

Baseball Bats for Kids

You wouldn't send a right-handed kid out to play hockey with a left-handed stick, or expect a child to play soccer with a basketball. Choosing the right equipment is necessary for fair and fun play, and for safety and success. Buying the right baseball bats for kids is every bit as important as selecting proper cleats, glove and batting helmet.

The right bat can directly impact how well kids perform at the plate. The wrong bat, on the other hand, can leave your child struggling on the peewee team. Buying the proper baseball bats for kids is important, but choosing the right one can be a little difficult.

Every player has a personal preference, and every sports "authority" will tell you something different. Some will say to buy a heavy bat for extra power, and expect your child to adjust his or her style and abilities to the added weight. Others insist that buying a long bat and telling kids to chock up on the grip will allow them to manage the few extra inches.

Don't expect to say a prayer and have the right bat magically appear. If it didn't work for Charlie Sheen in the movie Major League, it certainly won't work for you. The key to buying the right baseball bats for kids is in the consistent response of baseball experts: both weight and length are equally important.

The bat you choose for your child should be light enough to swing easily. Don't expect that your kids will develop Popeye forearms and a Babe Ruth swing just because you arm him or her with a heavy bat. And don't let coaching old-timers convince you or your child that heavy bats bring out-of-the-park hits. Kids can actually hit the ball harder and farther with a lighter bat, because they are able to swing the bat faster. If you're looking for proof, consider the fact that both NCAA and high school officials have passed prohibitions on baseball bats. These rules dictate that the bat may not weigh 3 ounces or more lighter than the bat's length in inches. Therefore, if a bat is 34 inches in length but weighs less than 31 ounces, it cannot be used.

Length is also an important consideration when choosing baseball bats for kids. Little League rules require bats to be less than or equal to 32 inches in length. Their barrels may not be more than 2.25 inches in diameter. Of course, you don't want to push the limits for kids in the "Farm" league (age 7 to 8), and a shorter bat of 26 to 27 inches will do just fine. Junior Minors (age 8 to 9) should try bats from 27 to 29 inches in length. Senior Minors (age 9 to 12) do well with 28 to 31-inch bats, and Majors (age 10 to 12) can easily swing a 29 to 32-inch bat.

Ultimately, it's not about the kind of bat, or wallop at the plate. Kids having fun is what counts most. If your child loves to play ball, you can make the game more fun and more satisfying by knowing what to look for in buying baseball bats for kids.