

Player Progression Baseball

Little League has several levels organized around age and skill to help develop players from ages 4 through 16. The progression of a child will vary based on the age at which the child starts playing organized baseball and the amount of time the child practices at home and school.

Parents spending the time to practice with their child and a child's own athletic ability play a large role in how a child will progress through the levels.

For a child who starts play as a 4, 5, 6 or 7 year old in Little League, a player might progress through each of the levels as follows:

	Tee Ball	7/8's	Farm	Minors	Majors	Juniors	Seniors
Child #1	4-5	6-7	8	9	10-12	13-14	15-16
Child #2	6	7-8	9	10	11-12	13-14	15-16
Child #3	4-5-6	7-8	9	10	11-12	13-14	15-16
Child #4	7	8	9-10	11	12	13-14	15-16

The above progressions are just examples. Each child is different which is why there are age ranges that overlap between levels. For children starting later than age 5 or 6, or for those children who have not successfully demonstrated the required baseball skills, it is best to let the child play down a level to gain confidence and have fun rather than place the child in a situation where he or she is playing below the skill level of their teammates.

Whatever the progression, it is important to make certain that a child is not pushed too fast where he or she is not given enough time to learn, practice and master the fundamentals of baseball. Remember most children will not play professional baseball, but by learning how to play the game and having fun while doing it, we continue the tradition of this great American past-time for the next generation.

Placement Guidelines by Player Age for Ages 4-9

League Age is the child age on August 30th. For example, a child born between September 1, 2006 and August 30, 2007 would be League Age 11 for the 2018 baseball season.

- Age 4 – All children Age 4 will play T-Ball.
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- Age 5 – All children Age 5 will play T-Ball.
- Age 6 – Most children Age 6 will play T-Ball. Those children at age 6 that have played T-Ball at age five AND are comfortable catching, throwing, and swinging at a pitched ball may request to play Collegiate.
- Ages 7 & 8 – Most children Age 7 and 8 will play Collegiate. A player is ready to advance when the player is starting to catch the ball with the glove “up” (at face level) as opposed to basket catches with the glove “down”. The player will be successful putting the ball in play in most coach-pitch at bats. A ball thrown or hit at a 7/8's player's head will usually result in the player making the effort to catch the ball with periodic success.
- Age 9 – Most children Age 9 will play Farm. The player is eligible to participate in the draft at this age for selection to Farm level and above.

In order for a player Age 8-12 to be selected on a Farm, Majors or Minors team the player must participate in Player tryouts.

PLAYER PROGRESSION - Baseball

Tee Ball (Ages 4 - 6)

Any child who will attain the age of 4, 5 or 6 years old on or before August 30th of the current season shall be eligible to play Tee Ball.

This division is primarily for 5 and 6 year olds who are just starting to play organized baseball. All 6 year olds must have played one year of Tee Ball in North Bothell Little League before advancing to the Collegiate level.

Tee Ball is generally the first introduction to organized baseball for most players. The primary objective by the end of the season is to ensure that each player has a "positive experience" with baseball, desires to play again the following year, and has successfully demonstrated the skills listed below.

- **Warm up techniques**
- **Names of defensive positions**
- **How to execute a throw (proper grip)**
- **Proper fielding position (down and ready)**
- **How to hold a bat properly**
- **What to do after the ball is hit (as a batter and a runner)**
- **Knows how, why and when to run to the next base**

Collegiate (Ages 7 - 8)

Any child who will attain the age of 7 or 8 years old on or before August 30th of the current season shall be eligible to play Collegiate.

At the Collegiate level, all games will be coach-pitch for all innings. A safety ball will be used since this will be the first-time children will be pitched to versus hitting off a tee.

This division is primarily for 7 and 8 year olds who have successfully demonstrated all the T-Ball skills. As with T-Ball, the primary objective at this level is to ensure that each player has a "positive experience" with baseball, desires to play again the following year, and has learned the skills listed below.

- **TEAM concept**
 - **Warm up techniques**
 - **Number of outs per inning**
 - **Fielding techniques (proper down and ready position)**
 - **Uses both hands to catch the ball vs. one handed or trapped catches**
 - **Understands where to make the defensive play**
 - **Proper Batting position**
 - **Proper base running (on the ground vs. in the air)**
 - **Good Sportsmanship (End each game with a High Five)**
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Farm Baseball (Ages 8 - 10)

Any child who will attain the age of 8, 9 or 10 years old on or before August 30th of the current season shall be eligible to play Farm. A player must have played one year at the Collegiate level to be eligible for Farm.

This division is primarily for 8 and 9 year olds who have successfully demonstrated all the Collegiate skills. This division is also for 10 year olds who were not drafted to the Minors level.

At the Farm level, all games will be player-pitch and will use a hard ball for all innings.

The Farm level is where the players should recognize situations and understand "HOW BEST" to make certain plays. As with Collegiate, the primary objective is to ensure that each player has a "positive experience" with baseball, desires to play again the following year and has learned the skills listed below with the emphasis on "HOW BEST".

