CHAPTER D.

Creating a Positive After School Program Climate

Resources for Teachers & After School Program Staff

Chapter Highlights:
✓ Best Practices for after school programs
✓ ExCEL How To Guides to implement activities with ease

D-1-2 SHPD ExCEL Best Practices Tip Sheet– Youth Development & Asset Building
D-3 How to Guides Overview
D-5 How to Form Respectful, Caring Relationships with Young People
D-6 50 Ways to Show Kids You Care
D-7 How to Use Positive Behavior Management
D-8 99 Ways to Tell a Student They Did Something Great
D-9 How to Develop Youth as Conflict Mediators
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D-13 How to Hold A Family Night
D-15-16 How to Give Youth Opportunities for Choice & Sample Program Sign-Up
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D-19-20 How to Foster Youth-Led Service Learning & Service Learning Planning Form
Train staff in youth development and asset building principles. Incorporate these skills in planning program activities, creating the after school program structure and developing the program’s vision.

Build Relationships! Smile and address students by name and make time to foster caring relationships with youth.

Communicate with youth using asset-based language instead of responding to students’ deficits. Model positive behavior, acknowledge student’s strengths and utilize teachable moments with the young people in your program.

Youth buy-in. Create opportunities for students to have a sense of ownership of their after school program and to share their ideas and opinions with adults (e.g. Incorporate opportunities for youth to choose activities on a regular basis, give enrichment activity ideas, youth-led activities, help to plan events, participate in focus groups, complete youth surveys).

Youth roles. Create opportunities for youth to lead their peers by making daily program announcements, leading activities, or being involved with youth leadership groups. Establish peer-tutors, peer-mediators and tour guides for the after school program.

Provide youth leadership training and opportunities for youth to build leadership skills so that they will be successful in taking leadership roles within the after school program (e.g. professionalism expectations, tutoring skills, public speaking, meeting facilitation, conflict mediation).

Incorporate community building activities, icebreakers, community circles and youth forums to give youth a fun and safe place to share information about themselves and learn about their peers.

Regularly recognize student and program successes (daily shout-outs, youth awards, peer appreciation board, student incentive systems).

Showcase youth’s accomplishments, completed projects, and program successes through program events/showcases, newsletters or bulletin boards.
Resources:
• After School Alliance- www.afterschoolallaince.org
• Community Network for Youth Development (CNYD) youth development framework, activities and resources- www.cnyd.org
• Community Network for Youth Development (CNYD) Youth Development On-Line, a free on-line resource for youth development professionals- www.cnyd.org/ydol_beta/
• National Institute of Out of School Time- www.niost.org
• National Youth Development Information Center- www.nydic.org/nydic/
• Search Institute Asset Building Information and Tools, including the 40 Developmental Assets™- www.search-institute.org/
• Youth Leadership Institute- www.yli.org
The following “How to Guides” are tools, templates and worksheets that can be adapted to meet your after school program or classroom needs to create a positive climate.

- How to Form Respectful, Caring Relationships with Young People
- 50 Ways to Show Kids You Care
- How to Use Positive Behavior Management
- 99 Ways to Tell a Student They Did Something Great
- How to Develop Youth as Conflict Mediators
- Conflict Resolution Agreement, Conflict Mediation Process, I-Messages
- How to Hold A Family Night
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- How to Foster Youth-Led Service Learning & Service Learning Planning Form

*Special thanks to the ExCEL District Coordinators and the 2005-06 ExCEL Mentors who contributed these “How To Guides.”

For a complete list of ExCEL After School programs resources, check the ExCEL website for the ExCEL ASP Resource Guide:
HOW TO FORM RESPECTFUL, CARING, GENUINE RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

When you form asset-rich relationships with young people, you take the initiative. You interact with young people; you don’t usually interact with, and not just in the usual places. Think of young people not as students but as people, so that wherever you see them - in a line in the grocery store, on the street, in a theatre - you have an opportunity to make them feel that they matter.

