

FLAGHOUSE Activity Guide

AAALF's Tips for Inclusion Insights Striking and Fielding Activities

Middle School
Ages: 11 - 13 years



American Association
for Active Lifestyles
and Fitness

Item #12615

Developmental Background

Striking and fielding activities such as softball, lacrosse, and cricket include many different movements that develop over a period of years until the prerequisite skills for these sports are developed. Games and other activities such as Stxball, kitten ball and even kickball help children learn the concepts of the games and such skills as striking, throwing, catching, and running. Students with disabilities often have not had the opportunities to develop these skills to age level or, the limits of their disabilities prevent them from performing at age level. Below are some indicators of success appropriate for middle school students.

Indicators of Success²

1. Student completes appropriate practice of striking skills at a level commensurate with his or her ability.
2. Student completes practice sheet for catching and throwing skills with a partner at least 6 times a quarter.
3. Six or more practice events are reported with student describing adaptations made to the catching, striking or running required by the game.

Learn to modify your teaching, the environment or the activity!³
Include students with disabilities in your class in any striking and fielding activity or sport.

How Do You Teach?

- Use simpler language. If student doesn't seem to understand, talk to him/her as though s/he were younger.
- Give clear examples of things they already know.
- Consider the sequence of tasks. If the student doesn't have prerequisite skills, back up and teach them.
- Allow time for mastery. Once a new skill is learned, give ALL students the opportunity to use it in a variety of ways before moving on to the next skill.
- Use multiple senses. Many students, not just ones with disabilities, can benefit from a variety of sounds, textures, weight, and feel of the activity and the equipment used (see our line of sensory simulation equipment).

Where Do You Teach?

- Shorten the base paths or make the field smaller for students with physical limitations. Make the goals larger or use brightly colored bases for students with visual limitations (beeper, flasher, or throw down bases can be used).
- Put the players' backs to the outfield or other distractions if they have trouble tracking the ball. Brighter balls help too !(Balls that change color, make sounds or have different textures are available.)
- Eliminate distractions by playing indoors during the learning phase. Cover permanent equipment if necessary to take them out of the field of vision.

- Provide structure and routine. Some students who are distractible or emotionally disturbed may become disoriented by frequent changes in the class routine. If this is the case, be consistent in the structure and routine of the class each day.
- Vary the class format if all students cannot learn in the same way. For some, one-on-one instruction is needed, so a peer or teacher's aide can accompany the student; others need multiple forms of stimuli, thus a station format might be more successful than full class instruction.

What - Change the Activity Itself!

- Select the best placement in an activity for students with disabilities. If the student uses a wheelchair or has limited mobility, place the student in a position that doesn't require much movement such as first base, goalie, right field, etc.
- Limit the time of participation. Students with organic or health impairments such as sickle cell anemia, heart conditions, or asthma may need to rest more frequently than other students. Develop a system where they can freely use a substitute if they need to rest, or they rotate into and out of more active roles, such as pitching for 10 minutes, then playing first base for 10 minutes.
- Adapt the skills according to the students' abilities. If striking a ball from a batting tee rather than a pitched ball is within the range of skills, the student would be given a batting tee to use. This of course, requires an adjustment of the standard rules as well.
- Modify the equipment. Manufactured equipment is available for some modifications such as fat bats, beeper balls, and VELCRO® gloves for catching. Unique modifications are still likely to be needed. Have ace bandages, easy-off adhesive tape, and duct tape on hand. Paddles and bats can be taped to the student, the wheelchair, a crutch, or a glove worn by the student or any number of other options depending on the situation. Equipment with handles can also be shortened using tools commonly available in a wood shop. Be creative!
- Rule changes will be needed to accommodate any number of the previous modifications. If possible, try to align rule changes with disability sport organizations such as the National Wheelchair Softball Association or the National Beep Baseball Association. For rules governing school-aged students participating with mixed disabilities, contact the American Association of Adapted Sports Programs.
- Level the playing field by having some students without disabilities wear blind-folds, bat left-handed if they are "rightys" etc. Sometimes the kids like to see if they can execute effective movement skills by doing things differently, which could make for a fun class. How do you think Tiger Woods learned to bounce a golf ball on the face of a club?

