

PART TWO

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING PQA REFERENCE GUIDE



SEL PQA ITEM SUMMARY

PAGE IN HANDBOOK	PAGE IN TOOL	ITEM NUMBER	
SAFE SPACE			
			Creating Safe Spaces
52	3	Item 1	Foster positive emotional climate
53	3	Item 2	Convey warmth and respect
56	4	Item 3	Provide support for safe space
58	4	Item 4	Demonstrate positive group management style
59	5	Item 5	Demonstrate mutual accountability
61	5	Item 6	Show active inclusion
SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT			
			Emotion Coaching
65	6	Item 1	Acknowledge emotions
67	6	Item 2	Support young people to name emotions
68	6	Item 3	Discuss constructive handling
70	6	Item 4	Discuss emotion causes
			Scaffolding Learning
71	7	Item 1	Break task into steps
73	7	Item 2	Model skills
74	7	Item 3	Encourage young people to improve performance
75	7	Item 4	Monitor challenge level
			Fostering Growth Mindset
77	8	Item 1	Guide young people to self-correct
79	8	Item 2	Use non-evaluative language
80	8	Item 3	Attribute achievement to effort
INTERACTIVE ENVIRONMENT			
			Fostering Teamwork
84	9	Item 1	Promote active collaboration
85	9	Item 2	Establish shared goals
86	9	Item 3	Provide group-process opportunities
			Promoting Responsibility and Leadership
89	10	Item 1	Assign responsibility for tasks
90	10	Item 2	Support carrying out responsibilities independently
92	10	Item 3	Provide mentoring opportunities
93	10	Item 4	Provide leadership opportunities
94	10	Item 5	Provide opportunities to present
			Cultivating Empathy
96	11	Item 1	Structure activity for sharing and listening
97	11	Item 2	Encourage understanding other's emotions
98	11	Item 3	Structure activities for showing kindness
99	12	Item 4	Support valuing of differences
ENGAGING ENVIRONMENT			
			Furthering Learning
102	13	Item 1	Support connections to previous knowledge
103	13	Item 2	Link examples to principles
104	14	Item 3	Encourage extending knowledge
105	14	Item 4	Encourage logical reasoning
106	14	Item 5	Guide discovery
			Supporting Youth Interests
109	15	Item 1	Provide open-ended choice
110	15	Item 2	Provide multiple opportunities for choice
112	15	Item 3	Support creativity
			Supporting Plans and Goals
114	16	Item 1	Set up planning opportunities
116	16	Item 2	Ensure young people record or represent plans
117	16	Item 3	Facilitate monitoring progress toward goal
118	16	Item 4	Support problem-solving alternatives



EXAMPLE OF HIGH-SCORING ENVIRONMENT

NOTES	RELATED SCALES
<i>In mid-September, Madison, the lead staff person for the Bright Street afterschool program stood at the door of the meeting space, welcoming the 6th through 8th graders as they arrived. She greeted each by name, giving out fist bumps and high fives. She called out "Hey, how are you?!" and "Good to see you!" "Jamil, how did your soccer game go yesterday?" Jamil responds that he scored a goal. Madison replies, "Way to go! You must feel so proud and happy!" Other young people also respond with "You're the man!" "I knew you had it in you!"</i>	■ Creating Safe Spaces
<i>At the beginning of the program, Madison asks the young people to recall the group norms they created at the beginning of the program year. "Remember how we agreed to treat each other? Those are the ways I'll treat you as well. During our opening circle Ethan will choose and lead a mindfulness practice, then we'll have our Share Out."</i>	■ Creating Safe Spaces ■ Promoting Responsibility & Leadership
<i>After the mindfulness moment, Madison says, "Our Share Out today will be sharing about a fall event or holiday that is meaningful to you. Please briefly describe it and what feelings you have associated with it. Some of you will have religious celebrations, some of you won't. Some of you may do Halloween, some may not. Remember the point will be to listen to each other and get to know each other better and value the diversity we have among us. So remember to focus your attention on the person who is sharing, thinking about what their experience meant to them, not what you are going to share."</i>	■ Creating Safe Spaces ■ Cultivating Empathy ■ Emotion Coaching
<i>Later, Madison has Aria, an 8th grader, lead a brainstorm session to plan a fall event that they can invite the younger children and families to. Aria writes down ideas for activities the young people come up with. Jonathon stops the group brainstorm to say, "Ewww, bobbing for apples—that's not sanitary." Madison says, "Jonathon, it sounds like you feel a bit revolted by that idea. Is that right? I can understand that. Does anyone feel differently about it?" Latoya says, "I used to have so much fun bobbing for apples. We laughed our heads off!" Madison nods, "I see Latoya felt a lot of joy bobbing for apples." All the young people share their feelings and ideas. They agree on activities and choose which activity they want to work on in groups of two or more.</i>	■ Promoting Responsibility & Leadership ■ Emotion Coaching ■ Fostering Teamwork ■ Supporting Plans and Goals
<i>Before they break into groups, Madison demonstrates how to create a timeline. "This is called a Gantt chart." Henry says, "There's no way I can figure that out! I'm not good at math." Madison replies, "It may be confusing at first, but if you keep working with it, you'll get it. Katie has used one before. She can help get you started." The groups decide on the steps needed to get their activity ready, write out the deadline for when steps should be ready, and who is to do it.</i>	■ Scaffolding Learning ■ Fostering Teamwork ■ Supporting Youth Interests ■ Supporting Plans & Goals ■ Furthering Learning ■ Fostering Growth Mindset
<i>As the committees work, Madison checks in with each group and comments, "What other activity have you planned that will give you an estimate about timing?" "Do you think that is realistic?" "Way to go! You have a back-up plan in case of rain. That strategy will help you be successful." During the last ten minutes of the session, each committee has someone share with the whole group what they have planned. Madison asks them about what they learned from the process of working together.</i>	■ Fostering Teamwork ■ Furthering Learning ■ Fostering Growth Mindset ■ Promoting Responsibility & Leadership



PQA TERMINOLOGY

How familiar are you with assessment talk?

Understanding the following terms will help you learn to use the Social and Emotional Learning Program Quality Assessment (SEL PQA):

- Mean or average
- Anecdotal evidence
- Reliability and validity
- External assessment
- Program self-assessment
- Domain/scale/item

A mathematical **mean** or **average** is obtained by adding up a series of numbers and dividing by the amount of numbers. For example, to calculate the average of 3, 5, 1, and 3, first add them up for a sum of 12. Next, since there are four numbers, divide 12 by 4 for a result of 3. This calculation is used in numerous ways throughout the SEL PQA.

A completed SEL PQA contains numeric scores, but every score must be supported by narrative **anecdotal evidence**. An anecdote is a little story.

Reliability is about how consistently different people give a single observation the same scores. **Validity** is about measuring what you think you're measuring. The SEL PQA, which is based on the YPQA, has undergone an extensive study to establish both reliability and validity. In other words, the SEL PQA is reliable because assessors tend to rate the same offerings similarly; it is valid because when asked, young people's reports of quality align with assessors' reports. Reliability also applies to assessors: An assessor is "reliable" if she has learned to produce scores at a level of accuracy that matches our expert raters (anchors).

The SEL PQA is a dual-purpose instrument that can be used both for **external assessment** and

program self-assessment. External assessment brings raters from outside the organization, and program self-assessment allows program staff and administrators to assess the strengths and improvement areas for their own program.

A **domain** is a grouping of three to six scales. These are the major groupings for the pyramid. The SEL PQA has four domains: **Safe Space**, **Supportive Environment**, **Interaction**, and **Engagement**.

Scale refers to a group of items that are measuring a particular concept. For instance, in the Supportive Environment domain, Emotion Coaching, Scaffolding Learning, and Fostering Growth mindset are scales. There are ten scales in the SEL PQA.

An **item** (sometimes called an *item row*) is a measurable standard of best practice. A scale is made up of three to six items—horizontal paths across the page. The SEL PQA describes low (1), medium (3), and high (5) scores for every item. **It's all about the items**. Items contain the actual assessment of behaviors; however, scales and domains provide useful ways for thinking about quality.

INTRODUCTION TO ITEMS AND SCORING

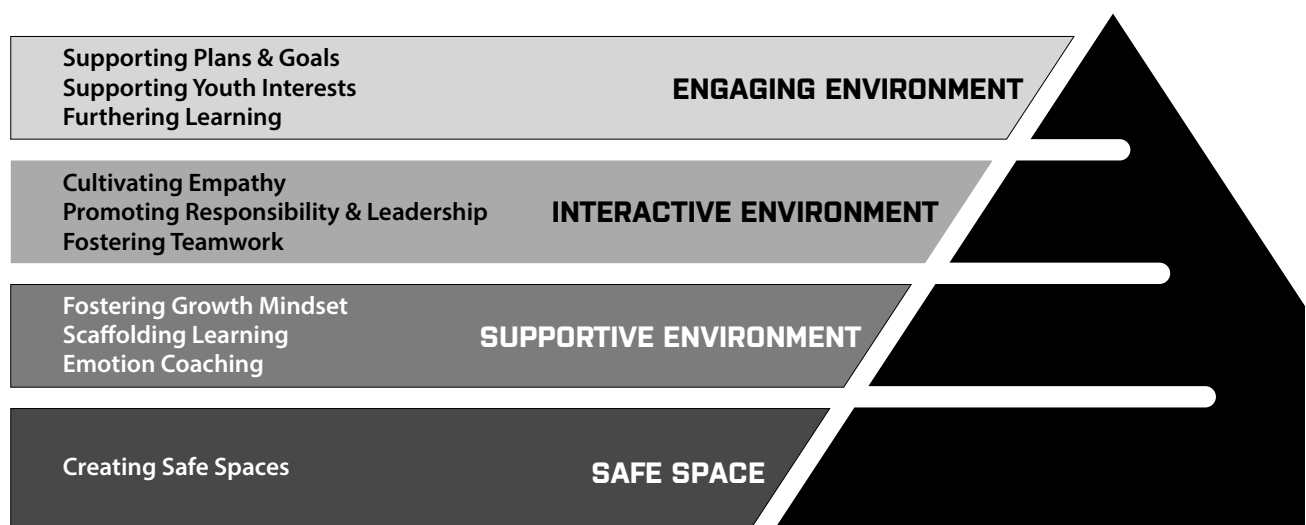
The Social and Emotional Learning Program Quality Assessment (SEL PQA) builds upon the research-validated Youth PQA (YPQA), the Summer Learning PQA, the Academic Skill Building PQA, more than ten years of observational measure development, and lessons learned from the SEL Challenge about exemplary practices to support social and emotional learning in young people. The SEL PQA articulates and measures staff practices that have been identified by research on positive youth development, social and emotional learning, and the science of learning and development, among others. The SEL PQA is designed to evaluate the quality of programs and identify staff training needs. It is composed of 41 items across ten theoretically derived scales. Users of this tool will note that the scales are renamed in order to more clearly indicate staff practices rather than young people's experiences or skills. The scales are organized into the original domains from the YPQA, also renamed to more clearly indicate the focus on characteristics

of quality learning environments rather than young people's behaviors. The SEL PQA pyramid of program quality is now organized as shown in the figure below.

To develop a PQA focused on intentional SEL practices, many of which are more difficult to both observe and score, many scales or items from the Youth PQA have not been included in the SEL PQA. Most of these relate to the physical structure of the program and safety practices. An optional checklist of the physical safety items is available as a stand-alone supplement in Scores Reporter. Additionally, some items from other PQAs have been rewritten to raise the bar defining high quality, making it harder to score at a level 5. These changes improve the precision of measurement and raise the standard of high quality for intentional SEL practice.

A general note on scoring the SEL PQA: when evidence is ambiguous or does not clearly fit the 5 indicator and does not clearly fit the 1 indicator, score it a 3.

FIGURE 3. SEL PQA Pyramid of Program Quality



I. SAFE SPACE

The Safe Space domain is about providing the foundation for an effective learning environment. It is a place where young people experience psychological safety—a place where they feel welcomed and included. It is a place where adults participate alongside young people to help them regulate their behavior and have positive interactions with adults and peers. This is important for all young people, but may be essential for young people who have been exposed to trauma, chronic stressors, or an otherwise difficult SEL history. It is a place where these young people can be supported to learn how to manage or overcome emotional activation or barriers that impede their full participation in the program. It creates a space where all young people can feel safe to be themselves, take risks, share, and get to know each other.

Creating Safe Spaces

Staff provide a safe and welcoming environment.

Level 5 Quality Descriptions

1. The emotional climate is always positive (e.g., mutually respectful, relaxed, equitable; characterized by teamwork, camaraderie, inclusiveness); young people and staff are observed offering encouragement, affirmations, or support to others.
2. Staff use positive and warm words, tone of voice, and body language that convey enthusiastic welcome, sincere affection, or genuine interest in young people's well-being (e.g., "Wow! It is so good to see you back at the program!" "Awww... I am so sorry your pet died!" Staff smile frequently; staff make appropriate and culturally relevant gestures that are responded to positively by young people —high fives, fist bumps, handshakes, bows, pats on the back, etc.)
3. Staff create a safe space for young people to share and provide young people with specific guidance or supports for creating a safe space (e.g., allow someone to finish without being interrupted, allow person to pass if they choose, only the person with the talking stick speaks, reinforce young people when they stand up for each other or someone outside the group).
4. Staff group management style is characterized by proactive or positive approaches (e.g., proactively promoting constructive engagement, calm redirection, structured attention-getters, showing understanding of possible emotional or physical triggers of individuals in the group, etc.).
5. Staff consistently hold young people and themselves accountable to an agreed-upon set of guidelines, behavior expectations, or consequences (e.g., staff note guidelines apply to themselves as well as to young people).
6. There is no evidence of bias on the part of staff based on religion, culture, race/ethnicity, class, gender, ability, appearance, or sexual orientation and there is evidence of mutual respect and active inclusion (e.g., meal plans include dietary or religious food requirements; reference is made to more than one type of family grouping; preferred pronouns are used).

Creating Safe Spaces is the only scale in the Safe Space domain. The items in this scale work together to create spaces that support emotional and psychological safety.¹ Staff must treat young people in a way that is respectful, caring, and equitable and they must provide or co-create norms, structures, and accountability that support young people to also treat each

other with respect and caring. This is the bedrock for creating a program where all young people feel secure, included, and a strong sense of belonging. Positive relationships between caring adults and young people create a warm, positive, and welcoming environment that motivates young people and enhances their ability to learn.

1. Physical safety is another component of a safe environment for young people. An optional checklist is available to measure critical aspects of physical safety in the environment.

ITEM 1: FOSTER POSITIVE EMOTIONAL CLIMATE

This item assesses the overall emotional climate of the program. It represents a high bar by defining the highest quality programs as clearly characterized by young people and staff who respect each other, get along well, and exhibit teamwork, camaraderie, and inclusiveness. Although what young people say and do is not directly under staff control, over time staff

contribute to an environment that is *always positive* by setting norms, fostering a sense of belonging, and guiding and supporting young people. This is the high bar aimed for. However, it is important that when negative behaviors do occur—and they will—that they are mediated, countered, or defused by staff or other young people.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 1

- Many youth workers struggle with this item because they feel that an element of playful negativity is part of the culture of the program or the young people that they work with. It is important to keep in mind, however, that the youth worker’s assessment of negative behavior as playful and part of group bonding may not be shared by all young people, and that young people may not feel comfortable speaking up when they feel emotionally unsafe. Therefore, staff should always respond to negative behavior regardless of the perceived response of young people.
- Give a score of 5 if there is evidence of young people and staff encouraging each other and in general creating a positive environment with no negative behaviors. If the environment is neutral to predominately positive and any negative behaviors are mediated, score a 3. If negative behaviors are not mediated or addressed, score a 1.
- “Predominately positive” is the key to scoring a 3. If a playful negative comment or two slips through without being addressed, it is still possible to score a 3.
- If the behavior of staff or young people is predominately negative, score a 1.
- Look for examples of young people interacting in positive ways:
 - A young person helps another young person with a task.
 - Young people compliment one another, encourage each other, etc.
- Examples of negative behavior that is mediated:
 - One young person calls another *stupid*. Staff responds, “Let’s not have putdowns.”
 - One young person calls another *stupid*. Another young person says, “He’s not stupid! We don’t talk that way around here!”