1. **Use the young person’s name or nickname**

2. **Know something about the young person**
   - What does the young person like to do?
   - What does the young person avoid doing?
   - What are the young person’s strengths?
   - What does the young person need?
   - What’s going on in the young person’s life?

3. **Listen to the young person and respond accordingly**
   - Support (e.g., “I know you can do this, and I know you’ll do the best you can too.”)
   - Challenge (e.g., “That’s going to take some hard work from you.”)
   - Acknowledgment (e.g., “I hear what you’re saying; that’s got to be tough”)
   - Attention (e.g., “Okay, tell me again how you did it.”)
   - Analysis (e.g., “And how will that accomplish what you want to do?”)

4. **Do something for or with the young person outside your routine**
   - Attend an athletic event that the young person is participating in.
   - Sponsor an activity that the young person is participating in.
   - Help the young person with a project.
   - Learn something together with the young person.
   - Eat lunch with the young person.
   - E-mail the young person.

5. **Maintain contact**
   - Follow up with the young person.
   - Remember the young person on birthdays and holidays.

Adapted from *Pass It On At School Activity Handouts*, Copyright ©1997 by Search Institute, Minneapolis, MN 800-888-7828; www.search-institute.org
50 Ways to Show Kids You Care
By Jolene L. Roehlkepartain

Everyone in a community can make a difference in the lives of children and youth. Even if you don’t think you can tackle tough problems such as violence, alcohol and other drug use, or school problems, you can make a difference by being a caring, responsible friend for young people. Need some ideas for what you can do? Here are 50 of them:

1. Notice them.
2. Smile a lot.
3. Acknowledge them.
4. Learn their names.
5. Seek them out.
6. Remember their birthdays.
7. Ask them about themselves.
8. Make eye contact when you talk.
9. Listen to them.
10. Play with them.
11. Read aloud together.
13. Be nice.
14. Say yes a lot.
15. Tell them their feelings are okay.
16. Set boundaries that keep them safe.
17. Be honest.
18. Be yourself.
19. Listen to their stories.
20. Hug them.
21. Forget your worries and concentrate on them.
22. Notice when they’re acting differently.
23. Present options when they seek your counsel.
24. Play outside together.
25. Surprise them.
26. Stay with them when they’re afraid.
27. Apologize when you’ve done something wrong.
28. Suggest better behaviors when they act out.
29. Feed them when they’re hungry.
30. Delight in their discoveries.
31. Share their excitement.
32. Send them a letter or postcard.
33. Follow them when they lead.
34. Notice when they’re absent.
35. Be consistent.
36. Notice when they grow.
37. Give them space when they need it.
38. Contribute to their collections.
39. Discuss their dreams and nightmares.
40. Laugh at their jokes.
41. Be relaxed.
42. Kneel, squat, or sit so you’re at their eye level.
43. Answer their questions.
44. Learn what they have to teach.
45. Use your ears more than your mouth.
46. Make yourself available.
47. Attend concerts, games, and events.
48. Find a common interest.
49. Include them in conversations.
50. Trust them.
HOW TO USE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Once the program has a set of clear expectations, make sure the staff is managing students’ behavior in a more effective way by highlighting the positive parts of behavior, rather than always focusing on the negative. Students become more empowered when they can clearly see the direct results that follow their behavior. Students who make good behavior choices receive positive results; students who make poor choices receive consequences without being singled-out or cut-down.

1) Be concise, be clear and be consistent
   - Rules should be easy to understand and easy to remember. Use a few simple rules that can apply to many situations and discuss their real-life application with students. Be safe, be respectful and be responsible is a great starting point. Being respectful can apply to “respect for other students’ property, feelings, as well as respect for teachers and school property.”
   - Have staff model the behavior expectations at all times, and consistently remind students of behavior expectations.

