



BASEBALL
QUEENSLAND



JUNIOR

COACHING HANDBOOK

**A STEP BY STEP GUIDE FOR BEGINNER
AND ADVANCED BASEBALL COACHES**



This booklet has been developed in collaboration with Autism Queensland, Sport4All and Baseball Queensland.

WELCOME TO COACHING

*First teach kids to love the game,
and then teach them how to play it*



Dear Coaches,

Welcome to the exciting world of junior baseball coaching! As you step into this rewarding role, you are not only becoming a coach but also a mentor, a guide, and an inspiration to the young athletes under your care. The Baseball Queensland community is thrilled to have you join our ranks, and we look forward to the positive impact you will undoubtedly make on and off the field.

Coaching junior baseball is about much more than teaching the fundamentals of the game. It's about fostering a love for baseball in young players, encouraging teamwork, building character, and instilling values that will serve them well beyond their athletic endeavors. Your influence will help shape their attitudes towards sportsmanship, perseverance, and respect, creating lasting memories and life skills.

Baseball Queensland is committed to supporting you in your coaching journey. We offer numerous resources, including coaching clinics, instructional materials, and mentorship opportunities with experienced coaches. We encourage you to make the most of these resources to enhance your skills and knowledge.

Remember, the success of your coaching is not solely measured by wins and losses, but by the growth and enjoyment of your players. Celebrate their progress, no matter how small, and create an environment where every child feels valued and eager to participate. Your enthusiasm and commitment form the foundation of their love for the game and their development as individuals.

Play ball!

Sincerely,

Sam Cawdron

Game Development Manager, Baseball Queensland



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION TO COACHING

Role of a Junior Coach	..... 4
<u>Creating a Positive Environment</u>	..... 5
<u>How to 'Teach the Basics'</u>	..... 6
<u>Working with Parents</u>	..... 7
<u>Building Social Skills and Teamwork</u>	..... 8
<u>Developing a Routine</u>	..... 9
<u>Behaviour Management</u>	..... 10
<u>Educational Play</u>	..... 14
<u>Manage your Expectations</u>	..... 14
<u>Coaching Philosophies & Goals</u>	..... 15
<u>Fun & Enjoyment: Best Practices</u>	..... 16
<u>Fun & Enjoyment: Common Mistakes</u>	..... 17

2. DEVELOPING SKILLS & FUNDAMENTAL MOVEMENTS

<u>Incorporating fundamental Movements</u>	..... 18
<u>Positive Reinforcement</u>	..... 19
<u>Inclusion & Participation</u>	..... 20
<u>Building Life Skills</u>	..... 21
<u>Age-Appropriate Learning</u>	..... 22
<u>Parent Involvement</u>	..... 23
<u>Understanding the Age Group</u>	..... 24
<u>Using Imagination & Storytelling</u>	..... 25
<u>Language</u>	..... 26

3. APPLYING INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

<u>Disability & Inclusion</u>	..... 27
<u>Developing a Routine</u>	..... 32
<u>Visual Supports</u>	..... 32
<u>Implementing Visual Supports in Coaching</u>	..... 35
<u>Modifying & Adapting Activities</u>	..... 36
<u>Understanding Player Behaviour & troubleshooting Common Scenarios</u>	..... 37
<u>Restorative Practices Resource</u>	..... 40

4. MY BASEBALL SEASON

<u>Equipment</u>	..... 45
<u>Season Structure</u>	..... 48
<u>Junior Curriculum</u>	..... 49
<u>Resources</u>	..... 66

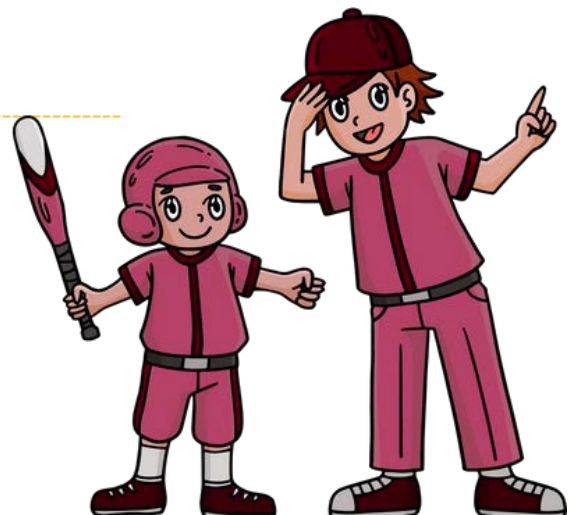
1 INTRODUCTION TO COACHING

ROLE OF A JUNIOR COACH

Coaching young children, especially 3 to 8 year-olds, requires a unique approach that focuses on fostering a love for the game, developing basic skills, and ensuring a positive and fun experience.

Here's what junior baseball coaching looks like for this age group:

-  **CREATE A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT**
-  **TEACHING BASIC SKILLS**
-  **WORKING WITH PARENTS**
-  **BUILDING SOCIAL SKILLS & TEAMWORK**
-  **DEVELOPING A ROUTINE**
-  **BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT**
-  **EDUCATIONAL PLAY**
-  **MANAGING YOUR EXPECTATIONS**



CREATING A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT



ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Young children need constant positive reinforcement. Praise their efforts, not just their successes, to build confidence and a sense of achievement.

CELEBRATE MILESTONES:

Recognise small achievements, like catching the ball for the first time or running to first base correctly. This helps build confidence and excitement for the game.

INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION:

Spend a few moments with each child to ensure they feel seen and valued. This can be as simple as a high-five or a word of encouragement.



FUN AND ENJOYMENT

The primary goal is to make sure the children enjoy playing baseball. Use games and activities that are fun/engaging and allow children to engage and participate in authentic ways.

GAME-BASED LEARNING:

Incorporate games like "Duck, Duck, Goose" but with a baseball twist (e.g., "Ball, Ball, Bat"). This makes learning the basics fun.

SILLY DRILLS:

Use playful drills such as "Cross the Lava" where they throw over a imaginary stream of lava. This helps them practice throwing while having fun.



SAFETY FIRST

Ensure the playing environment is safe. Always prioritise the physical and emotional well-being of the children.

EQUIPMENT CHECK:

Regularly check all equipment to ensure it's safe and appropriate for their size and skill level. Use soft balls to reduce the risk of injury.

FIELD SAFETY:

Ensure the playing area is free from hazards. Explain safety rules clearly, such as not swinging bats near others and always wearing a helmet.

EMOTIONAL SAFETY EXAMPLE:

During a T-Ball session, the coach notices a quieter child hanging back and gently invites them to help demonstrate the next activity, offering praise and a high-five to build confidence and ensure they feel included.

>>>> HOW TO 'TEACH THE BASICS'

How do you teach basic skills to young children? Here are some good methods and teaching tips.



VISUAL DEMONSTRATIONS

Use examples that involve the coach before you start an activity. If the game involves running around tagging a player with a ball, have a player try tag you and show the group.



SHORT INSTRUCTIONS

Young children have short attention spans. Keep explanations brief and to the point. You have 30 seconds to 2 minutes to explain your game or drill. Instructions should be verbal and visual, use kids to walk through the activity first.



HAVE A PLAN

Use BQ session planning tools to ensure you've got an easy flowing session. Utilise multiple stations, focusing on different fundamentals and rotate the group through these to keep them engaged.



GAME BASED ACTIVITIES

Try to stay away from 'drills' and anything involving long lines. Keep learning activities fun by using games.



SHORT, SHARP GAMES

Keep games short to maintain attention and energy levels. switch activities every 10-15 minutes.



BE FLEXIBLE

Be aware and accept that if a game or activity is not working with the group, change it. Don't be afraid to stop and move to a different activity - These are learning opportunities as a junior coach.

WORKING WITH PARENTS

Creating a supportive and encouraging community is not easy.



Here are some ways to engage parents and have them add value to the team:

►► CLEAR COMMUNICATION

Keep parents informed about training schedules, game times and any changes via emails, texts or a team app.

►► TEAM MEETINGS

Hold a meeting at the beginning of the season or as necessary to establish relationships, discuss what you need from parents and identify potential parent assistance for you

►► VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Offer parents various volunteer roles, such as team manager, scorekeeper or snack coordinator. This involvement will help create a stronger sense of community.

►► ASSISTANT COACHES

You're going to need help. Invite interested and knowledgeable parents to assist in trainings and on gameday. Ensure you have them buy in to your coaching philosophy. One team, one dream.

►► PARENT EDUCATION

Establish that parents are responsible for their child developing, just as much as the coach is. Teach them how to talk to their children after games, after losses and after wins.

►► PARENT BONDING

Organise informal social gatherings for parents to get to know each other. It's your role as the coach to facilitate and create a supportive environment and community.

BUILDING SOCIAL SKILLS AND TEAMWORK

Creating friendships and increasing social skills among young baseball players is essential for their development and enjoyment of the game.

Here are some strategies for fostering these important aspects:



TEAM BUILDING

Dedicate entire sessions to team building activities and games, particularly at the start of your season. Help kids get to know each other and their peers' names.



NAME GAMES

Activities where kids say each other's names often help with learning names and feeling more connected.



ART PROJECTS

Let kids work together on creating a team banner or drawing of their favourite baseball player. Your team is bigger than just what happens on the field.



STORY CIRCLES

Have a circle time where kids share stories about their week or a fun fact about themselves.

They will be shy at first in a new setting, it's your job as the coach to facilitate and make this environment a safe space for each player.



CONFLICT RESOLUTION

It's your role and responsibility as coach to ensure there's harmony in the team. Make sure to deal with any potential issues early.



NO TOLERANCE FOR BULLYING

Establish a zero-tolerance policy for bullying and address signs early. You should be the facilitator of fun, but also exemplify boundaries of what is acceptable. Bullying can be an abstract concept for many children - practice emotional safety and regular check in with individual players.

DEVELOPING A ROUTINE

Having a consistent training approach will allow players to feel safe and comfortable. Here are some good tips on ways to develop a routine.



YOUR STYLE

Find ways to add your coaching style to the sessions. Starting every training with a team huddle, player of the training awards and use fun and positivity as a focus for your sessions.

ARRIVAL ACTIVITIES

If kids get there early, brilliant! Have activities and games which require minimal supervision set up so they can play, learn and interact while you're getting ready for the session. Simple catch and throw stations can be easy arrival activities - make sure it's set up and visually appealing, then instruct the kids what the game is and let them play!

KEEP IT CONSISTENT

Change the games and activities each week, but try not to change the format or style. Kids react better when they can envision what training will be like and allow them to get excited.

REFLECTIONS

It may not seem like much, but allow for 5 minutes at the end of the session to come together as a group and discuss the training. This will help boost learning outcomes and allows kids the chance to express what they enjoyed, while giving you real time feedback.

For further information on developing a routine, see:
[3.0 Applying Inclusive Practices: Developing a Routine](#)

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

SET RULES EARLY

At the beginning of the season, establish simple, clear rules that are easy for children to understand. For example, 'Listen when the coach is talking' & keep your hands to yourself'. You can also co-create rules with the group - allow input from players on what they think is acceptable at trainings and gameday

RESTATE RULES EACH TRAINING

To start each training, begin by reminding kids what the rules are and have them tell you. 'Does anyone remember what our rules are we set out last week, hands up - who can tell me?'

POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

Use positive reinforcement to help the group understand the expectations. For example, 'Jimmy did some great listening last week and he's going to be the first shark/tagger for this next game.'

RESET

While setting clear expectations around behaviour is important, it's equally our responsibility as coaches to remember that every child is different, and every situation is unique.

If a reset is needed, it's important how it is framed and communicated, and also how it's perceived by each child.

Rather than using terms like "time-out" or "sitting out," refer to these moments as "resets." A reset provides a short break away from the group or activity, giving the child time to reflect on their behaviour.

Resets should be used as a last resort—only after other strategies have been attempted—or in response to more serious behaviours such as punching, biting or spitting.



REJOINING

When a reset is needed, it's important to frame it up properly in a calm, one-on-one conversation:

- Clearly explain what the behaviour was
- Let them know how long the reset will last (a brief - two minutes is usually a good guide).
- Explain when and how they can rejoin the group.
- Be clear about what will happen if the behaviour occurs again.

By using resets in this way, you're not only helping the individual child understand boundaries, but also reinforcing expectations for the whole group.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOUR

Understanding behaviour starts with taking the time to listen. When a child acts out, ask open-ended questions to help uncover what they were feeling or thinking in that moment.

For example, if John punches Ryder because Ryder took the ball, acknowledge John's feelings and explain that while Ryder shouldn't have taken the ball—and you'll speak to him—punching isn't an appropriate response. Instead, work with John to come up with a better plan for next time, such as coming to tell the coach.

Involving the child in finding a solution helps them feel heard and builds their skills to handle similar situations more positively in the future (See Understanding Behaviour on page 14).

PARENT SUPPORT

If behaviour continues, bring the parent into the conversation during or after training (depending on the situation). Explain that the child's behaviour is disrupting trainings and work a solution out together on ways forward.

Encourage three-way conversations between the child, coach, and parent to ensure consistent communication and that everyone is on the same page (see Parental Support on page 15).

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict between children is normal and can be a valuable learning opportunity when guided calmly and constructively. The goal isn't just to stop the conflict—it's to help children learn how to manage it better next time.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Begin by creating a safe, calm space where the child feels comfortable to talk. Give each child the opportunity to share their side of the story without interruption, using open-ended questions to guide the conversation (e.g. "How were you feeling when that happened?"). Acknowledge their feelings and gently help them consider the other person's perspective.

This can take place as a one-on-one conversation or with both children present, with you acting as the coach and mediator.

Once everyone has had a chance to speak, support them in finding a resolution. This might involve an apology, agreeing on how to share equipment, or talking through how they could respond differently next time. Involving the children in creating the solution helps build understanding, responsibility and ownership of their actions.

EXAMPLE

For example: If John and Ryder are in conflict because Ryder took the ball and John responded by punching him, acknowledge both sides. Let John know you'll speak to Ryder about taking the ball unfairly, but also explain that punching isn't okay. Work with John to develop a better response—such as telling the coach—if it happens again.

Encourage a "reset" if needed, but always come back to the conversation. Teaching conflict resolution in this way helps build emotional awareness, empathy and better social skills in the long run.

BEHAVIOUR IS DEEPER THAN WHAT WE SEE

There are many reasons a child may display challenging behaviour, and while the following practices provide a helpful guide for junior coaches, it's important to remember that every child is different. Each situation may require a slightly different approach based on the individual needs of the child.

As coaches, our top priority should always be the physical and emotional safety of the children in our care. Refer to Section 3.0: Applying Inclusive Practices for more guidance on understanding player behaviour & trouble shooting common scenarios.

As community coaches, it's our role to learn about our playing group and adapt our approach to meet the needs of all participants. Coaching junior sport is about more than just drills and what happens on the diamond—it's also about creating a positive, inclusive environment where every child can thrive.



BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOUR



ABOVE THE ICE BERG - VISIBLE BEHAVIOURS

- Refusing to participate
- Running away or hiding
- Meltdowns or crying
- Yelling or talking over others
- Disrupting drills or games
- Not following instructions
- Avoiding eye contact
- Hyperactivity or restlessness

BELOW THE ICE BERG - POSSIBLE UNDERLYING FACTORS

Neurological & Sensory Needs:

- Sensory overload (noise, lights, textures)
- Difficulty processing instructions
- Motor planning or coordination challenges
- Executive function struggles (memory, organisation, shifting tasks)

Communication:

- Difficulty understanding or expressing needs
- Non-verbal communication barriers
- Delayed processing time

Emotional & Social:

- Anxiety or fear (of failure, judgment, unfamiliar situations)
- Previous negative experiences
- Trouble with social rules or group dynamics
- Fear of being left out or misunderstood

Environmental or External Factors:

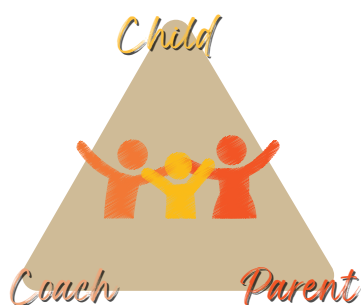
- Fatigue or hunger
- Changes in routine
- Lack of structure or unclear expectations
- Overstimulating or unpredictable environments

REMEMBER

- 🚫 Behaviour is a form of communication
- 🚫 Connection before correction
- 🚫 Check in with the child, their parents, or a support contact
- 🚫 Seek understanding, not just compliance

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

PARENTAL SUPPORT



3 WAY CONVERSATION:
Child, Coach & Parent

CREATE A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

- Choose a calm moment (after training or during a quiet break).
- Ensure the conversation is private and not in front of peers.
- Use a positive, non-judgmental tone to keep the child engaged.

