



**K-4 Baseball/
Softball
Coaching Manual**

“The Coach Clipboard”

Thank you for volunteering to coach in the upcoming Baseball/Softball season. We are pleased to have you a part of our program. We understand and appreciate the significant commitment of your time and energy to the youth in our community. We could not do what we do without volunteer coaches like you!

Coaching is a challenging and rewarding role. *You are the single most important factor in determining if the athletes on your team have a positive and rewarding experience.* This manual was made in an effort to assist you in making this season a positive experience for you and the young athletes that will be in your care. It was designed to:

- Assist you in understanding the KIDSPORTS philosophy and in realizing the goals KIDSPORTS strives to achieve in all our sports programs.
- Better prepare you for the challenges that you will face as a volunteer coach.
- Educate you on the policies and procedures of KIDSPORTS.
- Educate you on current “best practices” for coaching youth sports.

KIDSPORTS Mission Statement: KIDSPORTS is dedicated to providing positive youth team sports experiences through family and community involvement that is based on the philosophy of “all kids play.”

KIDSPORTS Philosophy: KIDSPORTS is dedicated to providing children with educational, recreational, and learning experiences through sports participation. KIDSPORTS believes children should be given opportunities to participate in many different activities with team sports being one of them.

KIDSPORTS Programs are designed too:

- Provide a source of recreation for children.
- Provide children with an opportunity to learn about sports and improve their athletic skills through participation and competition.
- Give children a chance to grow socially by learning teamwork, sportsmanship and fair play.
- Provide children with a source of fun and good times which will enrich their lives.

ALL KIDS PLAY: A corner stone of our organization is our commitment that ALL KIDS PLAY. Our programs are open to any child who is able to participate regardless of race, religion, creed,

sex, ability or financial status. As a KIDSPORTS coach, we expect you to have this same commitment to all kids. *This is not a “coach the best...bench the rest” organization.*

The Goal:

- **Goal -Building character through teachable moments:** Sports provides an endless supply of teachable moments that can be used by adults to develop great people. This is the Big Picture, what children take away from youth sports. Remaining physically active throughout their life, learning to bounce back from difficulties with renewed determination, learning how to support other people within a team context---these are all the Big Picture.

The Double Goal Coach: Your job as a KIDSPORTS coach is to be a *Double Goal Coach*. You should prepare your athletes to win AND teach life lessons through your sport. Both are equally important. All of our head coaches are required to take the Positive Coaching Alliance-Double Goal Coach coaching course. All of the philosophies and specific tools for being a Double Goal Coach are covered in this course.

Second Goal Parent: As a coach, it is important for you to make sure the parents on your team understand you expect them to be a *Second-Goal Parent*: they let coaches and athletes worry about the first goal of winning and they focus on the much more important role of ensuring their children learn the life lessons that will help them be successful in life. Tips and tools for supporting parents in their role can also be found at www.positivecoach.org

Triple-Impact Competitor: As a coach, your job is to help develop *Triple-Impact Competitors*: the kind of athlete that makes self better, teammates better and the game better. For these athletes it is not enough just to win, if that means breaking the rules or disrespecting opponents. Go to www.positivecoach.org to find tools on how to build a team culture that develops *Triple-Impact Competitors*.

KIDSPORTS—A School Based Program

KIDSPORTS is a school based program. This philosophy derives from both the mission statement of “all kids play,” and a task that KIDSPORTS was given by surrounding school districts in the early 70’s to supplant both elementary and middle school athletics. This means our first goal is always to form teams within school boundaries. This ensures that all kids in a school area are placed on a team with an assigned coach and prevents the creation of “All Star” teams. School based teams help to promote a sense of community and positive peer relationships for all children. This policy is in place to help us fulfill our Mission Statement and KIDSPORTS Philosophy.

Team Management

Parent Meeting:

The parent meeting is very important and is also often overlooked. It is an opportunity to get to know your families better and let them get to know you. This will allow you to set the stage for open communication, let them know your expectations, as well as give the nuts and bolts information about the team. In this meeting you should:

- Briefly introduce yourself.
- Tell them what your focus is for the players and team. (i.e. Have fun, teach appropriate skills, have them want to play again)
- Tell them what they can expect from you: to be on time, be prepared, be positive, be fair, etc. (see sample of coach pledge)
- Tell them what expectations you have of them: get child to practice, communicate if they will be absent or late, be positive, pick-up on time etc. (See sample of parent pledge and player pledge)
- Make sure you cover how you will communicate all information about games and practices with them (email, text, bonzi?).
- Make sure you have all the correct emails and phone numbers.
- It is a good idea to have paper copies of the practice schedule and game schedule to hand out even if you plan on sending that information electronically. Nothing gets a family off to a bad sports experience more than not getting information and their child missing practices or games.
- Get parent volunteers for refereeing (for the K- 2nd grade group), and help with snacks, carpools, awards, etc.