2) Update language in the program—both written and verbal
   - Look at your posted rules—are they positive? For example, instead of “no inappropriate language” write, “use safe language” or for “no running in the halls” write, “walk in the halls.” Focus on the positive!
   - Focus on students who are exhibiting positive behavior. “Great job Jessie and Billy for following my directions and sitting quietly at your desks.”
   - Like the written directions, use positive directions when speaking to the students. “Walk,” rather than “Don’t run.” “How should you sit at the table?” rather than “Don’t stand on the table!”

3) Use logical consequences
   - Have a clear set of consequences all staff and students know and understand.
   - Make the consequence logical and fair (much like, “the punishment fits the crime”). If a student is off-task during homework time or a group activity, and they have received warnings, take time out of their recess or free-time rather than out of the activity. Since they are using the group’s time as their own recess, the student will lose their own time.

4) Implement a rewards system.
   - Spirit Week! Groups or classes can compete against each other to earn points weekly to earn a popsicle and/or pizza party. To win points the group must exhibit the program’s stated expectations, as well as go above and beyond with helping out leaders and peers.
   - Stamp Store! Students earn points (or stamps or stickers) individually that they can trade-in for prizes (i.e. small toys, stickers, tattoos, pencils, bookmarks, games), field trips (to the local park, zoo, nature hike, beach—the possibilities are endless), movies, etc., etc.

WHAT SHOULD I HAVE IN MY TOOL BOX?

- Many different ways to praise students and utilize positive language. (See reverse side for an example.)
- The ability to try different approaches. If it doesn’t work the first time, don’t lose hope...try again, or change the approach.
- Follow through! Be prepared to give the logical consequences that follow the behavior, be consistent and fair.
- A print-rich environment. If you have a Spirit Week or some other rewards system...chart the students’ progress for all to see—that way they can see how far they’ve come and how far they need to go.

I HAVE A TIGHT BUDGET, WHAT’S THIS GOING TO COST ME?

The prizes in a rewards system for positive behavior management can be as simple or as intricate as a program needs.

- $ A high-five and a smile or free-time for the student is always appreciated ($0)
- $ Popsicles ($4-box of 12) or pizza ($10-$15 for a lg. cheese—don’t forget that with a little time and effort frozen pizza also works as an even cheaper option!) or popcorn.
- $ Small toys, stickers, pencils or games from a $.99 cents store, “Oriental Trading Company” or “S&S Worldwide” are some of the most cost effective. ($.99 to $250)
- $ Ask for donations! Local vendors may donate what you need, if not they may give you a percentage off.
99 Ways to Tell a Student They Did Something Great...

Teaching youth how to solve problems, as well as how to mediate the problems of their peers, generates a safe after school program climate and provides youth with an opportunity for meaningful program participation. Follow these simple steps to prepare youth to be successful conflict mediators.

1) Conflict Mediation Program Set Up
- Generate a conversation with students on conflicts that they have observed. How do conflicts start? How do they get resolved? Have they helped a friend resolve a conflict?
- Work with youth to generate a survey to ask students about the types of conflicts they encounter in the program.
- Have students who are interested in being Conflict Mediators complete an application and/or interview.
- Identify an adult ally who is responsible for training and holding regular check-ins with Conflict Mediators as well as checking in with “disputants” before they meet with the Conflict Mediators.

2) Train Students
Once you have a group of youth interested in being Conflict Mediators, train the students in the conflict mediation process:
1. Introduce Yourself And Establish Ground Rules (e.g. Respect, Listen, No Interruptions, No Put-Downs)
3. Paraphrase, Or Repeat What Each Person Says.
4. Ask What Each Person Is Willing To Do To Resolve this Problem. Encourage I-Messages. (See I-Message Poster)
5. Ask Each Person If They Are Willing To Complete A Conflict Resolution Agreement (Sample On Reverse).
6. Thank Them Both And Ask If They Want To Shake Hands.

3) Skill Building & Support
- Create a schedule of students who are expected to be on “duty” to assist with conflicts.
- Schedule a regular time for Conflict Mediators to check-in, work on their skills and share what they are learning.
- Have Conflict Mediators do mini-presentations or make posters to introduce the program and how students can access the services.
- Encourage Conflict Mediators to recruit and train others.

