

You want to start a Learn to Play program in your community, now what?



The goal of Learn to Play is to create a space for kids to just have **fun**, resulting in a healthy foundation for all physical activity - not just softball.

Here is a guide to help you get started!



How do I start a Learn to Play program in my community?

Recommended steps for starting your LTP program

- ❑ Gauge interest within the community, you will need athletes and volunteers!
- ❑ Create a Facebook Group/Page to promote LTP Program (share with local recreation/community groups)
- ❑ Contact Community Recreation Department to secure field time (using a diamond or open field is appropriate for LTP)
 - ❑ 60 min x 1-2 times per week
 - ❑ Mid-June to Mid-August (8-10 Practices)
- ❑ Determine registration fees, taking into consideration:
 - ❑ Gear cost (see slide 5 for a recommended list)
 - ❑ Field rental
 - ❑ Softball NB Registration (\$30/team)
 - ❑ Miscellaneous fees (some teams save up for a year end party or a snack fund)
- ❑ Contact Softball New Brunswick to set up individual player and coach registration
 - ❑ Individual registration provides insurance for your coaches, volunteers and players, making sure everyone is protected throughout their season.
 - ❑ All Softball NB Member Associations are required to complete registration.
- ❑ Coaches to complete online training and review Learn to Play Materials (next slide)
 - ❑ Online training is about 3 hours, asynchronous
 - ❑ Volunteers to complete Safe Sport Training and their Vulnerable Sector Check
 - ❑ Coaches to complete Safe Sport Training, Vulnerable Sector Check and Foundations of Coaching Softball Training
 - ❑ Reviewing materials will help make practice planning easier and provide structure to your practices



Before you get on the field - here's some training!

Softball Canada has developed great resources for starting up a Learn to Play Program, this is based on best practices for healthy development of children. Softball New Brunswick encourages use of these resources in building an effective Learn to Play Program.

Foundations of Coaching Softball

- **Part 1 and Part 2 are required for all coaches**
- Teaches you to identify and mitigate risks
- Strategies to work with players and parents
- Effective coaching and decision making
- 5-step process to effective coaching activities

Softball Canada LTP Program Modules

- Tips for an effective program
- Introduces the 5 fundamental skills and how to teach them
 - Throwing
 - Catching
 - Running
 - Hitting
 - Fielding

Softball NB LTP Skills Breakdown Cheat Sheet

Review and study the Manual and Video Modules above, this document is just a quick reference sheet to carry with you on the field and jog your memory as a coach.

Learn to Play Manual

Softball NB has free codes for you

- Program tips
- Equipment
- U5, U7, U9 specific skills
- Weekly practice plans

Learn to Play Videos (EN)

110 videos of drills, games and basics to help you out!

Learn to Play Videos (FR)

67 vidéos d'exercices, de jeux et de notions de base pour vous aider !



0-6 YEARS OLD: WHAT IS BEST FOR LONG TERM PLAYER DEVELOPMENT AND THEIR GROWTH AS AN ATHLETE? PROMOTING AN ACTIVE START.

Goals of an effective Learn to Play Program is to create a space for kids to just have fun, get involved in physical activity and develop their fundamental movement skills, we want kids to enjoy all sports - not just softball.

1. TO HAVE FUN!

Play based learning is most effective at this age, find ways to make practice energetic, fun and memorable.

2. Introduce Fundamental Movement Skills

60% of your practice time should be working on these skills, in a play/fun environment

- Running, starting, stopping, changing direction (forward, backward, sideways) falling, rolling
 - **Example:** Tag, chasing games
- Catching, throwing, striking, kicking
 - **Example:** Target throwing
- Agility, balance, coordination
- Hitting different objects of various sizes (balls, shuttles etc) with a bat/racquet

3. Give lots of opportunities to succeed

When introducing new skills, we want athletes to succeed, keeping skills simple with lots of successful tries is best. Keep feedback general and avoid hyper-focusing on “perfect” mechanics.

Tip! Using fun games or challenges are great motivators to get kids to try new things!

Appropriate Season length for this age

- 8-10 weeks
- 1-2 times per week.
- Sessions should be a mix of practice/modified games
- 60 minutes each
- No pre-season recommended



SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT FOR LEARN TO PLAY

Each player should have:

- Glove
- Running shoes
- Water bottle

Team equipment bags should have:

With links!

- [12 RIF Balls \(softer indoor softballs\)](#)
- [12 Wiffle balls](#)
- [Bases](#)
- [2-3 traffic cones \(to use as hitting tee\)](#)
- [2-3 foam bats](#)
 - U5 suggested bat length: 24-26"
 - U7 suggested bat length: 26-28"
- Additional materials to help make drills more fun
 - Assorted alternative balls (bean bags, balled up socks, stuffed animals, balloons etc)
 - Hula Hoops
 - Small Pylons
 - Pool noodles



If you have any questions as you are starting up your Learn to Play Program please contact us!



learntoplaysoftball@softballnb.ca



softballnb.ca

(policies, member associations, tournaments, resources)

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