CHAPTER 10

Promoting Diversity, Access, Equity and Inclusion

PROMOTING DIVERSITY, ACCESS, EQUITY and INCLUSION

This Chapter covers the following Core Competency:

18: Respects and honors cultural and human diversity

Overview

In order for your afterschool program to truly promote diversity, access, equity and inclusion, the concept needs to be fully embraced by all staff, stakeholders, and participants.

The most straightforward place to start is with your staff. "Unpacking" biases and misconceptions about youth with learning differences, from different countries, cultures, or religious backgrounds, and from varying socio-economic situations, is imperative to realizing the goal of a fully inclusive program. Taking the time to explore these issues with your staff will help them uncover and share their perspectives and understand how these may be playing out in their interactions with youth.

Next, participants and their families need to be engaged in embracing and contributing to making your program inclusive. Through activities, conversations, and even how the program operates, you can begin to collectively create an environment that is open to everyone's perspective and ways of doing things.

Finally, your vision for an inclusive program needs to be shared with stakeholders, so that they, too, can understand and support your efforts.

QSA SECTION 10

In our program all youth are welcomed into the program

In our Program...	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators
All youth are welcomed into the program	❏ Youth with special needs are automatically turned away from the program ❏ There is little or no interaction between participants with special needs and those without ❏ Some youth are consistently left out of activities ❏ Targeting language, negative stereotypes and hate speech are used in informal interactions	❏ Staff discuss the needs of youth with special needs and identify what accommodations they can offer to family. ❏ All youth are engaged and participating in activities in some way, regardless of physical abilities, etc. ❏ Staff check for understanding before moving into next activity ❏ Instructions are charted, spoken, and include pictures or modeling whenever possible ❏ Staff break activities into smaller parts ❏ Staff intervene to explicitly address negative stereotyping and discriminatory statements when they occur	❏ Staff are comfortable discussing the needs of youth with special needs ❏ Staff are able to provide adaptive equipment for youth (earphones for youth sensitive to noise, visual supports, behavior plans) ❏ Staff make it a point to prioritize interactive play over competition in some activities ❏ Staff are able to hold a facilitated discussion with program participants to explore strategies to create an inclusive community when one member has special needs

QSA SECTION 10

In our program, program materials are inclusive to their target youth population and youth are encouraged to unpack the role of bias in their social context

In our Program...	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators
Program materials are inclusive to their target youth population	❑ All program materials are in English only. Graphics and images reflect dominant culture, leaving out other groups.	❑ Materials are reflective of the participants' cultures, languages, youth with special needs ❑ Enrollment form includes a place to indicate if youth needs special accommodations.	❑ The mission statement, outreach materials and policies emphasize a commitment to serving ALL youth in the community (specifically youth with special needs, mobility issues, and learning needs)
Youth are encouraged to unpack the role of bias in their social context	❑ Youth rarely acknowledge the impact of power or privilege in the program or their lives ❑ Generalizations go unchallenged (such as "the American dream makes it possible for anyone to achieve success if they work hard enough," or, "Anyone can read because there are libraries everywhere.") ❑ Staff are not trained in anti-oppression conversations and miss opportunities to impact youths' awareness of their social context	❑ Facilitator needs the more conscious members of the group to challenge bias, instead of making it part of the training content ❑ Generalizations are challenged with provocative questions such as "What are some of the resources or experiences a person needs in order to be successful?" or "What might make it difficult for someone to utilize a library?" ❑ Staff can describe their own biases	❑ The program presents information and facilitates discussion about systemic privileges to bring awareness to the social context of power ❑ Without blaming or shaming, participants are given the opportunity to discuss ways they hold power, how this power benefits them, and how they can be stronger allies to others ❑ Staff can describe interaction between own cultural values and the cultural values of others ❑ Staff can describe own limitations in understanding and responding to cultural and human differences and seeks assistance when needed

QSA SECTION 10

In our program youth have opportunities to explore, share and celebrate their culture with others