LEAD WITH EMPATHY, NOT ACCUSATION

- Start by acknowledging the child's strengths.
- Use phrases like:
 - "I've noticed..."
 - "Can we talk about what's been happening lately?"
 - "How are you feeling during training?"

BE CLEAR, BUT KIND

- Clearly explain the behaviour that's affecting training.
- Focus on how the behaviour impacts the team or learning environment (not labelling the child).
- Example that comes from both the coach and parent: "Punching is not allowed and we need to find a solution together"

INVITE INPUT FROM EVERYONE

- Ask the child how they've been feeling or why they think the behaviour might be happening.
- Ask the parent to have input: "When we get frustrated, we need to take a breath, like we've been practicing at home and then come tell me or the coach"

COLLABORATE ON A WAY FORWARD

- Work together to develop simple strategies or adjustments.
- Offer support: "We can try giving short breaks" or "Would visual reminders help?"
- Agree on consistent expectations across home and sport.

FOLLOW UP

- Check in regularly to review progress.
- Let the child know you're proud of their efforts.
- Keep parents updated on any improvements or ongoing challenges.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

As part of Baseball Queensland's ongoing support for local coaches, if you're regularly facing a behavioural challenge and are unsure how to approach or coach the situation, please don't hesitate to reach out to behavioursupport@baseballqld.asn.au.

Baseball Queensland has a network of trained coaches, educators, and deliverers with expertise in junior development and managing a wide range of behavioural situations. We're here to support you.



CONTACT US

For more information: behavioursupport@baseballqld.asn.au

EDUCATIONAL PLAY

There is great power in unstructured play in terms of player development and defining core motor skills.

Here are some ways you can incorporate educational play into your sessions:

▶▶ **PLAY TIME**

Kids learn through trial and error, allow kids time at the start and finish of training sessions to have unstructured play and practice what works for them. Throwing and catching is a good example, supervise the play and allow kids to learn in a low pressure environment.

▶▶ **FREE TIME**

Setting up free time or unstructured play may seem like a lazy coaching style, but stay involved with the group. Play catch with them, join in on different groups and help out where you can. Make sure to explain to the parents the reasoning behind giving your team free time to minimise any frustration.

▶▶ **SOCIAL BONUS**

Educational Play also allows kids the chance to socialise and play with their friends. This will help add to your team dynamic and community.

▶▶ **SET UP EQUIPMENT**

Your first priority is to make sure it is safe, but ensure to set up equipment for kids to practice and play with. Make sure there are plenty of gloves and balls out so that everyone has the chance to participate. Encourage different games, like who can throw the furthest or who can catch a high ball with different groups.

MANAGE YOUR EXPECTATIONS

Coaching T-ball goes beyond teaching the game's fundamentals. It's about fostering a love for baseball, encouraging teamwork, building character, and instilling lifelong values.

Your influence will shape their attitudes towards sportsmanship, perseverance, and respect, creating lasting memories and life skills.

▶▶ **COACHING EXPECTATIONS "IT'S NOT BASEBALL"**

As a t-ball coach, we are putting ourselves through a great deal of frustration and disappointment if we enter the season believing we will be coaching baseball

▶▶ **REALITY**

As coaches, we need to treat the season as what it is—a time to spend with our child and their friends, watch them run around, laugh, and practice skills like throwing, catching, and hitting.

▶▶ **VIEWPOINT OF THE CHILD**

Children go to the park with the idea that they are playing, run around and visit their friends. It is important to consider the activity from the viewpoint of the child, manage and instruct them from that perspective, and acknowledge that practice activities won't always resemble baseball.

▶▶ **KEEP REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS**

With the kids on your team, aim for half to understand the game well by season's end. Don't expect a perfectly tuned team; focus on teaching key skills, developing players, and ensuring safety.

COACHING PHILOSOPHIES & GOALS

Coaching philosophies and goals change dramatically when you're coaching young children, compared to adults or what we see on TV. Your goals should be aligned to ensuring kids are enjoying your training sessions and seeing slow progress in activities and understanding.

Here are some good philosophies, mantras and goals to align yourself and your team for success.

- and remember, the success of your team doesn't mean wins and losses. How you frame up success with your team is completely up to you.



FUN & ENJOYMENT



BUILDING LIFE SKILLS



FUNDAMENTAL MOVEMENTS



AGE-APPROPRIATE LEARNING



POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT



PARENT INVOLVEMENT



INCLUSION & PARTICIPATION

FUN & ENJOYMENT

BEST PRACTICES

Every junior coach goes out with the intent to make their sessions fun. However often we get caught up in some simple mistakes that for kids, do not make trainings enjoyable.

Here are some things to help with making your trainings actually fun and enjoyable for players.



INVOLVE KIDS	VISUAL & DEMONSTRATIVE TEACHING	CREATE A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT
Involve children in decision making - Let them choose some activities or games	Show rather than just tell; kids learn well through visual cues	Involve parents. Set times when parents can be involved in your sessions
Have kids think of new rules or progressions on your activity	Use demonstrations to explain new skills or games	Ensure every child feels included and valued
Have kids help you set up games or activities, this helps kids feel like they're a part of the process	Chose well behaving kids as a reward to help demonstrate the new game with you	Use games to promote teamwork and achieving a common goal
INCORPORATE GAMES & PLAY	CREATIVITY & EXPLORATION	ENTHUSIASTIC & ENERGETIC
Use a mix of drills, games and free play to keep sessions engaging	Allow kids to experiment with different ways to perform skills	Your energy and enthusiasm are contagious and will help keep kids excited
Use games where everyone is moving and interacting	Allow and encourage time before and after training for practice	Show genuine interest in their progress and enjoyment
Adapt traditional playground games to include elements of the sport or skill you're coaching	Positive reinforcement, praise effort, not just success	Get involved in the session! Kids react positively when they're chasing around the coach

FUN & ENJOYMENT

COMMON MISTAKES

Every junior coach goes out with the intent to make their sessions fun. However often we get caught up in some simple mistakes that for kids, do not make trainings enjoyable.

Here are some things to avoid to ensure your trainings are fun and enjoyable.



FOCUSING SOLELY ON WINNING	EXCLUDING OR ISOLATING CHILDREN	FITNESS
Don't measure your success as a coach or team on how many games you've won	Avoid drills or games that have long lines or wait times	Avoid having fitness as an outcome for this age group
Avoid drills or games that put excessive pressure on kids to perform perfectly	Avoid criticising or even critiquing players if they make a mistake, especially in front of the group	Avoid 2 laps around the diamond for warm ups
Measure your success on smiling faces and player retention each week	Use games with maximum involvement	Incorporate a ball, games or skills into any running activities
UNCLEAR INSTRUCTIONS	LANGUAGE	SESSION PLANS
Avoid talking for too long, kids attention spans are short	Avoid talking your players like athletes	Avoid trying to cram in all of the skills into one session
Avoid overcomplex instructions, use simple language paired with demonstrations	Avoid long winded team talks where the coach analyses and describes everything that went wrong	Avoid training for over an hour with this age group
Avoid criticising players when they make a mistake, especially in front of the group	Use simple language and positive reinforcement to achieve outcomes	Kids need time to learn - use repetitive games and change the rules slightly each week to keep it engaging

2

DEVELOPING SKILLS & FUNDAMENTAL MOVEMENTS

Focus on teaching basic skills and fundamental movements.

At this age, children are developing their motor skills, so it's important to introduce a variety of movements and basic techniques - here's how.

INCORPORATING FUNDAMENTAL MOVEMENTS



CORE MOTOR SKILLS

Young children need to develop their core motor skills and co-ordination.

Try incorporating different forms of activity into your sessions like: hopping, jumping, closing one eye, catching with one hand games to assist this development.

Example: Warm up game - Follow the leader around the bases (coach led). Have players hop to first base, skip to second base, walk backwards to 3rd base and sprint home!



OTHER GAMES TO DEVELOP

The end goal is to be able to throw a baseball, however a multi sport approach at your training sessions can be beneficial.

Make sure to communicate this to parents, and then round the training back to Baseball - it is a baseball training, after all.

Example: Try incorporating different sports into your training to help teach skills. Dodgeball, cricket, volleyball, pickleball and other sports can all help in developing co-ordination and increasing skill.



EQUIPMENT

Incorporating different equipment into your training sessions can be a fun and unique way for kids to learn the fundamentals.

Using equipment like Velcro Discs and Spikeball sets can be great examples of learning tools to help kids develop co-ordination skills.

Example: Use Velcro Discs instead of gloves for a training session to get kids used to the contact of the ball hitting their hand + correct hand placement while receiving a catch.



BACKYARD CATCH

Encourage parents, during free time to take out their children and practice catching in the backyard or park.

Remember, as the coach you see the kids a maximum 2 hours per week. Parents can help speed the skill development process up by practicing in their spare time.

Example: They will need encouragement from you, as the coach. Set a plan out with parents to dedicate 20 minutes each day practicing and watch your team skyrocket!

➤➤➤ POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

Use positive reinforcement to build confidence and self-esteem. Encourage and praise children to motivate them and build a positive self-image



REWARDS

- To increase positive behaviour and reinforcement, the coach can use rewards such as small rewards, stickers or stamps to help praise effort.
- Try to choose your players that receive these awards based more on effort than performance and be sure to share around the love so all your players get recognised.
- You may also choose to reward your players or team by finishing with a game of their choosing. This really motivates kids if they know they can finish with something fun.

SPECIFIC AND POSITIVE FEEDBACK



- At this age group, it's your role to be CEO (Chief Energy Officer).
- Provide constant and positive feedback on how the kids are going throughout the training.
- Put yourself in their shoes, its nerve-wracking doing this while mum/dad is watching on. They need all the support they can get - that's where you come in.
- Seemingly little things like, 'Nice throw Johnny' or 'Great running Lisa' will help kids gain confidence.
- Even if the kids are making mistakes, it's your job to find something positive and communicate that aloud to them and the group.



ENCOURAGE MISTAKE CULTURE

- The culture of a team largely depends on the coach. Kids are going to make plenty of mistakes - communicate regularly to the group that mistakes are a part of how we learn and grow.
- Having an environment like this will help build emotional safety and provide kids the best opportunity to learn and grow.

INCLUSION & PARTICIPATION

Inclusion and participation are important in youth sports because they promote equality, build confidence, and teach essential life skills, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to benefit from the positive experiences and lessons sports can provide.



PROMOTE EQUAL PLAYING TIME

- Create a rotation system that ensures each player gets an equal amount of time in different positions on the field.
- Focus on development over winning.
- Set clear expectations and communicate with parents.



CREATE A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

- Greet each child warmly by name when they arrive and introduce them to their teammates
- Facilitate fun - if you see a child in your team isolated or not joining in, get some of your players to go over and invite them to play with them



CELEBRATE EFFORTS AND PROGRESS

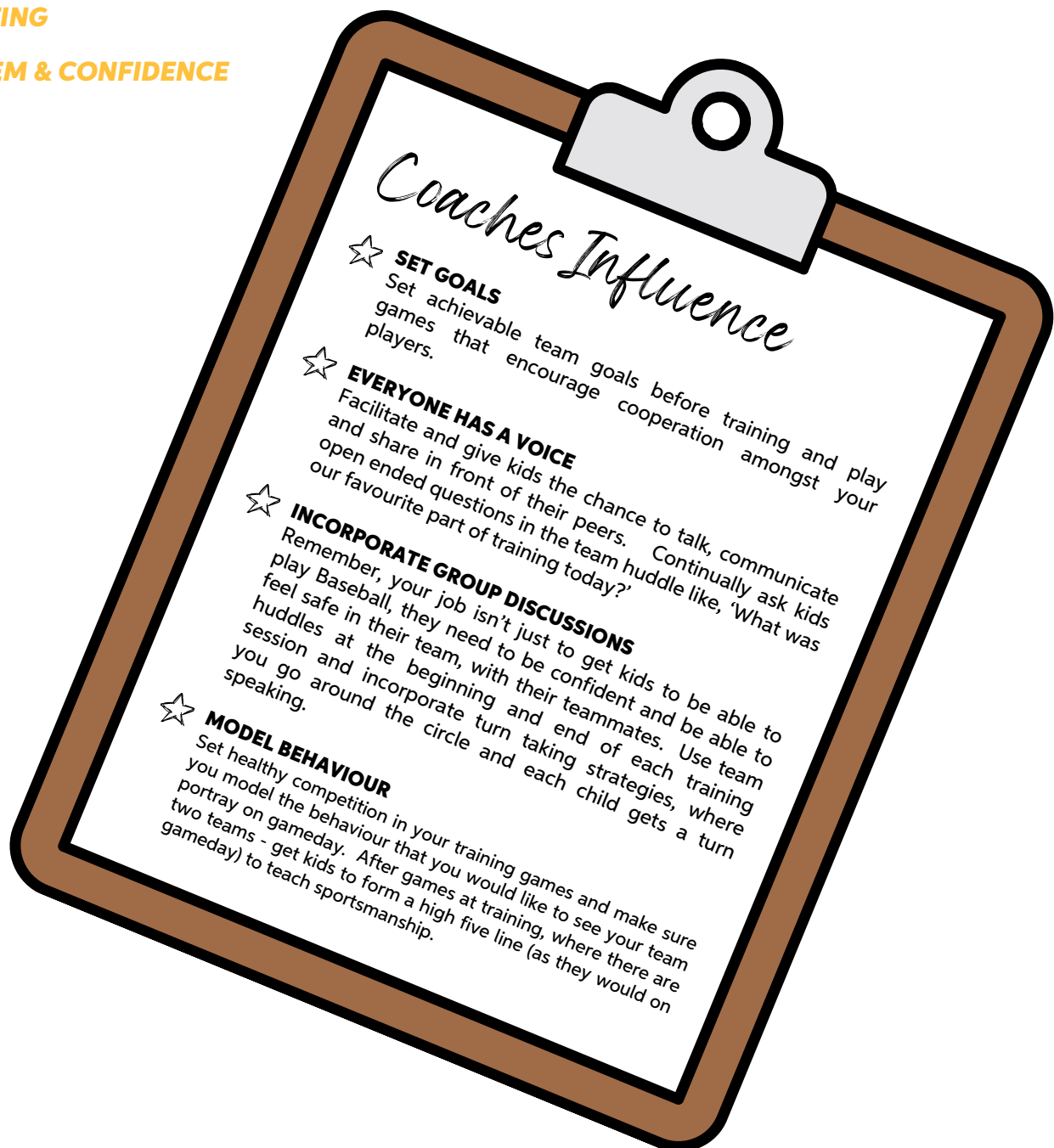
- Specific Feedback: Instead of just saying 'Good job', highlight what they did well, like 'Great hustle running to first base'
- High Fives & Fist Bumps: Physical gestures of encouragement like high fives & fist bumps can be a great way to celebrate small wins and make the players feel appreciated

»»» BUILDING LIFE SKILLS

Here are some ways you can boost building life skills with your team.

Sport naturally builds life skills through:

- **TEAMWORK & COOPERATION**
- **COMMUNICATION**
- **DISCIPLINE & RESPONSIBILITY**
- **RESILIENCE & HANDLING FAILURE**
- **RESPECT & SPORTSMANSHIP**
- **HEALTHY COMPETITION**
- **GOAL SETTING**
- **SELF ESTEEM & CONFIDENCE**



AGE-APPROPRIATE LEARNING

Coaching kids can be one of the most rewarding, yet challenging experiences.

Lots of junior coaches tend to lean more towards making sure their team is perfect and a well oiled machine on game day.