Adapted from materials provided by Soul Shoppe and Peer Resources, 2006
Conflict Resolution Agreement

Date: ____________________

Work with each other to complete this form to resolve the conflict by agreeing to what you will do or will not do from now on to settle your disagreement.

(Name)

I agree to:

• __________________________________________________________
  __________________________________________________________
  __________________________________________________________
  __________________________________________________________
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(Name)

I agree to:

• __________________________________________________________
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  __________________________________________________________

Signature of Student

Conflict Mediator

Signature of Student

Conflict Mediator
CONFLICT MEDIATION PROCESS

1. **Introduce Yourself And Establish Ground Rules**
   (e.g. respect, listen, no interruptions, no put-downs)

2. **Give Each Person A Chance To Describe What Happened**

3. **Paraphrase, Or Repeat What Each Person Says**
   (e.g. “I heard Maria say.......”)

4. **Ask What Each Person Is Willing To Do To Have This Problem Resolved. Encourage I-Messages.**
   (e.g. “What can be done to resolve this conflict?” See I-Messages poster to help students use I-Messages)

5. **Ask Each Person If They Are Willing To Complete A Conflict Resolution Agreement**

6. **Thank Them Both And Ask If They Want To Shake Hands**
I- MESSAGES

I felt ____________________

When you _______________

And I want you to __________

_______________________
HOW TO HOLD A FAMILY NIGHT

- Do you want more parent and caregiver involvement in your program?
- Do you find it hard to really reach out and talk with parent and caregivers and caregivers?
- Do you find that the only time you can make time to talk with parent and caregivers and caregivers is when a child is having difficulties?

If so, have you given any thought to having monthly Family Nights? These nights are all about having fun, and seeing and meeting other families and friends. It’s a great way to get parent and caregivers and caregivers involved in your program. They are easy to do and can be cheap as well.

Some examples of successful family nights are:

| *Movie Night | *BINGO Night | *Game Night |
| *Family Dinner Night | *Karaoke Night |

The trick to keeping costs low is to ask for volunteers (friends, family is, etc.). The Family Nights generally last two hours, and clean-up can last up to a half hour after the event is finished. If your staff are not able to volunteer, don’t despair. Believe it or not, you can run the event by yourself and ask for student and family volunteers once the event is underway.

Please note: Remind staff not to talk about student behavior (unless it’s good news).

Plan out your Family Nights for the entire year, that way you can solicit necessary donations well ahead of time. We have gotten fun raffle prizes, food, and drinks donated from local businesses.

Advertise your family night about a week ahead of time. Mention it to the students—a lot. Create an eye-catching flier to hand out to all families a week before the event. Our Family Nights are held on the third Friday of every month.

Family Nights can seem daunting, but the payoff is priceless. Families trust you and your staff more, students feel even more of a connection to your program, and everybody has a great time.
HOW TO GIVE YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHOICE

We all want the youth to feel connected to our programs. We want the youth to feel safe and supported, with opportunities to express themselves and to grow. Giving youth voice in the set-up of program schedules, sign-ups for activities and choices of electives can be a highly-successful way to achieve youth buy-in. This method can also be used for youth of all ages, from elementary to middle to high school students.

1) When should I start?
Opportunities for youth choice need to start in the program from the first day. The greater variety of youth choice more often means the greater the buy-in from the youth. If youth choice hasn’t been a big focus in the program yet...then start right away!

2) Where can youth choice fit into my program?
There are many ways to incorporate youth choice into the day-to-day program and choices in actual activities in the program schedule.

- The site coordinator can get student feedback about the program schedule and the types of enrichments offered in program.
- Line staff fit youth choice into deciding on what to teach as well as behavior management.

3) What do everyday youth choice questions sound like?
The site coordinator may have focus groups or surveys to ask the students what enrichments they like best—or what activities they would like to see in the program, as well as if they need more time for certain activities. Sample survey questions for youth choice may include:

- “What activities do you enjoy most in the after school program?”
- “Do you feel like you have enough time for homework in the ASP?”
- “What changes do you think should be made in the program schedule?”

