

7 Tips

On Organizing Large Groups of Kids in a Physically Active Setting



1 Be Creative Dividing Groups into Teams

There is nothing more frustrating than dividing kids into teams. Friends want to stay together, and certain kids don't want to be on the same team together. Sometimes it can be a real struggle!

These "group dividing" tips will make life so much easier and allow for more productivity.



Two Groups

- Ask everyone to partner up with someone.
- Ask one child to sit and the other to stand.
- Instruct all children sitting on one team and all children who are standing on the other team.



Three Groups

- Ask everyone to line up and number off, 1 through 6.
- Have 1's go in one area, 2's in another area, and so on.
- Ask 1's and 6's to form one team. 2's and 5's to form another, and 3's and 4's to form another team.



Four Groups

- Grab a deck of playing cards and pass out a card to everyone.
- Group 4 teams by the suites (i.e., "everyone that has a heart is one team, everyone with a club is another team, and so on.")



2 Quiet Kids Down with "Attention Grabbers"

Have you ever noticed how difficult it is to quiet down a group of kids? It seems the louder you yell, the louder they get! The solution is to interject fun and simple activities that immediately get their attention. Here are three techniques that are extremely effective.

- Hold one hand up and count down from five, while getting quieter with each number. "5, 4, 3, 2, 1." Have the kids join in and take your time.
- Clap once, clap twice. Say loudly, "Clap once if you hear me, clap twice if you hear me. Continue until the kids quiet down.
- Eyes: Say loudly, "1, 2, 3 eyes on me." and have the kids respond with, "1, 2, 3 eyes on you." Repeat until everyone has settled down.

3 Organization Starts With You

Sometimes your frustration with how your program is organized is a direct reflection on you. I know this is difficult to hear but take a moment to be completely honest with yourself.

After some reflection, if you find you need to adjust your organizational skills, here are a few tips that will help get you started.

Jennifer Dawn, the creator of *The Best Planner Ever*, offer three killer tips for powerful daily planning. These proven techniques will help you step up your organizational skills, and with that, everyone else in your program will follow.

Identify Your Priorities

If you jump into your daily (or weekly) to-do-list without prioritizing, you'll usually be left at the end of the day feeling more stressed. To feel centered and as effective as you can be, you must identify your priority tasks.

How do you know what's a priority? You need a clear vision on actionable goals. This will help you more easily identify your daily priorities and non-priorities alike. This will make every day planning simple, straightforward, and easy.

Stop Thriving on "Busy"

Being busy can be a real rush sometimes. Narrowly meeting deadlines, endless emails, piles of paper needing attention, the frantic race to a meeting. The problem is working in this manner rarely means you're effective and over time that constant "rush" just becomes a major stress.

Instead, when you sit down to plan your day, focus on being effective, not just busy. Look at your to-do list for the day and ask yourself, "*Is this just busywork, or am I actually moving forward?*"

Everything in One Place

If your plans, calendars, and "to-do" lists are all over the place, so are you. shuffling through lists or clicking what you need can wreak havoc on your focus, productivity, and mental health. Taking just a few minutes to consolidate your plans, goals, and calendar in one place will save you time, improve efficiency, and help you live each day on your terms.



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Find a Simple Plan or Guide to Follow

Have you ever invested a lot of money into a curriculum or program and then discovered what you thought was simple, ended up being extremely difficult for your staff to implement?

It is a huge decision deciding on a curriculum or resource that best benefits your organization. There are many options out there to choose from - so how do you determine the right one for you?

Here are Three Important Things to Consider When Deciding on a Physical Activity Program

- **It Must be Easy to Understand.** Lessons need to be simple and clear. In order to make it less confusing, the program should only require minimal or no equipment.
- **It Must be Simple to Implement.** Your staff who will be implementing the program may not have experience working with large groups of children in a physical activity setting. That's why the program needs to be simple and include step-by-step instructions that make it incredibly easy for anyone to effectively run the program.
- **It Must Target All Ages and Abilities.** The biggest mistake programs make is introducing physical activities that cater to the more "athletic" child. The children who need a quality physical activity program the most feel intimidated and end up having a negative experience. This is why the program you choose must be all-inclusive and non-threatening, yet challenging enough for the athletic children to enjoy.



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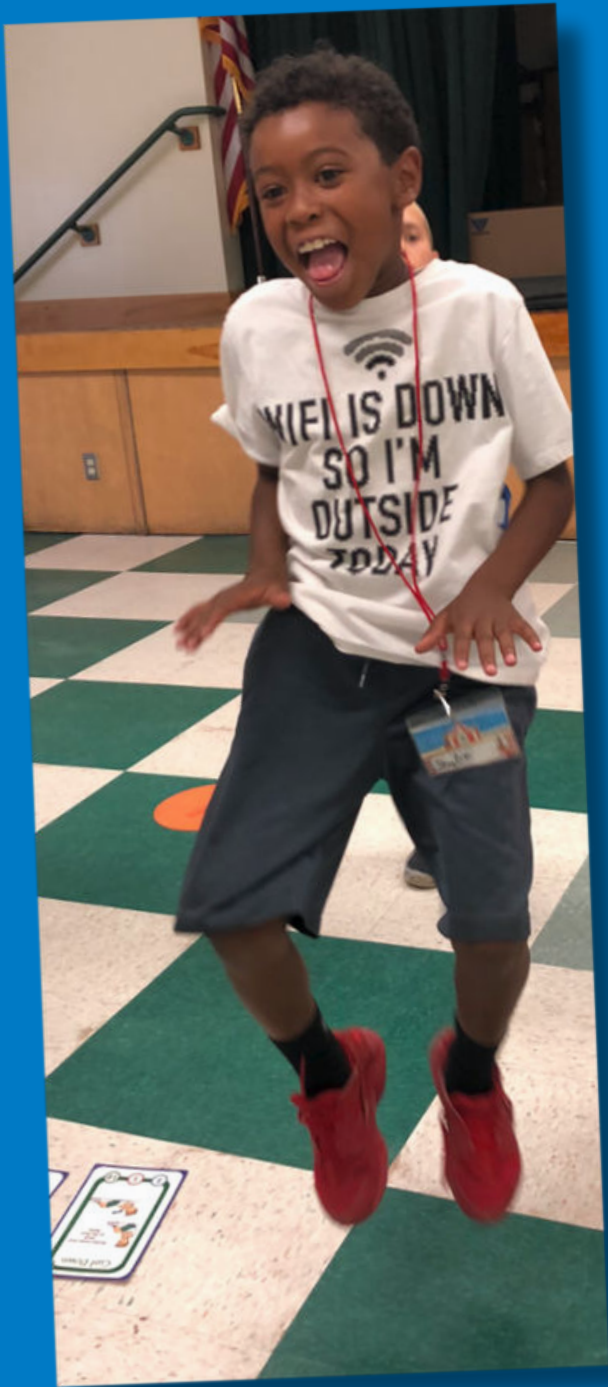
Enthusiasm is the Key

