

Resource Handout

Engagement in Learning (K-5)

When thinking about youth engagement, important questions to ask your self are: Would I want to do this activity? Am I excited about it? Would my participants (based on what I know and have observed) get excited about this? Am I doing the same old, same old type of activity? If the (honest) answer is “No.”, or you’re not sure, then find another activity; or, try it out and ask your participants what they think about it.

Always provide time for feedback and reflection. Youth voice is an important part of engagement in learning. And, use a lesson plan template that drives you to thoroughly develop an engaging lesson that addresses multiple learning styles and is developmentally appropriate.

1. This YouTube [video](#) **Maximize the Active Participation and Language Learning of ELL Students, Grades K-5** demonstrates more than FIVE different ways to engage young readers, including ‘partner sharing’, ‘movement’, and ‘non-verbal cues’.
2. When curious to know about what engages kids ask them, as this 8th grade teacher did. She shares her 10 tips for engaging students on this [www.Edutopia.org](#) blog post: [Kids Speak Out on Student Engagement](#). Take tips directly from her students, which include: “get us up moving around” and “use visuals”, and “have us interact with each other”. And, remember to ask *your* participants what gets them excited to learn?
3. The **Casa Grande Elementary School District** provides five tips for battling boredom in this [blog post](#). While the tips are designed for the school day, we know that “providing choices” and “providing work that speaks to kids’ interests” works in OST, too. What else can you take away from this brief article?
4. This website [www.howtosmile.org](#) has a funny name, but it is FILLED with all kinds of STEM and STEAM activities that are sure to tap into your participants’ sense of curiosity. You can search activities by age, size of group, even how much you want to spend on supplies per kid! There’s even an App you or your group leaders can download on their phone- they’ll only ever be a touch away from engaging STEM activities.
5. Sometimes we, or our staff needs a refresher about who the kids we are working with are, what’s important to them, and what they like and like to do. This [one-pager](#) from the **Fredrick County Public Schools** is a quick reminder of who kids are (and are becoming) at this age-stage. You can turn the information into an “Agree/Disagree” activity at your next staff meeting to refresh staff’s thinking about this. Remember, the activities and experiences that we develop should meet kids developmental needs. *Note on the right hand side of the website are also tip sheets for parents; sometimes they need to be reminded, too!*
6. What can we learn from school-day teachers? A lot! Here is a link from a website called **The Teaching Master** to more than [50 different blogs](#) by interest.

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7. Here's a [video](#) from www.theteachingchanel.org about the use of '**learning positions**' to actively engage learners. Introducing learning positions is away to introduce routines you're your classroom and engage participants.
8. [This resource](#) called **Engage Every Student** is from the Search Institute a leader in resiliency research, and founder of the 40 Developmental Assets ©. While this resource is for purchase, it might be worth the modest investment. This is a brief description from the website: "This book also provides exercises and handouts designed to foster self-esteem and a love of learning, and to create a positive parent-teacher-student relationship that will encourage learning in and out of the classroom."
9. This [website www.howstuffworks.com](http://www.howstuffworks.com) provides lots of fun activities that you can use to help engage participants. Some are new twists on tried and true activities.

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Relations with Adults (K-5)

Relationships with adults are a critical part of positive youth development and one of three known factors that help kids develop resiliency (the ability to bounce back from challenging situations), the same quality at the core of 'girt'. These three factors are:

1. Positive relationships with adults and peers
2. Clear, fair, & High Expectations
3. Opportunities to connect, navigate & be productive¹

*An important part of establishing positive relationships is finding ways to balance your "personal" and "professional" selves. Use the tips from [this article](#)² **Dilemmas of youth work: Balancing the professional and personal** Kathrin C. Walker and Reed W. Larson, about how to use personal information as 'teaching moments' in order to establish appropriate and meaningful relationships with your participants.*

1. [This resource](#) is from www.edutopia.org and describes **Three Ways to Make Meaningful Connections with Your Students**.
2. While [this resource](#) from www.paretnfurther.com (a partner of the Search Institute- a leader of resiliency research) is geared primarily for parents, there are some useful tips organized by ages about how to connect with children and teens. And since it's already aimed at parents, think about how you might share with the families of your participants. Can you include the tips in a newsletter? At an open house event?
3. Here are a [few activities](#) from an article on www.Edutopia.org that may seem familiar to some, but serve as a good reminder for quick, and easy ways to build relationships and get to know your participants.
4. This [brief essay](#) from the Harvard Education Letter offers five tips for building relationship with young people.
5. This [blog](#) post from www.edudemic.com called **30 Simple Ways To Connect With Students** contains a graphic with great ideas that is worth printing!
6. Be inspired by this [Ted Talk](#) (www.TedTalk.com) from educator Rita Pierson! She describes the importance of relationship building and human connection.
7. [This](#) resource is called **Building Relationships within the Classroom** (PBIS) and is like an instructional video of "how to" build relationships and provides examples and more

¹ Community Network for Youth Development (2001)

² New Directions for Youth Development Special Issue: Rethinking Programs for Youth in the Middle Years [Volume 2006, Issue 112](#), pages 109–118, Winter 2006

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than 10 specific tips for how to build relationships. The best tips come before the 7 minute mark.

