



10 Considerations When Selecting Activities for After School

1. The Activity is Safe

The safety of an activity is the top priority. Consider the physical environment and location. Review the activity for safety hazards, physical activities, and equipment. Consider the safety of the activity and the safety of the participants. Consider the safety of the participants and the safety of the activity.

6. The Activity is Time Appropriate

An activity should not last longer than the participants' engagement window. To avoid distractedness, behavioral incidents, and an aversion to the activity in future, look for those that can wind down when participants are still highly engaged.

7. The Activity Develops Specific Desired Outcomes

An activity should include components of learning and accomplishment and afford all participants the opportunity to develop a new skill or take on a particular task. Look for activities that allow for demonstration and evaluation to ensure participant understanding of the desired outcomes.

9. The Activity Offers Variety

Activities in programming are necessary to provide participants the opportunity to engage in activities that support their physical, emotional, social and academic needs and improve quality of life. Look for activities that can include multiple modes of support to meet these needs.

3. The Activity is Inclusive

Activities should support diversity in gender, ability, language, culture and socioeconomic background. Consider these criteria and select activities that support inclusion or can be adapted to do so. Look for activities that can be modified to allow individuals of varying ability to thrive. Consider that some activities may cause anxiety by calling unsolicited attention or requiring the participant to request an accommodation during implementation.

5. The Activity Supports Positive Leadership

Being able to positively role model skills is a valuable way to teach leadership skills and build self-esteem. Look for activities that allow for active staff engagement and those which offer the opportunity for participants to take on leadership roles (referee, team captain).

8. The Activity Supports Relationship Development

Relationships to consider include peer-to-peer, participant to staff, staff to staff, and staff to parent. Look for activities that foster respect, cooperation, familiarity and inclusion and provide opportunities to problem-solve, work as a team, communicate, and build community.

4. The Activity Supports Respect and Cooperation

Activities should foster positive interaction amongst participants. Look for activities that work towards a common goal, those that require participants to share resources, and those which encourage positive interpersonal communication.

2. The Activity is Fun and Developmentally Appropriate

Fun is essential for participant satisfaction and engagement. Look for activities that allow participants to experience the following fun factors: enjoyment, humor, creative expression, imaginative, and curiosity, and those that foster fun through positive and supportive engagement.

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Review Committee included representatives from: Boys and Girls Club of Durham, Cambridge & Etobicoke, Waterloo YMCA, Canadian Sport for Life, McMaster University, Oak Park Neighborhood Centre, Oshawa Physical and Health Education Centre



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The safety of an activity can be impacted by physical, emotional and social factors. Ensuring that equipment/space is suitable, in good condition, and developmentally appropriate, and scanning the area for potential hazards (ladders, benches etc.) is important for physical safety. Support socio-emotional safety by selecting activities that do not promote harassment or discrimination and which are developmentally appropriate for all participants. Look for activities that focus on cooperation rather than competition and which do not focus on social comparisons. Make sure that the rules and objectives of the activity are

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2. The Activity is Age and Developmentally Appropriate

There can be a wide variation in the maturity levels and capacities of participants, especially during late childhood and early adolescence. It is important to ensure that activities are developmentally appropriate for all participants. Ensure the activity provides adequate instructions and that these can be understood and followed by everyone. Ensure that participants are engaged, feel capable of completing the activity, and do not feel overwhelmed or bored.

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Variety in programming is necessary to provide participants the opportunity to engage in activities that support their physical, emotional, social and intellectual needs and improve quality of life. Look for activities that can stimulate multiple needs or support multiple outcomes.

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