

FUN AT BAT



FUNATBAT.ORG

GRADES 3-5

FUN AT BAT



GRADES 3–5 PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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FUN AT BAT Grades 3–5 Physical Education

CURRICULUM COMPONENTS

Program Overview 2

Lesson Overview. 3

SHAPE America’s National Standards and Grade-Level Outcomes
for K–12 Physical Education. 5

Active Start Guide. 7

Lessons 1–8. 10

Appendix A: Printable Active Start Diagrams 35

Appendix B: Critical Elements of Essential Skills 40

Appendix C: Assessment Rubrics 41

Appendix D: Printable Bat and Ball Position Station Cards 43

Program Overview

Fun at Bat is a bat-and-ball skills development program for all children. The overarching goal of this program is to promote fun and active lifestyles for children, while teaching them the fundamental skills of bat-and-ball sports. This curriculum provides the information necessary to implement the Fun at Bat program into physical education classes for grades 3–5. Together, we can ensure that children’s first experiences with bat-and-ball sports are safe, positive and enjoyable!

PROGRAM GOALS

1. Teach the fundamental skills and rules needed to play bat-and-ball sports.
2. Enable students to learn the health-enhancing benefits associated with playing bat-and-ball sports.
3. Create a fun, active and positive environment in which students can enjoy bat-and-ball sports.
4. Promote high self-esteem and self-confidence by giving students the opportunity to learn and succeed in bat-and-ball sports.
5. Model and teach the fundamentals of game play, while emphasizing teamwork and good sportsmanship.

USA BASEBALL’S CHAMPIONSHIP PRINCIPLES

Participating in youth sports not only allows children to develop physically with strong muscles and bones, but it also provides a platform for emotional development. The social interactions that students experience through playing sports can build a foundation for good character and positive self-esteem.

The Fun at Bat skills development program is designed to advance the development of positive character-building traits. Throughout the curriculum, USA Baseball has incorporated eight Championship Principles that can affect students positively beyond their time in sports and throughout their lives.

INTRODUCTION OF FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS

The 3–5 Fun at Bat curriculum provides opportunities for children to develop fundamental motor skills and an understanding of movement concepts in relation to bat-and-ball sports. The progression of skills throughout the 3–5 Fun at Bat curriculum represents a developmentally appropriate sequence, in alignment with SHAPE America’s National Standards and Grade-Level Outcomes for K–12 Physical Education.

We encourage teachers to follow the suggested lesson progression below and to make adjustments to meet the needs of their students in relation to their skill exposure and the number of days of physical education instruction per week.

- LESSON 1** Overhand Throwing and Catching
- LESSON 2** Fielding a Ground Ball/Catching a Fly Ball
- LESSON 3** Throwing/Catching/Reacting as a Fielder
- LESSON 4** Hitting
- LESSON 5** Field Positions
- LESSON 6** Advancing Bases
- LESSON 7** How to Make an Out
- LESSON 8** Game Play Specifics

Lesson Overview

CLASS SETUP AND ACTIVITY AREA

This program recognizes that physical education classes vary in the number of students and the size of the available activity space. As the teacher, you should do your best to ensure that activities are implemented in ways that maximize student participation and the time for which students are physically active.

All lessons are designed for 30-minute class blocks and can be implemented in a gymnasium or an outside field space. As the teacher, you should take into account space considerations, as well as gymnasium/field specifics that might need to be modified to successfully implement each lesson.

LESSON COMPONENTS

Championship Principle

- Introduce a Championship Principle at the beginning of each class, similar to a “word of the day.” Teachers should emphasize the principle throughout the lesson and remind students to be aware of how they encounter the aspects of the principle during class.

Active Start

- After introducing the Championship Principle, teachers should direct students to begin the Active Start dynamic warm-up, which consists of exercises designed to promote fitness and prepare the body for class activities. The Active Start Guide found at the beginning of this packet provides text descriptions and images of every exercise.

Fundamentals

- The Fundamentals section provides an opportunity for the teacher to introduce students to new skills and concepts, as well as review previously learned skills, through a brief overview and demonstration.
- The teacher is encouraged to use the **ON DECK** teaching method ([see below](#)) for introducing fundamental skills.

Active Play

- The Active Play section provides an opportunity for students to develop fundamental skills through practice and modified games.

Closure

- Closure provides an opportunity to check students' understanding of the Championship Principle and the fundamental skills introduced during the lesson. Encourage students to read the correlating chapter in their Championship Principles book in small groups, or with their parents/guardians.

