

## **BASEBALL TIPS FOR SUPPORTIVE PARENTS**

The decision to start playing youth baseball can be an exciting time. It can also be confusing with a lot of questions and concerns. Let's take a look at some Baseball Parenting Tips that will answer a lot of the basics of becoming a baseball parent!

### **COMMITMENT**

Before you do sign up for baseball, make sure you are ready for the commitment. Parents who sign up their children for baseball are making a commitment to their child as well as the team and should do their very best to honor that commitment. Learning the fundamentals of baseball is about repetition and missing practices or games is not good for your player's development and may affect the way the coach is able to use your player in games.

Life situations are going to happen and kids will miss games and practices. The coach will understand absence due to life situations like illness, a planned vacation, a family emergency, etc. The coach is going to have a tougher time understanding choosing "Dave & Buster's" over going to the game.

### **VOLUNTEERING**

A lot of parents may feel like they don't have the time to volunteer but volunteering is a great way to support the team and not all that time consuming. Volunteering to be a head coach can be time-consuming but there are other small ways to lend a helping hand to the team. Volunteering to be a base coach or help run the dugout are two very easy tasks that can help the head coach tremendously.

### **EQUIPMENT**

Parents should know that the league will provide some equipment but not all equipment. Items like catcher's equipment, baseballs and tees (for the younger ages) are provided by the league. The two most basic but important items that the child is going to need are a glove and a bat. Gloves and bats come in a variety of sizes and choosing the correct size is incredibly important. Players using a bat that is too heavy usually will hit the ball softly to pitcher, 1<sup>st</sup> Base or 2<sup>nd</sup> Base (easy outs for most age groups with live pitching). By using a lighter bat, the player will generate more bat speed and pull the ball to shortstop or 3<sup>rd</sup> Base (much harder play to make more most age groups). It is as small thing but can be the difference between your child getting on base and having fun versus the easy outs. Selecting the right size glove is a similar process. A glove that is too large is slower to move to where the ball is being thrown. Further down on this page is a checklist to use when purchasing equipment.

### **PRACTICE AT HOME**

Baseball is a game of repetition. The more that the basic skills are practiced then the better the player will become. Parents should try to practice with their kids or encourage their kids to practice/ play on their own. Just playing catch or hitting whiffle balls in the backyard or park can really improve your child's development.

### **ALWAYS BE POSITIVE**

Parents should always try to stay positive and make the baseball experience as fun as possible for the children. The game of baseball is full of errors and mistakes. Most children starting to play don't understand that players with a .300 batting average are a success – they are quick to see that they got only one hit and got out twice. Putting too much pressure on the child will slowly take the fun out of the game and could lead the child to not wanting to participate any longer. Your player more likely needs a sympathetic ear than another person telling him what he did wrong.

### **FINAL THOUGHT**

Becoming a baseball parent can be an extremely rewarding experience and a great way to find new friends (for both kids and parents). More importantly, it is also a way for the parents to spend quality time with their children while providing them with the enjoyment of the great game of baseball. Once teams are selected/drawn you should either receive an email or phone call from your coach to let you know what equipment/apparel you will need as well as the teams practice/game schedule for the upcoming season. Remember all of the coaches are volunteers and will need help during the season so any parents that can assist along the way are greatly appreciated.

## **EQUIPMENT**

Baseball equipment can be very expensive so it's important to establish what is really needed versus what can wait or what is not necessary. When in doubt, it is always a good idea to check in with the coach and see what they have to say before purchasing baseball equipment for your baseball player. Mark your calendar for August 19<sup>th</sup> at Dicks Sporting Goods for CBA appreciation Day. It is a great day to get 20% off most everything in the store.

### **FIELDER'S GLOVE**

Of course, a glove is absolutely essential. It is also essential that the glove is well broken-in before the first practice. Purchase the glove that is the correct size for your player this season. Buying a glove that is too big will just give them difficulty fielding.

### **BATS**

Bats can be very expensive so buying a used bat is not a bad idea (Play it Again Sports or other family's may have bats from older kids). Getting the right bat may be the most important purchase you make (especially in coach pitch). Players using a bat that is too heavy usually will hit the ball softly to pitcher, 1<sup>st</sup> Base or 2<sup>nd</sup> Base (easy outs for most age groups with live pitching). By using a lighter bat the player will generate more bat speed and pull the ball to shortstop or 3<sup>rd</sup> Base (much harder play to make for most age groups). It is a small thing but can be the difference between your child getting on base and having fun versus the easy outs. Bat weight is measured by the minus or drop weight which means the drop weight is the difference between the length and weight of the bat, so a bat that is 27 inches long and has a drop weight of -10 will weigh 17 ounces. You might look at a -12 (drop 12) for players that are smaller or new to the sport and may not have the swing speed for a bigger bat.

### **BATTING HELMET**

All players from tee ball up must have a batting helmet. Blast ball does not require helmets since they use a foam bat and soft ball. Please note that age groups U9-U10 are required to have a face guard attached to batting helmets.

### **EQUIPMENT BAG**

An equipment bag is not a must (some back packs can hold gloves and helmets and small bats) but certainly helps to keep everything better organized and easy to carry around. These vary greatly in price but you can find some for under \$20.

## **UNIFORMS**

**BASEBALL CLEATS** - For the blast ball and tee-ball age groups cleats are not mandatory but do help prevent injury. Once coach pitch starts cleats are essential. A player who plays in sneakers will run the risk of injury due to unintentional slipping or sliding.

**SLIDING SHORTS, ATHLETIC SUPPORTERS AND CUPS** - It is highly recommended that all male players wear a protective cup at both practices and games.

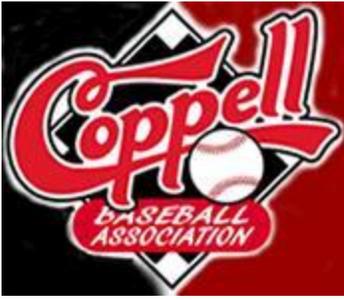
**BATTING GLOVES** - Batting gloves are not essential but can help players better grip the bat especially in hot weather when bat grips may become slick due to sweat.

**WATER BOTTLE** - When participating in a physical activity like baseball, it is very important to stay hydrated.

**HATS AND JERSEYS** – Supplied by CBA

**PANTS, SOCKS AND BELTS** – Make sure you have heard from your coach before purchasing these. The coach will let you know what color pants, socks and belts the team will wear during the season.

**Feel free to contact Bill Head, CBA Director of Instruction at [bhead67@yahoo.com](mailto:bhead67@yahoo.com) or 214.354.2339 with any questions you might have about equipment or training aids.**



# EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

- FIELDER'S GLOVE
- BATS
- BATTING HELMET
- EQUIPMENT BAG
- BASEBALL CLEATS
- SLIDING SHORTS, ATHLETIC SUPPORTERS AND CUPS
- BATTING GLOVES
- WATER BOTTLE
- PANTS, SOCKS AND BELTS