Instead try focusing on creating connections, enjoyable experiences and measure your success from smiles.

Here are some ways you can facilitate your coaching style to suit your age group.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Short Attention Spans

Young children have limited attention spans, so activities should be brief and varied.

Need for Movement

Kids at this age are energetic and need plenty of opportunities for physical activity. Try to plan your sessions around games that have plenty of running, tagging and movement.

Learning Through Play

Children learn best through play and interactive activities.

Concrete Thinking

Technical concepts can be difficult, they understand better through hands-on experiences.

Boundaries

Clearly define and set out boundaries for your games/activities, kids respond best when boundaries are clearly set with colourful cones and equipment.

Fun

This should be your primary objective. Don't stress too much if your team didn't learn what you set out at training, or your worried about what the team you're playing on the weekend will think. If your team have smiles on faces, laughing and having fun - your role as a coach will be successful.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Engaged parents can contribute to a positive team environment, support the coach, and help the kids have a more enjoyable experience. Here are some tips from a coach's perspective on getting parents involved:

1. COMMUNICATE EARLY AND OFTEN

INITIAL MEETING

At the beginning of the season, host a brief meeting with the parents. Explain the goals for the season, your coaching philosophy, and how they can help.

REGULAR UPDATES

Send regular updates via email or a messaging app. Include information about practice schedules, game times, and any team events. Keeping parents informed makes them feel more connected and involved.

2. ASSIGN ROLES

TEAM PARENT

Designate a "team parent" who can help organise things like snack schedules, game day logistics, or communication.

GAME DAY HELPERS

Invite parents to assist during practices. Even if they don't have baseball experience, they can help with simple tasks like organising drills, setting up equipment, or managing groups of kids.

ASSISTANT COACHES

Assign parents to roles during games, such as helping with equipment, keeping the dugout organised, or cheering on the kids.

3. ENCOURAGE POSITIVE SUPPORT

CHEERING SECTION

Encourage parents to be a positive presence on the sidelines. Explain the importance of positive reinforcement and cheering for all kids, not just their own.

PARENT-KID CHALLENGES

Incorporate parent-child activities into practices, such as friendly competitions or skills challenges. This allows parents to actively participate and bond with their child through baseball.

4. CREATE A COMMUNITY FEEL

SOCIAL EVENTS

Organise simple social events, like a team BBQ or end-of-season celebration. These gatherings help build camaraderie among parents and make them feel more invested in the team.

CARPPOOLING AND SUPPORT

Encourage parents to connect with each other for things like carpooling to practices or games. Building a supportive parent network can make the season smoother for everyone.

5. EDUCATE PARENTS

UNDERSTANDING THE GAME

Offer brief explanations of the game rules, especially if some parents are new to baseball. This helps them understand what's happening on the field and how to support their child.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Share insights on what to expect from 4 to 8-year-olds in terms of attention spans, skills, and emotional needs. This can help parents set realistic expectations and focus on effort and enjoyment rather than just performance.

6. INVITE FEEDBACK & INVOLVEMENT

OPEN COMMUNICATION

Encourage parents to share their thoughts, concerns, or suggestions throughout the season. This can create a collaborative environment where parents feel valued.

VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

Let parents know if you need help with specific tasks, like organising team photos, managing equipment, or coordinating snacks. Giving them clear ways to contribute can increase their involvement.

7. CELEBRATE TOGETHER

MILESTONES

Involve parents in celebrating milestones, whether it's a child's first hit, a great team effort, or just getting through the season with smiles. Acknowledging these moments together strengthens the bond between parents, kids, and coaches.

END-OF-SEASON AWARDS

Consider holding a simple award ceremony where parents can participate in recognising the kids' efforts. This could be anything from "Most Improved" to "Best Teammate" awards, ensuring every child feels celebrated.

8. BE APPROACHABLE & AVAILABLE

OPEN-DOOR POLICY

Make yourself approachable by being open to discussions before or after practices. When parents see that you're willing to listen and engage, they'll be more likely to get involved.

UNDERSTANDING THE AGE GROUP

Coaching 3 to 8-year-olds requires short, varied activities to match their brief attention spans, using simple language and plenty of positive reinforcement. Make sessions fun by incorporating playful, imaginative games and social interaction, while progressively challenging them at their own pace.

Patience, enthusiasm, and celebrating small successes will keep them engaged and motivated.



ATTENTION SPAN



USING IMAGINATION & STORYTELLING



LANGUAGE TO USE

USING IMAGINATION & STORYTELLING

Using imagination and storytelling in junior baseball coaching, especially for 3 to 8-year-olds, is a powerful tool to enhance engagement, build relatability, and make learning fun. Kids at this age are highly imaginative, and tapping into their creativity can make drills and exercises more enjoyable and effective.

Here are some strategies and examples of how to incorporate imagination and storytelling into your sessions:



1. TRANSFORM DRILLS INTO ADVENTURES

Instead of just running bases, turn it into a "Quest to Save the Treasure." The bases can represent different islands where the kids have to collect treasures (e.g., cones or small objects) while dodging obstacles (coaches or cones acting as barriers).

How it Helps: This turns a simple base-running drill into an exciting adventure, making it more engaging and motivating for the kids.



2. THEMED GAMES

Example: Introduce a game called "Escape the Ogre" instead of a regular tag game. In this game, the coach or a designated player is the "Ogre," and the kids have to avoid being caught while moving from one base to another.

How it Helps: The concept of an "Ogre" adds a fun element and keeps the kids focused on avoiding the tag. It also encourages strategic thinking and quick movement.



3. ANIMAL THEMES

Example: In a drill where the kids have to run to different positions on the field, tell them they're all different animals in a jungle. Maybe they're "cheetahs" racing to first base, or "monkeys" swinging from tree to tree (bases).

How it Helps: By associating different movements with animals, kids get to embody their favourite creatures, making the drill more fun and memorable.



4. STORYTELLING BEFORE DRILLS

Example: Start a session by telling a short story related to the drill. For example, "Today, we are explorers in the jungle, and we need to navigate our way through to find the hidden treasure. But beware, there are obstacles!"

How it Helps: A brief story can set the tone and context for the entire session, getting the kids excited and ready to play.



5. PERSONALISE THE STORY

Example: Use the kids' names in the stories. For instance, "Billy the Brave is on a mission to defeat the dragon by catching the fireball (ball)."

How it Helps: Personalising the story makes each child feel special and more connected to the activity.



6. TIPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Use Enthusiastic Language: Be animated in your descriptions. Kids will respond better to your energy.

Encourage Participation: Let the kids add to the story. Ask them what kind of creatures they want to be or what obstacles they need to overcome.

Balance Fun with Learning: Ensure that the imaginative elements still reinforce the skills you're trying to teach.

LANGUAGE

1. USE SIMPLE, CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS, KEEP IT SHORT

Break down instructions into one or two simple steps. For example, instead of saying, "Run to first base, then second, and then come back," you can say, "Run to first base. Ready? Go!"

Avoid Over-Explaining: Too much detail can be overwhelming. Focus on the most important actions and use simple words.

2. BE POSITIVE AND ENCOURAGING

Praise Effort: Use positive reinforcement like "Great job!" or "You're doing awesome!" Kids respond well to encouragement and will be more motivated to try their best.

Use Affirmative Language: Instead of saying, "Don't miss the ball," say, "Try to catch the ball." Focus on what you want them to do rather than what they shouldn't do.

3. USE VISUAL AND PHYSICAL CUES

Show, Don't Just Tell: Demonstrate what you want the kids to do. At this age, children often understand better by seeing an action rather than just hearing about it.

Use Gestures: Pointing, clapping, or using hand signals can help reinforce your instructions.

4. BE ENTHUSIASTIC AND ANIMATED

Vary Your Tone: Speak with energy and excitement to keep the kids engaged. A lively tone can make even simple instructions feel like fun.

Use Facial Expressions: Smile, nod, and use expressions that match the mood of the activity. This helps communicate emotions and keeps the atmosphere positive.

5. GET DOWN TO THEIR LEVEL

Make Eye Contact: When giving instructions, kneel or squat so you're at eye level with the kids. This makes communication feel more personal and helps ensure they're paying attention.

Speak Calmly and Gently: A calm, reassuring tone helps build trust and keeps kids from feeling overwhelmed.

6. USE FUN, RELATABLE LANGUAGE

Incorporate Imagery: Use metaphors and imagery that kids can relate to. For example, instead of saying, "Run fast," you can say, "Run like a cheetah!"

Give Instructions in a Playful Way: Make instructions part of a game or story. For instance, instead of saying, "Catch the ball," you could say, "Pretend the ball is a flying superhero—catch it!"

3

APPLYING
INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

DISABILITY & INCLUSION

WHAT IS INCLUSION?

- Inclusion of people with disabilities is about providing a wide range of options within a sport
- The goal of inclusion is to provide opportunities for all people to participate in the most appropriate manner possible.
- Coaching children with disabilities is no different, however it is important to have an awareness of different disabilities and how you can adapt programs and activities to suit the different needs of participants.
- Making small adaptations can often make a big difference in a participants enjoyment of an activity, especially if it increases the ability to successfully complete tasks.



TIPS FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN WITH DISABILITY

COMMUNICATING WITH BLIND/LOW VISION CHILDREN

- Always address the child by name and introduce yourself by name.
- Speak clearly and in a normal voice. There is no need to raise your voice or speak slowly.
- Remember that visual cues and facial expressions will most likely be missed. Make sure you verbalise any thoughts or feelings.
- Always ask before physically handling the child, offer assistance but don't assume they want/need this.



COMMUNICATING WITH CHILDREN WHO ARE HARD OF HEARING/DEAF

- Some deaf children use Auslan (Australian Sign Language). If Auslan is the preferred language, arrange for an Auslan Interpreter to be present if necessary.
- Gain the child's attention before speaking. Try a gentle tap on the shoulder, a wave or some other visual signal to gain attention.
- Face the child directly and maintain eye contact.
- Make sure your mouth is visible. Remember not to cover your mouth with your hand or any other object as you talk.
- Look directly at the child while speaking and speak evenly, not too fast or slow.
- Don't exaggerate your mouth movements, as this will make it more difficult to lip-read.
- Use short sentences.
- Keep your volume up and natural. Don't shout.

COMMUNICATING WITH CHILDREN WHO ARE NON-VERBAL OR HAVE LITTLE/NO SPEECH

- Look at and talk to the child, not their friend/companion/parent.
- Establish a yes or no response eg. Head nod, thumbs up.
- Let the child communicate how they wish to – they may use their speech, communication cards, text to speech communication devices or pen and paper.
- Don't pretend you understood them if you did not – if you do not understand find a method that works for both of you.
- Be patient, give the child plenty of time to communicate and finish what they want to say. Don't finish their sentences.
- It is okay to have silences, don't walk away or do something else.
- Ask questions to make sure you have understood the child.
- Don't presume that a child with little or no speech is lacking intelligence.



COMMUNICATING WITH CHILDREN WITH AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

- Before talking, ensure you have the child's attention. Try using their name or eye contact to make sure you have their attention.
- Keep your questions simple and your answers easy to understand.
- Remember that your body language is important, as children with an intellectual disability often rely on visual cues.
- Be prepared to use visual information or to receive visual information from someone with an intellectual disability.
- Be specific and direct. Avoid talking using abstracts, acronyms, metaphors or slang.

WHAT ARE INVISIBLE DISABILITIES?

"What are invisible disabilities?"

The term Invisible Disabilities used to describe disabilities that are not immediately noticeable when looking at someone. The term applies to a wide spectrum of conditions including physical, mental, and neurological disorders that may impair daily functioning.

These can include but are not limited to chronic pain and fatigue, cognitive conditions, allergies, brain and/or spinal injuries, hearing and vision impairments, learning differences and mental health conditions.

Because of their hidden nature, invisible disabilities can go unacknowledged or may be misunderstood.

ADAPTATIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITY - FOCUS ON ABILITY NOT DISABILITY



SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTIVITY ADAPTATIONS

- Make smaller groups or similar activities – this allows for individual progress at different levels
- Mark large groups of different abilities
- Use language that is appropriate to the group
- Make use of specifically designed equipment to assist in learning
- Always check for understanding of instructions
- Use circuit activities to allow participants to progress at their own level and pace
- Substitute players regularly
- Have fewer players per activity to allow freedom of movement
- Reduce the competitive element
- Change running to walking
- Reduce the size of the game playing area
- Use indoor surfaces as well as grass, turf
- Minimise distractions in the surrounding area
- Make the activity as inviting as possible so that participants want to “Give it a go”



EQUIPMENT ADAPTATIONS

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTIVITY ADAPTATIONS

Depending on the ability of each person with a disability (not all disabilities are the same) you may or may not need to adapt the equipment used.

Here are some tips that may assist coaches/volunteers:

EQUIPMENT: GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

Different bats:

- Size and weight – ensure that the participant has a bat that is appropriate to their individual size, strength and skill level
- Lighter – easier to manipulate with one arm or lack of physical strength
- Larger – larger striking surface makes it easier to make contact with the ball
- Longer – longer bat may assist with reaching the ball
- Shorter – easier to manipulate or hold if only using one hand

Different balls:

- Lighter – travels slower giving more reaction time and assists with lack of physical strength
- Larger – easier to hit and see
- Softer – travel more slowly and easily to control
- Different colours – may assist with visual impairment/colour blindness
- Internal bell – helps to judge location of the ball



For further information on inclusive practices workshops and resources, visit <https://www.sport4all.com.au/>

DEVELOPING A ROUTINE

*APPLYING INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

Below is an example of a visual schedule based of the Week 1 (Block 1) Junior Curriculum activities and how it fits into a broader routine. Developing a consistent routine for practices creates predictability and supports player engagement.

EXAMPLE SESSION PLAN



EXAMPLE PRACTICE ROUTINE

WELCOME/ARRIVAL ACTIVITY*

TEAM HUDDLE

WARM-UP ACTIVITY*

ICE-BREAKER ACTIVITY*

WATER BREAK

SKILLS & DRILLS ACTIVITY*

PLAYERS' CHOICE GAME

WRAP-UP/TEAM HUDDLE/PARENT CHAT

**Specific activities may change week-to-week, but the overall format and structure of the session remains largely the same, creating a predictable routine.*

VISUAL SUPPORTS

*APPLYING INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

WHAT IS A VISUAL SUPPORT?

A concrete cue that provides players with information about:

- What to expect (e.g., a visual practice schedule or sequence of steps in a new drill)
- What to do (e.g., drawing of where each position is on the field or colour-coded organisation system for packing away equipment)
- How to do it (e.g., visual boundaries for where to be or a picture of how to hold the bat)

WHY USE VISUAL SUPPORTS IN COACHING?

Visual supports are an invaluable tool for any coach. Unlike spoken language, visuals are permanent and can easily be referenced and referred back to by players and coaches. Using visual supports can:

- Increase meaning and understanding by helping players see what you mean
- Cater to different processing and learning styles
- Increase predictability and reduce anxiety
- Support player initiation, sequencing and transitions
- Help players learn new skills

For Reference: This information relates to the following sections of the handbook;

HOW TO TEACH THE BASICS - pg8

FUN & ENJOYMENT - BEST PRACTICES - pg16

LANGUAGE - pg29

VISUAL SUPPORTS CONT.

1. Visual Supports for Routines

a. Session Plans / Practice Schedule

Example: Visual schedule for a practice/session



Names Up Instructions	
1. Stand next to a cone	
2. Catch the ball	
3. Say your name	
4. Throw or roll the ball to another player	

2. Activity-Specific Visual Supports

a. Instructions

Example: similar to a visual schedule, visual instructions can be used to break down the steps, rules and expectations of an activity, drill or game.

Pack Away / Clean up		
Balls in the Basket	Stack Cones	Bats in the Bag

b. Placement and Positioning

Example: using cones or bases as visual cues for player positioning or activity boundaries

c. Set-up or Pack Away

Example: image of how to set up for a new game

Example: visual cues for where to put equipment (symbol or colour-coding)

d. Sequencing

Example: breaking down a multi-step activity or game in smaller steps, using numbers or symbols to support understanding

e. Timing

Example: using a stopwatch or sand timer to show players how long an activity is and when it will be finished, supporting transitions from one activity to the next.