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>The emotional climate is overall positive. However, at one point one young person says to another, “You must have a screw loose in your brain!” The other young person responds, “Yeah, but I got more screws than you!” Staff do not intervene. The young people end up smiling at each other and walk off together.</i>	3	If the overall climate is positive, and this is an isolated incident, a score of 3 is warranted.

TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 1, continued

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>During a presentation of artwork, one young person yells out, "That's ugly!" At other points young people give each other encouragement like "I like that" and "that's cool" and overall the emotional climate is positive,</i>	3	
<i>Young people call each other names, but it is in a positive "community building" sort of way. For example, several young people have insulting nicknames for each other.</i>	1	In most cases this should score a 1. Even though insults can be intended and even received playfully, you never know when an insult may be taken at face value. Children and young people are often more sensitive than they might appear to playful insults, even if they act as if they don't mind.
<i>Staff smile and offer encouragement frequently. Young people are laughing and talking with each other. No insults or negative behavior occurs. Young people cheer each other on. When one young person makes an embarrassing mistake, others say, "That's ok. We've all done that." At the end of the program, young people share "affirmations" of each other—"I saw Dana get back up and try again." "Leroy really helped me a lot on my project."</i>	5	There is lots of evidence that the young people really work together, support each other, and enjoy each other's company. Staff are also positive.

ITEM 2: CONVEY WARMTH AND RESPECT

This item is about the way staff create a welcoming environment through the way they speak and present themselves. It is about the words, tone of voice, and body language they use to convey warmth, sincerity, and genuine respect. Although it is crucial that staff use respectful language and are at least polite and generally pleasant, the staff in high-quality programs express genuine delight or interest in a young person's well-being. In these programs you may see young people "light up" from the attention and welcome they receive.

Observers need to be particularly mindful of variations in personal and cultural expressions. Both

a loud, exuberant welcome and quietly bending down and saying, "It is so, so good to see you!" may be appropriate ways to express delight in greeting someone. The ways a youth worker establishes a welcoming atmosphere may differ in different cultures and in different contexts, but the ideal is that young people truly get the message that the staff genuinely care about their well-being. It is difficult to judge what is acceptable or not within a particular cultural context, so paying close attention to young people's reactions may provide evidence of appropriateness to the culture, context, and age of the young people in the program.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 2

- **Tone of voice and body language matter!**
We generally expect words, tone of voice, and body language to convey the same message, although one of these may be the predominate mode of communication. If a clear positive or negative message is conveyed through just tone of voice or just body language, score based on that.
- To score this item, mentally start with an assumption of scoring a 3. *Polite, fine, ok, pleasant* describe a level 3. If words, tone of voice, gestures, or body language are overall neutral and respectful—neither particularly conveying warmth, nor particularly conveying disrespect or unfriendliness—score a 3.
- A score of 5 requires clear evidence of going above and beyond *fine, nice, pleasant*, and being respectful. Warmth, caring, and/or enthusiasm must be conveyed through words, tone of voice, and body language in a noticeably, emphatically positive way.
- Since your own biases will affect your perceptions, note the reactions of the young people to the staff's words, tone, and body language as well as staff behavior.
- Understanding the culture of the young people in the program and recognizing your own biases and culture will help you capture evidence that reflects the intent of this item.
- Remember that since what is considered "warm" can be subjective and influenced by culture, personality, and the background experience of both assessors and young people, be sure to weigh the respectfulness of the staff at least as strongly as the tone of voice.
- Consider straightforward or matter-of-fact words or tone to be neutral and score a 3, unless they are disrespectful or harsh, or it really appears that the staff is being rude with the young people. Speaking in a firm or somewhat stern voice does not automatically mean "negative"—firmness or correcting a young person's misbehavior can still be done respectfully.
- To receive a score of 1, staff use words, tone, or body language that is hurtful, negative, or disrespectful. It does not need to happen often. One instance can color the experience of the young person it is directed towards.
- Examples of disrespectful or negative words, tone, and body language:
 - *Glaring, scowling frequently, shaking a fist*
 - *Rolling eyes at young people*
 - *Making a "hurry up" gesture when young people are speaking*
 - *Walking away or turning a back toward young people when they are speaking*
 - *Insulting young people, using inappropriate foul language, using sarcasm*
- Examples of warm, respectful, or enthusiastic body language:
 - *Smiling frequently, nodding*
 - *High fives, fist bumps*
 - *Getting down on the level of young people*

TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 2, continued

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>While glaring at a young person, the staff member says, "Hello-o!" and gestures knocking on their forehead.</i>	1	The tone, glaring and gesture convey "Where's your brain? Get your act together!" Body language and tone are negative and conveying disrespect, although the word "hello" is neutral.
<i>The staff member pleasantly says, "Hello. Welcome." with a slight smile and gestures toward the seats as young people are entering the room.</i>	3	This is polite—not disrespectful, but not conveying delight at seeing the young people arrive.
<i>The staff member enthusiastically says "Hello, hello!" as young people arrive, giving each a broad smile and a fist bump or high five.</i>	5	The tone, gestures, and individual attention convey enthusiastic welcome and genuine delight in seeing the young people. Even though the word "hello" is neutral, the body language and tone convey a clear message.
<i>The staff member is soft-spoken and does not joke or act playful. However, she is polite and does not use any disrespectful language or harsh tones.</i>	3	This is not disrespectful and there is no evidence of harsh tones, but also no evidence of conveying sincere affection or interest in young people's well-being.
<i>The staff member jokes around and laughs with young people, sometimes teasing, but not with put-downs or insults.</i>	3	Although the staff may have intended the teasing and joking to convey affection, it is not what can count for a 5. If the teasing, however intended, contained actual or implied put-downs or insults, score a 1.
<i>Young people are off-task and acting silly in the back of the room. The staff member yells loudly, "Cut that out and get back to work! Right now!"</i>	1	Staff yelling, even once, is sufficient to score 1.
<i>When young people are persistently off-task and acting silly in the back of the room, the staff member says firmly, "Hey, cut that out and get back to work!" In other similar situations, the staff member says, "Please, let's focus. I know you can. Thank you." When a young person comes up to ask her for help, she responds warmly, "Sure! What do you need?"</i>	3	The staff member responds in firm tone sometimes, but is not disrespectful. At other times she redirects politely and responds to an interruption asking for help in a warm tone. The instance of a warm tone still leaves this overall as neutral or pleasant and isn't sufficient to emphatically convey "sincere affection or genuine interest in a young person's well-being."
<i>The staff member claps when young people proudly show her their work, smiles broadly and says, "Way to go! You must be proud!" She squats and looks at young people when they are describing their work. When young people leave, she sees them off by name and gives each a fist bump or high five.</i>	5	The staff member's gestures consistently convey interest in the young people and enthusiasm for their work.

TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 2, continued

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>During snack time with a group of second graders, the staff member wanders among the young people speaking quietly.</i> <i>Staff: "Lenaya, you got a new haircut. I like it!"</i> <i>The staff member squats down by Kira. "Kira, How's your grandmother? Is she getting better?"</i> <i>Kira says, "She's still in the hospital."</i> <i>The staff member briefly gives Kira a tender touch on the shoulder. "Oh, I'm so sorry. If you need to talk about it, you know I'm available to listen."</i> <i>The staff member consistently says please and thank you.</i>	5	The staff member's tone is quiet but expressive. Note the emphasis on the word "so." Her words convey caring and show a personal interest in young people and their well-being. So does taking the time to squat to the level of the young person and the brief touch on the shoulder.
<i>The staff member does not smile very much. When young people get too noisy, she says "Shhh!" loudly. There are no negative gestures or body language.</i>	3	When there is no negative body language or other evidence of disrespect, score a 3.

ITEM 3: PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR SAFE SPACE

This item is about the way that staff create norms and routines to make sure that young people are able to share their experiences and emotions. Young people (and adults for that matter) do not automatically know how to make a space where everyone, including those who are quiet or feel vulnerable about what they have to share, have a safe and supported place to share. To create safe space and facilitate the growth of social and emotional skills, staff should provide specific instruction and assistance in being good listeners and being respectful and supportive to others who are talking.

There are many resources and ideas for helping young people know when it's their turn to talk or when and how they should be giving undivided, non-judgmental attention to someone else. Specific guidance on

creating a safe space for sharing might include hearing a staff person say:

- "You may talk when someone passes you the ball/ stick/designated token. When someone else has the ball, it's their turn to share until they pass it on."
- "Another's emotions don't need to be 'fixed,' just listened to."
- "Don't give unsolicited advice."
- "It's okay to pass if you don't want to share right now."
- "Let's pay attention to their words but also what they communicate with their body language."
- "It's okay to have pauses and silence. Sometimes it is hard for people to talk about their feelings if they aren't sure people are listening and caring."



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 3

- The key to scoring is whether the staff member is giving specific guidance or instruction that helps young people know how to create a safe space.
- If staff interactions and responses create emotional safety but the staff member does not specifically help young people to make it a safe space for one another, score a 3.
- Staff may also support a safe space with gentle reminders or intervening if a young person is interrupting frequently or otherwise making sharing less safe. This would score a 5.
- If young people themselves provide guidance and support to others, this demonstrates that they have been taught this, so score a 5.

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>The staff member says, "It's our weekly time for sharing our personal stories. We are going to hear from Lloyd and Asia today. I want you to be sure to give your undivided attention to them and show them respect. Remember that giggling or laughing in response to what someone shares can hurt their feelings. What they are sharing is important and personal to them and it is our time to listen and come to understand them better."</i>	5	The staff member creates a safe space for sharing <u>and</u> provides guidance/support to young people on how to create a safe space.
<i>A young person tells staff a significant experience that happened over the weekend. The staff member smiles and nods and listens attentively. "Thanks for sharing. It sounds like that meant a lot to you."</i>	3	The staff member creates a safe space for sharing but does not provide guidance/support to young people on how to create a safe space.
<i>The staff member is energetic and upbeat—"Always keep that smile on your face!"—but quickly cuts off the conversation when a young person starts to share why they're upset.</i>	1	The staff member limits the space for sharing feelings.

ITEM 4: DEMONSTRATE POSITIVE GROUP MANAGEMENT STYLE

Interacting in constructive and positive ways with all the young people in a program is one of the primary ways that programs promote positive youth development. Research over many decades has confirmed that young people need structure and clear behavioral guidelines from adults in a context that is warm, predictable, calm, and fair. Having guidelines, rules or behavioral expectations that are clear, reasonable, and known ahead of time, possibly even written into a behavioral contract, helps staff maintain order and appropriate behavior in an atmosphere that is respectful and warm. This requires proactively setting up an environment and ways of getting the attention of young people that protects the self-esteem of young people, provides a secure and

safe environment, and focuses on the behavior desired, not on calling out misbehavior or reprimanding the young people. Staff should model emotion regulation, create an environment that fosters positive behavior, and give reasons and explanations for rules and limits so that they can provide learning experiences. Staff can redirect young people to the desired behavior without criticizing, scolding, or punishing. They should consistently be calm and positive, referring to an agreed-upon set of rules or expectations as needed. Having young people develop the set of norms or rules for behavior that they agree to is best practice (see item 5), although that process will usually only happen once at the beginning of a program.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 4

- Distinguish between *stern* and *harsh* and *demeaning*. Occasionally, using a somewhat stern, pay-attention tone does not automatically score a 1.
- If a staff person responds with excessive criticism, sarcasm, and insults, even once, that means this item will score a 1.
- When staff have a positive group management style and young people are cooperating, the group management may be invisible. But this didn't just happen—it is a result of staff planning, positive interactions, and consistent norms. There should be some evidence of proactive or positive approaches. So, if young people are behaving and no behavioral guidance or correction is given, look for some evidence of positive or proactive approaches to score a 5.
- The characteristics of a positive group management style listed in the item are not an exhaustive list. There are many ways to have a positive group management style—a dose of humor, a well-structured program, consistent attention-getting signals, and so on.

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
The staff member starts the session with a brief discussion about “the rules at our program” and has the young people give reasons for the rules they agreed upon. However, at several points during the session when someone gets a little rambunctious, the staff member yells, “That’s enough!!! Get your stupid butt over here!” without further explanation or discussion with the rambunctious young person.	1	Staff opened with a reminder about the rules and made sure young people understood the reasons for them, which is a proactive approach. However, at one point the staff member was harsh and demeaning.

TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 4, continued

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>The staff member starts the session with a brief discussion about “the norms at our program” and has the young people give reasons for the rules they agreed upon. However, at several points during the session when someone gets a little rambunctious, staff says in a calm, stern voice, “That’s enough! I don’t want anyone getting hurt. Please walk to the activity table.” The staff member addresses young people with “please” and “thank you” when giving directions or refers to rules as a way to “make our program a safe place for all our friends,” relating to young people with warmth.</i>	5	The staff member has started the session with norms which are an example of proactively setting expectations. The key is how the staff member addresses the rambunctious young person and emphasizes making a “safe space for all our friends.”
<i>Young people are off-task and disruptive for much of the session. The staff member sometimes reacts calmly but then also responds with sharp words and frustration.</i>	3	The staff member is not consistently proactive or positive in their approach.

ITEM 5: DEMONSTRATE MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

This item is about whether staff hold both themselves and young people accountable to the same set of norms, behavioral expectations or guidelines. For an external assessor to be able to score this item, the behavioral rules or expectations must be referred to in some way so the external observer knows whether young people and/or staff are being held accountable to them. Behavioral expectations can be in the form of verbal guidelines or spelled-out rules. Rules and behavioral expectations can be discussed and put into a written statement that is agreed to by young people and staff. This best practice is typically something that would happen at the beginning of the program year.

It is important for young people to have clear behavioral expectations. They need to have positive norms

and expectations for how to treat each other. Clear behavioral expectations and routines help the program run smoothly and provide a predictable set of expectations for how to behave. This helps make the program a safe place. It is important that the behavioral guidelines or rules apply to staff as well. Staff should, of course, model expected and appropriate behavior. More than that, if staff explicitly tell young people that behavior expectations or rules also apply to themselves as staff, it shows integrity and communicates that behavior guidelines and following agreed-upon rules are also part of being an adult. For instance, if not interrupting, being on time, or “no-put-downs allowed” apply to the young people, the same standards should also apply to the staff. In a mature program, young people can even safely remind staff if they slip up.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 5

- To score a 5, the staff must explicitly mention in some way that the rules apply to themselves as staff as well as the young people.
- If you see evidence of a set of guidelines or behavior norms, but do not know if guidelines were agreed to by the young people, just score based on whether the staff hold young people or themselves accountable.
- To score the item, the observer must observe something that makes them aware of the program's rules and expectations. If behavioral expectations, rules, or consequences are not referred to, do not score—put an X.

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>One day a staff member got stuck in a major traffic jam and arrived three minutes after the program start time. A young person said, "Now it is your turn to put up the chairs!" The staff member said, "You're right, that's the consequence we agreed on in our behavior contract, breaking our rule of arriving on time." That day the staff member put up the chairs by herself.</i>	5	The staff member agreed that the rule and consequence applied to her and followed through with the consequence. This example scores a 5 because a) there was a clear rule or behavior expectation, b) the staff member verbally noted it applied to her, and c) she held herself accountable to it by putting up the chairs.
<i>Some young people are busy using their cell phones while others work on their art projects. One young person who is working on his project says, "Hey! The rule is no using cell phones or devices during program time." The staff member does nothing to enforce the rule and young people continue to use their phones during the work time.</i>	1	The staff member does not hold young people accountable to the rule about no cell phone use.
<i>The staff member says in a conversational tone, "Remember the rule and consequence that you agreed to when you enrolled: no cell phone use during group time. You get one reminder and after that I will hold on to your device until lunch time."</i>	3	The staff member holds young people accountable. No reference is made by staff that they are accountable to abide by the same rule.