Team Meeting:

It is also a good idea to take a few minutes to have a team meeting. Keep this brief and simple. Just introduce yourself and have each player introduce themselves. You can also have them answer a simple question such as “what is your favorite food” or “what is your favorite animal”? This is a simple icebreaker that will help the players get to know each other. You also will want to let them know what your coaching will focus on, but in a way they will be able to understand. For example you could say:

“We are going to have a great time this Baseball/Softball season! We are going to learn all the ways we can move our bodies and learn how to play Baseball/Softball. You all are going to be learning lots of new things and even if things are hard to begin with, I am going to want you to keep giving your best

effort. That is how we will know if we are winning....if we are giving our best effort and learning new things. OK?! Now let's get started!"

You will also want to let them know your rules for the team. Don't have a big long list, just a few important rules that they will remember. Your rules will all be slightly different depending on your own personal style. Some examples of team rules are: 1) No talking when the coach is talking. 2) No negative comments to other players. 3) Give your best effort. 4) Have fun!

Game Time:

Game time should be a fun exciting experience that allows the players to play and practice all the things they have been learning in practices. The players who have never played the game before may be a bit nervous before the first game. For this age volunteers referee the game. The offensive team provides the home plate umpire and the defensive team provides the field umpire. These umpires are often the coaches but they do not have to be. Parents can volunteer to do this duty. You can usually get a couple of parents to help if you let them know at the beginning of the season. *Other important things to consider for game time are:*

- Letting families know how early to show up for a game...30 min prior? 15 min prior?
- What warm-up activities will you have your team do before a game? You will want them to get moving and ready to play, especially if the weather is chilly or wet.
- Making sure families and players know what behaviors are acceptable on the sidelines and in the game: cheering for both teams, no negative comments, no coaching from the sidelines, good sportsmanship. *Understand that the players and families will follow your example of behavior.*
- What is the purpose of the game? Not winning at this age....they will of course keep track of runs anyway. Your job will be to continually re-direct them to look at their own effort and if they are getting better at the skills to figure out if they are "winning".
- Make sure all players are allowed to play in all areas of the field. No player should be labeled just a 1st baseman or outfielder at this age
- What will your post game routine be? High-fives? A brief meeting? A team cheer? A snack. Try to be consistent; your players will look forward to whatever you do. The goal is to end the day with a positive message.

Coaching The K-1st Grade Player

Developmental considerations: “It’s all about me!”

Psychological/Cognitive

- *Individually oriented (egocentric)
- *Short attention span
- *Easily bruised psychologically
- *Perform tasks one at a time
- * “It’s MINE” is a commonly used phrase.
- *Limited tactical abilities
- *Biggest concern is which way to run after a hit and where to throw the ball.

Physical/Motor:

- *No sense of pace...will often run until they drop
- *Running, jumping, skipping, hopping and maintaining balance are *not* fully developed at this age.
- *Will often fall when changing direction because of high center of gravity.
- *Need multiple breaks during practice and games.

Psycho– social:

- *Could be first exposure to team sport.
- *Need to feel secure in practice and games
- *Social development is limited
- *Low interest in team activities or concepts. Often thinks about self first.

Coaching Consideration:

- *Give brief directions
- *Use several short activities
- *Lots of water breaks
- *Short training session (45min– 1hour)
- *Emphasize confidence and familiarity with the ball, throwing and catching.
- *Give plenty of encouragement and very little criticism or correction.
- *Primary focus is making baseball so enjoyable that the child chooses to play the next season.

* By the end of the season the player should be capable of : 1) Throwing the ball with some accuracy 15 to 20 ft. 2) Catching the ball with glove using 2 hands 50% of the time when thrown to them 3)Running the bases in the correct way during live play. 4) Proper swing to hit the ball off the Tee about 80% of the time.

The Kindergarten Game: T-Ball

Game is 5 innings. Time Limit: No new innings after 1 hour. Played with 10 players on the field: 4 outfielders, 6 infielders. 10 batters hit each inning regardless of “outs”. Each batter is given 3 attempts to hit a ball into play. Please do not allow unlimited swings as it results in very short games.

The 1st grade Baseball/ Softball Game: Modified Coach Pitch

Game is 5innings. Time limit: No new innings begun after 1 hour and 15 min. Played with 10 players on the field: 4 outfielders, 6 in fielders. 10 Batters bat each inning regardless of “outs”. Coaches pitch to their own team. A coach pitches a maximum of 3 pitches to a player, if they do not hit the ball into play they will be given 3 attempts to hit off of the Tee.

