditions and the distances the golfer hits each club is essential to proper club selection

GOAL:

For each golfer to know the distance they hit each club.

Vocabulary Of The Day

Wood – a club with a wooden head

Iron – a club with a metal head

Divot – slice of ground or turf cut with club (replace all divots)

Golf Rule #1 – Ball must be played where it lies – “Winter” rules – you may move ball in fairway 1 club head but not closer to the grass.
**Skillcard #5**

**HILL LIES**

**DRILL:**
Have golfers stand on a “hill” (or carpet on a ramp) and take 5-6 shots on command from coach for each of the following sidehill, uphill, downhill lies.

**TEACHING PROGRESSION**

**Sidehill lies** – Adjust the stance and ball placement to conform to the lie of the ball. Don’t overswing on a sidehill lie

Let the club head adjust to the contour of the ground

**Uphill lies** (or if the ball is above your feet) – Keep feet closer to the ball. Place ball more forward in the stance and keep majority of your weight on right foot

**Downhill lies** – Play the ball back in your stance with the majority of weight on left foot

**COACH FOCUS**

- Golfers may have to bend knees and adjust stance for a sidehill lie
- Have golfer take 2-3 practice swings to become familiar with the swing arch needed
- Check stance or aim compared to the uphill lie
- There is a tendency to pull or hook, so aim to the right
- The ball tends to go to the right so aim left of target
- Check stance or aim compared to the downhill lie

**GOAL:**
To be able to hit from sidehill, uphill and downhill lies with correct form.

**Vocabulary Of The Day**

**Lie** – position of ball on course

**Fairway** – the well kept mowed part of the hole between the tee and the green

**Rough** – long grass off fairway

**Golf Rule #2** – The participant whose ball is furthest away from the hole will go first.
**Skillcard #6**

**SAND SHOT**

**DRILL:**
Use a sand trap (or sand box or sand volleyball court). Have golfers spaced approximately 6 feet apart. On coach’s command, practice shot. Place the ball at various positions.
- a. On the lip of trap, b. One foot into trap, c. Middle of the trap

**TEACHING PROGRESSION**
To control a sand shot the golfer must hit sand about 2 inches behind the ball and let the sand push the ball out of the trap. On longer sand shots, hit the sand closer to the ball

Keep swing strong through the sand making sure you execute a good follow through

The golfer cannot touch the ground with their club while addressing the ball

After the shot, all footprints and club marks must be raked and the sand smoothed out

**COACH FOCUS**
- Determine the understanding of the sand moving the ball out of the trap and not the contact with the club face
- Enter trap at the shortest distance to the ball as to not disturb the trap
- Make golfers aware of the rules of hitting from a hazard

**GOAL:**
To hit a sand shot correctly with as little sand spray as possible.

**Vocabulary Of The Day**
- **Trap** – usually sand
- **Bunker** – hazard usually sand

**Golf Rule #3** – If a ball goes out of bounds it’s “stroke and distance.” You must hit from original spot and add 1 penalty stroke to your score. Ex: Hit #1 out of bounds, bring back to the tee add 1 penalty stroke. You would be hitting stroke 3 off the tee.
Game Time

Club Selection
Hill Lies
Sand Shot

General Description of Game

Have golfers pick out clubs for a drive, hill lie, and sand shot.

1. Have golfers start with picking out 3 clubs.
2. Have golfers tee up and drive towards the target area #1 (use more than 3 depending on the number of golfers) on a hill. Have one uphill, one downhill and sidehill target about 75 yards away. May be more or less yards depending on age or ability. To make target use rope or paint or hula hoops.
3. Pick up ball and proceed to sand trap (or sand box or volleyball court etc.).
4. Throw into trap, hit out to target area. Have 3 target areas. Let golfers hit up to 3 balls out of trap.
5. Start at tee again and hit to hill target #1 from the hill proceed to sand trap and hit at target #2, then repeat for target #3.