ITEM 6: SHOW ACTIVE INCLUSION

This item specifically deals with bias based on religion, culture, race/ethnicity, class, gender identity, ability, appearance, or sexual orientation. It illustrates that environments for young people must not only be free from the most obvious forms of bias and disrespect, but also exhibit evidence of explicit and intentional action to be welcoming and inclusive for all.

It is essential that all young people are treated with respect and that they are fully able to access the learning environment without limitations due to their identity characteristics. Slurs, name-calling, or insults are obvious forms of bias and must not be allowed. However, language is an area where the connotations of words shift over time and may vary by cultural background.

Most youth workers want to create a safe space for all, but they may unintentionally, even unconsciously, be setting up barriers or creating messages that certain groups of young people are less accepted, less intelligent, less trustworthy, or less an integral part of the program or the country—in other words, less valuable and less able to safely be themselves. Comments that make presumptions about people of a certain race or ethnicity are some common ways this happens and

are often the result of ignorance or bias. For those in the predominate group, taking the time and effort to examine one's habits, language, and presumptions and learning about how they may affect others is especially important.

For a 5 on this item, not only do staff *not* do something that shows bias, but they must take actions that indicate that they have intentionally taken into account diverse groups of young people and their needs, preferences, or backgrounds. They work to make a more equitable and inclusive space. This means more than simply making sure they call on everyone; it means making the activities sensitive, accessible, and relevant to groups of young people that might be in the minority in the program or in the larger society. Thought should be taken to see that this is done without putting the spotlight on a particular young person or grouping in a way that might make them feel embarrassed or awkward. General comments that call attention to positive features of diversity based on religion, culture, race/ethnicity, class, gender, disability, appearance, or sexual orientation counts as evidence for a 5. It is important to make inclusion explicit—even if, maybe especially if, staff do not know about differences that may exist.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 6

- Look for evidence that activities are accommodating and including young people of various physical abilities.
- Look for language that recognizes that young people might come from different backgrounds, different family configurations, with different access to experiences that cost money and so on.
- No evidence of bias scores a 3.
- To score a 5, there must be no evidence of bias, *and* there must also be evidence of accommodating, recognizing, including, and valuing diversity based on religion, culture, race/ethnicity, class, gender identity, ability, appearance, and/or sexual orientation.
- Obvious slurs or stereotyped assumptions are examples of bias.

TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 6, continued

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
Staff: "Let's welcome Ji-Min to our program. She's new in town. So Ji-Min, where are you from?" Ji-Min: "Chicago." Staff: "No, I meant what country are you from?" Ji-Min: "Huh?...America." Staff: "I mean where are you from? China?" Ji-Min: "Do you mean were my grandparents originally from Korea?"	1	Assuming Ji-Min was not American and making assumptions about her ethnic heritage is based on a stereotype and reflects bias.
The staff member says, "You may have heard about a hate crime in the news last night. We're going to have a chance to talk about it. Some of you may share an identity with the victim, others of you may not. Feel free to share your thoughts or feelings. We want to hear from all of you that want to share. We want our program to be a safe place for all of you no matter what your color, gender identity, religion, or sexual orientation."	5	The staff member is explicitly stating that a variety of viewpoints and identities are welcome, included, and valued.
The staff member says, "We will be having a field trip to a nursing home on Thursday. So, boys, I want you to be sure to be quiet and no rough housing. Girls, the older folks will really appreciate your cuteness and sweetness, so be sure to smile."	1	The staff member is stereotyping boys and girls and conveying defined gender expectations that may or may not fit individual young people.

II. SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

The Supportive Environment domain focuses on how staff support young people learning both cognitive and emotional skills. Staff provide scaffolding and coaching to promote learning and provide feedback that encourages young people to incorporate a growth mindset. In the Supportive Environment domain, staff support young people by providing the tools that will begin to help them move toward deeper engagement, problem solving, and owning their learning.

Emotion Coaching

Staff prompt young people to be aware of and constructively handle their emotions.

Level 5 Quality Descriptions

1. Staff consistently acknowledge, validate, or name emotions of young people (e.g., “It seems you are disappointed that you didn’t get the part.”).
2. Staff ask all young people to name or describe their emotions or identify the intensity of their emotions (e.g., “So everyone tell us how you felt after the art fair?”).
3. More than once, staff ask about or discuss constructive handling of their emotions (e. g., staff support young people to distinguish between feelings and actions, talk about ways to calm oneself or to express pride in an accomplishment without putting others down, etc.).
4. Staff ask young people about the causes of *their* emotions (e.g., “Why were you so angry?” “What happened that made you feel that way?”).

Emotion coaching is an approach toward emotional development that includes:

- validating and labeling emotions, including low-intensity emotions in self and young people;
- discussing strategies for dealing with situations that bring up or lead to emotions; and
- viewing negative emotions as opportunities for teaching and building community.

As staff relate to young people’s emotions with coaching rather than with a dismissive or disapproving

manner, they can help young people better regulate their emotions. This not only helps young people learn emotion management skills but also helps them to more fully engage with program activities.

Emotion coaching often occurs as an integrated suite of practices. Staff acknowledge emotions (item 1), have young people describe them (item 2), and ask the young people what made them feel that way (item 4) as part of supporting young people to handle their emotions constructively (item 3).



TIPS FOR SCORING

- This scale applies to all emotions—happy, sad, angry, afraid or anything else.
- Every item in the Emotion Coaching scale includes a staff action or practice. For items 2 and 4, the staff must prompt or ask young people to respond. It's okay to score a 5 even if the young person declines to respond.

- The key difference between Emotion Coaching item 4 and Cultivating Empathy item 3 is that for Emotion Coaching, the staff ask young people to look inward and examine the causes and consequences of their own emotions. For Cultivating Empathy, that thinking is directed toward the emotions of other people.

For each item, note whether or not the practice is something that needs to happen for all young people to score a 5, as this varies from item to item.

ITEM 1: ACKNOWLEDGE EMOTIONS

This item is about staff consistently acknowledging, validating, and naming the emotions of young people. Often one thinks that the only emotions that need to be acknowledged or validated are those that are intense or causing a problem. That is not the case. With intentional focus, naming and acknowledging a wider range of emotions can become an everyday practice. Emotions are happening all the time, whether noticed

or not. They can be labeled *cheerful, relaxed, excited, proud, or satisfied* as well as *discouraged, annoyed, gloomy, embarrassed, confused, or impatient*. Since *naming others' emotions* involves making assumptions, it is best to simply say "you *seem/appear* [feeling word]." When young people have self-awareness and labels for their feelings, they can respond in ways such as, "Actually I'm not irritated, just impatient."



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 1

- Notice when staff use emotion words in reference to emotions the young people might feel, have felt, or appear to be feeling in the moment.
- For this item, staff might create opportunities to discuss young people's emotions or casually mention emotions felt by young people in the course of other activities.
- If staff name, acknowledge, or validate young people's emotions most of the time, score a 5. For a score of 5, naming or acknowledging emotions must happen consistently, but not necessarily for every young person.
- If the staff name, acknowledge, or validate emotions occasionally, but not most of the time, score a 3. Notice both when staff acknowledge or validate young people's emotions and when staff miss opportunities or fail to do so.

TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 1, continued

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>Jana presents her project to the group, then heads to her seat with a fist pump, a little skip, and sits down with a huge smile on her face. The staff member says, "You spent a lot of time on that project. You seem pretty happy."</i> <i>Jana says, "I feel awesome!"</i> <i>The staff member says, "Would you say you're feeling proud, or maybe even jubilant?"</i> <i>Throughout the session, The staff member relates to the young people in a manner consistent with the above scenario.</i>	5	Staff can validate emotions by asking about them as well as by saying something more explicit like "I see why you would feel that way." The staff member also offers more specific names for the emotion.
<i>The staff member notices a young person staring off into space with a slight frown on his face. The staff member asks, "What's up? Are you ok?"</i> <i>The young person shrugs. The staff member asks, "Are you just bored or are you down about something?"</i> <i>The young person just shrugs again and doesn't answer.</i> <i>Other than this, the staff member does not name or acknowledge emotions in the session.</i>	3	This is the only instance of staff addressing a young person's emotions or emotional state.
<i>Several young people come into the program furious at the school administration. "We worked for weeks to prepare our exhibit for a multi-cultural night and it got cancelled because kids in Mrs. Smith's class acted up on a field trip. That's not fair! It makes me want to punch the principal."</i> <i>The staff member says, "That does not seem fair! I can understand why you are so angry. How can I help you?"</i> <i>The staff and young person continue to discuss the young people's emotions and the situation in this manner. Different young people describe feeling frustrated, angry, or discouraged. The staff member says, "I might feel that way too."</i>	5	The staff member allows time for the young people to discuss how they are feeling and validates their emotions. "That does not seem fair! I can understand why you are so angry." "I might feel that way too."

ITEM 2: SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE TO NAME EMOTIONS

This item assesses whether staff support young people to name or describe their own emotions. Young people come into a program with varying abilities to attach labels to their feelings. Learning to use a range of emotion words is one way to support young people in better communicating and understanding their emotions. This can begin with using the words they already have. “Are you a little mad or a lot mad?” “Describe how that feels

in your body.” It can also involve teaching young people new emotion words that help to convey nuance, such as *elated*, *anguished*, or *alienated*. Staff should look for ways to support young people in developing the skill of verbally labeling or describing their emotion. However, non-verbal ways of describing emotion, for instance pointing to an emoji that expresses their feeling, can count for this item.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 2

- To score a 5, all young people must be asked and given the opportunity to name or describe their emotion or the intensity of their emotions. A score of 5 can be given if all young people are given an opportunity, even if they decline to respond. If staff are asking all young people to name their emotion, that is a form of acknowledging young people’s emotions, so that also counts as evidence for item one.
- Staff may ask young people to describe the intensity of their emotion verbally or non-verbally. Non-verbal methods of describing emotions include writing about them, drawing, indicating the intensity of an emotion on a scale, etc.
- Staff asking and/or young people indicating whether or not they “liked” something or “had fun” is not sufficient to count for this item. If this is the only available evidence, score a 1.
- Young people may name or describe their emotions to each other or to staff. But the intent of this item is for the staff person to solicit young people to name or describe their emotions or identify the intensity of their emotions.

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>Jana presents her project to the group then heads to her seat with a fist pump, a little skip, and sits down with a huge smile on her face. The staff member says, “You spent a lot of time on that project. Tell me how you feel right now.”</i> <i>Jana says, “I feel awesome!”</i> <i>The staff member says, “Would say you’re feeling proud, or maybe even jubilant? What made you feel that way?”</i> <i>After all the other young people present their projects to the group, the staff member asks them to get out their journals and write about how they felt when starting their project and how they feel about it now.</i>	5	The feeling words (proud, jubilant) indicate different intensities of emotion as well as different nuances of emotion. All the young people write about their emotions.

TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 2, continued

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>The staff member notices a young person staring off into space with a slight frown on his face. The staff member asks, "What's up? Are you ok?" The young person shrugs.</i> <i>The staff member asks, "Are you just bored or are you down about something?" The young person just shrugs again and doesn't answer.</i> <i>This is the only time the staff member asks young people about their emotions.</i>	3	The staff member is asking young people to describe their emotion and prompts a response. Even if the young person does not respond, this counts toward scoring a 3. This is the only time the staff member asks young people about their emotions.

ITEM 3: DISCUSS CONSTRUCTIVE HANDLING

This item is about staff asking about or discussing with young people how to constructively handle their emotions. It is a key aspect of emotion coaching that may be misunderstood. Although understanding, accepting, validating, and listening to the emotions of young people is foundational to emotion coaching, not all behaviors prompted by emotions are acceptable. Emotions are not in-and-of-themselves "bad" or "good", but young people may need support to learn to appropriately handle

their emotions. After listening to and acknowledging young people's emotions, staff have a role in coaching young people to handle their emotions constructively. This might mean giving young people tools to calm themselves down or giving guidance about how to express their emotions to others. Even when behavioral responses to emotions are acceptable, staff can still ask about or discuss the constructive responses that were demonstrated by young people.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 3

- If staff ask young people about a way to constructively handle their emotions more than once, score a 5.
- Staff may ask young people to discuss constructive handling of their emotions among themselves. This might happen in the course of resolving a conflict or grievance among young people, but this could be done in other situations as well.
- Discussing how to constructively handle emotions may be part of the interaction with a young person who is "noticeably upset" (see Emotion Coaching item 5).
- Although it is good when young people figure out how to handle their emotion constructively themselves, for this item, if staff tell young people a more constructive way to handle an emotion when engaging them in a discussion, that counts too.

TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 3, continued

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>Kiara and Emily got in a squabble over who gets to use the paint station. They end up shouting at each other. The staff member asks each girl to describe the problem. When they start with trading insults and calling names, The staff member intervenes and asks each girl to describe what happened and what they were feeling. "Remember, no name calling! You can say, 'I feel ...' Then we can figure out a solution that best meets the needs of both of you." This is the only one of this type of interchange between staff and young people.</i>	3	If this is the only time the staff member discusses constructive handling of emotions, score a 3.
<i>Several young people come into the program furious at the school administration. "We worked for weeks to prepare our exhibit for a multi-cultural night and it got cancelled because kids in Mrs. Smith's class acted up on a field trip. That's not fair! It makes me want to punch the principal."</i> <i>The staff member says, "That does not seem fair! I can understand why you are so angry. How can I help you?"</i> <i>During the conversation, the staff member says, "Talking to the principal about ways you can share your hard work is something constructive you can do with your anger. But what do you think will happen if you use those swear words in the conversation with her? How can you calm your feelings enough so you can state your case and not lose your cool?"</i> <i>Later in the program, the staff member brings up the topic of what to do if you want to talk to somebody but are "hot" with emotion at the moment. The staff member asks the young people what suggestions they have.</i>	5	More than once the staff member asks the young people about how to constructively handle emotions. "How can you calm your feelings enough so you can state your case and not lose your cool?"

ITEM 4: DISCUSS EMOTION CAUSES

This item is about young people thinking about their own emotions and what caused them. It goes hand-in-hand with the previous item because often,

knowing how to constructively handle emotions involves understanding what caused the emotion in the first place.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 4

- The difference between a 3 and a 5 is whether the staff member asks young people to describe or name a cause of their emotion or whether the staff tells the cause of the young person's emotion.
- Asking about a cause of an emotion does not mean asking for a deep discussion. "What are you afraid of?" or "Why are you angry?" is sufficient.
- If staff ask or encourage young people to come up with a cause of their emotion *and* provides an opportunity for them to do so, but young people do not respond, a score of 5 can still be given.
- Asking young people why they felt a certain way or what made them feel a certain way is the simple or typical staff practice for this item.
- This item does not specify how many young people staff must tell or ask about the causes of their emotions to score a 3 or 5.

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>Jana says, "I feel awesome!" The staff member says, "Would you say you're feeling proud, or maybe even jubilant? What made you feel that way?"</i>	5	The staff member asks, "What made you feel that way?" Item 4 does not specify how many young people staff must ask about the causes of their emotions to score a 5.
<i>Kiara and Emily got in a squabble over who gets to use the paint station. They end up shouting at each other. The staff member asks each girl to describe the problem. When they start with trading insults and calling names, the staff member intervenes and asks each girl to describe what happened and what they were feeling.</i>	5	Since staff asked about what happened and how they were feeling, this counts for item 4. Only one instance is needed for item 4.
<i>The principal previously informed the staff that the multi-cultural night was cancelled due to misbehavior by some young people. Several young people who worked on the multi-cultural program came stomping in. The staff member says, "You must be really angry because the principal cancelled the multi-cultural night."</i>	3	The staff member tells the young people the reason she thinks they are upset.

Scaffolding Learning

Staff scaffold tasks for optimal learning.

Level 5 Quality Descriptions

1. Staff break down difficult tasks into smaller, simpler steps which are outlined or explained to young people before they begin (e.g., steps are explained in sequence; instructions are provided for specific steps; examples of completed steps are shared).
2. Staff model skills for all young people.
3. Staff encourage all young people to try out skills or attempt higher levels of performance.
4. Staff monitor or state an observation of the level of challenge for individuals or the group and adjust supports to maintain an appropriate level of challenge, if necessary (e.g., "Do you understand how to do this?" "Let's try doing it together and then we'll see if you can do it on your own." "It looks like that may be too easy for you. Let's try something harder").

