

T-Ball / Coach Pitch - How to Choose a Glove (Ages 4-6)

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You've signed your Little League player up for T-ball/coach pitch and now he needs a glove. Starting a new sport can be a drain on the wallet, especially if you're not sure if your son will enjoy playing baseball. You do not need to spend a lot of money on a glove in order to get a good quality one that can be used throughout the T-ball and coach pitch seasons. You just need to know how to pick out a good glove.

1. Size does matter. Contrary to popular belief, bigger is not always better for the beginner player. Beginning players need a smaller glove so that they can hone the skill of catching and fielding a baseball. Look for a youth glove that is 9 1/2" to 10 3/4". At this age, players do not need an 11" glove or a specialized glove (one made for 1st baseman, infielder, outfielder, etc.). They need an all purpose glove for T-ball and or coach pitch. Don't worry about playing certain positions at this point, T-ball is geared towards teaching fundamentals and making baseball FUN so that they want to come back next season.

2. Construction and Material. Most youth gloves are constructed with a leather palm and synthetic material for the outer shell. This allows for a lighter glove and one that easier to close. Look for a glove that is mostly leather and leather laces. If taken care of properly, a mostly leather glove can be used season to season. You will also need to look for a glove that has a good rounded pocket and one that features "easy close" or "power close" technology. Because beginning players are still developing muscles, gloves with closing technology make it easier to squeeze the glove closed when a ball is caught.

Once you get your player's glove, have him try it on and practice catching balls with it before the season starts. Not only will this practice help him, it will also help break in the glove. Since most youth gloves are a combination of leather and synthetic material, it is not advisable to use a glove conditioner. The best way to loosen up youth glove is to USE IT!

Once your player completes T-ball/coach pitch and moves into the upper leagues, it may be time to get a new glove. Again, there are key elements to look for when choosing a glove for the intermediate player.