

Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd Grade Basketball Coaching Guide

Thanks for Coaching! First let me thank you for volunteering to coach with my Parks and Rec youth basketball program. I know that it is a significant commitment of your time and energy. By coaching you are helping to provide a wonderful athletic experience for youth in our community. The Parks and Rec department would not be able to do what it does without the help they receive from parents, guardians, and friends of the participants. Sports participation is important because it teaches children the value of physical fitness, sportsmanship, practice, and teamwork. My hope is that each player is allowed to achieve their personal best while having fun. This guide will hopefully give you some ideas and resources that will assist you in leading your team's practices and to engage your players into learning the basics of basketball while having fun.

K-2 Grade Basketball

Basketball can be a challenging sport to teach the young player. This guide is designed to give you some tools and information that will help you organize your practices in a way so that your players will be successful. The K-2 grade player can range between 5 - 8 years old. Coaches of players in this age range need to focus on teaching the fundamental movement skills in addition to basic fundamental basketball skills.

Physical skills:

Developing fundamental movement skills; pushing , pulling, lunging, squatting, bending, twisting, throwing, catching, jumping, jogging, running; needs to be the primary focus at this age. All of those movements need to be combined to develop - agility, balance, coordination and speed. Making sure that each child gains proficiency in these basic athletic skills will enable them to develop to their full physical potential in later years.

Basketball skills:

Focus needs to be on developing fundamental basketball skills; stance, footwork, dribbling, passing and shooting. In addition, as a coach you also want to help the young player develop a love and passion for the game. Motivation to master the game of basketball is a fundamental skill that all coaches need to focus on developing in their players. Enjoyment is the most important ingredient in developing motivation in young players.

Technical skills:

In addition to fundamental basketball skills the young player needs to be introduced to the beginnings of technical basketball skills. These skills involve decision making or problem solving. For this age the problems that they must learn to solve are simple: Shoot or pass? Dribble to the right or the left?

The FUNdamental Stage

Developmental considerations:

Psychological/Cognitive

- Individually oriented (egocentric)
- Short attention span *Easily bruised psychologically
- Perform tasks one at a time
- Influence of peers is very strong
- Limited tactical abilities
- Biggest concern is which way to go when they have ball

Physical/Motor:

- No sense of pace...will often run until they drop
- Running, jumping, skipping, hopping and maintaining balance are not fully developed at this age. Large muscle groups are more developed than smaller ones.
- Needs to develop speed/fast twitch abilities.
- Will often fall when changing direction because of high center of gravity.
- Need multiple breaks during practice and games. Psycho– social:
- Typically this if first exposure to team sport.
- Need to feel secure in practice and games
- Social development is limited

Coaching Consideration:

- Give short and clear directions with a “follow me” approach
- Coach needs to guarantee success for all players through proper structure of practices
- Coach needs to provide appropriate positive reinforcement often.
- Work on speed when players are fresh *Use several short activities
- Water breaks
- Emphasize confidence and familiarity with the ball (every child needs To have access to a ball for entire session)
- Give plenty of encouragement and very little criticism or correction.
- Primary focus is making basketball so enjoyable that when the child has choices in activities, they choose to play basketball

Fundamental Skills for K, 1st and 2nd grade

Fundamental movement skill:

Agility, balance, coordination (throwing and catching), proper running technique, change of speed and direction, jumping and landing, starting and stopping (stride stop and 2 foot drop stop), pivoting

Basketball skills:

Ready position, triple threat, play with eyes up.

Ball handling:

Ball control, stationary dribbling (low, high, and wide), movement while dribbling (running, sliding, walking, change of direction, starts, stops, low, high)

Passing skills:

Stationary passing, moving and passing, passing to a teammate, receiving the ball (absorbing) catching on the move, catching the ball with 2 hands..2 eyes.. and 2 feet

Shooting skills:

Squaring the feet and shoulders to the target, pushing with both legs, proper hand, and arm placement (hand under/behind ball, fingers spread, elbow under ball/over knee), follow through (release). Learn first without the ball then with the ball. Close range shots, lay-up progression.