Coaching the 2nd - 4th grade player

Developmental Consideration: “Me and my partner”

Psychological/Cognitive:

- *Attention span a bit longer than K/1st player but still limited
- *Developing an ability to form a rule structure.
- *Still has limited ability to concentrate on more than one task at a time.
- *Beginning to understand the relation between time and space
- *Effort is synonymous with performance for them; if they feel they tried hard, they feel they have performed well.

Physical/Motor:

- *Bones still growing; growth plates are near joints. (Be aware of possible Injuries to those areas)
- *Still lack sense of pace; will run till they drop
- *Improved coordination from K/1st, but physical immaturity is still obvious.
- *Boys and girls are still similar in physical development
- *Beginning to develop physical confidence

Psycho– social:

- *Beginning to understand cooperative play and are more inclined towards group activities.
- *High need for approval from adults
- *Easily bruised psychologically; negative comments carry great weight.
- *Intrinsically motivated; play because it is “fun” and for their own enjoyment.
- *Increased desire for social acceptance.
- *Beginning to develop a team identity.

Coaching Consideration:

- *Practice should be no more than an hour. The will lose focus.
- *Mixture of individual and partner activities; more activities designed for partners.
- *Conclude each session with whole team scrimmage....let them play!
- *Stay away from complex team tactics and focus 2 or 3 players working together: for example. The pitcher throws to 1st and the right fielder moves to cover the throw.
- *Coach should begin to focus on helping players learn what “to do next” ...after they hit, after the ball is hit, after they throw, ect.
- ** By the end of the season the player should be able to: 1) Throw the ball with accuracy 20 -25 ft. 2) Catch a ball thrown to them, with two hands 70% of the time 3) be able to hit from coach 50% of the time and off a Tee 90-95% of the time. 4) Understand the basics of what to do on defense when the ball is hit into play: how to make an out & how to help a teammate.**

The 2nd grade Baseball/ Softball:

Coach Pitch

Game: 5 innings. Time limit: no new innings may begin after 1 hour and 15 mins (baseball) or 1 hour and 30 mins (Softball). Teams play with 10 players on the field: 4 outfielders, 6 infielders. An inning ends after 10 players have batted **OR** 3 outs are made. If a team has a 10 run lead after the 4th inning the game is terminated. A coach will pitch to their own team. A player is given a maximum of 5 pitches to hit a ball into play. A player is not out on a 3rd strike unless it is the 5th pitch.

The 3rd/4th grade Baseball/ Softball:

Modified Player Pitch

- 5 Inning games
- TIME LIMIT: *no new innings may begin after 1 hour and 30 minutes*
- Teams play with 9 players on the field at a time INNING TERMINATION: 5 runs per inning limit or 3 outs ends an inning
- 10-run RULE: 10 run lead after completion of 4th inning & the game is terminated
- Unlimited runs = only allowed in the 5th inning If a team incurs 3 walks and/or hit batters in a single inning (scattered or consecutive) – that will require the hitting team’s coach to coach-pitch for the remainder of the inning. Player-pitch must resume for the next inning.
- Coach Pitcher: each batter receives a max of 4 pitches to put the ball in play – after 4 pitches will be recorded as an out

Coach To-Do List

What to do after you get your roster:

- ___ Get all equipment and Uniforms
- ___ Sign up for practices
- ___ Contact all families to let them know when the first practice is and where it will be
- ___ Let parents know when your parent meeting will be
- ___ Give out the Parent - Athlete Concussion Awareness information sheet.
- ___ Print up letter to parents...with parent code of conduct
- ___ Get volunteers for parent referees and team managers: Let them know about any requirements they need to complete.
- ___ Let parents know what they can expect from you
- ___ Get an updated contact list for all parents
- ___ Make sure all your families follow their invite from Bonzi for Team Stream.
- ___ Let families know how you will contact them...text, email, phone call
- ___ Meet with players and go over expectations and team rules
- ___ Plan your first week of practices
- ___ Before the first game prepare your game rotation for game (2nd -3rd grade)
- ___ Have a great season!

Resource Guide

These were the websites used to produce the games and activities page. There is further information listed on these websites that may be useful to keep your practices fun, exciting and productive.

Websites used for drill selection:

QCBaseball.com http://www.qcbaseball.com/drills/baserunning_drills.aspx

Teeball USA <http://www.teeballusa.org/DrillsGames.asp>

QC Baseball: <http://www.qcbaseball.com/tools/practiceplans1.aspx>

ISport Softball: <http://softball.isport.com/softball-guides/how-to-crow-hop-in-the-outfield-in-softball>

Baseball Positive: <http://www.baseballpositive.com/practice-plans/>

Coach Mentoring:

We have several experienced coaches in all areas of Eugene/Springfield who have volunteered to be available as a resource to new coaches. These coaches are experienced in not only teaching soccer skills, but also in making sure that all players have a positive experience. They are willing to meet with you, come to a practice or help problem solve a specific issue. Please contact Paige or Pete for more information. paiges@kidsports.org and petel@kidsports.org

Games and Activities

WARM UP DRILLS

Dynamic Warm-up: Get them warmed up and ready to stretch.

