

SOFTBALL BASIC SKILLS

SKILLS

Catching

Fielding Fly balls

Fielding Grounders

Batting

Throwing Overhand

Throwing Underhand

Following this introduction are series of questions you can use to teach the skills for Softball.

Heading each skills set of questions is an Action **Task**. An Action Task is used to introduce the skill without demonstrating it. One of the ideas behind guided discovery is to allow the student to figure out the most effective way of doing the skill. If you demonstrate the skill first, you place an image of how the child may expect to do the skill they are going to do. If they cannot duplicate your example, the student may see this as failure. If after giving the children the action task, they do not demonstrate a likeness of the skill, you can try saying it another way, or pick a child out to demonstrate.

These questions should be used in the second part of your lesson, after your warm up, to teach the skill. Once you are satisfied with the class's performance of the skill taught, you can have them Practice the new skill. This can be done through a drill or a game, either traditional or creative.

Remember, each question should be asked to the entire class, and then allow the class to work on the question before answering the question. During the time the students are working on the question the teacher should walk around and work with students individually. After a few minutes, stop the class and allow a few

students to answer. Be sure you get mostly correct answers. If you don't, then you must find a way to reword the question so the students can work on it again. Be sure most of the students have the concept from the question before you move on to the next question.

THROWING

Throwing to the air

Action Task [AT]

Throw the ball up into the air so that you can catch it in your own space.

Guided Discovery Questions:

1. Where do you want the ball to go when you let go of it? (Directly above the thrower)
2. Where should you look as you try to throw the ball directly above yourself? (Directly above the thrower)
3. What does your arm swing toward as you throw the ball directly above yourself? (Follow through toward the space directly above yourself.)
4. How can you use your body and legs to help guide your throw to the space above you? (Push off with your legs upward)

This may be where you need to begin with your kindergarten, especially if softball is your first unit. Remember, each question should be asked to the entire class, and then allow the class to work on the question before answering the question. During the time the students are working on the question the teacher should walk around and work with students individually. After a few minutes, stop the class and allow a few students to answer. Be sure you get mostly correct answers. If you don't, then you must find a way to reword the question so the students can work on it again. Be sure most of the students have the concept from the question before you move on to the next question.

Throwing to the floor

[AT]

Throw the ball down to the ground so that when it comes back up, you can catch it in your own space.

Guided Discovery Questions:

1. Where on the ground do you want the ball to hit so that it bounces back up to you in your own space? (On the ground in the student's own space)
2. Where should you look as you throw the ball to the ground in your own space? (At the place on the ground you want the ball to bounce)
3. What does your arm or arms swing toward as you throw the ball down to the ground? (Toward the spot on the ground that the student wants the ball to bounce)
4. How can your legs or body help you throw the ball to the spot on the ground? (Bend toward the ground as you bounce the ball)

Underhand Throwing

[AT]

Take your beanbag and your target and find an own space. Throw your beanbag at your target so that your arm swings **under** your shoulder.

1. Where do your eyes look when you throw the beanbag at your target? (The target)
2. What does your arm swing toward when you throw the beanbag at your target? (The target)
3. What can your weak leg* do to help you throw be stronger and more accurate? (Step toward the target)

*At this point it is important to make sure the students know what the difference between weak and strong side of the body is. Strong side is the preference side i.e. right handed or left-handed. Weak side is the side that's not so coordinated! This is also when you can discuss opposition, and why it is better to step with the weak foot.

You can also ask if anyone knows the name for this type of throwing. (If a student comes up with it sooner it is ok to let them know this is underhand throwing.

Overhand Throwing

[AT]

Throw the ball at your target so as your arms moves it travels above your shoulder.

