

A 4-H AFTERSCHOOL RESOURCE GUIDE

Guiding Growth

**Training Staff for
Working with Youth in
After-School Programs**



18 U.S.C. 707

CREDITS



4-H Afterschool

EXTRAORDINARY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Donald T. Floyd, Jr.
National 4-H Council

Kashyap Choksi
National 4-H Council

Theresa M. Ferrari
Ohio State University

Susan Halbert
National 4-H Council

Lynda Harriman
Oklahoma State University

Andrea Hutson
USDA/Army Youth Development Project, Virginia Cooperative Extension

Sharon K. Junge
University of California

Eric Killian
University of Nevada, Reno

Lisa Lauxman
University of Arizona

Ina Metzger Linville
University of Missouri

Eddie Locklear
North Carolina State University

Gretchen May
University of Massachusetts

Sheila Urban Smith
Michigan State University

Samuel Suina
Institute of American Indian Arts

Deirdre Thompson
University of California

Nancy Valentine
CSREES/USDA

Bonita Williams
Lincoln University Missouri

Sharon K.B. Wright
CSREES/USDA

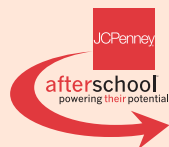
DIRECTOR, 4-H AFTERSCHOOL
Eddie Locklear

COORDINATOR, 4-H AFTERSCHOOL
Ronald C. Drum

EDITOR
Mary Kroll
Kroll Communications

DESIGNER
Amy Billingham
Pensaré Design Group, LTD

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Guiding Growth

Training Staff for Working with Youth in After-School Programs

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What is 4-H?

4-H is the Cooperative Extension System's dynamic, nonformal, educational program for youth. The program partners the cooperative efforts of youth, volunteer leaders, state land grant universities, state and local governments, 4-H foundations, and the Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service (CSREES) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. 4-H is one of the largest youth organizations in the United States, with more than 6.8 million youth and almost 611,000 youth and adult volunteers. The name 4-H is summarized as the four-fold development of youth through the Head, Heart, Hands, and Health.

THE 4-H PLEDGE

I pledge . . .

HEAD my Head
to clearer thinking

HEART my Heart
to greater loyalty

HANDS my Hands
to larger service
and

HEALTH my Health
to better living
for
my club
my community
my country
and
my world.

This resource guide is designed to be used by Extension professionals to train after-school program staff to improve the quality of after-school programming. It represents some of the curricula, ideas, and information available throughout the Cooperative Extension System. Other materials can be used to supplement any trainings, including:

- *Training School-Age Child Care Staff, A Handbook for Workshop Leaders.* Cornell Cooperative Extension.
- *Moving Ahead: Preparing the Youth Development Professional.* 4-H Cooperative Curriculum System. Order at <http://www.n4hccs.org>.

* Introduction based on work by Theresa Ferrari, Ohio State University.

The Issue of After-School Care

Care for school-age children is a concern for millions of American families, particularly those in which the single parent or both parents are employed. With nearly 40 million children between the ages of five and 14, the United States is experiencing a burgeoning need for out-of-school programs.^{1,2}

There is a growing awareness that where youth spend their time, what they do, and with whom they do it are important to their overall development.^{3,4} After-school hours represent either risk or opportunity. Youth who are unsupervised are much more likely to engage in activities that place them at risk.^{5,6} Programs in the out-of-school hours give youth safe, supervised places to spend time, along with chances to learn new skills, develop their interests, and spend meaningful time with peers and adults.

Participation in high quality after-school programs is linked with a lower incidence of problem behaviors, such as decreased academic failure, substance use, and delinquency.^{7,8,9,10,11,12} Furthermore, youth who attend these programs have demonstrated improved academic achievement (e.g., better school attendance and better grades) and improved social skills (e.g., positive relationships with adults, opportunity to make new friends, greater self-concept and self-esteem.)^{13,14,15}

However, it is also well documented that there are challenges in running effective after-school programs.^{16,17,18} Primary among these challenges are program quality, staff training, staff turnover, and consistent funding.

After-school hours represent either risk or opportunity.



A broad range of activities and organizations are described as after-school programs, creating ambiguous definitions.* After-school programs don't always share a common time period (i.e., immediately following the school day), since the term is used broadly to refer to any programs outside of school hours. Additionally, programming in after-school hours is not solely the domain of any one group. The after-school landscape is populated by a myriad of program types, program locations, and sponsoring organizations.

* Gootman, J. (2000). *After-school programs to promote child and adolescent development*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy of Science.

Why Should 4-H Be Involved in After-School Programs?

The current situation represents a tremendous opportunity to align existing youth development programs available through Extension and 4-H with the need for after-school care, as well as an opportunity to create new program delivery models.



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4-H has the resources to provide these after-school opportunities. Providing experiences for young people that address healthy development is the goal of 4-H. Extension helps youth develop into confident, capable, and contributing citizens.

It is probably not feasible for 4-H youth development professionals to meet all the after-school program needs for youth in their communities. However, many communities have existing programs that would benefit from Extension expertise and resources, and they would welcome opportunities to partner with Extension staff.

Elementary and secondary school enrollment is at record levels and is expected to increase every year through the early 2000s. The need for after-school programs will continue to increase.

Although states such as California and North Carolina have a long history of Extension leadership in after-school programming, school-age care education was emphasized nationally when Extension programming expanded in 1991. Thirty school-age child care sites were funded as part the Youth-at-Risk Initiative, a federal budget initiative that supported efforts to help high-risk youth. Two additional national initiatives (Children, Youth, and Families at Risk [CYFAR] and Extension Cares...for America's Children and Youth) have been founded since then, devoting more Extension resources to after-school programs. Despite these efforts, 4-H is not widely known in the after-school arena.

What is 4-H Afterschool?

4-H Afterschool is designed to combine the resources of 4-H and the Cooperative Extension System with community-based organizations that provide after-school programs which address community needs. 4-H Afterschool seeks to increase the quality and quantity of after-school programs. To accomplish this, we've chosen here to focus on improving the ability of program staff to offer high quality care, education, and developmental experiences for youth.

Other materials focus on helping after-school sites start 4-H clubs within their operations and providing activities and learning experiences for day-to-day programming.

How To Use This Resource Guide

This *Guiding Growth: Training Staff for Working with Youth in After-School Programs* resource guide is designed to be used by Extension professionals to train after-school program staff to enhance the quality of care they provide. It represents the curricula, ideas, and information available throughout the Cooperative Extension System. This guide can be supplemented with other Cooperative Extension System materials, such as:

1 *Training School-Age Child Care Staff, a Handbook for Workshop Leaders*. Cornell Cooperative Extension.

2 *Moving Ahead: Preparing the Youth Development Professional*. 4-H Cooperative Curriculum System (can be ordered at <http://www.n4hccs.org>).

A Master Training Matrix is provided on page 9 to help Extension professionals plan seminars or trainings. The typical training takes about eleven hours. It can be offered as a two-day training, as three half-day trainings, or as a series of two- to three-hour trainings. Or, chapters and/or topics can be individually selected and used in shorter workshops or trainings.

The training offered in this book is for an after-school program staff audience. The entire training takes about eleven hours. It can be offered as a two-day training, as three half-day trainings, or as a series of two- to three-hour trainings. Or, chapters and/or topics can be individually selected for shorter workshops or trainings. Appendix A: Your *Guiding Growth* Training Planner can provide help in planning a training.

There are two other resource guides in the 4-H Afterschool series. *Starting 4-H Clubs in After-School Programs* is used to help after-school sites get 4-H clubs up and running. *Extraordinary Learning Opportunities: A Sampler of 4-H Afterschool Activities* is an excellent sampling of 4-H programming and activities that sites can use directly or with assistance from Extension professionals. These guides are to be used independently; as such, they may contain some repetition.

Other Outreach

Extension professionals also may wish to start 4-H clubs in after-school sites (see *Starting 4-H Clubs in After-School Programs*). After-school program staff may request filler activities or just “something to do” with the children who attend their programs. *Extraordinary Learning Opportunities: A Sampler of 4-H Afterschool Activities* fills this need.

Master Training Matrix

This is a suggested training sequence for this guide. All activities can be offered, or they can be specifically selected to meet training needs. NOTE: To teach more in-depth about a particular topic, such as child development, this guide can be supplemented with other Cooperative Extension System curricula.

For help with planning a training, see Appendix A: Your *Guiding Growth* Training Planner.

SECTION

PURPOSE

CHAPTER ONE

Growing Up (Approximately three hours to complete.)

NAME GAMES	To help participants get to know each other and feel more comfortable interacting.
CHILD DEVELOPMENT	To understand how children develop, and how these stages set the tone for programming.
AGES AND STAGES	To understand pre-adolescent and adolescent characteristics and behavior.
GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE	To better understand how to foster cooperation and acceptable behavior among children.
AUDIENCES WITH SPECIAL NEEDS	To be able to adapt activities to be more inclusive of children with special needs.

CHAPTER TWO

Learning by Doing (Approximately two hours to complete.)

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING	To be able to describe and use the experiential learning process.
SAMPLE ACTIVITY: GOOD VIBRATIONS: THE SCIENCE OF SOUND	To learn how to incorporate the experiential learning cycle into an activity.

CHAPTER THREE

Health and Nutrition (Approximately 2½ hours to complete.)

PLANNING AND PREPARING SNACKS	To try some simple, healthy snack recipes.
FOOD SAFETY AND HANDLING	To learn the basics of safe food handling.
TEACHING CHILDREN ABOUT NUTRITION	To learn an activity associated with nutrition to teach children.

CHAPTER FOUR

Programs and Places (Approximately 1½ hours to complete.)

PROGRAM QUALITY	To compare current programs with NSACA standards for administration.
COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENTS	To gain knowledge about community needs assessments.

CHAPTER FIVE

Working with Parents and the Community (Approximately two hours to complete.)

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	To share successful methods for involving parents in programs.
FAMILY ACTIVITY NIGHTS	To give parents, caregivers, children, and staff opportunities to interact and learn in informal ways.
WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE	To understand how to begin to build a sense of community at sites.

GROWING UP



Chapter



Chapter Background*

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

As an extension professional, you can help after-school program staff understand that each child develops at his or her own rate. While the child's chronological age may be ten, his or her social, emotional, intellectual, and other "ages" may be all over the board. In other words, each child is a conglomeration of abilities, skills, and talents, sometimes wildly disparate from each other.

After-school program staff face many challenges in providing care for children. One of the greatest is understanding youth development — why children behave as they do, how to communicate with children, and how to structure learning so that it is based on how children develop. After-school program staff need to know how to help children develop healthy self-concepts, achieve success, be independent, express affection, try new adventures, be accepted by others, and be secure in who they are. This is a tall order!

For more information about child development, go to the Cooperative Extension System's National Network for Child Care web site at www.nncc.org/homepage.html.

For more information about the ages and stages of children, go to the National Network for Child Care's web site at www.nncc.org/cyfernet/cd.page.html.

* Use this section as background information to read and understand before you begin training. You may also choose to repeat this information during trainings.

Involving Older Youth in After-School Programs*

Children ages 10 to 14 begin to focus quite a bit on peer relationships and have a strong need to belong. Program staff can include them by:

- 1 Seeking their opinions and feedback about the activities they participate in, the rules they abide by, and the site itself.
- 2 Giving them responsibility.
- 3 Helping them connect to the larger community.
- 4 Exposing them to a wide range of interesting and challenging learning experiences.
- 5 Providing a support environment.

* Adapted from Tips on Out-of-School Youth Development Programs, at www.niost.org/tips-activities.html. Accessed 6/2002.

AGES AND STAGES

After-school program staff offer programs that encompass children who range in age from five to 14, and may also work with older teens. How, then, does the curriculum and activities include all these age groups? And what makes each group unique?

There are common traits shared by different age groups. For example, eight year olds are notorious for being able to control their large muscles better than small muscles. If program staff place this age group with 12 year olds and ask them all to make jewelry, the older children will have stunning creations while the eight year olds may be reduced to tears. Their small motor skills don't allow for flawless beading.

It's important for program staff to recognize the different ages and stages youth experience as they mature, and reflect on how these affect programming.

Chapter Background

GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE

One of the biggest challenges facing after-school program staff is guidance and discipline. Every person who has ever taught a class or interacted with children in a group knows that one or two mis-behaving youth can completely alter the outcomes of learning and play. Guidance and discipline must be used to protect the rights of all children.

According to some child development experts, children usually misbehave for one of four basic reasons: attention, power, revenge, or inadequacy.*

For more information about guidance and discipline, including research on such topics as behavior management and establishing rules, go to the National Network for Child Care's web site at www.nncc.org/Guidance/guide.disc.page.html.

1 Attention: When children believe they “belong” only when they are noticed. They feel important when they are commanding total attention.

2 Power: When children believe they belong only when they are in control or are proving that no one can “boss them around.”

3 Revenge: When children believe they belong only by hurting others, since they feel hurt themselves.

4 Inadequacy: When children believe they belong only when they convince others not to expect anything of them since they are helpless or unable.

Program staff can employ a host of strategies to help children get back on the right track. These include catching children being “good,” ignoring inappropriate behavior, implementing routines that structure the day, helping children express feelings, and other responses.



* Reprinted with permission from the National Network for Child Care (NNCC). DeBord, K. *Appropriate limits for young children: a guide for discipline, Part 1*. Raleigh, North Carolina: North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service.

Chapter Background

AUDIENCES WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Children with special needs usually have at least one physical, social, emotional, or mental impairment that limits their abilities. These may fall into following categories:¹⁹

- 1 Autism and Asperger's Syndrome
- 2 Attention Deficit Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- 3 Cerebral Palsy and Neurology
- 4 Developmental Disabilities
- 5 Emotional Disabilities
- 6 Learning Disabilities
- 7 Mental Illness
- 8 Orthopedic and Other Health Impairments
- 9 Speech, Language, and Hearing
- 10 Vision Disabilities

This resource guide provides information with which to train with after-school program staff. It can be supplemented with material from other sources, including:

- *Moving Ahead: Preparing the Youth Development Professional*. 4-H Cooperative Curriculum System. Order at <http://www.n4hccs.org>.
- *Training School-Age Child Care Staff, A Handbook for Workshop Leaders*. Cornell Cooperative Extension.
- Information and training from the CYFAR site, available at www.cyfarnet.org.

More than half of the identified disabilities in children with special needs are related to learning disabilities. Physical disabilities, according to the Internet-based Eric Digest, are relatively rare, constituting less than 2 percent of those identified as having disabilities.²⁰

There are two important questions to consider when working with your programs and children with special needs:

- 1 How can after-school staff and the children who attend the program better understand the perspectives (physical, emotional, etc.) of a child with special needs?
- 2 How can after-school staff and the children who attend the program help make the environment as rich and exciting for children with special needs as it is for everyone?