Young people learn best when they are provided tasks that are just beyond what they can do by themselves. Psychologist Lev Vygotsky called this the *zone of proximal development*. One way staff can support learning is by *scaffolding*, providing assistance that is just enough to help them get to the next level of learning or skill.

The Scaffolding Learning scale provides a sequential set of staff practices that support young people's learning. Learning can involve gaining information, using information in new ways, or improving physical skills, social skills, or technical skills. The key for the young people is that there are opportunities for growth, challenge, and improvement. The key tasks for the staff are to

make sure the activities are selected, structured, and presented in a way that supports learning and skill enhancement while providing a safe, encouraging environment that supports young people's persistence, effort, and risk-taking. Staff can encourage young people to take on challenges and set goals, and can create a safe environment where the mistakes and errors that inevitably occur when young people are learning are viewed as a valuable part of learning.

Another way staff can scaffold learning is by breaking tasks or skills into component parts. This way staff can allow young people to do the parts they are able to do and provide "just enough" assistance with the parts they cannot do by themselves.

ITEM 1: BREAK TASKS INTO STEPS

One way adults can help young people learn is to break down complex or difficult activities or problems into smaller steps or pieces. This makes tasks less overwhelming and may help young people identify a part that they may have difficulty with. When young people see the bigger picture or know ahead

of time the complexity of the task, the number of steps, and/or the directions associated with each step, they can mentally anticipate and prepare for the task. This goes along with knowing the learning focus of a task before they begin. Over time and with practice, young people learn that breaking difficult tasks into

smaller pieces is a good problem-solving strategy and begin to do this for themselves.

Again, this item can apply to a broad range of situations. Young people need to engage in tasks that have some level of appropriate challenge or complexity to them, but as an assessor, do not focus too much about whether the task is “difficult” or not, as that is hard to gauge. The primary intent of the item is

assessing whether the staff break down larger tasks into smaller steps and explain the steps before they begin. Sometimes even seemingly simple tasks benefit from outlining the steps, especially for younger children. It is better to identify the steps one wants to see in cleaning up than to assume the children know what is meant. Unless it is obvious otherwise, assume that if a task is being broken into steps, this item applies. This item often goes hand-in-hand with modeling.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 1

- To score a 5, before starting an activity or task, staff must provide young people with awareness of at least two steps, parts, roles, or smaller tasks that are a part of a larger task. Ex. “First, we will...then we will...”
- Any task can be difficult at first, so if “steps” are spelled out assume it is “difficult” enough to need it.
- If staff have broken a task into smaller chunks, but do not explain what the steps or the components are ahead of time, score a 3.
- If a task or activity is not being broken down into smaller steps, score a 1. Whether the task is complex and the staff do not support the young people by breaking it into smaller steps, or the reason that no tasks are broken down into steps is because the session does not include challenging or complex tasks, the staff are not supporting skill-building through scaffolding, so score a 1.
- It is common for staff to break difficult tasks into smaller pieces and give directions for one piece at a time, only explaining the next step after the previous step is completed. This is sufficient for scoring a 3.

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>The staff member shows how to do a science experiment to the whole group, identifying and explaining each step: “First, you ... then you ...”</i>	5	The staff member simultaneously explains each step in the experiment.
<i>The staff member shows how to do a science experiment while young people watch, but does not identify each step.</i>	1	Score a 1 unless the staff broke another task or skill into steps.
<i>The staff member does one step in a science experiment and then has the young people do that step. After they complete step 1, the staff member explains and demonstrates how to do step 2 and so on.</i>	3	The staff member breaks down the activity into steps, but does not explain a sequence of two or more steps before they begin.

ITEM 2: MODEL SKILLS

One important way staff help young people learn is by demonstrating or modeling how to do something. This way, young people know what they are aiming at and they see the steps and processes involved. Modeling here simply means showing young people how to do

something. This can be anything from how to do a math problem, respectfully make a complaint, or do a dance move. Often, there will be verbal explaining along with the demonstration, but the verbal explanation is not modeling.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 2

- This item refers to staff intentionally showing the young people how to do a task, activity, or skill so that young people can learn from or copy the behavior.
- The score is based on whether staff model for no young people, some young people, or all young people.
- If the modeling is done for the whole group, score a 5.
- If a staff member demonstrates something only to some small groups but not others, or to an individual young person only, score a 3.
- This item is not about being a role model for young people. Young people learn from behaviors (good and bad) of adults all the time.

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>A staff member gives detailed verbal directions on how to do a task but does not show young people.</i>	1	Giving verbal instructions is not modeling.
<i>Staff assigned young people to work in small groups on a project. One group asks how to do something and a staff member shows that group how. The staff member does not model for the rest of the young people.</i>	3	The staff member models for some, but not all young people.
<i>A staff member shoots a basketball into the basket and then says to all the young people, "Now it's your turn."</i>	5	The staff member models for the full group. Staff do not have to describe what they are doing (i.e. "You put your hands on the ball like this..."), although they may.

ITEM 3: ENCOURAGE YOUNG PEOPLE TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE

This item simply assesses whether young people are encouraged to try out skills or attempt higher levels

of performance. Learning and growth occur when the activity has an element of challenge in it.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 3

- This item has to do only with *performance* or *learning skills*. The young people must do something, not just gain knowledge or learn facts.
- All young people, *at some point in the session*, should be encouraged to try to do something they do not know how to do or to improve their performance in some way. The easiest situation to score is when the staff encourage the whole group to try to improve their performance, challenge themselves or do their best.
- If the staff introduce a skill as something the young people do not already know how to do and encourages everyone to try it, score a 5.
- If staff suggest ways to improve to some young people but not all, score a 3.

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>Young people are having "Friday free time." Some young people are reading, some are building a bridge out of blocks, others are just socializing. The staff member circulates and jokes around with some of the young people but does not comment on their activities or level of performance.</i>	1	This would score a 1 because although some of the young people may be using or improving skills, the staff member has not explicitly encouraged it.
<i>The students are working on creating clay pots. The staff member circulates. Once or twice the staff member points out considerations for improving the design or process to an individual young person.</i>	3	The staff member encourages a couple of young people but not all young people to improve their performance.
<i>The young people are involved in a game which involves tossing a bean bag. The game appears easy to the young people, so staff encourage them to step back between each turn and try to see if they can toss it further.</i>	5	The young people were encouraged to attempt higher levels of performance each time. This was addressed to all the young people. The key here for a "5" score is that all the young people were encouraged to improve their performance.
<i>A bean bag tossing activity seems easy for all the young people. They all seem familiar with the game and play it without much staff input.</i>	1	There is no evidence that this is a new activity or that staff encouraged young people to improve their performance. Unless the young people were challenged at other points in the session, score a 1.
<i>The activity is a basketball exercise. A couple of students protest, saying that they don't know how to play and it's too hard. The staff member allows them to sit out the activity without encouraging them to try it.</i>	1	The key is that the staff did not encourage or support attempting a skill. If some had been encouraged to try and others were not, the score would have been a 3.

ITEM 4: MONITOR CHALLENGE LEVEL

Finding the “zone of proximal development” where young people have “just enough” challenge is a tricky task that requires skill, feedback from the young people, and adjustments to one’s plans when necessary. Although this is a very important staff skill, it is difficult for an outsider to observe. How does one know for sure if something is too hard or too easy for the young person? One doesn’t know for sure. Therefore, this item focuses on the staff practice of monitoring the level of challenge. If a problem is too hard, the staff may provide more assistance or give

more practice at an easier level. If a task is very easy, it is time to move on to something more challenging. If the level of challenge is just right, it is possible the staff may be monitoring without saying anything. However, since it is good practice for the staff to ask and for young people to verbalize how well they are learning, scoring a 5 requires evidence of monitoring.

The examples here are about academic learning, but the concept applies to all areas of learning whether it is sports, building go-carts, leadership, or service learning.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 4

- For a 5, look for staff asking the young people questions about the difficulty of the task. The staff may also make verbal observations that indicate paying attention to the level of challenge (e.g., “I see you are struggling with that problem. Let’s go back and review the steps.”).
- If there is no evidence of monitoring, but there is also no clear evidence that the young person’s task is either too hard or too easy, score a 3. Since there is no evidence of adjustments needed, the staff may or may not be monitoring without comment. However, as noted, it is a good practice to explicitly check in with the young person anyway.
- Score a 1 if the task appears either much too easy or much too hard for the young person and there is no evidence of adjusting the difficulty of the task or the level of support.

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
George is working on math problems and has gotten most of them wrong. The staff member says, “Okay. Now do the next set.”	1	George clearly does not understand something, so needs adjustment, help, review, or more practice on an earlier step. However, the staff member does not adjust the level of challenge by offering more instruction, reviewing an earlier step, or working on easier problems.
George is working on math problems. He clenches his fists and moans to himself in what appears to be frustration. The staff member does not respond.	1	It looks like George is frustrated with the math problems, but the staff member does not check to see what the problem is or do something to adjust the situation.
George is working on math problems and has gotten most of them wrong. The staff member says, “It looks like you didn’t understand borrowing. Let’s review that.”	5	The staff member notices the area of challenge and offers to review that part.

TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 4, continued

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>George is working on math problems and has gotten most of them wrong. The staff member asks, "What do you need help with here?"</i>	5	The staff member is asking about what help is needed, which is a way of monitoring the level of challenge.
<i>George is working on math problems. It is not clear to the observer if they are correct or not or if he is struggling or not. The staff member looks at George's work, but does not ask about whether he understands it.</i>	3	This is an instance of giving the benefit of doubt when scoring. George hasn't indicated that the work is too hard or too easy. The staff member may or may not have been monitoring the level of challenge when looking at George's work, but has not indicated monitoring either verbally or by making adjustments.

Fostering Growth Mindset

Staff support young people in developing achievement-effort beliefs.

Level 5 Quality Descriptions

1. Staff guide or support young people in attempting to figure out for themselves how to improve (e.g., "So, what could you do differently?" "Next time, what could you do to keep yourself focused?").
2. Staff support at least some contributions or accomplishments of young people by acknowledging what they've said or done with specific, non-evaluative language (e.g., "The detail in that sentence helps me create the picture in my mind." "You figured that word out from the context by yourself!").
3. Staff attribute success to effort, strategy, attention, practice, or persistence (e.g., "Your brain is like a muscle, the more you exercise it, the better it works." "It may take some extra practice, but you'll get better at it." "I see you worked hard to meet your goal." "You can do this—just try a different strategy this time.").

This scale focuses on strategies for encouraging young people to tackle challenging tasks, to be confident that even if they are not succeeding at first, they can learn and improve through effort, perseverance, and trying new strategies. In other words, it is about helping young people understand that their abilities are not fixed. This is called

having a "growth mindset." In order to foster a growth mindset, staff first must create an environment where young people feel safe and feel that it is okay to struggle and make mistakes or errors. Encouraging effort and persistence, or providing specific feedback that can be used to improve, also supports a growth mindset.

ITEM 1: GUIDE YOUNG PEOPLE TO SELF-CORRECT

It is important that staff encourage young people to try to figure out how to correct an error or make an improvement on their own. This can be accomplished through a mixture of young people reflecting on their own learning processes and in understanding the criteria for work done well.

This item includes young people reflecting on their learning processes and noting when things like distraction or frustration contributed to errors. In this case, figuring out “how to improve” may involve changing study habits or learning to calm oneself when frustrated. If staff do not give young people opportunities to practice figuring things out for themselves, they will not improve these skills.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 1

- Within an observed session, staff may do all of the following: provide answers without having young people attempt to figure something out for themselves; ask the young people about their error, but not encourage a response; and guide and support young people in figuring out how to improve. If this happens, score based on the predominant way the staff responds. If staff frequently or mostly have young people figure out solutions to challenges or errors for themselves, score a 5.
- The key difference between scoring a 3 and a 5 is whether staff create genuine opportunities for young people to think for themselves and support young people’s attempts to figure out how to improve their work.
- If the staff mostly jump in before young people really have a chance to self-correct, score a 3.
- It is fine if the staff ultimately give young people the answer as long as they have provided an opportunity or support for young people to figure it out on their own.

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>The staff member asks, “So what is missing here?” When the young person does not reply quickly, the staff member gives the answer. This is how staff typically responds to young people’s errors.</i>	3	Asking, “So what is missing here?” is the right idea, but a young person may need some time, encouragement, or prompting to grapple with figuring out the answer.
<i>The staff member asks, “So what is missing here?” When the young person does not reply quickly, the staff member waits then says, “Can you tell me what you were trying to do there?” When the young person’s answer conveys confusion, the staff member points out the step that was missing.</i>	5	The staff member tried to reframe the question to help the young person figure it out for herself. It is important that the staff member waits, prompts, and/or rephrases questions in order to encourage the young person in figuring out how to improve.
<i>The staff member asks, “So what is missing here?” The young person looks at the sentence again and quickly adds in the missing punctuation. This is how the staff member typically responds to the young people’s errors.</i>	5	The staff member prompted the young person to notice where the improvement is needed and gave her an opportunity to figure it out for herself.

TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 1, continued

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>The staff member says, "You're missing the period at the end of your sentence." This is the typical way that the staff member responds to errors.</i>	1	The staff did not give the young person an opportunity to notice and correct the error.
<i>The young people are writing short stories. The staff member goes around to each young person and makes suggestions like, "You need more detail here," "How about saying sprints or races instead of just runs," or, "Describe what your character is thinking."</i>	1	This scenario is about helping young people improve their work. However, the staff member gives suggestions for improvement without encouraging or supporting the young people to figure out what they might add.
<i>The young people are writing short stories. The staff member goes around to each young person and asks questions like, "So, if I were reading this, would I be able to picture this in my head?" or, "What could you add to help me understand your character?" The staff member listens to the young person's ideas and sometimes gives additional prompts.</i>	5	The staff member is using questions to prompt or guide the young people in figuring out how to improve their story.
<i>The young people are writing short stories. The staff member says things like, "So, if I were reading this, would I be able to picture this in my head? If you describe the surroundings better, I'd be able to picture it."</i>	3	The staff member starts by asking a question, but doesn't let the young person use the question to come up with ideas to improve her work. Instead, the staff member essentially answers their own question.

ITEM 2: USE NON-EVALUATIVE LANGUAGE

Some kinds of praise can undermine a growth mindset, such as praising innate abilities (“you’re so smart”) which can convey the message that either someone is born with it or not. More broadly, how one encourages can support young people in taking ownership and responsibility for their learning. Giving specific and descriptive feedback lets young people know exactly what they did well so they can repeat or build on it. Simply asking a young person to describe or explain what they have done is also a form of non-evaluative encouragement. Evaluative feedback includes labeling something as “good” or “perfect.” It includes statements such as “I like…” Using praise like “good job” or “way to go” is fine—it counts for scoring a 3, but it takes the addition of non-evaluative feedback to score a 5.

Here are examples of non-evaluative feedback:

- Encourage young people to describe their plans, efforts, and goals.
- “Who will be involved in your project?”
- “How did you build this model of a volcano?”
- “How will you continue to develop and improve your poem?”
- Acknowledge young people’s work and ideas by making specific comments.
- “I see that you have listed all these details that will go into the event.”
- “You used lots of different colors on your volcano.”
- “You’ve found ways to use alliteration at several points in your poem.”



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 2

- A score of 5 measures whether staff went beyond “good job” even once to provide objective or non-evaluative feedback.
- Listen for staff to follow-up an evaluative statement with a specific non-evaluative statement.
- The simplest way to score this item is to use direct quotes from staff.
- Note where staff are asking a young person to describe or evaluate their own work. That counts as evidence for a 5.
- Evaluative praise counts for a 3.