Note: time can be an abstract concept without much meaning, particularly for younger players or those with different learning styles. Using visuals helps to make this more concrete. Another strategy to support players in knowing how long an activity is or when it will be finished is to use a quantity other than time (e.g., "two more rounds," or "everyone will get 2 hits").

VISUAL SUPPORTS CONT.

3. Visual Supports for Communicating Choices

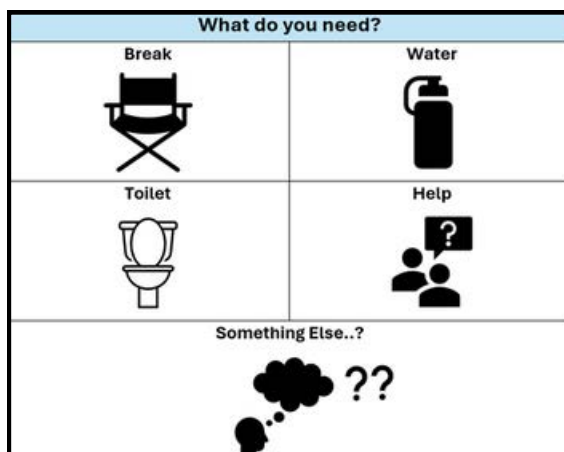
a. Visuals to support player choice and player voice.

Example: visual choice board of different games players can choose from.



b. Visual cues to support player voice, regulation, and self-advocacy

Example: a What do you need? choice board or cards (e.g., break, water, toilet, help, something else...)



IMPLEMENTING VISUAL SUPPORTS IN COACHING

Using visual supports is one way to create more inclusive and effective learning environments for all players, accounting for different learning and communication styles and enhancing overall understanding and skill development. Some visual supports may be created in advance, while others are made on the fly, in response to player needs or as strategy to support understanding.

BEST PRACTICES

Keep visuals simple and clear:

- Use bold colours and simple designs
- Limit text, focusing on key words or phrases

Consistency is key:

- Use consistent terminology and symbols
- Regularly reference and model the use of visual supports

Combine visual and verbal instruction:

- Point to visuals while explaining
- Allow time for players to process visual information

Be responsive to player needs:

- Consider different learning styles and different types of visual supports (e.g., drawings, symbols, images, videos, etc.)
- Regularly review and update visuals
- Adapt visuals based on player feedback and effectiveness

WHEN TO USE VISUAL SUPPORTS

Introducing new concepts or activities:

- Show step-by-step instructions
- Provide visual examples of proper form or techniques

Supporting communication differences:

- Offer choice boards for player input
- Use visual cues for player needs (water, break, help)

Reinforcing verbal instructions:

- Display key points alongside verbal explanations
- Use visuals to clarify complex or new ideas

Supporting transitions between activities:

- Show visual timers or activity counters
- Display the practice schedule

PREPARATION AND TOOLKIT

Create a core set of commonly used or referenced visual supports. For example:

- Practice schedule templates
- Field position diagrams
- Basic activity or drill instructions
- Equipment organisation images or charts
- Choice cards

Keep materials on hand for creating visuals on-the-fly:

- Whiteboard and markers
- Tablet or smartphone for digital visuals
- Different coloured cones or field markers
- Stopwatch or timers

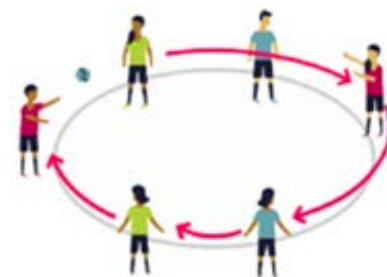
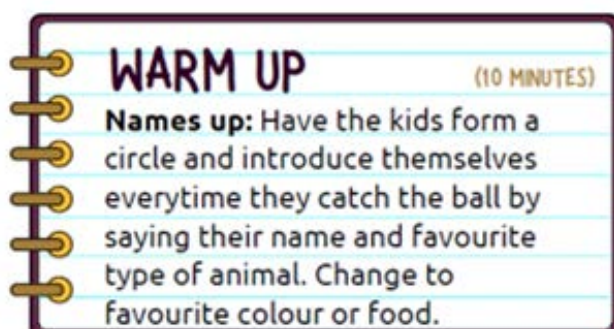
MODIFYING & ADAPTING ACTIVITIES

There are many reasons for modifying or adapting activities including to support:

- Different types of player engagement or participation
- Different skill levels
- Different types of communication
- Different sensory needs or preferences

Consider the Names Up activity:

Names Up Instructions	
1. Stand next to a cone	
2. Catch the ball	
3. Say your name	
4. Throw or roll the ball to another player	



- Use of cones or visual markers for where and how to form the circle (supportive of different learning styles, provides additional visual cues for positioning)
- Option to roll the ball instead of throwing it (supportive of different skill levels)
- Modify to pass the ball in one direction instead of random to increase predictability and understanding
- Use of a visual support to break down steps/instructions and to supplement verbal instructions, e.g. below,
- Option to act out the animal rather than say it (supportive of different engagement and communication needs)
- Option to point to name or sign name (supportive of different communication styles or preferences)
- Option to observe the first round or help the coach mark the attendance (supportive of players who may be unsure or hesitant to engage initially, providing an alternative way to participate and still be part of the activity)

UNDERSTANDING PLAYER BEHAVIOUR & TROUBLESHOOTING COMMON SCENARIOS

UNDERSTANDING PLAYER BEHAVIOUR

On the surface, behaviour is simply any observable action (e.g., running around, shouting, sitting quietly, interrupting, not participating, etc.), but behaviour is also a message, a form of communication. When a player's actions seem unsafe, unexpected, or disruptive to the team, it is usually a signal that something else is happening underneath the surface - an unmet need or unexpressed feeling.

Viewing behaviour as a message to be decoded rather than non-compliance to be punished or fixed, builds trust, supports the development of lifelong skills, and creates a safe and positive team culture. By asking 'What is this player trying to tell me?' rather than 'How do I stop this behaviour?' you will uncover the real needs and address causes, not just symptoms.

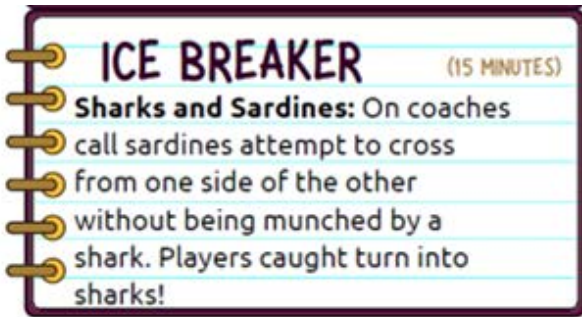
TROUBLESHOOTING COMMON SCENARIOS

The following scenarios provide examples of player behaviour that is often misinterpreted as disengagement or challenging to the team dynamics. However, by viewing behaviour as communication, we can:

- Look beyond the action
- Observe without judgment
- Get curious and ask, "What is this player trying to tell me?"
- Respond with empathy and seek to understand the deeper needs
- Support players more effectively, creating safe and inclusive environments
- Build a stronger, more connected team



The scenarios below relate to the game Sharks and Sardines:



SCENARIO 1: PLAYER DISENGAGED, SITTING ON THE SIDE, RELUCTANT TO PARTICIPATE

WHY MIGHT THIS BE HAPPENING?

- The player may feel unsure about the rules or expectations of the game.
- They might be anxious about being tagged or running in front of others.
- Physical fatigue or sensory overwhelm could be contributing to their reluctance. They may have had a poor sleep the night before or an emotionally draining day at school.

STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORT:

- Check in privately: Ask the player how they're feeling and if there's something they need. Example: "Hey, I noticed you're sitting out. Is everything okay? Would you like to join in or take a break?" Consider using a visual support to assist players in identifying and communicating their needs.
- Offer a role with less pressure: Suggest an alternative way to participate, such as helping set up boundaries or being the coach's assistant.
- Break the game into smaller steps: If they're unsure about the rules, explain them visually or demonstrate how to play.
- Provide reassurance: Let them know it's okay to sit out if they need time to watch and get comfortable or if they need a break.

SCENARIO 2: PLAYER UPSET THAT THEY WERE TAGGED BY THE SHARK

WHY MIGHT THIS BE HAPPENING?

- The player may feel frustrated or embarrassed about being tagged first or repeatedly.
- They might interpret being tagged as "losing" and struggle with the competitive dynamics.
- The player may be sensitive to and/or dislike physical touch.
- They could be experiencing difficulty managing emotions like disappointment.

STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORT:

- Validate their feelings: Acknowledge their frustration without judgment. Example: "I know it can feel disappointing to get tagged. That's okay—it happens to everyone."
- Reframe the experience: Emphasise that getting tagged is part of the fun and not a failure.
- Encourage resilience: Model positive self-talk and praise effort over outcome. Example: "You did a great job running fast! Let's try again next round."
- Adapting the activity: If tagging or "getting out" feels too overwhelming, consider modifying the game (e.g., sharks can tag with soft foam balls instead of hands or trying a version of freeze tag).

SCENARIO 3: PLAYER ONLY WANTS TO BE THE SHARK

WHY MIGHT THIS BE HAPPENING?

- The player may prefer roles where they feel in control.
- They may be less confident in the sardine role or find it less predictable.
- They may have difficulty with flexibility or taking turns.
- They may have a fear of “losing” or perceived losing.

STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORT:

- Set clear expectations: Explain that everyone will get a turn as the shark if they want one. Example: “We’re taking turns so everyone gets a chance. You will be the shark after two rounds.”
- Offer choices: Provide options that allow them some control while still following game rules. Example: “Would you like to go first as the shark next time, or second?”
- Highlight other roles: Help them see value in being a sardine by focusing on skills like teamwork and running fast. Example: “Being a sardine is fun too—you get to practice dodging and sprinting!”
- Use visual supports for turn-taking: Create a simple chart showing who will be the shark each round.

SCENARIO 4: PLAYER REFUSING TO PLAY, SHOUTING “I HATE THIS GAME”

WHY MIGHT THIS BE HAPPENING?

- The player may feel frustrated by aspects of the game (e.g., difficulty understanding rules, sensory overwhelm, or feeling excluded).
- The player may have had a negative experience with a similar game in the past.
- There may be external factors impacting the player (e.g., bad day at school, hungry, lack of sleep, family stress, etc.).
- Emotional regulation challenges might make it hard for them to express their feelings or communicate their needs.

STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORT:

- Stay calm and empathetic: Avoid reacting negatively; instead, validate their feelings and offer support through co-regulation. If feasible, have another adult facilitate the game so you can chat 1:1 with the player.
- Problem-solve together: Ask what would make the game more enjoyable for them and offer adjustments if possible. Example: “What’s something we could change about the game to make it better for you?”
- Offer alternatives: If unable to re-engage in the moment, provide options for what they can do instead (e.g., take a break, assist the coach, an independent drill, etc.)
- Reflect after emotions settle: Once they have calmed down, revisit their concerns and discuss ways to make future games more inclusive. This is also an opportunity to support their development and explore alternative, positive ways they can get their needs met in the future. Example: “What do you think you could do differently next time when we’re playing a game that you don’t like?” or using a visual support, you might work through “Instead of shouting, next time I can....” with choices like “Tell you I’m frustrated,” or “Give you a special hand signal” or “Take a break” that the play can circle, point to, or create their own options.

AUTISM QLD - RESOURCE APPENDIX

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

Restorative practices aim to repair and rebuild relationships that have been damaged by harm or misunderstandings. Instead of focusing on punishment or retaliation, these practices seek to identify and heal the harm, fostering greater understanding, empathy, and equipping those involved with better skills for the future.

Incorporating restorative practices both proactively and reactively supports the person(s) and their support team to repair and restore relationships and trust.

Proactive strategies may include:

- Check-ins
- Restorative 'circles'
- Inclusive decision-making
- Regulation support

Reactive supports involve collaborating during conflict and may include:

- Classroom/ small group conferences
- Community conferences



For further information on inclusive practices workshops and resources, visit <https://autismqld.com.au/>

AUTISM QLD - RESOURCE APPENDIX

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES - RESOURCE

What happened?



Pushed



Hit



Kicked



Took something



Bad/nasty words



Spat



Ignored



Upset someone



Ran away



Broke



Scratched



Made a mess

What were you thinking? What did you want to happen?



Angry



Go away



Frustrated



Don't like/ don't want to



Confused



Want to play



Worried



Want to go home



AUTISM QLD - RESOURCE APPENDIX

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES - RESOURCE

Who has been affected or hurt?



Student/child



Teacher



School helper



Teacher Aide



Whole class



Mum/Dad



Grandparents



Bus driver



Principal

How?

Outside?



Hurt head/face



Hurt arm



Hurt leg



Broke something



Made a mess



Hurt ears

Inside?



Made someone scared



Made someone cry



Made some embarrassed



Made someone worried



Hurt someone's feelings

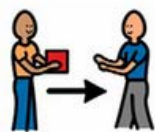


Made someone sad

AUTISM QLD - RESOURCE APPENDIX

RESTORATIVE PRATICES - RESOURCE

What needs to happen to fix things up?



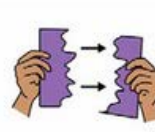
Give/give back



Say something nice



Check if ok



Fix



Help



Clean up



Say I will....



Something else

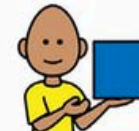
Sorry...



Say



Write



Show

For...



Accepted?



Yes



No



Not Yet

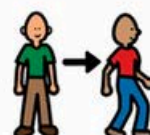
Next time...



Be safe



Ignore



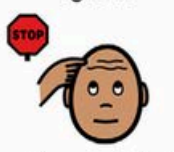
Walk away



Keep hands, feet
and objects to
myself



Get help



Stop and think



Advocate



Share/ take turns



Calm down



Follow the rules



Follow adult
instructions



4 MY BASEBALL SEASON



EQUIPMENT

EQUIPMENT MATTERS: SETTING YOURSELF (AND THE KIDS) UP FOR SUCCESS

As a junior coach, one of the biggest game-changers you can have in your kit is great equipment. While your club will provide a base kit to get you started, having engaging, age-appropriate, and colourful gear can make your sessions smoother, more fun, and more effective.

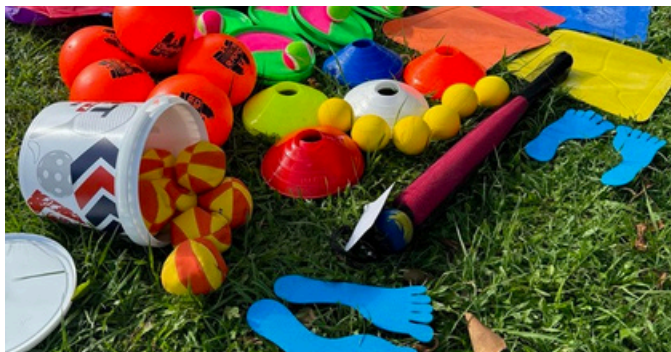
WHY GOOD EQUIPMENT MATTERS

Engagement

At the 3–8 age group, kids are drawn to bright colours, different shapes, and novel items. Think foam bats, velcro catchers, coloured cones, bean bags, and blast bases. These grab attention and make your sessions feel more like a game than a drill.

Better Learning Through Play

The right equipment helps you create fun, skill-based games that teach key fundamentals without the kids even realising they're "training." Dodgeballs for throwing, colour-coded bases for running games, and targets for hitting all reinforce skill development through movement and play.



Smooth Coaching Experience

Having extras—like multiple balls, cones, and quick setup tools—makes transitions between activities faster and keeps things flowing. You'll spend less time managing gear more time coaching.

Inclusive and Adaptive

With different equipment options, you can better support kids of varying abilities. Lighter balls, softer bats, and larger targets can make a world of difference for building confidence and success.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO PAY OUT OF POCKET

We completely understand that buying gear can add up—but there are creative ways to make it happen:

- Fundraising (raffles, sausage sizzles, donation jars)
- Local grants or community sport funding
- Club partnerships or sponsorships
- Pooling resources with another coach or team

WHERE TO BUY EXTRA GEAR

One great supplier we recommend is HART Sport, which has a huge range of junior-appropriate, colourful, and safe sporting equipment for T-Ball and Baseball activities.

