

# **SOFTBALL CLINIC PLAYBOOK**

**Girl Scout Gold Award Project**

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# Pre-Clinic planning

## Target Audience and Goals

I ran this clinic for girls in grades 3-7, however it is easily adaptable to grade K-7. I would advise creating separate clinics for grades K-2, 3-5, and 6+ so that skill levels are more similar, and there's less of a safety concern.

## Clinic Structure and Schedule

These clinics are best run as a series of 3-4 separate days, each clinic lasting 1.5 - 2 hours. The ideal time to run these clinics is January-February, giving girls a chance to try softball right before registration, as well as get some practice before the season begins.

## Location and Facilities

The space required to run these clinics is an indoor space, such as a school gymnasium, or indoor turf facility. If running these clinics over the Summer, or during warmer weather, outdoor space is preferable.

## Registration and Communication

Clinics may be run through your town's Park and Recreation department who can help you secure school gyms, run the registration process, and help with advertisement.

## Staff and Volunteers

For a clinic of approximately 20 participants, one head coach with 4-5 assistants is recommended. Your town's High School softball players, or older town league players make great assistants and role models for the younger girls, and most High Schoolers need community service hours. With younger girls (K-2 age), or more participants, you may need/want more helpers.

## Budget and Logistics

Costs will vary by town or locations, but generally renting a gym is more cost efficient than indoor turf facilities. If you're looking for an indoor turf facility, some options include:

- The Brickyard at The Millworks in Westford
- AtBats in Boxborough
- Teamworks in Acton

# Drill Ideas

## Fielding

- Everydays
  - Each girl will get a partner and kneel 5 ft apart. They will take turns rolling the ball and picking it up barehanded, working through the ball. After receiving the ball, transition to throwing position (stay on knees), don't actually throw it, roll it back. After mastering this skill, add gloves back in and repeat. Next, stand up, still using gloves, and work on ground balls, adding in forehand and backhand.
- Roll the ball run to let it between legs
  - Coaches will roll a ball as girls run to let it between their legs, as if fielding, to work on getting to the ball and positioning yourself so it's right in between your legs. They will not need a glove.
- Triangle in the dirt for glove and feet
  - Coach will draw a triangle in the dirt to explain to players ground ball fielding position. Explain that they should put one foot at each point of the base of the triangle, and their outstretched glove at the point, bending their knees.
- Short and 2nd coverage
  - Girls will split up between 2nd base and shortstop, while the coach hits ground balls to one side or the other. Teach the girls that if the ball is hit to the other side of the field, you cover 2nd base. After that, hit the ball to one player, while the other covers 2nd base.  
Optional: work on turning double plays with one girl covering the base and throwing to first.
- Line up against wall and don't let grounders through
  - Girls will line up against a wall about a foot apart from each other while the coach hits ground balls at them. The girls will attempt to field the hits, not letting any through to hit the wall.
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## Throwing

- Throwing Progressions
  - Girls will partner up, and work through throwing progressions. First, get close to your partner, and place your throwing elbow on your glove, flicking your wrist to throw. Next, put both hands flat in front of you in a U shape, turn your upper body to your throwing side, rotate the throwing arm 90 degrees up, and throw, following through as if buckling a seatbelt. Finally, throw full, using proper mechanics.
- Aiming at increasingly smaller stuffed animals
  - Girls will field a ground ball or catch a fly ball using proper mechanics and technique, and throw it at a stuffed animal placed on a tee or bucket. When a target is hit, pick a smaller target and have them aim at it.  
Optional: prizes for winners
- Pepper
  - Girls should pair up with one ball per group and stand 10 feet apart. They will throw the ball back and forth 10 times (5 each). The first team to sit wins, working on quick transfers, moving

with your throw and catch, and using your whole body to throw, not just your arm.  
Optional: each team makes up an animal name and shouts out their name when they sit down.