ON DECK TEACHING METHOD

The **ON DECK** Teaching Method is an effective teaching tool for introducing fundamental skills:

1. **Overview of New skill:** Introduce the new skill and provide fundamental keys.
2. **Demonstration of skill:** Demonstrate to students how to execute each fundamental skill, while reinforcing the fundamental keys of the skill.
3. **Experiment with the skill:** Provide students with an opportunity to practice the skill through active play activities.
4. **Clarify keys:** While students practice the fundamental skills, provide feedback on performance and clarify the fundamental keys (e.g., "Use two hands").
5. **Key mastery:** Provide students with multiple practice opportunities to aid their skill development. While students practice, continue to reinforce the fundamental keys that are necessary for skill mastery.

EQUIPMENT

What follows is a list of equipment provided by Major League Baseball (MLB) and USA Baseball, as well as additional or alternative items that you can use for each lesson in the 3–5 Fun at Bat curriculum. Each lesson plan includes equipment recommendations for each activity, as well as modifications that you can make to meet varying student needs.



You should view the quantities of additional/alternative equipment listed as suggestions for a class of 30 students. As class sizes vary, you will need to adjust equipment quantities to best meet the needs of all students. Larger classes may need more equipment to maximize practice opportunities, as well as activity time.

MLB/USA Baseball Equipment Kit	Additional/Alternative Equipment
MLB 1-position Rubber-Tek™ batting tee (1)	Hitting tees or large cones (7)
MLB throw-down Rubber-Tek™ base set (1)	Throw-down bases (8)
Foam bat and ball set (2)	Foam or plastic bats (6)
Oversized foam baseballs (8)	5-inch foam balls (1 for each student)
Regular-size foam baseballs (12)	
Deflated 5-inch Vibe ball (2)	Large mats (2)
Training discs (8)	Hoops (15)
Mesh equipment bag (1)	Poly spots (22)
12-inch inflation pump (1)	Large dice (1)
	Music

SHAPE America’s National Standards and Grade-Level Outcomes for K–12 Physical Education

Throughout the 3–5 Fun at Bat curriculum, students develop the fundamental skill sets that will enhance their ability to use both a bat and a ball. They will have many opportunities to learn and develop their throwing, catching and striking abilities to master the skills necessary for bat-and-ball play. Exploration of fielding positions and bat-and-ball game scenarios will occur in the Grades 3–5 curriculum. Students have the opportunity to practice their catching, throwing, hitting and base-running skills in bat-and-ball game scenarios.

National Standard	Grade-Level Outcomes	Description
1	Locomotor	S1.E1.4 Uses various locomotor skills in a variety of small-sided practice tasks.
		S1.E1.5a Demonstrates mature patterns of locomotor skills in dynamic small-sided practice tasks.
		S1.E1.5b Combines locomotor and manipulative skills in a variety of small-sided practice tasks and game environments.
1	S1.E6.4 Combines traveling with manipulative skills of throwing and catching in teacher- and/or student-designed small-sided practice tasks.	
1	Manipulative	S1.E13.3 Throws underhand to a partner or target with reasonable accuracy.
1		S1.E14.3 Throws overhand, demonstrating 3 of the 5 critical elements of a mature pattern, in nondynamic environments, for distance or force.
		S1.E14.4a Throws overhand using a mature pattern in nondynamic environments (closed skills).
		S1.E14.4b Throws overhand to a partner or at a target with accuracy at a reasonable distance.
1		S1.E16.3 Catches a gently tossed hand-size ball from a partner, demonstrating 4 of the 5 critical elements of a mature pattern.
		S1.E16.4 Catches a thrown ball above the head, at chest or waist level, and below the waist using a mature pattern in a nondynamic environment (closed skills).
		S1.E16.5c Catches with reasonable accuracy in dynamic, small-sided practice tasks.
1		S1.E25.3 Strikes a ball with a long-handled implement, sending it forward while using proper grip for the implement.
		S1.E25.4 Strikes an object with a long-handled implement while demonstrating 3 of the 5 critical elements of a mature pattern for the implement.
2		S2.E3.5 Applies the concepts of direction and force to strike an object with a long-handled implement.