A BIG IMPACT

Again, challenges faced by after-school program staff are deep and wide. Children may spend more than 700 hours each year in after-school programs. The impact that after-school programs have on healthy youth development cannot be underestimated. Providing safe, quality educational and recreational programs is the goal of Extension and after-school sites alike.

The University of Delaware maintains an excellent web site for information about working with children with disabilities. The web address is http://ag.udel.edu/extension/fam/ParentGrndMentor/special_needs_and_disabilities.htm.

Training Matrix

This is a suggested training sequence for this chapter and for the topic of child development. You can offer all the activities or pick and choose to meet your training needs. NOTE: To teach more in-depth about a particular topic, such as guidance and discipline, you may need to supplement the materials found in this chapter with other Cooperative Extension System curricula.

SECTION	PURPOSE	MATERIALS NEEDED	TIME
NAME GAMES	To help participants get to know each other and feel more comfortable interacting.	Beachballs or balloons, nametags. Set tables with drawing paper, cups and markers, hard candy, and any other decorations. Also make a handout of the day's agenda, or write it on a flipchart with markers or on a chalkboard with chalk.	20 minutes
CHILD DEVELOPMENT	To understand how children develop, and how their stages set the tone for programming.	Make <i>Child Development Overhead</i> (page 18); make signs using art paper and markers (see under <i>Overview</i>); photocopies of <i>Implications for Programming Handout</i> (page 19).	45 minutes
AGES AND STAGES	To understand pre-adolescent and adolescent characteristics and behavior.	Make overheads from <i>Ages and Stages Overhead 2</i> , <i>Overhead 3</i> , <i>Overhead 4</i> . (pages 21 to 23).	30 minutes
GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE	To better understand how to foster cooperation and acceptable behavior among children.	Flipchart and markers or chalkboard and chalk; photocopies of <i>Guidance and Discipline Handout</i> (page 26).	30 minutes
AUDIENCES WITH SPECIAL NEEDS	To be able to begin to adapt activities to be more inclusive of children with special needs.	Photocopies of <i>Leaf Litter Search</i> (pages 29 and 30); <i>Special Needs Cards</i> (photocopy sheet and cut apart, page 31); flipcharts and markers. If you plan to do the <i>Leaf Litter Search</i> activity, you'll also need lens boxes or magnifying glasses; collected leaf litter (or go outside); colored pencils; paper; insect/beetle field guides; plastic glasses; newspaper (if activity is done indoors).	One hour

Name Games

OBJECTIVE

To help participants (after-school program staff) get to know each other and feel more comfortable interacting. (Assumes you are training staff from several different sites.)

TIME

20 minutes.

MATERIALS

Beachballs or balloons, nametags. Set tables with drawing paper, cups and markers, hard candy, and any other decorations. Also make a handout of the day's agenda, or write it on a flipchart with markers or on a chalkboard with chalk.

OVERVIEW

You can use the ideas found here to begin your workshop, especially if your participants include after-school program staff from many different sites. Before you begin, cover the tables with drawing paper and place cups full of colorful markers and hard candy at each table. This encourages creativity and relaxes participants. Each participant also should have a nametag.

NOTE: If participants already know each other, skip this activity. Instead, start your training with an informal introduction and review of the day's agenda.

START HERE

Welcome participants to the workshop and introduce yourself. Explain that the important purpose of today's workshop (or series of workshops) is to enhance the ability of after-school program staff to help youth learn, play, and develop positively.

Use one (or more) of the following games to help participants get to know each other better:*

1 Imaginary Ball Toss. Ask the group to form a circle. Start by tossing an imaginary ball to your neighbor, first saying her name, "I'm throwing this ball to Eliza. Catch!" Ask participants to continue to throw the pretend ball around, first saying the name of the person they are throwing it to. After a few rounds, explain they are now throwing a water balloon. Soon, it grows to a bowling ball, watermelon — whatever the person throwing the object wants it to be. Repeat until each participant has had a few turns catching and throwing his or her imaginary objects.

2 Years and Years. Ask participants to line themselves up, starting from the highest number to the lowest, in the order of the years they've been involved in youth development/after-school care.

3 Up in the Air. Ask participants to form a circle and hold hands. Throw a balloon or beachball into the air, and tell them they need to keep it from touching the ground without breaking the circle. If this seems too easy, add some more balloons or balls.

FINAL ACT

After the group has settled down again, introduce the agenda for the session, using either a handout or flipchart and markers/chalkboard chalk. Ask participants if there is anything that can be done to make the room more comfortable, and address these needs. You're ready to move on to the next activity.

* Adapted from Crosiar, Sally Jo, Kathryn Sanger, Jennifer Birckmayer, and Polly Spedding. 1995. *Training School-Age Child Care Staff, A Handbook for Workshop Leaders*. Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Child Development

OBJECTIVE

To understand how children develop, and how their stages set the tone for programming.

TIME

45 minutes.

MATERIALS

Make *Child Development Overhead* (page 18); make signs using art paper and markers (see under *Overview*); photocopies of *Implications for Programming Handout* (page 19).

OVERVIEW

In this activity, you'll introduce ideas about how children develop, setting the stage for the rest of the *Growing Up* training.

Before you begin, hang colorful signs (make these with markers and art paper) around the room with the following sayings:

- 1 "Anyone who imagines that all fruits ripen at the same time as strawberries knows nothing about grapes." — Paracelsus
- 2 "Children love and want to be loved and they very much prefer the joy of accomplishment to the triumph of hateful failure. Do not mistake a child for his symptom." — Dr. Erik Erikson
- 3 "If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in." — Rachel Carson
- 4 "Children allowed to develop at their own speed will usually win the race of life." — Fred O. Gosman
- 5 "The child's personality is a product of slow gradual growth ... all of his abilities ... are subject to laws of growth. The task of child care is not to force him into a predetermined pattern but to guide his growth." — Arnold Gesell

START HERE

Introduce the topic of child development. Use *Overhead 1* to explain how children have many different domains that interact to determine the child's overall "maturity." This may explain why children who can skillfully hit a ball past third base may crumple at home if called "out." Ask participants to think of a certain child, and try to estimate his or her different developmental "ages." They may wish to share examples aloud.



Child Development

Next, explain that each child has different needs from a provider. Besides being understood for the conglomeration of ages he or she represents, a child also needs the following things to move smoothly through life (write these on a flipchart with markers):

- 1 a satisfactory self-concept
- 2 success in achievement
- 3 increasing independence
- 4 giving and receiving affection
- 5 adventure
- 6 acceptance by peers and elders
- 7 and the development and acceptance of a sex role.*

Ask participants to share aloud any examples they can think of as to how their programs meet these needs. For example, their programs may include using 12 year olds as mentors (increasing independence) or exploration days (adventure). Give participants several minutes to exchange ideas.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Break the group into five teams. Let each team choose one of the sayings you have hung around the room (they can physically retrieve it). Explain that teams will use these sayings to fill out an *Implications for Programming Handout* (distribute to teams).

Bring teams back together as a large group after they have filled out the sheets. Ask each team to share its saying and thoughts about how this affects programming (teams can summarize their sheets).

FINAL ACT

Ask participants the following questions:

- 1 What are the biggest challenges with working with children?
- 2 What are some ways that your programs generally can help children develop independence, caring, and other positive attributes?

Recommend that sites plan a child development day to figure out how programs can better address child development needs.

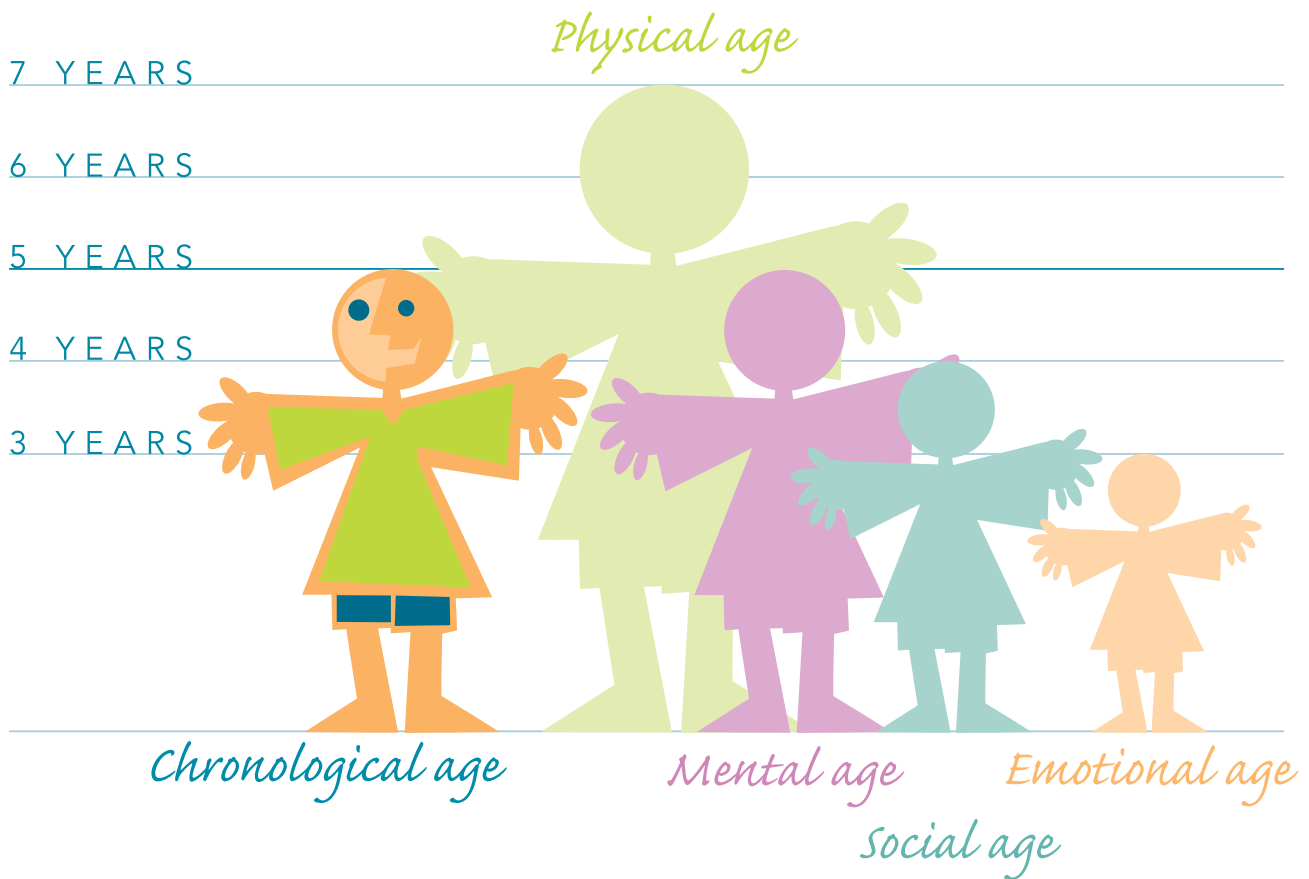


* Adapted from Crosiar, Sally Jo, Kathryn Sanger, Jennifer Birkmayer, and Polly Spedding. 1995. *Training School-Age Child Care Staff, A Handbook for Workshop Leaders*. Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Child Development

DEVELOPMENTAL STATES IN DIFFERENT DOMAINS

Children can be in different developmental stages in each developmental area.
For example:



SOURCE: Cooperative Extension System Extension "CARES" for America's Children and Youth Initiative, March 2001.

Child Development

Implications for Programming

Inspiration is nine-tenths of the work in raising children. But what does it mean for programming?

Analyze the quote your team has chosen to try to glean some ways to improve programming.

1 What does the saying mean? Write it down:

2 Does this saying ring true for the children you work with? If so, give some examples of how or why you think it fits children. If not, explain why.

3 As a team, brainstorm some ways you can help the children you work with achieve the major theme(s) of your saying (e.g., independence, accomplishment, autonomy, companionship). Write your ideas here (they can be specific or general):

Ages and Stages

OBJECTIVE

To understand pre-adolescent and adolescent characteristics and behavior.

TIME

30 minutes.

MATERIALS

Make overheads from *Ages and Stages Overhead 2*, *Overhead 3*, and *Overhead 4* (pages 21 to 23).

OVERVIEW

In this activity, you'll teach after-school program staff the basics of 4-H educational theory and introduce them to some activities.

START HERE

Explain to participants that one of the guiding principles of 4-H is the development of the child. While education in content areas and gaining skills are important, it is critical that we first understand the different ages and stages of a child's world.

Use *Overheads 2, 3, and 4* to explain the different ages and stages of child development. As an extension, ask participants to give examples from their experience working with youth of each age group, especially in story format. Alternatively, you can ask a small group to come up and pretend they are the age group represented on the overhead dealing with these dilemmas:

- 1 They must work together to take care of a hamster. The group includes two boys, two girls, and one adult.
- 2 They are trying to share one video game. The group includes three boys.
- 3 They are drawing posters to try to win a contest about the importance of brushing teeth. The group includes two girls, one boy, and one adult.

The group should role play using the characteristics of each age group (you can use separate groups to represent the different ages of each overhead).

Overwhelmingly across the country, children in pre-kindergarten through third grade make up the majority of those enrolled in after-school care.

WHAT'S NEXT

Emphasize that most program staff will work primarily with children ages five to eight. But understanding how different ages act and learn will help them attract and engage more different-aged children. For example, sites may choose to start a volunteer program to keep youth ages 12 to 16 busy in the summer by helping at the site. Ask program staff to share examples of:

- 1 Whether they are currently working with older youth (ages 10 and up).
- 2 How they are helping these young people learn and/or gain skills.
- 3 Whether they have special programs to recruit older youth.
- 4 How they may have benefited from using older youth in their programs.

FINAL ACT

Explain that understanding how different ages work, play, and learn is critical to helping them develop into productive and happy adults, and is core to 4-H programming.

Ages and Stages

Characteristics of Youth

GRADES K-3

CHARACTERISTICS

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMMING

Physical

Growing slowly, just learning to master physical skills. Can control large muscles better than small muscles.

Projects and meal times are messy. Activities that encourage use of large muscles, such as running, playing games, etc. are good.

Social

Learning how to be friends; may have many friends. Fighting occurs but doesn't last long. Towards the end of this phase, boys and girls separate.

Small group activities let this group practice their social skills, but still allow for individual attention. Role-playing helps children gain empathy. Encourage children to participate in mixed-gender activities.

Emotional

Are self centered. Seek approval from adults, and go out of their way to avoid punishment. Are sensitive to criticism; don't like to fail.

Be positive! Plan activities where everyone can experience some success. Foster cooperation, not competition.

Intellectual

Are concrete thinkers — base thinking in reality. Can't multi-task well. Are more interested in doing things than getting a good result at the end.

Plan lots of activities that take a short time to finish. Focus on the process rather than the final product. Allow for exploration and inquiry.