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>The staff member says, “Good job,” a lot.</i>	3	“Good job” is a (positive) evaluative statement and the comment does not give non-evaluative details.
<i>The staff member says, “Good job,” numerous times but also adds a few details about the young person’s work.</i>	5	The staff provided some specific, non- evaluative comments about the young person’s work. The requirement for a 5 is that “at least some” accomplishments are acknowledged with “specific, non-evaluative language.”
<i>The staff member says, “The colors in this painting are so bright. It really stands out,” and “I see how you used small brush strokes in this section.”</i>	5	Direct quotes from staff are the best source of anecdotal evidence for this item.

ITEM 3: ATTRIBUTE ACHIEVEMENT TO EFFORT

Research has shown that attributing success to something within the child's control like effort, persistence, or using the correct strategy improves learning. Learning will be limited and slow if children think either learning just happens and comes easily, or that they are dumb and unable to learn. This item assesses whether staff explicitly support or encourage the belief that effort, practice, persistence, and finding the right strategy are the keys to learning and success. This is not to say that some things are not out of one's control or that every failure is one's own fault. It does mean that staff should consciously foster a mindset that intelligence can grow and that mistakes or initial failure do not mean one can't ultimately succeed.

Sometimes staff unwittingly support the opposite belief and attribute success (or lack of success) to factors outside the young person's control. Even positive comments like, "You are so smart! You got that so quickly!" can undermine effort-achievement beliefs by conveying that being quick to achieve is an

innate quality rather than a skill that can be developed. Statements like this convey the idea that if you do not have to work hard at something, that means you are smart, but if something does not come easily, you must be dumb. It discourages young people from trying things that they may fail at initially.

Another instance where this item is tricky to put into practice is when something is especially difficult and staff want to be supportive and understanding. Saying, "That problem is really hard, you won't be able to do that one," implies the young person is not capable of doing hard things. It is important to convey high expectations, that staff have confidence in young people that they can succeed and strive for excellence. Saying, "Don't feel bad. That problem is really hard, you'll probably need more practice in order to get that one," conveys that with practice they will be able to succeed. The key is to be sympathetic about the challenge without conveying that the young person will not ultimately be able to overcome challenges or handle difficult tasks.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 3

- Pay attention to how staff praise or encourage. Praising persistence or effort counts toward a 5.
- If staff's comments imply that factors outside of the young person's control are responsible for success, then score 1.
- Staff may not make comments that attribute success to effort or attention, or that attribute success to factors outside young people's control. If there is no evidence either way, or if both types of comments are made, score a 3.
- Staff may directly teach about how practice affects the brain or how intelligence can be improved, although this is not likely to happen on a regular basis. An example of a score of 5 is staff saying "Your brain is like a muscle, the more you use it, the better it gets—you actually build neural pathways with repeated practice."

TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 3, continued

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>Josie is working on math problems and appears to be getting correct answers. The staff member frequently responds, "Good job! You're so smart!"</i>	1	Although this is meant as encouragement and to build self-esteem, it does not help Josie to make explicit connections between effort and achievement.
<i>Josie is working on math problems and doing well. The staff member frequently responds, "Good job! You're so smart!" Later the staff member says, "You've worked really hard on this, and it's paid off."</i>	3	The staff has attributed success to factors beyond Josie's control (innate intelligence, "you're so smart") and to hard work, something within Josie's control.
<i>Josie is working on math problems and doing well. The staff member frequently responds, "Good job! You've worked really hard on this, and it's paid off."</i>	5	The staff member attributes success to effort.
<i>Josie is working on math problems and doing well. The staff member says, "Good job! You got 90% correct!"</i>	3	For this item, there is no evidence of attributing success to hard work, strategy, or persistence, but no evidence of attributing success to factors outside the young person's control.
<i>Kabo has been working on math problems because her grades in math are poor. She is struggling with many of the problems. The staff member says, "It's okay. Not everyone is good at math."</i>	1	This conveys the message that "you're not good at math," which could reduce motivation to persist.
<i>Kabo has been working on math problems because her grades in math are poor. She is struggling with many of the problems. The staff member says, "It's okay if it takes extra time or practice for you to understand math. You can get it. You are a really hard worker."</i>	5	This recognizes what Kabo is well aware of—that she does not understand math as quickly as others do—but commends her for something in her control (hard work). It also conveys that ultimately she can succeed, and how long it takes to get there is not the important part.

III. INTERACTIVE ENVIRONMENT

The Interactive Environment domain is about providing an environment where young people and adults work together constructively. They learn to value differences, really listen, and work toward shared goals. The focus is opportunities that enhance and develop social skills like teamwork, responsibility, leadership, and empathy.

Fostering Teamwork

Staff provide opportunities to collaborate and work cooperatively with others.

Level 5 Quality Descriptions

1. Staff provide opportunities for young people to work in small groups that require active collaboration (e.g. working together on a joint project, activities with discussion and planning, interdependent roles, etc.).
2. Staff provide opportunities for all young people (groups or individuals) to work toward shared goals (e.g., each young person contributes a section to a story, young people build a catapult together).
3. Staff provide all young people multiple or extended opportunities to understand and practice group-process skills (e.g., contribute ideas or actions to the group, do a task with others, take responsibility for a part).

Collaboration in work, play, and learning enables young people to interact with others, to appreciate others' opinions and experiences, and to enhance personal perspectives, goals, and projects. In many traditional teaching models, helping one another is considered cheating and competition is promoted by the practice of grading on a curve. Small group work, however, is now common in "real world" work situations. The Fostering Teamwork scale is based on the notion that young people can learn from one another and that working in small groups can have a range of benefits. Smaller groupings allow more young people to play active roles, exercise leadership, share their knowledge or skills, and learn to interact constructively with others.

It is up to the youth workers to provide structure, direction, or support to groups, as needed, so that young people do indeed learn and practice teamwork skills. The key aspect of quality to be assessed is whether the young people are actually collaborating, not just working side by side in a group. When a group has a shared goal, collaboration and teamwork are encouraged. If young people have designated, interdependent roles, they will have to coordinate to accomplish the task.

The Youth Work Methods series guidebook *Cooperative Learning* provides strategies for creating purposeful learning structures, coordinated and facilitated by staff, where young people work interdependently with one or more peers.

ITEM 1: PROMOTE ACTIVE COLLABORATION

This item assesses whether young people have opportunities to collaborate in small groups. Although having smaller groupings is helpful, it is most important that when in a small group young people participate in activities that require active collaboration; that they are interacting, working,

and cooperating together. The presence of teams, pairs, or smaller groupings of young people is necessary, but not sufficient, for a high score. The item focuses on the nature of the interactions and activities: Is there true collaboration? Are there shared goals?



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 1

- If the whole group is small (eight or fewer young people), a whole group activity could count as evidence if young people are collaborating semi-autonomously as a small group.
- Pay attention to the type of interaction within the small groups. Note whether the young people actually need each other to do the activity.

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>The staff member divides young people into four groups and each goes to a separate table to work on invitations to a family dinner and celebration the program will be having. The staff member gives two groups a list of addresses and envelopes to address, and two groups invitations to write. The young people occasionally chat with each other about unrelated topics, but each young person is primarily just copying the relevant information onto envelopes or invitations.</i>	3	Although the young people are in groups and they even have a shared upcoming event, they do not need to interact or work together to do their group activity.
<i>The staff member breaks young people into groups to work on inviting families to an upcoming family dinner and celebration. The staff member asks young people to decide together how best to communicate with families and what to include on the invitations or announcements. Young people discuss their ideas with one another. One group decides to send invitations by email and create paper invitations. Another group decides to print paper invitations in two languages.</i>	5	The young people discuss ideas with one another in small groups and make plans together.

ITEM 2: ESTABLISH SHARED GOALS

This item assesses whether young people have opportunities to collaborate in small groups. Although having smaller groupings is helpful, it is most important that when in a small group young people participate in activities that require active collaboration; that they

are interacting, working, and cooperating together. The presence of teams, pairs, or smaller groupings of young people is necessary, but not sufficient, for a high score. The item focuses on the nature of interactions and activities: Is there true collaboration? Are there shared goals?



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 2

- Working in groups is likely, but not absolutely necessary, to score high on this item.
- The key to scoring this item is whether there is clearly a shared goal. If a young person or staff member verbalizes a shared goal, there is clearly a shared goal. If young people are working together interactively on a joint project, the goal may not need to be stated as long as it is clear that the young people understand what it is. For example, if the staff member says, “Get in your groups,” and all the young people get busy working on building their group’s go-cart, it is clear the shared goal is building the go-cart.
- All young people having the same individual goal does not mean it is a shared goal. For example, if all young people have the goal of completing their own individual art project, their goal is not a shared goal.
- On the other hand, it is possible for all young people to be working independently but toward a shared goal. For example, if each young person is completing an art project that will be part of a collective display, that is a shared goal.

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>The young people are sitting in groups of four at tables individually working on their own projects.</i>	1	Unless the staff or young people explicitly state that they are working toward a shared goal, score a 1. There was only evidence of individual work taking place, even though arranging young people at tables of four could allow for teamwork.
<i>Some young people are working in groups trying to come up with a design for the invitations they will be sending out. Other young people are working individually on addressing envelopes.</i>	3	Some of the young people worked collaboratively on the shared goal of creating a design for the invitations. However, others worked individually, and no explicit goal was mentioned. This does not count as all young people working toward a shared goal.
<i>The young people are sitting in groups of four at tables individually working on addressing envelopes to a performance the young people are having. A staff member says, “Our goal is to get all of these addressed today so they can go in the mail tomorrow and we will keep to our schedule for planning our banquet.”</i>	5	The staff member explicitly identified the shared goal.

ITEM 3: PROVIDE GROUP-PROCESS OPPORTUNITIES

This item assesses young people’s access to opportunities to practice group-process skills. Group-process skills, simply put, are tasks related to productively interacting in a group. Some examples of group-process skills include:

- Listening to others without interrupting
- Sharing ideas
- Constructive criticism
- Contributing to a discussion
- Taking turns
- Raising hands in a large group
- Valuing other’s ideas

Opportunities to practice and learn group-process skills are valuable. Note the words “opportunity to practice and learn.” This item does not score based on the skills of the young people. A high score on this item requires multiple opportunities—one or two brief opportunities are not enough—or participation in a group for an extended period of time. Group-process skills can also be visible in a full group. For example, a full group discussion can provide young people with the opportunity to take turns and contribute ideas.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 3

- This item is simpler than it looks. It measures whether all young people have an opportunity to interact meaningfully with other young people or young people and staff around the topic or task, in contrast to simply listening to a lecture.
- For large group discussions, pay attention to whether staff allow enough time for all young people to contribute and encourages all to contribute. If the staff ask all young people to share their ideas, but move on after only a few have contributed, that is an opportunity for some, not all. If the staff allow one or two people to dominate a discussion without making space for others to contribute, that too is only an opportunity for some. Score a 1 if all did not have an opportunity to practice group-process skills. Large group discussions only provide an opportunity for all young people to practice group-process skills if there is time for all young people to contribute.
- The standard is that all young people have ample opportunities to practice group process skills. This is defined by “multiple” or “extended” opportunities. If the staff has the young people do group work multiple times during the program session, this is evidence for a 5.
- If the young people spend a considerable portion of time in group work, even if they participate in only one group, that also scores a 5.
- For a score of 3, all young people must have at least one opportunity for practicing group-process skills.

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>Some young people informally talk but there is no intentional effort to have them talk.</i>	1	There is no evidence that the subject matter or the talking contributed to group-process skills in any way.

TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 3, continued

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>The staff member lectures on a topic then asks young people questions to test them on their listening comprehension.</i>	1	Being quizzed about a lecture does not constitute a group-process skill.
<i>The staff member divides young people into groups to create a science fair project. The staff member has young people select their roles and they start planning their project.</i>	5	All young people work in small groups and select distinct roles to support completing the long-term project. All young people have extended and ample opportunities to practice group-process skills.

Promoting Responsibility and Leadership

Staff provide young people with opportunities to grow in responsibility and leadership.

Level 5 Quality Descriptions

1. Staff provide all young people with opportunities to be responsible for assigned tasks or activities (e.g., taking attendance, handing out snacks, leading an opening activity).
2. Staff never take over or intervene intrusively in assigned tasks or activities, supporting young people to carry out roles or responsibilities as independently as possible.
3. Staff provide more than one young person an opportunity to mentor an individual (e.g., young people teach or coach another).
4. Staff provide more than one young person an opportunity to lead a group (e.g., teach others; lead a discussion, song, project, event, outing or other activity).
5. Staff provide more than one young person with an opportunity to share their ideas or work with the entire group (e.g., report results of their small group activity to large group, describe their individual project to the whole group, share ideas in partnership with adults).

This scale is about staff helping young people to grow in taking responsibility and leadership, gradually letting them do more things for themselves and taking more ownership and leadership in the program or offering. It is about encouraging the young people to take responsibility for parts of the life of the program, whether that means taking responsibility for part of an activity, leading an activity, or for some of the routine tasks (e.g., cleaning up, serving as treasurer). As young people grow and learn skills, they should be encouraged to do practical tasks for the group or themselves, even if they do not do it as efficiently as an adult would. Young people benefit when staff allow them to do things independently without undo interference. This does not mean that staff do not teach young people how to

perform tasks, give specific directions when directions are called for, or intervene to avoid large messes or costly mistakes.

Practicing on a small scale and developing related skills allows young people to grow in their leadership ability. Sometimes young people exercise leadership on their own, and that is good. However, ensuring that all young people develop and practice these skills and characteristics takes staff planning and initiative. The best practice standards in this scale involve staff intentionally creating these opportunities for young people. For more information on building leadership opportunities into a program, consult the Youth Work Methods series guidebook, *Youth Voice*.

ITEM 1: ASSIGN RESPONSIBILITY FOR TASKS

Having young people assist the group in practical ways conveys that staff see them as responsible and capable and encourages young people to exercise responsibility. Even in small ways, staff should be oriented toward involving young people whenever possible—in passing out supplies, cleaning up,

putting things away and any other tasks they are capable of doing. Staff should also involve young people in taking responsibility for parts of activities, such as taking turns choosing and leading ice-breakers or games. They can be responsible for certain roles in activities or parts of projects.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 1

- Consider: Who does clean-up? Who passes out materials? These could be opportunities for young people to practice responsibility.
- To some extent, what counts as taking responsibility will be age-dependent. “Everyone needs to put their paper cups in the trash” might be an appropriate example of responsibility for five-year-olds, but not for fifteen-year-olds. Use some judgment about whether staff provide opportunities for responsibility that are developmentally appropriate.
- Sometimes everyone will share a particular responsibility (“Everyone clean up the scraps around your table and chair and wash your tables”), and sometimes one opportunity will apply to just one or two young people. To score a 5, all young people need to have an opportunity for responsibility.
- Look to see if all young people are responsible for a role, task, or part of activity. If young people lead (see item 4) that will count as an opportunity for responsibility as well.
- Simply completing the activity of the day does not count as taking responsibility for a task or part of an activity (e.g., finishing the art project they are working on that day).

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>The staff member assigns one young person to be responsible for taking notes, three young people to research fund-raising ideas, one young person for making sure that recyclables are properly sorted. Every young person has some responsibility for a task or part of an activity.</i>	5	All young people have specific task responsibilities to the group. For some, it is a joint responsibility.
<i>The staff passed out all supplies, organized the snacks, and picked up after young people if they didn't pick up after themselves. One young person chose and led an ice-breaker.</i>	3	One young person had a group responsibility, but generally the staff did not have young people take responsibility for assigned tasks.