All staff has the opportunity to create choice in their lesson plans and programming. Creating two different lesson plans and letting the students choose which one they want to play is great for letting the youth feel connected to the program and giving the youth choice.

- “Would you rather play ‘Math Around the World’ or ‘Math Quiz Game’?”
- “Would you rather do your homework now during homework time or during recess?”
- “What are your favorite P.E. games? If we play ‘Grab the Apple’ and ‘All-Run Kickball’ you can have 10 minutes of kickback at the end of our class.’”

WHAT SHOULD I HAVE IN MY TOOL BOX?

- Provide staff training to give them ideas on quick and easy techniques for youth choice in their individual classes.
- Easy-to-update youth interest sheets (see the example of the sample youth classes and clubs sign-up on reverse).
- Have a set of questions concerning program to survey the students individually or through small focus groups—ask follow-ups after initial evaluations to see how the program is working.

I HAVE A TIGHT BUDGET, WHAT’S THIS GOING TO COST ME?

Including opportunities for youth choice in programs can be as costly or inexpensive as a program may need. Giving the youth voice in a program on a day-to-day basis doesn’t cost any money but is vital for youth buy-in and development.

$ Individual surveys for youth on white paper (Office Depot Recycled paper—500 sheets, $3.99 & copy costs from $0-.10 per copy).
$ Polling youth in classes and through focus groups ($0).
$ Prizes for youth to fill out extensive program surveys ($0.05-$1.50 per youth participant).
Sample Classes & Clubs Sign-up

NAME

GRADE

Hey Students! This is your chance to sign-up for classes and clubs. We will try to give you at least one class you are interested in, plus the clubs that you are most interested in. Not everyone may get their top choice, but we will try!

CLASSES: Check the box next to the class you would love to go to. Check as many classes that interest you, be aware some classes may take place during homework time, others during community time.

☐ CERAMICS (2/3)
☐ ARTS AND CRAFTS
☐ PUBLIC SPEAKING (2/3)
☐ NUTRITION (2/3)
☐ BOOKMAKING WORKSHOP
☐ MURAL MAKING

☐ CERAMICS (4/5)
☐ DANCE
☐ PUBLIC SPEAKING (4/5)
☐ NUTRITION (4/5)
☐ ROPE MAKING WORKSHOP
☐ SPORTS CLASS (3/4/5)

CLUBS #1: (These choices are for the first round of clubs starting Friday February 4th and lasting for three Fridays total)
Order the clubs from 1-5, with “1” as your first choice
___ Craft Stick Club - Marianne
___ German Club #2 - Michael
___ Mobile Club - Martha
___ Building Club - Desiree
___ The Zine Club- Charlyne and Naomi (lasts for 6 Fridays)

MONITOR SIGN-UP: Check the box next to the Monitor spot you would like to fill.
☐ Pencil Sharpener Monitor (4th and 5th Grades only)
☐ Ball Monitor (2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Grades)
☐ Hall Monitor (3rd, 4th and 5th Grades)
☐ Snack Monitor (4th and 5th Grades only)
HOW TO CREATE A STUDENT ADVISORY GROUP

Having a youth advisory group, an “afterschool student council,” is a great way to increase the youth leadership opportunities in your program! It’s also a big undertaking and one that can be anticlimactic if you don’t put some real thought into it first.

Here are some things to think about:

1) **Be clear on what role you’d like your student leaders to take on.** Youth advisory groups can be great for planning program wide contests, coming up with youth friendly incentive programs, advertising upcoming events, helping with set-up and decoration of special events.

2) **Decide how you want to select your members.** One way to choose your youth advisory group is to use an application process in which interested students fill out a questionnaire, go through an interview process and are selected onto the board. A second method is to have each club select 1 or 2 representatives to sit on the board.

