Creating a Positive Environment & Managing Groups of Children

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Purpose of this session is to provide you with strategies to create a positive environment and more effectively manage groups of children in afterschool settings.
Who are the children with whom you work?
Values imply what people think is important in a particular context.

Values are different from rules but are often inherent within rules.

Pair and share: What values are important to you? Your organization?
Co-Constructing Values with Kids

- Discuss with kids what they value in the afterschool setting.
- Brainstorm how the values can be enacted.
- Represent the values and make them visible.
We take care of the things around us

- Wafiqah and Aunty Gemma wash our breakfast dishes
- Shaniah and Joel feed our chickens
- Gemma helps clothe Andrew
- Moana carefully carries Lilikoi and Bonzai's eggs
- Koi washes cilantro for our salsa

We take care of each other

- Shaniah holds ice on Eliana's bumped forehead
- Andrew feels Shaniah's head
- Wafiqah asks Eliana if she would like to play
- Shaniah helps Willow to do her puzzle
- Allison shares quesadilla and soup with Aunty Aumua
Class Values

Respect
Be nice.
Listening body.
Peace of us.
Be in charge of you.
We Value

Students that respect others.
Students that are responsible.
Students that make great choices.
Students with a good attitude.
Students that collaborate with others.
Reinforce the Values

**Briefing:** At the start of your time together
- Explain what will be happening
- Talk about the values and how they will be used—referring to the representations.

**Debriefing:** At the end of the day, ask kids
- How they saw the values enacted.
- What needs to be improved for next time—and emphasize these in the next briefing.
Consider kids’ developmental levels

How you best reach kids depends on their developmental level and how you tailor your environment and communication to match it.
What is needed from you?

- Hierarchy of needs--safety first
- To be understood-clear, age appropriate communication
- Provide structure, guides of behavior (importance of values and rules)
- To develop a relationship of trust and support (importance of listening)
Strategies for group management

- Project confidence & authority—even if you don’t feel it
- Establish clear expectations—explain values & rules,
- Catch kids being good and reward them
- Bring kids with less self-control closer to you
- Assign responsibilities to keep less focused kids on task
- Separate kids w/ less self-control & pair with others
- Premack’s Principle: Determine rewards by observing
Don’t

- Assume if others are not bothered a situation is okay
- Leave kids unsupervised or in distress
- Assume kids understand you because you were clear
- Scream or yell at kids
- Assume poor behavior is deliberate
- Criticize or disparage kids—focus on behavior not worth
- Expect kids to be more developed than they are
How to listen to kids

- Face them
- Keep spacing close but respect boundaries
- Be at their level-literally!
- Make eye contact
- Don’t interrupt, except for establishing understanding
- Reflect understanding first, then add your say (or not)
- Careful to use language that is age-appropriate
Active listening with a partner

- Take turns listening to each other share a challenge each has had managing a group of children (or adults)

- Remember:
  - Make eye contact
  - Keep space close, but respectful
  - Don’t interrupt, except for understanding
  - Reflect understanding first, then add your say (or not)
How to listen to a kid

- Face them
- Keep spacing close but respect boundaries
- Eye contact
- Don’t interrupt, except for establishing understanding
- Reflect your understanding first, then add your say (or not)
- Careful to use language that is age-appropriate
- Avoid directing the conversation

- Move, if possible, to a quiet, calmer environment
- Don’t rush in to solve a problem, understand it first
- Take time—emotions dissipate
- Model calmness while presenting concern
I hope that you have gained some strategies for managing groups of kids (and adults)

Good communication, awareness, responsiveness, and caring are key

Good luck!

Questions?
For more information, contact

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