

INCENTIVES

PROJECT LEARN: AN EDUCATIONAL ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM



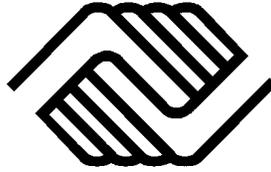
BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF AMERICA

HOMEWORK HELP

TUTORING

Resource Guide for
Boys & Girls Club
Professionals





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OF AMERICA**

**Project Learn:
An Educational Enhancement Program**

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Foreword

In the development of Boys & Girls Clubs of America's current strategic plan, approximately 1,500 local Club board members and professionals were polled. Overwhelmingly, they told us that education was their highest priority. Moreover, board members, Club professionals and young people told us that Clubs needed tools to assist them in improving the academic performance of their members.

Project Learn: An Educational Enhancement Program answers that call. Project Learn can be a "generation-changing" program for our Clubs. As we are able to increase our members' motivation to learn, improve their grades, and provide them with a better opportunity to graduate from high school and attend post-secondary institutions, we will not only improve those members' life opportunities, but we will also indirectly change the lives of their children. What an opportunity!

Project Learn is unique in its approach. Unlike many of our national programs, Project Learn is not a curriculum, but rather a strategy. This resource guide provides you with a methodology for academic improvement that utilizes many of the activities you are currently doing in your Club. At the core of this strategy are *high-yield learning activities*. High-yield learning activities are many of the same fun activities you currently implement for your members; they are activities that utilize skills and information critical for your members' success in school. Project Learn challenges you to think differently – strategically and critically – about every program and activity in the Club. It enables you to address questions such as: What skills does this program enhance? Does this program reinforce any information that my members need in school? What values or ethics about education does this program promote?

As Boys & Girls Clubs professionals, we face daunting challenges. School failure can be as detrimental to a child's life chances as the use of drugs and alcohol, gang membership or teen pregnancy. On the other hand, a child's achievement of success in school can literally transform the future of an entire family. Project Learn will assist you in creating a Club environment that boosts your members' chances of this kind of success. Boys & Girls Clubs of America is proud to distribute the Project Learn strategy to all Clubs. Its implementation can be life changing, providing Club members with skills for academic proficiency in their journey to success.



Roxanne Spillett
President & CEO
Boys & Girls Clubs of America

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Introduction

Background

Many factors contribute to the academic failure of young people from disadvantaged circumstances. Research by Dr. Reginald Clark demonstrates that the way children use their time – both in and out of school – is an important predictor of their academic performance. Clark found that low-achieving students spend most of their non-school hours involved in activities that have little benefit to them in the classroom. High-achieving students, on the other hand, participate in more activities that reinforce the skills and knowledge they are learning in school.

Clark's research suggests that Boys & Girls Clubs can enable young people to become high-achieving students by incorporating academically beneficial activities – known as *high-yield learning activities* – into the Club's daily program schedule. Clubs are encouraged to provide approximately 25 to 35 hours per week of these activities, including:

- ❖ Discussions with knowledgeable adults (four to five hours)
- ❖ Leisure reading (four to five hours)
- ❖ Writing activities (one to two hours)
- ❖ Homework help and study (five to six hours)
- ❖ Helping others (two to three hours)
- ❖ Games that sharpen cognitive skills (four to five hours)

Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) used Clark's research to design and field-test *Project Learn: An Educational Enhancement Program*. *Project Learn* features five major components:

- ❖ Homework help and tutoring
- ❖ High-yield learning and leisure activities
- ❖ Parent and adult involvement
- ❖ Collaboration with schools
- ❖ Incentives

Evaluation of *Project Learn*

Dr. Steven Schinke, of Columbia University's School of Social Work, performed a long-term evaluation of *Project Learn* at Boys & Girls Clubs in public housing developments across the United States. Schinke's study, funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, compared BGCA members (ages 10-15) in Clubs using *Project Learn* to young people in other after-school programs.

