

Skills & Drills

Hitting

- Hands on top of each other
- Knuckles aligned
- Eye on the ball/Look at the ball (if on tee)
- Belly button facing tee or plate
- Swing through

Hitting Drills

- Practice swing without ball
- Place a sticker on the ball (when on tee) and have player watch that when swinging
- Hitting off tee and practice dropping bat and running bases.

Throwing

- Key words: Point, step, throw.
- Parent with glove as target, point/step/throw for a few minutes each practice.
- Use bucket or other object as target for throwing practice.
- Gradually work towards throwing with a partner.

Throwing Drills

- Start close together, each time you hit the target take a step back. Add '3 strikes' component (have to hit target 3 times before moving)
- Have parent give grounder or fly ball and child has to field it and throw to target.
- Scatter 3-5 balls around. Say 'ready, go' and have that child run to each ball, adjust body position to hit a parent/target.

Catching

- Grounders – Alligator Hands: 'chomp' ball and bring it into belly button.
- Wide stance, knees bent, slide side to side to get ball, move forward to get ball.
- Ball above waist – glove faces up, ball below waist glove turned down.
- Keep the ball in front of you.

Catching Drills

- Grounders back and forth with parent. Add side to side/fast and slow. Can gradually fielding from off the tee.
- Tossing 'fly' balls with parent underhand first, teaching correct glove position and using two hands.
- Gradually work towards catching with a partner.

Base Running

- 1st, 2nd, 3rd, home plate
- Basic start with follow the leader around bases, yelling out the name of each base as they touch it.
- Have kids go one at a time with parent at each base waving arm like windmill to signify to keep going.
- Have them go again with parents holding up both hands to 'stop' on each base.
- Do a mixture of stop and go so kids need to watch base coach.
- Add hitting and running to drills. First home runs, so they get the path and order down. Then stop and go.
- Eventually have fielders, and when ball is thrown to pitching circle, runners stop.

Games!

Red Light Green Light - Progressive

- Start with simple red light green light (using green and red objects/whistle/voice etc...)
- Add Hand signals used for running bases. Two hands up = stop, arm winding around means go.
- For fun have parents line up and play RLGL and run to kids.

Base Race!

- Always a crowd favorite! ½ players at home plate, other ½ at 2nd base. Players run around bases and tag the next player on your team then sit down at the end of the line. First team all sitting down, wins.
- Remind kids to stay clear of the bases if they are not running, and to cheer on their teammates!

Tips & tricks

- Use paper plates/markers to make spots in the field so that kids know where to stand. You can even rotate spots after each hitter to allow kids to try a new position.
- Remind kids about 'safety' when hitting. That includes looking around before swinging a bat, as well as being aware when they toss it after a hit.
- Make the skills fun and relatable! If the kids aren't feeling the drills, play a game – have fun!!

Freeze Tag - progressive

- Start with 'popcorn' tag. Parents are it, have to freeze their kids. Kids crouch down and parents rub 'butter' on top of their head, kids 'pop' up and start running again. Flip and have kids chase parents.
- Ichiro (or other player) tag. Parents have ball and tag child with ball in hand (no throwing). To un-freeze, parents roll ball in between child's legs. Pick up ball and keep chasing.
- Fly Ball Tag- Parents freeze player with ball, kids have glove and call the ball 'I got it' 'Mine', parents toss ball to child, they catch it, toss it back and keep running.
- Tag-outs. Have kids line up, parents in front of their child. They roll the ball to the kids, kids field it and run after parents to 'tag' them out- with or w/o glove. Parents just run straight back (so no crashing).

