

Section Six

Training Materials on Important Out-of-School Time Issues

Created for the regional and local training events that the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST) conducted for the Corporation for National Service, the materials in this section offer straight-forward, user-friendly information on important out-of-school time topics. Because all NIOST training for the Corporation was presented in a “train-the-trainer” format, handouts were designed to be taken away and used by participants as they conducted training for members and volunteers.

The materials in this section can be used to help you understand important out-of-school time issues and/or present training to others. These materials can be used as reference materials for trainers, program directors, team leaders, members, and volunteers who are looking for basic information and ideas on key out-of-school time issues. If you need to present training on any of these subjects, study the information presented here, add to your knowledge by reading some of the resources suggested at the end of each section, and copy the materials for use as handouts in your training session.

Each set of handouts includes a basic training agenda and several pages of easy-to-follow information addressing key issues. The subjects covered by materials in this section are as follows:

- Creating a Quality Program
 - Understanding children’s needs
 - Creating appropriate environments
 - Choosing components and activities
 - Planning schedules and routines
 - Sample planning tools

- Behavior Guidance: Helping Children Choose Positive Behavior
 - Information on the many reasons why children may be acting out
 - Effective and ineffective approaches to behavior guidance
 - Scenarios for practicing techniques

- Homework Help and Academic Skill-Building
 - Exploring the benefits of effective homework programs
 - Learning about ways to effectively integrate homework and academic skill-building into after school programming
 - Ideas for making homework and learning fun for children

Training Materials

- Building Partnerships with Young People, Families, Schools, and Communities
 - Determining who your stakeholders are
 - Steps for effective partnership building
 - Tips and tools for building partnerships with each group of stakeholders
- Service-Learning in Out-of-School Programs
 - Understanding the concept of service-learning
 - Understanding the benefits that service-learning in out-of-school time programs can offer children and communities
 - Tips and ideas: specific project ideas, tips for working with young people of different ages, project planning tips, tips for effective reflection practices

Creating a Quality Program

AGENDA

- I. **Assessment of needs/interests in the room**
 - What sorts of programs are you involved in running or starting up?
 - How do you feel about the quality of program and activities (content) your program offers?
 - What do you hope to gain from this workshop?
- II. **Introduction to the *Agenda***
- III. **Basic Elements of Quality Programming**
- IV. **Program Content: Defining “Program” and “Components”**
- V. **Appropriate and Attractive Environment**
- VI. **Routines and Schedules**
- VII. **Theme-Based Activities**
- VIII. **Ingredients of Effective Programming**
- IX. **Program Design Tools** (worksheets on program goals, program design, components and activities, weekly schedules, daily activity plans)
- X. **Resource List**

****Corporation for National Service programs have permission to copy materials in this packet for training and reference purposes. Pages should be copied as is, with the National Institute on Out-of-School Time referenced at the bottom of each page.*

Basic Elements of Quality Programming

An effective out-of-school program should offer young people free time as well as a wide variety of structured activities that are fun and interactive and that help them develop or enhance leadership and social skills, self-esteem, conflict resolution abilities, academic skills, and interests and hobbies. Programming can include opportunities for youth to participate in group projects and special-interest clubs, work on homework, participate in tutoring and mentoring, go on field trips, and conduct community service projects. Quality out-of-school programs offer balanced, culturally relevant programming that is tailored to young people's interests and developmental needs as well as the needs and desires of parents, schools and communities.

Effective programming includes:

- **STRUCTURE WITH FLEXIBILITY:** a sense of structure and order through an established schedule and a fair amount of flexibility built into the schedule to allow young people to pursue interests and finish projects beyond scheduled activities
- **VARIETY OF APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES:** a wide variety of age-appropriate activities such as craft projects, service-learning activities, board games, field trips, sports, and clubs
- **STAFF WHO ARE COMMITTED, CARING, AND WELL PREPARED:** experienced, trained staff and volunteers who have plan activities carefully and involve young people in planning; staff who get to know youth and connect well with them
- **CHOICES:** daily choices about how young people spend their time
- **OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE INPUT AND DEVELOP RESPONSIBILITY:** opportunities for young people to gain a sense of ownership, develop responsibility, and select activities that reflect their interests as they help plan and lead activities
- **EXPLORATION OF SKILLS AND INTERESTS:** chances to develop hobbies, skills, and interests and get excited about learning; opportunities for young people to develop self-confidence as they find new talents in areas typically not addressed by regular school curriculum.
- **DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL SKILLS:** activities, behavior guidance, and discussion that offers young people opportunities to develop social skills and positive character traits
- **OPPORTUNITIES TO DO SOMETHING REAL:** service-learning projects and other hands-on activities that help youth see tangible results

*** *The National School-Age Care Alliance (NSACA) has developed a comprehensive list of "Standards for Quality School-Age Care." These standards are reflected in the preceding list of aspects of a quality program. See the Resources list at the end of this packet for more information on this resource.*

Program Content

Effective programming usually consists of regular components organized into daily and weekly schedules or routines. Programming should also include special events such as field trips and celebrations that may happen once a month or more. The components and activities that you incorporate into your program should:

- be selected with input from all “stakeholders” in your program (young people, parents, school personnel, staff, etc.). Hold brainstorming sessions and focus groups or conduct surveys to find out about needs and wants.
- address as many aspects of young people’s developmental needs as possible (*physical needs, need for creative expression, need to develop competence, need for meaningful participation, need to develop positive self-concept*).

The chart that follows shows examples of common daily or weekly program components and activities that go with each component.

Daily/Weekly Components	Activities
Homework and Academic Skill-Building Time	Homework support, learning games, tutoring, reading time
Outdoor Recreation	Outdoor free play, organized games and activities
Station Rotation	Staff set up different activity stations and young people move from station to station at their own pace. Examples of activity stations include: arts and crafts, board games, computer use, reading.
Clubs	Clubs meet regularly (once a week or more). Youth choose to be a member of a club for a certain period of time. Clubs can be based on interests and talents of staff, volunteers, and young people and could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art, Music, Drama, Dance • Computers • Science, Math • Languages, Geography • Cooking, Sewing • Community Service
Reading Time	Young people read alone, to each other, or listen to staff and volunteers reading stories.
Snack	Young people have opportunities to eat nutritious snacks and informally socialize with each other and with adults

Appropriate and Attractive Environments

We are all affected by the environment around us. Young people will be happier and better behaved in out-of-school programs if they find the environment to be comfortable, well equipped, and appropriate for the program's activities and the ages and needs of the youth to be served. The questions and ideas that follow may help you create an appropriate environment for your program.

QUESTIONS

- What kind of an environment do you think the young people in your program want? What do they say they want?
- What space do you have available to you? Do you need more space? How can you get it?
- Will you have different activities going on concurrently? Do the different activities require different sorts of environments? How can you divide up available space and make it appropriate for the different types of activities you'll be doing?
- How can you decorate your space to make it interesting, stimulating, and exciting for children? If other groups are using your space when your program is not in session, how can you create an attractive environment specific to your program needs that can be set up and dismantled on a daily basis?
- What furniture do you have available? What furniture would enhance your space? How can you get furniture donated? How can you effectively rearrange and use available furniture?

IDEAS

- Planning: Young people like to help design and create their own environment. Put together a design team with representatives from every age group. Involve parents and staff as well.
- Dividing up space: If you are using a large room, use movable partitions or simply set up a line of chairs to divide space.
- Decorating: Put up posters, create murals, display young people's art, put up different decorations in different areas to create appropriate environments for activities that will take place in each area.
- Supplies: make a list of necessary supplies for the activities you do regularly as well as a "wish list" of supplies that could enhance your program. Send home announcements and approach local businesses asking for donations of books, art supplies, games, old beanbag chairs, cushions, etc.
- Storage: put materials in rolling carts that can be brought out and put away easily or store materials in plastic tubs that can be stacked away in a closet. Sort materials according to the activities they're typically used for.

Routines and Schedules

Effective out-of-school programs offer young people established routines and schedules that are always subject to flexibility. When they are not in school, young people need time to choose their own activities, to relax, and to explore their interests, but they also need a sense of structure. Effective schedules often include blocks of time where youth can drift from one activity station to another at their own pace. Schedules can also include set times when the whole group meets together, eats snacks, or engages in outdoor recreation. While your schedule can be flexible, it is important to have an established routine and schedule that everyone understands. Offering activities regularly on a certain day of the week can give young people something to look forward to. Post a schedule where parents, staff, and children can all see it and refer to it.

Transition Time in After School Programs

When adults finish work for the day, they find many different ways to unwind and relax. Some enjoy chatting with family members or having something to eat. Some like to come home and take care of the laundry or run errands that need to be done before they relax. Some enjoy reading or watching TV. Everyone has different needs as they transition from the work day into their evening activities.

Similarly, as young people finish school for the day, they have different wants and needs. Some would like to relax and socialize for a while before they start structured activities. Some are hungry and need a snack. Some really need a chance to run around and engage in physical play. Some need quiet time to read or just be left alone.

The following words summarize the types of activities that young people enjoy doing as they transition from school to organized after school activities:

- **LAPS – participating in physical activity**
- **SNACKS – having something to eat and drink**
- **RAPS – socializing with friends and staff members**
- **NAPS – relaxing and enjoying some quiet time**

Most young people are inclined towards one of these types of activities as a way to wind down their school day and prepare for after school activities. Depending on space, staffing restraints, and other issues, many programs are able to offer all four of these activities to youth as they come into the program after school. Different areas and different staff people or volunteers can be assigned to oversee each of these types of activities.

Ideally, when they arrive at the program, young people should have choices about what they would like to do for a specified period of transition time (fifteen to twenty minutes works well for many programs.) After this transition time, they will be more prepared to participate in the regular components and activities of the program.

General Scheduling Tips

After determining how you'd like to handle transition time, think about the best way to incorporate the desired components into the time allotted to your program. There is no one "ideal" daily or weekly schedule for an out-of-school time program. Every group of young people has different needs, so the schedule of every effective program will likely be different. The following ideas will help you think about how to create a schedule that will meet the unique needs of your program.

- **Snack:** Ideally, food should be available throughout the afternoon so that young people can eat when they are hungry rather than at a set time. If certain constraints make it necessary to have a set snack time, find out when young people have lunch. If their lunchtime is early in the day, have snack towards the beginning of the afternoon. If it's late in the day, have it more towards the middle of the afternoon.
- **Homework and Academic Skill-Building:** If you set aside time for homework or tutoring, have activities and games that build academic skills available for those with no homework. Be sure that staff members are on hand to help with homework. Don't schedule activities in such a way that young people have to choose between doing homework and participating in another really exciting activity going on at the same time. Many programs find it effective to set aside a period of time when children have a choice between homework and quiet reading. Other programs find it effective to create a homework area and encourage young people to visit this area at some point during the afternoon. (See NIOST's training materials on homework for more ideas.)
- **Stations:** Offer young people regular opportunities to choose between a variety of activity stations during certain blocks of time. Have enough different stations so that there are a manageable number of young people at each station. Allow young people to move from one station to another at their own pace. Stations could offer reading, homework help, crafts, art, board games, etc.
- **Clubs:** Offer a choice of "Clubs" that meet once or twice a week and allow young people to explore their individual interests. If you offer clubs, have club leaders develop plans for a certain number of sessions during a given period of time (a month or more).
- **Late-Afternoon Activities:** If family members come to pick children up at the end of the day, they often show up before the official end of your program day. By offering low-key activities like board games or arts and crafts at the end of the afternoon, children will not have to leave in the middle of an organized activity.

