



BASEBALL

5 & 6 year old Coaching Manual



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BC Baseball 5-6 year old Development Booklet for Coaches and Parents

This booklet is to assist volunteer coaches who are mostly parents in running fun and productive practices so that players want to play the game and stay in it longer.

This also will assist parents at home who can have fun working on the baseball skills with their kids. If both the coach and parent are on the same page then it makes it a more fun learning experience for the kids.

The details in the booklet are a result of scientific research and many years of working with young children ages 5-6 years old.

The booklet details are part of a very successful BC Baseball Player/Parent/Coaches caravan program held for the last 7 years. In the 7 years of running the caravan we have received an increase of player participation and great feedback from kids, parents and coaches about the program.

The goal with this booklet is to assist in the education of the most important people in the development of players in the game at the grassroots level. Our volunteers are the grassroots of the game. They give many hours of their time to help many young people enjoy the game and we feel we need to be there to assist them in any way possible.

Your goals

The goal of the coaches is to make sure all kids are active at all times, develop some basics fundamental skills so that they feel some individual success, make sure the kids are having fun and to be very positive all the time. Instill a fun atmosphere during practices and games.

1.

The skills in the booklet will include:

Warm ups

Throwing a Baseball

Catching a Baseball

Hitting a Baseball Fielding a Baseball

Running the bases

The drills for each skill are fun, incorporate a game, use key words and are not always baseball related.

At this age it is important to keep it simple, develop their individual athletic skills and of course show some success. All this means the player will have more fun.

Keep in mind that baseball may be the sport with the most individual skills involved so there will be more failure. It is also a game where player stand around too much and we need to figure out how to limit that standing around.

Failure

Coaches need to let kids know that failure is part of the process and that they just need to keep working on the fun skills and getting better. Coaches need to make sure when correcting a skill or anything the player is doing incorrectly or not well, that you tell them a few things they are doing really well.

Incentives

If you have baseball cards these can be used as an incentive when kids are trying, hustling, listening, getting better and they can also be taken away when not listening, hustling. But do not take a card away if a player does not improve the skills because this is a much harder task. You can have fun with the kids and the cards. Make sure you are always smiling yourself with the kids.

2.

Listening

Encourage listening and why, smarter players become better players and then you can practice on your own. Stress that listening is the most important skill in baseball. Also, that you listen with your eyes and ears because together they will make the body understand what to do. Begin to mention now that listening with your eyes and ears is a sign of respect when someone is talking to you. Mention to the players if you as the player were asking a coach a question, would you like it if the coached looked the other way while you were asking a question? If not then do not do that to others, look at them and listen, you will learn a lot.

Hustle

Hustle is also a skill and must become a habit; we will show some fun drills to teach kids how to hustle. Ask kids, do you want to be a faster runner? If yes, not many kids will answer no, then if they run everywhere they go in practice or games that they are telling their legs to move fast and they will become faster. If they walk or go slow they are training their legs to do that instead. This must be instilled and practiced from day one. This can be done in a fun and productive way for the players.

Parent/Player meeting

You should always have a meeting with your parents and players prior to your first practice. This meeting is to ask for their assistance in practice and playing catch, roll ground balls, toss some wiffle balls underhand, and have fun with your kids in the back yard. Explain that the kids need to do the skills, play games each day if even for 10-15 minutes. The drills they will see because they will be assisting in practice. Plus let the parents know that you and your coaches are volunteers and will do your best to help each kid get better and have fun. But, one or two practices a week just gets them started and they have to practice on their own to get even better. This will lead to more success in the skills and fun playing the game of baseball.

3.

Equipment needed for a very fun practice

Stopwatch/Watch (Kids love to be timed, fun)

Bean bags (Used to teach how to catch a baseball, form around hands better, safer)

Softer baseballs (Safer, eliminate fear and the body learns better/ quicker)

Flat bases (Or make out of cardboard bases)

Big Wiffle Balls

Big Barrell Wiffle Ball Bats

Whistle (Kids hear and react to whistles, instead of your voice that can sound mean at times)

Warm ups

Skill:

Try to do warm ups where kids are always moving and accomplishing a skill related to the sport or for coordination. Utilizing their feet, hands, vision and balance. Should be fun so kids will do it and learn at the same time.