Playing Principles: (more for 2nd grade)

Basic offensive concepts, advancing the ball toward your offensive end, shooting the ball into the basket to score, spacing of players (4-6ft apart) cutting players (away from ball towards basket)

Basic Defensive concepts: (more for 2nd grade)

Recognition of when you are on defense, recognition of the person you are defending, when defending the ball staying between the person you are guarding and the basket, when you are defending away from the ball staying between the person you are guarding and the basket

Coaching in the FUNdamental Stage

It cannot be emphasized enough that the goal for this level is “**not to win, but rather to have fun while playing the game and ensuring success**”. The players need to learn fundamental movements skills through basketball in a fun and positive way. This not just because we want the kids to have fun, which of course we do, but also because learning those fundamental movements will allow each child to reach their fullest potential. If they are having fun, they will be more likely to continue participating. It is the coach’s **number one responsibility to aid in the success of their players**. This does not mean that each child will be a great dribbler or make a lot of baskets. What this does mean is that as a coach you give challenging, yet achievable goals for your players. If a player starts the season not being able to dribble the ball or make a two footed jump shot and then during the season is able to dribble more effectively and make a shot or two, that is success!

Sample Practice structure:

- 60 minutes
 - Warm-up: including speed work and agility: 5-10 minutes
 - Stretching, running down and back on the court
 - Technical skills and drills: 35-40 minutes
 - Play a game or scrimmage: 10-15 minutes
 - Cool down

How to make practices fun:

- **Make your practices fast paced**
 - Move from drills and games quickly
 - Limit standing in lines
- **Set rules and expectations**
 - Your practice will be more fun if everyone knows what is expected
 - Rules help keep the practice organized and running smoothly
 - Communicate the rules/expectations with the players
 - Be consistent with rules
- **Get your players attention:**
 - Establish a quick signal or technique to get your players attention quickly
 - Whistle, verbal or clap cue
 - Keep talking and instructions short
- **Make sure your players are successful**
 - Run a mix of drills varying in difficulty
 - Encourage all players
- **Be positive and upbeat**
 - Attitude is key
 - Be energetic and ready to play
 - Stay positive

How do make your drills fun:

- Be creative
- Turn any drill into a game:
 - Track missed shots, give points for achieving something: ie passes layup, jump-stops, etc.
- Use tag, Red-rover, sharks and minnows and other childhood games to incorporate basketball skills in a fun way in your practices.
- Add props like cones (to dribble through), chairs (to teach proper defensive stance), or other items to add fun into the practice. Again, your imagination is key, be creative

Drills and Games

Warm-up & Movement drills/games:

Follow the Leader: Basic game of follow the leader. You start off as the leader and get them moving. Jogging, sliding, jumping, lunging, skipping, the options are limitless. After they get the idea of the drill let the players take turns being the leader

Run to the Spot: Designate several areas around the court such as 3-point line, free throw line, low block, elbow, you can mark these with cones to make it easier. The players start close to you and on your command, they run to the spot you call out as quickly as possible and back. Emphasis is on starting in an athletic stance, a quick first step, and speed.

Coach Says: Game is like "Simon Says" but instead you have them perform tasks when "Coach Says". Things like jump on one foot, do 5 defensive slides to the left, show me Triple Threat position, etc. Use your imagination. When a player reacts when a command is given without coach says in the command, that player is out until the game is over.

Throw and Catch: On coaches command all the player throw their ball up into the air and catch it. Start only throwing is a foot or 2 in the air and increase as they master it.

Throw-Clap-Catch: Variation of previous drill. Add clapping in between throwing the ball in the air and catching it. Increase the height they throw the ball and increase the number of claps. This can progress to Throw-spin-clap-catch to make it more difficult.

Circle the Basketball: Have all the players stand with their ball facing you. On your command have them start to circle their ball around their waist. Have them go around several times and then change directions. Have them circle around their heads for several times and then around their knees. At the end have them start at their head and circle the ball all the way down to their knees and then back up.

