



***Baseball BC Grassroots***

***Initiation***

***Coach-Parent Leader***

***Manual***

***5U 6U 7U 8U 9U***



# Table of Contents

---

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>OVERVIEW</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>PROGRESSION SKILLS</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PROGRESSION SKILLS CONTINUED</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>PROGRESSION SKILLS CONTINUED</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>STRUCTURE OF THE PRACTICES</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>WHAT TO DO WHEN IT'S JUST NOT COMING TOGETHER</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>MORE COACHING TIPS</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>ATHLETIC POSITION ALL AGES</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>WARM UP</b>	<b>15</b>
5U 6U & 7U WARM UP	15
<i>Fun Activities/Ideas for warm up</i>	15
8U & 9U WARM UP	16
<i>Pre-Practice Activities 8U &amp; 9U</i>	16
<i>Practice Warm Up 8U &amp; 9U</i>	17
<i>Pre-Game Warm Up 8U &amp; 9U</i>	19
<b>CATCHING - TEACHING PROGRESSION</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>THROWING - TEACHING PROGRESSION</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>FIELDING – TEACHING PROGRESSION</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>HITTING – TEACHING PROGRESSION</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>RUNNING – TEACHING PROGRESSION</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>PITCHING – 9U</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>GENERAL GAME KNOWLEDGE</b>	<b>48</b>
POSITIONS	48
EQUIPMENT GUIDELINES	49
<i>Gloves</i>	49
<i>Bats</i>	49
BASE RUNNING	49
THROW TO A BASE FOR AN OUT – 6U	50
7U – HOW TO MAKE AN OUT	50
8U - ON FIELD COMMUNICATION	51



9U – TAG UPS AND APPEALS	51
<b>WHAT IS NEXT FOR COACHING DEVELOPMENT?</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>GAME RULES AND FORMAT</b>	<b>53</b>
5U GAME FORMAT STRUCTURE RULES	53
6U GAME FORMAT STRUCTURE RULES	54
7U GAME FORMAT STRUCTURE RULES	55
7U INTRO TO BASEBALL GAME RULES	56
8U GAME RULES	57
9U GAME RULES	60
<b>CODES OF CONDUCT</b>	<b>63</b>
8U CODES OF CONDUCT	63
9U CODES OF CONDUCT	64
<b>APPENDIX A</b>	<b>65</b>
9U (TADPOLE) SPRING PITCHING RULES	65
BATTING ORDER/POSITION CHART	67
FIELD ROTATION – 5U-7U	67
POSITION ROTATION – 8U/9U	67
<b>COMMUNICATION EMAIL RESOURCE</b>	<b>68</b>

**A Great Video for All Parent Leaders & Coaches to watch**

***“It’s what we say they will remember, not the skills we teach them.”***

***Echo’s Beyond the Game***

***The Lasting Power of a Coach’s Words***

***Coach Reed Maltbie – TedX Video***     [click to go to video](#)

# Overview

---

The Grassroots Program goal is to provide a fun & safe environment for children to learn the fundamentals of baseball while building physical literacy for kids in the Active Start Stage in the LTAD (Long-Term Athlete Development) model.

This manual is for parents who have offered to be Parent Leaders at the 5U, 6U & 7U division as well as those who are coaching at the 8U & 9U levels. These five divisions fall under the Grassroots category and the goal is to offer a strong basic foundation to players learning baseball.

In this manual we will explain the proper mechanics of baseball positions, drills, and practice plans to assist you in becoming a successful Parent Leader/Coach. The best thing you can do is work the kids through a mix of drills and games that are FUN!

These players are between the ages of 4 and 9 years old and the key with this age group is to break it down as simple as possible. The goal is to learn the fundamentals of baseball but also develop a sense of fun and enjoyment for the game. Keeping the activities short and well planned will result in a smoothly run practice.

## Parent Participation

Parent Participation is **recommended** for all five divisions. This helps relieve pressure for you the Parent Leaders/Coaches when running practices or on game day. Each age division brings different levels of support from parents. In 5U & 6U we suggest parents be partnered with their own child during the drills and on the fields for games. In 7U, the player's cognitive awareness is improving and some drills won't require parents to help. 8U & 9U teams tend to carry full rosters of 11-12 players, by having two to three drills stations setup with parents running the station allows for the coaches to help with technique correction/support for ALL the players.

We have found that when players are partnered with their parents for skills, the child has more fun and learn the proper technique at a quicker pace then when partnered with another kid.

## How to use these Materials

We recommend Parent Leaders and coaches read this manual focusing on the age division they are coaching. There are 10 weeks of practice plans for each age division that follow the Grassroots Learning Progressions chart. Review the designated weekly practice plan and review the proper mechanics related to that practice plan.