Theme-Based Activities

By centering the activities in your program on different themes, young people can gain a sense of continuity, develop new interests, and become “experts” in a wide variety of subjects. Themes can last for a week, a couple of weeks, or more. Themes encourage depth of study and diversity of activities. Well-developed themes will offer everyone something that sparks his or her interest.

Themes can become part of every component of your program. As you plan themes, try to develop activities that will address each of the areas of children’s basic developmental needs. For example:

- **Physical Needs:** Selected snacks can go with the theme. Games during recreation time can reflect the theme.
- **Need for Developing Competence:** During homework and academic skill-building time, particular subjects connected to the theme can be researched. Theme-focused books can be read during reading time.
- **Need for Creative Expression:** Activities can include arts and crafts that go with the theme. Young people can make up stories and present plays that go with the theme.
- **Need for Meaningful Participation:** Service-learning activities can be incorporated into every theme. Young people can work in teams on projects and develop teamwork skills.
- **Need for Development of Positive Self-Concept:** Each theme can end with a culminating event where families and communities are invited to celebrate the theme and learn about what young people have been doing.

The most effective themes emerge from young people themselves. Listen to conversations, tune in to the interests and trends you observe, and find out what youth are learning in school. Brainstorm theme and activity ideas with young people. After developing basic theme ideas, work with them to devise a timeline for the theme and decide on a week by week basis how to incorporate the theme into your components. Continually check in with young people to see what they are enjoying, what ideas they have, and when it’s time to move on to a new theme.

In general, successful theme-based activities:

- Focus on interests expressed by young people
- Are planned and implemented with plenty of ideas and help from youth
- End when participants’ interest begins to wane
- Build on the resources and interests of staff, volunteers, and families involved in the program
- Are incorporated into many components of the program
- Include service-learning activities
- Offer hands-on activities
- Include field trips
- End with a culminating event for families and community members that showcases what young people have learned through performances and exhibitions

Examples of Themes and Theme Activities

Each of the following theme ideas is accompanied by ideas for activities for children of all ages, culminating events, and service-learning possibilities. Some ideas work better for younger children while others are geared more towards older children. Be sure that your activities are age-appropriate.

Music - create instruments with household objects such as rice in a jar, glasses full of different amounts of water, and rubber bands stretched between nails, have guest musicians come in, young people who play an instrument can play for the group and tell about their instrument, research different instruments, listen to and dance to all kinds of music, attend a concert, prepare a song or musical piece to sing or play at a hospital or nursing home, hold a concert for the community

Animals - create art and crafts representing favorite animals, work together to create a mural of animals living in different parts of the world, have guests bring in animals, play charades and guess what animal is being acted out, make animal costumes, visit a zoo or farm, research favorite animals and present reports, research endangered species and write letters about concerns, help at a local animal shelter

All About Me - make “About Me” books or collages about talents, likes, dislikes, favorite things, etc., make family history charts, hold a talent show and encourage talents from playing the violin to telling good jokes to standing on your head, bring in baby pictures and current pictures and make them into a matching game, “spotlight” a different child each day and have other children share what they like about the child being spotlighted, create a group mural including panels of collages and paintings that represent each person in the program, go to a hospital or nursing home and make “About Me” books with patients

Nature - go on a nature walk and collect different leaves to see how many varieties you can find, learn about a favorite flower or plant and create a poster about it, create collages with magazine pictures of different landscapes and plants, do crafts about nature, learn about different habitats and create shoebox habitats, learn about environmental hazards in your community, plant and care for a community garden, grow vegetables for a local soup kitchen, do a clean-up project

Journalism - read articles selected by young people from the newspaper, do “reports” on daily events, interview each other and write reports about each other, find out about neighborhood and school events and write reports, take pictures to go with reports, publish a newspaper and distribute it to the community

Ingredients of Effective Programming

**Clear goals and purposes
established and understood by all stakeholders**
(young people, parents, schools, staff, and volunteers)

Commitment and buy-in of all stakeholders

**Components and activities
selected with help from stakeholders**

**Staff and volunteers who are
competent, enthusiastic, and well trained**

Consistency of routines, schedules, and components

Well-planned activities that are:

- child-centered: geared towards children's learning styles and interests
- child-directed
- age-appropriate
- hands-on
- constructive

Effective indoor and outdoor environments

Constant reevaluation and addition of new components

Program Design Tools – SAMPLE

Program Goals Worksheet

Work with your staff to brainstorm answers to the following questions:

What are the purposes of your program? What is expected of your program by each group of “stakeholders” in the program (young people, parents, schools, staff, funders, board, etc.)?

(Examples: providing a safe place, tutoring, literacy, learning, exploring new interests, teaching social skills, promoting self-esteem, enhancing social skills, building character, increasing academic competence, offering service-learning opportunities)

What are the needs of each group of “stakeholders”? How will you assess these needs? (Think about the needs of each group of stakeholders separately and look at where needs overlap and where they do not.)

How does/can your program meet these needs? (Think about your program’s current resources, possibilities for new resources, and possible limitations.)

How will you regularly involve young people and families in program planning? (This will help you meet needs on an ongoing basis.)

What are your program’s three to five main goals? (These goals should summarize the main purposes of your program and address the needs of your stakeholders.)

Program Design Tools - SAMPLE

Basic Program Design

Based on your responses to questions on the preceding page, answer the following questions with help from your program staff. Use your answers to these questions to fill in the worksheets on the next pages.

What will be the regular components of your program? (Look at the handout, “*Program Content*” for help.)

Where will each regular activity take place? (Specify rooms or areas that would be appropriate.)

When will each component happen? (Every day? Every week? At what time? For how long?)

What will be your daily and weekly schedule/routine? (Create a schedule grid showing days of the week and times of the day and fill in all your components. Be sure to allow for flexibility and spontaneity.)

How will you incorporate special monthly or bimonthly activities into your program? (Think about field trips, service projects, and celebrations.)

Program Design Tools - SAMPLE

Components and Activities

Component	Activities	Frequency/ Duration	Leader
<p><i>Example:</i> Homework</p>	<p>Homework help, tutoring, learning games</p>	<p>Every day for thirty minutes</p>	<p>Jane Doe</p>

Program Design Tools – SAMPLE

Weekly Schedule

Use this grid to create a weekly schedule showing times of the day and days of the week when each component of your program will take place.

	Time
	Monday
	Tuesday
	Wednesday
	Thursday
	Friday

Program Design Tools - SAMPLE

Daily Activity Plans

After developing themes, the next step is to plan activities for each day that would go with the theme. By filling out a simple activity plan, you can clarify the objectives of your activities and think through the time and materials required. Whoever is going to lead the activity can fill out the form. Involve young people in creating activity plans. Look at this example of an activity plan and use the form on the following page to create your own.

SAMPLE ACTIVITY PLAN

Name of Activity: *Cultural Collages* **Theme:** *Around the World*

Person Leading Activity: *Jose*

Objective of Activity:
understand the concept of "culture" and learn about each other's cultures

Skills Enhanced/Knowledge Offered by Activity:
social studies, appreciation of cultural identity, artistic skills

Supplies Needed:
construction paper, a wide assortment of old magazines, scissors, glue sticks

Staff Preparation Required:
Gather materials, research the word "culture," do a little preliminary research about the cultures represented by children in the group

Time Required: *1 hour* **Number of Youth to Participate:** *10*

SCHEDULE FOR ACTIVITY

Length of Time	Actions to be Taken
10 minutes	<i>Talk about what "culture" means. Talk about different examples of aspects of culture (traditions, food, countries where people's families come from, etc.). Each family has its own culture shaped by its traditions and beliefs - you don't have to be from another country or be part of a specific ethnic group to have a culture.</i>
15 minutes	<i>Go around the circle and have each person share something about his or her culture.</i>
30 minutes	<i>Have kids create collages by selecting and pasting together pictures from magazines that represent their culture.</i>
5 minutes	<i>Clean up.</i>

Program Design Tools - SAMPLE

Activity Planner

Name of Activity: _____

Theme Supported by Activity: _____

Person Leading Activity: _____

Objective of Activity:

Skills Enhanced/Knowledge Offered by Activity:

Supplies Needed:

Staff Preparation Required:

Time Required for Activity: _____ Number of Youth to Participate: _____

SCHEDULE FOR ACTIVITY

Length of Time	Actions to be Taken

Resource List

This following resources are representative of the vast array of materials available. Listing here does not constitute an official endorsement by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time, the U.S. Government or the Corporation for National Service. Unless otherwise noted, the following resources are available through local bookstores, online booksellers, or through companies that specialize in curriculum and materials for children such as School-Age NOTES (1-800-410-8780 or www.schoolagenotes.com), Quest International (1-800-446-2770 or www.quest.edu), or Innovative Educators (1-888-252-KIDS or innovative-educators.com). Many resources can be borrowed from the National Service Resource Center library (1-800-860-2684 or www.etr.org/NSRC).

Program Start-up and General Program Planning

Working With School-Age Children by Marlene Anne Bumgarner. Available at your local book store or through an on-line bookseller.

Caring for Children in School-Age Programs: Volumes I and II by Derry G. Koralek, Roberta Newman and Laura J. Colker

Kids' Club: A School-Age Program Guide for Directors by Linda Sisson

Before and After School Programs: A Start-Up and Administration Manual by Mary McDonald Richard

The Complete School-Age Child Care Resource Kit by Abby Barry Bergman and William Greene

By Design: A New Approach to Programs for 10 - 15-Year-Olds

School-Age Child Care: An Action Manual for the 90's and Beyond by Michelle Seligson and Michael Allenson

The National School-Age Care Association (NSACCA) Standards. Available by calling NSACA at (617)298-5012.

Keys to Quality in School-Age Child Care by Roberta Newman

General Theme and Activity Ideas

The Activities Club Theme Guides. Each Theme Guide offers easy-to-follow activity instructions to go with the theme. Resource Kits containing materials for crafts and games to support the theme can be ordered with each Theme Guide. Examples of themes offered: Marvelous Masks, Nature's Treasures, Take Flight!, Photography in a Snap. Available from The Activities Club by calling (617) 924-1556.

School-Age Ideas and Activities for After School Programs by Karen Haas-Foletta and Michele Cogley

Summer Sizzlers and Magic Mondays: School-Age Theme Activities by Edna Wallace

Ready-to-Use Activities for Before and After School Programs

Activities for School-Age Care: A Program Planning Guide for Playing and Learning by the National Association for the Education of Young Children

Arts/Crafts Activities

Kids Create! Art and Craft Experiences for 3 - 9 Year Olds by Laurie Carlson

Adventures in Art: Art and Craft Experiences for 7 - 14 Year Olds by Susan Milord

Take Part Art: Collaborative Art Projects by Bob Gregson

Crafts of Many Cultures: 30 Authentic Craft Projects from Around the World

Global Art: More than 135 Activities, Projects and Inventions from Around the World by MaryAnn F. Kohl and Jean Potter

Science Activities

Science Arts: Discovering Science Through Art Experiences by MaryAnn Kohl and Jean Potter

Showy Science: Exciting Hands-On Activities That Explore the World Around Us by Hy Kim

The Kids' Nature Book: 365 Indoor/Outdoor Activities and Experiences by Susan Milord

Science in Seconds for Kids: Over 100 Experiments You Can Do in Ten Minutes or Less by Jean Potter

Literature-Based Activities

Keepers of the Earth: Native American Stories and Environmental Activities for Children by Michael J. Caduto and Joseph Bruchac.