Box Run Relay: Divide team up into 2 teams. Mark off 2 sections of the half court from one side of the key to the sidelines and up to the half court line. Have each team line up on the base line on opposite sides of the key. On the coaches command the first player from each team will shuffle down the baseline. As they reach the corner of the court the players back pedal to the half court mark. At half court they will shuffle to the ball jump area. At the ball jump area, the players will sprint to the starting line, tag the next player who then continues the relay.

Tag: Simple game that can be modified and used in many different ways. Everybody is it, Freeze tag, flag tag (use flag football belts with flags), etc. Use without a ball and with a ball. Be creative!

Run and Jump: All players spread out across base line. Have them run towards other baseline, on your whistle the players jump or leap from one foot and land on both feet. Focus should be on landing low and balanced. Give points to players who don't fall forward and who land balanced and low. Do several rounds.

Frogs in a Pond: Place cones a couple of feet apart all the way across the court from sideline to sideline. Instruct players that they are now frogs who must jump across the pond (court) Start with having

players jump with two feet from cone to cone. Then have them try jumping from one foot and land on the other foot from cone to cone

Square Sprint: Pair up players. Make a small square with cones for no more than 10 ft across. Have one cone in the center. Have the pair number the cones. One player starts by the center cone. The other player calls out a number and the player in the center must run and touch that cone as quickly as possible. Progress to calling out 2 numbers at a time and then 3...etc. Focus is on staying low, not crossing the feet, quickness, agility. Do rounds of 1 minute and then switch.

Mirror Shuffle: Pair up players. Have players face each other along the baseline. No ball is needed. Have one player start as the defensive player. They get into the defensive stance. The offensive player simply jogs in a zig zag manner down to the opposite baseline. The defensive player shuffles/slides to keep in front of the offensive player. When they get to the baseline players switch roles and proceed back to the start line. You can progress and add the ball into the drill. The offensive player dribbles zig zag down the court.

Technical Drills and Games:

Dribbling

Stationary Dribble: All players on the baseline with a ball. Have players start in ready position (feet apart, toes pointed forward, knees bent) and with ball in Triple Threat position. Have them dribble with the right hand. Vary between low/high/hard/ soft/ wide. Have them dribble with left hand. Add more options as they develop. Front Crossover in front, pull back and forward

Red-light/Green light: Have all the players line up on a line with a ball. Dribble when the green light is given and stop on red. Work on ball control and keeping it close. Start with walking and move to a jog.

Queen/King of the Court: All players with a ball in designated area ($\frac{1}{4}$ court, $\frac{1}{2}$ court or full court depending on skill of the players) the smaller the court the more difficult the drill. On your whistle all players begin dribbling and moving around trying to knock or tap other players balls out of bounds. If a player's ball is knocked out of bounds or if the player steps out of bounds, they are out. The last player still dribbling in bounds is the Queen or King of the court. Do several rounds. You can progressively make the playing area smaller as the number of players is reduced.

Snake Dribbling: All players with a ball. Players form a winding line in the middle of the court; they are spaced a few feet apart. The players all begin dribbling while in the line. The player at the end of the line must dribble through the line weaving in and out of the other players until they reach the front of the line and stop (they continue dribbling in a stationary position) each time a player is at the end of the snake they must work their way to the front and stop. You can progress with this drill to having the snake move around the court, have the players in line try to knock the ball away from player attempting to make their way to the front of the line and have players use their non-dominant hand.