Ages and Stages

Characteristics of Youth

GRADES 4 – 8

CHARACTERISTICS

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMMING

Physical

Moving all the time; can't sit still. Beginning of adolescence is marked by a growth spurt, with females maturing before males.

Provide active learning experiences.
Avoid competitions between boys and girls.

Social

Joining clubs becomes popular. Don't always understand other viewpoints, but like to try to make others happy. Strive to please adults with successful project completion, rather than gaining satisfaction from completing the project itself.

Use group learning as much as possible, with same-sex members. Encourage older mentors to work with your group.

Emotional

Have a weak sense of their individual identity. May become moody. Justice and equality become important issues. Need to feel as if they are part of something very important.

Don't compare youth to each other. Help them identify their own strengths. Emphasize progress made from previous performances.

Intellectual

Until about age 11, think concretely (black/white), but begin to understand new ideas if related to previous experiences. Begin to think abstractly. Become immersed in subjects that interest them. Often reject solutions offered by adults in favor of finding their own solutions.

Use simple, short directions and brief learning experiences. Offer a wide range of activities to ensure many experience success.

Ages and Stages

Characteristics of Youth

HIGH SCHOOL

CHARACTERISTICS

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMMING

Physical

Physical changes are usually accepted, but boys may still be growing quickly. Most females reach maximum height by age 14 and most males by age 16.

Be willing to answer questions about physical changes. Avoid comments that criticize or compare body shapes/sizes.

Social

Self centered, but capable of feeling empathy. Are able to maintain relationships with many diverse people. Acceptance by members of the opposite sex is important. Want to belong to clubs yet be recognized as unique within those organizations. Spend more time working and going to school; less time in club and group activities.

Let teens plan their own programs. Establish a climate that is conducive to peer support. Emphasize personal development whenever possible.

Emotional

Searching for their identity, and usually find it around age 16. Want to be autonomous from parents. May have trouble with compromise; and may have unsettled emotions. Strive to earn responsibility and the respect of others.

Let teens assume responsibility; expect them to follow through. Help them explore their identity, values, and beliefs. Help them develop individual skills. Encourage them to work with older teens and adults.

Intellectual

Gain cognitive and study skills. Are mastering abstract thinking. Emphasis is on exploring and preparing for future careers and roles. Like to set their own goals based on their own needs, and may reject goals imposed by others.

Give them real-life problems to figure out. Let them make decisions and evaluate the outcomes. Encourage service learning. Plan field trips to businesses or colleges.

Guidance and Discipline

OBJECTIVE

To better understand how to foster cooperation and acceptable behavior among children.

TIME

30 minutes.

MATERIALS

Flipchart and markers or chalkboard and chalk; photocopies of *Guidance and Discipline Handout* (page 26).

OVERVIEW

In this activity, you'll introduce ideas about guidance and discipline to the group. Before you begin, you may wish to write the situations described under *What's Next?* on a flipchart or chalkboard.

NOTE: There are extensive resources available to help you teach about child guidance and discipline. This activity is meant as a starting point. You might wish to access activities in other curricula, including the following, to supplement your training:

- The Wisconsin Cooperative Extension System maintains a web site for their Early Childhood Excellence Initiative. The site contains a comprehensive listing of information about topics related to child development. Learn more at <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/ece/prompac/>.

- Researchers with Missouri University Extension have produced a paper along with participant feedback called *Positive Discipline and Child Guidance*. To order or print, go to <http://muextension.missouri.edu/explore/hesguide/humanrel/gh6119.htm>.

- See also the beginning of this chapter for more resources on child development.

START HERE

Use the *Chapter Background* as content to help program staff understand why children may choose to misbehave. Key points to cover include:

- 1 Children usually misbehave for one of four basic reasons: attention, power, revenge, or inadequacy.

- 2 Guidance and discipline must be used to protect the rights of all children.

- 3 Employ a host of strategies to get children back on track, such as catching children being "good," ignoring inappropriate behavior, implementing routines that structure the day, and helping children express feelings.



Guidance and Discipline



Next, share the information from the *Guidance and Discipline Handout* with participants. Review as a group, and ask participants to give examples or ask questions as you proceed through the information.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Divide participants into three teams. Give each team one of the following situations (describe or write on flipchart). Ask them to figure out how they would respond, both proactively and after the fact, to the situation. (They can refer to the handout for more information.) They can present their suggestions to the entire group.

1 Denton is six years old. He seems anxious when he arrives at after-school care, or when Mom leaves him in the morning during the summer. He plays but is subdued and withdrawn. He can't seem to concentrate enough to finish puzzles and other tasks. He wanders and tries to leave the group. The teacher/provider thinks he is just trying to get attention.

2 Asha is seven years old. She tried to paint a rainbow as well as her older friend Becky did, but the paint all ran together. When Becky laughed at the picture, Asha became angry and poured tempera all over Becky's painting, ruining it. It wasn't Asha's first outburst.

3 Elisha is a smart eight year old with a very advanced vocabulary. He enjoys most learning but has trouble sitting still during group time and during meal time. Marilyn is very loving but independent. When asked to follow rules, she often ignores requests and continues doing what she wants to do.

FINAL ACT

Ask participants to continue their discussion by discussing discipline at their sites. What types of strategies do they employ to help children have positive experiences? What are their biggest challenges? How can they use the information they learned today to make changes?

Guidance and Discipline

WHY DO CHILDREN ACT OUT?

According to some child development experts, children usually misbehave for one of four basic reasons: attention, power, revenge, or inadequacy.*

1 Attention: When children believe they “belong” only when they are noticed. They feel important when they are commanding total attention.

2 Power: When children believe they belong only when they are in control or are proving that no one can “boss them around.”

3 Revenge: When children believe they belong only by hurting others, since they feel hurt themselves.

4 Inadequacy: When children believe they belong only when they convince others not to expect anything of them since they are helpless or unable.

Additionally, after-school sites might have different expectations than school or home. Children might not understand the rules, or may be held to rules that are beyond them, developmentally.

Proactive Strategies for After-School Sites*

- Set clear, consistent rules.
- Make sure your environment is safe and worry free.
- Show interest in the child’s activities.
- Provide appropriate and engaging playthings.
- Encourage self-control by providing meaningful choices.
- Focus on the desired behavior, rather than the one to be avoided.
- Build children’s images of themselves as trustworthy, responsible, and cooperative.
- Expect the best from the child.
- Give clear directions, one at a time.
- Say “yes” whenever possible.

* From Positive Discipline and Child Guidance, available at <http://muextension.missouri.edu/xplor/hesguide/humanrel/gh6119.htm>.

RESPONDING TO MISBEHAVIOR

1 Natural Consequences: Allowing children to experience the consequences of their behavior directly.

2 Logical Consequences: Structured consequences that follow misbehavior. The child should be able to see how these are related.

3 Fix-Up: If children damage something, they need to help fix it or clean up. If they cause someone distress, they should help in relieving that.

4 Time Out: During time out, children are required to spend time alone in a specific place that has few, if any, rewarding characteristics. This gives a child time to reflect on his or her behavior.

5 Redirection: If a child is not following the rules and is being uncooperative, get the child’s attention and introduce another activity.

* Reprinted with permission from the National Network for Child Care (NNCC). DeBord, K. *Appropriate limits for young children: a guide for discipline, Part 1*. Raleigh, North Carolina: North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service.

Audiences with Special Needs

OBJECTIVE

To be able to begin to adapt activities to be more inclusive of children with special needs.

TIME

About one hour.

MATERIALS

Photocopies of *Leaf Litter Search* (pages 29 and 30); *Special Needs Cards* (photocopy sheet and cut apart, see page 31); flipcharts and markers; and items listed in the *Materials* section of the *Leaf Litter Search* (see page 29).

OVERVIEW

In this activity, you'll teach after-school program staff how to begin to adapt activities so that they are more inclusive of children with special needs.

NOTE: This activity is meant to heighten awareness about adapting activities for children with disabilities, and including all children in learning. Many after-school sites will benefit from using experts in the field to help them ensure program access to all participants at their sites and within their programs.

Before you begin, prepare a flipchart with the curriculum adaptation tips (listed below under *Start Here*).

If you plan to actually do the *Leaf Litter Search* activity, prepare the materials you'll need (see *Materials*, page 29).

START HERE

Give participants an opportunity to adapt a learning activity for children with special needs. After introducing the topic (see *Chapter Background* for more information), divide participants into teams of two or three. Give each team a flipchart with markers. Hand out copies of the *Leaf Litter Search* (see following pages) to each team. Then hand out a *Special Needs Card* to each team, which lists a disability, impairment, or handicap. Explain that each team has the task of adapting the activity to include the participation of children with the special need represented by the card.

Before they begin, refer to the prepared flipchart with these curriculum adaptation tips. Note that activities can be made more inclusive by:*

- **Size:** Adapt the number of items the learner is expected to learn or complete.
- **Time:** Adapt the minutes, hours, or days you allow for completion or testing.
- **Input:** Adapt the way the information is delivered to the learner.
- **Output:** Adapt the way the learner can respond to instruction.
- **Difficulty:** Adapt the skill level or problem type according to the student's need.
- **Participation:** Adapt the extent to which a learner is actively involved in the task.
- **Level of support:** Increase the human interaction with a particular learner.
- **Alternate goals:** Adapt the outcome expectations while using the same materials.

Note that:

"Inclusion is changing the rules of the game so that everyone can play and everyone can win."

— Richard Villa

* From Donnelly, Julie A. 1995. Midwest Autism Newsletter. From www.smsu.edu/Access/fact16.htm. Accessed 8/2002.

Audiences with Special Needs

Next, ask teams to go ahead and use their flipcharts and this information to brainstorm ideas and outline how they would change the activity.

WHAT'S NEXT?

After teams have had time to discuss and brainstorm solutions, ask them to share their ideas with the larger group. If other teams have ideas, list those, too. The goal is to start thinking of how best to include children of differing abilities in all activities.

You may wish to test some of the ideas by actually doing the activity with the adaptation ideas with the group. You may choose to simulate some of the physical challenges, e.g., blindfold a participant to simulate blindness; use a wheelchair to simulate paralysis. However, it is difficult to simulate autism, mental illness, or other disabilities. You can, in these cases, discuss if adapted activities might be successful for *all* participants. (NOTE: Please be sensitive to this role playing.)

FINAL ACT

After the activity is finished, ask participants if they thought the adaptation was sound. How did they enjoy the activity? Do they feel they learned anything? How could their experience have been improved?

Ask participants if they considered:

- Pairing children with disabilities with teen volunteers?
- Recognizing everyone for participating and finishing the activity?
- Demonstrating the activity before children did it on their own?

The goal is to start thinking of how best to include children of differing abilities in all activities.



Audiences with Special Needs

LEAF LITTER SEARCH*

LIFE SKILL

Critical Thinking, Learning to Learn.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To analyze small animals in leaf litter.

AGE

Five to 12. (Pair older children with younger ones.)

TIME

One hour.

SETTING

Outdoors or indoors. Fall is the best time of the year for this activity.

MATERIALS

Lens boxes or magnifying glasses; collected leaf litter (or go outside); colored pencils; paper; insect/beetle field guides; plastic glasses; newspaper (if activity is done indoors).

OVERVIEW

Many organisms live in leaf litter — the leaves, twigs, and other debris that falls onto the forest floor. Most of these animals are decomposers. Decomposers are extremely important — they break down dead material into nutrients, which can be used again by living things (such as trees or flowers).

In this activity, children look at leaf litter to find small animals — arthropods, insects, bugs, and other organisms that are classified as decomposers. They can use a lens box to look at their creatures more closely. Before you start this activity, find a safe outdoors area where there is leaf litter on the ground, or collect some and bring it in to the group. (It shouldn't be more than a few hours old, or the insects/bugs may migrate to the bottom of the garbage bag or other collecting device.)

START HERE

Explain that everyone has a home. Even decomposers. Decomposers are bugs, insects, and other living things that munch on dead material and release nutrients. Ask children where they think decomposers live. Explain that it's easiest to find decomposers among the land of the dead — dead leaves, that is! Invite children to look for these very important creatures.

Indoor directions: Divide children into teams of two or three. Give each team a magnifying glass or lens box, some newspaper, colored pencils, paper, plastic glasses, and a bag of leaf litter. Instruct teams to spread out the newspaper and then dump some of the leaf litter on top.

Outdoor directions: Divide children into teams of two or three. Give each team a magnifying glass or lens box, colored pencils, paper, and plastic glasses. Take teams outdoors to a safe area with trees and forest debris. Ask teams to collect a pile of leaf litter.

* Adapted from *Cycling Back to Nature: Food Production and Pesticides*. National 4-H Council.

Audiences with Special Needs

LEAF LITTER SEARCH

WHAT'S NEXT?

Ask teams to gently search their leaves for living things. Explain that it may take several minutes before teams locate a decomposer. Encourage them to keep looking. When they find an insect, arthropod, or other creature, they can use their pencil and gently put it into the plastic cup for further study. One or all of the team members can sketch the animal.

Teams also can look through field guides to try and identify the creatures they've drawn. Ask teams:

- 1 What kind of creature did you find?
- 2 Was it eating something?
- 3 Where did it come from?
- 4 Did you find other bugs or insects?
- 5 What else do you think the animals used the leaves for?
- 6 What role does the animal play in the forest?
- 7 What else can you tell me about it?

Also ask teams to share their pictures. You may wish to hang them around the room.

FINAL ACT

Be sure teams return their bugs to the leaf litter. If teams are indoors, put the leaf litter back outside when you're through. Explain why it's important to put the materials back outside (creatures can go back to their lives; nutrients can be released into the soil).



Audiences with Special Needs



Autism and Asperger's Syndrome

Both Asperger's Syndrome and autism are neurobiological disorders, although children diagnosed with Asperger's are said to fall into the "high end" of the autistic spectrum. Both conditions are characterized by serious and chronic social, behavioral, and communicative impairments. Affected children often have obsessive routines and can be preoccupied by a single thing or subject.

Learning Disabilities

Learning disabilities can take many forms. Affected children may have trouble controlling their rate of speech or learning to make speech sounds. They may have trouble expressing themselves. They may not understand certain aspects of language. Dyslexia is a common learning disorder. Other learning disabilities include developmental writing and arithmetic disorders, along with motor skills disorders.

Developmental Disabilities

A developmental disability is defined as a severe, chronic disability that is caused by a mental or physical impairment. It results in limiting the person's ability to care for himself or herself, receive or express language, learn, move, and/or live independently.

Cerebral Palsy and Neurology

Cerebral palsy is a condition caused by damage to the brain, usually occurring before, during, or shortly after birth. This and other neurological disorders can mean a loss of control of motor functions.

Emotional Disabilities

An emotional disability is a condition that is chronic and limits a child's ability to learn. The child with an emotional disability may have inappropriate behavior or feelings, general depression, an inability to maintain relationships, and a tendency to develop illness or fears associated with personal or school problems.