3) **Decide how many students you want on your board.** On our board we had about 30 representatives and found that about 2/3 of them showed up to each meeting... which was a little too much to really get a lot of planning done, but was great for getting signs made about upcoming events, contests, etc. and for getting the word out to their clubs. (The week after each meeting the representatives from each club would share out any updates from the meeting to the club that they represented.) If you want to have a large youth advisory group to make sure you have a good cross-section of your student population, you might think of electing a leadership team of about 3-5 students to plan more details, etc.

4) **How often should your youth advisory board meet?** It’s important that you determine what your expectations are from your youth advisory board and determine how often they will need to meet in order to meet these expectations. It’s also important to balance this with the time commitment that you can put into meeting with them. Once a month or every other week is a good time frame to aim for.

5) **How will you reward the students on your board?** Rewarding your students can be as simple as providing lunch at the meetings or giving door prizes to the students that participate. You might also see if you have it in your budget to provide a stipend to the students that attend meetings and contribute to the group.

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WHAT SHOULD I HAVE IN MY TOOL BOX?

- A student advisory group application. (See reverse side for an example.)
- A list of items you would like to address with your student advisory group.
- Create an agenda!!! When working with an advisory group it is very important to identify what you wish to accomplish.
- Follow up! (Ok, this isn’t really something you can have in your tool box, but it is **still** important.)

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I HAVE A TIGHT BUDGET, WHAT IS THIS GOING TO

A Student Advisory Committee can be as costly or as inexpensive as you want it to be... Here are some costs which can *(but don’t have to be)* incurred:

- Student stipends typically range from $25 - $100 depending on the students age.
- Gift cards can be given as “thank yous” in denominations from $5 - $20.
- Budget $20 for snacks for the meetings (pretzels, chips, soda, etc.) or $50 for lunch.
- Door-prizes can be anything from notebooks, pens, games, etc.
Student Voice Application

Name: 

Homeroom Teacher:

Parent/Guardian Name: 

Phone Number:

Why do you want to be on the Student Voice?

Please have two adults act as references for you:

Reference Name: 

Contact Number

Please briefly describe the qualities that ______________ has that makes him/her a great student leader.

Reference Name: 

Contact Number

Please briefly describe the qualities that ______________ has that makes him/her a great student leader.
HOW TO FOSTER YOUTH-LED SERVICE LEARNING

Research has shown that youth who participate meaningfully in their community are more successful in school. Follow these simple steps to assist youth in designing and carrying out service learning projects in their communities.

1. **Create the time and space:** Here are some questions to consider when arranging for Service Learning projects:
   - Will the projects be carried out as electives or as a required component of your program?
   - Will the service be a one-day event, or ongoing projects?
   - Will the projects take place on or off site?
   - Will everyone do one project, or will projects be done in small groups or individually?
   - **Find a project:** Allow youth to determine what the service project will be:
     - Begin your program by asking youth to brainstorm where help is needed in their community
     - Ask youth to come up with ideas for how they might help those in need (e.g. clean a park, make get-well cards for children in the hospital, knit hats for the homeless, etc.)
     - Assist youth in completing the service learning project planning form to identify resources needed, plan project, and create a timeline (attached)

2. **Prepare for the project:**
   - Before doing service, provide articles or lead discussions that address the larger picture of your service project (e.g. read an article or watch a movie about homelessness, the environment, or hunger)
   - Assist students with making phone calls to agencies, gathering materials, and planning for their projects

3. **Create a space for Reflection:**
   - After each project, allow students to reflect on their experience. Samples of Effective Journal Questions are attached to this sheet.

4. **Celebrate/Appreciate:**
   - Plan a celebration or day of appreciation to recognize the contribution that the youth are making to their community!

## Service Learning Project Planning Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>#1</th>
<th>#2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the top three issues facing your community right now?</td>
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<td>Pick one of the issues. What project can you do to help with this issue?</td>
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<td>Who will benefit from your project?</td>
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<td>What materials will you need?</td>
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<td>When will you do your project?</td>
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<td>Who will help you with your project?</td>
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