Thirty months after the program was established, *Project Learn* participants had markedly higher school scores than young people participating in other after-school programs. In comparison to those young people, *Project Learn* participants showed a:

-  Fifteen percent higher overall grade point average
-  Sixteen percent higher grade point average in mathematics
-  Twenty percent higher grade point average in history
-  Fourteen percent higher grade point average in science
-  Twenty percent higher grade point average in spelling
-  Nine percent higher grade point average in reading

The evaluation results clearly demonstrate *Project Learn*'s value and effectiveness. In his final report, Schinke concludes, "Boys & Girls Clubs of America can rightfully take credit for helping youth in essential areas of academic achievement, school behavior, and study skills."

Why Should We Implement After-School Education Programs?

There is no doubt that school-age youth need additional academic support. Young people, particularly from minority communities, are failing to learn basic skills (i.e., reading, writing and mathematics) during the school day. Nearly one-third of all public high school students – and nearly one-half of all African-Americans, Hispanic/Latinos and Native Americans – fail to graduate from public high school with their class, resulting in more than 1.3 million American high school students who drop out *every year*.¹

Research shows that out-of-school time programs give young people access to caring adults – something every child deserves – who can provide the support needed to address issues associated with poor academic achievement. Youth who

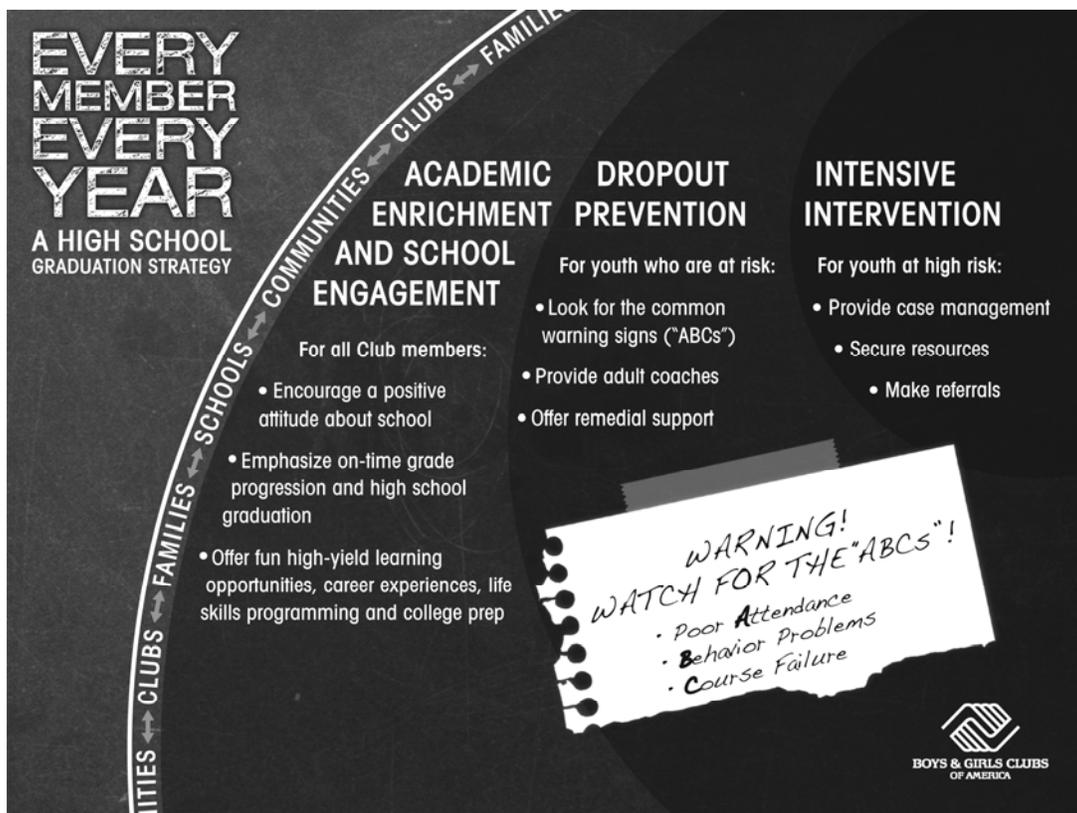
¹ Editorial Projects in Education, "A Special Supplement to Education Week's: Diplomas Count 2010: Graduation by the Numbers: Putting Data to Work for Student Success," *Education Week*, 29, No. 34 (2010); Alliance for Excellent Education, "The High Cost of High School Dropouts: What the Nation Pays for Inadequate High Schools," Issue Brief, (Washington, D.C.: Author, 2009).