Developing Multicultural Awareness Through Children's Literature : A Guide for Teachers and Librarians, Grades K-8 by Patricia L. Roberts, Nancy Lee Cecil.

The Service Learning Bookshelf: A Bibliography of Fiction and Nonfiction to Inspire Student Learning and Action compiled by Cathryn Berger Kaye. Available by calling (310) 397-0070.

WEB SITES OFFERING RESOURCES:

<http://www.nwrel/LEARNS> – The LEARNS web site offers information and ideas on promoting reading and literacy.

<http://www.ed.gov/americanreads> – The America Reads web site offers resources, links and publications to promote literacy.

Group Games, Sports and Recreation

Everyone Wins! Cooperative Games and Activities

Cooperative Sports and Games by Terry Orlick

The Incredible Indoor Games Book and *The Outrageous Outdoor Games Book* by Bob Gregson

Games. Games. Games: Creating Hundreds of Group Games and Sports by David Whitaker

The Multicultural Game Book: More Than 70 Traditional Games from 30 Countries

Step it Down: Games, Plays, Songs and Stories from the Afro-American Heritage by Bessie Jones and Bess Lomax Hawes.

General Homework Support and Learning Activities

Homework and Out-of-School Time Programs: Filling the Need, Finding a Balance by Susan O'Connor and Kate McGuire. This booklet contains basic ideas for integrating homework into an after school program. Available by calling the National Institute on Out-of-School Time at (781) 283-2510.

The Homework and Edutainment Club Guide and Resource Kits. The guide contains step by step instructions for setting up an effective homework program and the resource kits contain age appropriate learning tools and games for different age groups. Available from The Activities Club by calling (617) 924-1556.

WEB SITES OFFERING HOMEWORK HELP AND LEARNING GAMES:

www.ed.gov/free – This site offers free on-line resources on all academic subjects submitted by thirty-five different federal agencies.

www.ash.udel.edu/ash/index.html – Alphabet Superhighway offers fun games and learning activities.

www.tristate.pgh.net/~pinch13 – B.J. Pinchbeck's Homework Helper has links to many sites offering help on different homework subjects.

www.startribune.com/sonline/html/special/homework – The Homework Help site offers links and opportunities to ask homework questions.

Character Building/ Life Skills Activities

The Best Self-Esteem Activities for the Elementary Grades by Terri Akin, David Cowan, Gerry Dunne, et. al.

What Do You Stand For? A Kid's Guide to Building Character by Barbara Lewis

Character Education in America's Schools: Activities for Helping Children Develop Appropriate Social Values

WEB SITES OFFERING CHARACTER BUILDING RESOURCES:

<http://www.ethics.org/nice/nice1.html> - National Institute for Character Education (NICE)

<http://www.character.org> - The Character Education Partnership

<http://www.coe.usu.edu/eb/resources/characterbuilder> – The Character Building Site

<http://www.aces.uiuc.edu/~uplink/SchoolsOnline/charactered.html> - Teaching Kids to Care

<http://www.search-institute.org> – The Search Institute

<http://www.communityofcaring.org/home.htm> - Community of Caring

Service-Learning

Kid's Guide to Service Projects: Over 500 Service Ideas for Young People Who Want to Make a Difference by Barbara Lewis

Kid's Guide to Social Action: How to Solve the Social Problems You Choose by Barbara Lewis.

Children as Volunteers by Susan J. Ellis, Anne Weisbord and Katherine H. Noyes.

The Service-Learning Bookshelf: A Bibliography of Fiction and Nonfiction to Inspire Student Learning and Action by Cathryn Berger Kaye. Available by calling (310)397-0070.

Making a Difference (student magazine) featuring activities, writing by young people, ideas on service.

The Real Heroes (video) featuring personal testimonies from young people involved in a variety of service projects.

Today's Heroes (videos and guides) featuring typical teenagers who share stories of service experiences. Available from the Points of Light Foundation by calling 1-800-272-8306.

ORGANIZATIONS/WEBSITES:

The Service-Learning Exchange

Phone: 1-877-LSA-EXCHange; Web site: www.lsaexchange.org

National Service-Learning Clearinghouse

Phone: 1-800-808-7378; Web site: www.nisl.coled.umn.edu

ServNet:

www.servenet.org

The Points of Light Foundation

Phone: (202) 729-8000; Web site: <http://www.pointsoflight.org>

Learn and Serve America

Phone: (202) 606-5000; Website: <http://www.nationalservice.org/learn/index.html>

Behavior Guidance:

Helping Young People Choose Positive Behavior

AGENDA

- I. Opening activity or icebreaker
- II. Assessment of needs in the room
- III. Introduction to the Agenda
- IV. Memory exercise: Understanding the effects of good and bad behavior management techniques
- V. Why do Young People Act Out?
- VI. What is Discipline?
- VII. Punishment vs. Discipline
- VIII. Guidelines for Effective Behavior Guidance
- IX. Inappropriate Discipline and Suggested Alternatives
- X. Steps Towards Solving Behavior Problems
- XI. Scenarios
- XII. Questions and review of Resources

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Memory Exercise

Did you know what “the rules” were as a child? What sorts of things were “against the rules” when you were growing up? Were there different rules at home, at school, at other places?

What were the consequences for breaking certain rules? Were consequences explained to you along with rules? Were consequences enforced consistently? Were you ever punished for something you didn't know was against the rules?

Did the consequences or “punishments” you received affect your behavior? How did they affect you in general?

What didn't seem fair about the rules, punishments, or consequences you experienced as a child?

How did the rules and consequences you experienced as a child affect the type of person you are today?

Why Do Young People Act Out?

Understanding WHY young people may be acting out will help you develop appropriate strategies for helping them move towards more positive behavior. To figure out what may be prompting inappropriate behavior, you need to look at your *program* as well as at *issues that may be affecting a child individually*.

When a young person acts out, think about these three questions:

- What aspects of your program might make it difficult for the young person to behave?
- What individual issues might the young person be dealing with that could contribute to inappropriate behavior?
- What can you do to help the young person be more likely to choose positive behavior over negative behavior?

Programmatic reasons for behavior problems:

Aspects of your program can contribute to young people's inappropriate behavior. Sometimes programs "set themselves up" for bad behavior through the programming they offer or fail to offer, the rules they set or fail to set, and the environments they provide. The following are programmatic issues that contribute to young people's behavior problems:

- Boredom (not enough to do, not interest in the current project or topic)
- Too many restrictions (there are so many "no's" and rules that young people can't possibly keep to all restrictions)
- Too few rules, rules that do not make sense, or undefined rules (young people do not have an explicit understanding of what is appropriate and what is not and/or do not understand why certain rules exist.)
- Not enough opportunity for control (young people have too few choices and feel that they don't have enough control – they act out to exert control)
- Groups are too large (young people are being asked to work in groups that are too large for their developmental stage – younger children typically need to work in pairs or threes)
- Inappropriate environment (no separate areas for different activities, young people get in each other's way, the noise level is high, the environment is not comfortable)
- Lack of materials (when there is a lack of paper, crayons, games, balls, jump ropes, etc., there will likely be conflict if young people have to compete for scarce resources)
- Activities and curriculum not well planned (chaos results when staff are not prepared with well-thought-out activities and contingency plans)
- Not enough staff (young people are undersupervised and do not feel a sense of safety and control)

Why Do Young People Act Out? (continued)

Personal issues that can lead to behavior problems:

Some of the following causes of behavior problems can be quickly remedied. Some require staff to work with the young person long-term and involve parents and/or schoolteachers. Some require outside help from specialists.

- Family issues (concern over a sickness, divorce, death, or other issue in the family)
- Differing norms (what may be acceptable at home or at school is not acceptable in your program or vice versa)
- Physical issues:
 - child didn't get enough sleep and is over-tired and grumpy
 - child didn't get enough to eat and is hungry
 - child is ill, getting sick or getting over being sick
- Differing consequences and enforcement (at home or at school, inappropriate behavior is ignored or promised punishments are not enforced – young people have learned not to take rules seriously)
- Need for attention (attention for bad behavior is better than no attention at all!)
- Need for re-orientation (young person has been out sick or gone from the program for a time and has forgotten the rules)
- Distractions and extra stimulus (nearing a vacation period or big holiday)
- Testing limits (young people often “try” staff to see if they will follow through on consequences)
- Bad day (something may have happened earlier in the day that is affecting the young person)
- Immaturity
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)

Some information in this section is adapted from materials developed by Mikus Educational Consulting: 1997. Some information is from the booklet, Discipline in School-Age Care: Control the Climate, Not the Children by Dale Borman Fink, published by School-Age Notes.

What is Discipline?

Root of the word:

The word discipline comes from the word *disciple*. A disciple is a willing follower, someone who is happy to respond to your requests because you have won that person's trust and confidence. Discipline involves modeling appropriate behavior, pointing out young people's positive behavior, and instructing them through word and deed about what behavior is appropriate and what behavior is inappropriate. A basic definition of discipline is: *the actions adults take to guide and direct young people towards positive, acceptable behavior.*

The goal of discipline:

The goal of good discipline is to help young people become self-disciplined and able to control their own behavior. Good guidance involves teaching young people what they CAN do and explaining why they shouldn't do certain things and what appropriate alternatives might be. *True discipline is about consistent and fair GUIDANCE.*

The role of adults:

Adults must be loving, patient, and firm to help young people learn that it makes sense to act in certain ways. Discipline based on trust, respect, love, and consistency helps young people build self-esteem and self-discipline. Adults can help young people avoid inappropriate behavior by helping them understand rules and guidelines. When young people do something inappropriate, adults can help them look at the consequences of their actions and think about what they can do to make things better.

**DISCIPLINE =
GUIDANCE TOWARD POSITIVE, ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR**

Appropriate guidance requires a balance of:

- PATIENCE
- LOVE
- FIRMNESS
- UNDERSTANDING
- MUTUAL RESPECT
- MUTUAL TRUST
- CONSISTENCY

Punishment vs. Discipline

Punishment has very different goals and methods from discipline. Punishment usually attempts to “scare” young people into being obedient. Often, punishment is arbitrary and is not linked to natural consequences of young people’s actions or to established rules and consequences. Punishments are often assigned quickly without exploring and fully understanding the situation. It is easy to make assumptions about who is at fault when a conflict arises and quickly blame and punish the one who seems “guilty” at that moment. Further exploration of the situation often proves that more than one person is at fault and that a simple “punishment” for one child will not solve the problem.

Punishment or threat of punishment can stop negative behaviors – at least temporarily. But punishment only teaches young people what they shouldn’t do without teaching them what they *should* do. Punishment does not help young people learn to think about the consequences of their actions or specific steps they could take to rectify their actions.

