

1999

## Creating a Balanced Program

National Institute on Out-of-School Time

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/slceguides>



Part of the [Service Learning Commons](#)

Please take our feedback survey at: [https://unomaha.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_8cchtFmpDyGfBLE](https://unomaha.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8cchtFmpDyGfBLE)

---

### Recommended Citation

National Institute on Out-of-School Time, "Creating a Balanced Program" (1999). *Guides*. 16.  
<https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/slceguides/16>

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Service Learning and Community Engagement Examples at DigitalCommons@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in Guides by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UNO. For more information, please contact [unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu](mailto:unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu).

# Creating a Balanced Program

NSLC  
c/o ETR Associates  
4 Carbonero Way  
Scotts Valley, CA 95066

## AGENDA

- I. **Assessment of needs/interests in the room**
  - What sorts of programs are you involved in running or starting up?
  - How do you feel about the quality of program and activities (content) your program offers?
  - What do you hope to gain from this workshop?
- II. **Introduction to the *Agenda***
- III. **Defining Aspects of a Quality Program**
- IV. **Defining “Program” and “Components”**
- V. **Designing an Appropriate Environment**
- VI. **Designing Appropriate Routines/Schedules**
- VII. **Ideas for Themes**
- VIII. **Integrating Service-Learning**
- IX. **Keys and Summary**
- X. **Program Design Tools**
- XI. **Resource List**

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

## Aspects of Quality Programming

Children's developmental needs fall into seven basic categories: \*\*\*

- Need to develop physical skills and receive adequate rest and nutrition
- Need to development a positive self-concept
- Need for creative expression
- Need for structure and clear limits
- Need to develop competence
- Need for meaningful participation
- Need to develop independence and responsibility

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

Following are suggested aspects of effective programming:

- **STRUCTURE WITH FLEXIBILITY:** a sense of structure and order through an established schedule and a fair amount of flexibility build into the schedule to allow children to pursue interests and finish projects beyond scheduled activities
- **VARIETY OF APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES:** a wide variety of age-appropriate activities such as craft projects, service-learning activities, board games, field trips, sports, and clubs
- **STAFF WHO ARE COMMITTED, CARING AND WELL-PREPARED:** experienced, trained staff and volunteers who have planned activities carefully and involved children in planning; staff who get to know children and connect well with them
- **CHOICES:** daily choices about how children spend their time
- **OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE INPUT AND DEVELOP RESPONSIBILITY:** opportunities for children to gain a sense of ownership, develop responsibility, and select activities that reflect their interests as they help plan and lead activities

## Balanced Program Module

- **EXPLORATION OF SKILLS AND INTERESTS:** chances to develop hobbies, skills and interests and get excited about learning; opportunities for children to develop self-confidence as they find new talents in areas typically not addressed by regular school curriculum.
- **DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL SKILLS:** activities, behavior guidance, and discussion that offers children opportunities to develop social skills and positive character traits
- **OPPORTUNITIES TO DO “SOMETHING REAL”:** service-learning projects and other hands-on activities that help children see tangible results

\*\*\* *The National School-Age Child Care Alliance (NSACCA) has developed a comprehensive list of “Standards for Quality School-Age Care.” These standards are reflected in the preceding list of aspects of a quality program. In her book, Keys to Quality in School-Age Child Care, Roberta Newman talks about the seven developmental needs of children listed at the beginning of this section. See the “Resources” list at the end of this packet for more information on these resources.*

## Program Content

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

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

Following are examples of common daily or weekly program components and activities that go with each component.

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

## Appropriate and Attractive Environments

We are all very effected by the environment around us. Children will be happier and better behaved in out-of-school programs if they find the environment to be comfortable, well-equipped and appropriate for the activities that are part of the program and the ages and needs of the children to be served. Following are some questions and ideas to help you create an appropriate environment for your program.

