

# PITCHING RESOURCES

## Pitching for beginners

Do you coach a younger team (maybe 8, 9 or 10 year olds) and struggle to figure out how to teach them to pitch and just where to start?

If so, then these 6 steps are just what you've been looking for!

Recently I got an email from a coach who was coaching a first-year kid-pitch recreation team full of 9 years olds. She'd been to a couple of clinics and had a good understanding of how to pitch, but had no clue where to start or what to teach these first-time pitchers.

This isn't uncommon since teaching someone a skill like pitching, for the very first time, can be pretty overwhelming. No matter what you might know about pitching when you're dealing with kids this young it's almost better not to know much about pitching since they can't handle much information anyway. And luckily, it's not as hard as it might seem to teach young kids how to pitch so let's look at some keys for doing so:

- **Keep it simple** – remember that these are young kids. They DON'T CARE what you know about pitching ; they won't listen long enough anyway. So make your information real simple!
- **Give them control** – teach them how to make a pitch go up or down, in or out, instead of you simply telling them what to do. Kids are as smart as we treat them.
- **Make it fun** – if it's not fun who wants to do it?! Part of fun is being successful at something so find ways to help your young pitchers be successful.

Now let's look at a 6 Step Process that will use these 3 Keys to help make it possible to teach young kids how to pitch:

1. **No Balls** – Spend a lot of time letting the players practice going through the pitching motion without a ball. Put simply, the pitching motion is: A Step (with their glove-side foot), a Circle (with their pitching arm), and a Let Go! Step, Circle, Let Go all without the ball
2. **Let's Work Together** – Have them work their hands and feet together so when their stride foot hits the ground they should feel like their hand lets go of the ball.
3. **All Together Now** – Have all the pitchers line up facing a fence or wall. Give them each a ball and have them all pitch to the wall at the same time to prevent embarrassment and give maximum practice time per kid.
4. **Let's Get Closer** – When you introduce a ball put each pitcher about 15 feet from a fence or wall. Let them all pitch same time and focus on the concept that the BALL GOES WHERE YOUR HAND POINTS WHEN YOU LET GO OF IT!
5. **Up and Down** – Move back a little farther from the fence/wall and have them work on pitching to a spot high on the fence, then low on the fence and then in the middle of the fence – rotating each location every 2-3 pitches. This helps them work on making adjustments and starting to learn where their hand is pointing when they let go of the ball.
6. **Back It Up** – Finally, have them move back to regular distance and pitch. Have them use lots of balls instead of just one so they spend most of their time pitching instead of chasing and help them fix the next pitch instead of getting mad at the last one.