Examples of Punishment vs. Discipline:

Punishment: “You’ve painted on the table – you’re in time out. Go sit in the corner.”

Discipline: “There is paint on the table. It’s hard to clean paint off the table. How about if you help me clean up the paint on the table? What do you think you could do to make sure we don’t get any more paint on the table?”

Punishment: “You just hit Mary. We don’t hit. You’re out of the game.”

Discipline: (After comforting Mary and making sure she’s not hurt, address Mary and the child who hit her) “I’d like each of you to tell me what happened here.” “I’d like you two to sit here together until you can both tell me what you could have done to keep this situation from happening. I’ll be back in three minutes to talk about this with you.”

Punishment: “If I see anyone throwing their coat on the floor instead of hanging it up, that person will not be able to go outside during free play time.”

Discipline: “I’ve noticed that there are a lot of coats on the floor in the hall. Can anyone tell me why we shouldn’t have coats on the floor? What can we do to be sure all the coats are hung up?”

Punishment: “I heard that word you said, Glen. I’m calling your mother. You know we don’t allow that sort of language around here.”

Discipline: “Glen, would you come over here for a minute? (In private) I think I overheard you saying something that wasn’t appropriate – am I correct? How do you feel about our rule about that word?”

* Some information adapted from Before and After School Programs Coordinator’s Manual. Prince Georges County, 1998.

Guidelines for Effective Behavior Guidance

- **Young People’s Buy-in:** Young people help to define rules for the program and suggest appropriate consequences. A small “advisory group” made up of several youth representing the whole group can help define rules. Ahead of time, staff can prepare some “sample rules” for youth to use as a starting point to develop their own rules.
- **Understanding of Existing Rules:** Staff find out about the rules young people live by in school and in other organized groups they participate in. If appropriate, rules in the program are similar to other rules youth are accustomed to. If rules need to be different, adults clearly explain the differences.
- **Simple Rules:** Rules are simple and limited in number (five to eight basic one-word rules is ideal). Each rule can be defined by “sub-rules” that go with it. For example:
 1. **PEACE** (use “indoor voices” indoors, listen quietly when instructions are being given, no hitting, yelling, fighting, or swearing)
 2. **ORDER** (all coats should be hung up, all snack materials are to be thrown away, all games go back to their place)
 3. **ASKING** (ask to go to the bathroom, ask to get out a new game, ask others to play with you, ask for help if you need it, ask an adult to help if you have a conflict with someone else)
 4. **RESPECT** (listen to adults when they’re talking to you, respect different cultures, ideas, and ways of doing things)
 5. **KINDNESS** (help other people, notice what needs to be done and do it, take turns, use kind words)
- **Consequences:** Rules have clear consequences that young people help to establish. Where possible, consequences are tied to restitution or making amends. For example:
 1. **PEACE** – Sit aside from the group and think about what you could have done better. Before rejoining the group, tell an adult what you did wrong and what you plan to do in the future in a similar situation. If the situation involved a conflict with someone else, sit together and talk through the incident. Use conflict resolution strategies (see Resource List for books on this).
 2. **ORDER** – Clean up your mess before you can participate in anything else.
- **Knowledge of Rules:** Rules are clearly posted for young people, staff and parents to see and refer to. Information on rules is distributed to families and schools.
- **Consistency:** Everyone has to obey the rules, including adults. One young person is not permitted to “get away” with something another child is punished for. Children do not take rules seriously if they are inconsistently enforced.
- **Understanding and Kindness:** Adults kindly request that young people do certain things or do not do certain things. Adults do all they can to understand issues that may be contributing to young people’s behavior. They ask youth questions about their behavior and really listen to the answers. Adults take the time to get to know young people and gain their respect by respecting them.
- **Praise:** Adults give more attention via praise for good behavior than they give for bad behavior. They give so much attention for good behavior that young people would rather be “good” rather than “bad” in order to get attention.

Inappropriate Discipline and Suggested Alternatives

- **Unrealistic Expectations:** When adults think of “discipline,” they often think of the kind of discipline they experienced in school: children sitting in rows and raising their hands. Having too many strict rules can set a program up for failure. During their out-of-school time, young people need a more casual atmosphere allowing for self-directed activities and discussion.
- **Physical Force:** Not only is hitting or striking a child out of bounds, any sort of physical force, pushing, or directing is inappropriate. Aggression only teaches aggression. On the other hand, physical touch can be very effective. Place your hand gently on a young person’s shoulder if he/she is acting out or put your arm around a child and guide him or her away from a conflict.
- **Yelling:** By raising your voice, you only raise the noise level in the room further. Yelling teaches yelling. Choose a signal that signifies it’s time to be quiet (hand-clapping patterns, a few musical notes, or hand gestures like the peace sign can work well).
- **Power Plays:** Never say “because I said so” as a reason for why a young person should or shouldn’t do something. Adults often try to make silly rules stick to prove that they are in charge. Explain rules to young people. Negotiate with them and compromise when it’s appropriate. Help children learn that it isn’t “weak” to negotiate.
- **Bribes:** Never use food as a reward or bribe – this can cause unhealthy food associations. Bribery can lead children to do good things – but for the wrong reasons. Bribery does not help children to learn self-discipline. Explain to young people why they should and shouldn’t do certain things. Praise them for good behavior.
- **Reprimanding Young People in Public:** When you point out wrongdoing in front of others, young people can be so embarrassed that they can’t really pay attention to what you’re saying. Whenever possible, show respect for youth by taking them aside to talk about behavior problems.
- **Making Young People Apologize:** Insisting that a child say “sorry” to another child will not help that child change his or her behavior. Encourage young people to talk to each other about their conflicts and help them see the other person’s point of view. This may lead to an apology.
- **Noticing Everything:** Don’t point out every little thing that young people do that isn’t quite right (chewing with their mouths open, laughing too loudly, making obnoxious faces). Ignore behavior that isn’t specifically “against the rules” as much as you can. Try to point out more positive things than negative things about children’s behavior.

**Some information adapted from Do the Right Thing: Teacher’s Guide to Children’s Behavior. Fourth Edition. Fairfax County School-Age Child Care Program, November 1995.*

Steps Towards Solving Behavior Problems

1. Observe the young person and record what you see. Look for patterns of behavior. When are behavior problems happening? What seems to trigger them?
2. Get to know the young person (and his or her parents and teachers). Ask the young person about his/her behavior. Ask parents and teachers as well.
3. Think about this question: Other than the child, what might be the problem? Scrutinize your program and look for such programmatic issues as those stated on the list: “Why do young people act out?”
4. Talk with staff about possible causes and solutions. Think about this question: What can we do so that the young person/people will more likely CHOOSE to....”
5. Work with the young people, staff members, parents, and schoolteachers to create a plan for implementing solutions.
6. Follow up by regularly revisiting the issue and revising solutions.

Scenarios

Consider the following scenarios. Think about the various motivations young people may have for the behavior observed. How can a discipline approach (as opposed to a punishment approach) be used to guide young people towards understanding and adopting more acceptable behavior? Create role plays to help you think about exactly what you would say to a child in a given situation.

Younger children (ages five to ten)

Scenario One:

You are trying to explain the next activity to a group of children and two or three of them are talking to others sitting near them and causing a distraction.

Scenario Two:

Maria comes up to you on the playground, crying. She says that she wants to play with a group of girls and they said the game was closed so she can't play.

Scenario Three:

During free-play time, you see two children fighting.

Scenario Four:

After losing a game to Alberto, you overhear Ben say: "You must have cheated. My mom says Mexicans are all stupid. You should go back to Mexico."

Scenario Five:

Joey is continually disruptive. Every time you turn around, he is pinching someone or making someone cry. He has been put in "time out" repeatedly. When you ask him what he did wrong and how he can improve, he has good answers and seems truly sorry for what he did. However, his behavior does not seem to be changing.

Scenarios (continued)

Older Children (ages ten to fourteen)

Scenario One:

You overhear a group of girls using a lot of swear words as they exchange stories during snack.

Scenario Two:

You look over and see Damond and Mike pushing each other. It looks like they are headed into a fist fight. Some other kids are gathered around them, egging them on.

Scenario Three:

You notice that Denise is avoiding three older boys in the program who she used to laugh and flirt with. During the last couple of weeks, you've also noticed that she's become a lot less verbal and shows less enthusiasm for activities.

Scenario Four:

As you explain the rules for a game that the group will be playing, Maurice says, "Why we got to play such stupid baby games all the time?"

Scenario Five:

After repeated warnings, Alicia continues to be disruptive and disrespectful to staff. She often makes remarks that hurt the feelings of children and staff as well. When you tell her you're going to have to talk to her parents about her behavior, she says "Go ahead – call them. I don't care. They don't care. Like you're going to be able to reach them anyway."

Resources on Behavior Management, Discipline, and Guidance

Following are examples of the many materials available on the subject. Listing here does not constitute an endorsement by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time, the U.S. Government, or the Corporation for National Service. Unless otherwise noted, the following resources are available through local bookstores, online booksellers, or through companies that specialize in curriculum and materials for children such as School-Age NOTES (1-800-410-8780 or www.schoolagenotes.com), Quest International (1-800-446-2770 or www.quest.edu), or Innovative Educators (1-888-252-KIDS or innovative-educators.com). Many resources can be borrowed from the National Service Resource Center library (1-800-860-2684 or www.etr.org/NSRC).

Discipline in School-Age Care: Control the Climate, Not the Children by Dale Borman Fink

Adventures in Peacemaking: A Conflict Resolution Activity Guide for School-Age Programs by William Kreidler and Lisa Furlong

Creative Conflict Resolution by William Kreidler

Am I In Trouble? Using Discipline to Teach Young Children Responsibility by Richard Curwin and Allen Mendler

I Can't Sit Still: Educating and Affirming Inattentive and Hyperactive Children by Dorothy Davies Johnson

Discipline That Works: Promoting Self-Discipline in Children by Thomas Gordon

How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish

Developing Positive Self-Images and Discipline in Black Children by Jawanza Kunjufu

Homework Help and Academic Skill-Building

Homework Help and Academic Skill-Building

AGENDA

- I. Understanding “Homework”**
 - What do you remember about the homework you did as a child? How did you feel about homework? Why?
 - How do you think kids today feel about homework?
 - What is the purpose of homework? Does it seem to be meeting its purpose? Why or why not?

- II. Benefits of a Good Homework Program**
(Look at “The Purposes and Possibilities of Homework Programs”.)

- III. Setting up a Homework Program**
(Look at “Tips on Homework Help and Academic Skill-Building Activities” and “Questions for Homework Program Design”.)

- IV. Making Homework Fun**
(Look at “Homework Scenarios” and discuss scenarios in small groups.)

- V. Goal Setting**

- VI. Resources**

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The Purposes and Possibilities of Homework Programs

Why should after school programs offer homework help?

- After a long day at work, many parents want to spend time with their children in the evenings without having to focus on homework.
- Some parents with limited English or academic proficiencies feel overwhelmed by their children's need for help with homework.
- Many young people like to finish their homework during their after school program so that they can work on assignments with friends, get help and support from program staff, or simply get their homework "out of the way."

How can an effective homework program help young people?