### QUESTIONS

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

### IDEAS

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

## Routines and Schedules

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

### Transition Time in After School Programs

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

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

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

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

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



Ideally, when children arrive at the program, they should have choices about what they would like to do for a specified period of transition time (15-20 minutes works well for many programs.) After this transition time, children will be more prepared to participate in the regular components and activities of the program.

## **General Scheduling Tips**

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

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

## Theme-Based Activities

By centering the activities in your program on different themes, children can gain a sense of continuity, develop new interests, and become “experts” in a wide variety of subjects. Themes can last for a week, a couple of weeks, or more.

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

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

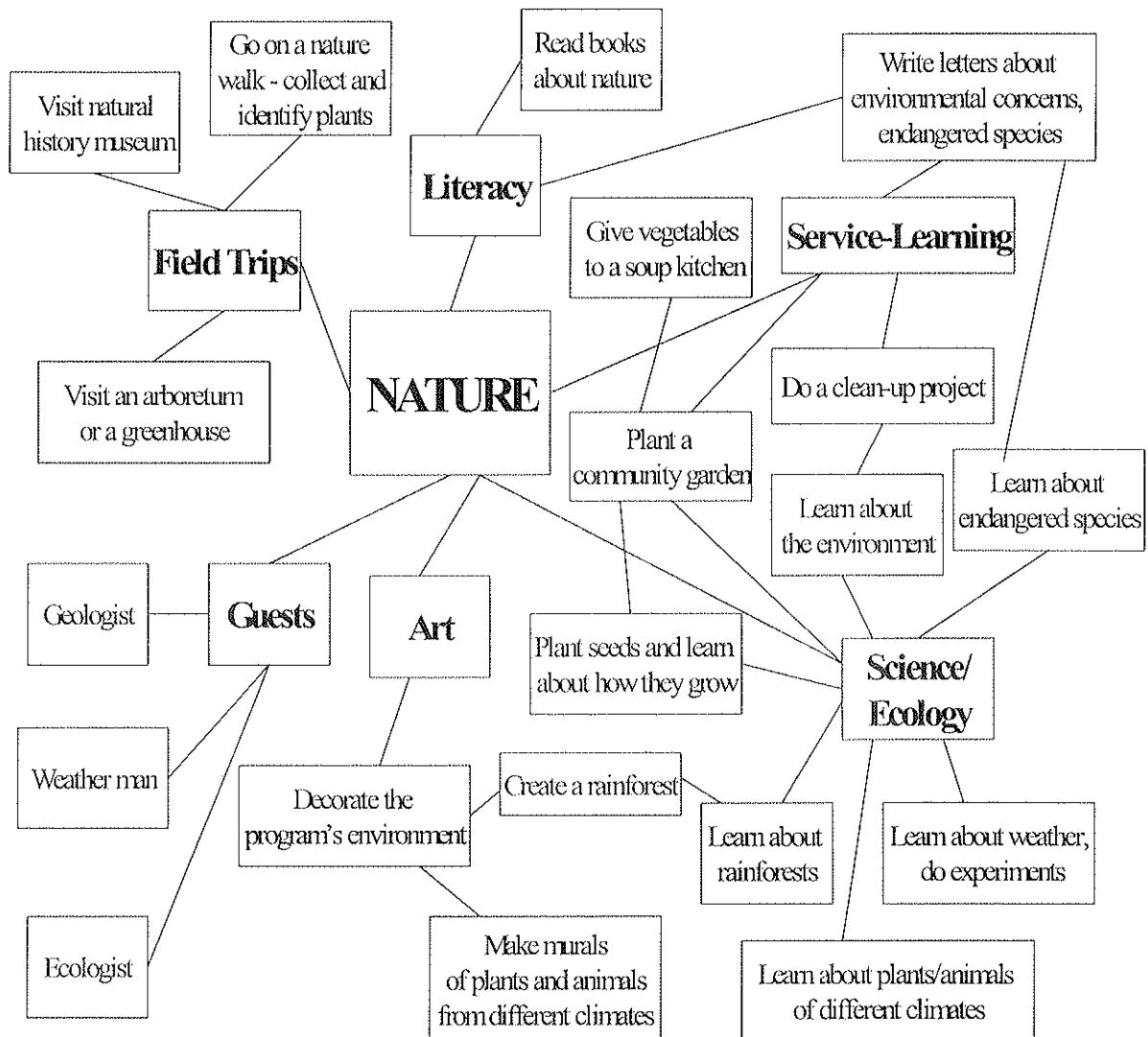
The most effective themes emerge from the children. Listen to children’s conversations, tune in to the interests and trends you observe, and find out what they are learning in school. Brainstorm theme and activity ideas with children. After developing basic theme ideas, work with children to devise a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

