

# NEILL

## Farm (7U/8U) Player Curriculum

Focus Areas	
<u>Hitting</u>	<u>Fielding</u>
<u>Throwing</u>	<u>Running the Bases</u>
<u>Catching</u>	<u>Outfield</u>
<u>Pitching</u>	

### Focus Area: Hitting

#### Teaching Points:

- **Stance**
  - Feet spread a little more than shoulder width
  - Slight Knee Bend
  - Toes on a straight line
  - Hands back and above shoulder
- **Swing**
  - Eye on the Ball – See the ball hit the bat

- Shoulder to Shoulder (Start Chin on Front Shoulder and End on Back Shoulder with eyes still in the zone)
- Butt out – push out through your back pocket
- Rotate Hips – Squash Bug
- Extend Bat to Pitcher through swing (don't roll wrists too soon)

## Drills:

- **Teaching Point Simulation (No Balls)**
  - Have players spread out and face a target (i.e. backstop fence).
    - Have players go through:
      - The steps of their stance (See Teaching Points)
      - The steps of the swing (See Teaching Points)
- **Hit off Tee**
  - Tee should be 6 inches in front of the batter's front foot
  - Player should get in stance before swinging
  - When done swinging the player should be looking down into the tee with chin on back shoulder
  - **Emphasize:** Pulling your hands to the ball, watching the ball hit the bat, and extending towards the pitcher
- **Front Soft Toss**
  - Coach (Tosser) should be sitting or kneeling about 5 yards away in front of the batter behind a "L" Screen
  - Coach under hands the ball in as a strike
  - **Emphasize:** Being short and quick to the ball, don't drop hands, use your lower half (hips/legs)
- **Live**
  - Live pitcher
  - Get batter to setup in their stance in the batter's box
  - Let them look at the first pitch
  - Give them 12 pitches
  - Throw at a decent speed (don't lob it)
  - **Emphasize:** Swinging at balls from their waste to knees (strike zone) and watching the all the way in until it hits the bat

## Helpful Videos:

- [Other Hitting Drills](#)
- [Additional Hitting Drills](#)
- [Tee Work](#)

## Focus Area: Fielding

### Teaching Points:

- **Set Position**
  - Feet spread
  - Knees bent
  - Hands out in front
- **Fielding a Ground Ball**
  - Creeping up through the ball
  - Technique to field ground ball: chin and chest behind the ball, hands out in front, eyes on the ball, glove on the ground, flat back, butt down
  - Work through the ball towards first base
- **Transitioning to the Throw**
  - Right Foot/Left Foot (For Righties) Step forward with right foot, show ankle to the receiver, and turn front shoulder to the target

### Drills:

- **Teaching Point Simulation**
  - Have players spread out and face a target (i.e. backstop fence).
  - Have players go through:
    - Getting Set (See Teaching Points)
    - The steps of fielding a ground ball (See Teaching Points)
- **Soft Hands**
  - Put kids in group of three/ask for volunteers

- Have them get in the stance they would be when they field a ground ball (feet spread, butt down, hands out in front)
- Roll four balls in a row to them – Have them flip it back
- **Emphasize:** Field the ball out in front with arms extended, and secure it with your throwing hand
  
- **Creeping Up Through the Ball**
  - Going Straight On
    - Divide into groups equal to the number of coaches
    - Set up two cones about 5 feet apart (per group)
    - Setup one Cone about 7 feet behind them in the middle of them (per group) so that you have a triangle with the three cones
    - Line up the kids in a single file line behind the single cone
    - Coaches should be about 15 yards in front of the two cones
    - First guy up gets in front of the single cone
    - Coach Says “Set” and the player gets in set position in front of the single cone
    - Coach then rolls the ball so that the player can come up through the cones and field it
    - Repeat to every player multiple times
    - **Emphasize:** Coming to the baseball under control
  - **Going Left**
    - Coach says “Set” and the player gets in set position in front of the single cone
    - Move two cones to left of the single cone (About 4 feet)
    - Roll the ball through the cone and make the player go left to through the cones to field the ball
    - **Emphasize:** Getting to the spot where the ball is hit while coming forward
  - **Going Right**
    - Coach says “Set” and the player gets in set position in front of the single cone

- Move two cones to right of the single cone (About 4 feet)
  - Roll the ball through the cone and make the player go right to through the cones to field the ball
  - **Emphasize:** Getting to the spot where the ball is hit while coming forward
- **Ground Balls/Jab - turn – throw**
    - Coach says “Ready” Players get in infield ready position
    - Coach throws ground ball directly to them
    - Player fields ground ball and holds in the ground ball fielding position (this emphasizes keeping the eye on the ball)
    - Coach says “jab” after they have the ball for three seconds and gives the player a target to throw at
    - Player jabs (Steps) throwing foot forward
    - Coach then says “turn”
    - Player turns front should to target putting his feet (straight line) and arms (elbows even with shoulders) into throwing position
    - Coach says “Pull” and player throws it to coach
    - **Emphasize:** Fielding the ball first and then popping up to get into throwing position