For many young people, "homework" means boring tasks that seem unconnected to anything interesting or important. Homework programs can not only help young people get their homework done, they can also help youth *change their attitudes toward homework and learning*. With well-trained and enthusiastic staff, after school programs can help young people get excited about learning by offering engaging learning activities that are related to homework as well as support and an up-beat and encouraging environment for completing homework.

What kinds of homework programs are there?

Homework in after school programs can take many different forms including:

- Homework help offered (Young people know that if they want to do homework, staff will be available to help them.)
- Homework time set aside for all young people to work on homework (Those without homework can read a book.)
- Homework/Learning area created (Young people visit this area when they wish and/or are required to spend a specified amount of time in this area at some point during the afternoon. In this area, children work on homework, participate in tutoring, or take part in fun, educational games.)
- Homework contracts developed (Young people work with staff and parents to create "contracts" that state the amount of homework they will get done or time they will spend on homework each day. They do their homework when they like, but they know they must finish certain things before the end of the afternoon. Alternately, their contract can state that they will finish a certain amount of homework before participating in other activities.)

Tips on Homework Help and Academic Skill-Building

The following tips and ideas can help you successfully integrate homework into your program and help young people get excited about learning.

Create a special area for academic skill-building:

Work with young people to decorate a room or area for homework and academic learning and come up with a creative name for the area. Fill the area with books, learning games, computers, school supplies like paper, pencils, rulers, and more. Put up colorful posters on the walls about books, animals, science, etc. Young people can come to this area whenever they like and stay as long as they like, rotate through this area in groups throughout the afternoon, or be directed to spend a specified amount of time in this area each day. If young people don't have homework, they can read or participate in skill-building games during the time they spend here.

Set up peer tutoring pairs:

Invite older children to sign up to be tutors to younger children. Offer the tutors some basic training and hold regular meetings with them. Be sure that tutoring doesn't interfere with the time tutors need to complete their own homework.

Bring in tutors:

Recruit parents, community volunteers, and local college and high school students to serve as tutors. They can help with homework in general or specialize in tutoring a specific subject. Ask tutors to come in at regular times each week and commit to serve in the program for a specified amount of time. Be sure that all tutors receive appropriate training (see "Resources" at the end for information on tutor training). Regularly meet with tutors to discuss children's needs. Assign tutors to individuals or small groups of children so they can get to know each other and learn to work together. Work with local high schools and colleges to develop a program where students can get service-learning or internship credit for regular tutoring.

Create a homework sign-off log:

Once young people finish a homework assignment, have them check in with a staff person or volunteer who can go over their work and put a star or check by their name in a homework log book. Develop a system for letting parents know how much homework their children have completed each day. Offer monthly prizes for those who've successfully completed a certain number of assignments.

Prepare engaging learning games:

Stock your academic area with flashcards, spelling, reading and math games, and computer learning games. Ask local toy stores and computer software companies for donations. Plan spelling and math contests, science experiments, book-writing activities, read-a-thons, and other simple learning-focused activities.

Hire or train an academic learning specialist:

Select a staff person or volunteer with expertise in education to coordinate homework and academic learning activities in the program. This person can train and direct volunteers, prepare learning games, coordinate tutoring, and help with homework. Learning specialists are essential for one-on-one literacy and math tutoring programs.

Questions for Homework Program Design

Use the following questions to help you determine the type of homework program you should offer. Through focus groups and brainstorming sessions, involve staff, young people, parents, and schoolteachers in discussions surrounding these questions.

Understanding Wants and Needs Of Stakeholders:

How can you find out about the wants and needs of young people, parents, and schoolteachers and administrators? You could use focus groups, brainstorming sessions, and surveys.

Program Design:

- **Schedule** - When will young people do homework within your afternoon schedule? Will there be a set time for homework and learning? Will there simply be a set area for these activities?
- **Staffing** - Who will help young people with homework? Will there be tutoring? Will there be peer tutoring? What sort of training will staff and tutors have? Will you have a learning specialist or someone specifically assigned to running a homework center?
- **Environment** - Where will young people do their homework? What sorts of materials will be available? How can you make the area inviting, learning-focused and exciting?
- **Requirements** - Will young people be asked to finish a certain amount of homework? Will they be asked to finish whatever they can in a certain period of time? Will someone check off homework completed? How will you make sure that children won't miss out on other fun activities because they are supposed to be doing their homework?
- **Motivation** - How will you motivate young people to finish homework and get excited about learning? How will you help those who have special academic struggles?
- **Learning activities** - What sorts of learning activities will you offer to supplement homework? How will you integrate these activities with homework?

Connections:

- **Connections with families** - How will you communicate with families about young people's learning needs, about the amount of homework that should/can be done during your program?
- **Connections with schools** – How will you communicate with school teachers about homework assignments, needs of specific students, and subjects currently being covered in the classroom?

Homework Scenarios: Making Learning Fun

#1 – Language Arts/ second grade

Sam is a second grader with a spelling test coming up. He shows you his list of words when you ask him about his homework and says “I hate these stupid spelling tests.” How can you help him learn the words and make preparing for the test fun?

#2 – Math/ third grade

Donna is in third grade. She brings in a long list of multiplication problems she is supposed to have finished for school the next day. She sits down and starts working on the problems but seems frustrated. You sit down to help her and quickly realize that she doesn’t have a grasp on the concept of multiplication. How can you help her understand what multiplication is all about?

#4 – Science/ fourth grade

Leroy is a fourth grader who is really excited about science. He loves doing experiments and figuring out how things work. He also loves to show other children how to do things. How can you help Leroy develop his talents in science and share his enthusiasm and knowledge with others?

#4 – Social Studies/ fifth grade

Dimond is a fifth grader who has to do a report on a historical figure from the Revolution. She has no idea where to begin and seems really overwhelmed by the project. What can you do to help her plan out how to get this report done? How can you help make the project interesting for her?

#5 – Reading/ sixth grade

Adam is a sixth grader who has to write a book report. He has a list of books and he is supposed to choose a book from the list. He likes reading and he seems excited about choosing and reading a book. As you help him put together a schedule for finishing the book and then working on the report, he says, “Why can’t we just read the books? Why do we have to write reports? I can’t write reports.” What do you think might be going on with Adam? What can you do to help him?

#6 – Language Arts/ first grade

Abdul is a first grader who is working on his handwriting. He writes so quickly and carelessly that his handwriting is virtually illegible. You can hardly even make out his name when he writes it. He says he is really trying to write nicely. What are some activities you can have Abdul do to help him?

#7 – Math/ second grade

You have a group of second graders who have finished all their homework. Some of the older children still have quite a bit of homework to finish. The second graders just finished worksheets with lists of simple addition and subtraction problems. What sort of activities can you have them do while others finish homework? Can you think of fun activities that would help solidify the math concepts involved in their homework?

Goal Setting

Use this form to set specific goals based on your experience and ideas gathered throughout the sessions. Use the sheet “Homework Practices and Results” to determine what level of homework center you want to offer and look at the “Practices” column for information on what you need to do to reach that level.

Goals for involving youth, parent, and school input in the program and environment you offer: (focus groups, surveys, advisory groups)

Goals for creating the best possible environment: (organization of space, furnishings, resources available – learning games, learning tools, etc.)

Goals for staffing: (child:adult ratio, training, getting more volunteers, finding a learning specialist, holding regular meetings and in-service trainings, etc.)

Goals for adding new elements to your homework program: (peer tutoring, learning activities, specific policies and motivators promoting homework completion, child goal-setting, etc.)

Goals for communicating with parents and schoolteachers: (distributing regular newsletters, attending faculty meetings, holding parent conferences)

Resources for Homework and Learning Activities

Following is a sampling of resources available on the subject of homework. Listing materials here does not constitute official endorsement by the U.S. Government, the Corporation for National Service, or the National Institute on Out-of-School Time.

Homework and Out-of-School Time Programs: Filling the Need, Finding a Balance by Susan O'Connor and Kate McGuire, NIOST, 1993. This booklet contains basic ideas for integrating homework into an after school program. Available by calling the National Institute on Out-of-School Time at (781) 283-2510.

The Homework and Edutainment Club Guide and Resource Kits by the Activities Club, 1998. The guide contains step-by-step instructions for setting up an effective homework program and instructions for hundreds of learning activities supporting different academic subjects. The resource kits contain age-appropriate learning tools and games for different age groups. Available from The Activities Club by calling (617) 924-1556.

WEB SITES OFFERING HOMEWORK HELP AND LEARNING GAMES:

<http://www.ed.gov/free> – This web site offers free on-line resources on all academic subjects submitted by thirty-five different federal agencies.

<http://www.ash.udel.edu/ash/index.html> – Alphabet Superhighway offers fun games and learning activities.

<http://www.tristate.pgh.net/~pinch13> – B.J. Pinchbeck's Homework Helper has links to many sites offering help on different homework subjects.

<http://www.startribune.com/stonline/html/specila/homework> – This Homework Help site offers links and opportunities to ask homework questions.

Literacy Activities and Tutoring Tips

www.nwrel.com/LEARN – The LEARN web site offers information and ideas on promoting reading and literacy and effectively training tutors.

www.ed.gov/america-reads – The America Reads web site offers resources, links and publications to promote literacy as well as information on tutor training.

Building Partnerships with Young People, Families, Schools, and Communities

Building Partnerships

AGENDA

- I. **Introductory Discussion: What is a partnership? Why are partnerships important?**
- II. **Steps for Effective Partnership Building**
- III. **Attributes of Effective Partnership Builders**
- IV. **Building Partnerships with Young People in your Program**
- V. **Building Partnerships with Families**
- VI. **Building Partnerships with Schools**
- VII. **Building Partnerships with Communities**
- VIII. **Involving Volunteers**
- IX. **Sample Fliers and Forms**
 - Volunteer recruitment flier
 - Volunteer/Intern checklist
 - Volunteer/Intern contract
 - Instructions for approaching businesses
 - Corporate partnership program
- X. **Resources**

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Building Partnerships

I. Introductory Discussion

What is a partnership? Why are partnerships important?

Brainstorm answers. One definition of partners: two or more parties with shared interests and goals as well as specific roles and responsibilities in relation to each other's work.

II. Steps for Effective Partnership Building

1. Determine stakeholders in your program.
 - Young people in your program
 - Families of children in the program
 - Schools attended by young people in the program
 - Communities: local community agencies, businesses, colleges, and universities
2. Determine needs and wants of each group of stakeholders.
 - Informally ask stakeholders questions
 - Brainstorm possible needs with staff
 - Conduct surveys
 - Convene focus groups
3. Determine needs and wants of your program.
 - People resources: support, volunteers, parent involvement, etc.
 - Material resources: supplies, food, money
4. Transform stakeholders into partners.
 - Hold special meetings with representatives of each group of stakeholders.
 - Establish common goals.
 - Match program's resources and abilities with partners' needs. (How can your program benefit each partner group?)
 - Match partners' resources and abilities with program needs. (What resources needed could each potential partner help you with?)
 - Establish roles and responsibilities of each partner. Be sure that all partners agree to all roles and responsibilities.
 - Maintain regular contacts and conduct regular meetings as appropriate.
 - Write down and follow-up regularly on all partners' responsibilities through phone calls, meetings, and other methods.
5. Acknowledge Partners: Constantly thank partners for everything they do, personally (verbally and through thank-you notes and gifts), at public events, and in newsletters.

