

GUIDELINES FOR CHALLENGER BUDDIES

New Buddy Training

*Your most critical responsibility is to keep your athlete safe at all times.
Be alert and ready to respond in situations that may be dangerous.*

PRE-GAME & WARM-UPS

- This is primarily a time for reconnecting with your athlete before the game. Find a location on the field away from others, and toss a ball back and forth gently. **Be alert to the possibility of errant balls** that could cause injury.
- **Bats are not allowed in the dugout.** If your athlete uses a personal bat, be sure it is given to the umpire or a coach upon arrival.
- Specific music signals the end of warm-ups. Direct your athlete to prepare for introductions by standing **in front of the dugout.**
- If your team will be in the field first, take gloves with you to introductions so you can go to the field without returning to the dugout. The team in the first base dugout always bats first.

FIELDING

POSITION & READINESS:

- **Always wear a glove** and be prepared to use it if necessary.
- There are no assigned positions in the field. Encourage your athlete to choose a position each inning and field balls that come to that area.
- **Stand behind the white arc** (a safe distance from the batter).
- **Avoid standing in the base paths.**
- **Stand diagonally in front of your athlete** so you will be in position to protect him or her from a batted or thrown ball if necessary. This is especially important if your athlete is in a wheel chair or using a walker.
- Before each play begins, the umpire or pitcher will scan the field to be sure all athletes and buddies are in position and ready. **IF YOU ARE NOT READY, don't hesitate to communicate this!**
- Fielded balls should always be returned to the pitcher. **Before your player throws the ball, be sure the pitcher is ready to catch it.**

	slow ground ball	hard hit ball
Athlete with unlimited mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow player to field the ball alone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If ball is going into the outfield, LET IT GO! • Encourage a player to go after the ball & remind him or her where to throw it if necessary. • If it is hit in the infield, knock it down if necessary and allow a player to field it. Don't deflect a ball unless you need to do so to protect a player (but, if in doubt, always err on the side of caution).
Athlete with limited mobility (walker, wheel chair)	<p>Field the ball or ask another player to field the ball and hand it to your athlete to throw or hold momentarily. You can assist a child who has difficulty releasing the grasp of the ball by gently guiding his or her hand downward at the wrist. When talking with an athlete in a wheel chair, always position yourself on his or her eye level and talk face-to-face.</p>	

At the end of an inning, all players and buddies should remain on the field until the last baserunner scores.

BATTING

- Help your athlete as needed in finding his or her location in the batting order (a photo lineup is posted on the dugout screen).
- As your team prepares to bat, the first 5-6 batters should get helmets and others wait a few minutes until the area clears and batting progresses. As soon as your athlete returns to the dugout from batting, return his or her helmet to the storage bag.
- Have your athlete ready when it is his or her turn to bat. If your athlete is lead-off batter, move directly to home plate and be ready. Subsequent **batters should be ready inside the edge of the dugout screen** and move immediately to home plate when their name is announced.
- **Take a glove when you go to the plate with your athlete.**
- If necessary, help your athlete get into batting position. The umpire will assist with bat selection.
- While the athlete is batting, stand out of bounds halfway down the first base line. Put your glove on and stay alert for foul balls!
- Some players will need guidance on where to run. In this situation, move toward first base and encourage your athlete to run toward you.

Thrown pitch	Batters will be thrown a maximum of 7 hittable pitches. If they are unsuccessful, the umpire will introduce the batting tee. Help your athlete understand this rule and accept use of the tee as a positive option for hitting. Applaud effort and celebrate when a hit occurs!
Tee	The umpire will set the tee and place the ball when fielders are ready. Some batters will need physical support while swinging the bat. Others may need encouragement and/or help with swinging. Don't hesitate to provide this when needed.
Batting Device	The umpire will position the batting device. Be responsible for getting your athlete into position and stay with him or her while batting. Assist as necessary in moving toward first after hitting the ball.

BASERUNNING

- In most cases, runners advance one base each time a batter hits the ball.
- You may need to direct your athlete where to run or move in front of him or her and provide a target instead of pointing.
- Run with your athlete and **stay close enough to protect him or her from a batted or thrown ball**. Always wear a glove and be prepared to field a batted ball if necessary.

CHICKEN DANCE

- The "Chicken Dance" is played between innings during each game. Family members and fans are invited to join the teams on the field for this longstanding ritual. There are some athletes who enjoy this dance more than the game itself and some who don't want to be involved. Please participate as led by your athlete—dance if he or she likes to dance or feel free to move to the sidelines if you are not dancing.

END OF GAME

- Assist coaches with lining up the players to greet the other team. Get in line with your player and participate in this important ritual.
- Remind your athlete to **"high five" gently** and watch to be sure this is done.
- Stay with your athlete until a family member meets you. Eat snack with the team only if invited by the parent who is providing it.

If your athlete has personal needs during a game, seek the assistance of a family member.