ITEM 2: SUPPORT CARRYING OUT RESPONSIBILITIES INDEPENDENTLY

The basic idea behind this item is to allow or encourage independence and not to micro-manage young people as they attempt to take on responsibilities and tasks. Sometimes it seems easier or more efficient to do things for young people, but that denies young people the opportunity to learn on their own and develop confidence. The staff can

allow young people to figure out how to accomplish a task and allow them to do it in their own way. It can be tempting for staff to take over a task and do it for a young person if they are struggling a bit or taking more time to do it than the staff member would have, but it is important to restrain that impulse.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 2

- If staff never allow young people to carry out activities or tasks on their own (and thus never intervene or impose procedures for doing those tasks), score a 1.
- This is an assessment of whether the staff take over or intervene in a task or activity that has been given to a young person. Initially giving directions on how to perform a task does not automatically disqualify them from achieving a 5, nor does responding when a young person asks for help. The key aspects to focus on when in doubt are whether the intervention is intrusive—is the staff member butting in, taking over, or doing it for the young people; and is the intervention critical for safety or to prevent a minor catastrophe.
- If the staff always allow young people some freedom or flexibility in performing the tasks, and do not take over or micro-manage, then score a 5. If staff occasionally hurry the young people along, micro-manage the task, or take over for the young people, score a 3.
- To decide between scoring a 3 and a 1, think about the proportion of the time staff intervenes. When there are only a small number of responsibilities assigned, if the staff member usually intervenes, score a 1; if the staff member usually doesn't intervene, score a 3.
- If the only time a staff member intervenes intrusively happens to be the only time a staff member assigned a young person a task, score a 1.

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>When a young person is carrying out the task of passing out the snacks, the staff person keeps interrupting to say, "Put the cracker on the napkin first, and then move on to the next person. No, first start at the front, then ..." and takes a cracker and puts it on the napkin. This is the only time a young person was given responsibility for a task or activity.</i>	1	Staff unnecessarily and intrusively intervened in the young person's task. (Since this is the only task assigned, 100% of the time staff intervened intrusively.)

TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 2, continued

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>The young person assigned to pass out wrapped snacks is taking much longer than the staff member would take. The staff member allows the young person to proceed at her own pace, carefully picking up only one snack at a time. Other young people are also assigned responsibilities and the staff member does not intervene intrusively.</i>	5	Since this was how the staff behaved with all assigned responsibilities, score a 5.
<i>All young people are assigned various chores and tasks. The staff member takes the snacks from the person in charge of distributing snacks, saying, "I've got this. I'll get it done more quickly." The staff member does not interfere with young people assigned to putting away supplies, watering plants, erasing the white boards, or other task assignments.</i>	3	The staff member does not allow the young person in charge of distributing snacks to do the job because "I'll get it done more quickly." However, the staff member does not intervene intrusively in other assigned tasks.
<i>The staff assigned young people to put away boxes of supplies by carrying them to the proper shelves. One heavy box starts to split open, and the staff member quickly grabs the box so the supplies do not spill out. At no other time does staff intervene.</i>	5	Although the staff intervened, do not consider it intrusive if the action was to prevent damage to materials, a major mess, injury to a young people, or other similar significant concern.

ITEM 3: PROVIDE MENTORING OPPORTUNITIES

The word *mentoring* here is used in a broad way. For the purposes here, it is about having the opportunity to use one’s experience or expertise to help another person one-on-one. This includes when a young person shares their knowledge or expertise with someone else. This is a valuable experience for young people. This can happen in any number of ways from very informal to more formal. For example, mentoring can be as simple as one young

person helping another with a problem, or it can be a formal, ongoing program in which older youth are paired with younger ones as “reading buddies.” In order for every young person to have an opportunity to mentor, young people will sometimes be the mentor and sometimes be the mentee, depending on whether in that particular situation they are learning from another young person or teaching or helping someone.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 3

- Note whether *staff* is providing or setting up the opportunity and if more than one young person is given the opportunity to share their knowledge or expertise to another individual.
- All young people, no matter what their age, can have knowledge or expertise that they can share with someone who can benefit from it.
- Group projects may provide lots of opportunities for young people to mentor or coach others on how to do something. If the staff explicitly encourage that type of coaching (e.g., “Each of you can help the others in your small group with things that you already know how to do”), then score as if more than one young person has an opportunity to mentor, even if you did not observe the actual mentoring.
- Mentoring, by our definition, is one-on-one. If a more experienced or expert young person is supporting, helping, or demonstrating something to a less experienced young person, that is mentoring. If a young person with a particular expertise is sharing, directing, or demonstrating to more than one young person, that counts as leadership, but not mentoring.

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>There are no formal mentoring opportunities, but a young person who finished her essay early is encouraged to help out another young person who is struggling.</i>	3	One young person has an opportunity to mentor an individual.
<i>Some of the young people in the cooking program previously participated in a baking class. The staff member asks if any of the young people would like to learn how to bake a dessert. Three young people raise their hands. The staff member has three bakers each teach one other person how to make a dessert of their choice.</i>	5	Three young people have a one-to-one opportunity to teach or demonstrate to another person how to make a dessert.

ITEM 4: PROVIDE LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

This represents an important opportunity that unfortunately not all young people often have: to lead a group, to be in front of others, to lead or direct. This doesn't necessarily have to be an elaborate, formal event, but can happen in more everyday ways as well. For example, one can ask a young person to lead a small group. A young person can explain the directions of a game to a group. A young person can lead parents or guests on a tour of the facility.

Typically, opportunities to lead happen for a select group of young people, those dubbed "natural leaders."

Although it is important to build on young people's strengths, the intention of this scale is to assess whether more young people have opportunities to practice leading, not just the young people to whom leading is natural. The challenge for the youth worker is to find opportunities for the young people who otherwise might not have them. The scoring standard here is that more than one young person gets a chance to lead, recognizing that it often doesn't work to provide every young person a chance to lead in one program session. The intent and best practice, of course, are that all the young people get a chance to lead.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 4

- Be sure to note the less obvious forms of leadership, especially those that occur in smaller groups. For example, the staff may tell everyone to take turns explaining or deciding how to play a game.
- The staff do not need to use the word leader, but either the group or the staff must appoint someone as leader or representative to direct, facilitate, organize, demonstrate, or decide.
- Simply sharing one's work does not count as leadership. (That counts for item 5). A demonstration must have an explicit purpose of a young person with expertise teaching others or demonstrating how to do something.

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>Leaders are paired up with individuals.</i>	1	This is an example of mentoring, not leading a group.
<i>One young person leads an ice-breaker. No other young person lead.</i>	3	One young person had an opportunity to lead.
<i>Everyone is divided up into groups. The staff member has 4 questions for the groups to discuss. For each question the staff member designates a different leader for the group discussion.</i>	5	Leadership rotated so that more than one young person had an opportunity to lead.
<i>Each young person creates an art project and later shows it to the whole group and shares why they chose the method they used.</i>	1	This is sharing out and counts for item 5, but does not count as leadership.
<i>Each young person researches a different art method and creates a project using that method. Later each young person explains the art method to the whole group and shows their project created using that method.</i>	5	The key here is that each young person is teaching the rest of the group the method they learned about and practiced. The rest of the group does not have that knowledge or expertise.

ITEM 5: PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO PRESENT

One way to help young people grow in leadership and responsibility is to get them used to sharing or speaking up in front of others. Young people may present a project they have worked on to the entire group; they

may “share out” the ideas of a small group, speaking as a representative of that group. These opportunities can be easy for staff to create and can be a step towards greater leadership roles for the young people.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 5

- If young people share an opportunity to present, jointly sharing out to the larger group, that counts for this item.
- Two or more young people need to have an opportunity to present or share out during the observed session to score a 5.

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>Young people create an art project that represents a favorite memory. Each of them shares their creation and the memory it represents to the whole group.</i>	5	Each young person shared their own ideas and project to the larger group.
<i>The staff member has small groups discuss a topic. Afterwards the staff member has one young person share a summary of their group's discussion.</i>	3	One young person presented the summary of their group's discussion to the whole group.
<i>The staff member has small groups discuss a topic, covering a list of questions. She appoints one person to facilitate the discussion in each small group. She does not have anyone share out about their small group discussion.</i>	1	Although there is a leader in the group, no one has the opportunity to share or present to the whole group.

Cultivating Empathy

Staff support young people in practicing empathy skills.

Level 5 Quality Descriptions

1. Staff provide young people with a structured activity where listening, understanding, and acknowledging the personal stories, experiences, feelings, culture, or viewpoints of others is the sole focus of the activity (e.g., staff have young people in small groups share about an experience that shaped their life).
2. Staff ask young people to discuss the causes or consequences of other people's emotions (e.g., in response to in-the-moment situations, past experiences, or in discussion of other actual or fictional events or experiences).
3. Staff provide explicit opportunities for all young people to affirm, appreciate, or show kindness to others (e.g., staff have young people write notes to a peer who is ill, organize a canned goods drive for a food bank, have each young person describe the strengths they appreciate in a teammate and how it helps them build on their own strengths).
4. Staff provide formal opportunities to learn about and value differences among people (e.g., young people interview people from different generations, countries, or backgrounds; staff have young people learn about each other's strengths after they take personality inventories).

Empathy is a complex emotional state associated with a variety of more basic skills associated with tuning in and internalizing another's affective state, maintaining the self-other distinction, and flexibly shifting between one's own and others' subjective perspectives. Although this emotional state happens within an individual, such that external observers may have difficulty observing it, it can be expressed in behavior and language in the form of, for example, relating to others with acceptance, understanding, and sensitivity to their diverse perspectives and experiences. Consequently, staff can provide opportunities and instruction that supports or encourages the development and practices of empathy.

Empathy and its various components, such as the capacity to take another's perspective, are characterized by complex developmental trajectories that unfold differently for different people. That said, even young children can "feel with" another child who is sad or crying. Having empathy for another whose experience is easily recognized as similar to one's own is comparatively easy, but developing empathy for others whose experiences, viewpoints, or cultures differ from one's own is more challenging. Nevertheless, staff can provide young people with intentional opportunities to listen to, acknowledge, internalize, and understand the perspectives of others. When doing this, creating a "safe space" and norms supporting respect are absolutely essential.

ITEM 1: STRUCTURE ACTIVITY FOR SHARING AND LISTENING

This item is foundational for supporting the development of empathy. It is possible to listen to other people’s stories and experiences without developing empathy, but it is almost impossible to have empathy without first listening to their story, especially if their experience or story is different from one’s own. This item is about intentionally setting up the opportunity where young people are encouraged to listen deeply and openly to the stories and experiences of

their peers. In this situation, having a diverse group supports young people in developing empathy, as they must learn how others who are different from them see and experience the world. They also might find emotional themes that are shared, despite other differences. As they listen to others, young people have the opportunity to first see that others have feelings and then to experience feelings shared in another’s perspective.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 1

- To score a 5, staff must set up a situation where the point of the activity is for young people to listen and understand the experiences or feelings of the young person speaking.
- For this item, young people must listen to live people share about their experiences

or feelings. The exception is if young people are acting out the stories of *their peers in the program*. Young people listening deeply enough that they can act out the stories of classmates or peers is a tried and true method of helping young people put themselves “into the shoes” of other young people.

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>The staff member has one volunteer share with the whole group their experiences with being insulted because of their physical appearance. The staff member reminds the group about making a safe place to share and putting themselves in the talker’s shoes.</i>	5	One person shares, but all are encouraged to listen and “put themselves in the talker’s shoes.”
<i>Young people are in groups discussing their views and opinions on a proposed new local ordinance. The staff member encourages them to listen and understand the views of others.</i>	5	Young people are given an explicit opportunity to listen to the views of others.
<i>Young people work on collages representing a holiday they celebrate. As they work, some young people informally talk about the holiday they celebrate.</i>	3	Although some young people share personal stories, that is not the focus of the activity.

ITEM 2: ENCOURAGE UNDERSTANDING OTHERS' EMOTIONS

With this item, staff may use a situation that comes up in the program—a conflict between young people, perhaps—to help young people to make the connections between emotions, actions, and the ripple effects that go out from there. The Cultivating Empathy scale focuses on when the staff are supporting young people

to examine or think about other people's emotions, whereas the Emotion Coaching scale focuses on self-awareness and one's own emotions. People can practice or learn empathy in live interactions but also from reading or talking about situations they are not a part of—second-hand or fictional situations.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 2

- The difference between a 3 and a 5 is whether the staff point out the causes or consequences of an emotion or whether the staff have young people make those connections.
- The “consequences” of someone's emotions can be other emotions, actions, or responses to the actions; they can be constructive or problematic.

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>Staff and young people are discussing current events. The staff member asks, “What emotions do you think led to that violent act? What do you think the victim felt when that happened?”</i>	5	The staff member has young people discuss the causes of an emotion and the repercussions of actions following on emotions.
<i>Staff and young people are discussing current events. The staff member says, “You can see that he felt afraid, threatened by those words, and responded with violence.”</i>	3	The staff member tells young people the causes and consequences of emotion.
<i>The young people are creating a play based on scenes from a movie. The staff member has young people discuss what each character might be feeling and why.</i>	5	The young people discuss the character's feelings.

ITEM 3: STRUCTURE ACTIVITIES FOR SHOWING KINDNESS

One of the most fundamental reasons young people need to develop empathy is so that ultimately, they develop into adults who are simply kind to each other. Providing structured or intentional opportunities to practice compassion or express gratitude for each other shows young people how important this is and helps them develop a habit of doing it. This is

something that anyone can be reminded to practice. Having structured times to practice kindness, express gratitude or affirmation provides young people with opportunities to learn and practice elements of empathy. This also encourages an environment where young people spontaneously affirm, support, or express kindness to each other.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 3

- The opportunity must be specifically or intentionally set up by staff.
- All young people must have the intentional opportunity to demonstrate kindness or affirm others to score a 5.
- The intention around this item is that staff are setting up an activity or situation for the purpose of expressing kindness, giving affirmations, or showing appreciation. If young people simply routinely clap after a performance, that is not enough to count. If after the performance staff has young people each say one thing that they thought was a strength of the performance, that would count.

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>The staff member ends each session with an “affirmations time”—a chance for two young people to acknowledge a team member’s contribution to the group.</i>	3	This opportunity is only provided to two (some) of the young people each session.
<i>The staff member ends each session with an “affirmations time”—a chance for all young people to acknowledge a team member’s contribution to the group.</i>	5	All young people are provided with the opportunity.
<i>A boy who does not know anybody joins the club. The staff member calls Pat aside and recommends showing the newcomer around and making him feel at home and welcome.</i>	3	The staff member is providing a specific opportunity for one young person to show kindness to a newcomer by showing him around.
<i>Young people are diligently working on art projects. One young person says to another, “Hang in there. Your project is looking really good!”</i>	1	Although one young person is encouraging another, since the staff did not set up an intentional opportunity, this does not count.

ITEM 4: SUPPORT VALUING DIFFERENCES

This item is about the staff providing formal opportunities for young people to learn about people who may have experienced life differently than they have. They learn about both the differences and similarities

across groups of people. Simply the fact of making this a planned activity within a program demonstrates to young people that valuing and appreciating differences among people is important.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 4

- To score a 5, assessors should look for an activity in which young people talk about or learn about people that may be different from them in culture, political views, religion, background, or some other way.
- Some activities that count as evidence for Cultivating Empathy item 1 could be used as evidence for this item if young people were asked to share about different viewpoints or experiences.
- When staff provide feedback to young people, notice if the staff member expresses appreciation of differences.
- If a young person brings up something about a person or group that the young person perceives as “different,” note how the staff person responds.

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>Young people share what they learned from interviewing an older person during a recent field trip to a nursing home.</i>	5	This gives young people an opportunity to understand the experiences and perspectives of someone from a different generation.
<i>Young people are giving presentations about their art projects and the ideas behind them. The staff member says, “It is really cool how each of you had such different ideas! I see how each of you were able to express yourself in such different ways.”</i>	3	This spontaneous comment demonstrates valuing difference.

IV. ENGAGING ENVIRONMENT

The Engaging Environment domain is at the top of the pyramid. This domain focuses on staff providing supports for young people to engage more deeply in projects and activities and take more initiative in their own learning. Staff encourage young people to use critical thinking skills to learn, plan, and problem solve.

Furthering Learning

Staff encourage young people to deepen their learning.

