LEAGUE AGE DETERMINATION FOR PARTICIPATION

Throughout its history, Little League has conducted detailed participation research studies that have shown, time and again, that parents, players, and volunteers stress the importance of allowing Little Leaguers to play with their classmates and friends. This produces the most beneficial and fun experience for players and families. Having this knowledge, we have created age specific divisions of play. Our Age Determination guidelines are different for baseball and softball. To determine what age group your Little Leaguer falls in, visit LittleLeague.org/AgeCalculator.

DIVISIONS OF PLAY – Little League offers baseball and softball divisions for kids from 4 years old (Tee Ball) to 16 years old (Senior League). The age structure of these divisions overlap in order to provide the flexibility for local Little League programs to offer the best divisions for their community. Little League also offers unique Tee Ball and Coach Pitch programs, as well as the Little League Challenger Division® and Senior League Challenger Division, which enables individuals with physical and intellectual challenges to play. For more information, visit LittleLeague.org/Divisions.

BACKGROUND CHECKS - Little League International was the first youth sports organization to require each of its local leagues to annually conduct a nationwide background check on its volunteers as part of its Child Protection Program. Parents and anyone else interested in volunteering must annually complete, sign, and submit a Little League Volunteer Application along with a government-issued photo ID to the local league in order for leagues to conduct a full criminal background check and other state requirements. This is required for all potential managers, coaches, local Board members, and any other persons, volunteers, and/or hired workers who provide regular services to a local league or who have repetitive access to, or contact with, players or teams. Each year, Little League pays for each of its leagues to conduct its first 125 background checks.

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PLAYER DRAFT - Once a local league’s skill evaluation/tryout process is complete, the next step in preparing for an upcoming season is the player selection process. Leagues are required to conduct a draft at the Major Division and above and may require that all players of a given age try out for the Major Division. Leagues may use alternate methods to assign players at the Tee Ball and Minor Divisions. There are three approved draft options that leagues are required to use for their player drafts. These methods provide parity within the league that provide a valuable experience for all players and teams. Learn more about draft methods online at LittleLeague.org/DraftMethods.

MANDATORY PLAY – Little League is not a win-at-all-costs organization. We want all Little Leaguers to enjoy the many benefits of being on the field, enjoying the experience with their friends. We’re proud of our regular season Mandatory Play regulation, which states that every player on the team roster must have at least one plate appearance and play six consecutive outs on defense in each game. This rule is modified during tournament play, and excludes the Senior League division.

PITCH COUNTS - Through extensive research, Little League found that overuse is the number-one factor in youth arm injuries among baseball players and, in 2006, instituted pitch count regulations with different pitching thresholds for different divisions of play based on age. Specific pitch count regulations for all divisions can be found at LittleLeague.org/PitchCount and have been adopted at many levels of play through Major League Baseball’s Pitch Smart initiative. While Little League is committed to protecting young arms, we cannot do it alone. Parents who have Little Leaguers who also play travel or showcase ball are strongly encouraged to alert coaches of recent pitching activities that occur outside Little League games.

BATS – For more than seven decades, Little League worked with the best minds in science, engineering, and technology to take the sports of baseball and softball to higher levels. Little League’s regulations on the bats that can be used within the program, at all levels of play, and detailed information can be found at LittleLeague.org/BatInfo. Beginning with the 2018 season, Little League will follow a new standard developed by USA Baseball for all levels of baseball except for Senior League and the Little League Challenger Division®.

TOURNAMENT TEAM (ALL-STARS) - The method of selecting a Tournament Team is to be determined by the local league Board of Directors. While methods vary, Little League recommends multiple groups within a local league participate in a fair selection. These groups may include players, league officers, team managers, team coaches, and volunteer umpires. Little League believes players should have a say in who makes a Tournament Team. It is the organization’s experience that players are often objective in the selection process, have an intuitive respect for fellow players, and appreciate the opportunity for their opinions to be heard.

LITTLE LEAGUE INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT PATH - While every Little Leaguer’s dream is to make it to Williamsport or the site of our six other World Series events, the tournament process begins in your community, and the only way to a World Series is by advancing through the tournament path. The tournament is structured to allow parents and others in the Little League family to have a voice and positively influence how teams and leagues advance. Every local league has the opportunity to participate in tournament play for a small fee that goes back to helping offset expenses for local leagues advancing through the tournament (Learn more: LittleLeague.org/TournamentSupport). The tournament path and championship site differ for each division, but all offer expanded play beyond the local level that typically includes tournaments at the District, Sectional, State, Regional, and World Series levels.