Mental Retardation

This condition is marked by subaverage general intellectual functioning; it severely affects a child's educational performance.

Orthopedic and Other Health Impairments

Children who have lost a limb or have other orthopedic impairments that require the use of wheelchairs may be in otherwise excellent health. Other health impairments include heart conditions, asthma, leukemia, and others that limit the child's educational performance.

Attention Deficit Disorder and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

ADD is officially called Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, commonly called in lay language ADHD. The primary features of ADHD are inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsiveness.

Speech, Language, and Hearing

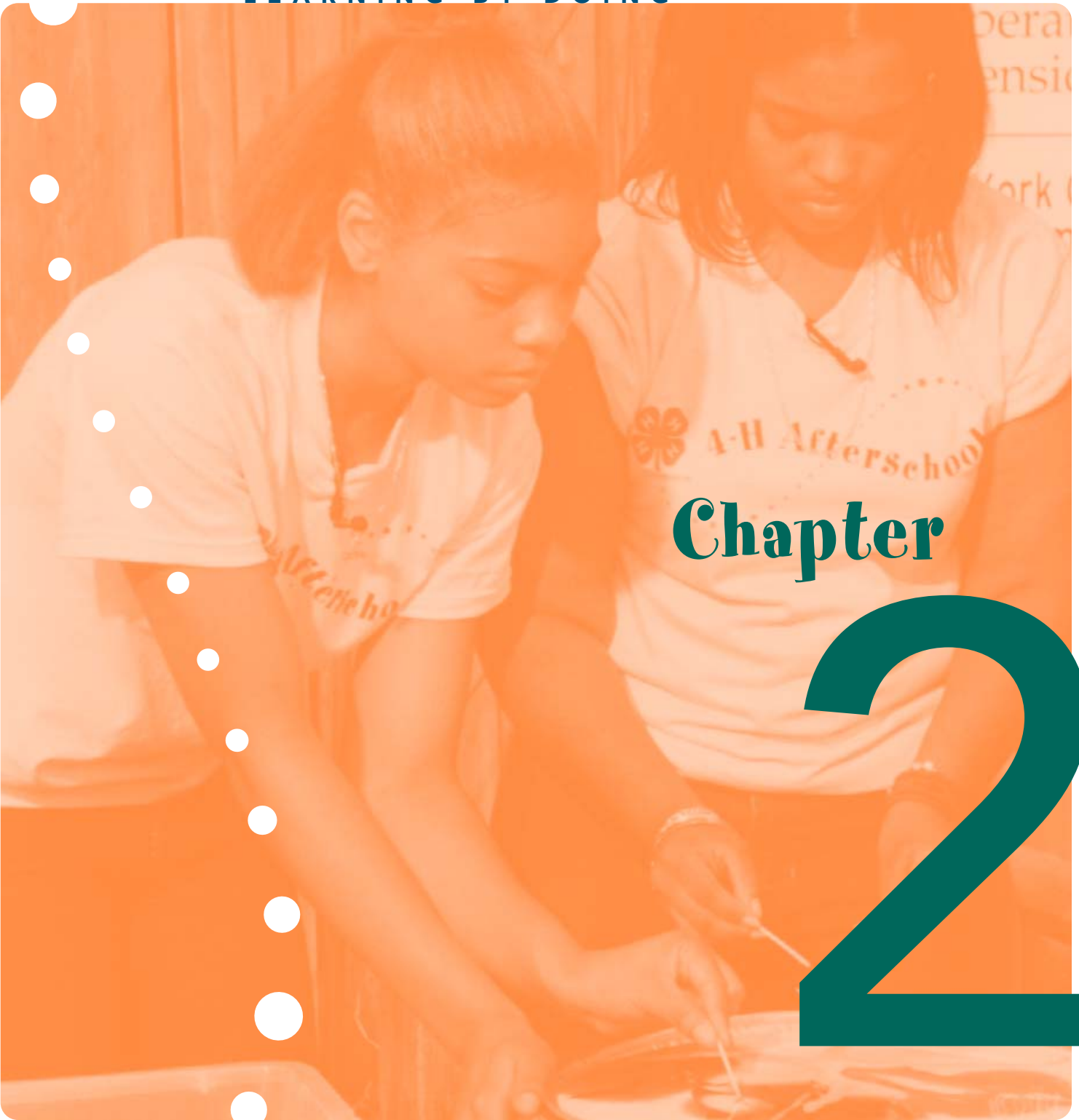
These impairments can include communication disorders such as stuttering, impaired articulation, and hearing loss or deafness.

Vision Disabilities

A child affected with a vision disability may range from near normal site (when corrected) to blindness.

ACTIVITY CARDS 1

LEARNING BY DOING



Chapter

2

Chapter Background

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

After-school program staff are inundated with curricula that focus on different topics or content. There are activities to study frog eggs, analyze rainbows, role play the Wright brothers' first flight, paint abstractly, etc. All of these concepts, while intriguing, are best learned through a process called experiential learning.

Experiential learning, or learning by doing, is the most effective way of helping children gain knowledge, since it engages learners actively, encourages them to think and puzzle things out for themselves, work harder, and ultimately, learn more.

Curricula not based in this process are not as effective at building knowledge and awareness. Such materials also don't increase investigation, critical thinking, problem solving, and other important life skills in children. Program staff can enhance any materials they use by learning and following the experiential cycle. All 4-H curricula are based upon this process.

Training Matrix

This is a suggested training sequence for this chapter and for the topic of learning by doing. You can offer all the activities or pick and choose to meet your training needs. NOTE: To teach more in-depth about experiential learning, you may need to supplement the materials found in this chapter with other Cooperative Extension System curricula.

SECTION	PURPOSE	MATERIALS NEEDED	TIME
EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING	To be able to describe and use experiential learning.	Flipchart and markers or chalkboard and chalk; make overhead from <i>Experiential Learning Overhead</i> (page 35); photocopy and make cards from the <i>Experiential Learning Cards</i> (page 36). Also need pine cones with seeds intact and tweezers.	One hour
SAMPLE ACTIVITY: GOOD VIBRATIONS: THE SCIENCE OF SOUND	To learn how to incorporate the experiential learning cycle into an activity (the activity helps children understand how sounds travel and are heard, and gain an appreciation for how sounds enrich our lives).	Drum and drumsticks; plastic containers with lids that aren't clear; beans, pennies, paper clips, o-shaped cereal, popcorn kernels, and other small items to put inside the containers.	30 minutes

Experiential Learning

OBJECTIVE

To be able to describe and use experiential learning.

TIME

One hour.

MATERIALS

Flipchart and markers or chalkboard and chalk; make overhead from *Experiential Learning Overhead* (page 35); photocopy and make cards from the *Experiential Learning Cards* (page 36). Also need pine cones with seeds intact and tweezers. (Some pine cones are difficult to dissect. Try to find ones that have already begun to release seeds.)

OVERVIEW

In this activity, you'll teach after-school program staff the basics of the experiential learning theory. Before you begin, write the information found in the textbox on this page on a flipchart or chalkboard.

START HERE

Explain that for children and teens to fully understand a new concept, several steps must happen. This is called experiential learning. Using *Overhead 5*, explain experiential learning.

Break the group into five teams. Explain that teams each get a chance to contribute to teaching an activity. Randomly assign teams one of the following functions: DO, SHARE, PROCESS, GENERALIZE, and APPLY. Give teams the corresponding *Experiential Learning Cards*. Explain that it is the task of the first team to DO the activity, the task of the second team to continue and SHARE the activity, the task of the third team to continue and PROCESS the activity, and so on.

Here's the activity:
Use tweezers to dissect a pine cone. Figure out how a pine tree uses this package to perpetuate itself (grow new seedlings).

Each team actually works on this project as a group. (Refer the teams to the information on the flipchart/chalkboard to help them plan their segments.) The DO team should begin the activity with instructions and should hand out materials. They should then proceed as their card describes.

Write on a flipchart/chalkboard these things to consider:

- Cones are heavy, and can drop efficiently from the trees.
- Cones protect seeds.
- Cones release seeds.
- Most seeds have light wings that help them disseminate by wind.
- Animals such as squirrels help introduce pines and other conifer trees to new areas by moving cones around.
- Some cones are called serotinous — they don't release seeds unless heated by fire or by high ground temperatures. This ensures seeds won't hit the ground until there is bare soil that they need to grow.

When the DO team is finished, the SHARE team is next. Continue until all teams have finished their part of the activity.

FINAL ACT

Field any questions. Ask:

- 1 How does the experiential learning process build understanding? How can you use it to strengthen curricula and activities?
- 2 Can you think of other applications of this process within the materials you are using now? Share some examples, if you'd like.

Experiential Learning

Direct, hands-on involvement (learning by doing) is the most effective way to help children learn. 4-H puts full emphasis on this principal. The experiential learning process engages learners actively, encouraging them to think for themselves, work harder, and ultimately learn more.

DO

Describe the activity you'll have participants do. Encourage them to think about what they might see or what might happen. Then, let participants experience the activity; perform or do it.

SHARE

Ask questions about the activity and the experience after they've completed it. Participants describe the results and their reactions.

PROCESS

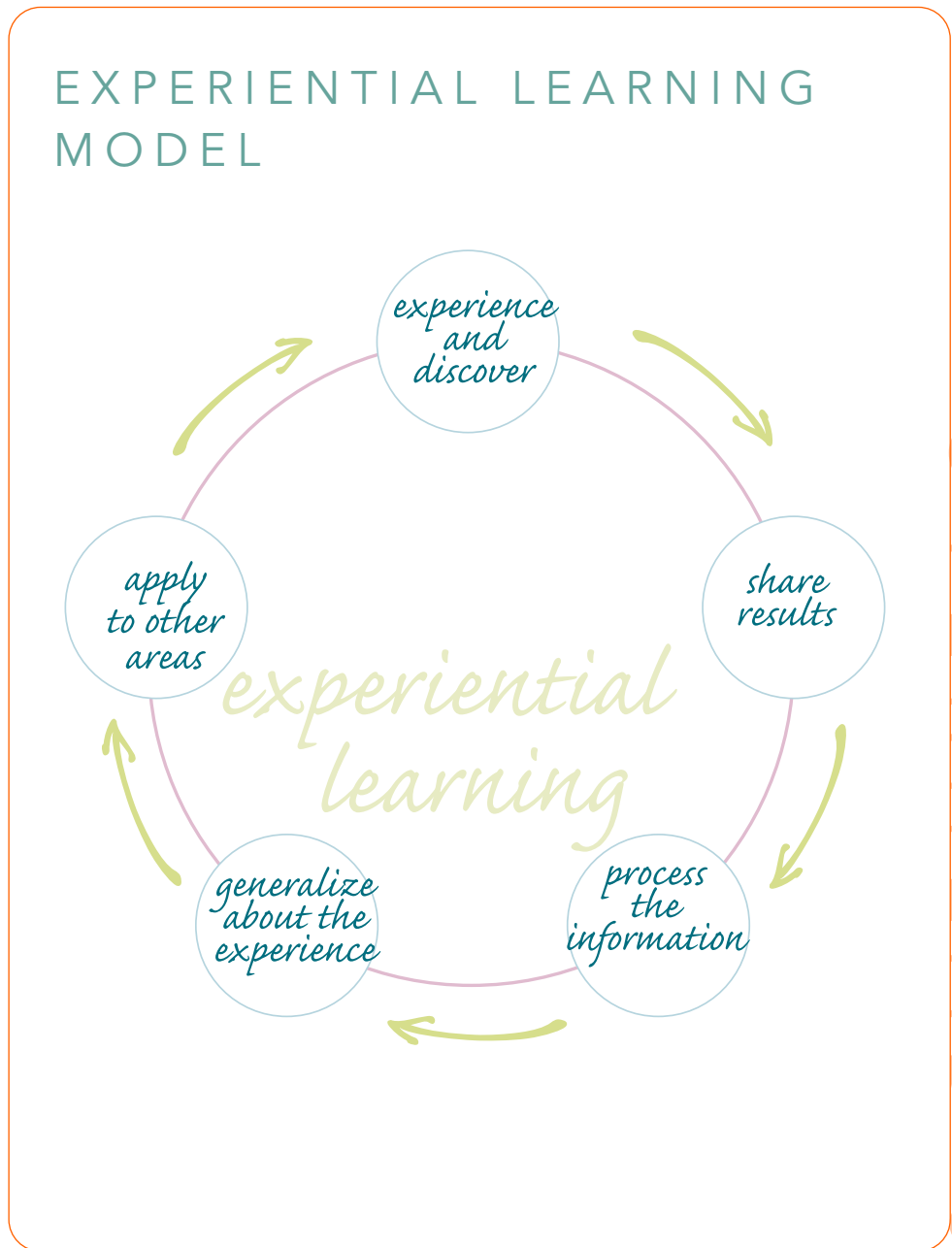
Ask questions about something that was important about the experience. Children analyze the experience and reflect upon the results.

GENERALIZE

Apply the results back to real world examples. Ask questions to help children connect the subject matter to life skills and the bigger world.

APPLY

Help participants apply what they learned to their own lives, to give them opportunities to practice these new skills or use the new information.



OVERHEAD 5

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CARDS

Experiential Learning



Do

Describe the activity you'll have participants do. Encourage them to think about what they might see or what might happen. Then, let participants experience the activity; perform or do it.

Share

Ask questions about the activity and the experience after they've completed it. Participants describe the results and their reactions.

Process

Ask questions about something that was important about the experience. Children analyze the experience and reflect upon the results.

Generalize

Apply the results back to real world examples. Ask questions to help children connect the subject matter to life skills and the bigger world.

Apply

Help participants apply what they learned to their own lives, to give them opportunities to practice these new skills or use the new information.

Sample Activity

GOOD VIBRATIONS*

THE SCIENCE OF SOUND

LIFE SKILLS

Critical Thinking, Learning to Learn.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To learn how to incorporate the experiential learning cycle in a typical 4-H activity. (The activity helps children understand how sounds travel and are heard, and gain an appreciation for how sounds enrich our lives.)

AGE

Five to 12.

TIME

30 minutes.

SETTING

Indoors or outdoors.

MATERIALS

Drum and drumsticks; plastic containers and lids that aren't clear; beans, pennies, paper clips, o-shaped cereal, popcorn kernels, and other small items to put inside the containers.

OVERVIEW

In this activity, you'll train participants how to use a typical 4-H experiential learning-based, hands-on activity. *Good Vibrations: The Science of Sound* helps youth understand the process of problem solving. NOTE: This activity (adapted) also can be found in *Extraordinary Learning Opportunities: A Sampler of 4-H Afterschool Activities*.

In this activity, participants get a chance to explore their sense of hearing. Before you begin, prepare "shaking containers" by placing beans, pennies, paper clips, cereal, popcorn kernels, or other small items into containers. Prepare two of each — two containers with paper clips, two containers with beans, etc.

