

Goals

Players should have FUN learning the fundamentals of basketball. The fundamentals include dribbling, passing, shooting, rebounding and defense. The majority of each session should be devoted to individual basketball skills.

First and second graders do not need to spend much, if any time stretching. A good warm up would include all of the players involved in a dribbling activity. Have a practice plan written out ahead of time.

Games / Drills

Dribbling

Encourage use of both hands.

Keeping head up

Players dribble around in a defined area marked by cones. First they remain stationary while dribbling. Coach holds up any number of fingers and the players have to call out how many are being held up. Once they master this, they move around while dribbling again having to keep an eye on the coach and other players to avoid collision.

Changing direction

Place markers on the court (cones). As players dribble around, when they come to a cone they must change direction and switch hands. Use crossover or spin to change direction.

Follow the leader

Have groups of 3-4 players, each with a ball. One player in each group is the leader and they dribble around the court...can practice changing direction, speed. Could also do this drill with each player having 2 balls depending on skill level.

Dribbling speed

Have each player with a ball and all start at one sideline. Dribble back and forth to each sideline seeing how many times they can touch a sideline in a defined time period. Try to have players alternate which hand they use. Keep control of the ball.

Tag dribbling

Have players line up on 4 sides of a square, making 4 teams...3 players per side, numbered 1, 2 or 3. All these players have a ball. One player (defender) is in the middle of the square without a ball. She yells out a number, and that numbered player (4 in all) dribble across the square to the opposite side. The defender tries to tag the players as they dribble across the square. If a player is tagged, he must sit down in the square. He can become untagged if a subsequent teammate pats him on the head as the teammate dribbles through. The team with the most players left after 2 minutes is the winner.

Freeze tag dribbling

Have 4 players without a ball trying to tag the other players who are dribbling. If a player is frozen, he may be freed by another player dribbling around him in a circle. After everyone is frozen or every 1-2 minutes have passed, change the "taggers".

Zigzag course.

Place cones in a zigzag and have a relay race with 4 teams.

Change Balls

Players dribble randomly in a grid. Coach blows a whistle and the players come to a jump stop on both feet and then start pivoting. Teach the proper pivot and that the pivot foot may not be changed once started. Coach blows the whistle again and the players put their ball down at their feet and go find another one, then start dribbling again. The reason for changing balls is to not allow double dribbling. Coach can put defensive pressure on the players during the pivoting or have one player join in.

"Jailhouse"

Start with all the players within 4 cones at the center of the court (the jail) with their ball held between their feet (shackled). The coaches are the guards (recruit parent observers as well.) The prisoners escape when the guards look away (fall asleep or whatever). The prisoners must keep dribbling randomly around the court. The guards chase them around may "capture" them by touching their ball. The captured prisoner must go back to jail with ball between legs. They may only be freed if another prisoner passes their ball to them from outside the jail and the ball is passed back. The kids love this one.

Passing

Teach chest pass and bounce pass.

Partner passing

Two partners stand 15 feet apart and practice passes.

Pass and move

3 players occupy 3 corners of a square leaving the 4th corner empty. Player A passes the ball to Player B and then moves to the open spot. Player B passes to Player C and then moves to the spot left open by Player A. Player C passes to Player A and then moves to the spot left open by Player B. The players thus move around the square in a clockwise fashion. Have the player make good eye contact and call the name of the person to whom the ball is being passed.

Passing to a moving player

Have players form 2 lines 20 feet apart making the base of a triangle. Line A player has the ball. Line B player runs to the top of the triangle while Line A player passes the ball to him. Line B catches the ball and passes it back to the next person in Line A and the 2 players switch lines.

Monkey in the middle

Have 5 players form a circle and one player in the middle. There is one ball. Players on the circle pass it across the circle (not allowed to pass it to player next to them). If the defender touches the ball, he switches places with the player who allowed the touch.

