**8-10 Year Olds (and younger)**

GOOD HABITS FORMED EARLY DIRECTLY TRANSLATES TO SUCCESS LATER IN LIFE (BLANKET STATEMENT, TRUE WITH LITERALLY ANY ASPECT OF LIFE…)

KIDS NEED ENCOURAGEMENT AND POSITIVE REINFORECEMENT AT ALL TIMES … (of course they are not trying to walk batters or throw balls)

BASEBALL IS A GAME OF FAILURE AND SUCCESS IN BASEBALL IS A SERIES OF ADJUSTMENTS

Pitching Distance = 46 feet

Base paths = 60 feet

Throw from the stretch

ARM PATH, ARM PATH, ARM PATH, ARM PATH…. PERIOD

11:52 Drill: **TIGHT CIRCLE** (<https://www.amazon.com/Throw-Right-Baseball-Model->Training/dp/B00DH5LARC)

Goals:

1. Proper arm path.
2. Get the pitchers hand into a good position. Righties, ball pointed toward SS; lefties ball pointed toward 2B.
   1. If we as coaches can deliver our players to the next level with every player having the ball pointed in the appropriate direction… that is a HUGE win!)

18:20 Drill: **LOWER HALF MECHANICS** take the arms out AND stride straight (http://betterpitching.com/3-tips-for-teaching-little-league-pitching-mechanics)

Goals:

1. Get the pitcher into a good position to crate momentum and get his body moving towards home plate

22:30 Drill: **FIGURE EIGHT** starting position with the hand in the glove (http://betterpitching.com/3-tips-for-teaching-little-league-pitching-mechanics)

Goals:

1. Glove Arm. Control it… pull the lead elbow to the outside hip.
2. This begins to process of understanding the importance of trunk rotation

28:30 **PITCHES THROWN** = 4 seam fastballs only. Two fingers on top of baseball held lightly. Smaller hands pitchfork, but again, held lightly. Advanced pitchers (only at 10 years old) begin to work on location (inner half of plate and outer half of plate) and change up. A change up at this age is a somewhat tighter grip with the ball in the back of the hand or possibly an added finger on the top of the ball. Regardless, do not sacrifice strikes for change of speed. Especially at this age, once rhythm and momentum is lost, it is VERY difficult to regain it.

**11 and 12 Year Olds**

Continue to build on drills from 8-10 year olds

Pitching Distance = 50 feet

Base paths = 70 feet

Throw from both the wind-up and the stretch. Do not worry as much about angles to home plate and where the pitcher needs to be positioned on the actual rubber. If going from the wind-up; rhythm and balance is CRITICAL. Mounds can be poorly maintained at this age, and as such, the pitcher should put himself on the rubber where he is most comfortable without losing his balance.

Drill: **TIGHT CIRCLE** (Arm Path)

Drill: **LOWER HALF MECHANICS** (Stride Straight and create momentum toward home plate)

Drill: **FIGURE EIGHT** (Glove arm. Pull lead elbow to outside hip)

40:50 Drill: **CHIN TO GLOVE** (Full motion. Need a partner seated 10-12 feet away with his glove as a target) Dry throws, no towel or weighed balls.

\*Throwing dry does not put strain on your arm. As soon as you put a ball or towel in the hand THAT puts undue stress/pitches on the arm. When creating muscle memory (and proper mechanics) by doing dry drills, you don’t want to strain the arm with several repetitive movements.

Goals:

1. Get over the front side/front leg by visualizing getting the pitchers chin to the partners target/glove
2. Reaching out to throw

47:57 Drill: **GLOVE TO CHEST** (Full motion. Partner in the same spot as in Chin to glove drill. When pitchers brings his knee up, pause, place glove on throwing side chest and leave it there for the remainder of the throw.

Goals:

1. A builder on top of Chin to Glove Drill, however this emphasizes the need for greater trunk rotation and activation of your hips because you cannot rely on your glove side to pull you through

53:19 **PITCHES THROWN**:

1. 4 seam fastball
2. Change-up
3. 2 seam fastball

**13-14 Year Olds**

Continuing to build on the previous drills and instruction. We are not building robots. No one person throws the exact same way as the other. The player needs to do what feels comfortable for him within a certain set of parameters. Let the athletic ability take over after that. The coaches will be able to work on smaller nuances tailored to the player now that they have been doing these drills for approximately half their lives!

Pitching Distance = 54 feet (13-14 league) 60 feet 6 inches (14u tournament)

Base paths = 80 feet (13-14 league) 90 feet (14u tournament)

1:00:30 Additionally, improving arm strength by way of long toss is now encouraged and emphasized. Depending on when a player pitches, will determine when he is throwing long.

Stretching and mobility drills are important as the boys will begin to put muscle on their frames. These muscles must not be tight and inflexible. A tight, tense muscle is a slow muscle. An explosive muscle is loose, elastic, and strong; much like a rubber band.

