



Age Group Skills Check List

Amended September 2009

The Softball NZ Skill Sets have been developed to help coaches identify and develop technical, tactical, strategy and game knowledge skills appropriate for specific age groups. Using this checklist of skills will help both the player and coach to understand the basic fundamentals required to attain and improve skill level and consistency of performance.

Descriptions & Drills for the following Skill Sets can be obtained through purchasing the "Coaching Planner" which is available from Softball NZ www.softball.org.nz

√ = Skills should be acquired by this age group

Hitting		U11	U13	U15	U17	U19
Bat Selection	Correct weight & length	√	√	√	√	√
Basic Swing	- Grip	√	√	√	√	√
	- Stance	√	√	√	√	√
	- Set Up / Ready Position	√	√	√	√	√
	- Disciplined Hitting		√	√	√	√
	- Timing			√	√	√
	- Loading	√	√	√	√	√
	- Step	√	√	√	√	√
	- Lead with the Elbow	√	√	√	√	√
	- Pitch Recognition (ball rotation)			√	√	√
	- Tracking			√	√	√
	- Strike Zone		√	√	√	√
	- Hip Rotation	√	√	√	√	√
	- Swing	√	√	√	√	√
	- Wrist Snap			√	√	√
	- Extension			√	√	√
	- Follow Through		√	√	√	√
Studying Pitcher					√	√
Correcting Faults				√	√	√
Slumps	- Causes				√	√
	- Remedies				√	√

Short Game						
Sacrifice Bunt	- Position in Box	√	√	√	√	√
	- Stance	√	√	√	√	√
	- Grip	√	√	√	√	√
	- Pivot	√	√	√	√	√
	- Bat at Top of Strike Zone	√	√	√	√	√
	- Arm Extension	√	√	√	√	√
	- Knees	√	√	√	√	√
	- Disciplined Selection		√	√	√	√
Fake Bunt				√	√	√
Squeeze Bunt					√	√
Push Bunt				√	√	√
Slap Bunt				√	√	√
Surprise Bunt				√	√	√
Drag Bunt				√	√	√
Slap Hitting	- Left Handed			√	√	√
	- Right Handed				√	√

Base Running		U11	U13	U15	U17	U19
Running Mechanics		√	√	√	√	√
Exit from Batters Box			√	√	√	√
Running Through First Base		√	√	√	√	√
Braking			√	√	√	√
Rounding Bases		√	√	√	√	√
Leading off Bases		√	√	√	√	√
Running Extra Bases			√	√	√	√
Jamming				√	√	√
Tag-Up		√	√	√	√	√
Getting out of a Rundown				√	√	√
Heads up Running			√	√	√	√
Stealing			√	√	√	√

Sliding						
Bent Leg Slide		√	√	√	√	√
Pop Up Slide				√	√	√
Head First Slide				√	√	√
Hook Slide				√	√	√
Retreat Dive				√	√	√
Back Door Slide					√	√
Breaking up Double Plays				√	√	√

Throwing		U11	U13	U15	U17	U19
Over Arm Throw	- Grip	√	√	√	√	√
	- Step	√	√	√	√	√
	- Body Position	√	√	√	√	√
	- Hip / Shoulder Rotation	√	√	√	√	√
	- Arm Action	√	√	√	√	√
	- Lead with Elbow	√	√	√	√	√
	- Release / Wrist Action	√	√	√	√	√
	- Follow Through	√	√	√	√	√
Accuracy		√	√	√	√	√
Side Arm Throw				√	√	√
Underhand Toss	- Stationary	√	√	√	√	√
	- Moving			√	√	√
Backhand Flick				√	√	√

Defensive Skills						
Ready Position	- Infield	√	√	√	√	√
	- Outfield	√	√	√	√	√
Ground Balls	- Midline Approach			√	√	√
	- Straight Approach	√	√	√	√	√
	- Round Approach			√	√	√
Lateral Movement	- Side Shuffle	√	√	√	√	√
	- Cross Over Step		√	√	√	√
Fly Balls	- Fingers Pointing Up (above waist)	√	√	√	√	√
	- Fingers Pointing Down (below waist)	√	√	√	√	√
	- Ready Position	√	√	√	√	√
	- Ball Judgement	√	√	√	√	√
	- Soft Hands	√	√	√	√	√
	- Foot Movement	√	√	√	√	√
	- Use 2 Hands (where possible)	√	√	√	√	√
Tags		√	√	√	√	√
Double Plays				√	√	√