Keep away

2 teams of 4 players. Make a 20 x 20 square divided into two halves. On one half are 4 red players and 2 blue players. On the other half are 2 blue players. Red has the ball to start and passes to a teammate. If 5 passes are made successfully they earn one point. If blue steals the ball, they pass it to a blue player on the other half of the square and join their blue teammates. 2 of the red players go to join them and play as above.

Passing relay races

3-4 teams. Dribble out to a cone and then turn and pass back to first in line.

Shooting

Encourage proper shooting technique with the shooting hand giving the power underneath the ball and the non shooting hand on the side, guiding the ball. No chicken elbows! Toes point toward the basket and knees flexed. Emphasize the follow through - "hand in the cookie jar." Proper technique is much more important than results at this age.

Wall work

Have the players practice shooting against the wall to practice proper technique. Spend some time with only the shooting hand on the ball and try for back spin. Walk around and give individual attention

Team shooting

Divide in to two teams shooting at opposite baskets. Number the players 1-6. The players dribble around in a square at mid court...call out a number and that numbered player dribbles toward the basket and shoots the ball. If he misses, the next highest numbered player shoots and so on until someone makes a basket. The first team to score a basket earns one point.

Team shooting II

Divide in to two teams shooting at opposite baskets. Each team has one ball. Pick a spot to shoot from. The object is to see which team can score the most baskets in a defined time. The first player in line shoots, grabs his rebound and passes to the next player in line.

Shooting Stations

Divide into even groups at all baskets and consider adding a wall station (as above). Have a coach at each station if possible and work on shots from a certain location (free throw - up close, short bank shot, side shot, etc.) Rotate every 3-5 minutes until each group has been at every station. No free throws from the free throw line.

Layer ups

Probably the most important shot. Again teach proper technique with same hand and knee driving up to the basket. Work on both hands even though the majority of players at this age will have extreme difficulty with the weak hand. May work on wall layups as above or have one of the stations work on this.

Rebounding

Rebounding position

This is to teach technique of boxing out. Partner up. One player is defense, the other offense. The ball is placed on the ground behind the defender. The players are facing each other. At the whistle the offense tries to get the ball. Teach the defender to block out by stepping toward their opponent, pivoting and maintaining contact. Encourage defense to flex their legs and make a solid base of support. The object is to try to keep the offense away from the ball for 10 seconds.

Rebounding one on one

Have 3 players at a basket. One person is the shooter and the other 2 are rebounders. Whoever gets the rebound moves out to be the shooter and the shooter becomes a rebounder.

Rebounding to earn points

Have 2 teams of three at one basket. Offense may pass but not dribble. Must shoot before the 5th pass. If they make the shot, they get the ball back but no points. If the shot is missed, whichever team gets the rebound earns a point and the ball.

It's mine, it's mine

The whole team is under the basket. Coach shoots and purposely misses. Whoever gets the rebound yells "it's mine, it's mine" and gets to go get a drink of water. Game is over when everyone has gotten a rebound.

Defense

Demonstrate good defensive position...knees flexed, weight slightly forward (not back on heels), eyes on opponents waist area, hands mirroring offensive players moves. Encourage players to take pride in their defense and praise this area often.

Three player sliding

Divide into groups of three. One of the three faces the other two...all three in defensive position. The leader slides side to side, changing speed and direction often with the other two mirroring her.

Partner sliding

One player has ball and dribbles. The other player demonstrates good defensive position. May need to do this back and forth from one sideline to the other with some zigzagging to force defense to change direction.

One on one defense

Same as #2 but this time defender tries to steal the ball. Offensive player tries to get across without turning back to defender for 15 seconds. Award points for stealing ball and getting across without having ball stolen.

"Scrimmages"

Full court 5 v 5 games at this age is like watching an angry beehive swing back and forth in the wind and should be avoided.. Half court "scrimmages" and small sided games 2 v 2 or 3 v 3 work much better. These may be done towards the end of a session and should emphasize the skills learned that day. Keeping players hungry for full court games is probably a good thing at this age. A few full court activities that may be appropriate include: