

Role Model, Mentor, or Friend? Adults in After School

BOOST Conference

April 28 - May 1, 2010

Palm Springs, California



Statistics

- The parents of more than 28 million American school-age youngsters work outside the home.
- As many as 14 million youngsters, including over go to empty houses on any given afternoon.
- 12-17 year olds left unsupervised 3 or more days per week are twice as likely as supervised youths to associate with gang members, three times as likely to be engaged in criminal behavior and more than three times as likely to use illegal drugs (Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, 2007)

Results of Good Programs

- Parents can concentrate on their jobs
- Children have improved academic performance, task persistence, improved work habits and study skills, and improved feelings and attitudes
- Communities see a decrease in vandalism and school failure

(Gareis, 2008)



Role of the Adult: What Part Should YOU Play?

❖ Role Model

❖ Mentor

❖ Friend



Role Model

- ❖ a person who serves as an example,
- ❖ a role model's behavior is emulated by others

Mentor

- ❖ a trusted adult with a long-term, consistent commitment to provide guidance and support to children or youth.
- ❖ Formal mentoring programs focus on developing the character and capabilities of the young person.

Friend

- ❖ A person whom one knows, likes, and trusts.

What is a Friend?

Younger School-Agers : Kindergarten, Primary Grades (1-3)

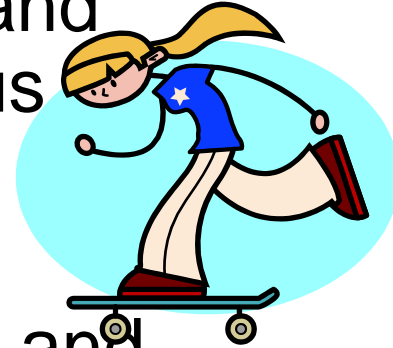
- More realistic and more rule-oriented than preschoolers.
- Level One of moral reasoning (direct consequences of behavior)
- Play reflects a developing need for order. .
- Peer group provides support that formerly was offered only within the family.
- Developmental task: to demonstrate that they are competent, that they have talents, skills, and abilities they can be proud of.





Older School-Agers and Teens: Intermediate Grades, Middle School, Junior High, and High School

- Preadolescent children and young teens are more vulnerable to violent crimes, drug and alcohol habits than age-mates in previous generations.
- Most crimes perpetrated by and against teenagers in the US occur between 3:00 and 8:00 p.m
- Because these age groups can “vote with their feet,” it is up to adult staff to create magic in programs that serves them.



4th-6th Graders



- Level Two of moral reasoning (social rules and expectations)
- Like to develop their own games or change the rules of familiar games
- Can understand other points of view
- Can work together to paint a mural, build a structure, plan events, or decorate a room.
- Developmental task: to demonstrate that they are competent, that they have talents, skills, and abilities they can be proud of

Middle School Youth



- A time of rapid physical, psychological, social and cognitive change
- Youngsters move from familiar one-classroom elementary model to a school day that may include as many as five different classrooms, teachers, and unique groupings of students.
- Developmental task: developing a sense of competency in their communities and in the larger society

Middle School ctd

Developmental tasks:

- finding an identity
- gaining gradually more independence from others
- acquiring knowledge and skills to necessary for advanced academic pursuits and the world of work

How Can I Be a Good Role Model?

- Smile and show interest in children and youth
 - Greet them warmly
 - Be a good listener
 - Exhibit patience and kindness
- Be clear about what you expect
- Show by your actions that you are enthusiastic about your work



How Can I Be a Good Role Model?

- When problems occur, use a step-by-step approach to solving them
- Stay calm and collected during problems and emergencies
- Use self control and avoid yelling, name calling, sarcasm, or belittling people when you are angry



How Can I Be a Good Role Model?

- Work out disagreements with co-workers or parents in private
- Never discuss important concerns or confidential matters in front of children, youth, or their families
- Dress appropriately for the work you do; wear clothing that is comfortable, clean, and lets you move freely. Avoid suggestive or tight clothing, shirts with disrespectful images or printing, high heeled shoes.

How Can I Mentor Youth?

- Share your special interests

- Life skills
- Hobbies
- Talents
- Sports
- Community service
- Collecting



- Teach a skill

- Knitting, sewing, crocheting
- Woodcarving
- Playing an instrument
- Cooking



How Can I Mentor Youth?

- Help them resolve issues that threaten their friendships
- Help them recall how successful they have been in the past during unfamiliar experiences
- Encourage them to make or design things that solve real and immediate problems in the program

(National Institute on Out-of-School Time, 2005)

How Can I Be Their Friend?

- Give compliments
- Cheer children up when they are sad
- Let kids win sometimes
- Remember their birthdays
- Be fun to be around
- Make them smile



Scenarios

- Mario and Tommy
- Haley and Jasmine
- Maria and Belinda
- Volleyball game
- Kendra and the jump rope
- Sammy and Ben

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Working With Older Children

The Role of the Adult

Keep Age Groups Separate?

- K - 2 -- some similarities in social and cognitive development; sensorimotor to preoperational
- 3 - 5 -- better able to play with rules, develop long term goals, collaborate; autonomy vs shame & doubt; preoperational
- 6 - 8 – like to change rules; industry vs inferiority; concrete operational
- 9 - 12 -- think of themselves as grown up; identity vs role confusion ; formal operational

Differences in Programs for Older Youngsters

The facility should not look like child care:

- family room
- drop-in center
- soda shop
- sports bar
- computer lab with comfy chairs
- Workshop with bench, tools, equipment



Guidelines for Older Children

- ***Guideline 1: Don't call your program "child care."***
- ***Guideline 2: Make the environment appealing, comfortable, and "cool."***
- ***Guideline 3: Provide new games, new challenges, and new rules.***

Implications for Staff

- Develop weekly schedules and activity plans *in collaboration with students*
- Provide leadership for part-time site staff, students, and volunteers
- Optimize the quality of homework assistance and student enrichment
- Supporting students in making positive behavior choices



Some Good Ideas

- Long term collaborative projects
 - Put on a play
 - Develop a community garden
 - Paint a mural
- Service Learning project
- Free band practice site
- Jr Achievement Business (snack bar)