participate in out-of-school time programs improve in key areas that foster success in school, including social and emotional development, increased interest and engagement in school, and avoidance of risky behaviors.²

Every Member, Every Year

Drawing from our mission, the Five Key Elements for Positive Youth Development and academic success and high school dropout research; BCGA has developed the programmatic strategy *Every Member, Every Year*. Our aim is to ensure that all Club members graduate from high school on time, ready for a post-secondary education and a 21st-century career.

The *Every Member, Every Year* program model is designed so that *all* Clubs, no matter their size or resources, can partner with youth, parents, schools and other community stakeholders to implement at least one of three approaches: academic enrichment and school engagement; targeted dropout prevention; and intensive intervention and case management.



² Afterschool Alliance, "Afterschool: A High School Dropout Prevention Tool," Issue Brief, No. 38, (Washington, D.C.: Author, 2009).

Academic Enrichment and School Engagement – All Clubs can put dedicated staff in place to offer educational programming and career experiences, such as Power Hour homework help and tutoring, Goals for Graduation, Project Learn (high-yield learning activities) and CareerLaunch[®].

Clubs should create a culture that promotes continual learning, making learning fun for youth, recognizing their efforts and helping them see the relevance of what they are learning to real life and their future. When Clubs do this, they help increase members' school engagement, which leads to improvements in academic performance and attendance and a reduction in risky behaviors.

Targeted Dropout Prevention – Clubs match individual youth who are at risk with adult mentors and provide other needed supports (e.g., remedial reading or math tutoring) to get them back on track for on-time grade progression. This is especially critical for middle school students.

Staff can intentionally track members by knowing the early warning signs of drop out, in particular, researcher Robert Balfanz's "ABC's": poor school attendance, behavior problems and course failure.³ Clubs can provide those members who are starting to slip with a steady hand of guidance and a safety net to catch them before they fall. BGCA has developed a new dropout prevention program, BE GREAT: Graduate to target these members and pair them with a mentor. As it is a more demanding approach, Clubs will need to assess their capacity to implement it.

Intensive Intervention and Case Management – Clubs provide high-risk youth with ongoing support and social service referrals.

Unfortunately, some young people face multiple risk factors that impede their chances of grade progression and ultimately graduation from high school. These young people are often from severely distressed communities and need intense, ongoing support and social service referrals to meet their specific needs, e.g., learning disabilities, mental health services, housing services, vision or dental services, etc. Most Clubs do not have the internal capacity to meet all of these needs, so they need to identify other service providers in their communities and serve as advocates for young people in need.

³ Balfanz, R., and Legters, *Locating the Dropout Crisis*, Center for Social Organization of Schools, Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore: Center for Social Organization of Schools: June 2004).

This approach calls for dedicated Club staff who can perform traditional, ongoing case management and develop an individualized plan for each targeted young person and his or her family. BGCA will develop and provide Clubs with training, tools and technical assistance to implement this approach. As it is the most intensive of the three approaches, however, few Clubs will be able to implement it immediately without first securing additional resources and building the needed capacity.

Clubs can play a leading role in facilitating and forging stronger community collaborations in order to improve educational outcomes for local youth. Such partnerships are critical; at least three decades of public education history in this country proves that no one entity has all the resources needed to make a positive change. It is when organizations and individual people join together, pool their resources and capitalize on their strengths that a real difference can be made on behalf of young people.

