**Activities to do in Clubs/Lessons**

Here are some ideas of activities to do in clubs or lessons.

We recommend that for children up to about 15-kyu, most games played in a children’s club setting would be 13x13 games. Beginners are better on 9x9 at first. There’s no reason ever to stop playing 13x13 Go completely, it is good for fast tournaments / arena tournaments etc.

1. Lessons with a single child or very small group

* Use the Kano “Graded Go puzzles for beginners” series of books and do a few puzzles in each session. These books are excellent in terms of building up difficulty slowly and introducing a range of topics at the right stage. One good feature is that the earliest puzzles are easy enough for beginners. Children get a sense of achievement by finishing sections and eventually whole books (there are 4 books in the series).
* Play teaching games against the children. Use the “Games against Go Teacher” chart in the Basic Resources folder. Start on a 9x9 board with a lot of handicap stones and when the children win they can move up and have fewer handicap stones or move to a bigger board. For some levels they should have to win more than once to move up.
* Once they have moved up to a larger board you can still sometimes play on a smaller board for variety
* Do the topics on the four Go Skills Sheets (12 topics on each sheet), using the Go Skills Guides. Give the child a star on the chart once they have mastered each topic. Give out a certificate when they finish a whole sheet
* After a while, introduce looking each session at one or two 9x9 whole board puzzles/situations to practice identifying strong/weak groups and big/small moves
* Remember to revise/reinforce topics already covered if it seems they haven’t been fully understood.
* To have a different opponent, you can get the child to play some games against bots on OGS or a similar server. They can start with the weakest one and move on to stronger bots. It’s easier to quickly review these games than games played on an actual board
* If your pupils are happy to play some games between lessons e.g. on OGS then you can do a quick review of a game they have played since last time. Just pick out one or two learning points and remember to praise good moves.

When there is a larger group or regular club, many of these activities are still good but it’s also possible to add some more things …

1. Club ladder

* Set up a ladder with several slots at each kyu level. Start from a very low level, say 45-kyu or 50-kyu so that there’s a lot of room for children to move up. It’s great if you can make an actual physical ladder that children’s names can slot in
* Use the 13x13 handicap scheme in the Basic Resources folder when children play games against each other or against a Go teacher or parents at the club. These handicaps should work quite well for even big grade differences as long as the players are not beginners
* Move children up the ladder if they win a couple of games against higher up players
* It’s best to have beginners play amongst themselves or with adults as stronger children may get carried away with trying to win by a very large margin. Adults can give some hints during the game. Beginners have to get to a certain level before the handicap stones really help them.
* Give out badges to children who reach milestones e.g. 30-kyu, 25-kyu, 20-kyu
* For players stronger than about 15-kyu who have started to play in tournaments, they will need to know that their tournament grade is more important and their grade on the ladder will not be so accurate.

1. Club tournament

* It’s possible to run a simple tournament with some pairing cards like the ones in the Basic Resources section. In a normal children’s club session it’s usually better for tournaments to be 13x13 Go as a 19x19 tournament could spread over several sessions and be more difficult to organise. Also on a full size board it is harder to use handicaps to fix mismatched games.
* One way is to have a Swiss system tournament with a fixed number of rounds
* Another way is to have an “arena” tournament where players are paired up for the next game as soon as possible after they finished the previous one. Children may end up playing different numbers of games so prizes can be given for most wins, best percentage of wins (with at least so many games played) etc.
* Tournaments can be even game or handicap. If the playing level of the children varies a lot, then there can be a problem in an even game tournament of too many mismatched games, which are not fun for either player. One way to fix this is to use even games with single or double elimination to determine the strongest player(s) and then have handicap games for anyone eliminated from the even game section.
* It’s good to give prizes! It’s especially good to have separate prizes for younger age groups and for new players as otherwise these won’t be encouraged to take part.
* There may be some children who really don’t want to play in a tournament. There usually shouldn’t be a problem to have a few children play friendly games instead

1. Group teaching

* Teaching can usually be done using a similar scheme/topics as for individual lessons
* It’s good to do puzzles in small groups with players taking turns to do a puzzle. This also allows you to vary the level of the puzzles for different children. It’s important to have a rule that everyone should think about every puzzle but only answer their own. If you don’t have a projector or smart board the best way is usually to print out each puzzle large size (one puzzle per sheet) and put it in the middle of a table where everyone can see it.
* Some of the topics in the Go Skills Sheets have activities to practice together (e.g. invading a square space in the corner surrounded by a solid wall of the other colour and trying to live).
* If the group is large it can be better to split into smaller groups for teaching. If you have more than one teacher, you can teach groups at different levels. If there’s only one teacher they can do puzzles with one group while another group plays games etc.

1. Participating in external events

* It’s great if children, once they reach an appropriate level, can play in external Go tournaments/events. This is easy if they are held locally (or you might organise a tournament yourself), otherwise you can organise a trip to a suitable event. If it is known that a group of children are going to play in an event, this can often be used to encourage other children to enter.
* In the UK, the UK Go Challenge is a great event for clubs to get involved in. The idea is to first hold a heat of the competition in your own club, with lots of prizes. Then afterwards the children have the opportunity to travel to the finals and play against children from other clubs.
* The Euro City Go League is a great event for teams from school/youth clubs to take part in. It’s played online on small boards, a mixture of handicap and even games, so it’s good for inexperienced players. Some strong players have played in it too. Having one or more teams from a club playing in an external event like this gives a sense of purpose and working together.