8. [This article](#): The critical ingredient: **Caring youth-staff relationships in after-school settings**, by Jean E. Rhodes, summarizes the importance of caring interactions between OST staff and youth.

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Peer Relations (K-5)

Positive peer relationships are critical to the healthy development of all children. Out of School Time programs have the opportunity through games, project based learning, guest speakers and field trips to positively influence this important part of a child's development. Find ways to praise and promote ideal, acceptable positive interactions; and be sure you are also modeling positive interactions. Remember our participants are watching us all the time!

1. [This two page brief](#) called: **Promoting Positive Peer Social Interactions** by the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning, by T. Bovey and P. Strain identified concrete things you see in early childhood when children have positive interactions with their peers.
2. This [Child Trends report](#) called: **ASSESSING PEER RELATIONS: A GUIDE FOR OUT OF SCHOOL TIME PROGRAM PRACTITIONERS** (2012) describes how peer relationships are formed and how OST staff can assess peer relationships. It also provides information about other research, reports, etc.
3. This [resource](#): **SNIP Training Toolkit Part 6 Let's Play: Activities that Strengthen Peer Relationships** is filled with games and activities that promote positive peer relationships.
4. This [brief article](#) called: **The Importance of Play in Early Childhood Development** from Montana State University Extension reviews the benefits of play in early childhood and gives examples of different types of play, some of which you can use to help foster positive peer relationships.
5. While this You Tube [video](#) called: **The Power of Relationships in Early Childhood Development** presented by First 5 Santa Clara County is a little long (40 minutes) it provides insight into the healthy social and emotional development of children and the importance of positive relationships, how they develop and how to support them. The video is part lecture, part discussion and provides examples of how to establish positive relationships throughout.
6. The Child Development Institute provides a 1-page summary in [this report](#) of how afterschool programs help children and teens become successful and healthy.
7. This [brief report](#) from University of Pennsylvania: **Children benefit from positive peer influence in afterschool programs**, y Victoria M. Indivero.

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Initiative (K-5)

While the terms motivation and initiative are not exactly the same, they do have the shared concept of being moved to do, to learn, or to try something. Some of the resources below may have the word motivation instead of, or even in addition to “initiative”. For the purposes of helping you create developmentally appropriate experiences where young people are developing a sense of curiosity and are moving beyond their current skills or knowledge we offer these resources.

1. [This article](#) from www.earlychildhood.com describes the importance of intrinsic (motivated from within) vs. extrinsic (motivated by external factors) motivation in children. It looks at how games and technology are motivators for children in the early grades. And it provides links to other great sources!
2. This [chapter](#) from the Google (ebook) **Promoting Positive Development in Early Childhood: Building Blocks for a Successful Start**, by Karen VanderVen, describes some of the factors important to promoting initiative and motivation in the early childhood stages of development.
3. For years, experts in child development have agreed on the importance of play as a way to meet children’s developmental needs, including developing their sense of curiosity, communication, empathy and more. This [report](#): **Learning and teaching through play Supporting the Early Years Learning Framework**, by Anne Kennedy and Lennie Barblett describes the ways you can include play in your work.
4. This brief [report](#) from the National Association of School Psychologists called: **Motivating Learning in Young Children** describes the qualities that you actually see in children when they are motivated and describes ways that you can develop and/or support this quality in your work.
5. Use this [inspirational video](#) from YouTube called: **You can do it!** to help kids think about the things they love to do or would like to learn to do. Then have them think about (draw, write, make a collage) the steps it would take to do these things. Older children can interview others and adults about what they like to do.
6. The Kid President series of videos by SoulPancake on YouTube are great for kids and adults! Check out [this one](#) called: **A Pep Talk from Kid President to You**. Maybe your staff needs a little pep talk- or your participants do after a set back, or they need a little extrinsic motivation before taking on a new task/challenge.
7. This [Ted Talk](#) called: TEDxNorrköping - Peter Gärdenfors - **How to Motivate Students?** provides an overview of the history of schooling and discusses the “unspoken rules” of schooling. He describes why children get bored and offers tips for how to address this and help motivate students to learn. He also stresses the importance of play as a tool

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for learning. This video can help you think about the specific ways you and your team can make your afterschool program DIFFERENT from the school day. This video would be a great way to generate discussion within your team as you plan your activities.

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