Drill:

Every kid has a tennis ball, bean bag, or softer ball. This drill also works on listening skills. Place players in a circle, or spread out so they are not near each other. When you say toss they toss the ball up in air and catch it. If you yell anything but toss they cannot toss the ball, working on listening skills. This can be fun because you might say go and some toss the ball, or all toss the ball, ask what happened to their

4.

listening skills. They saw you toss but were not listening. Do not point out individual players that did not listen, explain as a group. When they toss it up they count how many they catch. If too easy they toss it higher, if too hard keep it lower. Players toss the ball themselves. All players do this; make sure they are spread out. Emphasize giving with their hands when catching the item they tossed like they would if they toss an egg and they do not want to break it.

You can do this for a minute. Then change the drill to running in place and toss/catch.

You can also have them catch it with one hand one time and then other hand the next time, it's a little more of a challenge and fun.

Have them catch the ball two hands and go to a throwing position and then toss ball up again, gets them to turn their feet, gets arms 90 degree angle, just like you would if you are to throw a baseball.

Then you can have them jogging and tossing.

Finally run and toss.

When you do these depends on how they are doing. This helps them learning how to catch a baseball since they are not using a glove. It teaches the hands how they work.

Another drill is to pick partners and they shuffle in a circle and toss the ball as they shuffle in a circle. They can also reverse the circle. Depending if they are doing it really well and it's too easy then have them toss 2 baseballs, one player yells toss and this works on communication. You can have some players doing this and others one ball till it gets too easy with one ball.

Keep in mind they do this when you say the key word, you pick the key word, toss, go, whatever it is make then repeat it.

5.

Key words used:

Toss, Go, Give when you catch.

Dynamic Fundamental warm up: Another warm up which includes all the skills is the dynamic fundamental warm up.

This should be done every day as a team warm up for about 2-3 minutes.

Place kids in a circle, spread apart where they can see you. You yell different positions and the players follow what you do, at the same time they have to yell what you are yelling, they learn faster by doing and repeating the words.

You will yell ready position, throwing position, throw, fielding position, hitting position, contact point position, finish position, Hitting position, swing, freeze, catching a ball position. You might do these in order like, fielding position, throw. Hitting position swing, fielding position throwing position and throw. Then you can mix them up, example, fielding position, hitting position, ready position, throwing position etc. Makes them think.

As you do this for a few practices then you may only yell out the position and how show them as you yell them. They start learning more by having to think.

This is a great warm up that gets the body loose by going through all the different fundamental skills. Also, you can speed this up as they get better.

You will learn all the skill positions below in this booklet.

Throwing a baseball

Skill:

A very difficult skill due to the size and weight of the baseball. Allow players to grip the ball with as many fingers as possible to hold the ball. Do your best to keep their thumb at the bottom of the ball. Most likely all players will have 4 fingers on top of the ball and the thumb underneath; fingers will be spread a little so they can hold the ball.

6.

Focus on a couple of items when they throw a baseball. One let them throw it and see what they do; their body may do it correctly. Then if not done correctly then focus on a few items, one that they turn sideways, place arms in 90 degree angles with elbows at or slightly below shoulders, and then from that position throw the ball. For this age it might be better to start turned sideways and throw so that when you catch a ball they know how to get sideways because their body has been there many times already.

Drill 1:

Give each player a ball.

Spread them out in one line with room next to each other.

They are going to throw the ball into a fence.

You will yell ready position, this means hands together, glove and hand together, ball in hand. (Or you can start in sideways position ready to throw and hands would be together, or start in a sideways position arms in 90 degrees, ball facing back to to the side, not at their head).

Then say throwing position, they turn sideways and get elbows in 90 degree angle, ball in hand.

You then yell throw and they throw the ball and go get it after they throw it. When they throw they can step with the foot closer to the fence to throw the ball.

Then they come back to the place you started. Players do not have to be that far from the fence, maybe 20 feet(6 meters). Running to get the ball is fun, plus allows the body to go toward where they are throwing and use the whole body to throw with.

Drill 2

Have them throw the ball from ready position

7.

Drill 3

Have them throw to a parent or coach, so you might have a parent/coach per child or divide them up, 2 per parent, etc.

In this case you can play a point game, if they throw the ball in the circle, circle is a line from the coaches head to side of body, to belt buckle, to sit and back up to coaches head, that is the circle, they get 2 points, outside circle and you catch it 1 point, they throw it where you cannot catch it, no points and they have to go get the ball.