III. Attributes of Effective Partnership Builders

- **Understanding** (see others' points of view, agendas, needs, wants, and abilities; understand how to ask enough but not too much)
- **Flexibility** (accept help other than what you immediately think you need, alter plans and goals to work better with those of other people)
- **Persistence** (don't give up when people aren't immediately as receptive as you had hoped; expect that some partnerships you try to form will be more effective than others)
- **Commitment** (help partners see your commitment to the program; express sincere commitment to understanding and meeting needs of stakeholders)
- **Trust** (believe in your partners and their ability to really make a difference in your program, believe in your ability to draw out and sustain help and input from partners)
- **Organization** (find out and keep track of needs; record and follow up on specific responsibilities; establish and stick to concise agendas for meetings)
- **Humility** (admit needs and ask for help, be willing to share praise as well as blame with partners)
- **Gratitude** (express thanks publicly and privately)
- **Other Ideas**

IV. Building Partnerships with Young People in your Program

Importance of Involving Children and Youth as Partners

Successful out-of-school programs involve young people heavily in program planning and implementation. During their out-of-school hours, children and youth want to control their own time and choose their own activities. Programs that engage young people in program planning and solicit their input on program policies find that they are more excited about the program and less prone to act out or complain about policies or activities.

Tips for Effectively Involving Young People as Partners

- Put together a youth advisory group made up of eight to ten young people of different ages to represent the whole group. Rotate group participants so that everyone gets a chance. Meet regularly with this group to discuss:
 - Rules for the program
 - Possibilities and ideas for upcoming activities
 - Needs of the program (personnel and material resources needed)
 - Points of view about how things are going and what should be improved
- As appropriate, offer all young people the chance to make suggestions and vote on rules for the program, field trips to be taken, allocation of resources, etc.
- Involve youth in determining the needs of the program and soliciting donations and volunteers.
- Hold focus groups with young people whenever a new policy needs to be made or a new program component is to be added. Ask a small group of youth to share their ideas and concerns about the policy or component in question.
- Assign young people responsibilities. On a rotating basis, assign youth to help with such tasks as setting out and cleaning up snack, supplies and equipment, peer mediation, reading with younger children, making sure all coats are hung up, etc. Young people can help determine what responsibilities are included on the list of regularly rotating “jobs.”
- Involve young people in designing and decorating the program’s environment. They can help determine what sort of space is needed for the regular activities involved in the program, help develop lists of needed and wanted supplies, and help find donations.

V. Building Partnerships with Families

Importance of Involving Families as Partners

In many ways, staff of out-of-school programs serve as “surrogate parents.” Parents and family members of children in the program entrust the care of their children to staff of the out-of-school program. Staff are involved in guiding young people’s behavior, encouraging their social, emotional and academic growth, meeting their needs for food and nurturing, and many other duties for which parents and family members typically take primary responsibility. To effectively serve young people, staff and parents **MUST** see each other as partners in the process of raising, teaching, and nurturing young people.

When parents and families are asked for their help and input, and when that help and input is taken seriously, programs are able to more successfully meet young people’s needs and staff receive more support from families.

Tips For Effectively Involving Families as Partners

- Set up a “family advisory group” that meets regularly (monthly often works well) to discuss upcoming activities, program needs, needs of children, etc. Set up sub-committees to take responsibility for planning special events, fundraising, soliciting donations, etc. Establish meeting goals and agendas in advance so that you can keep meetings short and targeted. If at all possible, offer child care during meetings. Reserve time at the end of the meetings for families to chat with each other and with staff. Offering refreshments can be very effective during this time (have parents sign up to bring in refreshments if you like).
- Capitalize on the resources of family members. Ask families to fill out a form about their interests, hobbies, professions, etc. Integrate family members’ knowledge and abilities by inviting their input in activity planning and their participation in activity implementation. Find out about contacts and connections family members may have that could benefit your program in some way.
- Send home newsletters on a regular basis. Include information on upcoming activities, announcements of the program’s needs for donations and/or volunteers, and information on community resources and events that might be of interest. Family members can be invited to help write newsletters. Make sure that newsletters are available in other languages. Perhaps parents can serve as translators.

Training Materials – Building Partnerships

- Hold regular family celebrations. Invite parents, siblings, and other family members to attend family celebrations where they have the opportunity to learn about recent program activities through children’s presentations, performances, galleries of art, etc. These events are especially popular if they involve food (pot luck can work very well). Such events help families get to know each other and get to know staff members and volunteers.
- Set up regular meetings with individual parents or guardians to discuss their children’s strengths, progress, and needs. Hold special meetings with parents or guardians of children who are in need of special attention. Track progress of children having difficulties and regularly share information on progress with parents or guardians.
- Take concerns and suggestions of family members seriously. Take time to talk with parents and family members. Make sure they know that you are interested in their input and will try to do all you can to implement suggestions and make changes in response to concerns.
- Regularly survey families about their perceptions of how the program is going and what they’d like to see changed.

VI. Building Partnerships with Schools

Benefits of Involving Schools as Partners

Out-of-school time programs can do a great deal to make the work of schools easier and more effective. Schools have many resources that can benefit out-of-school time programs. Schools and out-of-school time programs that serve the same young people need to understand each other’s curriculum, needs, goals, and points of view. Ideally, OST programs and schools should work hand in hand to provide young people with a well-rounded education that helps them develop mentally, socially, physically, and emotionally. OST programs should do all they can to work with schools to help students succeed.

Tips for Effectively Working with Schools as Partners

- Attend teacher meetings at schools. Regularly send staff members to attend school meetings so that they can get to know schoolteachers and staff, share reports on activities going on in the out-of-school program, and find out about activities going on at the school.
- Have staff members volunteer in school classrooms. By going into the classroom and assisting schoolteachers from time to time, staff members can build good relationships with teachers, learn about experiences young people in their program have while they’re at school, and come to understand more about the school curriculum.

Training Materials – Building Partnerships

- Invite school personnel to regular family/community celebrations held by your program and attend young people's programs at the school. Help schools to learn about what your program is doing and do all you can to learn about what is going on at the school.
- Trade newsletters/bulletins. Distribute your program's newsletter to schoolteachers and the school principal. Make sure that you receive the school's newsletter.
- Learn about homework assignments. In order to effectively help young people in your program with their homework, it is helpful to regularly communicate with schoolteachers about the homework assignments that students have been given.

VII. Building partnerships with communities

Community partnerships can include partnerships with the following types of groups:

- Other National Service programs in the area
- Volunteer Centers/United Way chapters
- Businesses
- Non-profit organizations that provide youth services (like the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, tutoring and mentoring organizations, etc.)
- Churches
- High schools
- Colleges and universities, particularly service-learning departments and Federal Work Study programs

Partnerships with these and other entities in your community can offer your program:

- Volunteers to come in and work in your program as tutors, club leaders, mentors, sports coaches, etc.
- Material resources (donations of new or used items needed by your program)
- Connections to other potential partners

A partnership with your program can offer these organizations:

- Opportunities for more meaningful placements for volunteers
- Opportunities to build the future of the community by offering the next generation more resources and possibilities
- Opportunities for positive publicity
- Opportunities to further the mission of their organization

VIII. Involving volunteers

Specific Ideas for Regular Volunteer Positions

Following are examples of positions that can be filled by family members, school personnel, community members – anyone you've invited to volunteer in your program. All volunteers should receive a job description, participate in training, and sign a contract. (See samples at the end of this packet for ideas for fliers, job descriptions, and contracts.)

- **Club leader** (come in and lead a club based on their interests/hobbies at least once a week)
- **Homework helper or tutor** (come in regularly to help with homework or tutor specific young people in need of extra help)
- **Coach/sports leader** (come in regularly to coach a team or teach skills relating to specific sports)
- **Chaperone** (accompany young people and program staff on field trips to provide extra help)
- **Special event helper** (help publicize, gather supplies, set up, and run special events and family/community celebrations)
- **Fundraiser/Donations coordinator** (solicit donations of needed funds or supplies)

Tips on Recruiting and Integrating Volunteers

- **Develop specific volunteer job descriptions and eye-catching fliers** for all positions you hope to fill with volunteers. (See samples later in this packet.)
- **Send home announcements with children**, inviting all parents to volunteer or to recommend friends/neighbors as volunteers. Include descriptions of the types of volunteer jobs you have available.
- **Call local colleges and universities.** Place intern and work-study job descriptions at career, intern, work-study, or placement offices of schools near you. You may want to send fliers that can be posted. Interns can get credit for volunteering and you can get some great, reliable help from them. In many cases, you have to be willing to do a little paperwork for interns who need credit. You can get work-study students to work for your program for free if they serve as America Reads or America Counts tutors. Call the financial aid department of colleges and universities near you to find out about this possibility. More than 1200 colleges and universities supply tutors to local programs and pay them with federal work-study dollars. For more information on America Reads, look at the website: www.nationalservice.org/areads/aread.htm.
- **Call local businesses.** Many businesses have employee volunteer programs that allow employees to devote a certain amount of paid time each week or each month toward volunteer service. Other companies may not offer paid volunteer time, but

Training Materials – Building Partnerships

encourage their employees to volunteer and regularly post opportunities. Ask for human resources or the employee volunteer offices, tell them about specific volunteer needs and opportunities, and send them job descriptions. Talk about ideas for working in partnership. (See tips later in this packet for more details on partnerships with businesses.)

- **Call local groups that help match volunteers to needs.** Explain a little about your program and offer specific examples of activities that volunteers could be involved in. Offer to send or fax them a flier to post. They may also need a brief job description to put in their referral books. (See samples at the end of this packet.) Look for the following organizations in your local phone book or call the 800 information line (1-800-555-1212) to get a national number for the organization so that you can call and find out about local chapters.
 - Volunteer Center (Call 1-800-59-LIGHT to find a Volunteer Center near you)
 - United Way
 - Governor’s Community Service Commission (connections to AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve America)
 - State Office of the Corporation for National Service (connections to National Senior Service Corps programs and AmeriCorps*VISTA)
 - Colleges and Universities – community service or service-learning offices and/or Federal Work Study departments
 - High schools (many high school students have to perform a certain number of hours of community service in order to graduate and students really enjoy working with younger children as tutors, coaches, club leaders, etc.)
 - Senior citizen’s groups
 - State Education Agencies
 - Church groups
 - Community centers
 - Local chapters of national volunteer groups such as the Lions Club, Kiwanis International, and League of Women Voters
- **Set up information meetings and interviews for potential volunteers.** Interviews help volunteers/interns take positions seriously. Combining a small group information session with interviews can work well. At such a meeting, you can tell potential volunteers about your program, answer their questions, and complete brief one-on-one interviews. Volunteers should be very carefully screened and should be willing to make a commitment to the program.
- **Ensure that all volunteers have an orientation and participate in training.** If they receive adequate orientation and training, volunteers will be happier and more confident in their positions and more helpful to your program. Volunteers should typically receive the same information and pre-service and in-service training that regular staff members receive. See the checklist later in this packet for ideas about what you should do for volunteers before they start work at your program and a sample contract that you can ask them to sign.