- **Dump out balls they have to throw/run back into bucket**
  - Split the girls up into 2 groups, one on the 1st base line, the other between 3rd and 2nd base. Dump out one bucket of balls per group (one at home, one at third), and place the empty bucket next to the base. One girl per team will stand on the base as her team lines up at the other end. One girl at a time (in the line) runs to the dumped out balls, grabs one, and runs back to her line, throwing the ball accurately and with good technique to her teammate standing on the base. Her teammate must catch the ball in order to drop it in the bucket. If she has to move off of the base, or drops the ball, it gets readded to the dumped out balls. The girl who threw the ball replaces the girl standing on the base. First team to collect all of the balls back in the bucket wins.
- **Relay race-throwing and turning gloveside**
  - Split the girls into 2 groups, one spread out from home to the right field pole, the other from home to the left field pole. The girls will throw the ball down the line, each player catching and turning gloveside before throwing to the next teammate. The first team to throw the ball down and back wins.
- **Long Toss**
  - Girls will pair up and stand 10 feet apart, with all balls on one side. On coach's command, the partner with the ball will throw to her teammate who will catch the ball. If the teammate catches the ball, she will take a step back, if she misses, the team is out. Repeat until only one team remains.
- **Wall throwing, tap wall**
  - Each girl will grab a ball and stand about a foot away from the wall (when reaching back they should be able to touch it). Start the throwing motion, pulling your arm back and at the proper angle, but don't throw. Tap the wall with the ball a couple times before throwing it, working on extending the throwing arm, and not just using your wrist.
- **Crowhop**
  - Girls will catch a pop fly in the outfield, then shuffle into their throw. Work on using your forward momentum to throw, falling forward if necessary. For righties, your right foot should cross over behind your left foot, then left foot steps and throws.

## Catching

- **Over the shoulder catches**
  - Girls will be lined up facing the coach, who will throw a ball over the girl's shoulder. They must dropstep, as they run and catch it over their shoulder. Focus on running with gloves tucked and getting to the spot before the ball lands.
- **8 balls in the square**
  - Place cones in a rectangular shape in the outfield. One girl at a time will be inside the rectangle as coaches throw 8 balls into the square, semi-rapid fire. The player must catch the ball, toss it off to the side, and locate the next ball. This works on catching over the shoulder and running with gloves tucked.
- **Toss balls to work on flipping glove**
  - Each girl will get a ball and throw it in the air to herself, above her head. She will try to catch it above her head with both hands, not basket style or below her belt. Explain when to flip your glove and how to catch the ball at different heights.
- **High and low throws**
  - Girls will pair up and grab one ball per pair. One partner will toss a ball to the other, who will

attempt to catch it using the proper glove flipping techniques. If the ball is over her head, she will catch it with two hands, and if it's below her belt, she will flip her glove to catch it basket style, depending on where the throw is.

- **Towel snap**
  - Each girl will grab a towel, holding it by the end as they practice correct throwing technique. Work on finishing through your throw, ending as if buckling a seatbelt, and the towel should snap.
- **Get to ball before it's coming down and where to put glove when**
  - Girls will line up in the outfield. One at a time, the coach will throw or hit a ball to a girl. She will try to locate the ball at its peak height, and get to that spot before the ball, catching the ball above her head with two hands.

## Hitting

- **Tee Work**
  - Split girls up into even groups based on how many tees you have. Each girl will hit 10ish balls each, then rotate to the back of the line. Help each girl with their swing.
- **Wiffles**
  - Girls will form a circle around the coach (make sure everyone has space and won't hit others with their swing. Coach will throw 3 balls to each girl, who will attempt to hit it, while the other girls time up the pitch.
- **Inside and outside pitches**
  - Place a tee far off of the plate or very close to it, and have the girls work on pulling inside pitches to left field (righties) or hitting to the opposite field for outside pitches.
- **Tee Work AND Wiffles**
  - Split girls up into 5 groups (2, 2, 5, 5, 5). Two groups of 2 girls will be at the tees, while the rest are in groups of 5 at wiffles. The girls at the tees hit 10ish balls each, then rotate to wiffles, sending a player from wiffles over to the tees. The girls at wiffles hit 3 balls, then go to the back of their line. Help each girl with their swing.