START HERE

Explain to participants that *Good Vibrations: The Science of Sound* is designed to emphasize the life skill of critical thinking. Ask participants to pay particular attention to the experiential learning process, to see how it is applied in this activity.

Ask participants to assume the roles of youth ages five to 12. Note that the group will be beginning with the first step in the experiential learning process: *experiencing the activity*. Before they do this, however, note that you'll be providing some content background.

Explain that sound is vibration moving through a substance such as air, water, or other material. Our ears collect the vibrations and pass them down the ear canal to the eardrum. The eardrum vibrates like the head of a drum. (Use a drum to simulate this vibration — ask for volunteers to help make the noise.)

Continue your explanation by pointing out that other small bones in the ear continue the vibrations until they reach the inner ear, where they are changed to signals that are sent to the brain.

* Adapted from *4-H Cloverbud Series II Curriculum*. Ohio State.

Sample Activity

GOOD VIBRATIONS

THE SCIENCE OF SOUND

WHAT'S NEXT?

Help participants explore the wonderful world of sound. Give each person a container. Tell them to shake it up but not open it. Listen carefully to the sound it makes.

Now, instruct children to go around the room and find the person with the match — the same items in the container that they have. Participants may only use their sense of hearing to find the match.

After everyone has found a match, ask them to open their canisters and see if they've chosen correctly. Those who aren't correct should find their match, and carefully compare the sounds made. Explain that this is the experiential process of *sharing results*.

Next, explain to participants that they'll be using a series of questions to move through the next experiential steps, namely, processing, generalizing, and applying.

FINAL ACT

Ask participants these *processing* questions:

- 1 What kind of sounds did you hear?
- 2 How did you know who had the same items in their container?
- 3 Why did the different items in the containers make different sounds?

Ask some *generalizing* questions:

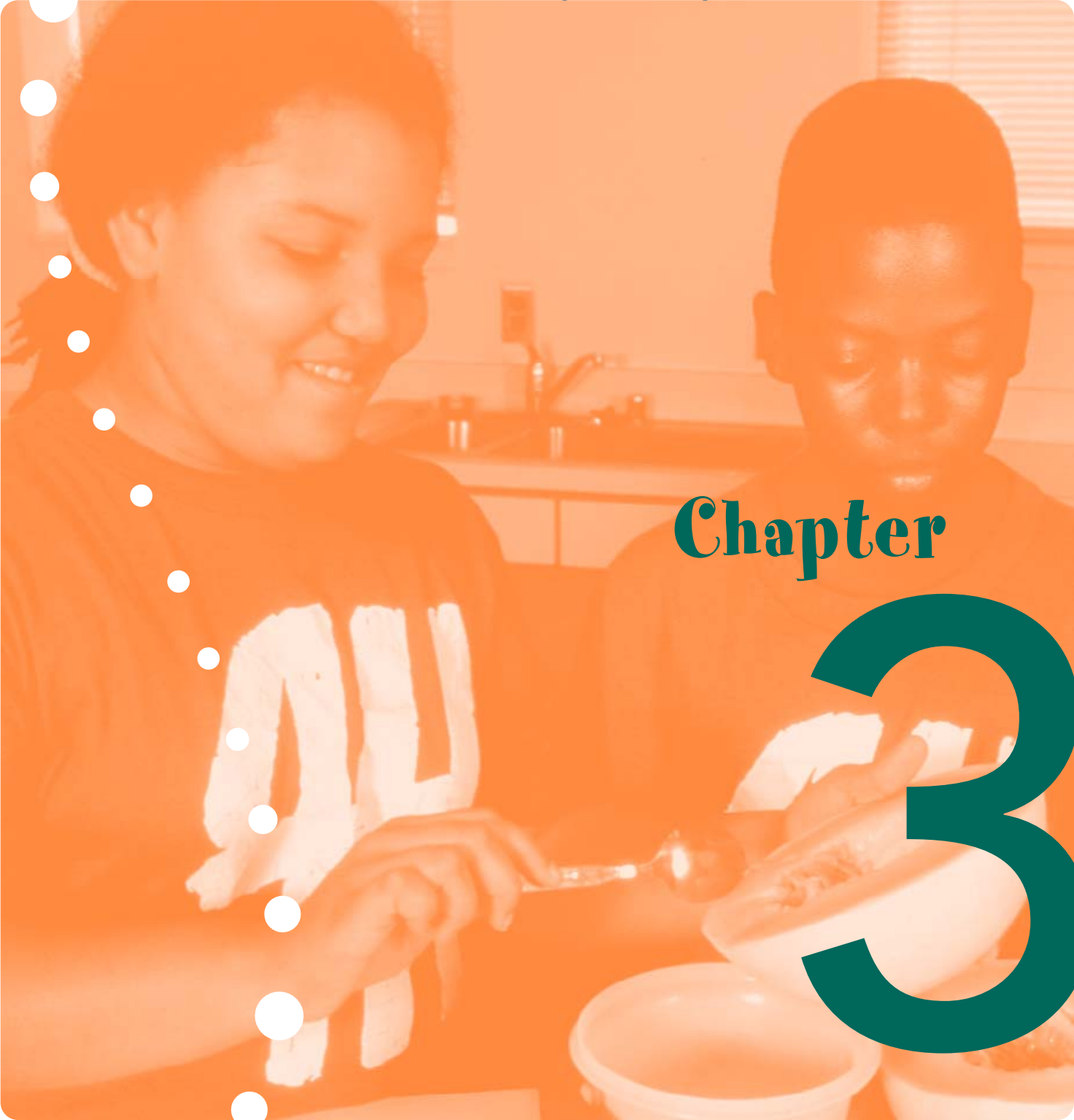
- 4 What other things could be put into the containers to make sound?
- 5 What things could you put in the containers that would not make sound?

Help children *apply* what they've learned. Explain that we get important information by hearing. Ask: When are some times when listening carefully is important? Are there ever times when listening isn't important?

More to Do

Why not an eardrum band? Assemble everyone and ask them to shake their canisters in beat to a simple tune, such as This Old Man or Row, Row, Row Your Boat. Accompany them on a piano (or other instrument) or play a tape/CD of music.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION



Chapter

3

Chapter Background

After-school sites can help promote safe and nutritious food. They can make nutrition goals, both for their sites and for educating youth, a priority. They can implement policies that support goals and make sure they have adequate resources to support these goals.

PLANNING AND PREPARING SNACKS

Sites are always challenged to think of simple, healthy snacks to feed children. Very large sites may be part of national or state programs that provide guidance and resources. Smaller sites, however, may be left to their own devices. How best, then, to plan and prepare snacks with limited time, budget, and staff? And how do you ensure foods are nutritionally sound?

The USDA recommends some simple rules for healthy eating, which includes snacking:

- 1 Don't forget to consult the food guide pyramid for snacks as well as meals.*
- 2 Use whole grains to make snacks when possible.
- 3 Choose fruit and vegetables as snacks.

FOOD SAFETY AND HANDLING

Food safety and handling issues are a growing issue. It seems that every day cases of children stricken with *E. coli* or listeria are in the news. Restaurants and other establishments make the headlines because of unsanitary conditions. After-school sites, if they offer meals or snacks, must meet regulations about food preparation. They also can help children learn about food safety in their own homes.

Foods kept at the wrong temperature cause the majority of food poisoning cases.

TEACHING CHILDREN ABOUT NUTRITION

With all the adults in a home working, children often are left to prepare their own snacks or meals. Often, their choices are convenience foods that contain high levels of sugar, fat, or both. How can program staff help children make the best choices, nutritionally, that they can?

Many after-school programs use cooking or food projects to teach children about nutrition and food safety. Such programs help children learn the basics of cutting, measuring, and use of equipment (microwaves, etc.). They also teach children simple ways to prepare nutritious foods.

Healthy eating is an important skill.*

- 1 It helps children grow, develop, and do well in school.
- 2 It prevents childhood and adolescent health problems such as obesity, dental caries, and iron deficiency anemia.
- 3 It lowers the risk of future chronic disease such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer and reduces potential health care costs.

* From USDA. September 2000. *Helping Students Learn to Eat Healthy*. At www.fns.usda.gov/tn. (Accessed 7/2002.)

* NOTE: The food guide pyramid, developed by USDA, may be modified by 2005. Changes could center on separating types of fats; ungrouping red meat and chicken, fish, and dried beans; and distinguishing between whole-grain products and refined ones.

Training Matrix

This is a suggested training sequence for this chapter and for the topic of health and nutrition. You can offer all the activities or pick and choose to meet your training needs. NOTE: To teach more in-depth about a particular topic, such as food safety, you may need to supplement the materials found in this chapter with other Cooperative Extension System curricula.

SECTION	PURPOSE	MATERIALS NEEDED	TIME
PLANNING AND PREPARING SNACKS	To try some simple, healthy snack recipes.	Photocopies of the <i>Food Guide Pyramid Handout</i> (page 43) and <i>Snack Ideas Handout</i> (page 44); chalk and chalkboard or flipchart and markers; scratch paper; markers; paper. Optional: computers and printers; healthy-eating cookbooks.	One hour
FOOD SAFETY AND HANDLING	To learn the basics of safe food handling.	Make photocopies of the <i>Food Safety and Handling Handout</i> (page 46); posterboards; markers; glitter glue and other art supplies; paper; pens.	One hour
TEACHING CHILDREN ABOUT NUTRITION	To learn an activity associated with nutrition to teach children.	Photocopy <i>Vegetable Game Cards</i> (pages 50 and 51) and cut them apart. Write their values on the back in large numbers. Chalkboard and chalk or posterboard and markers. Use the chalkboard/posterboard to make a <i>Vegetable Jeopardy</i> game board.	About one hour



Planning and Preparing Snacks

OBJECTIVE

To plan and prepare some simple snacks.

TIME

One hour.

MATERIALS

Photocopies of the *Food Guide Pyramid Handout* (page 43) and *Snack Ideas Handout* (page 44); chalk and chalkboard or flipchart and markers; heavy 8" by 11" paper; scratch paper; markers; paper. Optional: computers and printers; healthy-eating cookbooks.

OVERVIEW

Many after-school sites provide simple snacks for children. This activity helps after-school staff base snacks in the food guide pyramid. Before you begin, draw a large food guide pyramid on a chalkboard or flipchart. Leave lots of empty space within the pyramid; you'll be recording snack responses. You also may wish to write the criteria from *What's Next?* on a chalkboard or flipchart.

START HERE

Distribute copies of the *Food Guide Pyramid Handout*. Ask participants to study the pyramid and then list (out loud) some snacks they could or do serve, and where they fit in the pyramid. As they do this, write them down on the giant pyramid.

Give participants copies of *Snack Ideas Handout*. Discuss the recipes using these questions:

- 1 What are the major ingredients?
- 2 Where do they fall into the food guide pyramid?
- 3 Would these be easy for your staff, or even children themselves (with supervision) to prepare?

WHAT'S NEXT?

Break participants into teams of two each. Ask each team to think of a recipe for a "SnackDown" cookbook. The recipe must meet these criteria (you may wish to write them on a chalkboard/flipchart):

- 1 Use the food guide pyramid.
- 2 Use whole grains to make snacks when possible.
- 3 Choose fruit and vegetables as snacks.
- 4 Be easy for a child to prepare.

Give teams heavy paper, scratch paper, and markers and ask them to record their recipes in their best handwriting on the heavy paper. You also may wish to provide healthy-eating cookbooks for teams to reference. (Optionally, you can use a computer and let participants word process the recipes into one large book.) They also can write in food safety hints, if they wish. Give them lots of time to complete their recipes.

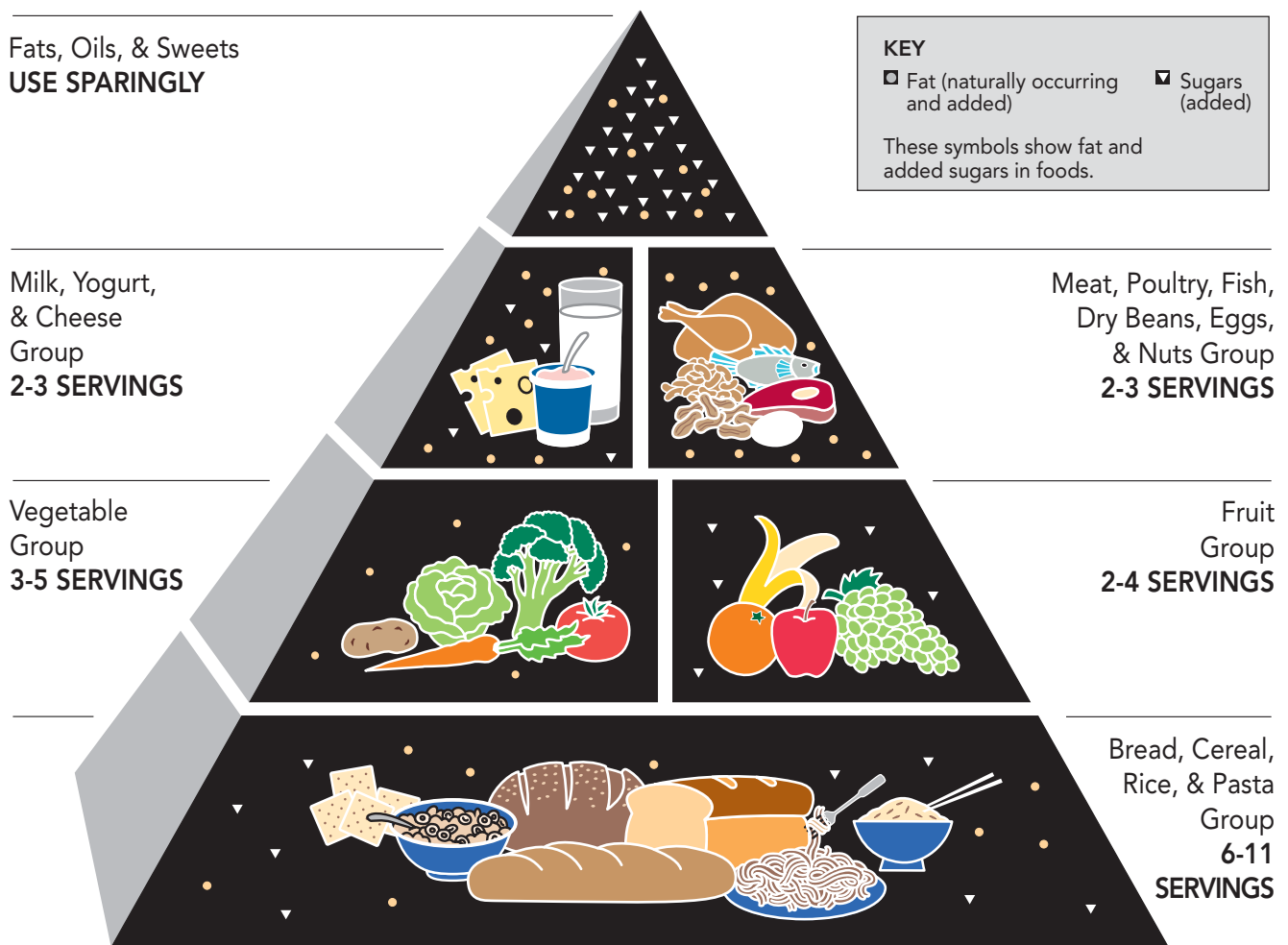
Give teams an opportunity to share their recipes. If you wish, you can ask the group to decide if each recipe meets the criteria (or how each could be changed to do so).