### In general, successful theme-based activities:

- focus on interests expressed by children
- are planned and implemented with plenty of ideas and help from children
- end when children’s interest begins to wane
- build on the resources and interests of staff, volunteers and families involved in the program
- are incorporated into many components of the program
- include service-learning activities
- offer hands-on activities
- include field trips
- end with a culminating event for families and community members that showcases what children have learned through performances and exhibitions.

## Using Webbing to Develop Themes

Following is an example of the use of “webbing” to brainstorm activities to go with a general theme topic. To use this technique, work with staff and children to brainstorm and connect ideas visually on a blackboard or large sheet of paper. Through webbing, you can come up with theme-based activities that are effectively tied to different components of your program and to children’s developmental needs. This technique can also help staff and children see the theme “grow” from a simple idea into many exciting and concrete ideas.



## Examples of Themes and Theme Activities

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Tips for Integrating Service-Learning

Young people can find great satisfaction and wonderful learning opportunities in planning and participating in community service. Out-of-school time programs can be the perfect setting for service-learning. Regular service projects are transformed into service-learning by emphasizing the academic and social skills involved in planning and performing projects and by engaging children and youth in reflection on their work. Following are tips and project ideas to help you incorporate service-learning in your program:

**Choose Appropriate Projects:** Younger children respond well to projects that have quick and tangible results and involve a lot of action (like picking up trash, doing a performance for elderly people, sorting food at a food pantry). Older children often enjoy longer-term projects that allow them to plan projects and get to know those they are serving.

**Keep It Simple:** Meaningful service-learning opportunities do not need to involve extensive planning, complicated transportation, or many materials. Projects can be simple, tangible and focused and can take place in walking distance from your site or right at your site.

**Have Children and Youth Help Plan Projects:** Involve children in brainstorming and researching project ideas. Discuss community needs and encourage youth to think about the resources and abilities they have that could meet needs they see. Offer young people lots of ideas and options about appropriate service projects and let them choose what they would like to do. Actively involve youth in making phone calls, thinking about what materials are needed, obtaining materials, dividing up work, etc.

**Develop Partnerships:** Set up a partnership with a local volunteer center, community center, food bank, nursing home, homeless shelter or hospital. Invite a representative to come and talk with youth about the work of their organization and about the needs the organization tries to meet. Young people can "adopt" a group and develop meaningful relationships as they serve the same people again and again. Have youth suggest types of organizations they'd like to partner with and help them research potential partnerships. Start by calling your local volunteer center (1-800-59-LIGHT) and look at the yellow pages listings for social service organizations.

**Be Persistent and Specific:** Many service agencies and volunteer centers are not used to the idea of children and youth as volunteers. They may not readily have ideas about what young people can do to help. Be prepared to offer concrete suggestions of what your group can do. Be persistent. Invite representatives to come meet the children and talk about needs. Chances are, once service agencies meet the children and see the good young people can do, resistance will melt away.

**Engage Young People In Reflection:** Reflection is a key element during the process of planning and executing a project and after completing a project. Reflection can involve a special time set aside for group discussion and an ongoing process of capitalizing on the "learning moments" that arise.

