

All Stars Cricket – the first, fun, active form of the game for 5 to 8-year-old boys and girls

The England & Wales Cricket Board (ECB) today launched the first nationwide entry-level participation programme for cricket, with the aim of getting 50,000 boys and girls excited by the game this year.

A new generation of families will be introduced to cricket through All Stars Cricket, a major new grassroots initiative which starts in May.

All Stars Cricket will be delivered through local cricket clubs and centres across England and Wales throughout the summer, giving 5-8 year olds their first experience of the game.

From today (Monday 20 March) parents can register their kids to take part via allstarscricket.co.uk. After signing-up, boys and girls will have a cricket 'back-pack' delivered to their door with a bat, ball and everything they need to try the game for the first time.

They will then start an eight-week programme at their local participating centre, with the emphasis placed firmly on learning how to play the game in a fun, safe and inclusive environment. Children will also learn the social development skills that team sport brings.

Each session of the 8-week programme - developed with input from Andrew Strauss and the England performance team - will give children the basic skills they need to develop a lifelong love of cricket. ECB will give participating centres free All Stars kits, volunteer training and support via a central marketing campaign, celebrating 'Big Moments' as children take their first steps in the game. The programme reflects ECB's strategic framework for growing the game at every level.

ECB Director of Participation & Growth Matt Dwyer said:

"We have big ambitions to significantly grow the game and this programme is all about putting a bat and ball in the hands of more children at an earlier age. First and foremost, we want to make playing cricket a fun and enjoyable experience for children and give them a passion for the game to last a lifetime.

"Drawing kids to the game at an early age will develop more players, create more fans and show the power of cricket in developing physical and social skills.

"We also want to make sure that parents have a great first experience at the club and give them the chance to have an hour back with their kids every week. We will be encouraging parents to get involved with sessions, whatever their prior knowledge of the game.

"Within weeks of unveiling the programme to clubs we had 2,000 of them sign up to deliver All Stars Cricket and this summer we hope to have 50,000 kids trying the sport all over the country through this exciting nationwide programme."

Former England captain and All Stars Cricket ambassador Michael Vaughan said:

"I started playing cricket at my local club and have seen first-hand how important it is to introduce kids to our sport in a fun way.

"As a parent, I've also seen how tough it can be to get kids interested in sport especially given the amount of activities competing for their time. Finding a way for cricket to appeal to kids and to get them active is more important than ever.

“We are bringing cricket to the front door of kids and parents across England and Wales. I can’t wait to see the positive impact this will have on clubs and the wider game.”

Minister for Sport, Tourism and Heritage Tracey Crouch MP said:

“All Stars Cricket is exactly the type of programme we are keen to see more of. It is vital to encourage children to have a happy, healthy and active lifestyle from an early age. All Stars Cricket proposes to do just that and I’m sure parents will jump at the chance to sign their kids up.”

Mumsnet CEO Justine Roberts said:

"We all know that kids - not to mention grown-ups - benefit from regular exercise, but finding fun new ways to get everyone running around can stretch parents' ingenuity. We're happy to be working with the ECB on their campaign to highlight ways to help parents find fun, sporty activities that their children will love."

England men’s and women’s stars Jonny Bairstow and Lauren Winfield and Ashes winning legend Michael Vaughan are backing the programme which will be formally launched later today at London’s ArcelorMittal Orbit in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.