In our Program…	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators
Youth have opportunities to explore, share and celebrate their culture with others	❑ Staff acknowledge other holidays but mainly hold a Christmas party ❑ Youth of non-dominant cultures are asked to be spokes-people of their traditions, and put youth on the spot to present/teach their cultural practices	❑ Staff affirms and respects each participant's culture, religion, home language and family values in all verbal and non-verbal exchanges ❑ Holiday seasons are inclusive of many cultures ❑ Special days are celebrated throughout the year to acknowledge all the cultures present in the program ❑ Time is built in to program activities for youth to learn about each others' cultures and traditions through fieldtrips, guest speakers, and other experiences. ❑ Staff incorporate community history and knowledge into program activities	❑ Staff encourages youth to name and challenge gender and cultural stereotypes ❑ Program incorporates activities to learn words in other languages, besides English ❑ Youth and staff contribute to an altar, or sacred space in the program that reflects important artifacts from their lives, culture or heritage ❑ Youth are encouraged to create rituals and traditions for the program, to reflect their shared culture

TIPS

Continuously work to create a program that respects differences

- ❑ Work with staff to develop cultural competencies and explore personal biases Consider how program practices reflect biases and work to change them

- ❑ Actively help participants recognize their prejudices and work through them

Develop an Inclusive Environment

- ❑ Choose activities and pedagogies that support including everyone

- ❑ See participants' strengths before their weaknesses

- ❑ Modify activities for participants with special needs

Ensure your program is accessible to everyone

- ❑ Make "removing barriers" a priority in your program

- ❑ Make sure your program is physically accessible to everyone

- ❑ Remove language barriers by hiring multilingual staff and translating materials and meetings

- ❑ Help meet families and participants where they are at by providing referrals and securing resources that will help them feel welcomed in your program

- ❑ Provide sign language interpreters and large print or audio materials at informational meetings as needed.

HOW TO

Create an Afterschool Program that Respects Differences

Respecting and celebrating differences with youth often takes the form of "heroes and holidays." We learn about great African Americans during Black History Month, we learn about Mexico during Day of the Dead, we learn about Chinese culture during the lunar new year.

But creating a program that respects differences means more than putting up pictures of people from different ethnicities and translating materials into multiple languages. While these actions are an important part of the process, they only begin to scratch the surface of creating an inclusive environment.

Ultimately, it is you and your staff's interactions with youth, families, and stakeholders that determine whether you are creating a program environment that truly respects differences. Therefore, a great place to begin creating an afterschool program that deeply respects differences, is to work with your staff.

Note: Honest discussions of personal histories can often bring up strong emotions in people. Make sure you allow plenty of time for these activities and allow for a debrief. You may consider bringing in an outside facilitator if you think having a skilled neutral party leading the discussions will be more effective.

1. Reflect on your own backgrounds and influences
At a staff meeting, ask staff to reflect on their own personal histories. This can be done as a pair and share, group discussion, or individual writing activity. Some questions you may want to pose:

- How has where, when, and the family you were born into had an influence on your life? Give three specific examples.

- Have you ever felt mistreated or judged because of your gender, ethnicity, religion, age or disability? Share the story.

- How have economics influenced your upbringing and life-decisions? Share two examples.

- Do you have a personal story about dealing with a disability (either by you or someone you are close to)? Share the story.

2. Reflect on how our personal identities influence how we interact with program participants and their families
After you have taken time to explore your own backgrounds, take time in a staff meeting to reflect on how our backgrounds influence our reactions, interactions, and understanding of program participants and caregivers. Some questions you may want to pose:

- Have you ever felt you were better able to help a participant or caregiver because of your background? Share the story.

- Have you ever felt that you struggled to connect with a participant or caregiver because of your background? Share the story.

- Have you ever seen participants or caregivers interact negatively with another participant or caregiver based on perceived or stated prejudices? Share the story and any actions you took to address the situation.

3. Reflect on how program practices are influenced by staff backgrounds
Finally, ask your staff to discuss how everyone's backgrounds, individually and collectively, contribute to program practices. Do these practices truly respect individual differences in program participants and their families? Do these practices show that we truly value ALL children and youth?

Some areas you may want to consider:

Program Rules: Might any of them be particularly uncomfortable or difficult to follow for individual program participants? Why? How can we address this?

Application Process: Might anything about the process pose a barrier to potential participants? How could we address this?