👉 Visit [HART Sport](#) to browse equipment and ideas.

EQUIPMENT

RECOMMENDED EQUIPMENT FOR JUNIOR CURRICULUM



HART Numbered Dice



HART Colour Base Set



HART Foam Baseball Set



HART Feet Ground Markers



HART Field Markers - Set of 50



HART Bucket of Bean Bag Balls



HART Dodgeball Pack



HART Rollout Line



HART Adjustable T-Ball Set



HART Foam Balls



HART Kangaroo Catch Vests



HART Paddle Ball Sets



HART Pop Up Target

Note: All activities in the curriculum can be delivered using standard club T-Ball equipment. This list includes optional extras—fun, engaging items that aren't essential but can add variety and enhance your sessions!

WELCOME TO THE BQ JUNIOR CURRICULUM

As a junior coach, you've got the freedom to shape your sessions in the way that works best for you and your team. Some coaches love to design their own activities. Others prefer to follow a guide. This curriculum is here to help—whether you follow it closely, draw inspiration from it, or give each activity your own personal twist.

Coaching juniors (especially 3–8-year-olds) can be unpredictable—so having a plan makes a big difference. This curriculum offers a ready-made structure to help you feel confident and prepared each week, while keeping things fun and flexible.

USE IT - HOW YOU LIKE

Whether you're new to coaching or just looking for inspiration:

- Follow the plan as-is
- Modify the games to suit your group
- Or mix and match to build your own session

This curriculum is here to support you—so you can focus on creating fun, safe and memorable sessions for every player.

GAME BLOCKS

You'll notice this curriculum runs in 3-week blocks, where the core game in each section stays the same—but the rules or format change slightly each week. For example:

- Week 1 might use foam balls
- Week 2 introduces gloves
- Week 3 adds a new rule or twist
-

This structure allows kids to build familiarity with the game, boosting their confidence and competence—while keeping each session new and exciting.

THE POWER OF PROGRESSION

One of the most important tools in your coaching toolkit is progression—knowing how and when to adapt or change an activity to keep kids engaged.

Young children thrive on repetition—but only when it stays fresh. If you notice attention spans dipping or energy shifting, it's time to tweak the rules, add a challenge, or make the game more exciting.

USING GLOVES IN JUNIOR SESSIONS (AGES 3–8)

All the games and activities in this handbook can be played with or without gloves. At this age, it's important to build foundational skills first—so we recommend starting without gloves for the first few weeks to help kids develop:

- Throwing and catching technique
- Hand–eye coordination
- Confidence with the ball

Once they're comfortable, add gloves as a fun progression activity—kids love the excitement of "playing like the pros!" Try replaying a familiar game but this time with gloves, and let them explore the feel and function.

Tip: A healthy balance of glove and no-glove activities gives kids the best of both worlds—developing natural catching skills and learning to properly use a glove, from a young age.

JUNIOR CURRICULUM - SEASON STRUCTURE

AGES 3 TO 8

Teams

Pre-Season

In Season

In Season

Post Season

Gameplay		Weekly Saturday Games	Christmas Break	Weekly Saturday Games	
		1 Night a Week Trainings		1 Night a Week Trainings	
Skills		Ice Breakers / Team Bonding		Ice Breakers / Team Bonding	
		Throwing & Catching		Throwing & Catching	
		Introduction to Positions			
		Hitting		Hitting	
Off Field					
Off Field	Parent Meet & Greet			Parent Check In Workshop	
	Kids Meet & Greet				End of Season Awards

Pre-Season

In Season

In Season

Post Season

	Week 1 - 2	Week 3 - 6	Week 7 - 9	Week 10 - 12	Week 12 - 15	Week 15 - 18
	BLOCK 1	BLOCK 2	BLOCK 3	BLOCK 4	BLOCK 5	BLOCK 6
Priority	Ice Breakers / Team Bonding	Ice Breakers / Team Bonding	Ice Breakers / Team Bonding	Ice Breakers / Team Bonding	Ice Breakers / Team Bonding	Ice Breakers / Team Bonding
		Throwing & Catching	Throwing & Catching	Throwing & Catching	Throwing & Catching	Throwing & Catching
		Introduction to Positions	Introduction to Positions			
		Hitting	Hitting	Hitting	Hitting	Hitting
				Baserunning		
				Fielding	Fielding	Fielding

JUNIOR CURRICULUM AGES 3 TO 8

WEEK 1: BLOCK 1

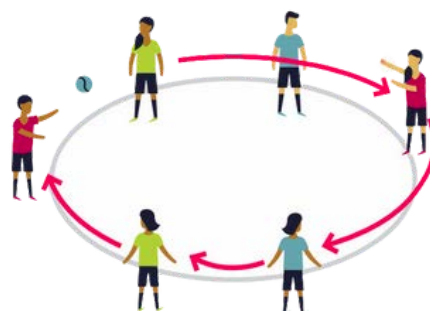
FOCUS: Ice Breakers / Team Bonding

WARM UP

(10 MINUTES)

Names up: Have the kids form a circle and introduce themselves every time they catch the ball by saying their name and favourite type of animal.

Change to favourite colour or food.



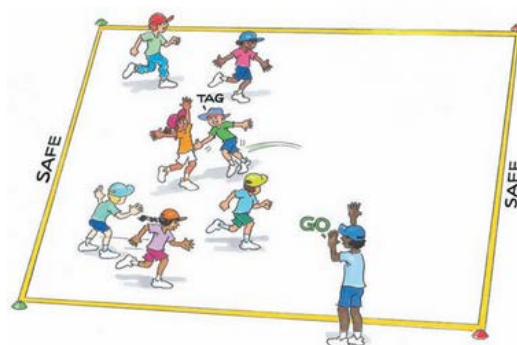
Coaches Tip:
Add Gloves as a progression

ICE BREAKER

(15 MINUTES)

Sharks and Sardines: On coaches call sardines attempt to cross from one side of the other without being munched by a shark.

Players caught turn into sharks!

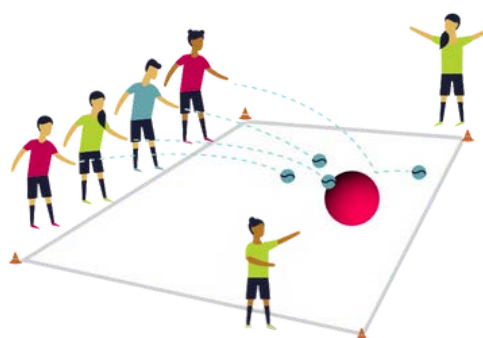


SKILL ACTIVITY

(10 MINUTES)

Throwing Range: Line up the kids and roll an object past them; they try to hit it as it moves by.

Vary the challenge by changing objects or making it a stationary target for accuracy.



Coaches Tip:
Young kids learn best when they're having fun—turn drills into games and always bring energy and smiles.



TEAM BONDING

(10 MINUTES)

Base Race with High Fives: Form a 2 team relay race and have kids take turns running to the base and back.

Once they return they can high five the next player and sit down in line: First team back wins!



JUNIOR CURRICULUM AGES 3 TO 8

WEEK 2: BLOCK 1

FOCUS: Ice Breakers / Team Bonding

WARM UP

(10 MINUTES)

Names up: Have the kids form a circle and introduce themselves again when they catch the ball.

Add in an incentive and see if anyone can pass the ball to someone who's name they remember.

ICE BREAKER

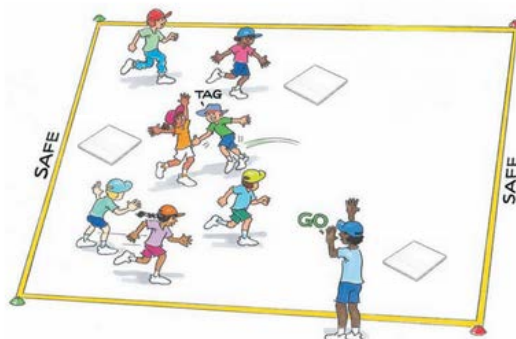
(15 MINUTES)

Sharks and Sardines: On coaches call sardines attempt to cross from one side of the other without being munched by a shark.

Add in some bases this week that are temporary 'safe zones'



Coaches Tip:
Kids this age learn visually. Show them what you want them to do, rather than over-explaining



SKILL ACTIVITY

(10 MINUTES)

Throwing Range: Get the kids to throw at the object as it goes past.

Change objects (a coach running through) or change style (still and who can get it closest).

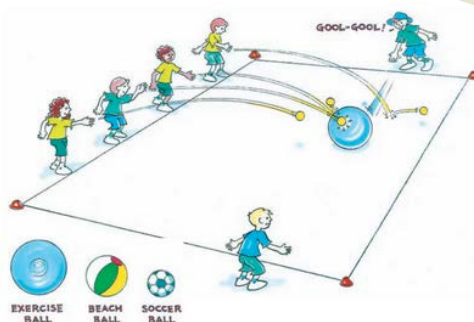
TEAM BONDING

(10 MINUTES)

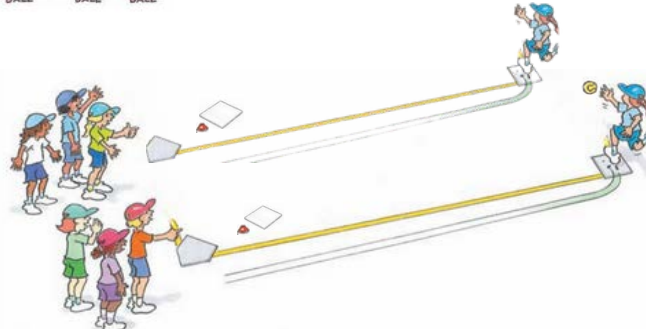
Base Race with Throwing: Have kids take turns running to the base with a ball.

Once they reach the red base they can throw to the next player and sit down:

First team back wins!



Coaches Tip:
Kneel or crouch when speaking to the kids—it helps with connection, attention, and understanding



JUNIOR CURRICULUM AGES 3 TO 8

WEEK 3: BLOCK 2

FOCUS: Ice Breakers / Team Bonding

Hitting

Introduction to Positions

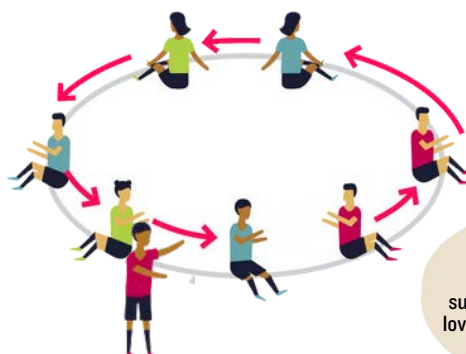
Throwing & Catching

WARM UP

(10 MINUTES)

Duck, Duck Goose: The child who is 'it' goes around saying 'Duck, Duck, Goose!' The chosen player must chase the "Goose" around the circle.

The runner tries to reach the empty spot without being tagged.



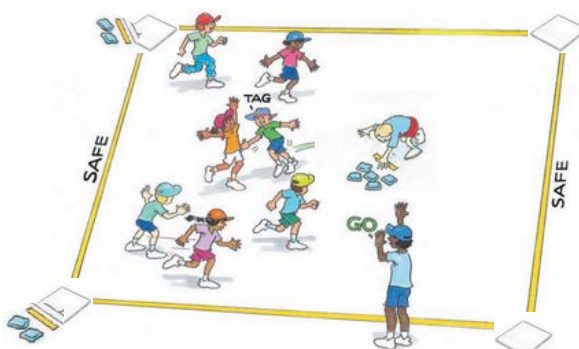
Coaches Tip:
Praise trying, not just success. Say things like "I love how hard you tried!" or "Great focus!"

ICE BREAKER

(15 MINUTES)

Sharks and Sardines: Sardines try and steal the sharks eggs (bean bags) and return them to their reef (base).

One bag per trip. They are safe on the base or at safe zones at either end. Tagged players are stuck for 10 seconds.

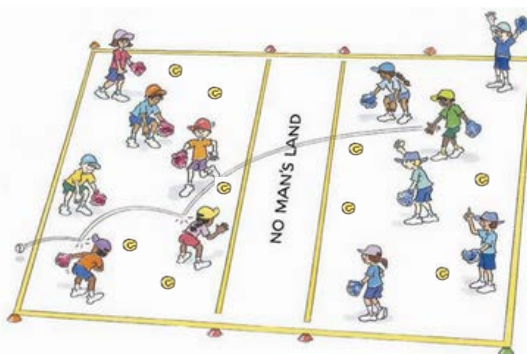


SKILL ACTIVITY

(10 MINUTES)

Throw Frenzy: Divide the group into 2 teams, with each team staying in their half. Scatter plenty of balls across both sides.

The goal is to have fewer balls on your side after 1 minute by throwing or rolling them back to the other team.



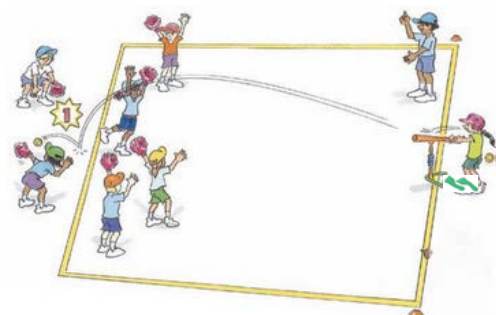
Coaches Tip:
Familiar warm-ups, songs, or activities build confidence and reduce anxiety for young players.

INTRO TO HITTING

(10 MINUTES)

Take turns and rotate children, have non-hitting kids in the field chasing the ball.

Give each child 5 hits each and ensure kids stand on the feet hitting mats.



JUNIOR CURRICULUM AGES 3 TO 8

WEEK 4: BLOCK 2

FOCUS: Ice Breakers / Team Bonding

Hitting

Introduction to Positions

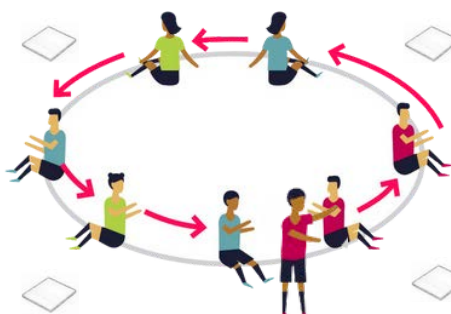
Throwing & Catching

WARM UP

(10 MINUTES)

Duck, Duck Goose: 4 bases around the circle. The player who is "it" must run around the circle, touching each base.

They can stop on a base to be safe and return to their seat on the next turn.



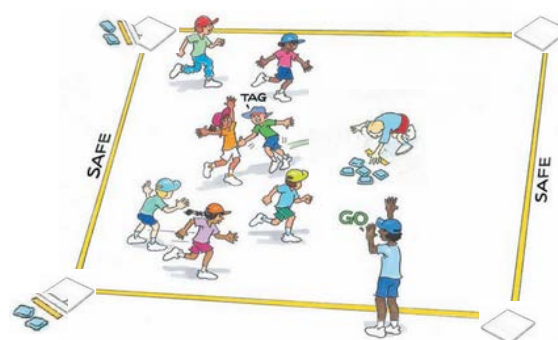
Coaches Tip: Keep explanations of how to play brief, then let them move. Their attention spans are short.

ICE BREAKER

(15 MINUTES)

Sharks and Sardines: This week, sardines try and steal the bean bags and return them to their base.

Players who are tagged are stuck indefinitely - but may be freed with a high 5 from another player.



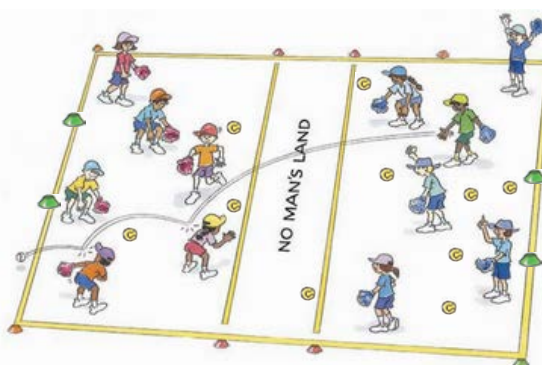
Coaches Tip: Learn and use Names. This builds trust and helps with connection

SKILL ACTIVITY

(10 MINUTES)

Throw Frenzy: This week, players aim to throw or roll the ball through the end zone (green markers).

