10 Considerations When Selecting Activities for After School

6. The Activity is Time Appropriate

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

5. The Activity Supports Positive Leadership

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

8. The Activity Supports Relationship Development

Facilitate small group or team activities that allow participants to build a relationship with their peers. Consider the needs of the group, build trust, and build social skills.

7. The Activity Develops Specific Desired Outcomes

An activity should support the development of specific desired outcomes. This can be done by structuring the activity to directly address the outcomes you want to achieve.

9. The Activity Offers Variety

Participating in a variety of activities is an important aspect of engagement. Consider the needs of the group, build trust, and build social skills.

3. The Activity is Inclusive

Activities should support diverse programs or settings, ability, language, culture, and other community backgrounds. Consider the needs for the group, build trust, and build social skills.

2. The Activity is Safe

Programs should work to ensure that the environment is safe, fun, challenging, and a relaxed atmosphere.

4. The Activity Supports Respect and Cooperation

Participants should be given opportunities to talk, reflect, and share their ideas and perspectives. This will help them develop a sense of community and cooperation.
10 Considerations When Selecting Activities for After School

1. The Activity is Safe

The safety of an activity can be impacted by physical, emotional, and social factors. Ensuring that equipment/space is suitable to good condition, and developmentally appropriate, and warning the area for potential hazards (such as, barriers) is important for physical safety. Support some 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 model competence. Make sure that the rules and objectives of the activity are

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1. The Activity is Safe

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 understood by all participants to minimize misunderstandings and possible harm.
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.
3. The Activity is Inclusive

Activities should support diversity in gender, ability, language, culture and socio-economic 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 unwanted attention or requiring the participant to request an accommodation during implementation.
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.
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).
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 outcome.
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.
9. The Activity Offers Variety

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.
Fun is essential for participant satisfaction and engagement. Look for activities that allow participants to experience the following fun factors: Enjoyment, humour, creative expression, imagination, and curiosity, and those that foster fun through positive and supportive engagement.
2. The Activity is Age and Developmentally Appropriate

There can be a wide variation in the activity 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.

Review Committee included representatives from: Boys and Girls Club of Durham, Cambridge & Kitchener-Waterloo YMCA, Canadian Sport for Life, McMaster University, Oak Park Neighbourhood Centre, Ophea, Physical and Health Education Canada.
10 Considerations When Selecting Activities for After School

1. The Activity is Safe

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 (sharps, broken glass) is important for physical safety. Support 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 adult correctness. Make sure that the rules and objectives of the activity are clear.

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