Staring Dribble Drill: Pair up players according to skill and size. Have players face each other and hold the ball in whatever hand they wish. On your whistle the players must begin dribbling and staring into each other's eyes. If a player blinks, looks away or looks down at their ball the other player earns a

point. They begin a new game. The first player to 5 points wins. You can use many variations of this drill; use their weak hand only, allow them to move around, switch up partners; add a second ball for more advanced players

Sharks and Minnows: All players stand on one end of the gym with a ball. All these players are Minnows. Pick a couple of players to be Sharks. The Sharks have a ball too. On your command the Minnows try to dribble their ball across the sea without being tagged by the Sharks, who also must dribble their ball while trying to tag the Minnows. If the Minnow is tagged, they become an Octopus and must freeze and put their ball between their feet. The Octopus can tag players but cannot move. Repeat until you have a winner, or everyone is eaten. You can make this game more difficult by having the players use their non dominate hand or increasing the number of Sharks. You can make it easier by allowing them to use both hands to dribble or decreasing the number of Sharks or increasing the size of the sea

Dribble relays: Form 2 or 3 teams. The teams are lined up on the baseline. The first 2 players in each line have a ball. On your whistle have players dribble up and down the court as quickly as they can while staying in control. Have players dribble down the court with their right hand and back with their left. Once the player reaches the starting point the next player goes. Remind players to keep their eyes up. You can add things to this drill such as jump-stops w/ pivots at the other baseline and/or have them do a change of direction dribble at the half court, such as a crossover, spin move or step back dribble.

Dribble Around Cones: Divide team into 2 or 3 groups. Have groups line up in a straight line on one base line. Set up cones down the court about every 5 ft. You can have the cones in a straight line or in a zig zag pattern. On you whistle have the first player in the line dribble through the cones and back. Vary this drill by having the players use their non-dominate hand.

Dribble Around Defenders: Have 4 or 5 players stand down the center of the court. These players can't move their feet, but they can use their hands and lean for the ball. The other players start from one end and try to dribble in a weave pattern through the defenders. The goal is to get through the defenders without losing control of their ball or having it touched by a defender

Passing

Line Coach Pass: Line up all players in a line facing the coach. Each player has a ball. Have each player pass the ball to the coach and the coach passes it back to the player. This is a good drill to introduce passing to players. It allows the coach to instruct all players on the proper passing technique. Have players focus on passing and catching with 2 hands, 2 eyes and 2 feet. Watch for players stepping into the pass and snapping the hands towards the target. Make sure when receiving the pass, the players hands are ready and in the proper position. Do several rounds up and down the line. Show both the chest pass and the bounce pass.

Wall Pass: Each player has a ball. Have players find a spot on the wall. Have player start making a bounce pass to the ball and catching the return. Progress to players performing a chest pass and catching the return.

Partner Pass: Pair up players based on skill and size. Have each pair have a ball. Have pairs stand about 5- 10 ft apart. Have players pass back and forth start with bounce passes and then progress to chest passes. Remind them of good passing and receiving techniques.

Give and Go: Divide team up into 2 lines facing each other about 10ft apart. One ball is needed. The first person with the ball makes a chest pass to the opposite line and then runs to the end the opposite line.

Passing Line Relay: Divide team into 2 equal teams. Line them up across the court from sideline to sideline about 5ft apart. The first player in each line has a ball. They pass the ball to the next player in line. That player must turn 180 degrees using a pivot and passes to the next player in line. This continues to the end of the line and then back to the front. If the ball is dropped or the pivot is not done properly the team must send the ball back to the start to begin again

Triangle Passing: Divide players into groups of 3. Have each group form a triangle. Have them pass to each other into a clockwise direction. Then have them pass in a counterclockwise direction. Progress with this drill by having the groups of 3 move around the court while continuing to pass and maintain proper spacing.

Monkey in the Middle: This is a great game that will teach players how make a pass under pressure. Divide team up into groups of 3. One ball for each group. One player is in the middle and the other 2 players try to pass back and forth to each other. Instruct players to fake a pass first and then make a pass to their partner. If the defensive player gets a steal or tips a pass, they replace the player who made the pass. Do short rounds of 30 seconds each and then switch positions

Shuffle Partner Pass: Have team divided up into pairs. One ball for each pair. On the coaches command the players run down the court passing the basketball to each other. Once they reach the end the continue back to the starting point. Have players use all kinds of passes.