- Jog to outfield and back
- Lunges: front, side and backward.
- Sprint at 50% to outfield and back, then at 75 % and back

Stretches:

- Arm circles , Elbow grab, Arm bar
- Front hang leg stretch

Throwing warm-up:

As always, have the girls/boys start practice by warming up their arms playing catch. They can warm up and you can instruct at the same time. Encourage these young players to hold the ball with 4 seems and 3 or 4 fingers.

- Have them line up in outfield using third base line as reference
- Half of team on outfield third base line and half 7-8 feet across in pairs
- Flip drill: Palm up holding ball with arm in front in an “L” position kneeling with opposite knee on the ground. Flip wrist and throw to partner.

Proper throwing motion drill:

- Same pairs move to 10 feet apart. Feet and shoulders are square. Player on 3rd base line should be facing toward home and partner facing toward outfield while heads turned toward one another. When throwing player should point glove at partner and arm should be in an “L” throwing position. Ball should be held palm down and wrist slightly bent. Some coaches refer to this position as the “Duck Position.” Throw to the partner while stepping across your body with your right foot (this will be opposite for left handed players.)

They should be extending their arms back behind their body and then following on thru once they have thrown the baseball.

Start them out close together and then have them move farther apart. Keep moving them apart until they reach their maximum throwing distance.

HITTING DRILLS

Tee Drill: Player should measure themselves from farthest part of plate with their bat to get into proper position to the plate. Players should grip the bat with fingers 1st and knuckles should be facing in the same direction facing away from the batter. Shoulders should be square and feet should be approximately shoulder width apart and knees bent in athletic position. Player should then distribute weight approximately 60% back and 40% front. Hands should be approximately level with back shoulder and eye level. Player should take small front foot stride, start swing leading with hands, while turning back foot (ball of foot) and finishing their swing after contact. Some refer to turning the back foot as “squishing the bug” and this is very important because it helps open hips for power. A lot of kids at this age stop their swing once contact is made. A best practice for this is to have them hit deflated soccer balls off the tee as this will force them to finish their swing. After this drill you would want to have them hit normal size baseballs as well.

Ghost Swing. Each player will wind up to swing to hit an imaginary ball. The player freezes when they have completed the swing to articulate their form when batting. You can add “squishing the bug” to the form of the batter to emphasize the movement of the foot turning as they swing. Focus on the hip movement, moving them from an open hip stance turning towards where the ball is being pitched or hit off a tee. (*QCBaseball.com*)

Coach Pitch One Knee soft toss: From approximately 12-15 feet. Have coach on one knee overhand pitching to players while the other coach stands beside player for instruction. Make sure you are not throwing lolly pops as this doesn't teach the kids to swing level and in most cases teaches them to swing up. The coach beside the player should instruct after each swing and have player reset their stance before next pitch.

BASE RUNNING DRILLS

Catch the Coach. Coach runs from home plate to first base. After a few steps, coach shouts "tag me" to a player holding a ball, who runs after the coach and tries to tag him out. Coach to decide where/when/if the runner is successful. (*Teeball USA*)

Track Meet. Two players at home plate. At the "start", one runs to 3rd base, the other to 1st base. They continue running [in opposite directions] around the bases. First one to return to home plate wins. **Note:** to avoid collisions, instruct the runner that begins via 1st base to touch 2nd base from the outside corner; the other runner, coming from 3rd base, touches the inside corner of 2nd base. (*Teeball USA*)

Run Down. Two fielders and a runner, who tries to run from one base to another without getting tagged out. Participants rotate positions. (*Teeball USA*)

Catch the Players. Coach starts four or more players about 10 seconds apart from home plate to circle the bases. Coach starts last, trying to tag the players [alternate: snatch off their caps.] (*Teeball USA*)

Infield Invaders. Begin with players on first and second and one player in the batters box. The rest of the player will form a line behind home to prepare to run the bases. Place coaches at each base as necessary. A coach will hit ground balls to any part of the field to allow the runner from home to run through first. If the ball is a ground ball, the player runs through one base but if

the ball is a fly ball then a coach must instruct the player to tag up and determine whether the player should run home or not. (*QCBaseball.com*)

Race for the Base. Split the team in equal halves. Have half the team start at home and half at second. Have the first player in line start with the ball in his hand. Each team will start running around the bases. After each player runs around the bases, he will hand the ball to the next player. First team that gets all players completely around wins. (*QCBaseball.com*)

Infield Popup Drill: Have player stand on the bag with one coach playing deep second and another coach throwing him pop ups. The principle is to teach kids that they shouldn't automatically run on a pop up and they shouldn't automatically stand on the bag either. When the ball goes in the air teach the kids to take 3 full steps off the bag. Have the coach throw to the second base coach and either make the catch or drop it on purpose. Teach the kids when caught to quickly get back to the bag and when dropped to be ready to go to the next base. You will be amazed after doing this consistently for two or three practices how they will adapt to this and how many outs you will save.