(continued)

National Standard	Grade-Level		Description
	Outcomes		
3	Engages in Physical Activity	S3.E2.3	Engages in the activities of physical education class without teacher prompting.
		S3.E2.4	Actively engages in the activities of physical education class, both teacher-directed and independent.
4	Personal Responsibility	S4.E1.3	Exhibits personal responsibility in teacher-directed activities.
		S4.E1.4	Exhibits responsible behavior in independent group situations.
		S4.E1.5	Engages in physical activity with responsible interpersonal behavior.
4	Working With Others	S4.E4.3	Works cooperatively with others.
		S4.E4.b	Accepts players of all skill levels into the physical activity.
		S4.E4.5	Accepts, recognizes and actively involves others with either higher or lower skill abilities in physical activities.
4	Safety	S4.E6.3	Works independently and safely in physical activity settings.
		S4.E6.4	Works safely with peers and equipment in physical activity settings.
5	Self-Expression and Enjoyment	S5.E3.3	Reflects on the reasons for enjoying selected physical activities.
		S5.E3.4	Reflects on the enjoyment of participating in different physical activities.
5	Social Interaction	S5.E4.4	Describes the positive social interactions that come when engaged with others in physical activity.

Active Start Guide

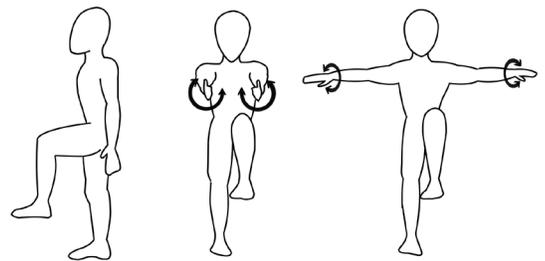
GRADES 3–5 DYNAMIC WARM-UP

The dynamic warm-up incorporates activities designed to improve and develop basic functions that are the building blocks of higher-level sports skills and physical fitness. These are exercises that emphasize postural alignment, mobility, balance and coordination. The objective is to stimulate and prepare the brain and body to behave and work together.

Each class will start with this dynamic warm-up (roughly 5 minutes). Depending on the space and size of the group, have students stand in a circle with you in the middle, or in lines facing you in front. Remember to vocalize and demonstrate each exercise. Students may rest for a few seconds after each exercise, as well as at your discretion, and remind students to always breathe.

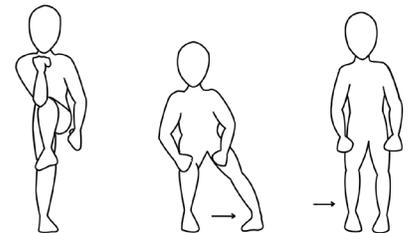
1. **MARCH IN PLACE:** This drill works postural stability and the action of running while stimulating the body's ability to balance. This challenges the eyes and brain to work together regardless of the sight line. This will prepare students to accelerate, decelerate and run whether running to a base or chasing after a live ball. **Students perform each March in Place exercise for 5 seconds.**

- March in place, looking straight ahead
- March in place, turning head to left
- March in place, turning head to right
- Challenge level: March in place with arms out to side, doing arm circles forward and backward, or arms in front with arm circles clockwise and counterclockwise.



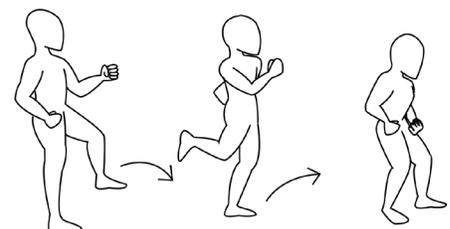
2. **SLIDES:** This prepares students to change direction quickly, whether accelerating or having to run back to a base or spring after a batted ball. Bringing the knee to the opposite elbow promotes the trunk's ability to rotate properly for hitting and throwing. **3 repetitions with each leg.**

- Slide to the right, bring R knee to L elbow, take R foot and step to R, slide L foot.
- Slide to the left, bring L knee to R elbow, take L foot and step to L, slide R foot.



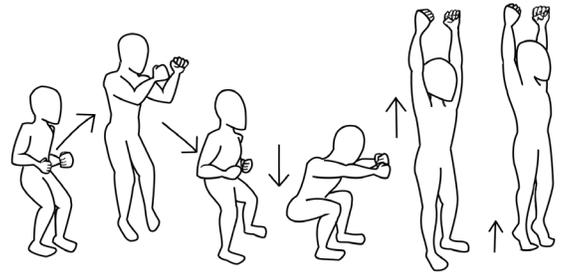
3. **HOP (SINGLE-LEG JUMPS):** This movement prepares the body for all of the energy and power required for jumping, running, accepting landing forces and observing individual differences in right- and left-side abilities. Baseball is a power game, whether hitting or going from standing to recognizing fly balls and ground balls immediately and chasing them. **3 repetitions each leg, alternating in between.**

- Going forward, jump off L leg to R leg, then from R leg jump and land on both feet.
- Going forward, jump off R leg to L leg, then from L leg jump and land on both feet.