Guided Discovery Questions:

1. If you want the ball to go to your target, where should you look? (At the target)
2. What should your throwing arm move towards as you throw the ball to your target? (Toward the target)
3. Where should your weak foot step toward as you throw the ball to your target? (Toward the target)
4. What can your shoulders and trunk do (explain what trunk is) to help give you more power and accuracy in your throw? (Rotate with the throw/step)
5. In order to let your shoulders help with the throw, which side of your body has to start the throw facing the target? (The weak side)
6. Which surface of your body finishes the throw facing the target? (The front surface)
7. How can you change how high or low you throw the ball? (Let go sooner/higher if you want the ball to go higher, and let go later/lower if you want the ball to go lower)

FIELDING

Fielding Ground Balls

[AT]

Get a partner. One partner will play the base person, and one partner will play the fielder. The base person should roll the ball (throw a grounder) to the fielder. The fielder should catch the ball and throw it back to the base to get the imaginary runner out.

Guided Discovery Questions:

1. Which direction should your fingers point as you are catching the ball? (Down toward the ground)
2. What direction should your palms face as you are catching the ball? (Toward the ball)
3. What level should your body be in when you are catching a ground ball? (Medium)
4. What part of your body should bend in order to allow you to see the ball coming toward you? (Your knees)
5. If you want to use your body to help you catch or stop the ball, where in relation to the ball should your body be? (Directly in the path of the ball) If the ball isn't coming directly to you, what must you do in order to get in the path of the ball? (Move to the path of the ball)
6. What locomotor move can you use to move sideways to the ball? (Sliding, because your legs won't get all tangled as you move to the side) Remember to remind the students to take turns being the base person and the fielder.

Fielding Fly Balls

[AT]

Get a partner. One partner will be the fielder, and one partner will throw the fly balls. The thrower will throw the ball up high into the air, and the fielder should catch the ball before it hits the ground.

1. Where should you look as you catch the ball? (Ball)
2. Where should your fingers be pointing when you catch a fly ball? (Upward)
3. What part of your hand should be facing the ball? (Palms)
4. If you want to be ready to throw the ball straight from the catch, where should your throwing hand be when you catch the ball? (Above your shoulder helping to catch the ball)
5. If you want to be ready to throw the ball straight from the catch, what can you do with your body position as you catch the ball? (Catch the ball with your weak side facing the target, so you can step right into the throw from the catch)

BATTING

Batting

[AT]

Each player will get five (5) hits each, then rotate through again. Hit the ball off the tee. Do not go up to the tee unless you are the batter. The fielder that will bat next can bring the balls up to the tee for their turn at bat.

Guided Discovery Questions:

1. Where do your eyes look as you are swinging the bat to hit the ball? (At the ball)
2. To get the most power, how should you hold your hands on the bat? (Hands together, strong hand on the top & weak hand on the bottom)
3. To get the most power where on the bat should your hands be? (Toward the bottom of the bat)
4. How should your arms look when you actually hit the ball? (Extended straight out over the tee)
5. What can your weak leg do to help you get more power and direct where the ball will go? (Step into the hit, in the direction of where the ball should go)
6. What should your strong foot do to help keep you stable as you hit the ball? (Stay planted)
7. As you begin the swing, which leg is holding most of your weight? (Strong/back leg)
8. As you follow through the swing, which leg takes the weight of your body? (The front leg)
9. Which surface of your body begins facing the pitcher? (The weak side) Which surface of your body finishes facing the pitcher? (The front surface)
10. Where on the ball should you make contact if you want the ball to go on the ground? (On top of the ball)
11. Where on the ball should you make contact if you want the ball to go up in the air? (Underneath the ball)
12. Where on the ball should you make contact if you want the ball to go straight out like a line drive? (In the center of the ball)
13. If you want the bat to swing level with the ground, what part of your body should bend in order to adjust to the height of the ball? (The knees)

CATCHING

Catching

[AT]

Find an own space. Throw your ball in the air, and when it comes back down to you, catch it. Try to stay in your own space.

Guided Discovery Questions:

1. Where do your eyes look when you are catching the ball? (At the ball) How should you hold your hands so the ball will fall into them? (Like a basket to catch ball in, under the path of the ball)

2. When the ball hits your hands, what can you do to help the ball stay in your hands? (Close them around the ball)
3. If the ball isn't falling down right to you, what will you have to do if you want to catch it? (Move to where the ball is falling, and place your hands under the path of the ball)