Running through 1st base drill: Line kids up at home plate and one by one have them run to 1st base running through it and peeling toward the dugout after running all the way through the bag. A lot of kids at this age will decelerate when getting to 1st and typically stop right on it. There aren't a lot of throws being made to 1st at the youngest ages but they will begin to see understand how to save those few seconds by running all the way through and prevent outs by peeling out of the base path toward the 1st base dugout.

Stop at second base drills: These drills are to make sure that the kids learn the only base you can run through is 1st, and learn what to do when reaching 2nd. Have kids start at 1st and run on command to second having them stop on second and look to the 3rd base coach for instruction. After the kids have become proficient at this you can then start to teach them how to properly round second by pushing off the inside of the bag with the outside of their right foot to gain momentum.

CATCHING DRILLS

Catch. Two or more players play catch. Keep score of the number of successful catches. (*Teeball USA*)

Discover the Meteorite. Coach will throw balls from home plate as if he is a batter. Each correct position determined, a player gets 1,000 points. Players that catch the ball with their gloves are those awarded with the points. (It is similar to the game of "500", when a football is thrown for points).

Just Block It. Coach hits ball directly to a fielder. Emphasis is on stopping the ball from getting through to the outfield. OK to just block the ball; [better, of course, to catch it.] Can be a game with a point scored from every block, two for a catch and zero if the ball is not stopped (*Teeball USA*)

Scoop or Pick-up. Two players [or two rows of players] line up about 10 feet apart. From kneeling position, one player rolls the ball to the other. Repeat 10 to 15 times. (*Teeball USA*)

One and Two. Two players play catch. Thrower scores 2 points if ball is caught at or above the shoulders. 1 point if caught between waist and shoulders. No points if caught below the waist or not caught. First player to score 10 points wins. (*Teeball USA*)

Dive. Coach throws or hits ball to one side or the other of a fielder, who has to dive to make the catch. Then, throw to 1st base. (*Teeball USA*)

Distraction. Coach rolls the ball to a fielder, but another player runs in front of the fielder and tries to break the fielder's concentration on catching the ball. (*Teeball USA*)

Catching Contest. Players are in pairs and throw the ball back and forth between each other. Last pair that has not dropped a ball wins. (*Teeball USA*)

Catching Flies. Hit or throw fly balls to fielders by using a soft baseball, rubber ball or tennis ball. Repetition and practice are the key to success. (*Teeball USA*)

Crab Drill. Player is in basic fielding set position stance, crouched forward with glove open and down. Player takes three or four steps as coach rolls the ball. (*Teeball USA*)

Base Slides. Coach will stand midway between first and second. First player in line will run to first and get in position to receive the catch. Coach will deliver a throw trying to alternate the location of the throw so players can work on footwork in all directions. Once a player has caught the ball he will throw it back to the coach and go to the end of the line. As players go through the line, coach should move to simulate throws coming from other positions. (*QCBbaseball.com*)

Out-catch the Runner. Two coaches will line up on the pitcher's mound, once facing first base and the other facing 3rd base. There will be players lined up just outside the where the coaches are at. As well, there will be a player on 3rd base and a player on 1st base. The rest of the team will be split in half in a line behind 2nd base and home plate.

The first coach is lined up facing first base and they will throw a grounder in the grass. The player lined up near them will run and scoop up the ball to throw it to the player sitting on 1st base. When the ball is released from the coaches hand the player at home will run as fast as they can to first to see if they can beat the throw to first base. The same thing will be happening with 2nd and 3rd base, just flipped. Rotate based on whatever works best for your team, it can be each time or letting the infielder and 1st baseman sit at their positions for a few rounds.

Infield Alligator Drill: Feet shoulder width apart with players knees bent in crouched athletic position. Same knee bend as guarding someone in basketball. Players should be in a low position with weight on balls of their feet. Roll ball to the player and have them move glove to field the ball in a smooth motions. One analogy is to tell them to move their love to the ball like an airplane landing. This will prevent quick jerky movements and why most kids miss the ball between their legs. As the ball enters their glove the player's free hand should trap the ball into the glove to prevent it from bouncing out. The alligator analogy comes from clamping down on the ball like alligator jaws. The glove should be on the ground palm up. And base of the other hand should be touching the glove. Add in footwork and throwing to a designated position.