For more information and resources about the *Every Member, Every Year* strategy, please visit www.bgca.net.

A Philosophy for After-School Education Programs

Both groups agreed that a supportive and enriching learning environment is an important factor in student success. Four things are critical for young people in an effective after-school environment:

1. Extended practice time with school-related skills and information⁴
2. An environment that provides continuity between home and school⁵
3. An environment that cultivates innate ability and stimulates independent learning
4. An environment that values and honors academic success

First, young people need extended time in a learning environment. Many of these children enter school without knowing “basic” skills and information (e.g., naming colors, telling time, counting to 10, knowing the alphabet, etc.). If children have

⁴ For additional information, see *Safe and Smart: Making the After-School Hours Work For Kids*. Accessed online Oct. 10, 2010. Available: <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED419303.pdf>

⁵ For additional information, see Reginald Clark, “Why Disadvantaged Students Succeed,” *Connections*. (Summer 1992): 10-13. See also *Years of Promise: A Comprehensive Learning Strategy for America’s Children*. New York: Carnegie Corporation, 1996. Accessed online Oct. 10, 2010. Available: <http://carnegie.org/fileadmin/Media/Publications/PDF/Years%20of%20Promise.pdf>

not learned these skills and information by the fourth grade, they become disenchanted with school and begin the process of dropping out of school.⁶

Additional practice with school-related skills and information may be all that young people need in order to be successful. Clubs can offer students that additional practice through tutoring and help with homework. Clubs can also reinforce important skills by using every moment of the child's after-school time as a potential learning experience.

Second, young people need an environment that embraces the information and skills promoted by the school system. Many children are failing because there is incongruity between their homes, schools and social environments. Skills needed for success in school may not be valued in the child's home or social environment (i.e., minority children who are labeled as "selling out" when they achieve in school). Skills critical for survival in the child's social environment are criticized in school (i.e., fighting, gang involvement). Boys & Girls Clubs can serve to bridge skills and information used in *both* environments. Clubs can emphasize the importance of school achievement *and* help prevent the social alienation that many young people experience when they do well in school.

Third, young people need an environment that stimulates their innate abilities. The belief that children begin their existence void of information and skills is still a popular one – particularly among elected officials who gauge school effectiveness on standardized test scores. Thus, many teachers drill and test in an effort to inscribe critical pieces of information onto a child's brain.

A more intriguing notion is that all children are innately brilliant. The term *education* is derived from the Latin *ēducāre*, which means "to bring out." When you start with the premise that children *want* to learn, education becomes a process of providing sufficient stimuli to trigger self-directed, lifelong learning.

Boys & Girls Club staff members do not have the time or the resources to engage in excessive amounts of drill and practice; however, they can expose all children to stimuli in an effort to spark their innate brilliance and to cultivate their interests. The key is to expose young people to new ideas, concepts, careers and people. This exposure will spark their curiosity, stimulate them to ask additional questions, and make them want to explore topics more extensively and independently.

⁶ Jawanza Kunjufu. *Countering the Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys*. Chicago: African American Images, 1988.

Finally, young people need an environment that supports their academic endeavors. Most children begin their academic careers with bright eyes, full of energy and vigor. They are excited about school and want to please their teachers, parents and Club staff members.

Between the first and the fourth grade, however, many children lose that vigor and zeal for success. The lack of an academic support system is one reason children lose that zeal. Many children grow up in an environment where academic success is ridiculed. Children who are subjected to this ridicule need an environment where their academic success is praised and valued. They also need realistic models of success to use as a standard for their achievements.

Other children have big dreams of going to college, becoming a doctor, etc. – but lack the guidance for transforming their lofty goals into a realistic set of actions. Club staff members can provide this guidance or contact other adults who can give young people the guidance they need.

Another group of young people lacks direction. They make bad decisions because they lack the ability to foresee the consequences of their actions. These young people need both goal-setting activities and a supporting cast of adults to keep them focused and help them make wise decisions.