## Base running

- **Baserunning**
  - Girls will line up at home plate and run from home to 1st at full speed, running through the base, and turning right to head back to home. Next, they will run from home to 2nd, making a question mark shaped curve. Next, home to third, curving their runs, and finally home to home.  
Optional: prize for 3 fastest
- **Relay race-running**
  - Split girls into 2 teams, one starts at home, the other at 2nd. Each girl will run the bases once, returning where she started, tapping in the next girl in her line. The first team to finish wins. Make sure girls are cheering for their teammates and engaged.  
Optional: winners get prizes
- **Sliding**
  - Girls will line up along the outfield, all at once running and sliding on the grass to practice. One foot should be fully extended, as if reaching to the base, with the other underneath it, in a 4 position. Once the girls get the hang of this, line up at 1st, one at a time running to 2nd and

sliding with proper form. Start sliding a couple feet in front of the base to allow for full leg extension.

- **Leading and stealing**
  - One girl will start at each base, others line up behind them. A coach or pitcher will do a fake pitching motion in the circle. When the pitcher does their motion, the girls on each base will take their lead ( a couple of running steps, followed by a sideways shuffle), then run back to their base and head to the back of the line. Once everyone has gone through a couple of times, after the girls take their lead, a coach will say “go” or “back”. The runners must steal the base or return to their own.

## Other

- **Hype Video**
  - I created this video that can be shown to participants <https://youtu.be/pqtKD36t3KA>. It features older players explaining their different softball journeys and answering some questions about softball.
- **Talking/communication**
  - Girls will line up in the outfield in two lines, one from each line at a time. Coach will hit or throw a pop fly in between the two girls, who will have to communicate who will catch the ball, saying things like “I got it” or “mine”.
- **Shipwreck**
  - Coach will be the “captain”, giving commands to the girls to perform specific actions or movements, with the goal of being the last crew member standing by following the captain's orders correctly and quickly. Some commands may include # of women in a boat (girls form a line on the ground of that many players), captain's ball (two girls link arms and skip in a circle), chow time (one girl on all fours, other sitting on her back eating a meal), captain's coming (girls stand still and salute captain without moving until “dismissed”), starfish (three girls sit on the floor and hold hands), and many more.  
Ex: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/135j\\_Z-eTo0aEEFEz7qQoEWc9Tj5w1nd6X8iYV34RFX8/edit?tab=t.0](https://docs.google.com/document/d/135j_Z-eTo0aEEFEz7qQoEWc9Tj5w1nd6X8iYV34RFX8/edit?tab=t.0)
- **Wiffle Ball**
  - Split girls up into 2 teams, a hitting and fielding team. Play wiffle ball to learn softball rules, coverages, strategies, etc. Everybody will get up once per inning. The hitting team should cheer for their teammate, to stay involved and learn new cheers.
- **Pickle**
  - Split girls into three groups of around 3. One group will be at a base (3rd), another at another base (home), and the third will put on helmets and be runners. The girls on the bases will attempt to tag out the runner, who will be headed for home. The goal is to get the runner out, or force her back to third base, DO NOT let her score. Don't throw full, throw it short, like a dart, and follow your throw to the next base. Runner's goal is to score.
- **Softball Tag**
  - Split girls into two groups. One per team will be in the middle at a time, both with a ball. The coach will point at one of the two players, who must chase the other, trying to tag her. The other girl will try to run away.