- **Advanced warm up techniques**
- **The ball is always "LIVE"**
- **Ground ball fielding techniques**
- **Where to make the play**
- **Relaying the ball from the outfield to the infield**
- **Batting stance (closed, open)**
- **Pitching mechanics**
- **Bunting**
- **Infield Fly Rule**
- **Communication (calling for a fly ball)**
- **Backing up plays**
- **Pitcher position**
- **Difference between a Force Play and a Must Tag**
- **Good Sportsmanship**

Minors Baseball (Ages 9 - 12)

Any child who will attain the age of 9, 10, 11, or 12 years old on or before August 30th of the current season shall be eligible to play Minors. A player must be selected by a manager through the player review and draft process to play at the Minors level.

The primary objective at the Minors level is the same as the previous levels with emphasis on preparing players for advancement to the Majors level. The Minors level is both competitive and instructional with more emphasis on instructional than competitive during the regular season.

It is critical that the managers and coaches of this division provide sound training and good balance of playing time and position rotations for all players. Besides building upon the skills taught to them at the preceding levels, players should successfully demonstrate the following skills:

- **Coming on time to practices and games prepared to play baseball**
- **Competence in batter's box positioning**
- **Proper grip of the bat**
- **Acceptable level of determining ball vs. strike**

- **Passing the bat through the strike zone**
- **Proper base running techniques including:**
 - **Stealing after the ball crosses the plate**
 - **When to tag up** ○ **How and when to slide**
- **Correct pitching mechanics and baseball grips (fastball, change-up)**
- **Proper footwork to field and throw quickly**
- **How to go back on a fly ball**
- **Sacrifice situations**
- **How to rundown a base runner (pickle)**
- **Covering bases and backing up positions after a hit**
- **Always show good Sportsmanship on and off the field (no bad mouthing other players)**

Major Baseball (Ages 11 - 12)

Any child who will attain the age of 11 or 12 years old on or before August 30th of the current season shall be eligible to play Majors. A player must be selected by a manager through the player review and draft process to play at the Majors level.

The Majors level is both competitive and instructional with admittedly more emphasis on the competitive aspects of the game than at the Minors level. Managers focus on fielding a competitive team while also providing the players with a fun learning experience.

Players should focus on refining their baseball skills with a strong emphasis on consistency. Often the difference between an average player and a good player is the ability to consistently execute the required skills.

Players in the Majors level should:

- **Come on time to practice and prepared for practice or games (including safety equipment)**
- **Show proper batting stance, bat position, and swing execution**
- **Reasonable competence in contacting the ball**
- **Know the difference between bunting for a base hit and a sacrifice bunt** • **Demonstrate proper base running techniques including:**
 - **Exploding off the base after the ball crosses the plate**
 - **When to tag up vs. going half way** ○ **Proper sliding techniques**
- **Execute proper pitching motion (can throw 50 - 70 pitches without experiencing noticeable arm discomfort)**
- **Use Catching skills (blocking the plate with the ball, blocking wild pitches, throwing out runners)**
- **Cover bases correctly when receiving a throw or fielding a ball**
- **Understand how to go back on a fly ball**
- **Properly execute a double play**
- **Execute a run down - both as a runner and a fielder**
- **Know what can happen after a ball is caught in foul territory**
- **Use the relay man from out field or throw home if needed**
- **Cover all bases and backs up other players after a hit**

- **Always show good Sportsmanship on and off the field (no bad mouthing other players)**
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Seniors and Juniors Baseball (Ages 13 - 16)

Any child who will attain the age of 13, 14, 15, or 16 years old on or before August 30th of the current season shall be eligible to play Junior or Senior baseball.

North Bothell Little League offers players ages 13-16 the opportunity to participate in the IntraDistrict Seniors program and Seattle city programs. The intra-district includes approximately 20 Junior teams (13-14 yr olds), and 11 Senior teams (15-16 yr olds) from the Kenmore, Northshore, and Woodinville leagues. Games are played on full size baseball fields (same as the pros) and include leading off, unrestricted stealing, etc., just like in the high school and professional programs.

North Bothell typically has 4 junior teams, and 2 senior teams in this program. Teams play approximately 3 games a week, for 8 weeks, followed by a week of play-offs. The season is complete by the end of the school year. Given this schedule, there are no practices scheduled once the season begins.

The level of competition varies by league, depending on the strength of the other competing programs in that area. Skill levels vary from recreational to highly competitive (select) levels of play. All players are ensured playing time, like the Little League program.

If you would like to see an exciting, fun game of baseball, with all aspects of strategy, including bunting, stealing, pick-off plays, etc. come watch one of the games. Field locations include the Complex field #1, as well as the local junior high and high school fields. These young men even get to play a few night games under the lights at Pop Keeney.

Come see a game or two. You will have fun watching these young men play ball with all the intricacies and strategies seen in the big leagues.