Pop up drill: You will need to use soft baseballs or tennis balls for this drill. Have players stand in the athletic fielding position and catch with glove at approximately eye level without blocking view and palm up with fingers extended to the sky (overhand) Most kids will struggle with this and want to catch underhanded or over handed with glove away from their body one handed. To get them used to this way of catching a pop fly, start from a short distance of 5 ft and use the soft balls. Make sure that they are catching with both hands. A good way to help them understand how to catch with two hands is to have them take off their gloves and put both hands spread out in front of them with thumbs touching. Then with thumbs touching have them rotate the throwing hand with thumbs together with catching hand.

THROWING DRILLS

Bounce to the Bucket. Large basket or cooler put on a base. Outfielders try to throw and bounce the ball into the open container. Can be done as a game with 10 points for getting the ball in, 5 for hitting the bucket and 1 point for the nearest bounce, no matter where the ball ends up. This drill/game teaches throwing from the outfield to a base. (*Teeball USA*)

Crow Hop. Classic throwing drill. Player takes a short step and a hop in the direction of the intended throw. (*Teeball USA*)

For outfielders who need more power, use these steps to learn the proper crow Hop.

- **The throwing-side foot leads:** Bend your knee and bring it as high as you can. At the very least, your knee should be bent at 90 degrees so that your thigh is parallel to the ground. Then, work on getting it even higher (think midway between your hip and chest). The higher your knee, the farther and stronger your crow hop will be.
- **The back leg follows:** Once your throwing-side foot reaches the highest point of your hop, your back leg follows. This leg needs to get as high as your throwing-side leg.
- **The back foot lands, then throw:** Once your back foot lands, throw!
- **The front foot follows through:** After your back leg lands and you've released the ball, follow through with your front foot to ensure that your throw is on target. Allow your momentum to bring you forward. Some people drag their throwing arm on the ground in front of their opposite foot. Others, however, have such momentum that they fall forward — this is okay!

Baseball Curling. Set up a two boxes zoned by cones. Separate them an appropriate distance away from one another so that teams have the chance to be able to throw ball in the other teams square. Split the team in half to opposite boxes. The goal is to get the ball into the box of the other team. Each player gets three balls to try to put in the other team's box. The team with the least amount of baseballs in their box wins.

Round the Horn. Have players stand at different position in the field. Have the players throw the ball around in a rotation. After completing a complete rotation to all the players on the field, rotate the players to a new position on the field. (*QCBaseball.com*)

Egg Throw. Take a raw egg and have myself and another coach stand about 5-10 feet apart. Toss the egg back and forth between coaches. Explain to the players that they must have soft and catch it gently. You may want to break an egg by using hard hands and inflexible movement to show your players that it is better it is to keep your arm relaxed. It is up to you whether you would like your team to try it or not. (*QCBaseball.com*)

Baseball Pitching

Pitching Motion

Note: These three steps happen quickly, work through the steps slowly until the player is ready to do them all together.

Step 1: The Look In

Legs should be wide (about 70% of height) and legs should be bent. Ball is in throwing hand and glove is on the front leg knee. Toes on the front leg or facing the batter, and toes on the back leg or facing parallel to front (forming a T-formation) on the pitching slab. Eyes on target.

Step 2: Set Position

Knees stay bent. Pitcher closes stretch, keeping feet about shoulder width apart. Ball hand and glove comes together at the waist.

Step 3: Leg/ Hand Lift

Front legs come up, thigh parallel to ground, back leg perpendicular to ground. At the same time, arms come up to chest, ball still in glove. Have leg and arm motion happen simultaneously (think of a sting pulling it all together). *Have pitcher stop and balance in the position to check form. Front foot should be directly under the knee and relaxed (not bent) but hanging comfortably.

Step 4: Power Position

Front leg strides forward, directly to batter. Stride should be long for power, but in control to keep balance. Arms separate and throwing arm goes back into throwing position, and front arm facing the batter. When the front foot hits the ground, arm is in throwing position; hips and upper body rotate toward the batter. The ball should be directly behind the ball. Glove hand stay out and chest moves towards the glove. Upper body is perpendicular or slightly bent forward. Ball is released in front of throwing shoulder.

Step 5: Follow Through

Arm follow through (like a whip), with the throwing hand touching the outside hip. Back is bent. Back leg is lifted and is 'stepping over the bucket, back leg should not drag when pitch is released. All momentum and power aimed at batter. Pitcher land with both feet balanced and in ready field position.