# Progression Skills

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Throwing</b> <b>5U</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Catching</b> <b>5U</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Hitting</b> <b>5U</b></p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ready - Hand up</li> <li>2. Aim - Point to target with arm/leg</li> <li>3. Throw - Body control – stay on feet</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ready - 2 hands together and out</li> <li>2. Watch - Eyes on ball</li> <li>3. Catch - Close hands</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Set feet - Bellybutton to tee</li> <li>2. Set hands - Door knockers</li> <li>3. Bat position - Bat point to sky</li> </ol>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>6U</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>6U</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>6U</b></p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Grip - 4-seam/across horseshoe</b></li> <li>2. Ready - Hand up</li> <li>3. Aim - Point to target with arm/leg</li> <li>4. Throw - Body control – Stay on fee</li> <li>5. <b>Follow Through</b></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ready - 2 hands together and out</li> <li>2. Watch - Eyes on ball</li> <li>3. Catch - Close hands</li> <li>4. <b>Catch – Close hands Cradle/Cushion</b></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Set feet - Bellybutton to tee</li> <li>2. Set hands - Door knockers</li> <li>3. Bat position - Bat point to sky</li> <li>4. <b>Follow Through - No Spinorama/ Squish the bug</b></li> </ol>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>7U</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>7U</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>7U</b></p>
<p><b>**Progressive throwing Intro** - Start square, soccer kick, step and ready, aim, throw, follow through)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Grip - 4-seam/across horseshoe</b></li> <li>2. <b>Square up - Chest to target</b></li> <li>3. <b>Step &amp; Ready - Hand up; Show the dog the ball</b></li> <li>4. Aim - Point to target with arm/leg</li> <li>5. Throw - Body control – stay on feet</li> <li>6. <b>Follow Through</b></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ready - 2 hands together and out</li> <li>2. Watch - Eyes on ball</li> <li>3. Catch - Close hands</li> <li>4. <b>Catch – Close hands Cradle/Cushion</b></li> <li>5. <b>Move towards the ball using body control</b></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Set feet - Bellybutton to tee <b>**Plate**</b></li> <li>2. Set hands - Door knockers</li> <li>3. <b>**Power** Position - hands back, bat point to sky</b></li> <li>4. <b>Swing - Moving ball</b></li> <li>5. <b>Follow Through - No spinorama/ Squish the bug</b></li> </ol>



# Warm Up

---

## 5U 6U & 7U Warm Up

Reason to warm up is different for players at this age. We want to focus on physical literacy, and not so much about preparing the players muscles for participation.

### **Physical Literacy, What is it? Why is it important?**

**Physical literacy** is the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge, and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life. It's important to give children at this age a multitude of different abilities to try to master. At this age you want to focus on running, jumping, and hopping which helps agility, balance, coordination and speed.

### Fun Activities/Ideas for warm up

- Freeze tag
  - Have players stand in different positions when they are tagged (hitting, fielding, throwing). Once touched by another player, they can continue running around
- ZigZag relay
  - Set up cones in a staggered line (slalom). Have player run through cones and tag next person in line to go.
- High knees – make sure opposite arm/opposite leg. Knees up as high as possible. Drive through the ground. Quick up and down is more important than being first to the next line.
- Butt kicks – make sure opposite arm/opposite leg. Heels to butt. Quick up and down is more important than being first to the next line.
- Shuffles – laterally shuffle the feet without touching them together. Stay low in a good athletic fielding position with chest and eyes up.
- Kangaroo jump – hopping over cones. Do it forward/backward and side to side
- Military walk – arm straight out, try to kick hand with opposite leg
- Backpedal – 7U. Reach back with the feet while running backwards. Extend as far back as possible with the legs.
- Crossover (front and back) - 7U. Cross the right foot over the left and left over right
- Jumping Jacks
- Squirrely – have players run around in a coned off area. When you say “dog”, they have to stop and get in throwing position. If you say “bat” they have to get in hitting position, if you say “monkey”, they have to get in fielding position.
  - Use fun animals or can just say “throw”, “hit”, “field” etc.
  - Can add in balance drills. When you say flamingo, they have to balance on 1 leg
    - Make sure they use both legs to balance

- The shuttle – place balls at each bag. Split up into 4 teams (1 team at each bag). Have players take the balls and put them at another teams bag. Goal is to have 0 balls at your bag at the end of set time. Players can only take 1 ball at a time.
- ABC running technique <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zEHuJTjPNTA>

## 8U & 9U Warm Up

For 8U and 9U, it is important that we start teaching players how to warm up properly. They are starting to get to an age where they are moving faster and we should warm up the body for any active participation. In your warm up there should be no throwing! Throwing will happen after warm up and stretching. We want to warm up to throw, not throw to warm up. The warm up should take at least 10 minutes, and probably closer to 15. Make sure to incorporate breaks if the players are getting tired.