SAMPLE FLIER

INTERNS AND VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!!

Want to share something you love?

_____ offers innovative after school enrichment programs for elementary school children in the _____ area. Our curriculum offers children the opportunity to gain new skills, build meaningful relationships, increase their self-esteem, participate in character-building activities, and have a lot of fun.

We need "experts" to share their knowledge and talents with children.

Clubs are a major component of our program. Led by interns and community volunteers, Clubs give kids a chance to explore their interests in such subjects as:

art	science
music	theater
languages	computers
sports	animals

With support and training from _____ program staff, Club Leaders design and implement two-month-long clubs based on a subject that they love. Clubs are held one afternoon a week with a group of approximately ten elementary-age children.

Qualifications for Club Leaders are as follows:

- Knowledge of a particular subject that would be an appropriate club theme
- Experience working with children and good references
- Creativity and flexibility
- A sense of adventure!

To Apply:

Please contact _____ at _____ for further information and an application.

SAMPLE

Volunteer/Intern Checklist

To be completed by Site Managers for all Volunteers and Interns

Name of Volunteer/Intern: _____ Position: _____

- 1. Did the volunteer/intern fill out the appropriate application?
- 2. Did he/she fill out a CORI (criminal background check) form? Is form sent in?
- 3. Did he/she participate in training?
 - Educate volunteers on the importance of out-of-school care so they can feel the significance of their help. Let volunteers know that you have an investment in them, and that the staff is here to back them up 100%. Let them know you appreciate their help.
 - Go over the _____ Program's mission statement, daily and weekly schedule, and activities and basic information on families and children involved in the program.
 - Go over their job description, clearly defining their role and explaining what we expect of them and what they can expect from us. *Each volunteer must receive a Job Description Form stating their title, specific responsibilities, time commitment required, and what hours they must be on site.*
- 4. Did the volunteer/intern have a TOUR OF THE SITE? Did the tour include:
 - classroom/storage space?
 - the sign-in log which must be filled out each time they come?
 - the place to find announcements?
 - the location where the volunteer/intern schedule is posted?
- 5. Did the volunteer/intern sign a contract stating their job description and hours?

*** Points to highlight in talking about expectations ***

ABSENCES: Volunteers should notify Site Managers of ALL anticipated absences. A one-week warning of an absence is highly recommended.

DRESS: While casual clothes are welcomed, we do request a neat, clean, professional appearance from all our volunteers and staff.

REPORTING ISSUES WITH STAFF: If a volunteer has a problem regarding a child or any member of the staff that they cannot quickly resolve on their own, they should contact the Site Manager.

MEETINGS: Volunteers are invited to all staff meetings, plus a monthly volunteer meeting designed to address problems and concerns.

SAMPLE

Volunteer/Intern Contract

Name: _____ Phone: _____

I commit to volunteer/be an intern for the _____ Program from _____ (date) to _____ (date). I plan to be on site on _____ (days of the week you'll be there) from _____ (time) to _____ (time).

While serving in this capacity, I understand that I must comply with the standards of the _____ Program. I have received a job description and training about my position.

If I must be absent, I will give one week's notice and will attempt to find a substitute. I will give two weeks notice if I must leave the program for some unforeseen reason.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

SAMPLE

Instructions for Approaching Businesses

Goal: Contact businesses in the area with the intent of educating them about your program, building public awareness and support, and asking for materials and human resources. We hope to receive support in terms of donated goods, supplies, food, or financial assistance as well as volunteers.

In order to gain the support needed, we ask that staff:

- Make a list of all local businesses around your site that could be possible donors of products or supplies. (An ideal time to do this would be at a site staff meeting)
- Set up an appointment with managers and owners.
- Put together a specific “ask list” – specific things you plan to ask for – before going to your appointment.

In talking with business owners and managers, do the following:

- **Familiarize them with the program.** Explain who you are and offer them a general overview of the program.
- **Ask for something specific.** Assess what the store or business could offer you and let them know how their products could fit into our program. If you approach a grocery store, let them know about the need for snacks and refreshments at special events and ask if they would be willing to make any kind of donation. If the business sells paper products or supplies, let them know that we need these kinds of materials for daily art projects and would greatly appreciate a donation.
- **Invite them to visit your program.** Set up a specific date and time. Let them know that something great is happening in their community and they are welcome to come and see the things that youth are doing after school. Let them know how much we need and appreciate their assistance.
- **Tell them about benefits for them.** Let them know that their business will be listed as a sponsor in your newsletter and all publicity efforts.
- **Follow Up.** A few days after an initial conversation, follow up with a letter that thanks them for their time and clarifies any understanding you have about what they have agreed to donate.

SAMPLE

Corporate Partnership Program

A primary focus of the _____ program is to link families, schools, communities, and businesses, helping them work in partnership to provide young people with meaningful after school activities. Our enrichment programs are designed to help elementary school children deepen their love for learning, build important skills, strengthen their sense of citizenship and develop such universal human values as respect, responsibility, and honesty.

By working in partnership with businesses, we help match resources to needs and provide employees and companies with meaningful opportunities to directly affect students, their families, and our nation's public schools.

Following are some options for your company's involvement in our program:

Engage employees as volunteers:

- Partners make it possible for employees to act as "Club Leaders" or homework coaches in our program. Club leaders come in once a week for about an hour and a half to lead a group of up to ten children in activities related to the subject of their choice. Homework coaches come in an hour a week and consistently work with one or two children who need academic help. All volunteers receive quality training and are always supported by our staff as they plan and execute their sessions.
- Partners offer their employees opportunities to assist with our monthly parent celebrations and our occasional special events and field trips.

Sponsor a specific element of our program:

Partners can choose to sponsor a specific element of our program (homework help, a service project, a field trip, a club, etc.). Through in-kind donations and active involvement in our activities, partners contribute both economic and human resources to our program.

Example: A local newspaper sponsors our Journalism Club which engages children in writing their own newspaper about their community. The newspaper sponsor provides the program with copies of their paper to give out to the students to use as models, sends a reporter to the program to speak to the children, assists in the production of the newspaper, and pays for the food for the family celebration at the end of the expedition. The newspaper gets great positive P.R., gets their product in the hands of potential new customers (the children's parents), and provides employees with meaningful volunteer opportunities.

Sponsor our financial assistance program:

Our sites are located in _____. Over _____ percent of children in the school system are on some sort of assisted lunch program. This population desperately needs enrichment programs after school. While our fees for the program are extremely low, there are still many families who cannot afford the \$____ per hour that we charge. To aid us in offering the program to all children, our Corporate Partners can commit to subsidizing a certain number of children who can not afford the program.

Resources on Partnership Building

The following resources are a sampling of the many resources available on the subject. This list does not constitute an endorsement by the U.S. Government, the Corporation for National Service, or the National Institute on Out-of-School Time. Unless otherwise noted, the following resources are available through local bookstores, online booksellers, or through companies that specialize in curriculum and materials for children such as School-Age NOTES (1-800-410-8780 or www.schoolagenotes.com), Quest International (1-800-446-2770 or www.quest.edu), or Innovative Educators (1-888-252-KIDS or innovative-educators.com). Many resources can be borrowed from the National Service Resource Center library (1-800-860-2684 or www.etr.org/NSRC).

Building Relationships with Parents and Families in School-Age Programs
by Roberta L. Newman

“Chapter 2: Choosing Partners” from *School-Age Child Care: An Action Manual for the 90s and Beyond* by Michelle Seligson and Michael Allenson

“Identifying Local Resources for your Literacy Program” On-line materials available from LEARNS and applicable to out-of-school programs with or without a literacy focus. Available at www.nwrel.org/learns.

Training and Technical Assistance for Corporation for National Service programs on sustainability and collaboration-building is available from Campaign Consultation. Go to etr.org/nsrs/resguide for explanation of services available and contact information on this T/TA provider.

Service-Learning In Out-Of-School Time Programs

Service-Learning in Out-of-School Time Programs

AGENDA

- I. Needs/Interests/Resources Assessment
- II. Memory Exercise
- III. Learning Opportunities Offered by Service-Learning in Out-of-School Time
- IV. Definition of Service-Learning
- V. Importance of Service-Learning
- VI. Benefits of Service-Learning
- VII. Eight Keys to Effective Project Planning
- VIII. Sample Project Ideas
- IX. Brainstorming Activity
- X. Resources

****Corporation for National Service programs have permission to copy materials in this packet for training and reference purposes. Pages should be copied as is, with the National Institute on Out-of-School Time referenced at the bottom of each page.*

Service-Learning in Out-of-School Programs

I. Needs/Interests/Resources Assessment

- Who does service-learning or service projects in their program?
- What sort of projects have you done/do you do?
- What brought you to this workshop?

II. Memory Exercise *(participants discuss in pairs or threes, then share with the larger group)*

- What kind of service did you do as a child? Service can mean informal service (like helping your mom or an elderly neighbor), formal service (like helping at a soup kitchen) and service leadership (like planning and directing service projects).
- What did the service you did in your youth mean to you? How do you think it affected who you are today?

III. Learning Opportunities Offered by Service-Learning in Out-of-School Time

Young people can find great satisfaction and wonderful learning opportunities in planning and participating in community service. Schools around the country have integrated the concept of service-learning into their regular curriculum, connecting it to academic subjects. But learning can be combined with service with or without an academic focus. Participating in service can offer young people opportunities to learn about:

- **Awareness**
- **Teamwork**
- **Responsibility**
- **Compassion**
- **Citizenship**

As youth help plan and execute service projects, they are presented with excellent opportunities to develop:

- **Leadership**
- **Research skills**
- **Public speaking abilities**
- **Project management skills**

Out-of-school programs can be the perfect setting for service that is connected to both academic and nonacademic learning opportunities.

IV. Definition of Service-Learning

Definition of Service-Learning:

In the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, service-learning is defined as an educational method:

- “under which students or participants learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that is conducted in and meets the needs of a community;
- “which is coordinated within an elementary school, secondary school, institution of higher education, or community service program [including out-of-school programs], and with the community;
- “which helps foster civic responsibility;
- “which is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students, or the educational components of the program in which the participant is enrolled; and
- “which provides structured time for the students or participants to reflect on the service experience.”

According to this definition, some of the main components of service-learning are:

- **Active participation**
- **Meeting real needs**
- **Fostering of civic responsibility**
- **Integration of educational objectives**
- **Structured reflection**

Difference between “service” and “service-learning”

Community service becomes “service-learning” when those leading the service consciously draw out and build on the learning opportunities inherent in hands-on service activities. Regular service projects are transformed into service-learning when the academic and social skills involved in planning and performing projects are emphasized and youth are engaged in reflection on their actions. Effective service-learning involves ongoing service and long-term relationship-building between young people and those they are serving.