The other team may block/stop. Allow 2 minutes, tally the scores, and adjust the field to ensure kids can reach the targets.

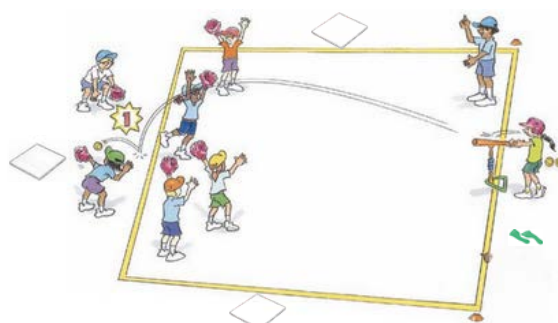


INTRO TO HITTING

(10 MINUTES)

Take turns and rotate children, have non-hitting kids in the field chasing the ball. Give each child 5 hits each.

This week, have players in the field return the ball to one of the bases before the next hit.



JUNIOR CURRICULUM AGES 3 TO 8

WEEK 5: BLOCK 2

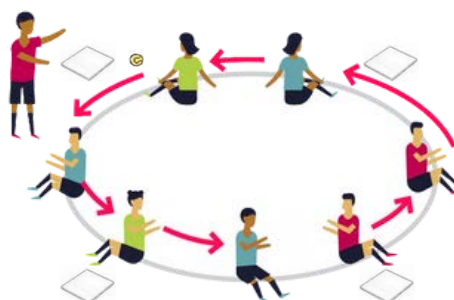
FOCUS: Ice Breakers / Team Bonding Hitting
Introduction to Positions Throwing & Catching

WARM UP

(10 MINUTES)

Duck, Duck Goose: This week, introduce a ball. The player who is 'it' throws the ball to each person while saying "duck, duck" and "goose."

The player who receives the ball on "goose" must chase and try to tag with the ball.



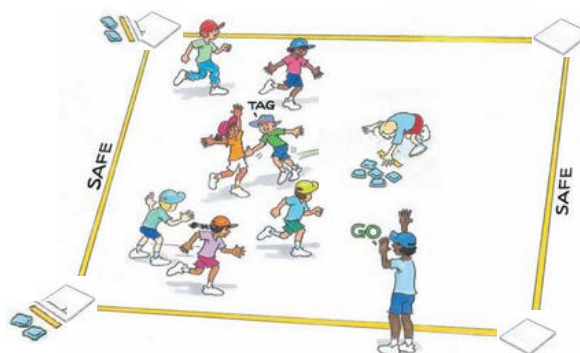
Coaches Tip: Keep explanations of how to play brief, then let them move. Their attention spans are short.

ICE BREAKER

(15 MINUTES)

Sharks and Sardines: Coach as the shark. Sardines try and steal the bean bags and return them to their bases.

Add in a rule where the Shark can steal back the bean bags from the bases and return to the stash in the middle.

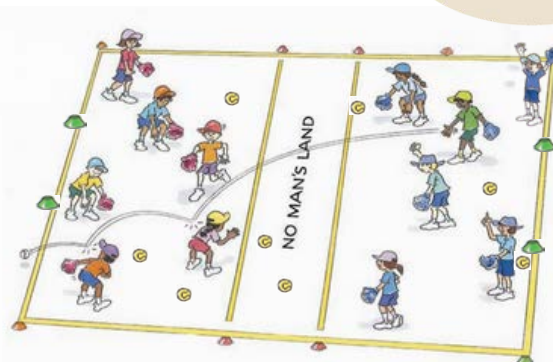


SKILL ACTIVITY

(10 MINUTES)

Throw Frenzy: Players still score by either throwing through the green markers.

Add in catching: If a player catches the ball on the full their team receives an extra 5 points.



Coaches Tip: Be enthusiastic, respectful, and calm—they'll mirror your energy and tone.

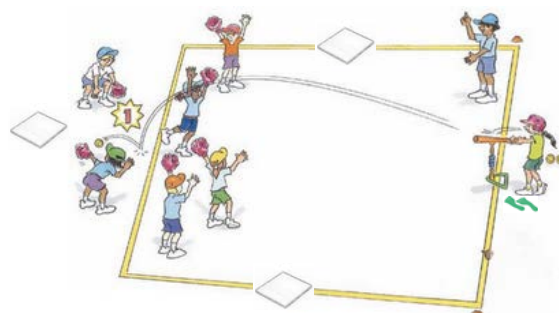


INTRO TO HITTING

(10 MINUTES)

Take turns and rotate children, have non-hitting kids in the field chasing the ball. This week, only 1 hit per player.

After hitting the ball, the player will run to first base. They can continue to second base on the next hit and so on.



JUNIOR CURRICULUM AGES 3 TO 8

WEEK 6: BLOCK 3

FOCUS: Ice Breakers / Team Bonding

Hitting

Introduction to Positions

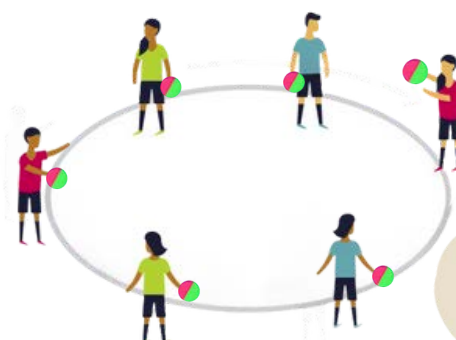
Throwing & Catching

WARM UP

(10 MINUTES)

Velcro Circle Catch: Have kids practice throwing and catching around the circle with the Velcro tennis ball and catcher.

Start by passing to the person next to them then progress to anyone in the circle.



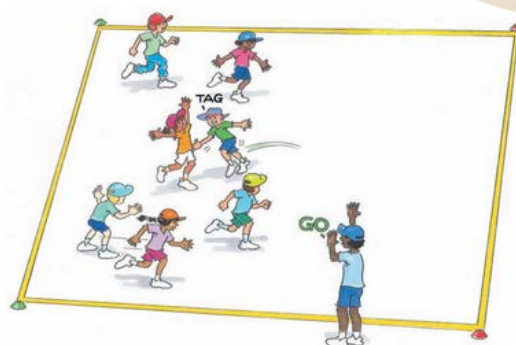
Coaches Tip:
Turn drills into adventures
—"run to the spaceship,"
"hit the magic ball,"
"throw like a superhero"

ICE BREAKER

(15 MINUTES)

Stuck in the Mud: Taggers chase the runners around the field. If a tagger touches a runner, the runner is "stuck in the mud" and must freeze, standing with their legs apart.

Players can free players by crawling through legs.

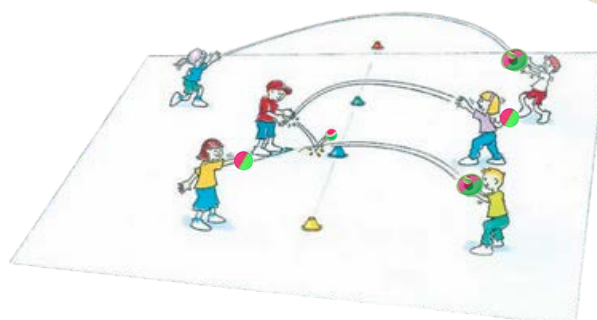


SKILL ACTIVITY

(10 MINUTES)

Velcro Catch Throw Frenzy: Divide the group into 2 teams and give every player a Velcro Catcher.

Have kids throw over to the other side and practice catching with a partner.



Coaches Tip:
Highlight positives in front of the group.

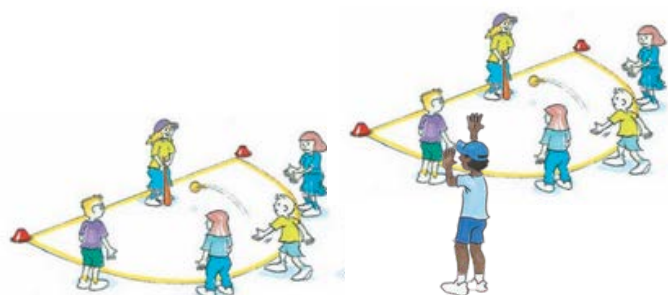


HITTING

(10 MINUTES)

French Baseball: Have kids form a semi circle around the batter. Kids roll/under arm throw and players must stop the ball from hitting their legs with the bat.

If the thrower hits the batters legs, they are in and swap over.



JUNIOR CURRICULUM AGES 3 TO 8

WEEK 7: BLOCK 3

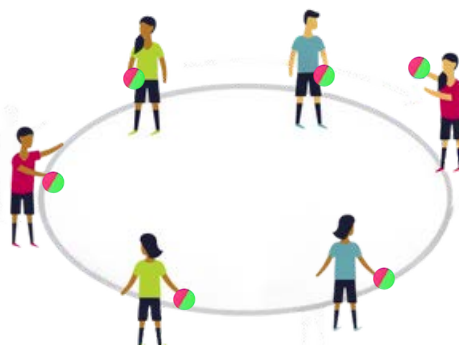
FOCUS: Ice Breakers / Team Bonding Hitting
Introduction to Positions Throwing & Catching

WARM UP

(10 MINUTES)

Who's got the ball: This week, the players may pass the ball around to each other.

Once the coach yells stop, the person in the middle tries to guess who has the ball behind their back.



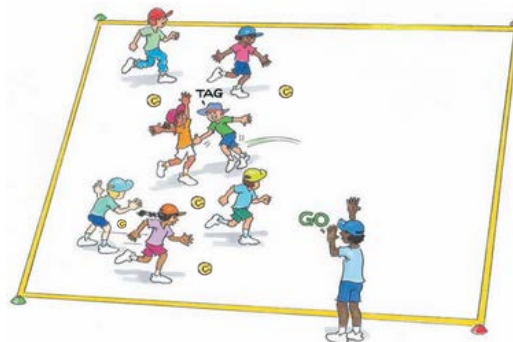
Coaches Tip:
Controlled chaos is normal. Keep structure, but don't expect military precision.

ICE BREAKER

(15 MINUTES)

Stuck in the Mud: This week, all players have a soft foam ball in their hands (except taggers).

To un-freeze frozen friends, players must roll the ball between their legs.

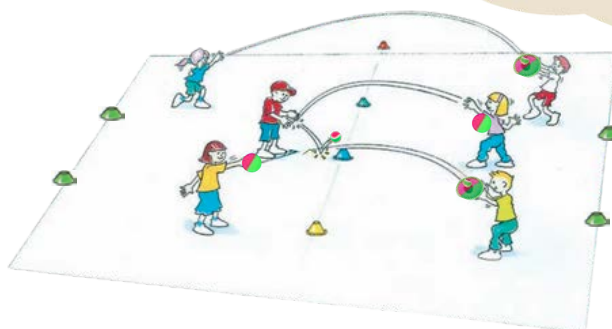


SKILL ACTIVITY

(10 MINUTES)

Velcro Catch Throw Frenzy: Give all players a Velcro catcher again and divide into 2 teams.

This week, teams must try and throw through the green gates for a point. The other team may stop/catch the ball.



Coaches Tip:
Keep transitions between activities quick to prevent restlessness and distractions.

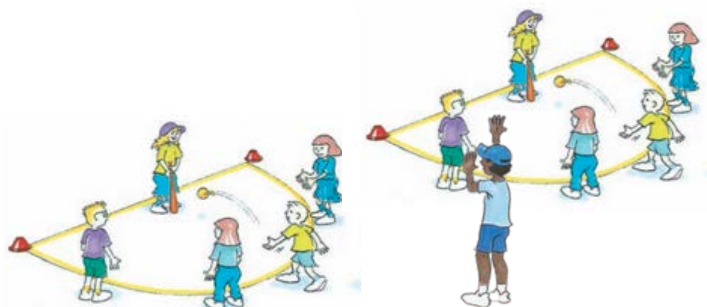


HITTING

(10 MINUTES)

French Baseball: Have kids form a semicircle around the batter and underarm throw (no rolling). Players must block the ball from hitting their legs with the bat.

If the thrower hits the batter's legs, they switch places.



JUNIOR CURRICULUM AGES 3 TO 8

WEEK 8: BLOCK 3

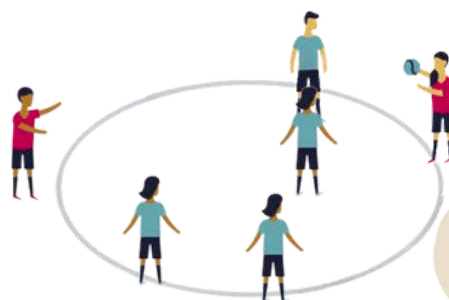
FOCUS: Ice Breakers / Team Bonding Hitting
Introduction to Positions Throwing & Catching

WARM UP

(10 MINUTES)

Red Light, Green Light: One player is the marshal with a ball. Others sneak up when their back is turned. On "Red Light," freeze! If caught moving or tagged (no throwing), go back to the start. The marshal can't move their feet.

Player that reaches the marshal becomes the new marshal.

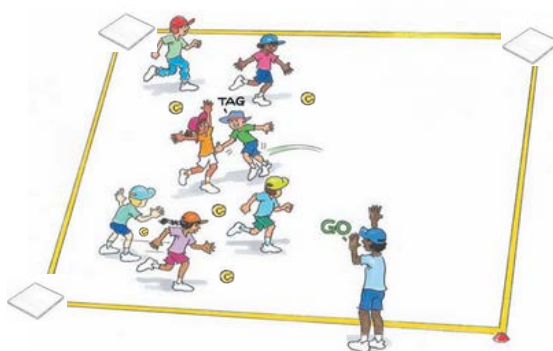


ICE BREAKER

(15 MINUTES)

Stuck in the Mud: This week, add in some bases as temporary 'safe zones'. All players have a soft foam ball in their hands (except taggers).

To un-freeze frozen friends, players must roll the ball between their legs.

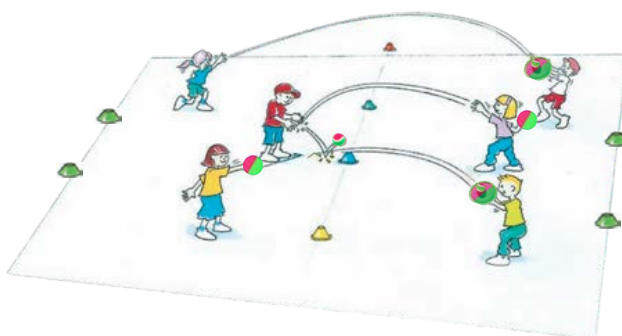


SKILL ACTIVITY

(10 MINUTES)

Velcro Catch Throw Frenzy: This week, teams still gain a point by throwing through the green gates.

They also gain 5 points if one of their teammates catches the ball on the full with the Velcro catcher!



HITTING

(10 MINUTES)

French Baseball: Place a bag or bin behind the batter and have them step to the side. Inform the throwers that if they hit the bag, they're in.

The batter can swing to try to stop the ball.



JUNIOR CURRICULUM AGES 3 TO 8

WEEK 9: BLOCK 4

FOCUS:

Ice Breakers / Team Bonding

Hitting

Fielding

Introduction to Positions

Throwing & Catching

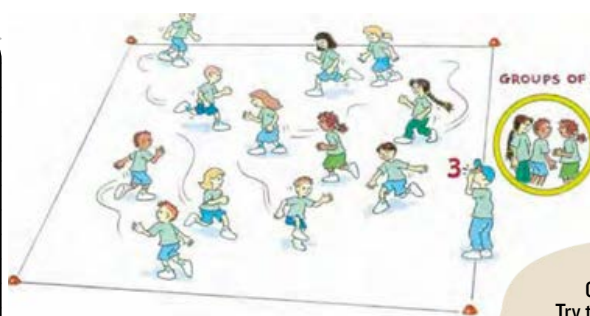
Base running

WARM UP

(10 MINUTES)

Numbers Up: Players run in different directions, avoiding contact. When the coach calls a number, they form groups of that size.