## Helpful Videos:

- [Throwing Fielding Transition](#)
- [Infield Drills](#)
- [Additional Drills](#)
- [Fundamentals \(Ripken\)](#)

## Focus Area: Throwing

### Teaching Points:

- **Grip**
  - Three Fingers across seams (four seam fastball)
  - Thumb under the ball
- **Throwing Position**
  - Look at your target
  - Feet in straight line to target
  - Point front shoulder at target
  - Elbows even with shoulder high so your body looks like a field goal post
  - Ball facing away from you – facing centerfield if you were pitching
  - Step and Throw (emphasize pulling your chest to your glove)
- **Throwing Target**
  - Chest of the receiving player

## Drills:

- **Teaching Point Simulation (No Balls)**
  - Have players spread out and face a target (i.e. backstop fence).
    - Each player shows their grip (See Teaching Points)
    - Then have each player go through the steps of throwing (See Teaching Points)
    -
- **Follow your Throw**
  - Draw a straight line in the dirt or line up cones for kids to put their feet on
  - Group kids into groups (Get Volunteers)
  - Each kid gets a ball
  - Single Line behind the first player for each group
  - First Player put toes on the line
  - Coach says “set” and player gets into throwing position (elbows even with shoulders)
  - Coach says “pull” and player pulls his chest to his glove and throws the ball to the coach. Emphasize throwing it to the coach’s chest.

- After throwing, player runs to coach to get the ball and goes around the coach and gets back in line
- **Emphasize:** Pulling your chest to your glove release the ball out in front and get momentum going forward

### Helpful Videos:

- [Youth Warmup Throwing Progression](#)
- [Throwing Drills](#)
- [Throwing Fundamentals](#)

## Focus Area: Running the Bases

### Teaching Points:

- Running to first
  - Run hard
  - Drop Bat
  - Run Straight down the line not looking at ball
  - Listen for coach
  - Three Things
    - Run through the base
    - Take a Turn
    - Go to second
- Running to other bases
  - Banana out when approaching base to go to next
  - Listen for coach as you approach the bag
- Hold on balls in the air

### Drills:

- **Running to First**
  - Line kids up in a single file line behind the plate towards third base
  - Have a coach at the plate and one as the first base coach

- Each kid should
  - Pretend Swing
  - Run to first
- **Through**
  - On the first few times around, they should run through the bag – coach should say “through” early down the line
  - **Emphasize:** Running full speed down the line and running through the base turning slightly to the right
- **Make a Turn**
  - Put a cone down about 10 feet from first base towards the plate and two feet to the right of the foul line
  - On the next few reps, have the coach tell them to “make a turn” when the runner is about a quarter of a way down the line
  - **Emphasize:** Banana out and go around the outside of the cone, hit the inside of the bag, go about three steps beyond the bag with your head up.
- **Go to Second**
  - On the next few reps, have the coach tell them to go to second about a quarter of a way down the line
  - **Emphasize:** Banana out and go around the outside of the cone, hit the inside of the bag, and going straight to second.
- **Listen to the first base coach**
  - On the last few reps, give a different option to each player early down the line
  - **Emphasize:** Listening to coach but still running hard

### Helpful Videos:

- [Running Drills](#)
- [Little League Base Running Progression](#)



# Focus Area: Catching

## Teaching Points:

- Watch Ball
- Fingers Up
- Two Hands
- Secure the ball with throwing hand (two hands)
- Don't Stab at it

## Drills:

- **Soft Toss with No Glove**
  - Drill requires soft (tennis) balls
  - Line the Players up in a line across with No Glove
  - Coach should go 6 feet in front of each player and flip the ball to each one
  - Player should try to catch the ball with their bare hand (where the glove would be) with their fingers up
  - **Emphasize:** Watching the ball all the way into the hand
- **Rapid Fire**
  - Coach has bucket of balls
  - Put kids into groups
  - Single file line with players behind the first kids in line
  - One Player steps up and gets 15 balls flipped to them to catch
  - Coach should flip balls to all areas, including glove side, opposite side, high and low
  - **Emphasize:** Securing the ball with your throwing hand
- **Cover your bag**
  - Put players into three groups and put them at a base
  - Put them in a single file line about 7 feet above the base (use a cone)
  - For each player

- Coach says “break”
- Player runs to the bag
- Player puts one foot on the bag and the other out in front ready to receive the ball from the thrower (coach)
- They should have their glove out in front with fingers up
- Coach throws the ball to the player on the bag
- **Emphasize:** Securing the ball with your throwing hand and keeping foot on base