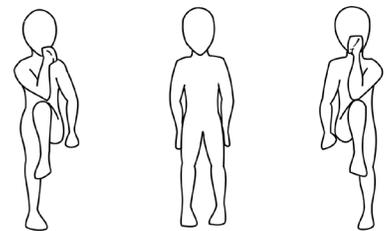
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4. **DOUBLE-LEG JUMP/SQUAT/REACH/TOE RAISE-SQUAT/JUMP:** This drill is designed to display double leg power and to use the body as an entire chain that can express power, express the ability to bend with a full, deep squat requiring mobility of the ankles, hips and mid-back, trunk stability and displaying strength and balance while doing a toe raise. Baseball requires full-body connection, whether throwing, pitching, hitting or fielding. This drill links it all together. **2 repetitions, focus on landing jumps softly.**

- Standing on both legs, jump forward, land and go to a full-squat position. Raise up from the squat, reaching arms to the sky, then add the toe raise. Lower heels, then jump straight up.



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5. **CROSS-CRAWL:** This drill not only prepares the body to move in a reciprocal or opposite pattern that is similar to running, it also connects the lower and upper body to coordinate action together and stimulates the brain and balancing system to engage as the arm and leg cross midline or the center of the body. Baseball requires cross-body action in hitting, fielding and running, as well as full mental alertness. This drill accomplishes all of these important functions. The act of throwing is a reciprocal pattern, or one that you step and throw with the opposite arm and leg. The ability to cross-crawl underpins throwing mechanics. **4 each way for a total of 8.**

- Standing cross-crawl, R elbow to L knee then alternate.



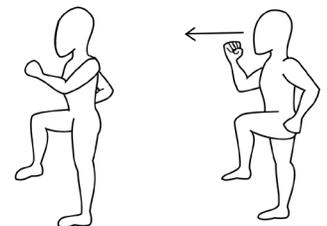
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6. **BRIDGE AND HIP EXTENSION:** The bridge is a hip hinge movement done on the ground that is the same athletic stance a fielder would take in preparation for a play and a hitter as he or she sits into the batting stance. It works the power muscles of the backside and loosens up the hips. It allows the athlete to bend appropriately not only to field a ground ball but also to rise fluidly to throw in one motion. Pulling the knees to the chest enhances full range of motion about the hips and knees. **2 sets of each exercise.**

- Lie on back and push hips to the sky; hold for 3 seconds. When hips are back on the ground, pull both knees to chest and hold for 5 seconds.



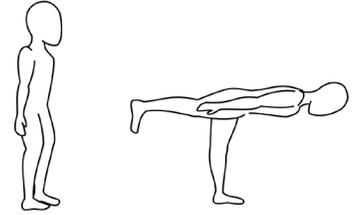
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7. **SUPER-SLOW-MOTION MARCH:** This challenges one's balance through standing on one leg while teaching the body how best to handle being out of balance. Baseball requires many different movements that come at high speeds and in balance-compromising positions. This helps prepare the stabilizing muscles to act appropriately in most situations. **1 set for 10 seconds.**

- March in place, in super-slow motion, looking straight ahead.



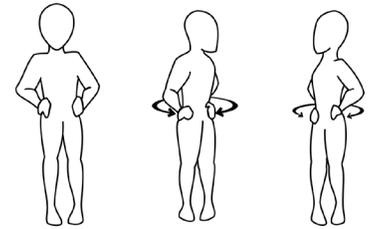
8. **STAND ON ONE LEG:** Taking a more advanced approach to form the bridge and hip extension, the athlete stands on one leg and then performs a hip hinge on one leg while the other leg goes behind him or her. This is an excellent drill for single-leg balance, stability and strength that challenges the ability to bend and balance on one leg. It also uses all critical elements of running and moving in any direction and very much is a precursor to throwing and pitching. **2 repetitions, alternating R and L leg. Attempt to hold each pose for 5 seconds.**

- Stand on L leg, hinge at the hip, taking chest toward the ground, R leg behind to create a T.



9. **WHIRLY BIRDS:** Hips and trunk that move well will perform well when playing. This drill simply opens up the hips and trunk allowing freer movement when running, fielding and hitting. **1 set rotating hips clockwise, then 1 set rotating hips counterclockwise. 10 seconds each direction.**

- Standing on both legs with feet close together and hands on the hips, rotating hips in different directions.