1:03:21 Drill: **SHOOT THE CURVE** (Front knee up, back leg straight back. The player will act as if he is throwing a fastball, then just prior to release, he will pause, make the break of the wrist for the curve, and then continue with his follow-through. Repeat.

Goal:

1. Allows the player to “see” what the release of a breaking ball looks like and where it needs to be released from.

1:09:40 **PITCHES THROWN**:

1. 4 seam fastball
2. Change-up
3. 2 seam fastball
4. **Curve ball (END OF YEAR, 14 YEAR OLDS ONLY, PERIOD)**

**INFIELD MECHANICS & DRILLS**

Key: Frequent repetition of the correct techniques will consistently get the desired results.

1:14:10 **Perfect fielding position (Objective)**

1. Heel to instep (glove-hand foot to throwing-hand foot)
2. Twice shoulder width
3. Elbows on knees, relatively flat thighs, bottom down
4. Back flat–parallel to ground
5. Hands out in front and on ground (enables soft, quick hands)  
   • Glove between eyes and ball  
   • Field out to in, down to up

Problems:  
Feet parallel = weak base  
Feet too narrow = can't get low  
Knees in = can't get low, bottom stays up  
Glove formed incorrectly = small area to catch ball

1:18:05 **8-10 Year old SET UP**

Feet together

Throwing hand instep foot

One Shoulder width apart, then two shoulder width apart

Re-set feet (instep if need be)

Butts down, glove out front

1:20:02 **1-2 Field (Approach)**

1. Approach ball glove-hand side (shoulder) – take feet to ball, short strides, field it as close to hitter as possible
2. Step straight with throwing-hand foot and start to go down (1)
3. Step up and out with glove-hand foot so you end up with twice shoulder width, glove hits the ground (quarter turn with glove) the same time the glove hand foot hit the ground (2)
4. Done right you end up in "perfect fielding position" 10-12 feet before the ball arrives (on-time)
5. It does not matter how many steps you take before you do the approach (1-2 field).

Problems:  
Raise up from ready position = late  
Stay back (not aggressive) = ball plays you  
Flipper = turn glove over (wasted motion)  
1-2 field is late (not 10' to 12' before ball arrives) = fielding ball too deep in feet  
Dead stop before ball arrives = too early, time it, play through the ball

1:24:18 **Drills “1,2 Field”**

* Quick feet drill – from perfect fielding position "pop feet" (quickly move both feet) so throwing hand instep is pointing to target, front shoulder, nose pointed at target  
  Quick, short arm circle to power position
* Shadow throw drill – get into throwing position (strong front side), pivot off back foot, pull down & through, back foot comes around (follow through), don't see chest
* Put it all together – perfect fielding position, catch & cradle ball, pop feet, stay flexed throughout, throw

1:25:23 **Ready Position**

1. Feet parallel with toes facing hitter, spread wider than shoulder width
2. Flexed knees, heels on ground, weight on balls of feet
3. Waist bent slightly
4. Hands out and extended (present glove to hitter)
5. As pitcher starts motion, take 2 steps in, then rock back & forth (de-cleting) as ball enters hitting zone
6. Corner players a little lower, but bottom should never be lower than knees

Problems:  
Dead stop = slow reaction  
Too straight up, feet too close = bad reaction  
Too low = first movement is up

Drills

* Ready position drill  
  Pitcher simulates wide up or stretch, players get in ready position

Progression: coach points directionally, players react 3 to 4 steps never raising up

**Hitting Drills**

1:36:50 **Ichiro Hitting Drill**

Swing through

Correct to where the swing technically stops

Bring bat back and through the zone, above the waist, about the tee, and back into the launch position

1:40:34 **Slot Drill with Tennis Ball under elbow**

Automatic feedback achieved

Tennis ball in elbow crease

Swing… tennis ball comes out and should go straight

Elbow inside the body toward the direction of the pitch

1:42:50 MOST IMPORTANT POINT… quick to the ball!!!

1:42:08 **Slot Drill with the Tennis ball in the armpit**

The tennis ball can stay in throughout the swing

The tennis ball can come out at the end of the swing

This really prevents the bad habit of “Get your back elbow up”

When you are short to the ball and long through it, the tennis ball will come out at extension of the swing, after contact has been made

1:50:28 **45 Degree Closed Drill**

This is a total backside and hips drill at first, but after practice, can become an all-purpose hitting drill

Hangs start at the launch point

Shoulders level, swing through and explode your hips

1:53:27 **Donaldson Hitting Drill**

Another backside teaching drill

Front leg comes up and parallel to the ground, almost like a pitcher.

Hands break up into the launch position and the front leg comes down toward the pitcher. Pause. Feel the strong backside. Then swing through.