# SAMPLE CLINIC PLAN 1

Duration	Activity	Description	Equipment Needed	Gear required	Helpers needed
rolling	Check-in	Set up check-in station with helper to sign kids in with parent signature	Helper, clipboard, sign-in sheet		1-2 signing in 2 to watch girls 4 total
10 mins	Show video and talk to parents	This is the link for my <a href="#">HYPE VIDEO</a>	Projector Computer, Screen, Boomy, printouts of equipment list		At least 2 to watch girls
10 mins	Throwing progressions	Partners, go through progressions	Balls	Mitt, fielding mask	All, spread out giving pointers
5 mins	Stretching				
5 mins	Everydays	Partners, kneeling, 5 ft apart, roll ball and pick up barehanded, transition to throw, don't throw, work through ball	Balls		All, spread out giving pointers
5 mins	Partner Rolling Grounders	Same thing, standing, with glove, forehand and backhand, with alternating knees if enough time, show triangle	Balls	Mitt, fielding mask	All, spread out giving pointers
5 mins	Water break				Helper set up for next drills, put bases out
5 mins	Roll ball run to let between legs	Split into 4 groups, line up, roll ball, run to let it between legs as if fielding, no glove, explain why bc u want to position yourself so ball is right between your legs			4 helpers, one per line
10 mins	Full Grounders	Girls at positions, roll/lightly hit grounders from home, make plays, rotate positions, give demonstration	Balls, bases, demonstrator	Mitt, fielding mask	One helper to hit balls, others spread out giving pointers
5 mins	Fly balls	Split girls up into 4 groups of 6, throw balls, explain how to catch over head, not below belt, get to ball at peak, be there first, throw to catcher, demonstrator	Balls, demonstrator, 4 helpers	Mitt, fielding mask	4 helpers, one per group
10 mins	Throw balls	Split into 2 groups, catch fly	Balls, Stuffed	Mitt, fielding	2 helpers, one per group

	at increasingly smaller stuffed animals	ball like taught earlier, throw at stuffed animal on tee/bucket, winners get prizes	animals (2 per size/level), 2 tees/buckets, prizes, 2 helpers	mask	
5 mins	Water break				Helpers set up tees and nets
20 mins	Tee work and wiffles	Split girls up, 4 groups (2, 2,10, 10) some at tees, some at wiffles, switch when one done with tee, help each girl with swing	Tees and nets, balls, wiffles, helpers	Helmet, bat	4 helpers, one per group
10 mins	Base running	Run from home-1st, run through base, then home-2nd, with question mark, then home-home, prize for 3 fastest, demonstrate	Bases, phone timer/stopwatch		
5 mins	Relay Race	Split into 2 teams, one at home one at 2nd, each person runs once, winner moves on to final, winners get prize-Cheering	Bases		2 helpers, one per team or 4 helpers, 2 per team, cheering and joining/advising
10 mins	Shipwreck	Teach and play			All, watching and reffing
5 mins	Debrief	Circle up, ask what people learned, liked, questions			
5 mins	End and thank parents, tell time for next clinic, check out	Set up check-out station with helper to sign kids out with parent signature, give daily prize	Sign-out sheet, helper, clipboard		1-2 helper for sign-out sheet, others watching girls

## SAMPLE CLINIC PLAN 2

Duration	Activity	Description	Equipment Needed	Gear required	Helpers needed
rolling	Check-in	Set up check-in station with helper to sign kids in with parent signature	Helper, clipboard, sign-in sheet		1-2 signing in 2 to watch girls 4 total
5 mins	Stretching				
10 mins	Throwing progressions	Partners, go through progressions	Balls	Mitt, fielding mask	All, spread out giving pointers
5 mins	Pepper	Pair up 10 feet apart, throw back and forth 10 times quickly, first team to sit wins, work on transfers, each team makes up animal name	Balls	Mitt, fielding mask	All, spread out giving pointers
5 mins	Long toss	Pair up 10 feet apart, throw and get further on my command until you drop	Balls	Mitt, fielding mask	All, spread out giving pointers
10 mins	Relay race (throwing) focus on turning gloveside	Split girls into 6 groups, first to throw there and back wins	balls	Mitt, fielding mask	3 (including me) 1 on each side of me to example turning gloveside
10 mins	Shipwreck	Teach and play			All, watching and reffing
5 mins	Water break				Helpers set up tee and wiffle stations
20 mins	Tee work and wiffles	Split girls up, 5 groups (2, 2,2, 5, 5, 5) some at tees, some at wiffles. Tee girls hit 7 balls then go to wiffles and send one girl from wiffle to Tee. Wiffle girls hit 3 then go to back of line. help each girl with swing.	Tees and nets, balls, wiffles, helpers	Helmet, bat	5 helpers, one per group, optional face mask/helmet
15 mins	Baserunning	Run from home-1st, run through base, then home-2nd, with question mark, then home-home, prize for 3 fastest, demonstrate	Bases		All giving pointers, demonstrating
5 mins	Water break				All helpers set up for wiffleball and make fair teams