Rapid Passing: One player is in the center of the key with a basketball. All other players are lined up about 2 feet in from the 3-point arc. On the coaches command the player in the key passes the ball to the player furthest on the left, that player immediately passed the ball back to the player in the center. The player continues passing quickly to the next player across the line until they have passed to each player. Then the player at the far right takes the center position and the player from the middle gets in line on the far left. Each player rotates through rapid passing. All kinds of passes can be used. Emphasize good form in passing and receiving.

4 Square Passing: Set up a large square in one half of the court. Have players divide up on each corner of the square. Each corner has a ball. The coach tells the players what kind of pivot (right/left) they will do and what kind of pass (bounce/chest). On the whistle the first player in each line dribbles to the center of the square, performs the pivot and passes the ball back to the line. The player then follows the pass to the back of that line. After they get the hang of it see how many passes, they can do in a row or how long they can go without dropping a pass.

Middle Man Passing: Divide team up into groups of 3. Have the 3 players line up a couple of feet apart in a straight line. Player 1 on the right has a ball and Player 3 on the left has a ball. Player 2 is in the middle. Player 1 passes to player 2; player 2 passes right back to Player 1 and turns to Player 3. Player 3 passes to player 2 who passes it immediately back to Player 3. Player 2 turns back to player 1 to start the

whole sequence over again. Do rounds of 30 seconds and then switch positions. Progress to adding a pivot to the drill before the pass.

Shooting

Pizza Waiter: This is a silly drill to introduce and reinforce proper shooting form. Have all players in ready position. Have them show you how a waiter would bring you pizza on a tray. Make sure all players have their palm facing up with their arm bent in an L shape under the hand. The elbow should be over the knee and under the hand. As the players show you their Pizza Waiter position, place a ball on their “tray”. Instruct them that a good waiter does not drop their food, so they need to use their other hand to gently hold the “pizza” (ball) on the tray. After they are able to show you the proper position, have the players toss their “pizza” in the air until you blow your whistle. On whistle the players should get into their pizza waiter position. Make corrections as needed. Do several rounds.

Cookie Jar: Tell players that at the end of their shots they need to be trying to get cookies out of a cookie jar up high on a shelf. Arm extended, wrist bent, fingers down. Have players go through the shot progression without a ball. Have them show you ready-triple threat position, bent knees, pizza waiter, push up with legs, cookie jar. Have them stand around the basket and shoot an imaginary ball several times, this will help them focus on the technique without having to worry about the ball too.

Shoot To Wall: Have players stand 3 feet away from the wall and shoot up to the wall. Players catch the ball and repeat. Make brief adjustments. Help them with verbal cues to remember the shooting sequence. Progress to marking a square on the wall and having them shoot to the target.

Partner Line Shooting: Partners are positioned on a line about 10-15 ft apart. The goal is for the shooter to land the ball on the line. Players should hold the ball in good form, directly over the line. The player shoots the ball up and tries to have it land directly on the line. The partner catches the ball and then it is their turn to try to shoot the ball to land on the line. Teams get a point for every time their ball lands on the line.

Dribble and Shoot: Divide team up into 2 groups. Have groups lined up at half court. Mark spots on both sides of the basket with a cone. Those are the spots that the players will shoot from. On coach’s command players from each line dribble down the court stops at the cone and shoots. After making the shot or making 2 attempts the player gets the rebound, dribbles back to the line and passes the ball to the next player in line.

Around the world: Divide team into as many groups as you have baskets. Start with marking 3 spots around each basket the with cones. On your command have the first players in each group shoot at each cone. The other players at the basket help rebound the ball and pass it to the shooter. Once the first player shoots at all 3 spots, the next player takes their turn. Progress to adding more spots around the basket as the players increase their abilities.

Layup lines: Divide team into as many groups as you have baskets. Have players dribble towards the basket and attempt layups. Observe all players and instruct/correct as needed.

Ready Position

You can't score unless you make shots. A quick surefire way to improve your shot is simply to have your feet and hands ready to catch and shoot, even before the ball is passed. To play defense properly, most coaches and players understand that you must start with a ready position that allows the defender to move in any direction, including jumping up to block a shot or standing still to take a charge. The basic ready positions for both offense and defense in basketball are essentially the same. This is the most basic and necessary athletic stance for success in most sports, including basketball.

