



6U Clinic - Parents/Coaches

**Ethics** – Teaching players to have respect for their teammates and opponents is vital. Every child should be treated with respect and any form of verbal or physical abuse will not be tolerated.

**Game** – Each team will have 3 outs per inning.

**Player's Positions** – Every child plays every inning. There are 2 girls at pitcher's mound (on both sides of the pitching machine – never in front of the machine), a catcher (with batting helmet on) and girls covering every base.

**Over Throws** – Players cannot advance to 2<sup>nd</sup> on an overthrow to 1<sup>st</sup> base. Children can advance bases when there are overthrows to 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> base.

**Domination Rules** – The players should not be taught to run down or chase children with the ball for a tag out when the ball is hit away from a baseline. Players need to attempt a throw to the base for the force out. Tags made by players stationed a base are legal.

**Outs** – Children are removed from the base if defensive team successfully gets the ball to 1<sup>st</sup> base before the runner or if the 1<sup>st</sup> basemen tags the runner with the ball/glove hand.

**Pitching Machine** – The pitching machine should be set at 25 mph at 30 ft. IF the player does not hit the ball after 3 tries then she will be allowed to hit the ball of a tee.

**Legal Hit** – A player must hit the ball at least 10' to be considered a legal hit in 6U. Bunting is not allowed. We do not have a catcher and it is not safe to rush in players for bunts.

**Celebrations** – Please celebrate both the offense and defense during the game. Getting an out is just as important as a hit. NEVER CELEBRATE A CHILD'S MISTAKE.

**Coaches** – *Offense:* There will be a coach using the pitching machine and coaches on 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>.

*Defense:* Coaches can stand behind the 2<sup>nd</sup> baseman and SS to help give directions to their team.

### **The Big 3 – Hitting, Catching and Throwing**

This is a league designed to develop the fundamentals of softball mechanics. Each child should learn how to master each of the Big 3 before the end of the season.

#### **Hitting – Start from the ground up.**

Foundation - Every batter needs to have a solid foundation and it starts with their feet. Try to make sure the feet about are about shoulder width apart and toes pointed towards the plate. Make sure the knees are slightly bent, a slight bend in the waist and their butts slightly poked out.

Hands – Players should line up their “knocker” knuckles when gripping the bat. This is not a death grip.

Swing – The bat should be placed on the shoulder prior to the swing. Raise the bat straight up and position the hands slightly behind the back shoulder. The child should shift 60% of their weight to their back. The swing should come directly toward the ball with the palms of the batting facing up (back hand) and down (front hand). Watch for children rolling their wrist too early. Please do not let this habit start early. The follow through of the swing should be around the shoulder area.

#### **Catching – Alligator / Catch Like a Princess**

##### ***Alligator – Ground balls to the player.***

Foundation – Try to make sure the fielder moves their feet so the ball is coming to the middle of their body. Bend the knees to lower their body and keep their eyes on the ball. Do not let them simply bend over at the waist to field a ball. If you can see the top of the fielder’s head then we have a problem.

Glove – Put the glove all the way to the ground to catch a ground ball. Use the open hand to “snap” down on top of the ball when it enters the glove. This is like an alligator snapping at food.

##### ***Catch like a Princess – Fly balls to the player.***

Foundation – Try to make sure the fielder moves their feet so the ball is coming to the glove side of their body. Bend the knees to lower their body and keep their eyes on the ball.

Glove – The player should always keep the palm of the glove facing the ball. The player should be able to see the back of their glove if this is done correctly and look like a princess wave. IF NOT, then the player is trying to catch the ball with their palm facing the sky. This will act as a funnel and direct the ball directly at the player’s face. This is why we say catch like a princess. Use the opposite hand to help close the glove around the ball during the catch.

##### ***Throwing – Starfish or Butterfly***

Foundation – Make sure the players steps direction at the target with the foot opposite their throwing are. The inside of the back foot should also be pointed towards the target.

Arm – The player's throwing hand need to pull the ball behind the back shoulder and keep the ball high in the air (like asking a question in class – hand high so teacher notices it). Point the glove hand or elbow directly at the target. The player should get into this position and look like a starfish or butterfly. Start by moving the elbow at the target and snap the wrist at the top of the throwing motion. The player 's follow through should take their throwing hand thumb to their opposite leg thigh (thumb to thigh). The back foot should move forward because of the momentum of the throw.

### **Practice – Divide and Conquer**

Always try to keep the players engaged. They are there for fun and excitement. Lots of boring rules and standing around will kill their enthusiasm. It will also make you miserable when they do not listen or follow instructions. Try to divide your team into as many small groups as possible. Make sure everyone is engaged in the drill whenever possible. Kids standing around with bats and balls tend to cause chaos when bored. Working in small groups or stations will allow you to maximize the number of drills or skill sets practiced during your time with them. Kids also love competitions. Make fun games with the skills training and always have lots of positive cheering for the kids. Laughter will fix most mistakes and being silly with them will go a long way.