Level 5 Quality Descriptions

1. Staff have young people make connections between session activities and young people's previous knowledge (e.g., related topics previously studied, "real world" applications or issues. For example, staff ask young people questions like "How does our program gardening project relate to what you learned about river pollution?").
2. More than once, staff support young people in linking concrete examples to content-related principles or categories, (e.g., "Giving more specific names to your feelings will help others understand you better." "What other four-sided figure would be a quadrilateral?" "Understanding a candidate's platform will help voters make informed decisions.").
3. Two or more times, staff encourage young people to deepen or extend knowledge (e.g., staff ask young people questions that encourage them to analyze; define a problem; make comparisons or inferences; or predict, apply, or generate alternate solutions. For example, "How do you think the distance from the lamp will affect the seedlings?" "What does this have in common with what you learned last week?")
4. More than once, staff support young people to use logical reasoning (e.g., "Why do you think that would happen?" "Please explain your reasoning.")
5. Staff frequently make comments, ask questions that guide young people in discovering an answer to a problem, or guide young people's initiative in learning (e.g., "And what else do you notice?" "Your paragraph tells me what, but not why." "What tools do you think you need before you start?").

ITEM 1: SUPPORT CONNECTIONS TO PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE

Helping students make connections to their school-day content, academic skills, and previous knowledge is important for several reasons. This helps young people build and integrate the skills and

knowledge they draw on to solve problems. Deep learning involves synthesizing and integrating new knowledge and skills to previous experiences—what they already know.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 1

- If staff make the connection themselves and just inform the young people about a connection, score a 3, unless the staff have encouraged the young people to make a connection and they were not able to do so.
- If the staff have the young person make a connection or encourage them to do so by asking questions, score a 5.
- If it appears the staff is trying to connect to the young person’s previous knowledge, count that even if it’s unclear what they previously learned.

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>The staff member says, “Do you know anyone who is a carpenter? How would a carpenter use what we learned today about angles?”</i>	5	The staff member is having young people connect to what they have learned outside of school or the program.
<i>The staff member says, “You already know how to multiply fractions, so you use the same technique to divide fractions.”</i>	3	The staff member is connecting to what the young people already know how to do.
<i>During a lesson, a young person realizes a connection to something he learned at school and tells the staff about it. The staff member nods but does not follow up on it.</i>	1	The staff member is not encouraging or making the connection.
<i>During a lesson, a young person realizes a connection to something he learned at school and tells the staff about it. The staff member responds and asks the young person to elaborate.</i>	5	Although the staff member did not initiate the conversation, she is supporting the young person in elaborating on the connection.

ITEM 2: LINK EXAMPLES TO PRINCIPLES

This item is about taking a specific instance, example, or application, and understanding how the specific links to the more universal or abstract. This could include anything from simple scientific categories such as mammals, which young children can understand, to mathematical formulas or scientific laws that many adults do not understand. Making these connections is a fundamental process of learning. The principles and categories referred to in this item may be those

from any number of disciplines, including math, art, and various branches of science. Connecting ideas is a fundamental process of learning. Young people may start with a concept and move to concrete examples. Or young people may start with several concrete examples and then learn the principle that applies. Either way supports learning. The criterion for scoring is the number of linkages or instances. More than one is required to score a 5.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 2

- “More than once” can mean more than one principle or category is explained, and/or that at more than one time the staff ties an activity to a principle.
- Principles can include things like the “law of gravity,” “always start a paragraph with a topic sentence,” or “measure twice, cut once.” Most content areas from sports to hairstyling to art have principles or general rules that can be learned and that apply in many or all instances.
- Pay attention if staff say to always do something. It *might* apply as evidence for this item. “Remember to always follow the recipe carefully when baking. Unlike many main dishes where you can often adapt, changing proportions even a little in baking can ruin a recipe.” Following a recipe carefully is an important principle of baking.
- It is better if staff give definitions or explanations for the category or principle, but that may not always happen.

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>In a dance class the staff member has the dancers watch several different salsa dances and explains why they belong to the salsa category.</i>	5	The dancers are given several different examples of salsa dances.
<i>All young people attend a cooking class after lunch. The staff member reminds young people that whole numbers are also fractions—one cup of flour is $\frac{3}{3}$ cup, $\frac{4}{4}$, and so on.</i>	3	Staff uses the cooking activity as a concrete example of using fractions. “Whole numbers are also fractions” is the universal principle or concept that has many real life or concrete applications.
<i>All young people attend a cooking class after lunch. First, they make cupcakes. The staff member points out that whole numbers are also fractions, one cup of flour is $\frac{3}{3}$ cup, $\frac{4}{4}$, and so on. The staff member has different groups plan out what they would need to quadruple the recipe. Different groups use whatever method they can figure out to do that. Afterwards, the staff member explains how to do it by multiplying fractions.</i>	5	The staff member points out one principle before having young people experiment, then the staff member points out another principle afterward.

ITEM 3: ENCOURAGE EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE

There are many ways to encourage young people to deepen their knowledge or push their thinking. As an assessor, it is only necessary that one recognizes when the staff person is helping young people move beyond simply knowing and understanding the facts of the matter at hand. Many words can describe this process: deepen, extend, elaborate, apply, analyze, synthesize, design, create, evaluate, and so on. The more interconnected knowledge is, the better it is understood and retained. For this item, the staff member encourages young people to elaborate, apply, analyze, evaluate, or synthesize in some way.

There are many ways staff can extend young people's

knowledge. The following are a few examples:

- If e-a-t spells eat, how do you think you would pronounce b-e-a-t?
- What other choices might the character in that story have?
- What techniques did the author use to convey that something bad was about to happen?
- Try writing your own poem using alliteration.
- Use what we learned about plants this week to design your own garden.
- How can this sentence can be improved?
- What do you think about that reasoning? Does it make sense?



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 3

- Look for the staff asking a prompting question and the young people giving the answer.
- If the staff supply an example that deepens or extends the content discussed, that does not count for this item. The staff must prompt the young people to find a way to deepen or extend the knowledge.
- The occurrences of "deepening and extending knowledge" count whether they are done with the same young person or with multiple young people.

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
After reviewing material about photosynthesis, the staff member says, "One reason we recycle paper is because we want to save trees so they can take carbon dioxide from the air."	1	The staff member is doing the analysis, giving an example, and not encouraging young people to generate one.
After reviewing material about photosynthesis, the staff member asks, "Why do you think people want to save trees?" The young person answers, "Because they make oxygen and people need oxygen." No other extending knowledge occurs in the session.	3	The young person applies knowledge of photosynthesis to staff's question about saving trees. If it happens once, score a 3.
After reviewing material about photosynthesis, the staff member asks, "Why do you think people want to save trees?" The young person answers, "Because they make oxygen and people need oxygen." The staff member then asks, "What might be another reason?" The young person thinks, then says, "I heard too much carbon in the air isn't good, maybe that's why."	5	The staff member has young people extend knowledge twice.

ITEM 4: ENCOURAGE LOGICAL REASONING

Reasoning refers to the thinking processes used to draw conclusions during problem solving or decision making. To problem solve effectively, young people must learn to think clearly and logically and know whether an argument or solution makes sense. Over time, young people learn to think more critically. Often the first step is asking them *why*, pressing for logical thinking.

This item is about having young people come up with rational or logical arguments for their thinking or choices. Did that answer or solution make sense? Why? Can they defend or explain it rationally or logically? The criterion for scoring is the number of instances of this occurring. More than once is required to score a 5.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 4

- Simply asking young people questions that prompt a logical or rational response counts for this item.
- The types of reasoning used here would include logical reasoning, mathematical reasoning, or scientific reasoning, but any type of clear, sensible, rational reasoning counts.
- If young people do not give an answer that is based on logical reasoning, see if the staff prompts young people to provide a logical or rational argument.

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>Young people are putting on a dinner for their families. The staff member has young people identify two ways to price out the potential purchases and to provide logical arguments for or against each purchase option.</i>	5	Young people have to reason logically about and evaluate two different purchase plans.
<i>Young people plan to ask the city council to turn a vacant lot into a playground "because kids would like it." The staff member says, "Try to think of arguments that relate to the costs versus the benefits of turning the lot into a park."</i>	3	The staff member asks the young people one time to develop arguments that relate to the costs versus the benefits of turning the lot into a park. The staff member has young people develop an argument based on logical reasoning. If this happened more than once it would score a 5.

ITEM 5: GUIDE DISCOVERY

There are at least two different ways to help young people learn how to do something. Telling them the steps involved in doing it is one way. Another way is to *not* explicitly spell out the steps, but to support or guide young people into figuring it out for themselves. Sometimes the process of verbally guiding young people to support them in their own learning discoveries is called a guided-discovery approach to learning. Young people can learn from experiencing and practicing and from being taught by adults. However, a combination is best. At one end of the spectrum is a lecture where the young people are passive learners. At the other end is putting the young people on a quest without a clear idea of where they

are going, what to look for along the way, or any directions. Guided discovery emphasizes young people's discovery, but staff are involved by asking questions or making comments that highlight what to look for and point young people's thoughts in a profitable direction. This approach supports young people's initiative and allows them to learn things on their own, but it doesn't leave the process to chance. Guided learning can be combined with staff demonstrating strategies and conveying factual information. Staff can also arrange learning experiences and materials to maximize the young person's ability to make connections and discovery, but that is not necessarily captured in this item.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 5

- This item is about guiding the *young people* to make guesses/predictions, come to conclusions, find the answer, and/or make the mental connection, rather than the staff doing it for them.
- Verbal guidance can include comments, observations, open-ended questions, and close-ended questions. Asking young people what they notice fits well with a guided discovery approach.

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>The staff member explains how to do the dance moves step-by- step, showing how to do each part in order. The young people practice. When the young people struggle with a step, the staff member demonstrates and says, "Your foot goes forward there on the count of 3."</i>	1	The staff's method in this case is directive. This method of instruction scores high on modeling.
<i>The staff member gives a small group manipulatives to help them learn about area of squares. After the young people experiment with combining different shapes, the staff member asks them to make a large square. She asks a series of questions, allowing the young people to answer.</i> <i>"So what shapes do you have in your square?"</i> <i>"And comparing Shayla's and Tyrel's, do you notice any similarity?"</i> <i>"How many squares on the side...? And how many across the top...? And how many total?"</i> <i>"So, what would be one way to describe how big that square is?"</i>	5	The staff member is setting up a way for the young people to learn about the area of squares. He does not tell them the formula but asks questions that guide the young people to discover the formula themselves. The staff's primary approach is guided discovery.
<i>The staff member tells the young people that the formula for area is length times width. She gives the young people manipulatives. She has them make 2×2 squares and 3×3 squares and count how many squares total. The staff member asks, "What does knowing the number of squares across tell you?" "Do you need to know the number of squares down?"</i>	3	In this scenario, the staff member tells the formula up front, but she also asks questions that guide the young people in coming to conclusions by discovery.
<i>The staff member is teaching a group about nutrition. She sometimes asks the young people what they think and why they think that before presenting factual information.</i>	3	The staff member is primarily presenting factual information but does use some questions to see if young people come to the right conclusion themselves.
<i>The staff member frequently says, "How could you sound that word out?" "Where would you find another clue about what that might mean?"</i>	5	The staff member frequently prompts the young person to come up with a strategy for figuring out a word by themselves.

Supporting Youth Interests

Staff shape opportunities for young people to make choices based on their interests.

Level 5 Quality Descriptions

1. Staff provide opportunities for young people to make at least one open-ended choice within the framework of the activities (e.g., “Pick any topic.” “Use these materials any way you want.”).
2. Staff provide all young people with multiple opportunities for choice among or within activities (e.g., “You can paint whatever you want—use any colors, any design.” “You can use this pattern or that one.”).
3. Staff support young people in using their creativity, curiosity, or imagination (e.g., staff encourage young people to use materials, knowledge, or skills in new ways; to “wonder.” For example, staff says, “Think about all the different ways you could end the story.”).

Providing choice is an integral part of the ways staff promote engagement, learning, leadership and belonging. Giving young people opportunities to make choices can help make a learning activity successful and engaging. In addition, giving young people opportunities to make decisions encourages them to explore their interests, participate as group members and leaders, and ultimately become stronger decision-makers in life. The choices staff provide should have real outcomes and should matter to young people. Superficial choices like whether they write their name on the front or back of the paper or whether they choose which chair to sit in would not be considered meaningful choices. Additionally, the choices must be in the framework of the activities the assessor observes. This means if the young people previously decided to participate in the dance offering instead of the karate offering, that doesn’t count for the purposes of this scale.

Item 1 in the Supporting Youth Interests scale is focused on a key distinction between *discrete* choices and *open-ended* choices. A discrete choice is a selection between options (e.g., “Do you want to pick up leaves, pick up garbage, or paint the park benches for our community service project?”), and an open-ended choice does not have a finite set of options (e.g., “What could we do to improve the park for our community service project?”). Providing young people open-ended choices with a variety of materials they can use in any way they want will usually provide them with multiple opportunities to make choices. Open-ended choices force young people to think more deeply as the options are not provided. The table below can help illustrate the relationships between open-ended choices, discrete choices, and the number of opportunities for choice, and give scoring guidance.

	Item #1		Item #2
	Discrete Choice	Open-ended Choice	Number of Opportunities for Choice
Young people choose between option A, B, C, D...etc.	Yes	No	One choice
Young people choose “any animal” to be their mascot.	No	Yes	One choice
Young people paint “anything they want.”	No	Yes	Multiple choices (choose subject, colors, placement, style, etc.)
Young people choose between three items for their snack; they choose between four games to play for recreation time.	Yes	No	Two choices

ITEM 1: PROVIDE OPEN-ENDED CHOICE

There are infinite ways to provide choices depending on the activity. In a photography workshop, young people can choose the pictures to take or choose shots within a theme. During a craft project, rather than following a set procedure for creating a Thanksgiving turkey, young people can make their own designs. In a workshop on leadership, young people can make meaningful decisions about what concepts they wish to explore in depth.

This item assesses whether the choices given are open-ended or limited to the specific options offered by the staff. Discrete choices are those where the staff says, “You can do this, this or this.” Open-ended choices are where the young people generate the options and the young person is free to do whatever they want within the bounds of the structure of the activity. With open-ended choices young people generate the options and the ideas, and so they exercise more creativity, more autonomy, and do more of the thinking and deciding.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 1

- The distinction to make for this item is whether the choice is an open-ended choice or a discrete choice.
- If the staff offers both a discrete choice and an open-ended choice, score a 5—the young people have at least one open-ended choice.

TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 1, continued

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>Young people chose to be in this workshop but, once there, the staff person has all the young people doing the same thing in the same way.</i>	1	Although young people were allowed to choose the program offering that they want to be in, they were not allowed to choose what to do within that offering.
<i>The staff member says the young people can make placemats for the fall session by laminating an oak, maple, or hickory leaf cutout to cardstock.</i>	3	The young people had the choice for an oak, maple, or hickory placemat, but they could only choose between those three cutouts provided.
<i>The staff member provides young people with a variety of art supplies for making placemats. "Please pick a theme that relates to a season. For instance, if you pick spring as your season, you could make a collage of spring holidays, your favorite spring activities, flowers that bloom in spring, or whatever theme you want."</i>	5	Although there are a discrete number of seasons, young people can create whatever theme or subject matter they want. They have an open-ended choice within the broad framework of seasons despite the fact that they are all making placemats.

ITEM 2: PROVIDE MULTIPLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHOICE

Item 1 focuses specifically on the particular type of choice, whereas this item measures how many choices all young people get. Giving young people choices is a way to allow them to engage more fully in the activities and engage in learning. It can be a beginning place for encouraging initiative. The more that young people feel they have chosen something, the easier it is to be invested in it and the more motivated they may be to work hard at it.

In addition to providing choices among activities, choice can often be woven into activities. Because this is an observation of a particular point in time, do not count things like the fact that young people may have chosen to be there or chosen the session they are in.

Most choices count for this item. Choices about what to do or how to do something, choices about roles in a group activity, group choices, and individual choice—these all count. If an activity contains

open-ended choice, particularly if young people are designing or creating something, there are likely to be many choices within that one activity. For example, if the young people are allowed to paint "whatever they want," the choices are almost infinite. They are choosing the subject of the painting, which colors to use, the design of the painting, and perhaps what type of paint they use.