## Helpful Videos:

- [Catching Drills](#)
- [Throwing Progression](#)

## Focus Area: Getting Outs

### Teaching Points:

- Force Outs
- Throwing to the base
- Flipping for the force out

### Drills:

- **Running for the force**
  - Have a few players at each base in a single file line
  - Have three coaches, one for each base
  - Roll a grounder to the player up at the base, and have them run and tag the base with their foot
  - Then the player should turn and throw it back
  - Next player then goes
  - After each player does three at each base, they rotate to the next base

- **Emphasize:** Fielding the ball first
- **Flipping for the force at second**
  - Line up players at short and second
  - Roll grounders to the players at short
  - Second baseman runs to second and covers the bag
  - Shortstop flips the ball underhand to the second baseman
  - Rotate players
  - Then do ground balls to second, with shortstop covering
  - **Emphasize:** Soft flip to the receiver
- **Base Bucket**
  - Put a player at first base with a bucket right next to them
  - Have players at each position
  - Roll grounders to each one and have them throw to first base
  - The first baseman should get the ball tag the bag and put the ball into the bucket
  - Repeat until all balls are in the bucket
  - **Emphasize:** Direction of the ball to be in line with bucket

## Helpful Videos:

- [Outfield Drills](#)

## Focus Area: Outfield

## Teaching Points:

- Don't let it get to fence
- Chin and Chest behind the ball
- Glove down early
- Throw the ball into second base

## Drills:

- **Outfield Hits**
  - Put the players into four groups and put them in each OF position
  - Coach should stand about 15 yards from them
  - Roll the ball to them
    - First Three Reps: Straight On
    - Next Three Reps: To the Left
    - Last Three Reps: To the Right
  - Players should stop the ball and throw it to second base.
    - Have player or coach at second
  - **Emphasize:** Getting in front of the ball so it does not get to the fence

## Focus Area: Pitching

### Teaching Points:

- Set Position (Stretch)
  - Right side of the Rubber
  - Feet: Little less than shoulder width and front leg slightly ahead of back
  - Hands Back near throwing shoulder (help with Balance)
  - Back leg slightly bent
  - Eyes on target
- **Delivery**
  - Lift front leg to belly button (slight twist): rhythm should be smooth (not too slow, not too fast) and keep the hands up
  - Drive/Push Off with Back Leg and lead with the front hip and butt
  - Break Thumbs Down
  - Bring arms up even with shoulders
  - Landing Toe pointed slightly to the right of the target (for righties)
  - Straight line from side of back heel to back of front heel (Stay closed)

- Keep Glove Tight/Slightly Turning it over on delivery
- Release the ball out in front of your nose, chest over your front knee

## Drills:

- **Teaching Point Simulation**

- Have players spread out and face a target (i.e. backstop fence).
- Have players go through:
  - Getting Set Position (See Teaching Points)
  - The steps of delivery (See Teaching Points)

- **Towels Snaps**

- Have a few towels (the size of dish towel)
- Set up a bucket or a chair
- Have the players lined up about 4 feet behind the bucket
- Put them in the set position with the towel in their throwing hand
- Have them lift their leg for a pitching delivery and snap the towel on the bucket
- Have each player do it about 6 times
- **Emphasize:** Snapping your wrist forward, and bending your back

- **One Knee Throws**

- Put players into groups – number of groups should be equal to number of coaches
- Spread them out about 10 ft apart and have a coach about 20 feet in front of them
- Put each player on one knee
  - Throwing side knee should be on the ground
  - Other knee up with foot on the ground out in front of the player
  - Player should turn into throwing position with front shoulder facing the coach/target and elbows even with shoulders
  - Player should then throw the ball to the coach
  - **Emphasize** bending the back and chest finishing over the front knee

- **Wall Bumps**

- Find a fence or a padded wall
- Have the player facing the wall in there set position (stretch)
- Have them lift their front leg for delivery and then lead/fall into fence or wall with their front hip/butt
- 10 Reps for each player
- **Emphasize:** Back knee bent and leading with your front hip/butt
  
- **T Drill**
  - Put Tape Down (or cones) Perpendicular to Rubber (straight line down the landing hill toward the catcher) and Across Landing Zone to form a “T”
  - Have players setup (stretch) on the right side of the Rubber to the right of the tape
  - Have them throw pitches using their delivery
    - Front foot should always land on the right side of tape down the hill
    - Front Foot should also extend over the tape out in front
  - **Emphasize:** Bringing up the knee to the belly button (slight twist) and leading with front hip so they land on the right side of the tap down the middle of the mound

## Helpful Videos:

- [One Knee Throwing Progression](#)
- [Wall Bumps](#)
- [Towel Drill](#)
- [One Knee Drills](#)
- [Pitching Fundamentals](#)
- [Additional Drills](#)
- [T Drill](#)