Any player left out does an activation like star jumps.



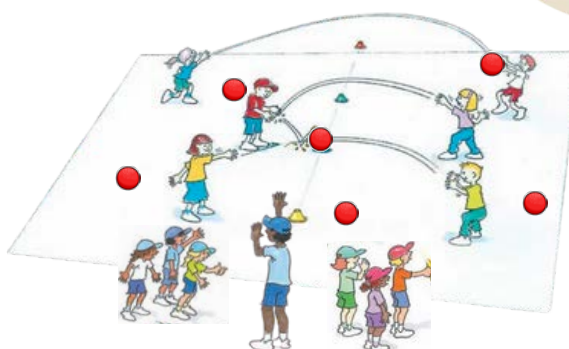
Coaches Tip:
Try to have one extra game or idea in your back pocket for when/if something falls flat.

ICE BREAKER

(15 MINUTES)

Dodgeball: Players are divided into two teams, trying to hit opponents with the ball below the waist. If a ball is caught, the thrower is out.

Players who are out stand with the coach and can rejoin after a 1-minute time penalty.



Coaches Tip:
Rotate Roles – Let every kid try different positions to build confidence and keep things fun.

SKILL ACTIVITY

(10 MINUTES)

Kangaroo Catch: In pairs, players start close and use a kangaroo vest or shirt as a pouch to catch the ball. After each catch, they step back; if they drop it, they sit down.

Play multiple rounds and celebrate the winners of each round.

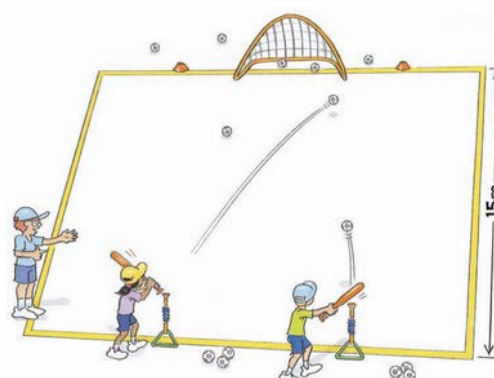


HITTING

(10 MINUTES)

Target Practice: Set up tee stations for kids to hit targets like hula hoops, balls, nets, or goals.

Monitor their success and adjust their distance as needed to ensure they can reach the targets.



JUNIOR CURRICULUM AGES 3 TO 8

WEEK 10: BLOCK 4

FOCUS:

Ice Breakers / Team Bonding

Hitting

Fielding

Introduction to Positions

Throwing & Catching

Base running

WARM UP

(10 MINUTES)

Numbers Up: Players move around the square using different animal movements (e.g., hopping like a frog).

When the coach calls a number, they form that many in a group, changing the animals and movements each time.

ICE BREAKER

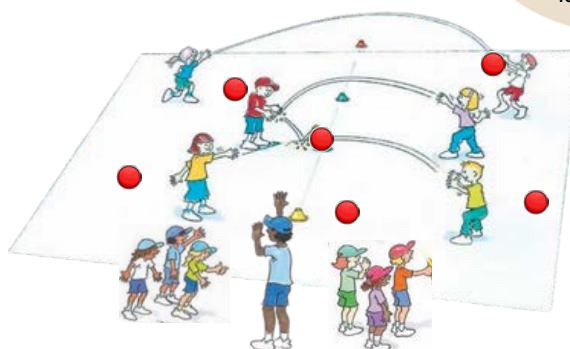
(15 MINUTES)

Dodgeball: This week, players can throw at opponents from the shoulders down.

Change the time penalty to 2 minutes, allowing teams to attempt to eliminate the entire opposing team to win the game.



Coaches Tip: Hearing their name helps them focus and feel seen.



Coaches Tip: "Be a kangaroo and jump!" or "Throw like a monkey" makes movement fun and relatable

SKILL ACTIVITY

(10 MINUTES)

Kangaroo Catch: This week, players have 1 minute to complete as many passes and catches with their partner as possible, throwing into a kangaroo vest, shirt or hat before throwing back to count.

See which partners win!

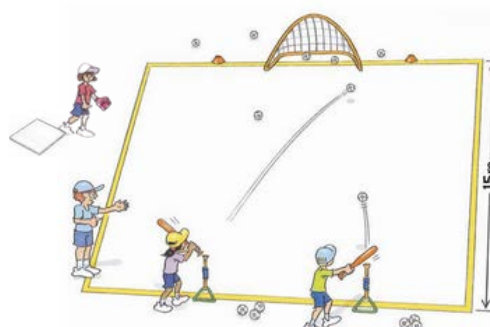


HITTING

(10 MINUTES)

Target Practice: Players at each base run to gather the ball and throw it back to the coach.

After hitting off the tee, players rotate to the base positions and the base players return to the end of the line each turn.



JUNIOR CURRICULUM AGES 3 TO 8

WEEK 11: BLOCK 4

FOCUS:

Ice Breakers / Team Bonding

Hitting

Fielding

Introduction to Positions

Throwing & Catching

Base running

WARM UP

(10 MINUTES)

Letters Up: Split into two teams. Players run around a square until the coach calls a letter. Teams race to form the letter by lying down.

Award points for the fastest and neatest team.



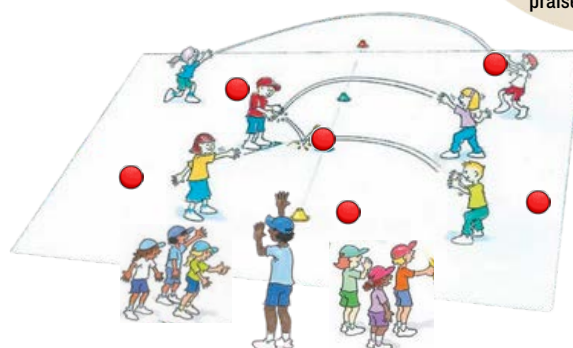
Coaches Tip:
Celebrate the small stuff. Catching a rolling ball, standing in line, or listening to instructions all deserve praise at this age.

ICE BREAKER

(15 MINUTES)

Dodgeball: This week, players can throw at opponents from the shoulders down. No time limit this week, players who are hit are out.

They can re-enter the game if their teammates catch the ball on the full.



SKILL ACTIVITY

(10 MINUTES)

Kangaroo Catch: This week, have players start close and practice underarm and overarm throws, into their partners pouch.

Have kids slowly step back and see how far players can successfully throw and catch!



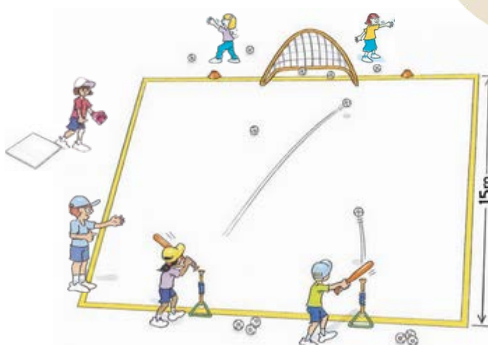
Coaches Tip:
Embrace the Wiggles and Wandering. It's normal! Keep inviting kids back with energy and encouragement, not demands.

HITTING

(10 MINUTES)

Target Practice: Place players at each base and have two floaters to gather and throw to the base after being hit.

After hitting off the tee, players rotate players through the positions.



JUNIOR CURRICULUM AGES 3 TO 8

WEEK 12: BLOCK 5

FOCUS:

Ice Breakers / Team Bonding

Hitting

Fielding

Introduction to Positions

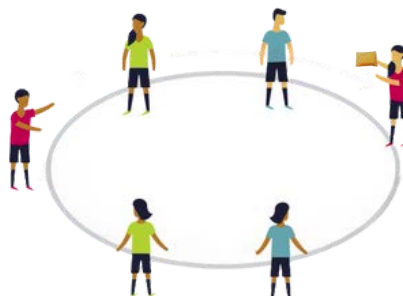
Throwing & Catching

WARM UP

(10 MINUTES)

Bean Bag Hot Potato: In a circle, kids pass a "hot" bean bag quickly, aiming for the longest streak of passes and catches.

Try to beat the record!



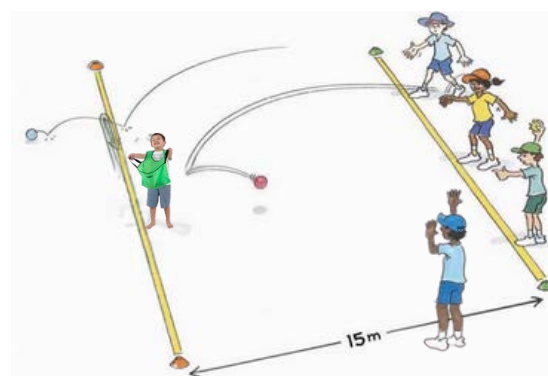
Coaches Tip: Physical praise like high-fives, fist bumps, or thumbs-ups go a long way with this age group.

ICE BREAKER

(15 MINUTES)

Kangaroo Catching Range: Have kids line up with foam balls and throw them into the 'kangaroo's pouch' (target).

One child catches, and after counting catches, rotate the catcher.

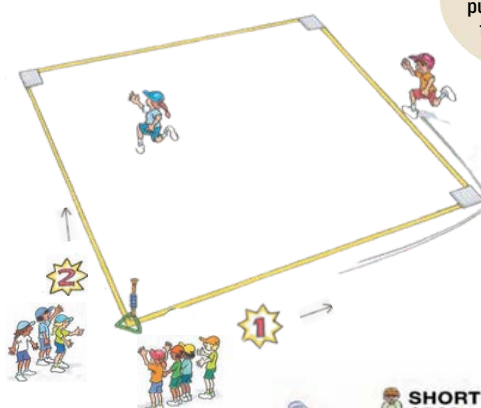


SKILL ACTIVITY

(10 MINUTES)

SPR: Form 2 teams at home base. Players run in opposite directions, play scissors-paper-rock when they meet, and the winner continues.

The loser returns to their line. The goal is to reach the other team's home plate.



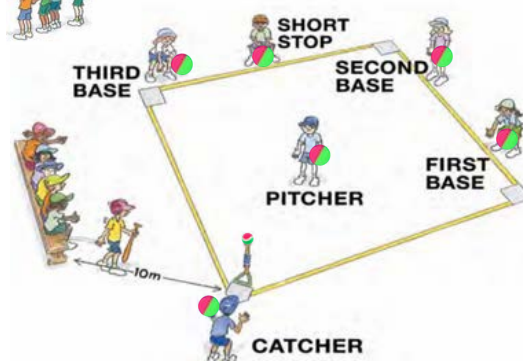
Coaches Tip: Celebrate effort loudly and publicly. "Did you see how fast Ava ran?! That was amazing!"

HITTING

(10 MINUTES)

Velcro Ball: Split into two teams and have a traditional game of T-Ball. Equip fielders with Velcro catchers and use a tennis ball to play the game.

Have a few innings and swap teams over.



JUNIOR CURRICULUM AGES 3 TO 8

WEEK 13: BLOCK 5

FOCUS: Ice Breakers / Team Bonding

Hitting

Fielding

Introduction to Positions

Throwing & Catching

WARM UP

(10 MINUTES)

Bean Bag Hot Potato: Tell the kids they have 3 lives. Each drop costs a life: 1 drop means balancing on one leg, 2 drops mean catching with one hand, and 3 drops lead to elimination and they sit down.



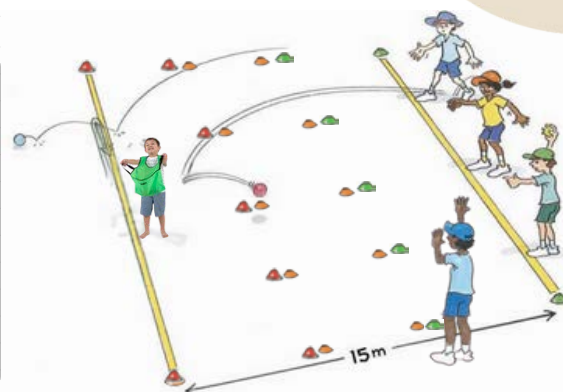
Coaches Tip:
Use coloured cones to highlight and amplify your activity. You'll be amazed the difference it makes.

ICE BREAKER

(15 MINUTES)

Kangaroo Catching Range: Set up a points system: green 1, orange 5, and red 10 points. Players earn points by catching the ball in those zones.

Have players line up and communicate their target before throwing.

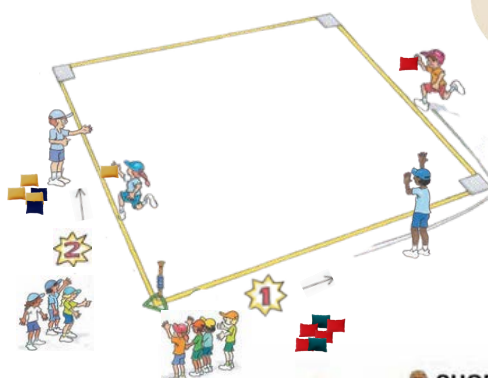


SKILL ACTIVITY

(10 MINUTES)

SPR: This week, a coach tosses a bean bag to each player. Teams earn 1 point for leaving a bean bag on 1st or 3rd base, and 5 points for 2nd base.

If players meet, they play Scissors, Paper, Rock, and the loser is sent home.



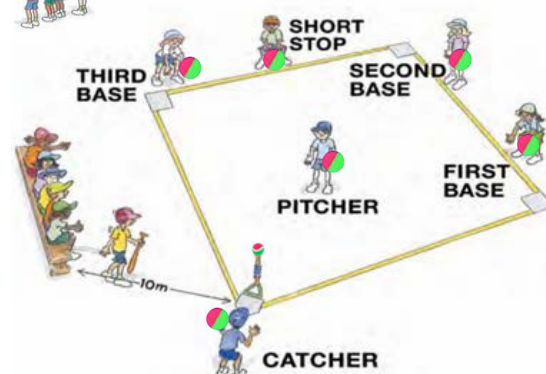
Coaches Tip:
Play along with them! Don't just observe—run, jump, crawl, throw. Be in the action when you can.

HITTING

(10 MINUTES)

Velcro Ball: Split into two teams and have a traditional game of T-Ball. Equip fielders with Velcro catchers and use a tennis ball to play the game.

Have a few innings and swap teams over.



JUNIOR CURRICULUM AGES 3 TO 8

WEEK 14: BLOCK 5

FOCUS:

Ice Breakers / Team Bonding

Hitting

Fielding

Introduction to Positions

Throwing & Catching

WARM UP

(10 MINUTES)

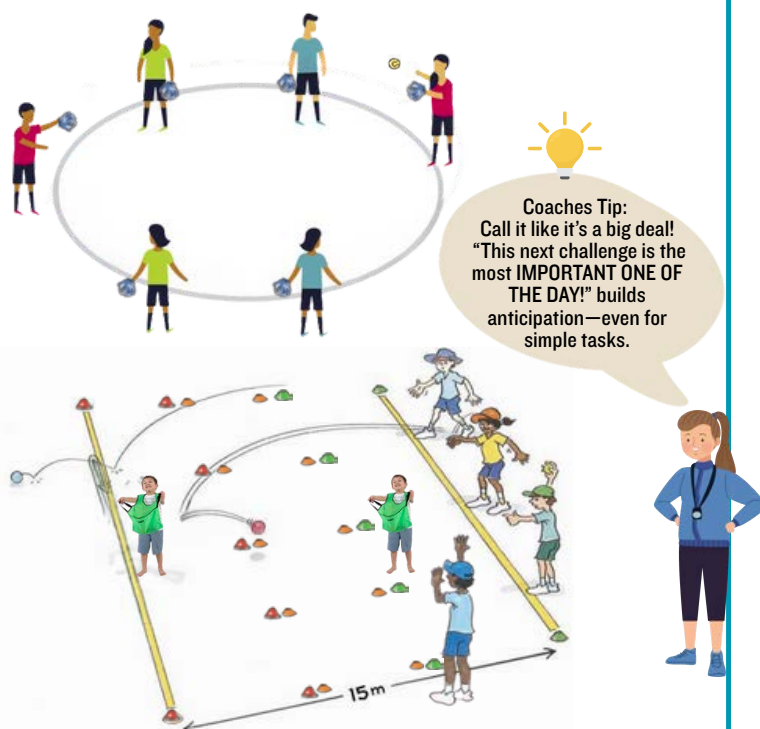
Glove Hot Potato: Give each player a glove and use 1 rubber ball. Each drop still costs a life: 1 drop means balancing on one leg, 2 drops mean catching with 1 hand behind their back one hand, 3 drops and they're out/sit down.