Education Program Outcome Model

The following is an outline for a “program outcome model” for education programs in general, and for *Project Learn* in particular. When a Club develops a program outcome model, Club staff members are better able to see the “big picture” of implementing a program. They watch the process move from the incubation stage through the development of long-range goals that clarify how the program should have a positive effect on young people.

In completing the model that follows, you will need to consider the specifics of your Club’s available resources, number of members, etc. This will help you keep the objectives of your educational programs in mind, while helping you organize your thinking and planning for the practical aspects of time, materials, personnel and budget you will need for the successful delivery of each program. (See this manual’s Appendix for a sample proposal for seeking funding support for and promoting the program locally.)

Project Learn Outcome Model

Inputs	Program Activities	Program Outputs	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff members and time • Learning Center <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Computers/ Internet access ❑ Tables and chairs ❑ Software ❑ Books and magazines • Program Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ <i>Project Learn</i> Manual ❑ Power Hour Guide ❑ Back Pocket Hints for the Learning Center ❑ Supplies • Funding/resources • Volunteers • Parents, relatives and other adults who are significant in the lives of Club members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework help and tutoring • High-yield learning activities • Parental and adult involvement • Collaboration with schools • Incentives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance of members in homework help and tutoring sessions • Number of high-yield learning activities • Number of parent and adult activities • Attendance of parents, relatives and other adults who are significant in the lives of Club members 	<p>Initial Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Club members will spend more time studying or completing homework assignments • Club members will engage in more high-yield learning activities <p>Intermediate Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students' grades will improve • Students will have fewer absences • Students will have fewer behavioral problems <p>Long-term Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Club members will be better disciplined about their school work • Club members will be able to use technology • Club members will graduate from high school • Club members will be life-long learners • Parents will stress the value of education to their children • Community members will endorse Club goals

Planning *Project Learn*

Good planning is the key to successful program implementation. BGCA recommends a five-step planning process:

- ✓ Identify and organize inputs
- ✓ Establish Club-wide objectives
- ✓ Develop the overall program
- ✓ Develop program plans
- ✓ Evaluate the program

This section uses the first four of these steps as the framework for *Project Learn*. In addition, this section will cover the establishment of an Education Advisory Committee as part of the planning process.

Step 1: Identify and Organize Inputs

Review Mission and the Formula for Impact

Before designing and implementing any program, it is important to revisit why you are in business – your mission and core beliefs. The mission of your organization is the most important input. By analyzing your organization’s mission and the Five Key Elements for Positive Youth Development, you can determine whether the proposed program fits with your organization’s mission. BGCA’s mission is:

To inspire all young people, especially those who need us most, to realize their full potential as productive, responsible, caring citizens.

Impact 2012, our five-year strategic plan, charges the entire movement to boldly move forward to lead with Impact and deepen the Boys & Girls Clubs experience by ensuring each member realizes their dreams and reaches their full potential. The plan serves as a blueprint for increasing the effectiveness of our Clubs and furthering our mission so that together we will ensure a positive future for every child and a nation empowered by great citizens.

The level of Impact a Club has on young people depends on how often and how long members participate, as well as how well the Club implements the Five Key Elements for Positive Youth Development:

- ***A Safe, Positive Environment.*** Club staff, facilities, program offerings and age-appropriate settings create stability, consistency and a sense of physical and emotional safety for members. The Club provides structure and clearly defines acceptable behaviors.
- ***Fun.*** Clubs generate fun for members. Members develop a strong sense of belonging through connections they establish with staff and peers. Staff members make the Club feel like home, fostering a family atmosphere and creating a sense of ownership for members.
- ***Supportive Relationships.*** Club youth develop meaningful relationships with peers and adults. Staff members actively cultivate such relationships to ensure that every member feels connected to one or more adults and peers. Staff members demonstrate warmth, caring, appreciation, acceptance and proper guidance in their interactions with members.
- ***Opportunities and Expectations.*** Club youth acquire physical, social, technological, artistic and life skills. Clubs encourage members to develop moral character and behave ethically. Staff members establish and reinforce high expectations and help young people do well in school and pursue a post-secondary education.
- ***Recognition.*** Clubs recognize and affirm young people's self-worth and accomplishments. Staff members encourage youth and provide positive reinforcement as they make improvements and experience successes. The Club showcases young people's achievements.

