

# NEILL

## Minors (9U/10U) 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>	<u>Bunting</u>
<u>Catching (Plate)</u>	

### Focus Area: Hitting

#### Teaching Points:

- **Stance**
  - Feet spread a little more than shoulder width
  - Slight Knee Bend
  - Chest over knees/Butt Out
  - 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
- Stride with your hands coming back (like a punch)
- Hit Through the baseball
- 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)
- **Tee**
  - **Cross Overs**
    - Player lines up about 3 feet behind the Tee in the batter's box with front foot crossed over in front of their back foot
    - Player should stride with the front foot into the ball while keeping their hands back (Walking away from your hands)
    - **Emphasize:** Sinking into your back leg/butt out to generate power and hit through the ball. Keep head still.
    - **Video:** [Cross Overs](#)
  - **Launch Position**
    - Line up tee about 6 inches in front of the players front foot
    - Have them stride and keep their hands back
    - Hold that position for 2 seconds, then swings
    - Emphasis going back to go forward with your hands to generate power
    - **Video:** [Launch Position](#)
  - **Straight 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:** Going back to go forward, pushing out the back pocket and hitting through ball with your head down
  - Video: [Tee Work](#)
- **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:** Starting early. Pulling the hands back when the pitcher's hands go back for the underhand flip
- **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:** Starting early. Pulling the hands back and striding when the pitcher starts to stride to them (“Dancing with the Pitcher”)

## Helpful Videos:

- [Hitting Drills](#)
- [Additional Hitting Drills](#)

## Focus Area: Fielding

### Teaching Points:

- **Set position**
  - Hands out in front

- Right step/Left Step on Pitcher Release
- **Fielding a ground ball**
  - Creeping up through the ball
  - Technique to field ground ball: chin and chest behind the ball, hands out in front, 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**
  - Pair kids up and put them about 10 ft. from each other
  - Each player is on their knees
  - They roll the ball to each other
  - **Emphasize:** Flat Back, Hand out in Front, other hand ready to close, and funneling the ball up to their chest
- **Work Arouds**
  - Work Arouds
    - Players get in a single file line (you can do as many lines as coaches)
    - Setup a cone to the right of the players so that they have to go around it before they field the ball
    - Put a player at first
    - Coach says left/right, and player creeps into his field position

- Coach then rolls the ball so that the fielder has to come up through the ball after going around the cone to their right.
- Player fields the ball and makes a throw to first
- **Emphasize:** Emphasis working toward first base and good foot work to get into position to throw
- **Video:** [Workarounds](#)

## Helpful Videos:

- [Infield Progression](#)
  - [Infield Drills](#)
  - [Technique](#)
  - [Fundamentals \(Ripken\)](#)
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## Focus Area: Throwing

### Teaching Points:

- **Grip**
  - Three or Two Fingers (bigger Kids) across seams (four seam fastball)
  - Thumb under the ball
- **Throwing Position**
  - Look at your target
  - Show your inner ankle to your partner with a step
  - Turn your front shoulder to your partner
  - Break heads down
  - Follow 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
  - Turn Glove and bring body to the 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)
  - **Drills**
    - See Videos

## Helpful Videos:

- [Mechanics](#)
  - [Throwing Progression](#)
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## 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 and breaking down, looking to the right for an overthrow
  - **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](#)
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## 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 with their fingers up
  - **Emphasize:** Watching the ball all the way into the 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:

- [Mechanics](#)
  - [Catching Progression](#)
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## Focus Area: Outfield

### Teaching Points:

- Good Angles to the Ball
- First Step Back
- Momentum coming forward when catching a grounder or fly ball
- Throw the ball to the glove side of the cutoff man.

### Drills:

- See Videos

### Helpful Videos:

- [Mechanics](#)
  - [Outfield Drills](#)
  - [Outfield Tips](#)
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# Focus Area: Pitching

## Teaching Points:

- **Set Position (Stretch)**
  - Right Side of the Rubber
  - Feet: Little Less than should 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
- **Video:** [Towel Drill](#)
  
- **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
    - **Video:** [One Knee Drills](#)
  
- **Wall Bumps**
  - Find a fence or a padded wall
  - Have the player facing the wall in their 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
  - **Video:** [Wall Bumps](#)
  
- **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
- **Video:** [T Drill](#)

## Helpful Videos:

- [One Knee Throwing Progression](#)
  - [Pitching Fundamentals](#)
  - [Additional Drills](#)
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## Focus Area: Bunting

### Teaching Points:

- Up in the box
- Pivot back foot
- Bat in front of the zone
- Hand slides up the bat and pinches it
- Bat on a slight angle
- Lower knees for lower pitch
- Catch the ball with bat

### Drills:

- See Videos

## Helpful Videos:

- [Mechanics](#)
  - [Bunting Drills](#)
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# Focus Area: Catching Behind the Plate

## Teaching Points:

- Up in the box
- Pivot back foot
- Bat in front of the zone
- Hand slides up the bat and pinches it
- Bat on a slight angle
- Lower knees for lower pitch
- Catch the ball with bat

## Drills:

- See Videos

## Helpful Videos:

- [Mechanics](#)
  - [Catching Drills](#)
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