If a player struggles always go to ready position, throwing position and then they throw. If they struggle from the throwing position then have them start from the throwing position till the body feels it and then go back and start from throwing position.

Key Words

Ready position

Throwing position

Throw

Catching a baseball

Skill

This is a very hard skill because the glove hinders the movement of the hands to do it correctly. Plus the ball is good big and there is always a fear factor that they will miss and get hit by the ball, even if it is a softer baseball. It helps to have a softer baseball, bean bag, etc to learn how to catch. First they have to develop technique, in order to do this we have to eliminate fear, a hard ball, an adult from a high angle throwing the ball, another player throwing the ball. You will progress to them playing catch. First you start by the first drill listed earlier where the players toss the ball to themselves so the hands and body learn how to catch. Then you progress to more drills listed below.

8.

Drills

Line players up where they have a partner in front of them about 5-10 feet apart. One partner will have a bean bag, or very very soft ball, on your word of toss, they toss the ball to their partner underhand, other player try's and catch it. Then you yell toss again and they toss it back. You can do this 5-10times and see how they are doing. If well, you can have them move back and keep doing it.

Game, if they catch it they take a step back, if drop it they take a step forward, this keeps them in the area of comfortablity.

To get them to move you can have them run around anywhere and toss and catch and see how they do.

Key Words

Toss

Two hands

Soft hands

Hitting a baseball

Skill:

This is the most difficult skill of all but the most fun that all kids prefer to do at practice. So you can use this as an incentive to pay attention, hustle, and then you will hit as a group.

Balance is the hardest part of the skill. Starting balanced and ending balanced when swinging is very hard.

Below we describe how to get in a position to help players grip the bat properly and get into a good stance.

9.

Drills:

Starting: Hopefully you will have wiffle ball bats. As a group spread out, each kid has a bat, explain a warm up before hitting. Start feet wider than shoulders, toes straight, bat on ground in front of them, like. Golf club, grip bat, this will automatically help them grip the bat correctly. Then raise hands up on shoulders and lift bat off shoulder, this is a good batting stance.

From this say contact position, you as the coach do it so they see it, do not worry if they are not perfect. Back leg should turn and front should be on about 45 degree angle, but do not worry, they are too young to get in this exact position. Just go to contact position, this is where they meet the ball.

Then yell finish position, they finish the swing and go all the way around their body with their hands.

Then yell stance, and now you keep doing this by saying, stance, contact, finish. Then Stance and swing, if they take a step with the front foot and swing that is ok, this will happen naturally most of the time, if not you can show it, step first and then swing.

Take 8-10 full swings as a warm up to finish and they are ready to hit. But ask the players one thing, after they swing in the above drills, to freeze at the end until you say stance again. Working on listening skills and balance at the same time. **Very, Very Important.**

Another drill, line up players with lots of room, example on the right or left field foul line, hitting toward the field, parents in front of the player, parents toss the big wiffle balls underhand and they hit.

10.

Not enough coaches and parents for this, then break them up in groups but tell the players not hitting the ball that they have to swing also. Helps them stay busy, swing and swing, you get better by swinging. They can do this at home 10-20 times a day and they will get better. Key is to always swing, hit or miss the ball, freeze at the end to work on balance.

Game, see how many balls they can hit out of 10, does not matter where the ball goes. Next time they try and beat their individual number. If first time they hit 4 then next time they have to beat 4, they get a baseball card if they do it.

When hitting the balls if you do not have enough players and coaches you can also have one player hitting for each coach/parent you have and the other players getting the balls and bringing them to you. You are working on another skill, catching fly balls, ground balls, line drives, moving, diving, having fun, always action.

T-ball

Utilize a batting T so that players begin to get used to the T because early you might start with the wiffle ball and bat to get the body used to swing the bat. Then use a regular bat for the batting T. When a player sets up on the batting T you can have them take the bat and place the barrel (bigger part) behind the ball so they know where the bat needs to go to hit the ball. Then they can come up to the hitting stance and then they can swing and hit. If you're playing a game have a player on deck with a coach and a batting T practicing.

Where to stand to the batting T, have the players front foot even with the T and their body about a bat length from the T, lay the bat down, end of it even with home plate, where the bat ends that is where they should stand.