FINAL ACT

Reproduce the recipes, bind/staple them together, and distribute to participants at some later point. They can use the "SnackDown" cookbook as a learning tool at their sites by offering cooking classes using the book, or by distributing the recipes/books directly to the children and their families. Or, suggest that children at sites may wish to write their own cookbook!

Planning and Preparing Snacks

FOOD GUIDE PYRAMID A GUIDE TO DAILY FOOD CHOICES



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Agriculture/U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Available at www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/fpyr/pyramid.gif.

NOTE: The food guide pyramid, developed by USDA, may be modified by 2005. Changes could center on separating types of fats; ungrouping red meat and chicken, fish, and dried beans; and distinguishing between whole-grain products and refined ones.

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Planning and Preparing Snacks

SNACK IDEAS!

Veggie/Fruit Bites

- Fresh, cut-up, well-washed raw vegetables, such as carrot rounds, cucumber slices, radish slices, celery sticks, etc.

OR

- Fresh, cut-up, well-washed raw fruits, such as apple slices, strawberry halves, banana slices, melon slices, etc.
- Spreads, such as peanut butter or cream cheese

Make bites by spreading a vegetable/fruit piece with a spread, and then topping it with the same vegetable/fruit.

Gorp on the Go

- 1 cup peanuts (check for food allergies among children before adding)
- 1 cup sunflower seeds
- 1 cup dried cranberries or raisins
- 1 cup other dried fruit, such as peach or apple slices

Mix all ingredients together and keep well sealed. Serve in paper muffin cups.

GORP WITH A TWIST

Omit other dried fruit, and add 1 cup of cereal such as bite-sized wheat or o-shaped cereal and 1 cup pretzels.

Energy Bars

- ½ cup peanut butter
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 egg
- ½ cup water
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1¾ cup biscuit mix

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease an 8" x 4" loaf pan. Beat peanut butter and sugar until well blended. Mix egg, water and vanilla separately; add to peanut butter mixture. Add biscuit mix and beat until smooth. Pour into pan and bake for about 40 minutes. Cut into bars.

Food Safety and Handling

OBJECTIVE

To learn the basics of safe food handling.

TIME

One hour.

MATERIALS

Make photocopies of *Food Safety and Handling Handout* (page 46); posterboards; markers; glitter glue and other art supplies; paper; pens.

OVERVIEW

Experts estimate that about 9,000 people die and at least six million get sick each year from all food-borne infections. Keeping food safe at after-school sites and helping children learn how to eat safely at home is critical. In this activity, participants learn the basics of food safety and then break into teams to figure out ways to reinforce the concepts at their sites.

START HERE

Review the information in the *Chapter Background* section of *Food Safety and Handling* with participants. Summarize by giving participants the *Food Safety and Handling Handout*.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Break participants into teams of two to four members each (try to have at least four teams). Ask one half of all the teams to use the *Food Safety and Handling Handout* to design a simple activity for children to get across one of the main points. Give these teams paper and pens to plan their activities. The team can either describe or actually do the activity with the group.

Explain that other teams will design a communication mechanism for staff and volunteers about safe food handling, using one of the main points of the handout. They may want to design restroom hand washing signs, for example, or design a food safety poster. Give these teams access to posterboards, markers, glitter glue, and other art supplies. Allow all teams plenty of time to complete their tasks.

FINAL ACT

Let teams present their ideas, or run the entire group through the new activities. Encourage them to implement the ideas at the sites.



Food Safety and Handling

Basic Rules of Food Safety*

Keep hot food hot. Always keep hot food at 140 degrees Fahrenheit or above.

Keep cold food cold. Store food below 40 degrees Fahrenheit if it will be served cold. Do the same with food that is still uncooked or with leftovers that will be reheated.

Perishable foods (foods other than baked goods or shelf-stable foods) should be allowed to remain between 40 degrees Fahrenheit and 140 degrees Fahrenheit for no more than two hours.

Keep things clean. This includes not just the food itself but also the utensils, the kitchen, and the food handlers!

Hand washing is essential. Few people realize that this means scrubbing with a full lather for 30 seconds! That is a long time, but less scrubbing just doesn't do the job of reducing bacteria.

Keep foods separate. Keep raw foods separate from cooked foods. Raw foods such as meat and poultry may contain harmful bacteria. Cooking will destroy those bacteria and make the food safe. But the bacteria will remain on plates, cutting boards, and utensils that have been in contact with the raw food. It is important that raw or already-cooked food not come in contact with these surfaces or with the raw juices of these foods.

* Reprinted with permission from the National Network for Child Care – NNCC. Keith, M.A. (1991). Kids, food, and safety. In Todd, C.M. (Ed.), *School-age connections*, 1(1), pp. 3-4. Urbana-Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service.

Teaching Children About Nutrition

OBJECTIVE

To learn an activity associated with nutrition to teach children.

TIME

About one hour.

MATERIALS

See list of materials found in *Vegetable Jeopardy* (page 48).

OVERVIEW

In this activity, participants will learn how to teach a nutrition activity to children. Before you begin, assemble the material for *Vegetable Jeopardy* (pages 48 and 49) and prepare the *Vegetable Jeopardy* game board and cards (see *Overview*, page 48).

START HERE

Explain to participants that there are many health and nutrition activities that they can teach to children. Explain you'll work through one called *Vegetable Jeopardy* with the group.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Play *Vegetable Jeopardy* with participants. Act as game host and moderator. Participants may wish to take on the roles of children while they play. Follow directions within the activity.

FINAL ACT

Ask participants if they enjoyed the game. Suggest that they could let older children research and write the game cards, to increase knowledge outcomes. Ask participants if they can think of other game adaptations.

Children

often do

participate in

choosing and

preparing

their meals.



Teaching Children About Nutrition

VEGETABLE JEOPARDY*

LIFE SKILLS

Healthy Lifestyle Choices, Disease Prevention, Teamwork.

AGES

Five to 14. Mix younger children with older ones.

TIME

45 minutes.

SETTING

Indoors or outdoors.

MATERIALS

Photocopy *Vegetable Jeopardy Game Cards* (pages 50 and 51) and cut them apart. Write their values on the back in large numbers. Chalkboard and chalk or posterboard and markers. Use the chalkboard/posterboard to make a *Vegetable Jeopardy* game board.

OVERVIEW

Vegetable Jeopardy helps children become acquainted with vegetables, an important food group for disease prevention. NOTE: This activity (adapted) also can be found in the *Sampler of 4-H Experiential Learning Activities*.

In this activity, children play a game to learn about vegetables. Before you begin, make a gameboard from posterboard or chalkboard. Write the categories at top. Tape the *Game Cards* on the gameboard, face down.

START HERE

Introduce the topic of vegetables to participants. Explain that there are lots of good vegetables to eat, and we need to eat them every day! Ask questions to stimulate discussion:

- 1 What's your favorite vegetable?
- 2 Do you ever grow vegetables?
- 3 What kind of vegetables do you like best — fresh, frozen, or canned?

Next, explain that everyone will play a game about these amazing foods!

WHAT'S NEXT?

Divide participants into two teams by counting off carrot, broccoli, carrot, broccoli, etc. Ask teams to choose a captain, who will give answers for the team. Explain that team members must work together to choose the category and answer the question. First captain who puts his hand up gets to answer. If one team gives a wrong answer, the other team gets a chance to answer.

* Adapted from Expanded Food and Nutrition Program (EFNEP). 1994. *Youth Curriculum Sourcebook*. North Central Region, University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Service.

Teaching Children About Nutrition

VEGETABLE JEOPARDY

Act as a moderator to read questions and keep score, or appoint someone to do these things. (Optional: With younger children, don't keep score. Everyone who participates and works together on a team is a winner.) Play the game!

FINAL ACT

After the game is done, ask children the following processing questions:

- 1 What was it like to play the game?
- 2 What did you like the best?
- 3 What did you learn about vegetables?
- 4 Did you like being on a team?

Help participants process and apply. Here are some guiding questions:

- 1 Vegetables are important parts of our diet. Can anyone think of ways to eat more?
- 2 Do you think you'll eat more vegetables? Why or why not?
- 3 Can you think of a vegetable snack you could make yourself?



VEGETABLE JEOPARDY GAME CARDS

Teaching Children About Nutrition



ACTIVITY CARDS 3

Green Vegetables

Q. Name a vegetable used to make pickles.

10

A. What is a cucumber?

Orange/Yellow Vegetables

Q. Maize is another name for this vegetable.

10

A. What is corn?

Green Vegetables

Q. This green vegetable is the basic of most salads.

20

A. What is lettuce?

Orange/Yellow Vegetables

Q. You may eat this vegetable at Thanksgiving, smothered in marshmallows.

20

A. What is a yam (or sweet potato)?

Green Vegetables

Q. This vegetable can be green or red, hot or mild.

30

A. What is a pepper?

Orange/Yellow Vegetables

Q. This vegetable grows on vines and its name is often used to describe something you might do to a bug.

30

A. What is squash?

Green Vegetables

Q. When you eat this vegetable, you're actually eating the flower.

40

A. What is broccoli?

Orange/Yellow Vegetables

Q. This orange vegetable gives you good eyesight and can be used to make cake.

40

A. What is a carrot?

VEGETABLE JEOPARDY GAME CARDS

Teaching Children About Nutrition



Vegetable Puzzles

Q. Name a vegetable that's red inside and out.

A. (Either okay): What are red beets or red cabbage?

10

Vegetables in Cartoons and Movies

Q. Bugs Bunny's favorite food.

A. What is a carrot?

10

Vegetable Puzzles

Q. Name a vegetable you eat that's a root (or part of one).

A. (Any okay): What is carrot, turnip, beet, radish, or potato?

20

Vegetables in Cartoons and Movies

Q. Popeye got his strength from this vegetable.

A. What is spinach?

20

Vegetable Puzzles

Q. Only one in five people eat enough of these every day.

A. What are vegetables?

30

Vegetables in Cartoons and Movies

Q. When an actor peels this vegetable in a movie, he or she starts crying.

A. What is an onion?

30

Vegetable Puzzles

Q. This vegetable is also a letter of the alphabet.

A. What is a pea? (P)

40

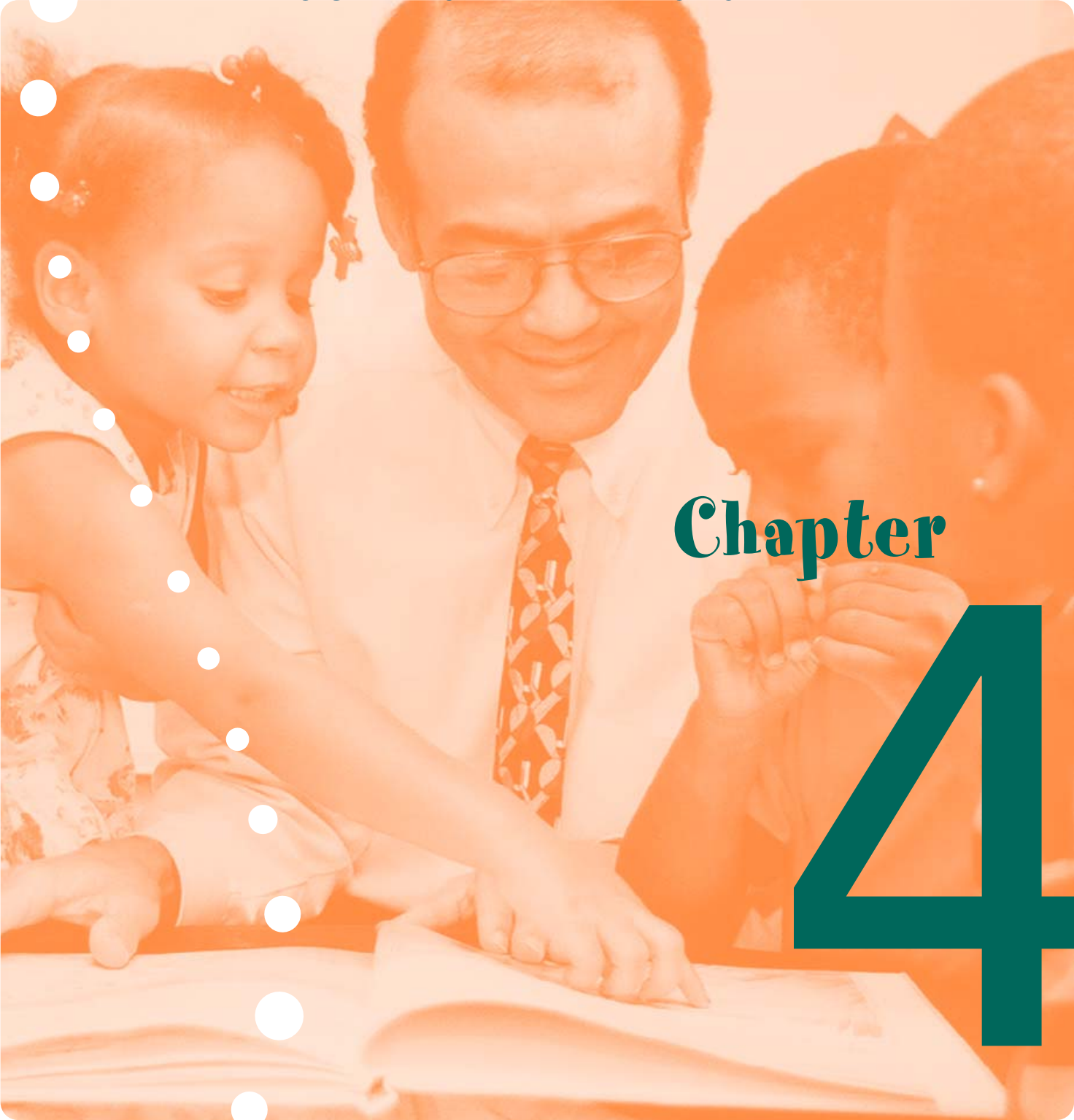
Vegetables in Cartoons and Movies

Q. This small vegetable, placed under a stack of mattresses, kept a princess awake all night

A. What is a pea?

40

PROGRAMS AND PLACES



Chapter

4

Chapter Background

PROGRAM QUALITY

The National School-Age Care Alliance (NSACA) has established standards for quality after-school programs.* These standards relate to the quality of human relationships between children and with staff and families; the indoor and outdoor environments; activities and scheduling; safety, health, and nutrition; and administration. After-school sites who meet these standards have achieved high quality programs for the children they serve. Sites will get a chance to examine these standards by participating in the first activity in this chapter.

COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

The foundation of the program development process, according to researcher Theresa Ferrari, is the community needs assessment.** Community needs assessments allow after-school sites to:

- 1 Gather information about attitudes and opinions;
- 2 Determine which issues are most important to the community;
- 3 Give others a voice in structuring programs;
- 4 Determine the amount of support for programming;
- 5 Evaluate current conditions at centers.

Centers who undertake this effort will be able to figure out if they need to increase the quality or quantity of their program. Programs can then be structured and planned to meet these needs.

Researchers also have found some indicators of quality after-school programs. Successful programs have:

- Community partnerships.
- Involved parents.
- Well-trained staff.
- Administrative policies and procedures that are consistently enforced.
- Mechanisms in place that help ensure sustainability (sliding-fee scales; access to grants; access to food programs, etc.).
- Evaluation components.
- Positive environments for young people that foster optimum development.
- Fiscal management policies.

* For more information about the NSACA standards, go to their web site at www.nsaca.org.

** Ferrari, Theresa M. 2002. *An Extension Program Model for Out-of-School Time*. Ohio State University Extension.

Training Matrix

This is a suggested training sequence for this chapter and for the topic of after-school programs. You can offer all the activities or pick and choose to meet your training needs. NOTE: To teach more in-depth about a particular topic, such as program quality, you may need to supplement the materials found in this chapter with other Cooperative Extension System curricula.

SECTION	PURPOSE	MATERIALS NEEDED	TIME
PROGRAM QUALITY	To compare current programs with NSACA standards for administration.	Photocopies of <i>NSACA Standards Handout</i> (page 56); flipcharts and markers for teams; flipcharts and markers or chalkboard and chalk Optional: Print out copies of <i>Personnel Practices for School-Age Child Care</i> , available at www.nncc.org/Business/personnel.practices.html .	45 minutes
COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENTS	To learn more about community needs assessments and how they are used.	Make an overhead from <i>Community Needs Assessment Overhead</i> (page 58); flipchart and markers.	45 minutes



Program Quality*

OBJECTIVE

To compare current programs with NSACA standards for administration.

TIME

45 minutes.

MATERIALS

Photocopies of *NSACA Standards Handout* (page 56); flipcharts and markers for teams; flipchart and markers or chalkboard and chalk. Optional: Print out copies of *Personnel Practices for School-Age Child Care*, available at www.nncc.org/Business/personnel.practices.html.

OVERVIEW

In this activity, participants will analyze their sites according to standards set by the NSACA. Before you begin, write questions found under *Start Here* on a flipchart or chalkboard.

START HERE

Break the group into teams according to sites. For example, if you have four after-school sites represented by program staff, let representatives from these separate sites become a team. (Teams may have different numbers of members.)

Give each team a copy of *NSACA Standards Handout*. Review the sheets with the large group. Then ask teams to go through each area (Child/Adult Ratios, Supervision, etc.) and write down, using a flipchart and markers, some ideas for improving their programs so that they could more closely align with the standards. (They can use a separate sheet of paper for each area.) They should answer these questions (write these on a flipchart/chalkboard):

- 1 What areas of our program need improvement, according to the standards?
- 2 How could we move in the direction of improvement?
- 3 How long would it take us to meet the standards?
- 4 Are there barriers to meeting the standards? How could we address them?



Give teams quite a bit of time to discuss their programs. Be sure to rotate to answer questions or to help teams move through the information.

WHAT'S NEXT

Ask teams to share their findings, area by area. The goal is to get some dialog exchange about possible solutions, so you may want to ask teams to talk about the areas they are most excited about improving.

FINAL ACT

Optional: Hand out copies of the *Personnel Practices for School-Age Child Care* document referenced in the Materials list. Explain that this document is most relevant to the staffing issues discussed in this session. Give participants several minutes to review and discuss the document.

* The optional sheet listed in the materials section can be used for educational purposes. Reprinted with permission from the National Network for Child Care – NNCC. Eller, C.L. and Russell, M.M. (1993). *Personnel practices for school-age child care* (Beyond Opening Day). Storrs, CT: University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension.

Program Quality

NSACA Standards*

CHILD/ADULT RATIOS

- Staff-child ratios vary according to the ages and abilities of children.
- The ratio is between 1 to 10 and 1 to 15 for groups of children six and older.
- Staff-child ratios and group sizes vary according to the type and complexity of the activity, but group sizes don't exceed 30.
- There is a plan to provide adequate staff coverage in case of emergencies.
- Substitute staff help maintain ratios.

SUPERVISION

- Children's arrivals and departures are supervised.
- Staff have a system in place that lets them know where children are at all times.
- Staff plan for different levels of supervision according to the level of risk involved in the activity.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

- Staff meet the requirements for experience with school-age children in recreational programs.
- Staff meet minimum age requirements.
- Enough qualified staff are in place to meet all levels of responsibility, e.g., administration, management of daily operations, and supervision of children.

STAFF ORIENTATION

- Staff receive a written job description that outlines responsibilities to children and families.
- The program is reviewed with each staff member.
- Written personnel and program policies and procedures are reviewed with staff (including emergency procedures, confidentiality policies, etc.).
- New staff are given a complete orientation to the program philosophy, routines, and practices, and are introduced to staff/parents/children.

TRAINING OF STAFF

- The training needs of the staff are assessed. All staff receive between 15 and 30 hours of training annually.
- Staff receive training in how to work with families, how to relate to children, safety, and other issues.
- Program directors and administrators receive training in program management and staff supervision.

STAFF SUPPORT

- Staff receive enough support to make their work experience positive.
- The program offers the best possible wages and working conditions to reduce turnover.
- Full-time staff receive benefits, including health insurance and paid leaves of absences, paid breaks, and paid preparation time.

- Staff are able to discuss concerns about the program.
- Staff receive continuous feedback and supervision.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

- The financial management of the program supports the program's goals.
- The administration oversees the recruitment and retention of program staff.
- The director involves staff, board, families, and children in planning and decision making.
- Administrators assist with ongoing evaluation, in an effort to improve all areas of programming.

PROGRAM POLICIES

- Program policies and procedures are responsive to the needs of children, youth, and families in the community.
- A written mission statement sets forth the program's philosophy and goals.
- The program is affordable to as many community members as possible. It uses all potential sources of subsidy.
- The program hours of operation are based on family needs.
- Children with special needs are welcomed at the program.

* More information on the NSACA standards, from which this sheet is adapted, can be found at www.nsaca.org/standards_glance.htm.

Community Needs Assessments

OBJECTIVE

To learn more about community needs assessments and how they are used.

TIME

One hour.

MATERIALS

Community Needs Assessment Overhead (page 58); flipchart and markers.

OVERVIEW

In this activity, participants will study the basics of planning a community needs assessment. Before you begin, you may wish to write the problem statement from *Start Here* on a flipchart.

START HERE

Explain that one of the most important steps in undertaking a community needs assessment is understanding the why — why is your organization undertaking the effort? What do they want to know? What are the important issues that need to be addressed?

Next, read this problem statement to the group (or write it on a flipchart):

Steel Mountain Day Care is thinking of expanding their program to accommodate an additional 75 children. They also are thinking of moving the program nine miles to the west, in a building next to the interstate. Their focus also would de-emphasize literacy and homework in favor of a theater emphasis.

Ask the group to list some issues that the Steel Mountain Day Care may have which involve the community (write their responses on a flipchart with markers). What do they need the community to help them figure out?

Point out that by first conducting a needs assessment, the Steel Mountain Day Care could probably avoid making several expensive mistakes.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Ask the group to suggest a list of issues they, as after-school sites, may have that they wish to involve the community in (write these on a flipchart). For example, they may list operating hours or program focus. After they have generated a list, share *Overhead 6* with the group. Use some of the identified issues as examples to review the overhead.

Next ask:

- 1 Can you give an example of using a community needs assessment in your program? What were the results?
- 2 How would a needs assessment help define the solution? What are its strengths? Any limitations that you can define?
- 3 Does it help to align identified needs with the actions your program takes? Why (or why not)?

FINAL ACT

Explain that Extension staff can help structure and implement a needs assessment. You also may wish to demonstrate how specifically your area/region can aid them in this process.

Community Needs Assessment

1

Use a committee to plan and conduct the needs assessment. The committee should contain staffers, parents, older youth, and members of the community who have a stake in the issues.

2

List the issues that need to be addressed.

3

Identify who needs to be surveyed. Is it parents, teachers, neighbors, or others?

4

Decide what information you need to collect. Is it the current enrollment in the school district or other existing information? Or must you use a survey to get the information?

5

Select a random sample of who needs to be surveyed, since it probably isn't feasible to survey everyone.

6

Design your questionnaire and pretest it for errors or confusion.

7

Collect the information.

8

Analyze the results. What do they say about the issue?

9

Report the results of the survey and how your organization used it to make decisions.

WORKING WITH PARENTS
AND THE COMMUNITY

Chapter

5

Chapter Background

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT*

After-school sites do not operate in a vacuum. They must cultivate good relationships with parents and other community members. You can help after-school program staff increase their ability to build these relationships.

One of the hallmarks of a successful after-school program is a welcome, open attitude toward parents. In such programs, staff work actively to build strong relationships with parents. Staff solicit input from parents and are sensitive to family values when developing their curriculum. Above all, they approach the task as a partnership that ultimately best benefits the child.

Parents can choose to become involved at different levels with the after-school program. At the lowest level, parents simply receive information. Newsletters, notes, and messages on a bulletin board keep parents minimally involved and knowledgeable about the activities of their children. However, this is a one-way mechanism; it does not allow for feedback from parents to staff.

Levels of Parental Involvement:

- 1 Receive information.
- 2 Provide information.
- 3 Are active learners.
- 4 Become teachers.
- 5 Become decision makers.

At a higher level, parents can be valued as providers of information. They may provide insights about their child to staff, outline goals, or suggest ways to handle problems that may arise. All of their input, however, revolves around their child.

At a third level, parents are welcomed as learners. They may attend seminars sponsored by the after-school site or read literature generated by the program. These sources contain information needed by the parents, for example, coping with adolescence or school performance.

At an even higher level still, parents are seen as teachers. They may choose to teach their own children at home, extending any lessons learned during the day, or may actually visit the after-school setting and work with their child. They also may help other children learn, for example, by hosting children at a work site or sharing a hobby.

At a final level, parents work with the after-school site as decision makers. They play an active role in the day-to-day life of the after-school program. This level requires a substantial commitment from the parents.

Most parents will start at the lowest level of involvement. With support from the after-school site, however, they will advance through levels until they find their niche.

Approach
the task as a
partnership
that ultimately
best benefits
the child.

* Adapted from the *School-Age Child Care Training Manual*. Cooperative Extension Service, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Chapter Background

Children in after-school care usually have their caregivers in the workforce much of the day. Many children have parents who are divorced, remarried, or single, which challenges children to cope and adapt to sometimes stressful transitions. After-school program staff need to understand how family dynamics affect a child's behavior. When program staff make a genuine effort to get to know families, children benefit, since they feel that everyone is "pulling together" for them.

FAMILY ACTIVITY NIGHTS

To improve communication between after-school program staff and families, many sites schedule special events. Family Activity Nights can be as informal as an open house or as scheduled as a workshop. They may include an educational component for parents and children, too. In all communities, Family Activity Nights serve to let children, parents/caregivers, and staff interact in a relaxed and positive atmosphere.

WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE

While after-school program staff strive to maintain good relationships with parents, they also should understand where they fit within the community. How is their after-school site perceived? What are its strengths and weaknesses? And how can it better connect to the community at large, including neighbors, schools, social service agencies, other after-school sites, businesses, and other organizations?

While a community needs assessment (see Chapter Four) can help answer some of these questions, another approach can help children benefit, too. After-school sites can strive to build a sense of community with the children at their sites. They also can provide children with opportunities to link to the community at large.



Training Matrix

This is a suggested training sequence for this chapter and for the topic of working with parents and the community. You can offer all the activities or pick and choose to meet your training needs. NOTE: To teach more in-depth about a particular topic, such as working with the community, you may need to supplement the materials found in this chapter with other Cooperative Extension System curricula.

SECTION	PURPOSE	MATERIALS NEEDED	TIME
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	To share successful methods for involving parents in programs.	Flipchart and markers; masking tape. Make <i>Parental Involvement Overheads 7 and 8</i> (pages 64 and 65). Optional: Make photocopies of <i>Survey Handout</i> (page 66).	30 minutes
FAMILY ACTIVITY NIGHTS	To give parents, caregivers, children, and staff opportunities to interact and learn in informal ways.	Photocopies of <i>Family Activity Night Planning Handout</i> (page 68); flipchart and markers or chalkboard and chalk; construction paper, scissors, glitter glue, markers, posterboards, and other art supplies.	45 minutes
WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE	To understand how to begin to build a sense of community at sites.	Flipchart and markers or chalkboard and chalk; photocopies <i>Community Outreach Event Handout</i> (page 70).	45 minutes



Parental Involvement*

OBJECTIVE

To share successful methods for involving parents in programs.

TIME

30 minutes.

MATERIALS

Flipchart and markers; masking tape. Make *Parental Involvement Overheads 7 and 8* (pages 64 and 65). Optional: Make photocopies of *Survey Handout* (page 66).

OVERVIEW

In this activity, participants better understand ways to involve parents in programming and share ways they have fostered parent involvement in their programs.

START HERE

Introduce the topic of parental involvement using *Overhead 7*. Next, ask participants to discuss levels of parental involvement at their sites. Ask them to rate the level of parental involvement, with “5” being maximum involvement and “1” corresponding to none at all. (Participants can raise their hands as you call out the numbers.) Ask:

- 1 Why do you think participation is so high (low)?
- 2 Do you think parents understand the benefits of their involvement to their children? Why or why not?
- 3 Which levels (from *Overhead 7*) of parental involvement are most of your parents comfortable with?

WHAT'S NEXT?

Use *Overhead 8* to guide a lecture about increasing parental involvement. Next, ask participants to share examples of how they've involved parents in the past. Take notes on a flipchart using markers and tear off sheets as they are filled; hang these around the room. You can organize this discussion by asking how parents were used as recipients of information, providers of information, learners, teachers, and finally, decision makers.