25 mins	Wiffle ball to learn coverage and rules	Split girls up into 3 teams, everybody gets up once, focus on rules and strategy, real softball rules, other team cheering	Bases, tape wiffle balls, wiffle bat		2 helpers, helping batting team, first and third coaches, two teaching team extra cheers, me umping
5 mins	Debrief	Circle up, ask what people learned, liked, questions			
2 mins	End and thank parents, tell time for next clinic, check out	Set up check-out station with helper to sign kids out with parent signature, give daily prize	Sign-out sheet, helper, clipboard		1-2 helper for sign-out sheet, others watching girls

## SAMPLE CLINIC PLAN 3

Duration	Activity	Description	Equipment Needed	Gear required	Helpers needed
rolling	Check-in	Set up check-in station with helper to sign kids in with parent signature	Helper, clipboard, sign-in sheet		1-2 signing in 2 to watch girls 4 total
5 mins	Stretching				
10 mins	Throwing progressions	Partners, go through progressions	Balls	Mitt, fielding mask	All, spread out giving pointers
5 mins	Toss balls to work on flipping glove	Everyone get a ball, throw in air to self above head, catch over head with both hands, not basket style	Balls	Mitt, fielding mask	All, spread out giving pointers
	High and low throws	Pair up, toss balls to partner to catch over head with two hands or below belt basket style, depending on where the throw is	Balls	Mitt, fielding mask	All, spread out giving pointers
10 mins 8 balls in the square if extra time	Over the shoulder catches	Split girls up into 4 groups of 6, one at a time, throw ball over their shoulder as they run and catch it over their shoulder, talk about running with glove tucked	Balls, demonstrator	Mitt, fielding mask	One helper per line-4 total
10 mins if time permits	8 balls in the square	Split girls up into 4 groups of 6, one at a time, throw 8 balls quickly, having them catch the pop ups, toss ball to side, another girl gets them out of the way	Balls, demonstrators, 4 helpers, cones	Mitt, fielding mask	4 helpers, one per group
5 mins	Water break				
15 mins	Shipwreck	Teach and play			All, watching and reffing
10 mins	Dump out balls and hit grounders they have to throw/run back into bucket	Split girls up into 2 groups, dump out bucket of balls, one per team standing on base, team lines up at other end, one girl at a time runs to balls and back to team, throws ball to standing teammate to catch and put in bucket, then stands on base	2 buckets of balls, 2 cones	Mitt, fielding mask	2 helpers, one per group
10 mins	Throw balls at increasingly	Split into 2 groups, catch fly ball like taught earlier, throw at stuffed animal on tee/bucket, winners get	Balls, 2 basketballs, 2 soccer	Mitt, fielding mask	2 helpers, one per group

	smaller balls	prizes	balls, 2 tees/buckets, prizes, 2 helpers		
5 mins	Water break				
20 mins	Tee work and wiffles	Split girls up, 4 groups (2, 2, 10, 10) some at tees, some at wiffles, switch when one done with tee, help each girl with swing	Tees and nets, balls, wiffles, helpers	Helmet, bat	4 helpers, one per group
5 mins water break if needed					
10 mins	Leading and stealing	Start at each base, when the pitcher does motion, take a lead. Next time, say go or back they must go or back	Bases		
5 mins	Relay Race	Split into 2 teams, one at home one at 2nd, each person runs once, winners get prize-Cheering	Bases/tape		2 helpers, one per team or 4 helpers, 2 per team, cheering and joining/advising
10 mins extra or replacement if needed	"Pickle" tag	Split girls into two groups, one per team in the middle at a time, teenager points one direction, that person chases the other, trying to tag her		Mitt, fielding mask	
10 mins	Wiffle ball	Split girls up into 2 teams, everybody gets up once, focus on rules and strategy, real softball rules, other team cheering	Bases, tape wiffle balls, wiffle bat		All, watching and reffing
5 mins	Debrief	Circle up, ask what people learned, liked, questions			
2 mins	End and thank parents, tell time for next clinic, check out	Set up check-out station with helper to sign kids out with parent signature, give daily prize	Sign-out sheet, helper, clipboard		1-2 helper for sign-out sheet, others watching girls