

Learn to Play Program Information



The LEARN TO PLAY PROGRAM is a revolutionary way of introducing the sport of Softball to children. Activities are included which foster the involvement of ALL players, including players with high and low skill levels. The child will experience excitement, enjoyment and success. Activities and lead-up games are patterned after informal playground games that promise an hour of FUN and LOTS OF ACTION. Participants will go home at the end of the night happy and tired, while improving their fitness level.

Research has shown that out of a possible 20 reasons for youth participation in sport, the top four are:

- ① To have FUN
- ② To stay in shape
- ③ To get exercise
- ④ To improve skills

Children ranked "challenge of competition" as #10 and "to win" as #12 clearly indicating that competition should not be the focus of programs for young children.

The LEARN TO PLAY PROGRAM replaces the old game of T-Ball and promises an hour of FUN, games and activity....set up to develop the players' individual softball skills and build self confidence. The following chart compares the characteristics of the game of T-Ball (which is currently used to introduce children to softball) and the LEARN TO PLAY PROGRAM:

T-Ball Characteristics:

- Competition is the emphasis
- Low number of repetitions of skills
- Less skilled players receive little opportunity to improve
- More aggressive/skilled players dominate game
- Players are standing in the field leading to boredom and low activity
- Volunteer coaches are given no direction or resources

vs Learn to Play Characteristics:

- FUN is the emphasis
- High number of repetitions of skills
- Progressions to suit the skill level of the player
- Drills that offer a high success rate for every child
- Action packed lesson plans leading to high activity for players
- Volunteer coaches are given prepared lesson plans with easy to follow instructions and progressions for teaching basic skills

The LEARN TO PLAY PROGRAM consists of 3 levels. Level 1 is aimed for kids aged 5 to 6; Level 2 is aimed for kids aged 7 to 8; and Level 3 is aimed for kids aged 9 to 10. All levels are designed to make it easy for the volunteer Moms and Dads with little to no coaching experience to implement. It includes prepared lesson plans, easy to follow instructions, a letter to give to parents that outline what the program is all about, progressions for teaching basic skills, and lead up games designed to simulate the real game of Softball.

The LEARN TO PLAY PROGRAM is designed as a grassroots entry level to the sport of Softball. The emphasis is on FUN, ACTION, and a POSITIVE ATMOSPHERE, with a gradual introduction to non-stressful competition. The kids will have FUN, and they will want to come back for more!

Resources:

Kowalski, Shirley. Learn to Play - Level 1. Ottawa: Softball Canada, 2004.