Pitching		U11	U13	U15	U17	U19
Velocity & Mechanics	- Grip	√	√	√	√	√
	- Set Up	√	√	√	√	√
	- Drive			√	√	√
	- Use Both Arms		√	√	√	√
	- Stay Tall	√	√	√	√	√
	- Up & Close		√	√	√	√
	- Stride Out			√	√	√
	- Letter K		√	√	√	√
	- Stride Foot Contact (arm at 9-10 o'clock position)				√	√
	- Power-line		√	√	√	√
	- Fast Arm	√	√	√	√	√
	- Fast Spin	√	√	√	√	√
	- Arm Whip (leads with the elbow)			√	√	√
	- Slide		√	√	√	√
	- Measurable Velocity Standards			√	√	√
Control	- Consistent Release Point			√	√	√
	- Pitch Height (low & high)			√	√	√
	- Pitch Width (corners of plate)				√	√
Movement	- Fastball	√	√	√		
	- Two Different Spins			√	√	√
Pitch Variation 3 Pitches/3 Speeds	- Dominant Pitch (either drop or rise)				√	√
Pitch Variation 2 Pitches/2 Speeds	- Dominant Pitch (either drop or rise)			√	√	√
	- Change Up				√	√
	- Other (either drop or rise)				√	√

Catching						
Equipment	- Mask, Chest Protector, Shin Guards	√	√	√	√	√
	- Catchers Mitt			√	√	√
	- Cup (males)		√	√	√	√
Squat	- Set Up (square)	√	√	√	√	√
	- Positioning			√	√	√
Receiving	- Catch the Ball	√	√	√	√	√
	- Catch & Hold	√	√	√	√	√
	- Eyes Open	√	√	√	√	√
	- Signals			√	√	√
	- Framing			√	√	√
	- Blocking the Wild Pitch		√	√	√	√
Throwing	- Runners On (angle set up)			√	√	√
	- Quick Release			√	√	√
	- Snap Throw			√	√	√
	- Runners On (alertness)		√	√	√	√
	- Pick Off			√	√	√
Tagging	- Set Up	√	√	√	√	√
	- Laying the Tag			√	√	√
Fielding	- Pass Balls to the Fence	√	√	√	√	√
	- Bunts		√	√	√	√
	- Pop Flies		√	√	√	√
	- Covering 1st & 3rd			√	√	√
Leadership	- Communication		√	√	√	√
	- Calling the Game			√	√	√
	- Umpires			√	√	√
	- Setting Defensive Patterns			√	√	√
	- Game Knowledge			√	√	√

Team Strategies		U11	U13	U15	U17	U19
Specific Defence	- Bases Loaded	√	√	√	√	√
	- Steals of 2 nd Base		√	√	√	√
	- Steals of 3 rd Base		√	√	√	√
	- Relays & Cutoffs		√	√	√	√
	- Double Plays		√	√	√	√
Bunt Defence	- Runner at 1 st			√	√	√
	- Runner at 2 nd			√	√	√
	- Runner at 3 rd			√	√	√
	- Runner at 1 st & 2 nd			√	√	√
Communication	- Fly Ball Priority System	√	√	√	√	√
	- Coaches Signals			√	√	√
Rundowns				√	√	√
Defence, Ball to the Outfield	- Single No Runners	√	√	√	√	√
	- Single With Runners	√	√	√	√	√
	- Extra Bases, No Runners	√	√	√	√	√
	- Extra Bases, Runners	√	√	√	√	√
Runners at 1st & 3rd				√	√	√
Delayed Steals				√	√	√
Runners at 3B				√	√	√
	- Offence		√	√	√	√
	- Defence		√	√	√	√
Defend Slap Hitting					√	√
Pick offs / Pitchouts					√	√

Rules + Understanding						
Infield Fly Rule		√	√	√	√	√
Dropped Third Strike Rule		√	√	√	√	√
Interference / Obstruction		√	√	√	√	√
Force Play		√	√	√	√	√
Broken Force Play		√	√	√	√	√
Fair / Foul Ball Rule		√	√	√	√	√
Strike Zone		√	√	√	√	√
Designated Player (DP)				√	√	√
Safety Base		√	√	√	√	√
Player Substitution				√	√	√
Game Etiquette		√	√	√	√	√
Running Lane		√	√	√	√	√

Softball NZ Player Pathways

U13 Rookie Sox

U15 Raw Sox

U17 Emerging Sox

U19 Silver Sox

Sox 20+