## Balanced Program Module

**Celebrate Efforts:** Regularly congratulate young people for their work. Make sure that organizations and individuals benefiting from your group's work express their thanks directly to the children and youth involved. Help young people see that the good feelings they get from helping others is part of their reward. On a daily basis, recognize young people who help each other, show courtesy and do things without being asked - all acts of kindness contribute the community and can be considered service-learning.

### **SIMPLE PROJECT IDEAS:**

Following are some tried and true ideas that are easy to organize and execute in almost any community with children and youth of different ages. All suggested projects can teach children planning skills while helping them develop awareness and understanding. Along with each project suggestion are examples of specific learning that could be tied to the project.

<b>SERVICE PROJECT</b>	<b>SOME LEARNING POSSIBILITIES</b>
Rake up leaves or plant flowers for people who are elderly or disabled. Help with yard work at your site	Learn about plants, gardening and landscaping. Learn about the specific challenges of others in your community.
Perform a play, read to people, or sing a song at a nursing home or hospital and take time to get to know people there. Write letters or draw pictures to send if transportation is an issue	Practice singing, performing, conversation and/or writing skills. Learn about nursing homes or hospitals.
Develop "reading buddies." Within your program or in partnership with another program, assign older children to younger children and have them read to each other regularly.	Solidify the reading skills of both younger and older children. Older children learn responsibility, patience and teaching skills. Offer older children simple training about being a good tutor.
Hold a toy/food/clothing drive for a homeless shelter or soup kitchen.	Learn about hunger and homelessness while developing planning, organizing, counting and sorting skills.
Put together "personal hygiene kits" (toothpaste, soap, etc.) for a homeless shelter. Ask the children to bring in sample soaps, shampoos, etc	Learn about homelessness. Use math to figure out numbers of kits to be made given the number of items available.
Pick up trash in a local park or neighborhood. If there seems to be a shortage of trash receptacles, find out who is in charge and write letters.	Learn about the impact of litter. Learn to do research and practice writing skills. Learn to notice needs and do something about what you notice. Learn about responsibility.
Make cookies or pictures to give to local police officers, custodians, teachers or cafeteria workers.	Learn about the work that these people do. Learn to appreciate those who are often under-appreciated.
Sort food at a nearby food pantry or help prepare and serve food at a soup kitchen	Learn about hunger issues in your community. Use counting and sorting skills and/or measuring and cooking skills.

## **Ingredients of Effective Programming**

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

**Commitment and buy-in of all stakeholders**

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

**Staff and volunteers who are:**

- ◆ competent
- ◆ enthusiastic
- ◆ well-trained

**Consistency of routines, schedules and components**

**Well-planned activities that are:**

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

**Effective indoor and outdoor environments**

**Constant re-evaluation and addition of new components**

*Program Design Tools – SAMPLE*

## Program Goals Worksheet

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

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

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

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

**How does/can your program meet these needs?**

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

**What are your program’s 3-5 main goals?** (These goals should summarize the main purposes of your program and address the needs of your stakeholders)



*Program Design Tools - SAMPLE*

## Basic Program Design

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

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

**Where will each regular activity take place?**

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

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

**Will you incorporate special monthly or bi-monthly activities (such as field trips, service projects and celebrations) into your program? How?**

## Components and Activities

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

## Weekly Schedule

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

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

## Theme Ideas

(to be used after brainstorming using webbing techniques)

Theme Title	Ideas for Activities Related to the Theme	Duration (# of weeks)	Ideas for Final Project
<p><i>Example:</i></p> <p>Music</p>	<p>Make instruments, have musicians come in, go to hear a performance, research favorite instruments for reports...</p>	<p>2 weeks</p>	<p>Concert where kids perform using homemade instruments</p>