Modified Play Rules

*Note: Use any hill available – does not have to be on a golf course. Make sand traps using small wading pools if needed or set up course near sandy area.
Skillcard #7

SHORT SWING

DRILL:
Have golfers line up back to back (approximately 6 feet apart driving range style). Try 3/4 swing, 1/2 swing and 1/4 swing. Do each swing 5 times and then go retrieve balls on coach’s command.

TEACHING PROGRESSION
Start with correct stance
Shorten the backswing according to distance required
The shorter the distance, the shorter the swing
The shorter the swing, the less the body turns and the less wrist action
Follow through same as backswing
Accelerate through the ball

GOAL:
To be able to execute a shot with 1/4, 1/2, and 3/4 swing.

COACH FOCUS
• Use a short swing when the shortest club in the bag still produces too much distance
• Check golfers to make sure body movement and wrist action is kept to a minimum
• Ensure acceleration through ball and follow through are correct

Vocabulary Of The Day
Approach Shot – shot hit before the green
Fore – warning yelled if ball is going towards other golfers
Hazard – natural or unnatural obstacles on a course

Golf Rule #4 – Ball marks on the green should be repaired and never use anything but a putter on the green.
**Skillcard #8**

**PITCH SHOT**

Draw with paint or rope off a practice green with a flag or hole. Have golfers circle the green 15-50 yards out (start close and work out). On coaches command, golfers attempt a pitch shot to the green. Check for short swing and loft. Have each golfer hit 5 shots before all go and retrieve their balls.

**TEACHING PROGRESSION**

This shot is used when the ball must fly high and land softly on the green. Usually the club of choice is a 9 iron, pitching wedge or sand wedge.

Stance should be square or slightly open. Use a shorter backswing for a shorter shot. Choke down slightly on club grip to have better control of shot.

Let loft of the club do the work on the shot. Do not try to scoop the ball.

**COACH FOCUS**

- Check swing on 9 iron, wedge and sand wedge
- Check stance, grip and distance of backswing
- Check that golfers are not “pushing” the ball. Check for loft

**GOAL:**

To be able to execute a pitch shot with correct form to a designated target.

**Vocabulary Of The Day**

- **Par** – expected score for a hole
- **Birdie** – finishing hole 1 stroke below par
- **Bogey** – finishing hole 1 stroke over par

**Golf Rule #5** – Do not break branches or stomp down grass to improve the lie of the ball.
**Skillcard #9**

**Playing from the Rough**

Have golfers line up in rough (or any grass over 4 inches tall) back to back 6 feet apart. Set a target line for short shots or where the “fairway” would be. Have golfers hit on command and then retrieve all together on command.

**Drill:**

**Teaching Progression**

Open stance slightly when playing from the rough. Set feet firmly especially in deeper rough.

Depending on thickness and length of grass bring club head back more upright to avoid dragging in grass.

Hit through the ball strongly and remember to follow through open club face slightly.

**Coach Focus**

- Check stance and upright backswing
- Check for a strong swing with club face open slightly
- Hit down on the ball
- Make sure golfers aren’t looking to see where the ball lands before they follow through

**Goal:**

To hit a shot with correct form from the rough allowing the ball to land at a designated target.

**Golf Rule #6** – A ball lying by a fence or any man made object may be moved by dropping the ball with arm straight out. Do not drop closer to pin.

**Golf Rule #7** – The penalty for a lost ball is stroke and distance – 5 minutes is considered lost.
Game Time

SHORT SHOT
PITCH SHOT
PLAYING THE ROUGH

General Description of Game

Target practice from the rough to the fairway, short shot to edge of green

1. Have golfers tee off into rough (set up tee right in front of rough).
2. Choose club and hit shot out of the rough onto the fairway (or short grass).
3. Using short shot take one or two shots to just before target area (green).
4. Using a pitch shot, hit the target area.
5. Have golfers count number of strokes to get used to doing this. Have golfers try to remember which club was hit and count that way. ex. driver, 4, 8, pitching wedge = 4 shots.