Project Learn addresses all of these elements within your Club. By making sure that the Key Elements are firmly integrated in the whole Club experience, your Club can help increase academic success and ultimately graduation rates.

Analyze and Record Your Building and Staff Inputs

To analyze building and staff inputs, consider the following questions:

- ❖ How much program space is available in your Club?
- ❖ Could you make better use of the space you have?
- ❖ How many staff members (full-time and part-time) do you have?
- ❖ How many program volunteers do you currently have?
- ❖ What is your program budget?

These answers establish a baseline for the development of *Project Learn*. The next step is to project your needs for implementing *Project Learn*:

- ❖ Will I need additional staff members? Volunteers?
- ❖ Will I need additional space for homework help?
- ❖ How much will I need to increase my program budget?

Assessing Needs and Interests

Who Is My Target Audience? One of the most important components of the planning process is defining the population you plan to serve – also known as defining your “target population.” Most foundations, United Way chapters, and federal and state agencies ask for your target population. Many of these funders have specific target populations in mind. You want to show them that your population will fit their focus. Specifically, answer these questions:

- ❖ How many young people are served by the program?
- ❖ What percentage is male? Female?

- ❖ What is the age range you plan to serve? What percentage is aged 6-9? 10-12? 13-15? 16-18?
- ❖ Where do they live? (Be as specific as possible.)
- ❖ What is their average household income?
- ❖ What is the educational level of the adults in the community (i.e., high school graduation rates, percentage of adults with postsecondary education, etc.)?
- ❖ What is the educational level of the youth in the community (i.e., achievement test scores, high school graduation rates, etc.)?
- ❖ What percentage is from single-parent households? Two-parent households?

When you answer these questions, you establish a profile and present a clear description of your targeted audience. You can find the answers to these demographic questions by analyzing Club membership records, census records, *Diplomas Count*, public school statistics, public housing authority records, etc. The information you gather will be useful on two levels: for potential funders and for Club staff members, who can gain insight into the needs and interests of the young people in your Club.

Assessing the Current Achievement Levels of Your Club Members

Assessing the educational level of the youth in your community can be a time-consuming process. Your goal should be to collect the best information you can, in a systematic way.

A good place to begin collecting information is from your members' report cards. Report cards will give you information about each member's academic performance, as well as give you a way to gauge the strengths and weaknesses of your members as a group. Reviewing report cards is a fairly easy process. You can begin by simply asking members to show you their report cards on "Report Card Day." When possible, interim reports will allow you to collect more timely data on member's academic progress. You may get this information from members' teachers, parents or in some school systems; out-of-school providers may have access to electronic grade book software with parental permission.

When you review report cards, praise Club members for their achievements, push for improvement in weaker subjects, and discuss the benefits of academic achievement. *Never* criticize them for bad grades, however. Your interest in their development will often be enough to encourage them to keep showing you their report cards without your having to ask. If you can, get their parents' consent to make copies of their report cards and file them. Look at them individually and collectively.

- ❖ Are individual members' grades improving? Declining?
- ❖ Are members attending school consistently?
- ❖ Does the report card note disciplinary problems? Excessive talking? Office visits?
- ❖ Does the group have similar strengths or weaknesses?
- ❖ Are their reading, mathematics or science scores increasing or declining?

As you collect copies of their report cards over the school year, you should begin to see patterns of both performance and behavior.

Your own assessment of your members provides important information. Your observations can give you important insights into Club members' needs and help you tailor programs to meet those needs. Ask yourself the following questions:

- ❖ What have you noticed about the child's abilities?
- ❖ Does he struggle with reading things at the Club?
- ❖ Can she count her change correctly at the canteen or vending machine?
- ❖ Does he appear dazed or inattentive?
- ❖ Does she spell her words correctly when she takes phone messages?

