

BELIEVE • COMPETE • DREAM • EXCEL • FOCUS • RESPECT



Smart Spots can be used in a large variety of situations. The 6 rainbow colors of each set are printed with motivational words on one side and are blank on the other. They are 10 inches in diameter and durable like our other court shapes.

- Use shapes for targeting, home positions, and movement drills. **NOT a new idea.**
- Inspire with messages in sports to enhance character education. **NOT a new idea.**
- Combine shapes and motivational words. **NEW IDEA!**

Smart Spots are a new training tool concept to make players smarter about both tennis and life. This idea is based on a recent study at Stanford University:

- 92% of the reason you succeed or fail is determined by attitude.
- 75% of the reason a person learns or fails to learn is based on attitude.
- 85% of the reason a person gets or keeps a job and advances is based on attitude.
- Children are 25% of our population but 100% of our future!

WHAT IS CHARACTER? Character is who we are inside. It is defined by **how we behave when no one is looking.**

THREE DIMENSIONS OF CHARACTER EDUCATION

1. **Knowledge** – Teaching principles of right and wrong to enhance the ability to perceive and understand the moral implications of situations as well as make ethical decisions (cognitive).
2. **Feelings** – Instilling a deep and lasting belief in ethical principles while inspiring and reinforcing a desire to act ethically. The result is a moral commitment to be fair-minded and honest (emotional).
3. **Actions** – Demanding and modeling ethical conduct so that ethical behavior becomes automatic and instinctive; living up to core ethical principles so they become habits (behavioral).

CORE QUESTIONS

Should Coaches Be Involved in Character Education? Yes, but coaches can feel uncomfortable combining character education with sports training. Smart Spots make it easy.

Isn't the primary responsibility in the hands of the parents? Of course, the primary responsibility for character development does rest with parents and families. But since sports are a primary opportunity to test the “character” of young athletes, it is only natural that coaches play an important role as well.

Are coaches involved whether they realize it or not? Yes, whether or not character development is a conscious goal of a sports program, sports will deeply affect the evolving character of the children involved. From middle school on, many coaches have more influence on the values and behavior of young people than parents. The question is not whether coaches should be involved in character development; the question is whether they do so intentionally and intelligently.

Do parents want teachers and coaches to promote character through sports? According to a study by the American Federation of Teachers, a majority of Americans wants public schools to teach core ethical values.

- **95%** want schools to teach honesty and the importance of telling the truth.
- **95%** want schools to teach respect for those of different racial or ethnic backgrounds.
- **93%** want schools to teach kids to resolve problems without resorting to violence (i.e. bullying and intimidation).

ACTIVITIES

- 1. TOSS and LEARN:** Pair children. Each one stands with both feet on their own spot. They toss a ball back and forth and spell out one of the words on the spots cooperatively. Example with “**BELIEVE**”. First child tosses and says “B”. Second child tosses back and says “E”. First child tosses back and says “L”. Continue until one word is completed and then go to the word on the other spot. **Learning outcomes:** Spelling improvement, awareness and thinking about these words, balance since two feet are on a 10-inch spot, accurate tossing, catching, and cooperation with a partner. Can be competitive with multiple teams performing at the same time. Adjust distance between partners according to skill level. Rotate words in each round as some words are longer.
- 2. HIT and LEARN:** Pair children. One stands with both feet on a single spot. Second child has racquet. Player on spot tosses ball to hitter who spells out, one letter at a time, the word on the spot where the tossing child is standing. For each letter to count the thrower must catch the hit. Example with word “**FOCUS**.” With first hit, child says “F.” On second hit, child says “O.” On third hit, child says “C.” It goes on until one word is completed. **Learning outcomes:** Spelling improvement, awareness and thinking about these words, accurate hitting, balance for child with two feet on the spot, accurate tossing, catching, and cooperation with a partner. Switch positions after word is completed without error. Can be competitive with multiple teams performing at the same time. Adjust distance between partners according to skill level. Rotate words in each round as some words are longer.
- 3. COOPERATIVE HITTING:** Pair children. Each one stands with one foot on their own spots. Both have racquets and must keep one foot standing on their spot at all times. Players hit back and forth and spell out, one letter at a time, the word on the spot where the tossing child is standing. For each letter to count, the thrower must catch the hit. Example with word “**DREAM**.” With first hit, child says “D.” On second hit, child says “R.” On third hit, child says “E.” It goes on until one word is completed. **Learning outcomes:** Spelling improvement, awareness of these words, accurate hitting, balance for the tossing child, accurate tossing, catching, and cooperation with a partner. Switch positions after word is completed without error. Can be competitive with multiple teams performing at the same time. Adjust distance between partners according to skill level. Rotate words in each round as some words are longer.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Turn spots “words down.” Before stretching at the end of a workout, have athletes pick up a spot and use the “word” selected in the situations listed below. Adjust to different ages as appropriate.

- Describe an example in your sport when someone other than you exhibited this trait.
- Describe an example in your sport when you personally demonstrated a high level of this trait.
- Describe an example outside sports when someone other than you exhibited this trait.
- Describe an example outside sports when you personally demonstrated a high level of this trait.