



First Tee Life Skills Experience – Changes in 2022

First Tee's signature Life Skills Experience seamlessly combines life skills lessons with the game of golf. Traditionally, participants progress through five different levels starting from the PLAYer level and culminating with the Ace level in high school. Each level builds on the previous level to empower youth with skills including conflict resolution techniques, resiliency, goal setting, planning for the future, self-management, and giving back. These are considered *certifying* levels. Participants acquire hours, knowledge, and skills throughout their time in each level until they are eligible to move on to the next level through a certification process (find out more about the certification process below). Participants begin in certifying levels as young as 7 years old and continue through high school.

We also offer our Junior Links non-certifying classes for children as young as 5 to grow curiosity for the game of golf and introduce a few of our signature core values.

Beginning in 2022, First Tee is undergoing a curriculum refresh, and First Tee – Fort Worth is proud to play an integral part in piloting this refreshed curriculum, as well as provide critical feedback to our national office. Participants and families will notice that our classes have shifted to an age-based structure, regardless of skill level or current status in the Life Skills Experience program. The advantages of switching to an age-based structure are numerous and participants may find that learning amongst peers their own age proves a more comfortable environment. Participants with greater golf experience and those who have progressed to higher levels of the program will also find they have the opportunity to demonstrate leadership amongst their peers by helping others during class and setting a good example. Participants will now be exposed to lessons previously reserved for upper levels earlier in their First Tee journey. Lessons like goal setting and conflict management are introduced early on.

For those who have worked so hard to reach higher levels of the program, their levels still count! We will still be tracking hours in each level, working in yardage books, and tracking golf skill and lesson knowledge to certify into higher levels. However, instead of having a single week of certification at the end of each session, participants will demonstrate their skills and knowledge throughout the session, allowing them to move up when they're ready!

See the Breakdown of Each Level Below

Junior Links (ages 5-6) - Non-certifying level, grows curiosity for the game and introduces basic golf skills and core values.

PLAYer – Tee up for the first time and learn the game of golf and First Tee's Code of Conduct.

Par – Focus on interpersonal and self-management skills on and off the course.

Birdie – Emphasis on setting goals and making them a reality.

Eagle – Learn resilience, conflict resolution, and future planning.

Ace (required minimum age 14 or entering 9th grade) – Put it all together and hone in on setting goals, career education, and giving back to the community.

Advancement through Levels – Certification

Each level of First Tee marks growth in both life skills and golf skills. In order to progress through each level, participants must complete the requirements for their respective levels which include a minimum number of programming hours, work in their yardage book, and play requirements. Participants are expected to work on these requirements throughout their time in a level. Regardless of how many weeks have passed in a session and regardless of their age group, participants will be promoted to higher levels of the program when they have demonstrated proficiency in the requirements of their respective level. **This is a change from our previous model of certification testing during one week at the end of each session.** This will enable participants to certify at their own pace rather than rushing or delaying certification of a participant. See what your participant needs to certify at the link below.

[See Certification Requirements by Level](#)

Other Opportunities

Competitor Class – For those looking to advance their golf skills to compete in tournament play, or in high school and/or college, this class offers lessons on both the mental and skill aspects of the game, including course management, competition golf, managing emotions and more.

Local Opportunities – There are often opportunities for participants to demonstrate their character growth by representing First Tee – Fort Worth at events and functions including professional tournament, charity and fundraising events, and public speaking opportunities. Additionally, we play several competitive events between other First Tee chapters, host a tournament series of our own, and have a local section of PGA Jr. League.

National Opportunities – As part of a national organization, First Tee offers a variety of events that include golf, leadership, and character development content for participants ages 14-18. These events must be applied to for selection through a vigorous application, and occasionally, an interview process. These are meant to mimic job interviews to give participants experience in these real-world processes. These opportunities often include travel across the country and once-in-a-lifetime experiences, often at no cost to the participant's family!