LESSON 1

LESSON OBJECTIVE:

Students will demonstrate the fundamental keys of overhand throwing and catching.

Equipment

MLB/USA Baseball

- 10 oversized foam baseballs

Additional/Alternative

- 5-inch foam balls (1 for each student)
- Music

SHAPE America National Standards and Grade-Level Outcomes

STANDARD 1 S1.E1.4, S1.E1.5a, S1.E1.5b (Locomotor-*Hopping, galloping, running, sliding, skipping, leaping*); S1.E6.4 (Locomotor-*Combinations*); S1.E13.3 (Manipulative-*Underhand throw*), S1.E14.3, S1.E14.4a, S1.E14.4b (Manipulative-*Overhand throw*), S1.E16.3, S1.E16.4, S1.E16.5c (Manipulative-*Catching*)

STANDARD 3 S3.E2.3, S3.E2.4 (Engages in Physical Activity)

STANDARD 4 S4.E1.3, S4.E1.4, S4.E1.5 (Personal Responsibility); S4.E4.3, S4.E4.b, S4.E4.5 (Working With Others); S4.E6.3, S4.E6.4 (Safety)

STANDARD 5 S5.E3.3, S5.E3.4 (Self-Expression and Enjoyment); S5.E4.4 (Social Interaction)

CHAMPIONSHIP PRINCIPLE: Introduce Responsibility

Responsibility means we not only care about making good choices for ourselves, but that we care about others as well. Being responsible means we are dependable, prepared and on task. Someone who shows up for class or a game on time with all of his or her equipment, and is sensitive to others as well, will find success in bat-and-ball sports and in life. Responsibility allows us to manage all the things we have happening in our lives.

What steps can you take to be a responsible player and person?

ACTIVE START – DYNAMIC WARM-UP

5 MINUTES

FUNDAMENTALS OF OVERHAND THROWING (Overview and Demonstration)

3 MINUTES

Students hold the ball in the preferred hand, with non-preferred hand pointing at the target. Bringing the throwing arm back into an “L” shape (arm bent at the elbow and hand held in the air with the ball), students step with the opposite foot, turn the hips and begin throwing the ball toward the target.

Key 1: Point to the target

Key 2: Step with opposite foot

Key 3: Follow through across the body

ACTIVE PLAY

3 MINUTES

Targets, Targets Everywhere

Students each have an oversized foam baseball. They try to locate and throw overhand at as many targets in the activity area as possible. The targets can be large items such as doors or posters, or small items such as numbers on the bleachers, cracks on the wall, etc. If outdoors, targets can be attached to the backstop or other fences with zip ties, or similar fasteners. Hang targets at varying levels, low and high. Students move by sliding (as instructed in the dynamic warm-up) from target to target.

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FUNDAMENTALS OF CATCHING (Overview and Demonstration)**3 MINUTES**

As the ball approaches, students should have their eyes on the ball and their arms reaching out. If the ball is below the waist, the thumbs should be out; if the ball is above the waist, the thumbs should be together. As the ball enters the hands, students grasp it and bring it in toward the body.

Key 1: Eyes on the ball

Key 2: Reach arms out

Key 3: Thumbs in if the ball is above the waist

Thumbs out if the ball is below the waist

ACTIVE PLAY**14 MINUTES****Partner Throw**

In pairs, students practice throwing overhand and catching an oversized foam baseball (or any small ball). Partners can start off approximately 10 feet apart (distance can be adjusted based on skill level). Students can count how many continuous, successful throws and catches they make.

VARIATIONS

- Increase or decrease distance between players
- Use a different-sized ball

Partner Throw, Catch and Tag

In pairs, students practice throwing and catching an oversized foam baseball (or any small ball). Play some music. When you pause the music, it becomes a tag game between partners. The partner who has the ball when the music stops is the first tagger. The partner without the ball moves (with a predetermined locomotor skill) until tagged by the partner with the ball. When a student is tagged (receives the ball from his or her partner), the tagged student becomes the tagger, but he or she first must perform three jumping jacks to give the partner a head start. The tag game continues until you turn on the music again. At that prompt, students stop playing tag, locate their partners, stand 5-10 feet from each other and begin throwing again.

CLOSURE**2 MINUTES**

What new skills did we learn today?

Fundamentals of Throwing and Catching

What two things is it important to remember when throwing a ball?

What is the difference between fielding a ball below the waist and above the waist?

Championship Principle: Responsibility

In what ways can you be responsible in our classroom?

For what were you responsible in our game today?

Remind students to read the chapter on **Responsibility** on their own.

What do you think we will be doing next class?