Activities: Are any of our activities difficult for certain participants to engage in? Are our activities reflective of the backgrounds of our participants? Why or why not? How might we modify or add to activities to accommodate everyone?

What Should I Have in My Toolbox?

- ❑ Reflection questions
- ❑ Background information or readings on culturally relevant pedagogy, such as:
  - Ladson-Billings, Gloria (1994). The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American children. Jossey-Bass Publishing.
  - Gay, G. (2010). Culturally responsive teaching, 2nd Ed. New York, New York: Teachers College Press.
  - www.nccrest.org/professional/ culturally_responsive_pedagogy-and.html

$ I have a tight budget, what is this going to cost me?

- ❑ Staff salaries for staff meeting time (varies)
- ❑ Stipend for an outside facilitator if needed (varies)
- ❑ Books: $15-$30 on Amazon

HOW TO

Make Sure Your Afterschool Program is Accessible

Your program is thriving; participants are having fun; all's well. But are you sure that all of the youth who could be attending your program are? Are there potential participants sitting alone at home or on the corner not attending your program because it was inaccessible to them for some reason?

Below is a list of some common reasons youth may not be able to access your program, along with suggestions for how to make your program more accessible to all potential participants!

1. Transportation Issues

For school-based programs, this may mean that certain students (those with special needs, those from other neighborhoods) have to take a school bus home directly afterschool, and therefore cannot attend your program. For community-based programs, this may mean that youth have no way of getting safely from school to your program location.

Suggestions:
- Arrange for a late bus or van transportation
- Send staff members to local schools to pick up students
- Teach participants how to use MUNI
- Organize carpools

2. Physical Limitations

While the law requires all programs to be physically accessible to anyone, accessibility may not always be easy (e.g. wheelchair users may need to enter through a backdoor that is often locked). Accessibility may also include a *parent or caregiver's* ability to comfortably enter the program to drop off or pick up their child.

Suggestions:
- Advertise the accessibility of your program (explicitly state that your program is wheelchair accessible)
- Designate a staff person each day to be in charge of accessibility and helping those with access barriers (holding open doors, running elevators, clearing obstacles)
- Walk through your program and note any potential barriers. Fix them.
- Allow space for wheelchairs in the front of parent meetings and performances
- Provide sign-language interpreters at informational meetings for potential participants and at program functions as needed

3. Language Barriers

You may have program materials and flyers in Spanish and Chinese, but what about San Francisco's other communities? What is being done for families who cannot read in any language?

Suggestions:
- Translate program brochures and applications into multiple languages such as Arabic, Tagalog, and Vietnamese
- Make verbal announcements about your program in as many languages as possible (you may consider inviting current participants' parents to translate)
- Offer assistance with completing program applications, such as having a staff member read off the questions and fill in the answers for parents
- Hire staff who speak multiple languages

HOW TO

Make Sure Your Afterschool Program is Accessible
...*continued*

4. Costs

Your program may be free, but the costs associated with participating, such as not being at home to babysit a younger sibling, help out with the family business, or paying for the bus ride may be keeping some potential participants from joining your program.

Suggestions:

- Consider offering paid youth "internships" within your program. See Chapter 6: Youth Development, for ideas on how to create a junior staff program

- Accept all siblings into the program whenever possible

- Provide MUNI passes

- Consider parents for paid positions in your program when jobs are open

- Host a food pantry for families in your afterschool program (visit www.sffoodbank.org for more information) or refer families to social services

What Should I Have in My Toolbox?

- ❑ Access to a bus or van with insurance and a properly licensed driver
- ❑ Translators and/or sign language interpreters
- ❑ MUNI passes, stipends, list of referral agencies

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I have a tight budget, what is this going to cost me?

- ❑ Providing vehicle transportation can be costly. This may be an area your program wants to fundraise towards
- ❑ Parents may be willing to volunteer their time to do translations, or you may offer a small stipend

HOW TO

Create an Inclusive Environment

There are many things you can do within your program to establish an environment that makes everyone feel welcomed and valued. Here are a few places to start.