Kneeling Partner Pitches

Players get into partners with one ball. Both players are on their knees. Start off with a short distance and extend it after time. Each player pitches back a forth to each other. A point is awarded if the partner catching the ball doesn't need to extend their arms out are the sides to catch the ball. This drill help with the upper body mechanics of pitching.

Softball Pitching

Basic Pitching Skills---Teaching points-

- Three keys to pitching: Accuracy, spin, and speed.
- Make sure children have feet positioned on the mound right. Both feet should be touching the mound if not their style is illegal.
- Left-handers have left foot forward and right foot back. Right-handers have right foot forward and left foot back.
- Make sure kids are using their legs and driving off the mound not just stepping.
- When kids stand mound the door is closed when the jump off the mound the door should open and stay open so the arm swing can come through.
- You do NOT want to close the door at the end that is not the proper style. Keep your hips open the whole time. If you close the door you do not use the full potential of your arm swing.
- After you jump off the mound you should have a strong front side and your back foot should slide into the heel of your front foot.
- Instead of closing the door think front hip at that target.
- Throwing arm should not be locked out straight it should have a little bend to it. This way your arm can be a whip so it can generate more speed and spin.
- Glove arm should point straight at target during pitch and then fall to side during release.
- It is best to throw a 4 seam drop ball instead of 2 seam because you will generate more spin.
- Make sure kids are dragging their back toe. Not their whole foot like an anchor just the tip of the back toe.

Basic Drills:

These drills will help work on muscle memory. So that when your pitchers actually do the circle in the open door position, they don't have to think about that part. They have put it in their memory and just bring their arm back and shoot the ball through.

With these four drills – the wrist snaps, the muscles, the half circles, and the full circles – you need to have your pitcher do these drills into their glove or into a wall, not to a catcher, for at least three to four weeks. Continue this until you feel like they have gotten the technique. There's not going to be any aiming involved – you don't want them to try to worry where the ball goes ever. You just want them to get that momentum up, snap it at the hip.

Wrist Snaps

Have your pitcher begin with her feet perpendicular to the target . Isolate the pitching wrist with the opposite hand and cock the wrist back as far as possible. Elbow is at the side, bring the ball through, snapping the ball into their mitt, brushing the hip with proper four-seam spin and grip. When they release the ball the thumb should be up and the pointer finger pointing toward the target –like a pistol.

Muscles:

Same stance as with Wrist snaps. Arm in a 90 degree angle like you are flexing your bicep. Hand wrist is cocked, with the ball and palm of the hand facing the sky. Just bring the arm straight down and into the same motion of the Wrist Snap drill—snapping the ball into the mitt.

Half Circles:

Same stance as the wrist snaps. Arm above head NOT locked but with a slight bend. Wrist is cocked and the ball is facing the sky. Arm should be slightly forward so that when the pitcher looks up with just their eyes they can see the hand and ball. Pitcher brings the arm down and right into the wrist snap motion, snapping ball into their mitt.

Full Circles:

Same stance as wrist snaps. Cock wrist with ball at hip with hand on top of ball, finger pointing to where the catcher would be. Swing back a little bit and then begin to bring arm forward and above the head. As the arm moves forward and up have the fingers pointed to the ground and ball is too the sky. This bring them to having wrist cocked, ball up and arm slightly bent--- just like the starting position of the Half Circle Drill. Then bring the arm down and right into the motion of the wrist snaps. This is one fluid motion.

You can find more pitching drills and resources at:

<http://www.softball-spot.com/dir/drills/pitching/>

There is a link to this site on our Coaching Corner—on the KIDSPORTS website.



PRACTICE PLAN

Name: Kidsports United	Date: 5/27
Age Group: Kinders	Focus:

Notes / Setup / Coaching Points

Warm Up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jogging the bases • Arm stretches • Flip Drill : 5mins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pairs, start at 7-8 feet apart. • All coaches' help with proper form: don't let them "throw" but flip ball.
Throwing Drills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper Throwing Motion Drill: 10 mins • Around the Horn: 5-7mins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pairs, move to 10 feet apart • All coaches work with them on proper form. (see drill description) • Rotate players through positions
Base Running Drills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run through 1st base drill: 5 mins • Catch the Players: 5mins 	

<p>Catching Drills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crab Drill : 5-8min • Infield Alligator Drill: 5-8 mins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show proper athletic baseball ready position. Instruct players on moving to ball to field ball. • Coach rolls balls side to side and players “crab” to ball. • Make sure players are catching with 2 hands “like alligator”.
<p>Hitting Drills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ghost Swing • Tee Drill: hitting soccer balls • Tee Drill: hitting baseballs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start out with ghost swings, working on technique. Then progress to soccer balls and then end with regular balls off the tee. • Have one coach at the tee helping to reset stance and work on swing.