## Daily Activity Plans

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

### SAMPLE ACTIVITY PLAN

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

**Person Leading Activity:** Joe Smith

**Objective of Activity:**

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

**Skills Enhanced/Knowledge Offered by Activity:**

social studies, appreciation of cultural identity, artistic skills

**Supplies Needed:**

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

**Staff Preparation Required:**

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

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

### SCHEDULE FOR ACTIVITY

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

## Activity Planner

Name of Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Theme Supported by Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Person Leading Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Objective of Activity:

Skills Enhanced/Knowledge Offered by Activity:

Supplies Needed:

Staff Preparation Required:

Time Required for Activity: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Children to Participate: \_\_\_\_\_

### SCHEDULE FOR ACTIVITY

Length of Time	Actions to be Taken

## Program Resource List

NIOST does not endorse any of these products. This list comprises a few resources which are representative of the vast array of materials available. Unless otherwise noted, all resources are available through the catalogue, "School-Age Notes." Call (800) 410-9780 for further descriptions of resources and ordering information.

### Program Start-up and General Program Planning

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### General Theme and Activity Ideas

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

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

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

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

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

## Arts/Crafts Activities

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

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

Take Part Art: Collaborative Art Projects by Bob Gregson

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

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

## Science Activities

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

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

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

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

## Literature-Based Activities

Keepers of the Earth: Native American Stories and Environmental Activities for Children  
by Michael J. Caduto and Joseph Bruchac. Available at your local book store or through an on-line bookseller.

Developing Multicultural Awareness Through Children's Literature : A Guide for Teachers and Librarians, Grades K-8 by Patricia L. Roberts, Nancy Lee Cecil. Available at your local book store or through an on-line bookseller.

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

### WEB SITES OFFERING RESOURCES:

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

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



## Group Games, Sports and Recreation

Everyone Wins! Cooperative Games and Activities

Cooperative Sports and Games by Terry Orlick

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

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

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

Step it Down: Games, Plays, Songs and Stories from the Afro-American Heritage by Bessie Jones and Bess Lomax Hawes. Available at your local book store or through an on-line bookseller.

## General Homework Support and Learning Activities

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

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

### *WEB SITES OFFERING HOMEWORK HELP AND LEARNING GAMES:*

<http://www.ed.gov/free> – Free on-line resources on all academic subjects submitted by 35 different federal agencies

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

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

<http://www.startribune.com/online/html/special/homework> – The Homework Help site offers links and opportunities to ask homework questions

## Character Building/ Life Skills Activities

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

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

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

## Balanced Program Module

### *WEB SITES OFFERING CHARACTER BUILDING RESOURCES:*

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Service-Learning**

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

Kid's Guide to Social Action: How to Solve the Social Problems You Choose by Barbara Lewis. Available through Free Spirit Publishing by calling 1-800-735-7323.

Children as Volunteers by Susan J. Ellis, Anne Weisbord and Katherine H. Noyes. Ideas for designing appropriate and effective volunteer opportunities for children under age 14. Available at your local book store or through an on-line bookseller.

Making a Difference (student magazine) featuring activities, writing by young people, ideas on service. Available through Quest International by calling 800-446-2700.

The Real Heroes (Video) featuring personal testimonies from young people involved in a variety of service projects. Available through Quest International by calling 800-446-2700.

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

### *ORGANIZATIONS/WEB SITES PROMOTING SERVICE-LEARNING:*

National Helper's Network

Phone: 800-646-4623; e-mail: [helpnet@igc.apc.org](mailto:helpnet@igc.apc.org)

The Points of Light Foundation

Phone: 202-729-8000; website: <http://www.pointsoflight.org>

Learn and Serve America

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

National Service-Learning Clearinghouse

Phone: 800-808-7378; website: <http://www.nicsl.coled.umn.edu>

## Workshop Title: Creating a Balanced Program

### Goals of this Workshop:

- Help participants understand the importance of CHILD-CENTERED programming that offers children many CHOICES.
- Offer participants ideas for appropriate components and activities to include as they create or improve a program.
- Offer information in such a way that it can be easily passed on to other people (focus on training the trainer)