1. Build Community

- Do a daily check-in with your whole group. Ask a different question each day. Anything from "What's your favorite movie?" to "What do you want to be when you grow up?" to "How was your day today?" Encourage participants to listen respectfully to each other and share honestly (this may take some practice – but keep at it!). Let participants come up with the questions.

- Play icebreakers. There are a million games you can play that help youth interact with each other. Pick up a game of icebreakers, or search online for ideas.

- Give participants the opportunity to decorate their space with their own artwork or with images that are meaningful to them

2. Call Out Bias

- Step in quickly if you hear derogatory language or see a participant being ostracized. Show participants that these types of behaviors are unacceptable in your program

- Lead discussions or provide activities as necessary to help participants gain understanding about prejudice and how they can address it

- Create a safe space for LGBTQ youth by disallowing slurs and explicitly welcoming them into your program

3. Create Cooperative Learning Opportunities

- Organize participants into small groups and give them a challenge activity that they have to solve together. Give each group member a specific role in the activity. Intentionally mix up the groups for each project so different youth get to work with each other each time

4. Emphasize Teamwork

- Recognize and compliment participants who help each other and work together

- Do physical activities that don't require score-keeping and that de-emphasize competition, such as sports drills, dance, bike riding, etc.

- Do a youth-led community service project (See Chapter 6) or help youth organize and carry out an event for the rest of the program

5. Develop Youth-Centered Curriculum

- Choose activities that address the needs and interests of participants (ask them what they want to do!)

- Allow participants to make choices within activities (they need to make a sculpture out of recyclable materials, but can make any kind of sculpture they want)

- Help participants learn each other's languages, or a new language entirely

- Give you the opportunity to educate each other about themselves, their background, or their interests

- See Chapter 6: *Youth Development*, for more ideas

6. Celebrate Accomplishments

Host group parties that include a lot of input from participants as to food, activities, and themes

Go on field trips. Museums, camping, the movies...

Offer awards for participants who demonstrate an inclusive and teamwork-based ethic

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What Should I Have in My Toolbox?

- ☐ A book of icebreakers
- ☐ An open mind

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I have a tight budget, what is this going to cost me?

- ☐ An icebreaker book will run you about $10 on

HOW TO

Support Participants with Special Needs

It is generally acknowledged that good practices geared towards children with special needs, are good practices for everyone in your program. The following selections, taken from the Special Needs Inclusion Project Toolkit www.snipsf.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/v2010Inclusion-Tool-Kit-Sept-update1.pdf will help you think more deeply about how you see and work with children with special needs.

The following article from Paula Kluth provides information on a way to assess a student's strengths and needs, and discovering strategies for making modifications or accommodations for program activities.

Strengths & Strategies
Assessing and Sharing What Matters
© 2005 Paula Kluth

I once met with a team of middle-school teachers who worked with a student named Jim. While Jim did not have an identified disability, it was clear from conversations between his teachers that some of them struggled to connect with him. Two of the teachers complained about Jim's constant activity. One sighed, "He never sits down, he is a jackhammer - he bounces around constantly". Another remarked, "He gets up in the middle of my lessons to sharpen his pencils and he twists around in his seat so much that it distracts the other students".

While most of the teachers nodded in agreement with these assessments, two of the educators at the table seemed confused by this information. The physical education teacher claimed that she didn't have "any problems" with Jim and that, in fact, he was one of her strongest students. She saw him as an active and athletic student, a leader, and as an asset to her class. He participated fully in all activities and seemed to try hard to acquire new skills. The science teacher also described Jim as an active learner and called him "cooperative and inquisitive". Some saw Jim's energy and activity as an asset while others saw

it as a problem.

Perhaps a conversation between members of the aforementioned team could help all teachers see and inspire the strengths in Jim. Teachers who had success with Jim might be able to share useful strategies with those who were struggling. The physical education teacher, for instance, might share her ideas on how Jim learns best. The science teacher might tell or show others about some of Jim's best assignments or class contributions. Teachers might even agree to co-teach a few lessons together or to observe each other's classes.

Jim's story illustrates the power of perception in teaching. In this case, Jim's teachers could have reframed and solved their problem simply by sharing their impressions of him and by listening to and learning from the ways in which other colleagues had labeled and understood him. Jim's teacher might also have learned a lot about their biases by examining how their perceptions influenced their language and how their language may have impacted their practices.