Heels Up

Coaches in every sport teach players to "get low" and "stand on the ball of the foot" or "on your toes." These phrases are metaphors to more easily explain how to perform this technique. When done correctly, it actually is the area of the foot directly behind and across all of the toes, which includes the ball of the foot, that will bear and support the weight of the body. Raising the heels off the floor automatically causes the legs to bend, making it easier and more natural to lower the body into a slight squat that provides balance, power and enhances propulsion. This bio-mechanically correct contact point of the foot, combined with a low center of gravity, is the optimum position for basketball players to start any movement. Players will find it easier to sprint, jump, slide, stop, pivot and hold their position.

Wide Base

Maintain a wide stance with both feet about shoulder-width apart. A shoulder-width stance is sufficient enough to increase the ability to quickly move forward, backward, or shoot jump shots and free throws. To increase the ability to move laterally, separate the feet even more than shoulder-width. Establishing post position requires an extremely wide stance.

Two-Foot Jump Stop

Like the ready position, this is one of the most basic yet useful types of footwork. The jump stop is essentially a technique used to transition from moving (even quickly) in any direction, into stopping and reestablishing the ready position described above. To execute the jump stop, simply get both feet airborne, land with both feet touching the floor simultaneously and immediately drop into a ready position stance to help regain balance.

There is no need to jump up or jump high. In fact, the lower you remain to the ground the quicker you will be able to transition into whatever movement you choose to do next. The two-foot jump stop allows players to gain, reestablish and maintain balance in order to transition into the next movement needed to make a play. On defense, the jump stop can be used to establish defensive position to either take a charge or shift quickly into a defensive slide. On offense, both post and perimeter players use the

jump stop to enhance their ability to catch a pass, (commonly referred to as "coming to the ball") and create the option of establishing either foot as a pivot. In the modern game, the jump stop is used by many shooters instead of the traditional 1-2 step when shooting.

Pivoting

The purpose of pivoting is to gain a positional advantage. Learning to pivot in the direction that gives the offensive player positional advantage is an acquired skill. A foot becomes a pivot foot, because it is the last foot to touch the floor, or the other foot leaves the floor first. Because the pivot foot can turn as long as it remains anchored to the floor, the player is now able to move the other foot without causing a traveling violation.

Most players keep their entire foot on the floor when pivoting. Most coaches allow this and many teach it. Although commonly used, this is not the best bio-mechanical way to place the foot on the floor. If the foot is flat, the player stands straight up instead of being low, balanced and powerful. Remember "heels up." The pivot foot should contact the floor only with the area of the foot directly behind and across all the toes.

A pivot should only be used to gain a positional or tactical advantage like maintaining balance, to get away from the opposing player or to protect the basketball. Once in the ready position following a two-foot jump stop, either foot may be used as the pivot foot. Virtually every basketball movement requires or can be enhanced with proper pivoting.

Shooting

Step-Back Shooting

Purpose: Improve shooting touch.

- Stand directly in front of the rim.
- Start low and finish high.
- Don't dribble. Make your shot.
- Hold your form until the ball goes through the net.
- Do five reps, then take one step back. Make five shots from that spot.
- Repeat until you reach the last spot at the free-throw line

Team Line Elbow Shooting

Purpose: Improve patience and shot mechanics

- Arrange players in two lines facing each other.
- Players in the line to the right place their right foot on the elbow.

- Players in the line to the left pass low to players on the right, who rotate their left foot toward the basket and shoot, holding their form.
- After 10 reps, switch passing and shooting lines. On the left side, the player's left foot is on the elbow.

Spot Form Shooting

Purpose: Develop concentration. Good for a daily warm-up at any level.
Begin at either block.

- Bounce the ball back to yourself, catch it low and come up shooting.
- Make 10 shots from that spot and move to the middle of the lane.
- Complete 10 shots and move to the other block. Make 10 shots.