



Setting the Standard: Intentional Learning and Skill Development Beyond the Bell

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Beyond the Bell[®]

Beyond the Bell[®] is a suite of professional development services, products, and practical tools designed to help afterschool program leaders and staff create and sustain high-quality, effective afterschool and expanded learning programs.

The practical, easy-to-use *Beyond the Bell Toolkit* provides information about program management, design, partnerships, delivery, evaluation, and improvement. It contains 96 tools that are ready to use and has a set of related professional development services.

The Continuous Improvement Process

Develop programs using sound processes

Implement those programs by employing quality practices

Evaluate the implementation of the program

Use the data from the evaluation activities to continually **improve** the program.



Youth Development



Youth Development

Participants are attracted to supportive environments that:

- Focus on respect and strengths
- Have clear expectations and values
- Meet emotional, social, cognitive, and physical needs/interests
- Provide opportunities for decision making (individually and collectively)
- Respect individuality (culture, language, gender)
- Include time to practice and develop relevant skills
- Help expand interest and aspirations

Activity!

Youth development means...

- Fostering positive growth in youth,
- Building on their strengths, and
- Addressing their developmental needs

How is your program incorporating youth development practices?

Complete Tool 63: Youth Development Checklist

Youth Development Checklist: Discussion

- Were you surprised by your results?
- What areas appear strong?
- What areas could use improvement?



Developing Intentional Activities

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Intentional Activities

Intentional means having a clear intent or goal and making purposeful decisions based on that goal.

- Select age- and stage-appropriate activities that address young people's interests, meet them in their developmental and learning space, and build on their strengths
- Create clear, consistent, and fair guidelines and expectations
- Develop written activity plans with content-specific strategies and embedded youth development practices
- Include reflection as a key component of your activity

Intentional Skill Building Activities

Skill Building

Research has identified four common elements in afterschool and expanded learning programs that are most effective in developing skills (Durlak et al., 2011). These SAFE elements and characteristics include the following:

S = Activities are sequenced

A = Learning is active

F = Activities are focused on developing personal and social skills

E = Activities explicitly target specific skills and outcomes

Reference Tool 70- Structuring Activities for Skill-Building

Reflect on opening activity

Skill Focus

- 21st Century Skills (Critical Thinking, Global Awareness, Accountability)
- Social Emotional Competencies (Self-awareness, management, relationship skills)
- Habits of Mind (Higher Order Thinking Skills, Standards of Mathematical Practice. Capacities of a Literate Individual) The learning skills necessary for meeting the Common Core Standards.

Reference Skills Handout

Activity Types and Content

Characteristics are shared by high-quality enrichment activities, some of the characteristics are:

- Hands on and interactive.
- Connect learning to young people's lives.
- Exhibit well-integrated academic content.
- Provide opportunities for youth to participate in authentic decision-making and allow leadership
- Develop strong relationships between youth and caring adults, older youth, and peers.
- Age and ability appropriate for youth in your program.

Reference Tool 74-Connections to Learning



Academic Enrichment

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What is Academic Enrichment?

- Academic Enrichment activities are often interactive or project focused. They enhance young peoples learning and development by bringing day school concepts to light in new ways. The activities are fun for youth, but they also impart knowledge. Finally, they can encourage youth to apply the knowledge and skills that are emphasized in school to real-life experiences.
- Academic Enrichment activities are **not**: Homework Help, Tutoring or Direct Instruction.

Embedding Academic Enrichment Activities in Your Program

Academic enrichment activities can expand the way that youth think about what they are learning during the day. Programs should:

- Plan your academic enrichment activities based on young people's expressed academic needs and interests.
- Link your program's enrichment activities to the subjects that youth are studying during the school day.
- Be intentional about incorporating academic content in a way that allows learning to grow out of the activity, rather than being added as an afterthought.

Reference Tool 75-Academic Enrichment Activity Planning

Is This An Academic Enrichment Activity?

(Tool 75, pg.2)

- The activity integrates academic content.
- The activity links to subjects youth are currently studying.
- The activity teaches academic concepts through methods that differ from typical school day instruction.
- The academic learning happens as an intrinsic part of a fun, engaging activity.
- The activity encourages youth to apply the learning they are doing to their own experience or to witness how academic concepts are used in real-life situations.
- The activity encourages youth to take on leadership roles.
- The activity promotes positive relationships among youth (across different ages) and between youth and caring adults.

Identifying Academic Needs of Youth

Tools to Communicate With Day School Staff

Beyond the Bell Tools:

- # 48 School Staff Meeting Topics
- # 49 Identifying Program-School Alignment Opportunities

Other Strategies:

- Obtain copies of textbooks and review “Extensions” or “Investigations”, usually at the end of the chapters.
- Talk one-on-one with day school staff about skills that need strengthening.
- Participate in day school academic team meetings.
- Send out bi-weekly emails asking for academic needs feedback.

Activity!

Academic Enrichment Book Report-Literacy Devices

- Group review of traditional book report format: Written synopsis of setting, characters, conflict, climax and resolution.
- Divide into small groups.
- Utilize Tool 71 (Activity Planner) to help you create an academic enrichment book report with the story of Harry Potter and an assigned literary device (e.g., Antagonist-create a backstory for the character).
- Utilize Tool 75 to assess Academic Enrichment focus.
- Share with whole group.

Academic Enrichment Literacy Activities

1. Write a letter to the author.
2. Be a reporter and interview a character.
3. Create a travel brochure of where the story takes place.
4. Create a twitter account regarding key story elements.
5. Dress as a character and act out a characterization.
6. Retell the story from a different point of view.
7. Write a different ending to a story or chapter.
8. Have you changed after reading this book? Why?
9. Create a back-story for a character.
10. Create a blog or Pinterest page created by antagonist/protagonist.

Academic Enrichment Activity

If You Give a Pig a Pear...

1. Read the book *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* by Laura Numeroff.
 2. Place youth in pairs or small groups.
 3. Provide youth with new titles for their book (see above).
 4. Task youth to re-write the book.
 5. Youth can be asked to illustrate part of the story.
 6. One or additional members of the group can choose to present the new story.
- Think: Does this meet our academic enrichment guidelines?

Academic Enrichment Activity

The Vocabulary Game

1. Connect with school day teachers to acquire your youths current vocabulary words (either site words or words from a story they are reading).
2. Assign youth to a word. Task them with looking up the definition.
3. Youth should write their word on one side of a 3 x 10 placard and the definition on the other.
4. Start a verbal story: In a magical kingdom far away, a young prince was in distress...
5. Ask each youth to stand up and take a turn using and inserting their word into the group story (students' hold placards when taking a turn).

Intentionally connect to Learning Standards

- Explicitly connect learning standards (Common Core and state standards) to program goals and intended outcomes.
- Provide orientation and planning time for staff members to integrate learning standards into activities and projects.
- Establish a professional learning community by offering joint professional development for program and school-day staff members.
- Help educate family members about the Common Core and how to apply learning in the subject areas with their children at home.

Reference Tool 53- Aligning With Learning Standards

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