For the warm up, it is important that players show up on time. The warm up should begin with the entire team participating. This is a time to have some fun, be social, but also warm up the body for the activities of the day. If players are late to practices or games, it becomes difficult to do a proper warm up for that player because they are always playing catch up. Implement a rule that everyone has to arrive 5 minutes before practice begins. There is a difference between practice warm up, and pregame warm up which we will describe below, so make sure to try and implement the right warm up depending on what you are doing at the field that day.

For players that arrive before practice and want something to do, there are some games that they can play that will occupy their time and also help with some baseball skills. Below we have listed some Pre-practice activities/games that players can do prior to the start of practice. Have your players do these while they are waiting around for practice to begin. Get parents involved as well!

- Reason to warm up is different for players at this age. We want to focus on physical literacy while also warming the body up for participation.
- Physical Literacy, What is it? Why is it important?
  - Important to give children at this age a multitude of different abilities to try to master. At this age you want to focus on running, jumping, and hopping which helps agility, balance, coordination and speed. At this age, speed development is crucial, and all of the warm up activities should be done at a fast pace.

## Pre-Practice Activities 8U & 9U

For players that arrive before practice and want something to do, here are some games that will occupy their time and also help with baseball skills that don't include throwing. Have your players do these while they are waiting around for practice to begin. Get parents involved as well!

- Flip

- Players can use their bare hands or glove. All players make a circle. 1 person starts off by hitting the ball with their glove or hand to someone else in the circle. Goal of the game is to get other players out, by the ball hitting the ground or someone not hitting the ball to another player. Players get 4 lives or mistakes until they are out of the game. Last one standing wins!
- Pepper
  - In groups of 4 or 5, have 1 player as the hitter and the rest form a line or semi-circle in front of the hitter. From about 10 feet, players underhand toss the ball to one player hitting. The hitter half swings, and tries to hit the ball on the ground to the other players in the semi-circle. If the hitter hits the ball in the air and the ball is caught, the player who catches it gets to hit. If the player swings and misses, the player on the far right of the hitter gets to hit. All other players shuffle down the line and the hitter becomes the first person to the left of the hitter. To make it more challenging for the fielders, if they make an error, they can be sent to the back of the line (last to hit). Use wiffle balls or lite flight balls until they are comfortable with how hard to hit the ball.
- 2 ball
  - Players are in a circle and have 1 ball each. One person has 2 balls and they start the game. That player throws the ball underhand to another player. The player that the ball is coming to has to throw their ball to someone else before they catch the first ball. To make it easier, you can let them catch the ball at first and then throw the new ball. Suggest having the players always hold the ball in their throwing hand, and have their catching hand open to catch the ball. Players get 4 lives or mistakes until they are out of the game. Last one standing wins
- Short hops
  - Players set up in a line. A coach or parent has a ball. Set up all players in the same direction (straight up, forehand, backhand). Throw a ball so the ball skips just before their glove. Players have to let the ball bounce once, and then catch it. Can use a glove or bare hands. Small balls will be better if using bare hands
- Bat dribble

Each player has a bat and a ball. Goal is to bounce the ball off of the bat as many times as possible without letting the ball hit the ground. Use large bats and/or balls to make it easier

## Practice Warm Up 8U & 9U

Warm up in practice is especially important for teaching fundamental movement skills. This is a great time to try new movements and also have some fun with it. There are some examples below of what to do for a practice warm up. There are lots of different movements that you can do, but here are some



**Set Hands** – place the bat in the hands of the player. The bat should lay across the inside part of the knuckles, and not in the palm of the hand. The knuckles should line up somewhere between the middle knuckles (door knockers) and the lower knuckles.



Knuckles Line Up

**Bat position** – the hands need to be high and around the ear and 3-4 inches in front of the back shoulder. The elbows are in a relaxed position making a triangle with the hands. The bat should be pointed up to the sky at a 45-degree angle. Make sure that the end of the bat doesn't wrap around the head, this makes it very difficult for players to get the bat through the strike zone.



Hand Position



Triangle



Bat Angle

## Hitting – Squish the bug/Follow through 6U

**Squish the bug** – after we get into a good starting position (set feet, set hands, bat position), we want to use our hips to power the rest of our body to hit the ball. How we do that is, with your back foot, we want to turn it like we are squishing a bug, getting our heel off the ground and we are balancing on the ball of our back foot. We want our hips and bellybutton now facing the pitcher. After we squish the bug is when we start moving our hands towards the ball. As best we can, we want to separate these two movements so they are sequential and not done simultaneously.

Squish bug at contact



**Follow through** – the follow through occurs AFTER contact of the ball. We want the players to continue the path of the bat past the ball and until the bat reaches the players back. The follow through is done with both feet planted on the ground and without lifting them off of the ground. It is best at this age to keep both hands on the bat throughout the follow through for safety reasons.

Follow Through