Modified Play Rules

*Note: set up course on any park land if a course is not available.
Using a green or indoor/outdoor carpet, have golfers find the “perfect grip and stance” for them. Practice putts from 1 foot working out to 8 foot putts.

**TEACHING PROGRESSION**

Select a stance for putting that is the most comfortable for the golfer. Usually upright with neck and shoulders slightly bent, feet 4-12 inches apart

The stance is square and balanced

The left arm is close to the body and the right arm is close to the right thigh

The ball is at the left instep

During the stroke, make sure the head and legs do not move. The shoulders and arms move together like a pendulum

The backswing is short and low to the ground. It must be in line with the target and intended roll of the ball

Keep follow through toward target

**COACH FOCUS**

- Stance may be narrow or wide depending on golfer. Check golfers to ensure golfer uses grip that is comfortable usually both thumbs on top

- Keep golfers from bending over too far

- Don’t let golfers over correct

- There is no head or leg movement on the stroke. Check to see if putter head is taken straight back in line with target

- Line up putter shaft with hole and have golfer stand accordingly

- Do not move head until after the shot

**GOAL:** To be able to sink putts from a distance of 1-8 feet.

**Flag (stick) or pin** – flag with hole # on it

**Green** – short cropped grass around the hole
Skillcard #11  Instructional Skills

CHIP SHOT

Mark out a smooth area for a green (or use a practice green). Have golfers circle green 6 feet apart. On command, have golfers use the correct club and stroke to run the ball at the cup. Retrieve balls on coaches command only.

DRILL:

TEACHING PROGRESSION

The chip shot is used when there is an open shot to the pin with no hazards between golfer and green

A lower lofted club, such as a 7 iron, is preferred in order for the ball to run on the ground to the cup

Stance similar to the pitch shot with the golfer weight more on the front foot.

On short chips, use the putting stroke. This will keep the ball on target

GOAL:

To execute a chip shot so the ball “runs up” the green and does not fly over.

COACH FOCUS

• Check golfers to ensure a lower lofted club is used and stance is slightly open with weight forward

• Check golfers to ensure a putting stroke is used for short chips

• Do not let golfers loft the ball over the green. A short loft followed by a run is desired

Golf Rule #8 – The penalty for a ball in the water is one stroke and the ball must be dropped in front of the hazard.
Skillcard #12

**READING THE GREEN**

Have golfers practice with the lie of greens (or lay carpet down outside on ground that is not flat). Ask which way the ball will “break” then demonstrate the break. Have all golfers putt from various marked areas around the green.

**DRILL:**

**TEACHING PROGRESSION**

From behind the ball on the green, the golfer looks at the contour of the ground to determine the direction of roll or commonly known as the break.

The green’s grass also lays in one direction. This will affect the roll of the ball. Also, if the putt is against the “grain”, it will slow down. If the putt is with the “grain” the putt will roll farther and quicker.

**COACH FOCUS**

- Have golfers squat down to get a good look. Check golfers to ensure the knowledge of seeing the contour and knowing which direction the ball will roll.
- Check golfers to ensure they can tell the direction of the grain on the green.

**GOAL:**

To be able to tell which way the putt will go by looking or “reading” the green.
Game Time

CHIP SHOT ROLLS PUTTING READING THE GREEN

General Description of Game

Have golfers putt from various distances then have them chip and putt.

1. Start off with a green (or indoor carpet with holes cut out) 1 foot, 2 feet, 3 feet, 4 feet etc.
2. Have golfers start at one point and putt and continue moving around the “green” and putt. If you have use of a putting green, do the same with the golfers circling the green. **At this time, explain putting etiquette “furthest out putts first”.
3. After putting, have golfers start at 40 yards hitting chip shots to the carpet or green. After 40 move to 30, 20, and 10 yards, making sure the ball runs up but not over the green.
4. Wait until first set of golfers are done before the next group chips.

Modified Play Rules

Golfers Line Up

10 Yards
20 Yards
30 Yards
40 Yards