Here are some questions to help frame a discussion about parental involvement under *What's Next?*:

- 1 Do you find parents appreciate your attempts to keep them informed?
- 2 Have you ever given children activities or things they can do at home with parents? Have these been successful?
- 3 How do you best let parents know that your program has needs? What do you find to be the reaction?
- 4 Do you find that some parents are natural leaders? How do you encourage those who don't step up right away to take on more interesting roles?
- 5 How do you best help a parent gain parenting/teaching/leading skills?

Now ask: Rate, on the same scale we used earlier (1 to 5), how involved you would like parents to be at your site. How can you move from the current situation to the desired situation? Brainstorm some ideas with the group, writing them down on the flipchart sheets.

FINAL ACT

Review the large body of information generated by the group by referring to the flipchart pages. Congratulate the group for successfully sharing techniques to help inform and involve parents!

You also may wish to hand out the *Survey Handout* to participants. They can use this form at the beginning of the year to survey parents about communication and participation.

* Adapted from the *School-Age Child Care Training Manual*. Cooperative Extension Service, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Parental Involvement

Benefits of Parental Involvement

- 1**
Strengthens the parent's ability to care for the child.
- 2**
Results in positive outcomes for the child.
- 3**
Reduces problems in the after-school setting.

Levels of Parental Involvement

- 1**
Parents as recipients.
- 2**
Parents as providers of information.
- 3**
Parents as learners.
- 4**
Parents as teachers.
- 5**
Parents as decision makers.

OVERHEAD 7

Parental Involvement

How to Increase Parental Involvement

BE SUPPORTIVE!

- 1 Understand and accept the family.
- 2 Be professional.
- 3 Understand parent-child relationship.
- 4 Give praise to parents.

KEEP THE PARENT IN THE CHILD'S LIFE!

- 1 Understand what it is that parents want or need to know.
- 2 Respect differing value systems.
- 3 Solicit parent input and keep parents informed of upcoming activities.
- 4 Provide feedback to parents.

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTS TO BECOME INVOLVED!

- 1 Give them things to do at home together.
- 2 Let parents know what the program needs.
- 3 Give parents chances to take on leadership roles.

EDUCATE PARENTS!

- 1 Help them understand their child's behavior.
- 2 Teach them skills.

Parental Involvement

Survey*

How do you want us to communicate with you? We can provide better experiences for your child if we are both working together to help your child receive the best care and instruction possible. Please take a few minutes to fill out this survey and return it to us, so we know the form of communication parents prefer!

- Send a note home with my child when something goes RIGHT.
- Send a note home with my child when something goes WRONG.
- Talk to me when I come to pick up my child.
- Set up a regular, short parent conference.
- Call me at home/work (circle one) if something is wrong.
- Call me at home/work (circle one) if something is right.
- Call me at home/work (circle one) with a regular report.
- Send me a newsletter with program highlights.
- Plan activity nights for parents, children, and staff.
- Plan educational workshops for parents about children.
- Keep a bulletin board posted at your site with program highlights and notes.
- Ask me to volunteer once every week/month/year (circle one). Or, write different amount of times to volunteer per month here: _____.
- Ask me to be on a committee or board.
- Ask me to help teach the children about a special hobby or interest I have (write the hobby/interest here): _____.
- Ask me to do a volunteer job that I can do at home.
- Ask me how I'd like to be involved.

Your name (optional): _____

Please return this survey by _____ to _____.

* Adapted from Crosiar, Sally Jo, Kathryn Sanger, Jennifer Birckmayer, and Polly Spedding. 1995. *Training School-Age Child Care Staff, A Handbook for Workshop Leaders*. Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Family Activity Nights

OBJECTIVE

To give parents, caregivers, children, and staff opportunities to interact and learn in informal ways.

TIME

45 minutes.

MATERIALS

Photocopies of *Family Activity Night Planning Handout* (page 68); flipchart and markers or chalkboard and chalk; construction paper, scissors, glitter glue, markers, posterboards, and other art supplies.

OVERVIEW

In this activity, participants break into teams to plan Family Activity Nights. Before you begin, put together an art table that has construction paper, scissors, glitter glue, markers, posterboards, and other art supplies. You also may wish to write the information found under *What's Next?* (core strengths) on a chalkboard or flipchart.

START HERE

Begin by discussing the idea of involving parents and other community members by holding Family Activity Nights. Such events can be as informal as an open house or as scheduled as a workshop! In all communities, Family Activity Nights serve to let children, parents/caregivers, community members, and staff interact in a relaxed and positive atmosphere.

Ask sites if they've ever held such outreach events. What were the outcomes? What were the strengths of the events? The things that needed improving?

Review the following "core strengths" information with the group:

To build strong community partnerships for learning, it's recommended that:

- 1 Families read together.
- 2 Parents and caregivers monitor out-of-school activities.
- 3 Parents talk with children and teens.
- 4 After-school sites make after-school visits easier.

5 Sites promote family learning.

6 Sites encourage parent leadership.

Point out that Family Activity Nights can help promote all of these core strengths.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Break the group into teams of about three or four people each. Give teams a copy of the *Family Activity Night Planning Handout*. Explain that teams will plan the activity nights by filling out the planning sheets. Ask them to keep the previous "core strength" information in mind while planning their events. For example, they may wish to plan a family reading night, or have parent boards plan the events.

Also explain that some of the best Family Activity Nights happen with the collaboration of children at the site. Ask one member of each team to "become" a seven-year-old child and creatively offer up any ideas he/she may have.

After teams are done planning the night according to the theme, they will move to the art table and design a large poster to advertise their event!

FINAL ACT

Give teams a chance to share their planning ideas and posters. Discuss how the events can be implemented at each site, and what the outcomes or improvements might be.

Family Activity Nights

Family Activity Night Planning

Plan a celebration! Our theme is:

1 What is the best time of day to offer this activity? Immediately after school? On Friday nights? Write the day and time here:

2 What do we want to happen at this night? What are our goals — to help families meet other families and staff, or learn something? Write goals here:

3 How are we going to help families get to know each other and the staff? Write ideas here:

4 What is our main activity of the night?

5 Are we going to serve food? How will it be prepared — will we have families help make or bring the food?

6 If we are going to have an educational event, how will we do this? Will we show a video? Bring in a guest speaker? Lead the group in an activity? Write ideas here:

7 How will we wrap up the evening?

8 How will we measure its success?

Working With the Community at Large

OBJECTIVE

To understand how to begin to build a sense of community at sites.

TIME

45 minutes.

MATERIALS

Flipchart and markers or chalkboard and chalk; photocopies *Community Outreach Event Handout* (page 70).

OVERVIEW

In this activity, teams review and or brainstorm some ideas to involve the children at their sites with the community, and then plan an event that would accomplish this.

START HERE*

Explain that a sense of community plays an important part in developing a child's self-esteem. Children need to know who they are and how they fit into the world around them. They need to become aware of others and the community in which they live.

Explain that infants care only about their own physical needs. Preschool children, too, remain very self-centered. However, school-age children are becoming better able to reach out to others. They need opportunities to develop giving relationships and to understand the world around them.

Next, suggest the following activities to help children feel part of the larger community, or ask participants to brainstorm a list and fill in:

- 1 Invite people from the community to come to your after-school site and talk about what they do.
- 2 Take field trips to places in the community.
- 3 Take part in community activities.
- 4 Make service to the community a part of your program.
- 5 Collect food for hungry people.
- 6 Hold a special program for teachers in the community.
- 7 Entertain senior citizens.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Break the group into teams of two to three participants each. Ask them to choose one of the ideas from the list and make a *Community Outreach Event* plan to implement at their site, using the *Community Outreach Event Handout*. Give teams time to plan their events.

FINAL ACT

After they have finished, let teams share ideas. Remind them it's important to get the children's feedback on their plans, and, in fact, children should be involved from the earliest point. Ask teams if they think they have viable plans, and how they would implement them.

* Reprinted in part with permission from the National Network for Child Care – NNCC. Eller, C.A. (1991). Building a sense of community. In Todd, C.M. (Ed.), *School-age connections*, 1(1), pp. 1-2. Urbana-Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service.

Working With the Community at Large

Community Outreach Event

Our idea:

How we're going to do this:

Where it will happen:

Who's involved?

When will we do it?

What will children learn?

How will community members benefit?

Other comments:

NOTE:

ALL

Community

Outreach

Event plans

should be

reworked with

input from

youth before

they are

implemented!

SHARE YOUR 4-H AFTERSCHOOL
PROGRAM RESULTS

Chapter

6

Join Up...and Share Your Results*

- Do you have outstanding programs you want others to know about?
- Are you pressured to report results of your programs?
- Do you feel as if you have no time for reporting the outcomes of your programs?
- Have you been in a situation where you needed to report program results immediately?
- Would you like to contribute to a National effort?

Then 4-H Afterschool has a few solutions!!

4-H Afterschool programs will have several opportunities and systems available for reporting program results and being recognized for quality efforts. They include:

- 1 The Extension CARES Initiative (ECI) Evaluation and Reporting System
- 2 4-H Afterschool Program Profiles (a.k.a. Benchmark Information)
- 3 State Plan of Work reporting system
- 4 ES-237
- 5 4-H and Family and Consumer Science “Programs of Excellence” Collection

WHAT IS THE ECI?

The Extension CARES Initiative (ECI) is a national initiative of the Cooperative Extension System that aims to increase the quality, availability, accessibility, affordability, and sustainability of child care, school-age and teen out-of-school programs. Program goals and objectives can be found at the reusda.gov/extension-cares web site.

WHAT IS THE ECI EVALUATION AND REPORTING SYSTEM?

The ECI evaluation and reporting system is a web-based system for reporting information from early care and education, school-age care and teen programs. This is the primary system 4-H Afterschool programs will use. It generates local reports and provides data that can be aggregated for state and national use.

Why should you use the ECI system?

- It's on the Internet, so no special software is required.
- Data entry is fast and easy, and the system performs all the analysis for you!
- Provides instant professional reports of your results!

There are three ways in which you can report results of your efforts with 4-H Afterschool projects into the ECI system.

PART 1: Simply tell us what trainings/programs you are doing. With the report you will get from this data, you can answer evaluation questions such as: Who am I reaching with my program?; What range of topics have I offered through training?; How many training hours have I offered my participants?

* This chapter was written by Toni DeWeese, ECI National Data Coordinator.

Join Up...and Share Your Results

PART 2: Use ECI Client

Satisfaction evaluations to evaluate the training/program you've done.

There are four versions of client satisfaction surveys: Provider/Staff, Extension, Families, and Community, each depending on the target audience of the program. Each evaluation contains basic questions on demographics of that population, plus four simple questions about the program. You can either send evaluations for scanning or enter evaluation data into the online system. With the report you will get from this data, you can determine multiple characteristics of your audience, as well as answer questions such as: How do participants rate the quality of the training?; Am I reaching my target audience?; How do my programs compare to the national average?

PART 3: Report specific activities or outcomes you've been working toward.

For a list of the questions asked in the semi-annual report, refer to the website at: www.eci.msstate.edu. While the semi-annual report can be conducted alone, we highly encourage it to be used in conjunction with reporting programs and using client satisfaction evaluations to maximize the power of this system and the reports you get back.

NOW, HOW DO YOU START?

- 1 Obtain an ECI User ID and password for logging into the system. Visit our website for a list of state ECI coordinators, then contact your coordinator for a User ID.
- 2 Once you have a User ID, you can login to the system to start reporting.
- 3 *You also need to download the reporting and evaluation system training manual. This manual gives you step-by-step instructions on how to report your data in the system.* It also tells you complete instructions on how to use client satisfaction evaluations. To download the manual, visit our website at: www.eci.ext.msstate.edu.

Our website has just about everything you need to know about the evaluation and reporting system so you can start reporting right away! If you have questions about the evaluation and reporting system, please go to the www.eci.ext.msstate.edu web site.

The ECI evaluation and reporting system is one of the few that allows the aggregation of data across the country. Summary data will help market our excellent work and position Cooperative Extension System for resources in the future. JOIN UP and become part of the national effort! You'll be glad you did!

Other than the ECI evaluation and reporting system, how can I participate in...

4-H AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM PROFILES (AKA BENCHMARK INFORMATION)?

4-H Afterschool Programs will be asked to respond to an on-line survey during the fall of each year. This gives the 4-H Afterschool Leadership Team valuable information that profiles programs, lets us know who is involved in afterschool programs, and provides information which can be used to market the nation-wide efforts of the Cooperative Extension System. Some of the questions in this quick survey are similar to the ones asked in the "Semi-Annual Report" through the ECI system. The "profiles" offer quick snapshots of what is happening across the country, while the semi-annual report collects and analyzes the information in more detail. To preview the Profile questions, visit our website at: www.eci.ext.msstate.edu.

With the report you will get from this data, you can determine multiple characteristics of your audience.

Join Up...and Share Your Results

STATE PLAN OF WORK (POW) REPORTING SYSTEM?

A set of outcome indicators that measure impact in early care and education, school-age care, and teen out-of-school time programs, has been developed and will be integrated into the national Plan of Work system that states submit to the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) in order to receive federal funds. These outcomes and indicators were developed by a national committee of Family and Consumer Science faculty and the School-Age Care, Teen Out-of-School Time, and Evaluation Committees of ECI.

Watch for this opportunity in the next POW reporting cycle. Copies of the indicators can be found on the ECI website at: www.reeusda.gov/extensioncares.

ES-237 ANNUAL REPORTING FOR 4-H?

There are two categories in the ES-237 Annual 4-H Report, starting with the reports due November 1, 2004, that will capture 4-H Afterschool efforts. Under the "4-H Club" category, states will be able to report youth members in: community 4-H clubs, school 4-H clubs, afterschool 4-H clubs, and military 4-H clubs. It is a new option to be able to report 4-H clubs in these different categories. Previous reports only asked for 4-H clubs and many interpreted this to mean community clubs only. This category assumes there is a 4-H club structure present in the afterschool environment.

There is another category in which states can report "youth participating in School-Age Child Care programs." States can report youth reached through all afterschool efforts (needs assessments, curriculum enhancement, staff training, community development, etc.) here. A 4-H club structure does not have to be part of the afterschool experience.

4-H PROGRAMS OF EXCELLENCE?

For a number of years the National 4-H Headquarters staff collected "4-H Programs of Excellence" from the states and compiled them into a web-based resource of information. These were narrative reports that could document results.

Opportunities such as this may be available in the future. 4-H Afterschool programs are encouraged to provide program information for these types of requests.



Training Planner

TRAINING DATE(S):

LOCATION:

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:

Session 1

ACTIVITY	TIME	MATERIALS NEEDED	NOTES

Session 2

ACTIVITY	TIME	MATERIALS NEEDED	NOTES

Session 3

ACTIVITY	TIME	MATERIALS NEEDED	NOTES

ENDNOTES

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4-H AFTERSCHOOL
7100 CONNECTICUT AVENUE
CHEVY CHASE, MD 20815-4999
PHONE • 301-961-2814
FAX • 301-961-2894
WWW.4HAFTERSCHOOL.ORG



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