This experience was similar to one I had on my first day of teaching. That first morning of my career, I was told I would be working with a student named Jay. Then I was given dozens of files to review. I marveled at the stacks of reports, evaluations, observations, clinical assessments, work samples, and standardized test results. I couldn't believe a child so small could have so many "credentials". As I reviewed the files I moved from feeling stunned to overwhelmed to terrified. Jay's paperwork was filled with information about his inability to be a student or a learner. The documents detailed his challenging behaviors, skill deficits, and communication problems. I was devastated to read so much about this individual yet find so little about his abilities, gifts, and strengths.

HOW TO

Support Participants with Special Needs ...continued

As these stories illustrate, if every meeting begins with a description of a student's struggles and if every report written fails to include student strengths and gifts, it becomes hard to plan for and support that learner. Certainly, the way that we talk, think, and write about our students impacts our practice. In addition, our perceptions of learners and the ways in which we communicate about them, can serve to strengthen or damage our relationships with families.

A parent of a fifth-grade student once told me that she was in the education system for six years before any teacher said anything kind or positive about her daughter. When the teacher off-handedly shared that Rachel, her daughter, had "a beautiful smile and great energy" the mother burst into tears, startling the teacher. After learning of the reason for the mother's reaction, the teacher made it a point to keep sharing information about Rachel's abilities, gifts, skills, and accomplishments throughout the school year.

For all these reasons, I began using a simple document titled "Strengths and Strategies" when I plan with teachers, families, and students. This document can help educators focus on the abilities and strengths of learners instead of only on their difficulties and areas of need.

What Are "Strength & Strategies" Pages?
"Strength & Strategies" pages are simply lists that provide positive and useful information about a single learner. One list contains a student's strengths, interests, gifts, and talents. The other list answers the question, "What works for this student?"; this list should contain strategies for motivating, supporting, encouraging, helping, teaching, and connecting with the learner.

When Do I Use "Strengths & Strategies" Pages?
"Strengths & Strategies" pages can be used anytime for any purpose. I often use them to begin IEP meetings. They can also be used as an attachment to a positive behavior plan or as a communication tool for teams who are transitioning a student from teacher to teacher or school to school.

Why Use "Strengths & Strategies" Pages?
While this tool is not complex and does not necessarily provide a team with new information, it can help teachers organize the information they have and understand it in a new way. The focus on positive language and abilities can prompt educators to think and talk about students in more proactive way. It can also help teachers make changes in their planning and in their daily practice. Specifically, educators may be able to use these forms to:

• plan curriculum and instruction;

• create curricular adaptations;

• develop student goals and objectives;

• design supports for challenging situations;

• work more collaboratively with and elicit concrete ideas from families; and

• collaborate and communicate with each other.

See Tools for a completed example of a Strengths and Strategies Worksheet which may be used as a model.

What Should I Have in My Toolbox?

❑ Special Needs Inclusion Project Toolkit: www.snipsf.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/ v2010Inclusion-Tool-Kit-Sept-update1.pdf

❑ Pen and Paper or Computer for making "Strengths & Strategies" Pages (See Tools)

❑ "Quick Tips for Working with Youth with Special Needs" (See Tools)

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I have a tight budget, what is this going to cost me?

❑ The Special Needs Inclusion Project Toolkit

Used by permission for the SNIP Toolkit from Paula Kluth, pkluth@paulakluth.com

TOOL

Strengths and Strategies Profile Example

This form can be used as an attachment to a positive behavior plan or as a communication tool for teams who are transitioning a student from teacher to teacher or school to school. A student's team (e.g., teachers, family, therapists) should work together to fill in this form. Ideally, each list should contain NO LESS than fifty items.

