



**Getting Challenger  
Baseball Started in  
your Community**

### **Organize Key Leadership Group**

1. contact key local community leaders
2. look for local leaders that have a %connection+to Challenger Baseball  
eg. Person that has a child / niece / nephew / relative / friend with a disability, who may be interested in participating in, and organizing Challenger Baseball

### **Initial Meeting to Generate Interest and Volunteer Support**

1. local media exposure for meeting
2. newsletter to parents within local league

### **Team of Committed Volunteers**

1. contact local baseball / softball organizations for volunteer assistance
2. contact local support group for parents of kids with disabilities
3. advertise through local media (newspaper, radio, TV, etc)

### **Gain Support of Local League / Association and the Community**

1. contact local baseball / softball league for support
  - ie. Volunteers, field space, uniforms, equipment, etc
2. contact local community organizations
  - ie. Service clubs, fraternal organizations, etc for sponsorship, volunteers, etc

### **Charter your Challenger Baseball program with Little League Canada**

1. contact Little League Canada . Wendy Thomson (613)731-3301  
(email: [wthomson@littleleague.ca](mailto:wthomson@littleleague.ca))
  - package for chartering Challenger Division available
  - charter fees to Little League Canada: \$13 per team

## **Contact Local Associations for Persons with Disabilities and the Local School Board (Specifically the Special Needs Coordinator)**

1. arrange face to face meeting to introduce concept, and desire for help
2. discuss Challenger Program and the desire to provide this opportunity for the children with cognitive or physically disabilities in the community
3. discuss the potential number of participants in the local community
4. discuss a proposed newsletter or communication, and gain the endorsement from, the Association / Special Needs Coordinator
5. discuss how to best get the word out:
  - o through the local schools (school newsletter ?)
  - o use the assistance of the Association / Special Needs Coordinator for ideas on how to target specific families (instead of a handout to the general population)

## **Basic concepts of Challenger Baseball:**

1. Children with cognitive or physical disabilities, to participate %a a league ò on a team ò in a uniform+
2. Children age 4-18 years old, participate in a fun and safe environment, that caters to their very special needs
3. Able-bodied %Buddies+participate with each player, to assistant and provide a safer, more enjoyable experience
4. Everyone bats each inning ò no balls and strikes ò no outs ò everyone is safe at each base
5. Tee ball or coach pitch
6. Games are an hour, to an hour and a quarter maximum

## **Field specs for Challenger Baseball:**

1. Choose an %all-weather+field, that has the best surface to allow access for children with disabilities
2. Use a smaller diamond ò 60qbase paths is perfect ò not a huge need for outfield area
3. Ensure surface is as smooth as possible, for safety and accessibility reasons

## **Reserve Field Time for the Season with local league for Challenger Baseball:**

1. Find an optimal field time that takes into account the needs of families, as best as possible

## **Equipment required for Challenger Baseball:**

1. Bats ÷ aluminum or foam
2. Balls ÷ soft baseballs or foam
3. Bases ÷ regular league bases, with exception of home base, if possible
4. Batting tee ÷ optional, and available if necessary, for batter
5. Catchers gear ÷ not necessary, but a fun option (particularly for higher functioning players)

## **Uniforms used for Challenger Baseball:**

1. Whatever uniform is used, do the best possible to replicate those used in the conventional baseball program, including belts, socks, and hats
2. Various ideas:
  - “ Uniforms available within the conventional league supply
  - “ Button down is often better, particularly for children that have a larger head
  - “ T-shirts / ¾ Length Shirts are workable, particularly for newer Challenger Baseball programs

## **Put together a team of committed “Buddies” to help with the Challenger Baseball players:**

1. Youth and young adults in the community
  - “ Assist with players ÷ helping at bat, pushing a wheelchair, lead a player around the base path, provide safety role, and otherwise mentor players
2. A couple of different concepts:
  - “ Find a specific Buddy for each player, one on one, for the entire season; or
  - “ Utilize teams in the local league, to act as Buddies

### **How to solicit Buddies for the program:**

1. Contact local league, for help in getting interested volunteers from their membership
2. Contact local high schools, to communicate the need for volunteers  
" Buddy involvement helps students complete required  
%volunteer community hours+
3. Contact local church groups, to communicate the need for volunteers
4. Contact [www.bestbuddies.ca](http://www.bestbuddies.ca), to communicate the need for volunteers

### **Two Key Coordinator Positions to Fill:**

Division Coordinator

- a. person to take charge and make it happen
- b. liason to local league

%Buddy+Coordinator

- a. Person to solicit and screen suitable buddies to assist players
- b. Person to organize buddies
  - i. Provide phone / email list of buddies for team coach

### **Coach Position to Fill:**

Need to organize and coordinate team

- a. contact team re games / events, etc
- b. appoint team parent, who will assist coach in communicating with team (ie phone, email, etc)
- c. coordinate onfield warmup and game particulars (eg batting lineup, field positions for fielders)