

# General Advice for Enjoy Tennis Volunteers



## Key points to remember when interacting and working with athletes:

### 1. Language and Communication

- Use clear, simple, age-appropriate language.
- Communicate and speak directly to the athlete, rather than a parent/sibling.
- Observe how the athlete communicates e.g. verbally, visuals, gestures, facial expressions, or using communication aids.
- Always use the athlete's name to gain his/her attention before an activity.
- Provide one instruction at a time and ensure that the athlete understands.
- Pause and allow time for the athlete to process an instruction and respond to you.
- Incorporate social skills into activities e.g. listening, eye contact, turn taking.
- Speak calmly in a relaxed tone and at an appropriate pace for the athlete.

### 2. Sensory Needs

- Be aware of an athlete's sensitivity to noise, light, touch, smell, space, or movement.

### 3. Abilities and Independence Skills

- Focus on the athlete's abilities, skills, interests, likes and preferences.
- Adapt the activity to suit the athlete's level of ability and skill.
- Encourage the athlete to become as independent as possible at all times.
- Allow for rest breaks/time out and observe attention/concentration/fatigue.
- Ensure that the athlete knows how to ask for help/assistance, if required.
- Encourage interactions and development of friendships among peers.

### 4. Tennis Tips

- Use visuals or actions to demonstrate instructions or tennis techniques.
- Break a skill/technique down into smaller, achievable steps.
- Be creative and repeat the tennis drill in lots of different ways to develop key skills.
- Develop motor skills, balance, and hand-eye co-ordination e.g. throwing and catching.
- Provide lots of reassurance, praise, laughter, and encouragement.

**And above all ...**

**Make it Fun, Inclusive and Enjoyable for all of our Athletes! 😊**

**Catherine Merrigan, Vice President, WTC**