If you have more batting T's you can have several players hitting balls at one time and have the other players getting the baseballs. The more swinging the better.

You can also make your own batting T's.

Key Words

Stance

Contact point

Balance

Finish

Swing

Step, swing

Fielding a baseball

Skill:

Fielding a baseball is a difficult skill because a ball is coming at you and you must get into a position where you can slow down, lower your body, stay balanced, get down early and not late, catch the ball as it bounces. Takes a lot of different skills to work together. Balance, vision, coordination, etc.

Good position as you field the ball is for the feet to be wider than the shoulders so that when you bend your knees it is easier to lower your butt about to the knee level. Your right foot if a right handed throwing should be slightly behind the left for balance, if the feet are even in the ready or fielding position they will be on their heels and off balance. The feet position for lefty throwers would be left foot slightly behind the right. Very uncomfortable position to get into because the muscles are not used to this position. Hands need to be out in front and elbows slightly bent, glove should be with the finger tips touching the ground, bare hand can be on top or to the sides of the glove, but near so when the ball hits the glove you can cover the glove with the bare hand, not before or that will hurt.

Drills

To begin and understand the fielding position you can do a drill where they watch you and do what you do. You get in a ready position, hands out front, keep hands there, righties, lefties the opposite way, take your right foot and place your toe behind your left heel, then take your right foot and slightly to the side slightly wider than your shoulders, this puts the feet as described below, then say take your elbows place then on your knees, which bends the knees and waist, then slide hands out to fielding position, head up to see the ball coming. So, here is how it would sound.

Ready position, hands out front, right foot behind left, slightly right leg out, hands on knees, slide hands out, head up. Repeat this 5-6 times to get kids to feel that position.

Do the dynamic fundamental work out at the start of practice will help with the body understanding the fielding position.

In this drill you will start the players with the ball in the glove and in a fielding position, best one they can get in. They will get better as you do it. From the field position you say throwing position and throw into a fence. Go get the ball and go back. Repeat 5-10 times.

Then you can divide them into groups, or with a. Coach/Parent one on one, do the same drill and now they throw to you, use the throwing point game you used in throwing to get them to have some fun.

Once you did this 5-10 times then they can go from fielding position and when you say throw they go from a fielding position to throwing you the ball. Check that they turn sideways and throw you the ball.

Each time they get to a fielding position in all these drills they will keep getting better. Do not look for perfection.

Key Words

Fielding position

Throw position

Feet wider than shoulders

Knees bent

Head up to see ball coming

Bare hand on top or to the side

Running the bases

Skill:

Very important to play the game to understand how to run the bases. You do not have to be fast to run the bases. You have to use good running technique and know how to cut the angles properly.

Running technique, run on the balls of the feet, head straight, lean slightly forward, pump arms up and down, look where you are running.

Drills

Sit down drill, have players sit on the ground and put legs straight in front, pump the arms so they know how to do it.

Home to first, have hitters get in batting box, swing and freeze, use wiffle ball bat, after they freeze they will drop the bat by opening hands, a good technique to teach them not to throw the bat. Then you say go or whistle, they run to first, this is a hit in the infield, run through base, try and touch front part but do not break stride to touch the base, after base slow down, and look right to see if ball was over thrown.

Run all the bases on a base hit. Take orange cones, a milk carton with water in it, place it about 20 feet down the line, about a foot in foul territory before the base, this is the cone they will run around before they touch the base. Then place a cone after the base, about 3 feet back from the base line, this is the cone they have to stay inside the cone, not outside or the turn is too long. Place cones the same way at each base. The players can practice running the bases by following the cones.

When touching the bases try and touch the inside tip of the base, look at the base when touching it. You can also color that part of the base so it's a visual effect as well, easier to see.

Key Words

Look where you are running

Pump arms

Lean forward

Touch inside of the base

Freeze

Drop bat

FUN GAMES TO PLAY

California Kickball

This game is played with a miniature soccer ball. The players place the ball at home plate and kick the ball into the field. They run the bases and the defense gets the ball and throws it to the player at the base to get the out. Players use 2 hands to catch the ball.

Freeze Tag

Players find a partner and one partner starts off in front of the other, when you say go the one partner gets to run and the other tries to tag them. If he tags them then they switch. Always switch so the other player gets a chance to be the runner.