PRACTICE PLAN

Name: Kidsports Utd.	Date: 5/27
Age Group: 2 nd grade	Focus: Fielding/Out-fielding

Notes / Setup / Coaching Points

<p>Warm Up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jogging out and back • Stretches • Flip drill: 5mins • Partner throwing: 10 mins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure players are properly warmed up before stretching or throwing • Require proper technique • Start at 7 feet then work up to longer distances.
<p>Throwing Drills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crow Hop Drill: infield:5mins • Crow Hop Drill: outfield: 5mins • Bounce to the Bucket: 7 mins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start with ball in the glove: practice the quick hop/step/throw to coach • Go over how outfielders can generate power of Crow Hop. Practice bigger hops /Steps/throws. (see drill explanation) • Use large bucket or cooler. Give points for making it in from different distances
<p>Base Running Drills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infield popup drill:10 mins • Stop at 2nd base drill: 10 mins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about that you don't automatically run on a popup and don't automatically stay on the base. • Work on looking for 3rd base coach and proper foot placement on base.

<p>Catching Drills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just Block It: 5 mins • 1's and 2's: 5mins • Pop up Drill: 10 min 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how sometimes it is ok just to stop the ball (better to catch but at least get in front of it to stop it) • Fun partner game where you get points by a good throw and a proper catch. • Use soft balls and start at short 5 ft distance.
<p>Hitting Drills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach One Knee Soft Toss: 10 mins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach 12 -15 ft away • Over hand toss. • A coach at plate with player instructing



PRACTICE PLAN

Name:	Date:
Age Group:	Focus:

Notes / Setup / Coaching Points	
Warm Up:	
Throwing Drills	
Base Running Drills:	

Catching Drills:	
: Hitting Drills:	



PRACTICE PLAN

Name:	Date:
Age Group:	Focus:

Notes / Setup / Coaching Points	
Warm Up:	
Throwing Drills	
Base Running Drills:	

Catching Drills:	
Hitting Drills:	



PRACTICE PLAN

Name:	Date:
Age Group:	Focus:

Notes / Setup / Coaching Points	
Warm Up:	
Throwing Drills:	
Base Running Drills:	

Catching Drills:	
Hitting Drills:	

Coach Conduct Pledge

- I will be responsible for all the kids on my team.
- “ I will do my best to insure that all the kids have fun playing sports.
- “ I will treat all kids with respect and avoid negative criticism.
- “ I will teach all kids the skills of the game, the values of teamwork and the meaning of good sportsmanship.
- I will lead by example and always demonstrate good sportsmanship during games.
- “ I will see that "all kids play" regardless of skill level.
- “ I will provide only encouragement and positive direction to players during games.
- “ I will know the rules and always play by the rules.
- “ I will respect the officials and their authority during games.
- I will communicate with the parents on my team and inform them of all team rules, practices and games. I will be on time to all practices and games.
- I will respect all facilities and equipment made available for my team to practice and play games.
- I will never use profanity, abusive language or threatening behavior towards any player, parent, coach or official.
- I will report to KIDSPORTS any perceived misconduct by coach, player, parent or official so it can be dealt with in the appropriate manner.

Coach Signature

Date

Parent Conduct Pledge

I will enjoy my child's opportunity to experience the benefits of sport.

I will trust in my child's ability to have fun as well as to perform and achieve excellence on his/her own.

I will help my child to learn the right lessons from winning and losing and from individual accomplishments and mistakes.

I will respect my child's teammates and fellow parents as well as the players, parents and coaches from opposing teams.

I will give only encouragement and applaud only positive accomplishments whether for my child, his/her teammates, their opponents or the officials.

I will respect my child's coach and support his/her efforts. I will not instruct from the sidelines unless asked to by the coach.

I will insure that my child will attend all games and practices possible and, when not possible, I agree to inform the coach in advance.

I will respect all facilities made available so my child can play games and practice his/her sport.

I will respect any equipment or uniform that may be loaned to my child so that he/she can participate.

I will respect the officials and their authority during games.

I will never demonstrate threatening or abusive behavior or use foul language.

I will be responsible to report to KIDSPORTS any perceived misconduct by coach, player, parent or official so it can be dealt with in the appropriate manner.

Parent signature

Date

Childs Name

Player Conduct Pledge

- 1) I promise to give my best effort at all times.
- 2) I promise to respect the coach during practices and games.
- 3) I promise to be a good teammate by being positive and supportive with all players
- 4) I will live up to the high standard of sportsmanship established by my coach
- 5) I will respect my opponent, remembering we can compete on the field and be friendly off the field.
- 6) I will respect the officials at all times, never arguing with them about calls
- 7) I will do my best to be at all practices and games on time and ready to play
- 8) I will have fun.

Player Signature