The Solutions You Need

The following matrix can be used to identify where, on a two-dimensional continuum, students in your class fit so you can provide the most suitable equipment and supports for their success. The matrix is arranged so that the easier, novice-level activities/skills are identified in the lower left-hand quadrant of the matrix. There you can see to some extent, a developmental sequence of striking and fielding movements with recommended equipment appropriate at each level. As you can see in the

upper, right-hand quadrant, implications for the most difficult and advanced skills featuring the standard equipment used in any physical education class. You would be surprised that, if given an option, many students will choose to use equipment that gives them a greater chance for success. If the environment in the class is such that these choices are “okay,” ALL students will learn, find success and perhaps learn to enjoy an activity they can incorporate into an active lifestyle throughout their life span.

Developing Skills for Striking and Fielding

Advanced - More Skills

- Softbats are standard size but lighter—they absorb impact and come in two lengths (G2277)
- Students getting a bigger piece of the tee than the ball have the Up-rite batting tee to contend with—it keeps popping back up (G5383)
- Catching with one hand can be improved with the no-miss mitt and balls with Velcro (GE5456)
- Get the ball up off the ground with a batting tee (E2403)
- Softcrosse sticks prepare players for lacrosse in a kinder, gentler way (G9812)

- Softball bats come in lengths from 24" thorough 34" and aluminum softball bats weigh less the shorter they are. (G10898)
- Gloves sized according to age and skill levels (G10787)
- Balls range from the no bounce type (G682) to regulation softballs (G4639), lacrosse balls (G856) and cricket.
- Lacrosse sticks range from flexible plastic heads with a foam ball stop to NCAA approved rigid strength (G9742)
- Foam balls present no threat when catching and also come in bright colors (G9632) or for extra help in catching, get the tacky grip (G2135).
- Softcrosse can be played indoors or out and is played with plastic sticks (G9812)
- Mini-Lacrosse (G3148) or Stxball (G5300) are good lead-up games to lacrosse and the sticks could continue to be used by students with disabilities who have limited strength or range of motion.

Easier

More Difficult

- Children needing support for striking and fielding could use standing and mobility devices such as a mobi-rover (E35935) and walker (E3528) or a cane walker (E30176) depending on their balance.
- Strike ball on the ground with broomball stick (G5958)
- Koosh catchers are another fun way to learn to catch with one hand developing hand-eye coordination safely (E34566)
- Overhand throwing precedes fielding scores so practice for accuracy can be fun. Velcro tag is a game used to improve throwing accuracy and expands any tag-type games normally used (E8234)

- Balls that are brightly colored (E4894) in either yellow or red are easier to see by students with visual impairments.
- Cricket bats provide wide surface for striking and plastic ball makes it safe (G1834)
- Students with tactile discrimination problems could benefit from using balls that have textured surfaces (G8860)
- Tee ball bats are still available in wood—good inexpensive choice (G2425)
- Other throwing accuracy games done individually include throwing at targets (S21144)

Novice - Less Skilled

¹ Classification systems for sport and physical activities such as the one endorsed by the State of New York, cluster activities in ways that enhance the chances of positive transfer of skills from one activity to the next.

² Adapted from Fairfax County Public Schools, (2002). On the Move: A Roadmap to Fitness & Wellness. Physical Education Program of Studies, Grades: 6-8. Fairfax, VA: Instructional Services Department.

³ Adapted from Seaman, J.A. & DePauw, K.P. (1989). The New Adapted Physical Education. 2nd Ed. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing.

Resources

American Association for Active Lifestyles and Fitness (AAALF/AAHPERD)

Adapted Physical Activity Council
1900 Association Drive
Reston, VA 20191
<http://www.aahperd.org/aaalf/>
800-213-7193 X430

Making Connections: From theory to practice in adapted physical education. (2003)
Scottsdale, AZ: Holcomb-Hathaway. 480-991-7881

American Association of Adapted Sports Programs

4585 Park Dr.
Pine Lake, GA 30071
<http://www.aaasp.org>
404-294-0070

National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE/AAHPERD)

1900 Association Drive
Reston, VA 20191
<http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/>
800-213-7193 x410

Moving Into the Future: National Standards for Physical Education. (1995). Dubuque, IA: WCB McGraw-Hill. 800-321-0789

National Beep Baseball Association

512 8th Ave. NE
Minneapolis, MN 55413
<http://www.nbba.org>

National Wheelchair Softball Association

PO Box 737
Sioux Falls, SD 57101
<http://www.wheelchairsoftball.com>

PE Central—Adapted Physical Education

<http://www.pecentral.org/adapted/adaptedmenu.html>

*This activity guide is brought to you through a partnership between the American Association for Active Lifestyles and Fitness (an association of AAHPERD) and FlagHouse
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