Wolf/Tag

Materials. None

Concepts: listening, counting and running

Lesson:

The coach starts the game by having all of the students lined side by side on one end of the field. The coach is "Mr. Wolf" and stands about half way from the children.

The students ask: "What time is it, Mr. Wolf?"

Mr. Wolf calls out a time (ex. 10:00 and the students take 10 steps forward).

This continues until Mr. Wolf says it is "Midnight". At that point the children try to run to the other end of the field without Mr. Wolf getting them (trying to tag them).

If Mr. Wolf tags them, they become Wolves with him, and go to the middle of the field where they will try to tag other Wolves.

The game continues with the children running from one end of the field to the other each time “Midnight” is called as the time (only the teacher calls out the time).

As the students reach one end of the field safely they should stay there until the coach tells them he/she is ready for them to ask the time again.

Game continues until one person is the winner and that person gets to start the next game as “Mr. Wolf”.

Follow the Leader

Take a player and have them run around the bases, and the players follow that player. You can have the player run anywhere within the infield, outfield, and the players follow him or her. Switch players so others get to do it also. You can also have teams of 4 with one leader or teams of 3 with one leader and they follow the leader.

Simon Says

This is where the coach plays a game of Simon says, he will say Simon says “fielding position”, if he does not say Simon says then the player is out or losses a point. You can use a point system or they get 3 mistakes then out. The coach can say Simon says “hitting position”, Simon says “throwing position”, use all the positions, have fun with it, players will learn the positions.

Player's Code

1. Play for the *fun of it*, not just to please your parents or coach.
2. Play by the rules.
3. Never argue with the umpires decisions. Let you coach ask any necessary questions.
4. Control your temper – no mouthing off, breaking sticks, throwing bats or other equipment
5. Work equally hard for yourself and your team. Your team's performance will benefit and so will your own.
6. Be a good sport. Cheer all good plays whether your team's or your opponent.
7. Treat all players as you yourself would like to be treated. Don't interfere with, bully or take unfair advantage of any player.
8. Remember that the goals of the game are to have fun, improve your skills and feel good. Don't be a show-off or always try to get the most points or penalties
9. Cooperate with your coach, teammates and opponents, for without them you don't have a game.

Coaches Code

1. Be reasonable in your demands on the young player's time, energy and enthusiasm. Remember that they have other interests.
2. Teach your players that the rules of the game are mutual agreements which no one should evade or break.
3. Group players according to age, height, skill and physical maturity whenever possible.
4. Avoid over playing the talented players. The *just average* players need and deserve equal playing time.
5. Remember that children play for fun and enjoyment and that winning is only part of it. Never ridicule or yell at children for making mistakes or losing a competition.
6. Ensure that equipment and facilities meet safety standards and are appropriate to the age and ability of players.
7. The scheduling and length of practice times and competitions should take into the maturity level of the children.
8. Develop team respect for the ability of opponents as well as for the judgement of umpires and opposing coaches.
9. Follow the advice of a physician when determining when an injured player is ready to play again.
10. Remember that children need a coach they can respect. Be generous with your praise when it is deserved and set a good example.
11. Make a personal commitment to keep yourself informed on sound coaching principles of growth and development of children.

Parent Code

1. Do not force an unwilling child to participate in sports.
2. Remember children are involved in organized sports for their enjoyment, not yours.
3. Encourage your child always play by the rules.
4. Teach your children that honest effort is as important as victory so that the result of each game is accepted without undue disappointment.
5. Turn defeat into victory by helping your child work toward skill improvement and good sportsmanship. Never ridicule or yell at your child for making a mistake or losing a competition.
6. Remember that your child learn best by example. Applaud good plays by your team and by members of the opposing team.
7. Do not publically question the official's judgement and never their honesty.
8. Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from children sporting activities.
9. Recognize the value and importance of volunteer coaches. they give of their time and resources to provide recreational activities for your child.

A
Coach
Will Impact
More Young People in a Year
Than an Average
Person Does in a
Lifetime

Videos to follow.

BC Baseball is here to assist you in any way possible to help you become a better coach, which ultimately helps the kids enjoy the game. At this age it's all about enjoying the game, fun and learning along the way. We would like to thank you for all the time you volunteer to help the kids. Have a great season with your practices and games. Please ask us any questions you might have anytime.

BC Baseball Coaches Educational Staff (Al Forman, Mike Kelly & Grant Rimer)



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