### Basic Content

- Establishing the purpose of the program:
  - What does the program hope to accomplish?
  - What do teachers, parents, staff and children want?
- Understanding keys for effective, high-quality programming and activity planning by:
  - Thinking about program components
  - Developing environments that support children's needs and program components
  - Established yet flexible routines/schedules that offer structure and a sense of order
  - Organizing activities around themes
  - Integrating service-learning
- Using sample forms to think about developing regular programming based on goals and needs

## Workshop Agenda

Each Agenda item can be expanded or contracted to fit the time available. Write down the number of minutes you plan to spend on each topic in the space provided. Fill in your own methods to add to or replace the methods listed. Add your own stories/experiences throughout. Many topics (indicated by an asterisk) are supported by a handout. Have participants turn to the appropriate page in their handouts as you go over these subjects.

Select several fun, interactive activities that participants can use with children (team-building activities requiring very few props or materials work well). Insert these activities periodically during the session to keep participant interest and energy high and offer examples of appropriate activities.

### I. **Assessment of needs/interests in the room** \_\_\_\_\_

Have participants answer these or other questions so that everyone can see the similarities and differences in their needs, frustrations and experiences. You can do this quickly by having participants raise their hands if they fit certain categories.

- What sorts of programs are you involved in running or starting up? (after school, summer, elementary school, middle school, tutoring, literacy-focused, service-learning, other?)
- How do you feel about the quality of the programming you offer - the content of your program? (great, pretty good, needs some work, starting from scratch, need to make a lot of changes)
- What do you hope to gain from this workshop? (take a few hands on this one or go around the room if there's time)

### II. **Introduction to the *Agenda*\*** – briefly go over agenda \_\_\_\_\_

### III. **Defining program purposes and goals** \_\_\_\_\_

- **Ask:** WHAT ARE SOME OF THE PURPOSES OF OST PROGRAMS? Some answers:
  - ⇒ providing a safe place
  - ⇒ providing a sense of structure and order
  - ⇒ tutoring
  - ⇒ literacy
  - ⇒ learning
  - ⇒ exploring new interests
  - ⇒ teaching social skills
  - ⇒ promoting self-esteem and responsibility
  - ⇒ providing a sense of belonging and membership
  - ⇒ offering caring, trusting relationships with adults
  - ⇒ enhancing social skills
  - ⇒ building character
  - ⇒ increasing academic competence
  - ⇒ offering service-learning opportunities

- Talk about how most programs have a combination of the above purposes. Programs need to clarify where their emphasis should be.

#### IV. Defining Aspects of a Quality Programming

- **Ask:** WHAT ARE SOME OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN? Talk about the seven developmental needs listed on the page titled *Aspects of Quality Programming* and the importance of tying creating programming that addresses these needs.
- **Ask:** WHAT ARE SOME ASPECTS OF “QUALITY” PROGRAMMING? Talk about the guidelines offered in the NSACA Standards. Brainstorm answers. Look at handout: *Aspects of Quality Curriculum\** (this handout is reflective of the NSACA standards on Activities). Here are some examples of answers participants may come up with:
  - ⇒ Child-centered
  - ⇒ Structured yet flexible
  - ⇒ Offers lots of variety and choices
  - ⇒ Gives children the chance to be good at things
  - ⇒ Emphasizes children's “multiple intelligences”
  - ⇒ Builds responsibility, social skills and character traits
- Emphasize the importance of making a program CHILD-CENTERED and including many CHOICES for children.