ICE BREAKER

(15 MINUTES)

Kangaroo Catching Range: This week, have 2 catchers working together as a team and pool their points.

See which partners in your group can score the most points and have a few rounds!



SKILL ACTIVITY

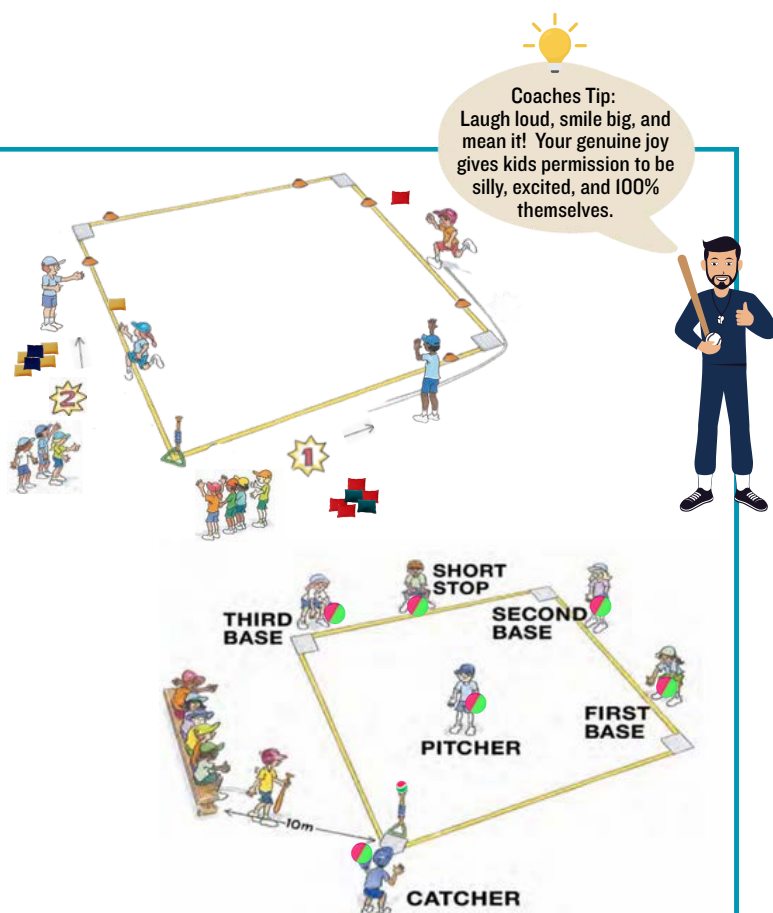
(10 MINUTES)

SPR: Same rules as last week, but set up markers about a meter from each base on each side. Players must throw from the marker and get the bean bag to land and stop on the base for the point to count.

HITTING

(10 MINUTES)

Velcro Ball: Split into two teams and have a traditional game of T-Ball. Equip fielders with Velcro catchers and use a tennis ball to play the game. Have a few innings and swap teams over.



JUNIOR CURRICULUM AGES 3 TO 8

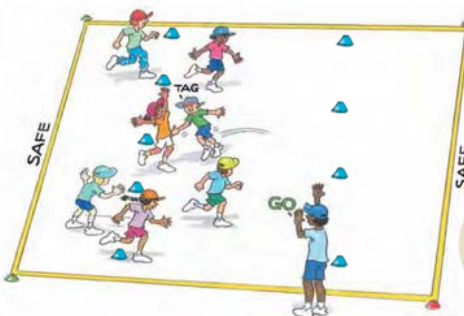
WEEK 15: BLOCK 6
FOCUS: Ice Breakers / Team Bonding Hitting Fielding
Introduction to Positions Throwing & Catching

WARM UP

(10 MINUTES)

Cross the River: Assign "sharks" to the blue cone area. Others cross without being tagged; tagged players become sharks.

The coach can call out traits (e.g., "Red shirts!") each round.



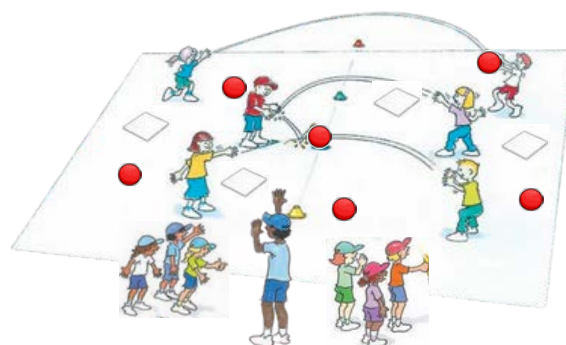
Coaches Tip: Even young kids like knowing why they're doing something: "We warm up so our bodies feel happy and strong!"

ICE BREAKER

(15 MINUTES)

Base Dodgeball: Players can throw at opponents from the shoulders down. Those hit are out but can re-enter if a teammate catches the ball on the full.

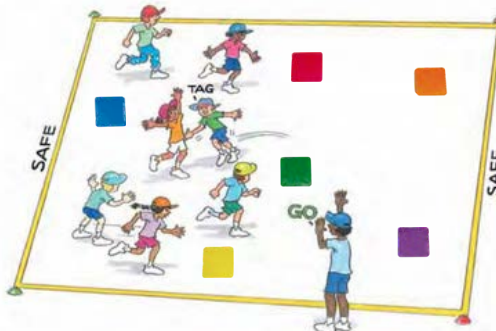
Bases act as safe zones, so players aren't out if hit while standing on one.



SKILL ACTIVITY

(10 MINUTES)

Islands: "Sharks" are taggers, and players are safe on islands (bases). When the coach calls a color, players must leave their island and find a new one without being tagged. Tagged players become sharks.

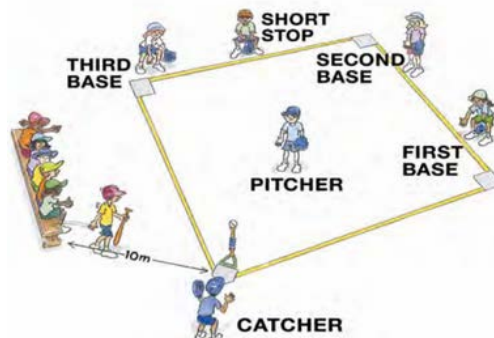


Coaches Tip: Make it part of the game: "Oops! That's okay—mistakes mean we're learning!"

HITTING

(10 MINUTES)

T-Ball: Split into two teams and have a traditional game of T-Ball. Equip fielders with gloves and a ball to play the game. Have a few innings and swap teams over.



JUNIOR CURRICULUM AGES 3 TO 8

WEEK 16: BLOCK 6
FOCUS: Ice Breakers / Team Bonding Hitting Fielding
Introduction to Positions Throwing & Catching

WARM UP

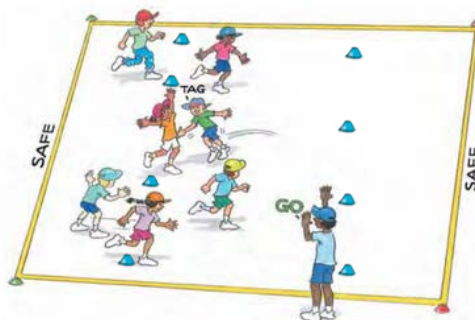
(10 MINUTES)

Cross the River: Start with 2 "sharks" forming a linked "net." Sharks link arms or hold hands and must tag runners while staying linked; tagged players join the net, making it bigger. Coach continues to call over traits each round.

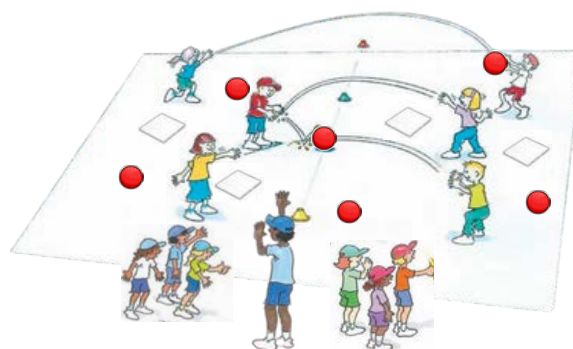
ICE BREAKER

(15 MINUTES)

Base Dodgeball: Same rules as last week apply, but this week, if a player catches an opponent's throw while in contact with the base, any eliminated players may rejoin the game.



Coaches Tip:
You've got 5 seconds left—5... 4... 3..." helps prepare for transitions without surprises.

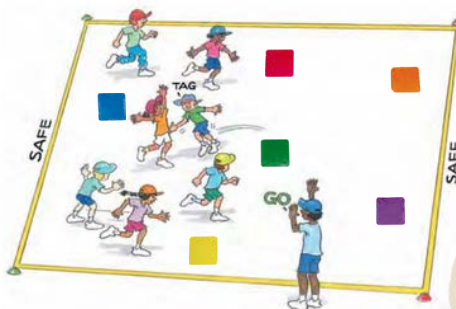


SKILL ACTIVITY

(10 MINUTES)

Islands: Give all runners a ball. If they throw/roll it to another base from their own, the coach selects a shark to return to a runner. Tagged runners become sharks. 1 shark must remain at all times.

Coach calls out unsafe bases.



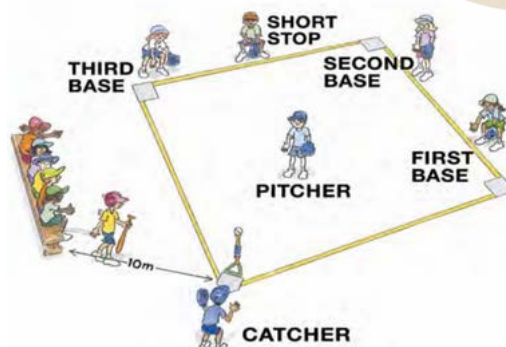
Coaches Tip:
Match your tone to the moment! Use calm, slow tones for listening times, and upbeat voices for play—this helps signal behaviour shifts.

HITTING

(10 MINUTES)

T-Ball: Split into two teams and have a traditional game of T-Ball.

Equip fielders with gloves and a ball to play the game. Have a few innings and swap teams over.



JUNIOR CURRICULUM AGES 3 TO 8

WEEK 17: BLOCK 6

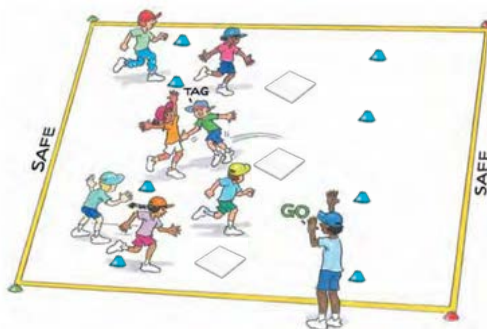
FOCUS: Ice Breakers / Team Bonding Hitting Fielding
Introduction to Positions Throwing & Catching

WARM UP

(10 MINUTES)

Cross the River: Sharks form a linked net to tag runners. Add safe zones where runners can stay for up to 10 seconds.

The coach calls traits (e.g., "Anyone who had toast for breakfast has to cross!") each round.

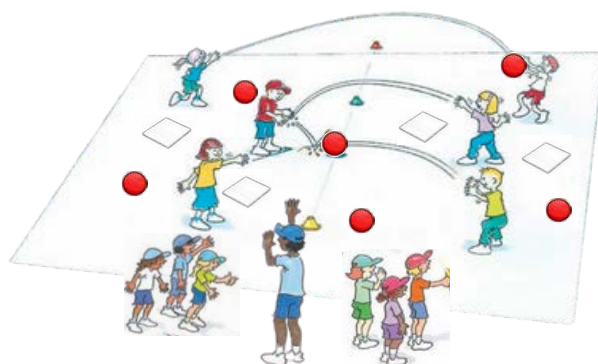


Coaches Tip: Keep safety top of mind—watch for tripping hazards, sun exposure, or nearby distractions.

ICE BREAKER

(15 MINUTES)

Base Dodgeball: Same rules as last week apply, but this week, if a player catches an opponent's throw while in contact with the base, any eliminated players may rejoin the game.

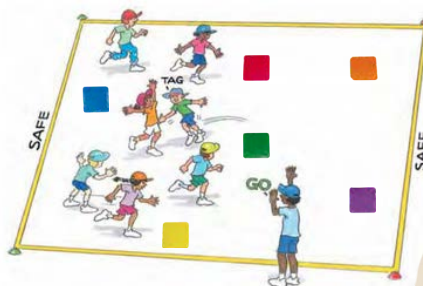


SKILL ACTIVITY

(10 MINUTES)

Islands: Give all runners a ball. This week sharks are linked by forming a net. Players still try to roll/throw from base to base to gain runners back from being sharks.

Coach continues to call out bases runners must leave.



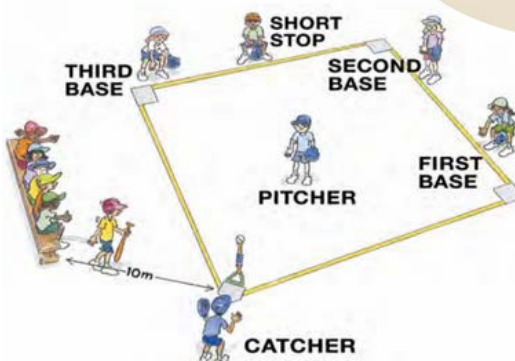
Coaches Tip: Celebrate the Group, Not Just Individuals. Use group praise: "That was awesome teamwork, everyone!" to build a shared sense of achievement.

HITTING

(10 MINUTES)

T-Ball: Split into two teams and have a traditional game of T-Ball. Equip fielders with gloves and a ball to play the game.

Have a few innings and swap teams over.



RESOURCES

A range of helpful resources are available to support your coaching journey are listed below. For more information and to access these resources, visit [Baseball Queensland's Club Hub](#).



Aussie T-Ball Club Manual



Aussie T-Ball Schools Manual



Little League T-Ball Manual



Baseball5 Handbook



Baseball5 Toolkit



National Integrity Framework



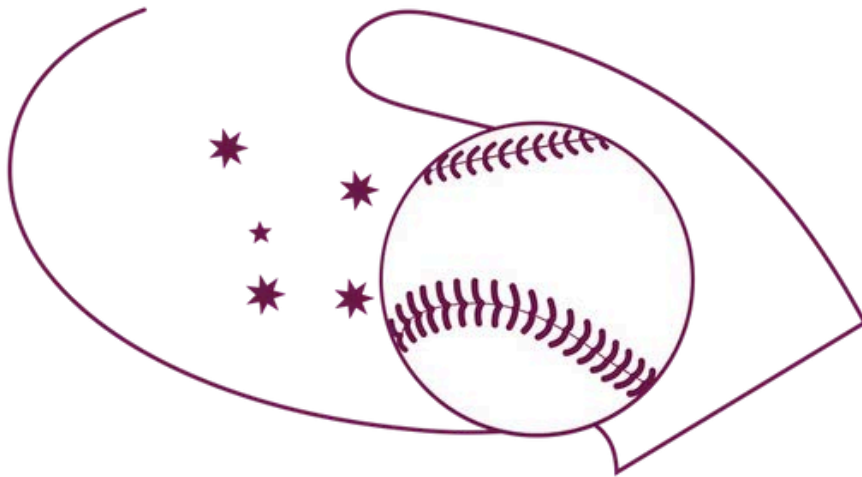
Baseball Australia Coaching App



Autism QLD Resources



Sport4All Resources



BASEBALL
QUEENSLAND

JUNIOR
COACHING HANDBOOK