- ❖ Does he complete his homework?
- ❖ Does she avoid the Learning Center at all costs?
- ❖ Is he a disciplinary problem?

Placed in the context of six-week grades and other school-related information, this qualitative data can provide a more complete picture of the child.

If you need a more exact picture of the academic achievement of the children of the *community*, you can:

- ❖ Survey public school teachers
- ❖ Request achievement test scores from the school district
- ❖ Perform your own assessments

Surveying local teachers is probably the easiest way to get information. Personal interviews allow you to collect information and to introduce yourself and the program to the teacher.

You can also request students' achievement test scores from the school district. You will need parental permission to get this information.

Assessing individual Club members yourself is the most difficult way of gaining information about their academic skills. These assessments are both time-consuming to give and difficult to interpret. Assessment tools are widely available, however. Consult your local school districts for suggestions on appropriate assessment tools.

Assessing Local School Standards

In planning *Project Learn*, it is important for you to understand what schools expect of Club members. Most school districts publish a set of standards: skills and information considered essential for achievement in a particular grade. You can get this information from your local school district office. Some schools may also have individual goals based on localized student needs. Additional programs and activities at these schools may offer opportunities for collaboration during before- or after-school hours.

Assessing the Interests of Your Members

Doing well in school, completing homework, and graduating from high school should not be reduced to a popularity contest. As adults, we are responsible for helping young people learn how to be responsible, productive and caring adults. We cannot achieve these results in a vacuum, however. It is important to solicit both the insights and the participation of young people in the planning and implementation of *Project Learn*.

This kind of participation is especially important when implementing *Project Learn* for teenagers. BGCA suggests assessing their interests and asking for their suggestions for implementing any program. You may want to try the following:

- ❖ ***Interest Survey*** – Prepare a survey that addresses their attitudes about school, topics of interest, and homework completion. Poll them on the attributes of an attractive setting to complete homework and study. Ask about appropriate times for homework completion.
- ❖ ***Focus Group*** – Analyze data collected from the survey, and verify the accuracy of the results. Gather a representative sample of Club members and give them the results of the survey. Ask them for specific suggestions for implementation.

Identify Community Resources

Identifying Other Community Education Programs. Another important step in the planning process is to assess the availability of resources in your community. What other educational enhancement programs in the community are available to your Club members? Are neighborhood churches, schools, community groups or the recreation department also running homework help and tutoring programs? If so, whom are they serving? How many young people can they serve? What types of activities are they providing? How is *Project Learn* similar to or different from their program?

Funders do not like to pay for duplicated services. If similar programs exist in your community, Clubs should make an effort to collaborate and supplement the existing services. The existence of two educational programs in a community is not always a duplication, however. Additional community programs may be necessary if the other programs are at capacity, serve a different age group, cost more than your members can afford, or provide different types of services. Providing the best

service to as many community youth as possible is the goal. The issue of who provides the service is secondary.

Finding Free Stuff. Once the location and service provider have been established, you will need to assess what material and human resources are available. To implement *Project Learn*, you will need textbooks, computer software, educational field trips, pencils, paper and people. You can find these things in almost any community. If you plan well, you can get many of these items for FREE!

Here are some suggestions for finding free or reduced-price supplies for your *Project Learn* program:

- ❖ Ask local merchants for school supplies, educational games, backpacks, foods and software as donations to the Club. In particular, when you purchase items at full price, ask if the merchant will provide additional items for free or at a reduced cost.
- ❖ Ask local school contacts for copies of textbooks your members will be using.
- ❖ Talk with school contacts about purchasing education software using their discounted price.

Please refer also to this manual's Appendix for additional free or low-cost resources that may complement your program.