#### V. Defining “Components,” and “Activities”

- Look at handout: *Program Content\**
- Ask for ideas of program components (the different types of activities that fill children's time when they're at the program - homework, recreation, tutoring, reading time, clubs, choice time with different stations to visit, etc.)
- Talk about the components listed on the handout

#### VI. Designing an Appropriate Environment

Talk about the necessity of designing an environment that will offer appropriate or adequate space for the components to be included in the program. Emphasize the importance of including children in designing and setting up the environment. Go over the tip sheet: *Appropriate and Attractive Environments\**.

**ACTIVITY:** Have participants design an environment for a program. Divide them into groups and give each group a different scenario. Following are examples of scenarios you could use:

- Your program has three rooms of dedicated space and 50 kids who come regularly. You have round tables and chairs in one room and individual desks and chairs in the other rooms.
- Your program has use of the school cafeteria and you have 50 kids who come regularly. The cafeteria is filled with tables and benches.

- Your program has use of the library, the gymnasium and a very small teacher's lounge. You aren't supposed to touch the books in the library or the equipment in the gym. Others use these spaces when you aren't there. You have 50 kids who come regularly.

### VII. Designing Appropriate Routines/Schedules

Use the handout: *Routines and Schedules\** as a framework for discussing the many ways that different activities can be incorporated into daily routines or schedules.

- **Ask:** WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO WHEN YOU GET HOME FROM WORK? Talk about how everyone likes to do something different. Children are the same way when they enter your program. They all need something a little different. Go over the section on "Transition Time."
- Talk about the section on "Basic Scheduling Tips" and brainstorm ideas for incorporating program components into a regular afternoon or summer day schedule.
- Stress the importance of FLEXIBILITY – staff need to be in tune with the children and ready to change the daily or weekly schedule to accommodate their needs and moods as well as special occasions or circumstances that arise.

### VIII. Ideas for Themes

- Talk about the general idea of incorporating themes and go over *Theme-Based Activities\**.
- **ACTIVITY:** Introduce the idea of "webbing" and have participants work in groups to brainstorm ideas for themes using webbing techniques. Have groups present a favorite theme ideas and activities to go with each theme to the larger group. Use the handout, *Using Webbing to Develop Themes\**, as an example.

### IX. Service-Learning (*can be done as a workshop on its own*)

*If time is short, just point out this section and suggest participants read over it and use it on their own.*

- Suggest that service-learning can be incorporated into all themes and all activities to offer children opportunities to develop teamwork, citizenship, responsibility and understanding of needs around them.
- **Ask:** WHAT IS SERVICE-LEARNING? How does it differ from service projects?
- Go over the four components of service-learning:
  - ⇒ planning,
  - ⇒ action,
  - ⇒ reflection
  - ⇒ recognition
- **Ask:** HOW CAN SERVICE-LEARNING ENHANCE AN OST PROGRAM? HOW CAN SERVICE-LEARNING BENEFIT CHILDREN? Talk about children's need for opportunities to assume responsibility, feel that they are making a difference, learn about their community, develop habits of noticing needs and doing something about them.
- Go over or point out the sheet on *Service Learning Tips\**

- **ACTIVITY:** If time permits, divide participants into groups or have everyone work together to brainstorm ideas for appropriate and meaningful service-learning projects to do in OST programs.

**X. Summary**

From all that's been said, ask participants to brainstorm what they see as the "ingredients of effective programming." Talk about the handout in their packet. Have participants add their points to this list.

**X. Tools for Program Planning**

With a basic understanding of the aspects of quality programming and the types of components that can be involved, participants can use the sample forms provided in this section to start designing components, environments and schedules or routines that will meet their program's unique needs.

Stress that the forms included in this packet are SAMPLES. Participants can use these forms as a starting place to develop their own forms and practices that will meet the unique needs of their program. These forms are designed to be used WITH CHILDREN. Children should be involved in every step of program planning.

*This section can involve a simple overview of the tools provided or group work to actually use the tools to design a sample program based on certain circumstances presented by the trainer.*

**XII. Resources**

Point out and go over *Resource List\** at the end of the handout packet. Highlight resources that might be of particular interest to participants.