<p>Service = ACTION</p>	<p>Service-Learning = ACTION PRECEDED BY CAREFUL PLANNING; ACTION COMBINED WITH REFLECTION; THOUGHTFUL ACTION; ACTIVE YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN PLANNING AND ACTION; ONGOING SERVICE AND RELATIONSHIPS</p>
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V. Importance of Service-Learning

Young people need more opportunities to give, to develop skills, to do meaningful activities, to develop strong relationships

According to research done in support of the Presidents' Summit on America's Future, young people need five resources in order to be successful:

- An ongoing relationship with a caring adult – parent, mentor, tutor or coach
- A safe place with structured activities during non-school hours
- A healthy start
- A marketable skill through effective education
- An opportunity to give back through community service

Just as much as they need help from adults to have meaningful relationships, safe places, health, and marketable skills, young people need help from adults to find ways to take responsibility and become contributing members of their community. Just like adults, children, especially as they grow older, desperately need to feel like they have a place in this world, that they matter, that they can make a difference.

According to a recent report by the Search Institute, "Young people say they have few opportunities to contribute. One of the scarcest assets among sixth to twelfth graders is the opportunity to be resources to their communities. Only 25% of 100,000 youth surveyed during the 96 – 97 school year said they have many opportunities to contribute."

Young people who are involved in meaningful service activities typically have high self-esteem, good teamwork skills, strong leadership skills, and a sense of connection with their community.

VI. Benefits of Service-Learning

Some benefits for young people

- Gives young people more opportunities to do something REAL
- Helps them learn to be citizens of their community
- Builds research and planning skills
- Builds teamwork skills
- Builds social skills
- Builds responsibility and awareness
- Offers the opportunity to experience the joy of completing something tangible and feeling good about meaningful accomplishments
- It's FUN (provided that the service is well-planned and age-appropriate)

Some benefits to your program:

- Positive publicity for what you are doing with young people
- Opportunities to build good will with those you work with (such as the building custodian as children help with a cleaning project, schoolteachers as youth do something special for their teachers, etc.)
- Stronger curriculum, increasing interesting activities and options for young people
- Staff excitement about doing something new and meaningful
- Parental and school involvement (Many programs get parents and others involved in their program for the first time when they ask for help with a service-learning project. After this first time, many want to stay involved.)

Some benefits to your community:

- Really help make your community better, meet real needs
- Build mutually beneficial and lasting relationships in your community

VII. Eight Keys to Effective Project Planning

Choose Appropriate Projects

Children of all ages can be involved in planning, executing and reflecting on service activities. Younger children often respond well to projects that have quick and tangible results and involve a lot of action (like picking up trash, doing a performance for elderly people, writing letters to soldiers overseas). While projects for younger children may be quite simple, they can still offer children opportunities to participate in planning and reflection. Older children can often take on more involved projects that require more extensive preparation. Children of all ages can benefit from participation in on-going service that allows them to get to know those they are serving. Involve children in brainstorming and researching project ideas. Give them specific and age-appropriate roles in planning and executing projects.

Keep It Simple

Meaningful service-learning opportunities do not need to involve lots of money, complicated transportation, or many materials. Projects can be simple, tangible, and focused and can take place in walking distance from your site or right at your site. Bear in mind that effective service-learning should involve on-going projects rather than single episode projects.

Have Young People Help Plan and Execute Projects

Actively involve youth of all ages in planning and executing service-learning projects. Children can help with every step of the planning and execution of almost any project. Project planning offers youth excellent opportunities to develop research, strategic planning, and other important life skills.

- Discuss community needs and encourage youth to think about the resources and abilities they have that could meet the needs they see.
- Younger children may need you to offer them concrete ideas and options about appropriate service projects. Older children can take more of a leadership role in brainstorming and researching ideas.
- Youth can be involved in:
 - ⇒ making phone calls (finding a project, coordinating logistics, asking questions about needs, times, dates, etc.)
 - ⇒ thinking about what materials are needed to complete the project (using math skills to figure out quantities needed)
 - ⇒ obtaining materials (getting donations, going with staff to purchase supplies, etc.)
 - ⇒ dividing up work (deciding who should do what and when it needs to be done)

Develop Partnerships

Set up a partnership with a local service agency such as:

- a local volunteer center
- community center
- food bank
- nursing home
- homeless shelter
- hospital

Invite a representative to come and talk with youth about the work of their organization and about the needs the organization tries to meet. Young people can "adopt" a group and develop meaningful relationships as they serve the same people on a regular basis. Have youth suggest types of organizations they'd like to partner with and help them research potential partnerships. They can look at the yellow pages listings for social service organizations and ask parents and community members for ideas.

Be Persistent and Specific

Many service agencies and volunteer centers are not used to the idea of young people as volunteers. They may not readily have ideas about what young people can do to help.

- Invite representatives to come meet young people and talk about needs.
- Be prepared to offer concrete suggestions of what your group can do.
- Be persistent.

Chances are, once service agencies meet the young people and see what good they can do, resistance will melt away.

Engage Young People in Reflection

Reflection is a vital step in the process of transforming "service" into "service-learning." Through encouraging youth to think about and reflect on the needs of their community and the impact of the projects they do, staff can make the most of the learning possibilities inherent in service projects. Effective reflection practices should include:

- a special time set aside for group discussion
- an ongoing process of capitalizing on the "learning moments" that arise throughout the process of planning, executing, and following up on the project

Ideas for reflection questions to be used in discussions:

- ⇒ How do you think our project made a difference? What more could we have done?
- ⇒ How does it make you feel to help other people?
- ⇒ What did you learn that you could apply to other aspects of your life?
- ⇒ What can we do to follow up on our project? What more can we do about the issue we addressed?

Celebrate Efforts

Like all of us, young people need to see that their efforts are worthwhile and appreciated. Sometimes projects don't go as planned and the results are not gratifying. Young people's efforts can always be congratulated and the work they have done and the learning they have achieved can be celebrated regardless of the overall success of the project.

- Regularly thank young people for their work.
- Make sure that organizations and individuals benefiting from your group's work express their thanks directly to the young people involved.
- Help young people see that the good feelings they get from helping others is part of their reward.
- On a daily basis, recognize young people who help each other, show courtesy, and do things without being asked. Help youth see that their everyday actions are connected to building and sustaining a strong community.

Involve Families

- Parents and family members can offer great support for service-learning and often welcome the opportunity to be involved in the program in meaningful ways.
- Tap into the knowledge, ideas, and resources of families. Have youth find out what ideas their parents have about the needs of their community.
- Ask for help from families in planning and executing service projects.

VIII. Sample Project Ideas

SERVICE PROJECT	SOME LEARNING POSSIBILITIES
Plant a community garden in partnership with senior citizens in your neighborhood.	Learn about plants, gardening, and landscaping. Get to know seniors and learn from them.
On a regular basis, perform a play, read to people, or sing a song at a nursing home or hospital and take time to get to know people there. Set up a pen-pal program and write letters or draw pictures to send if transportation is an issue.	Practice singing, performing, conversation, and/or writing skills. Learn about nursing homes, aging, or hospitals. Learn how to relate to new people and make new friends.
Develop "reading buddies." Within your program or in partnership with another program, assign older children to younger children and have them read to each other regularly.	Solidify the reading skills of both younger and older children. Older children learn responsibility, patience, and teaching skills. Offer older children simple training about being a good tutor.
Hold a toy/food/clothing drive for a homeless shelter or soup kitchen.	Learn about hunger and homelessness while developing, planning, organizing, counting, and sorting skills.
Put together "personal hygiene kits" (toothpaste, soap, etc.) for a homeless shelter. Ask the children to bring in sample soaps, shampoos, etc.	Learn about homelessness. Use math to figure out numbers of kits to be made given the number of items available.
Adopt a local park and work to keep it clean. Pick up trash on a regular basis. If there seems to be a shortage of trash receptacles, find out who is in charge and write letters.	Learn about the impact of litter. Learn to do research and practice writing skills. Learn to notice needs and do something about what you notice. Learn about responsibility and accountability.
Develop a fruit and vegetable stand that serves snacks to children and sells healthy food to adults.	Learn about food and nutrition. Learn entrepreneurship. Practice math skills and learn about marketing and business skills.
Regularly sort food at a nearby food pantry or help prepare and serve food at a soup kitchen.	Learn about hunger issues in your community. Use counting and sorting skills and/or measuring and cooking skills.
Write a cookbook. Sell it and give the proceeds to a local cause.	Learn about healthy cooking and menu planning. Practice marketing and language arts skills.

IX. Brainstorming Activity *(use with staff or young people)*

- Divide into groups of three to five people
- First step: Each group brainstorms at least five simple, effective service projects that would be appropriate for a specific age range of children. If you like, ask them to come up with projects that fill certain categories such as one-time projects, ongoing projects, hunger projects, holiday projects, homelessness projects, environment/clean-up projects.
- Second step: Each group creates a chart with four columns: “Project Name,” “Benefits to the Community,” “Learning Objectives,” “Follow-Up Ideas.” Have groups fill in their top project ideas in the project name column and fill the other columns with notes on the specific learning that the project would promote and ideas for follow-up activities.
- Third step: Groups share their ideas with the larger group.

Resources for Service-Learning

This list is a sampling of resources available on the subject of service-learning. Listing materials here does not constitute official endorsement by the U.S. Government, the Corporation for National Service, or the National Institute on Out-of-School Time. Unless otherwise noted, the following resources are available through local bookstores, online booksellers, or through companies that specialize in curriculum and materials for children such as School-Age NOTES (1-800-410-8780 or www.schoolagenotes.com), Quest International (1-800-446-2770 or www.quest.edu), or Free Spirit Publishing (1-800-735-7323). Many resources can be borrowed from the National Service Resource Center library (1-800-860-2684 or www.etr.org/NSRC).

Kid's Guide to Service Projects: Over 500 Service Ideas for Young People Who Want to Make a Difference by Barbara Lewis. Service project ideas for children and youth that range from simple one-time projects to large-scale commitments.

Kid's Guide to Social Action: How to Solve the Social Problems You Choose by Barbara Lewis. How-to manual offering kids the tools they need to effect change and inspirational stories of youth who have made a difference.

Children as Volunteers by Susan J. Ellis, Anne Weisbord and Katherine H. Noyes. Ideas for designing appropriate and effective volunteer opportunities for children under age 14.

The Service-Learning Bookshelf: A Bibliography of Fiction and Nonfiction in Inspire Student Learning and Action by Cathryn Berger Kaye. Available by calling (310) 397-0070.

Making a Difference (student magazine) featuring activities, writing by young people, ideas on service.

The Real Heroes (video) featuring personal testimonies from young people involved in a variety of service projects.

Today's Heroes (videos and guides) featuring typical teenagers who share stories of service experiences. Available from the Points of Light Foundation by calling 1-800-272-8306.

ORGANIZATIONS AND WEB SITES:

The Service-Learning Exchange

Phone: 1-877-LSA-EXCHange; Web site: www.lsaexchange.org

Opportunities to connect with peer mentors, information on events and initiatives, help locating local resources

National Service-Learning Clearinghouse

Phone: 1-800-808-7378; Web site: www.nisl.coled.umn.edu

Publications lists, info on joining a listserv, links to other sites, general information on service-learning

ServNet

Web site: www.servenet.org

Connects youth to volunteer opportunities in their local community

The Points of Light Foundation

Phone: (202) 729-8000; Web site: www.pointsoflight.org

Information on volunteer centers as well as youth service training opportunities and publications

Learn and Serve America

Phone: (202) 606-5000; Web site: www.nationalservice.org/learn/index.html

Information on grants and resources available for service-learning through the Corporation for National Service