This item assesses whether the choices given are open-ended or limited to the specific options offered by the staff. Discrete choices are those where the staff says, "You can do this, this or this." Open-ended choices are where the young people generate the options and the young person is free to do whatever they want within the bounds of the structure of the activity. With open-ended choices young people generate the options and the ideas, and so they exercise more creativity, more autonomy, and do more of the thinking and deciding.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 2

- This item requires that all young people have multiple choices. If some young people have multiple choices and others have only one, score a 3.
- Staff may give discrete choices or an open-ended choice.
- If all young people are designing something in an open-ended way that involves young people making many choices within the activity, score a 5.

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>Young people are given a "free art time." They have a lot of supplies to choose from and can make whatever they want.</i>	5	Although the staff member does not spell out exactly what or how many choices they have, the nature of an open-ended time for art allows everyone to have multiple choices. They choose what type of project they are going to do, what materials they'll use, what design, and so forth.
<i>The staff member gives all young people the option to use paints, markers, or crayons to draw a goldfish to put on the bulletin board.</i>	3	All the young people are not given a choice of what to draw, but they are given a choice among three drawing tools. This scenario would score a 5 if they were given a choice of drawing any type of fish.
<i>Young people listen to a guest presentation on local river ecology. Before the presentation, they are told to find a seat, any seat, and sit down.</i>	1	Although the young people are allowed to choose the seat they sit in, this is not choice among or within activities.

ITEM 3: SUPPORT CREATIVITY

Creativity occurs whenever young people have the skills to use what they already know and put concepts or materials together in an innovative way. This includes when they come up with a plan, design a project, or put their own innovative ideas into practice. This fosters their interest and investment.

This item also refers to curiosity and imagination. Imagination promotes creativity and curiosity can promote imagination. Wondering, supposing, and

being open to new ideas can spark imagination and creative thinking, all of which are important mental skills in most fields. Science is advanced when scientists wonder and are curious; literature is written using imagination and creativity. Creativity, imagination, and curiosity may support problem solving in any discipline or in everyday life. It supports flexible thinking—a skill that is sometimes helpful in coming up with a new solution to a problem.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 3

- Look for words that indicate encouraging curiosity or imagination: *wonder, suppose, what if?*
- If the staff has young people do an activity that is inherently creative, score a 5. Consider that encouraging creativity.

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
The staff member says, “If you were that character in the story, what would you have done differently to solve the problem?”	5	Although the staff member doesn’t use the word <i>imagine</i> , the young people are being asked to <i>imagine</i> what they might do in that situation.
The staff member gives the young people some manipulatives in the shape of triangles and says to combine them in as many ways possible to form larger triangles.	5	Combining things in new ways is creating.
The staff member gives the young people some triangle-shaped manipulatives and shows the young people a specific arrangement to make. The young person starts to experiment with different arrangements. The staff member says, “You can do that later, after we finish this problem.”	3	The staff member is neither explicitly encouraging nor discouraging the creative experimentation.
The staff member gives the young people some triangle-shaped manipulatives and shows them a specific arrangement to make. The young person starts to experiment with different arrangements. The staff member says, “You need to follow directions and only do it the way I show you.”	1	The staff member is preventing and discouraging experimentation.

Supporting Plans and Goals

Staff provide opportunities to plan, set goals, and solve problems.

Level 5 Quality Descriptions

1. Staff provide multiple opportunities for young people (individual or group) to set goals, or make or revise plans for projects and activities, (e.g., how to spend their time, how to do a task).
2. Staff provide opportunities for young people to record or represent their plans (e.g., a small group draws a diagram before building, staff help full group make a large idea web to plan an event, young people create a list or timeline).
3. Staff have young people monitor progress toward goals the young people set for themselves.
4. Staff support young people to try more than one way to meet a goal or solve a problem (e.g., staff tell young people to devise more than one solution, try another approach; staff structures activity to use different processes to anticipate or solve a problem).

This scale is about providing opportunities for the planning that young people do for projects or activities. Consider the following in terms of the opportunities that staff create for young people as they plan:

- Articulate ideas
- Make decisions
- Set goals
- Concentrate
- Express personal intentions
- Imagine and anticipate actions
- Shape intentions into actions
- Consider implications

- Analyze situations
- Deliberate
- Consider their own thinking process
- Open up to new approaches and alternatives
- Take on a curious and inquisitive attitude
- Become involved and engaged
- Make ongoing modifications
- Experience a sense of control
- Participate in increasingly complex ways

Over time and with practice, young people become better at making plans, need less scaffolding, and can make more elaborate plans.

ITEM 1: SET UP PLANNING OPPORTUNITIES

This item assesses whether young people have opportunities to make plans. These do not have to be big life plans; they can be small plans for how young people will spend their time or conduct an activity or project. Ideally, the young people get several opportunities

throughout each session to make plans. Revising plans previously made in order to incorporate what they learned in a first round of implementation is also an important part of planning. The more they plan, the better they will get at this important life skill.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 1

- Planning is something that happens before beginning an activity or before the next part of a more involved activity. Planning involves articulating something ahead of time—most frequently by writing it down or discussing it. Planning may start with deciding what the goal is.
- If the young people plan in different groupings, that counts as multiple opportunities to plan, even if the plans are about the same goal or upcoming activity.
- Planning is not simply making a choice about what to do, although it might include that. Planning is a process. It means young people must figure out how to do something—what steps are involved, what sequence to do things in, who should be involved, the time frame for the tasks, and so on. Each of these things is part of planning. It counts if young people are engaged in some part of a planning process, even if they do not create all the elements of a well-constructed plan or finalize a plan. A structured opportunity to discuss potential options before engaging in an activity is a commonly observed form of planning. For the purpose of this item, setting goals can be included in planning.
- Young people could plan for current activities within the program offering, future activities, their learning goals, or special events.
- Remember that planning can be either big or small. It does not have to be a long-term plan; it can be simply planning how the young people are going to spend their time during a one-hour session. But remember, planning is more than simply choosing an activity. It is deciding ahead of time how, when, in what sequence, for how long, and what method to use to come up with or implement ideas.
- If evidence of planning is not observed, then score a 1 for items 1 and 2. However, more elaborate planning can take multiple sessions to carry out. Longer-range planning is a program strength, not a weakness. So, any evidence that young people are using or acting on their own previous plans counts as an opportunity for planning.

TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 1, continued

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>The staff member says, "Today you will be finishing up the projects you planned out two sessions ago and will start planning your new project." Young people do some planning today and did some two sessions ago.</i>	5	This is evidence that young people had multiple opportunities to plan.
<i>The staff member has the young people create a goal for how much they want to accomplish that day.</i>	3	Setting the goal is one opportunity to set goals or make plans.
<i>Young people are in small groups. The staff member says, "Okay. Decide whether you are going to decorate the outside of the cards first or write the script inside."</i>	3	This is one opportunity for all young people to make one very simple plan. Note they are deciding the sequence of the tasks before they begin.
<i>Young people are in small groups. The staff member says, "Okay. Which groups want to decorate the outside of the cards and which groups want to write the script inside?"</i>	1	The young people are making a choice about which activity to do, but this is not a plan. To count as a plan, there must be some element of coming up with ideas of what to do beforehand, deciding steps or order to do things in, figuring out what will be involved in carrying out a task, setting a goal, etc.

ITEM 2: ENSURE YOUNG PEOPLE RECORD OR REPRESENT PLANS

Writing a plan down, mapping it out on paper, or recording it in some way that young people can refer back to helps them remember the plan better, monitor their progress when carrying it out, and articulate the plan more clearly. Sharing plans with others verbally is

also good, but it is easier to not remember or present the details of a plan clearly if the plans are only shared verbally. If the only way plans are shared is verbally, score a 3. If they also represent their plans in a tangible way, score a 5.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 2

- If evidence of planning is not observed, then score a 1 on all items.
- Creating a plan with others automatically scores a 3 because talking about the plan verbally will be part of the process.
- This item focuses on staff encouraging young people to make a record of plans and to share those plans with others. However, if a plan is recorded or represented, that scores a 5, even if the plan is not shared with others.
- A digital recording counts—even if it is an audio recording—because the plan can be referred to for clarification or recall.
- The number of young people who are encouraged to record and/or share their plans does not get assessed in this item.

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>Young people are asked to write down their plans for creating props for a play. However, they are not asked to share their plans with anyone.</i>	5	Writing down a plans is recording it. Sharing the plan is not a requirement to score a 5.
<i>Young people share their plans for skit topics within small groups.</i>	3	
<i>The staff member says, "Okay, now tell me how you plan to decorate your mailbox" to one young person as the staff circulates.</i>	3	The staff encouraged one young person to share verbally. No other ways of sharing were encouraged.

ITEM 3: FACILITATE MONITORING PROGRESS TOWARD GOAL

It is one thing to make a plan and another thing to implement it. Monitoring progress towards a goal is a key life skill for young people to learn and practice. It involves time management, estimating the time required to complete the task, and the habit of reviewing one's progress along the way. To assess how

much progress has been made, young people have to understand the goal. It is more common for staff to give directions on what to finish in a set amount of time and to ask young people to monitor their progress, but it is best if young people are able to develop or select the goal themselves.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 3

- See if there is a clear goal for the activity. To score a 3 or 5 on this item, there must be a goal. If not, score a 1. The goal can be related to how much the young people get done, where they are going, how it should look at the end, whether there is improvement from a previous attempt, etc.
- If there is a goal, see if it is set by the young people or the staff. To score a 5, the goal must be set by the young people themselves.
- See if the young people are the ones monitoring the progress toward the goal. This might be because staff expressly asked them to monitor their progress toward the goal or it may be that the staff inquire about young people's progress and ask the young people to give an assessment of their progress toward the goal.

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>Young people are creating posters to advertise a rummage sale they are having. The staff member asks young people how many posters they think they need and suggests they set a goal. Toward the end of the session, the staff member asks them if they think they are on track for getting the posters made. The young people reply they think they'll have even more than the minimum they need by the end of the next session.</i>	5	The young people set the goal and estimate the progress they have made toward that goal.
<i>Young people are creating posters to advertise a rummage sale they are having. The staff member tells them they will need to make six posters today. Halfway through the session, the staff member asks how many they have made already and if they think they'll finish all six today.</i>	3	The staff member set the goal, but has young people estimate progress toward the goal.
<i>The young people spend the session planning for the rummage sale. They set a goal for how many posters they want to make to advertise it and plan for how long they think it'll take to make them. They decide to check in at the end of every day to see if they are on track to meet their goal.</i>	5	For the purpose of scoring this item, if the young people are working on setting the goal and figuring out a plan for monitoring progress, score a 5, even if you observe just the plan for monitoring, not the actual monitoring which will come at a later date.

ITEM 4: SUPPORT PROBLEM-SOLVING ALTERNATIVES

Sometimes a plan does not work in the way the young people anticipated. Revising a plan and trying something in a different way is part of the process and is one way young people develop problem-solving abilities. The process of trying something, reflecting on it, and trying to solve the problem in a different way helps young people learn to think flexibly and critically. They look at a problem from multiple angles. They anticipate various outcomes. This item assesses first whether they are attempting to meet a goal or solve a problem, then whether they return to the problem and try solving it

in another way. They could try a different strategy or apply the same strategy in a different way. They could problem solve and use a different method and find they arrive at the same solution. In this way they are learning to think flexibly and critique what they've done and consider if there are other or better ways to approach a problem or meet a goal.

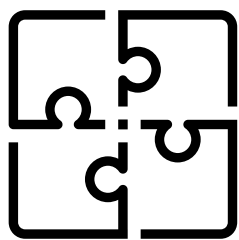
The emphasis for this item is having young people create more than one solution or try another approach even if the end result is the same.



TIPS FOR SCORING ITEM 4

- Did staff ask young people to solve a problem in more than one way or encourage them to think about how they could solve a problem in a different way? Did staff have young people try out various solutions?
- If the staff encourage young people to create back-up plans, that counts as an alternate way to solve a problem or meet a goal.
- If the young people are engaged in some problem-solving activity, but there is no evidence of staff encouraging the young people to solve the problem in more than one way or staff setting the activity up so that young people review and try the problem again, score a 3. (A young person may on their own initiative try another approach to solving a problem, but this item assesses whether staff actions or instructions support solving a problem in more than one way.)

SCENARIO	SCORE	NOTES
<i>Young people are building boats from kitchen materials. They will be racing them against another class.</i>	3	The staff provide young people with the problem of building a boat they can race.
<i>Young people build their first boats and try them out to see if the boats float and might work in a race. The staff member has young people discuss how well their first boat design worked. Then the young people change up their original design and test their second version of a boat.</i>	5	The problem is to build a boat that they can race. The young people come up with and test two boat designs.
<i>The staff member has young people come up with a design for their boat based on what materials they think will float best. After that, the staff member has the young people come up with a plan for making the boat go as fast as possible.</i>	5	While the young people in this scenario have not actually built their boats yet, the staff member asks them to come at the problem of building a boat from two different angles.



Indicator Scramble Answers

Creating Safe Spaces

5-1-3
3-5-1

Emotion Coaching

1-5-3
5-3-1
3-5-1
5-1-3

Scaffolding Learning

5-1-3
3-5-1
3-1-5
1-5-3

Fostering Growth Mindset

3-5-1
3-1-5
5-1-3

Promoting Responsibility and Leadership

3-5-1
3-5-1
5-1-3
3-5-1
5-1-3

Supporting Plans and Goals

1-5-3
5-3-1
5-1-3
3-5-1

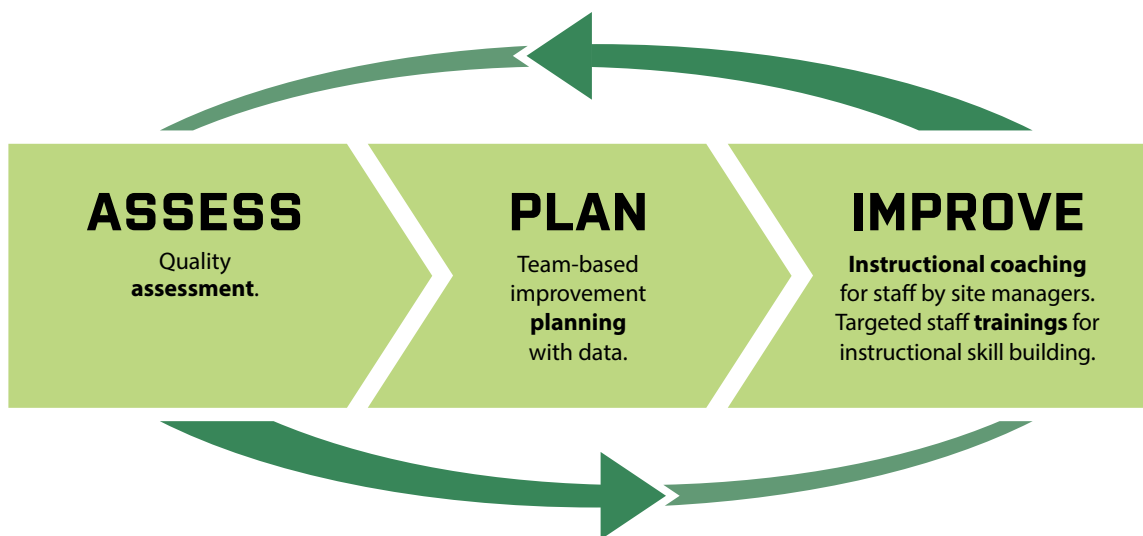
Notes

[illegible]

YOUTH PROGRAM QUALITY INTERVENTION

The Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI) is a comprehensive system for improving the quality of youth programs. The YPQI involves a three-part approach to program quality: the assess-plan-improve sequence as shown below. This sequence begins with assessment in order to identify both youth workers' existing strengths and areas for improvement. These areas then become goals in an improvement plan, with clear steps and benchmarks for success. To manage improvement, the Weikart Center also provides powerful supports for leaders and the high quality Youth Work Methods series of workshops for staff.

As a whole, the assess-plan-improve sequence establishes a supportive system for continuous improvement.



TO LEARN MORE, PLEASE VISIT

cypq.org



DAVID P. WEIKART

CENTER FOR YOUTH
PROGRAM QUALITY

cypq.org