Mischa's Strengths, Gifts, Interests, & Talents

- Can count to one hundred
- Is very neat and tidy
- Can pour her own juice or milk
- Keeps her desk area very tidy
- Likes to have her back rubbed
- Can solve simple addition problems
- Knows how to add with a calculator
- Likes to have jobs/responsibilities
- Fascinated by watches- esp. those with big faces
- Can get started on her morning routine without assistance
- Enjoys doing class jobs (e.g., watering plants)
- Loving
- Likes to look at animal magazines
- Knows left from right
- Knows how to use her CD player
- Loves the "Dixie Chicks"
- Can read her "All About Me" book independently
- Likes to be a leader
- Energetic
- She is a strong decoder
- Loves Pokemon
- Is self-confident
- Loves to sing familiar songs
- Loves to count things; very interested in putting numbers in order
- Can get started on her morning classroom routine without assistance
- Can talk like Donald Duck
- Athletic
- Likes to show family photos to friends
- Improving in comprehension
- Can read simple books to her little sister
- She can stay "on the job" for 10 minutes at a
- time
- Can put her shoes on without support
- Likes to run around the playground, likes to be chased
- Likes to organize things by color or size

- Plays with Mega-bots and creates neat stories with the characters
- Knows how to play 4 computer games on her own
- Is knowledgeable about birds, especially hummingbirds
- Loves to sing folk songs- especially "Peter, Paul, & Mary"
- Exceptional memory- knows all of the birthdays of friends and staff members
- Is cooperative
- Is a peacemaker
- Cares about others
- Loves movies about animals
- Shares her things
- Good natured
- Can prepare her own snack
- Very polite
- Loving
- Seeks out affection

What Works for Mischa?: Effective Strategies

- genuine and gentle encouragement
- telling her when she is doing something right
- a calm and gentle approach
- whispering instead of using a firm voice
- giving her lots of choices
- pre-teaching difficult lesson content
- asking her opinion
- giving her responsibilities
- letting her use a pencil grip
- humor
- letting her work with friends
- letting her "read" more than one book at a time, she spreads them out and reviews 2 at once
- allowing her to occasionally do her math problems on the chalk board (this is very motivating)
- letting her send e-mail to friends (helps her work on her writing skills)
- ask her to help with organizing things in the classroom (e.g., straighten library books)

Kluth, P. & Dimon-Borowski, M. (2003)   **San Francisco Expanded Learning Collaborative Resource Guide**

TOOL

Quick Tips for Working with Youth with Special Needs

Modifying Program Activities

Homework Time

- Clearly state beginning and end of homework time.

- Select activities that will reflect what students are studying in school (e.g., if studying geography, a group could design a globe, paint a mural of the world, or ask students to describe the country they are from).

- Use volunteers or older students to assist as tutors.

- Check to make sure that students with more significant disabilities have homework, be prepared with project-based activities that relate to areas that students are working on in school.

Arts and Crafts

- Use an assortment of items to modify a craft (e.g., name stamp for a signature, thick paint brushes, pre-cut shapes, pre-drawn outlines for coloring, tape to hold down paper, large beads, or stickers).

- Simplify directions by taking one step at a time.

- Pair-up participants who can assist one another.

- Be prepared to have back-up activities for those who finish more quickly or lose interest.

- Match activity roles with participants' interests and talents, especially when working in groups.

Free Time

- Make materials available to facilitate interaction and conversation among peers (e.g., games, magazines, computer software).

- Allow freedom to participate in activities without direct adult supervision.

- Provide semi-structured activities for those students who may need them.

- Respect all participants' choices.

- Remember to praise students for following the rules during free time.

Field Trips

- Prepare participants with details of the trip.

- Provide written communication of events/trips in the person's native language, including Braille.

- Ensure that the activity site and transportation will be accessible.

- Review transportation and community sites.

- State rules simply and positively.

Free Time

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- Allow freedom to participate in activities without direct adult supervision.

- Provide semi-structured activities for those students who may need them.

- Respect all participants' choices.

- Remember to praise students for following the rules during free time.

Arrival/Departure Activities

- Take time to preview the schedule of activities.

- Remind participants each step that needs to be taken when arriving or leaving the program.

- Pair-up participants during transition times as well as during structured activities.

- Have impromptu games available to keep participants together during down time.

Group Games

- Choose games that emphasize cooperation, not competition.

- Always have creative variations of games available to participants.

- When forming teams, rotate groups frequently so that participants have a chance to make new friends.

- Have players come up with modifications for teammates or for themselves.