

Parent Car Talk Guide: Building Baseball IQ Beyond the Field

A polished conversation guide for parents who want to help young players think more clearly, play more confidently, and enjoy the game more deeply.

Why car talks matter

Baseball knowledge grows in small moments. A short conversation in the car, at dinner, or after practice can help your child process what happened, ask better questions, and build confidence without pressure.

You do not need to be a baseball expert. You only need to be curious, encouraging, and willing to listen. The goal is not to quiz or correct. It is to connect, reinforce learning, and help your player understand the game in a way that feels positive and supportive.

Key idea — the best conversations are short, natural, and focused on growth. They help young athletes feel seen, understood, and proud of their effort.

What's included

- Conversation starters that help your child reflect on practice, games, and progress
- Baseball IQ questions that build understanding of rules, strategy, and decision-making
- Mental-game and sportsmanship prompts that support confidence, focus, and character

This guide is designed to make baseball feel clearer and more approachable. Use it to open up discussion, reinforce lessons from the field, and remind your player that effort, growth, and teamwork matter every day.

Conversation starters

Use these prompts to help your child reflect on what they are learning and how they are experiencing the game. They work well in the car, at the table, or during any relaxed moment together.

Reflection & learning

- What is one new thing you learned at practice today?

- Was anything confusing during the game or practice?
- Can you teach me something your coach emphasized today?
- What is one thing you want to improve this week?
- Was there a moment when you had to think quickly?

Effort & growth mindset

- What did you work hard on today, even if it did not go perfectly?
- Did you make any mistakes today? What did you learn from them?
- Was there a time you kept going even when it felt hard?
- What is something that is getting easier for you now?

Teamwork & leadership

- Who helped you today, or who did you help?
- Did you encourage a teammate today?
- What is one way your team worked well together?
- Who showed great teammate energy today, and why?

Focus & mental preparation

- What do you think about before stepping into the box?
- What helps you stay focused during the game?
- Do you have any routines that help you feel ready?
- What do you do when you start to feel nervous?

Baseball IQ questions

These questions are meant to spark curiosity, not create pressure. Pick a few that fit the moment and let the conversation unfold naturally.

Rules & fundamentals

- What does it mean to be on deck? What does a full count mean?
- What is a force out? What is a tag out?
- Where is the strike zone?
- What happens if you foul off a pitch with two strikes?
- What does it mean to swing level?
- What does it mean to choke up on the bat?
- Why do we run through first base?
- What part of the bat should you hit the ball with?
- What does it mean to strike out looking?

Situational awareness

- If there are runners on first and second and the ball is hit to third, where is the throw?
- With a runner on third and fewer than two outs, what is the smart play?
- With two outs, do we need to rush every throw?

- Why is it important to know the number of outs before every pitch?
- What does force play mean?
- How do you know whether to tag the base or tag the runner?
- What does it mean to hit the cutoff man, and why does it matter?
- Why should outfielders back up throws even when the ball is hit somewhere else?
- What should you do before every pitch on defense?
- If you are in the outfield and there is no play, where should the ball go?
- What should you yell if a fly ball is hit and you want it?
- What can you do between innings to help your team stay ready?
- What should you do when the coach gives you a sign?
- Why do we sometimes bunt instead of swinging away?
- How do you know when to slide?
- With the bases loaded and one out, what is the smart play on a ground ball?

Position-specific questions

Pitcher

- What should you do if you field a ball and a runner is coming home?
- When is it smarter to throw to first instead of trying for a lead runner?
- If a bunt is laid down, what should your first move be?
- What do you do if the catcher throws to second to catch a stealer?

Catcher

- If there is a bunt, where should you throw?
- How do you communicate with infielders before the pitch?

First base

- If the ball is hit to the pitcher, where do you go?
- What do you say to help teammates when a bunt is down?
- When do you tag the runner, and when do you step on the base?
- What is your job on a ball hit to right field?
- What foot do you put on the base? What leg do you stretch with?

Second base

- On a double-play ball, who covers second?
- What is your job on a bunt to third base?
- Where should you position yourself with a left-handed hitter?
- What do you do when a runner tries to steal second?
- Who takes the throw from the catcher on a steal attempt?

Shortstop

- When do you cover second base? When does the second baseman?
- If the ball is hit to center field, what is your job?

- What is your priority on a slow roller up the middle?
- How do you turn a double play?
- What is your job with a runner on third and a ball hit back to the pitcher?

Third base

- What is your main job on bunts?
- Where do you go if the ball is hit to the outfield?
- How do you make the throw to first quickly and accurately?
- When do you go home instead of first?
- What is your responsibility on pop-ups near the mound?

Outfield

- Where do you throw if the ball is hit to you with a runner on second?
- What do you do if the ball is hit over your head?
- How do you back up your teammates?
- What does it mean to take a good angle to the ball?
- Why is it important to hit your cutoff man every time?

Team communication & situational play

- What does “two, two, two!” mean?
- What should you yell if the ball is in the air and you are under it?
- What does it mean when a coach says “play is at one” or “play is at home”?
- When do we try to get the lead runner instead of just getting an out?
- What does infield in mean, and when would we do it?

Baserunning & Hitting Decisions

Use these prompts to help young players think through game situations, baserunning choices, and what to do after contact.

- What’s one thing to think about before you step into the batter’s box?
- What should you do if you swing and miss?
- What does “tagging up” mean?
- When is it okay to run after a fly ball is caught?
- What happens if you leave the base too early on a fly ball?
- What does it mean to “round the base”?
- Should you watch the ball while running or listen to your coaches?
- Why do we run full speed, even on an overthrow?
- If you’re on second and a ground ball is hit, what do you do?
- If you're on third with fewer than two outs, what should you do on a grounder?
- What should you do after you hit the ball and you're not sure it will be caught?
- What’s the smart thing to do if you're not sure whether to slide?
- What should you do if you're on first and the batter hits a fly ball to the outfield?

Communication & Team Culture

Use these prompts to reinforce teamwork, dugout habits, and respect for everyone involved in the game.

- What does it mean to “have your teammate’s back”?
- Why is it important to talk on the field?
- What are some things you can say to encourage teammates?
- What do we say when someone makes an error?
- What does it mean to be a leader on the field?
- Why is cheering from the dugout important?
- What do we do if the other team makes a mistake?
- When is it your job to call out the number of outs?
- How do you show respect to umpires and opponents?

Mindset, Confidence & Learning

Use these prompts to support a growth mindset, emotional control, and confidence before, during, and after games.

- What should you do if you make a mistake?
- What should you be thinking about when you're on deck?
- What should you do if you're not in the starting lineup?
- Why do we practice the same drills over and over?
- What’s something you can learn from striking out?
- What’s more important: effort or winning?
- If someone is nervous before a game, what could you say to help them?
- How does staying positive help you play better?