




**Effective Communication with Children and Youth**

*Part of the CalSAC Workshop Strand  
Unite, Empower, Transform.*

A CalSAC Module, presented by:  
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CalSAC is building a future where every child in California — regardless of income, race, or zip code — has access to high quality, affordable out-of-school time programs.

**Training**


**Leadership**

**Advocacy**





**GETTING STARTED**

- Training Agenda
- Bike Rack
- Group Agreements



**GROUP AGREEMENTS**


- Try on new ideas and perspectives
- Move up/Move back
- Assume positive intent
- “I” Statements
- Confidentiality
- Both/And Thinking
- It’s okay to disagree




**TODAY’S OBJECTIVES**

**By the end of this module, participants will:**


- Understand effective and dynamic communication tools;
- Learn strategies to check for understanding;
- Learn activities that engage young people in communication.






## KEY CONCEPTS

- Children/youth learn a great deal from listening and observing the adults around them.
- Communicating with children and youth contributes toward their academic development, social-emotional learning and character building.
- Staff should be aware of their tone of voice, facial expression, and body language.




## KEY CONCEPTS

- Effective communication is an important character building and social-emotional skill to develop both for staff and children/youth that will prepare them for success in academics, work, and life.
- Staff need to be aware of their interactions with children/youth and other personnel in order to ensure that their communication conveys their intended meaning, and that they're modeling effective communication.



## ACTIVITY: PIECE IT TOGETHER


- Everyone has different puzzle pieces from **5 different puzzles**.
- Within a **four-minute time frame**, get together in a group with members who have the same pieces for the same puzzle.
- Strategize as a group how you will figure out how to locate like members of their group within the allocated time and **complete all the puzzles**.
- When puzzles have been completed, or when four minutes has passed, the activity is over.



## COMMUNICATION


The elements of communication can be broken down into:

- **Voice:** volume, rate, intonation, vocal variety
- **Body language:** including gestures, facial expressions, touch
- **Connections:** using words to create pictures and demonstrate relevance



## ACTIVITY: COMMUNICATION

- Form groups of four and choose someone to go first.
- The first speaker shares a humorous story.
- The three listeners provide feedback about:
  - the speaker's use of voice
  - body language
  - word choices
  - connection
- Rotate speakers until everyone has had a chance to share a story.



## DISCUSSION

- What did you learn about yourself as a communicator?
- What is your strongest area (voice, body language, or connections)?
- What is one thing that you will practice?
- How does your identity (culture, race, gender, etc.) influence how you communicate?

**EMPATHETIC LISTENING**

Effective communication is a cycle:

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    graph TD
      A[Person 1 Sends Clear Message] --> B[Person 2 Interprets Accurately]
      B --> C[Person 2 Sends Clear Response]
      C --> D[Person 1 Interprets Accurately]
      D --> A
    
```

**EMPATHETIC LISTENING**

Listening empathetically requires:

- Providing the speaker with our **undivided attention**
- Being **non-judgmental**
- **Observing the emotions** behind the words
- **Being quiet** – you don't have to respond
- **Assuring the speaker** that you have understood what they are saying

**EMPATHETIC LISTENING**

- Empathetic listening helps children and youth to build **interpersonal skills** – the ability to communicate effectively and work well with others.

**DISCUSSION**


- When you're talking with someone, what signals let you know that the listener is paying attention?
- Which of the tips for empathetic listening most resonates with you?
- Which is the most difficult for you?
- How would you teach a skill like empathetic listening to children and youth?

**CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING**

Checking for understanding is essential in order to know that the message you sent is the one that was received by the listener.


**CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING**

- Brainstorm ways to check for understanding and chart on flip chart paper.



### THE 3 E'S

- **Echo** – you state, child/youth restates, you say, “That is absolutely correct,” and restate again.
- **Elaborate** – you state, child/youth states but leaves something out, you restate and add the missing pieces.
- **Explain** – you state, child/youth misses it completely, you restate and ask again.




### STRENGTHENING COMMUNICATION

- At your table groups, **share activities that you currently do in your programs** that help children/youth practice both sides of communication – listening and speaking.
- Share out one or two of the activities your group discussed



### COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

- “What’s Up?”
- Three Question Interview

### REVIEW OF OBJECTIVES

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- Learn activities that engage young people in communication.



### ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES

- **Gain tools and resources** to protect and advance policies that support out-of-school time programs
- Join us at the **CA Afterschool Challenge** in May at the State Capitol



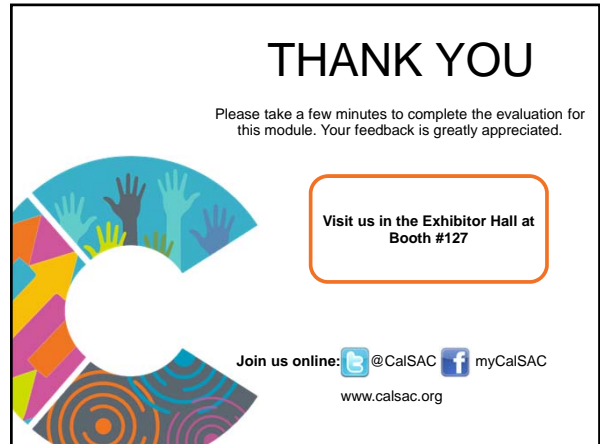
### LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

- **3-Day Leadership Intensive Retreats:** regional, fee-based management and leadership trainings.
- **Leadership Development Institute (LDI) Fellowships:** year-long, cohort based fellowships aimed at increasing the leadership capacity of the OST field.
  - LDI for Emerging Leaders of Color
  - LDI 360°/365



**TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**



- **Specialized Training Projects:** Dig more deeply into STEM, SEL and other important topics through our specialized professional development programs.
- **eLearning:** FREE online, self-paced, modules available for our most popular topics
- **Apply to be a CalSAC Trainer!** Do you enjoy leading trainings? Join our Trainer Network!



# THANK YOU

Please take a few minutes to complete the evaluation for this module. Your feedback is greatly appreciated.

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## 1.1.3b

# Effective Communication Activities for Children and Youth Handout

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### What's Up?

1. Have children or youth sit in a circle.
2. Instruct children or youth that during *What's Up*, they can praise one another for something special, wish others a happy birthday, share a success that they have had, or share a story.
3. During this time, children/youth may also choose to share a concern or problem that they are experiencing and ask for their friends to share "best practices." For example, a child may want to approach a parent to ask for a new puppy, and ask her afterschool friends to help her figure out how to approach her dad.
4. If a child or youth asks for "best practices," then when another person offers a suggestion, the one who asked may only respond with a "Thank you." They are not to indicate that they have already tried it, or it won't work, etc.; they simply thank the person for what they offered.
5. As the leader, take notes, recap the notes if necessary, and ask if anyone else has something to say. Do not add your comments until the very end when everyone else has spoken, and do not offer up any opinions.

### Three Question Interview

1. Each child or youth in the circle should have pencil and paper.
2. Have them pair up with someone they don't know very well.
3. The children or youth in the pairs interview each other, asking three simple questions, such as "What is a movie that you like?" or "What do you like to do afterschool?"
4. The person asking the questions writes down his/her partner's responses.
5. When both partners have had a chance to ask three questions, they find other partners and repeat the process.
6. After 15 minutes, the children or youth form a circle.
7. Ask, "What do people know about \_\_\_\_\_ (names a child or youth)," and the others say what they know.