Your students can read you like a book. They know it if you (or your line staff) sincerely want to be with them and have their best interest as a priority. On the other hand, they also definitely know if someone is just putting in the time for a paycheck.

Shaping young minds and exposing them to all the wonderful experiences that Expanded Learning programs have to offer is such an important responsibility - and your staff's attitudes are a direct reflection on how the children in your program will respond to it. And while enthusiasm is contagious, it must start with your staff.

Here are Three Crucial Tips to Help Staff Stay Motivated and Enthusiastic

- **Empowerment.** Hold staff accountable but give them the freedom to manage their students. Micromanaging will only result in dissension and is a sure-fire way of deflating enthusiasm. Make it clear when and what staff will be evaluated on. However; in the meantime, let them do the job that you clearly defined for them.
- **Support.** Let them know you are there for them. If they have any questions or need support in any way. You are there to listen and help.
- **Provide Proper Resources.** If you provide training without the proper resources to implement what was taught, staff can become frustrated. Always make sure your staff has the proper resources to let them do their job effectively.



Add Variety to Your Program

Boredom can be a big problem in an After School setting. Reasons can vary from not being sufficiently challenged to not feeling motivated by an activity, down to simple lack of variation within the program. It's important to provide a variety of activities in order to "mix-it-up." New and exciting activities make participation much more inviting.

Here are Three Tips to Help Bring More Variety Into Your Program

- **Purchase Resources that Can Be Used Multiple Ways.** For example, indoors or outdoors, large or small groups, limited or unlimited spaces, and for all ages and abilities. You will get the biggest bang for your buck if you take all these factors into consideration.
- **Ask Your Staff.** Explain to your staff that you want variation in the program and ask for feedback. Their input may provide some insight you didn't consider. Plus, if they're asked to provide input, the percentage of buy-in is high resulting in a better program.
- **Think Outside the Box.** Most programs look at physical activity time as "sport time." The biggest misconception is believing that physical activity and sports are one in the same. They are not. Not all children are athletic, but EVERY child deserves to have a positive experience being physically active. So, be sure to look into resources that don't only offer the "cookie-cutter" sports experience.



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Grab Their Attention with Brain Teasers

A sure way to eliminate confusion and get students focused on the task at hand is by starting the day off with brain teasers. These are also excellent "go to" activities when you notice students losing focus or even dosing off. Brain Teasers are a sure-fire way to energize your students.

Here are Three Active Brain Teasers Guaranteed to Enhance Focus and Energy

Thumb & Index Finger Challenge

- Ask students to give a "thumbs up" with their right hand.
- Then ask students to point their left index finger.
- On the signal "go", the students will simultaneously switch their right hand pointing the index finger and their left hand giving a "thumbs up".
- Continue to repeat the signal (verbalizing the word "Go"), allowing students to continue to switch "thumbs up" and "index finger" pointed on each hand.
- Start slow and speed up as everyone becomes more familiar with the movement.

Reaction Crossover

- Students place their hands on their temples (just above their ears).
- On signal (verbalizing "1"), everyone quickly moves their right hand and touches their left knee, and back to the temple (have them practice this a few times).
- On signal ("2") everyone quickly moves their left hand and touches their right knee, and back to the temple. (Practice).
- Now mix it up by yelling out a "1" or "2" and the students must move the location that fits the command.
- Start slow and speed up.

Reaction Clap

- Students place their hand on their temples (just above their ears).
- On signal ("1"), everyone quickly claps their hands, touches their knees, and then move their hands back to their temples (Practice).
- On signal ("2"), everyone claps their hands, touches their knees, claps AGAIN, and then move hands back to temples. (Practice).
- Now instructor mixes it up by yelling out "1" or "2" and the students must clap the appropriate amount of times that fits the command.
- Start slow and speed up.

Thank you for requesting this free resource. We're confident these tips will help eliminate some of the frustration you've been experiencing.

After over 20 years working with programs just like yours, we've found the key to reducing frustration is implementing a physical activity program that is unique, fun, and allows all students to experience success.

If you can relate to this frustration, let us help. We are offering an exclusive offer to help defeat your frustration, organize your staff, and increase engagement - 20% off on our professional development training. Just mention code **TRAIN23** when booking your training date.

This training will provide your entire staff with a simple, easy-to-implement physical activity plan that will quickly organize, motivate, and engage any number of children in your program.

Visit www.skillastics.com/training/ to learn more about our training. Then call us at (951) 279-3476 or schedule a chat with us so we can learn about your program and help find the resources and training that best fits your needs.



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