Identifying and Recruiting Volunteers. Volunteers should be the easiest resource to acquire. Potential volunteers for *Project Learn* might include:

- ❖ ***Students who are in college.*** College students that are education, social work, child or youth development majors are a good pool of potential volunteers. Often times these students have to do community service hours as a course requirement or working at the Club may be an eligible place of employment for their work/study program.
- ❖ ***Parents, grandparents, and community members.*** These adults have a vested interest in the development of their children.

- ❖ ***Nonprofit organizations.*** Groups like United Way, the local Literacy Council, Hands-On- volunteer organizations, and Retired Seniors Volunteer Program (RSVP) coordinate volunteer opportunities for their supporters.
- ❖ ***Civic groups.*** Organizations like Rotary, Optimist, Civitan, and Lions Clubs and the Junior League provide volunteers to their communities.
- ❖ ***Fraternalities and sororities.*** Many fraternities and sororities provide volunteers as part of their service to the community.
- ❖ ***Corporations.*** Businesses are more likely to give money to organizations in which their employees volunteer. Thus, a great initial approach to a desirable, local corporation is through a request for volunteers. (Please work through your Executive Director and Resource Development Director before approaching a corporation).

For additional resources for assessing, recruiting and managing volunteers, please consult the Community Volunteerism Resources section on www.bgca.net.

Step 2: Establish Club-Wide Objectives

After you have identified and organized your inputs, you need to establish some annual objectives for the program. These objectives should detail the results you want from the program. The previous section outlined a sample logic model with outputs and outcomes. You can find specific instructions for constructing outputs and outcomes in *Program Basics* and *Demonstrating Impact: A Step-by-Step Guide to Outcome Measurement*. You will find suggested methods for measuring *Project Learn* outcomes in the last section of this manual.

The following are some suggestions for establishing measurable and achievable outcomes:

- ❖ Initially, refrain from targeting grade improvement as an outcome.
- ❖ Be sure the program is fully implemented before you seek individual behavior changes.

- ❖ Be realistic about expectations for your Club members. An adequate behavior change for some children may be:
 - coming to homework sessions on time
 - coming to homework help sessions prepared to engage in school work
 - completing and turning in homework assignments on time
- ❖ Evaluations can be an expensive, time-consuming and labor-intensive process. Resist the temptation to replicate the national evaluation of *Project Learn*. Insist on more reasonable, achievable outcomes and methods – particularly to board members and funders.

Step 3: Develop the Overall Program

Writing a plan is the next step in the planning process. This plan is not a proposal, although it could be developed into one (a sample proposal is provided in this manual's Appendix). The purpose of the plan is to synthesize the information you have gathered into a concise format to be shared with all Club staff members, administrators, and the board of directors. This plan will provide a road map for the implementation of *Project Learn*. This manual's Appendix also provides Action Plan and Work Plan forms for your use.

One key aspect of this program development process is program promotion. Recruiting members into the *Project Learn* program is a key outcome of program promotion. Recruiting students who are doing well and enjoying school will not be difficult, but there are quite a few Club members who avoid learning opportunities and the Learning Center as if it were the plague. It is for these young people that you must take the time to develop strategies for involving them in educational opportunities.

Why do they avoid learning opportunities? How can you change their behavior? There are no simple answers to those questions – but here are a few ideas to consider when dealing with these young people:

- ❖ Many of these members lack basic skills or are simply behind their peers in school. Over time, these children have become masters at disguising their deficits. The exposure of these deficits is an embarrassing experience.

- ❖ Most of these adolescents and teens want to achieve. They lack confidence in themselves. Small successes can boost their confidence and show them they are capable of achieving.
- ❖ Their willingness to work on their academic weaknesses is typically based on trust. They trust you with their secret. They trust you will help them. They know that you can show them a way out of their predicament.

Success with these young people – especially as they get older – is not 100 percent. Do the best you can do. When they are ready to learn, they will seek you out.

Step 4: Form an Education Advisory Committee

Purpose of an Education Advisory Committee

Developing an Education Advisory Committee is the last step in the planning process. The purpose of the Committee is to assist you in thinking critically about the implementation of *Project Learn* and any other educational programs you may be using. Committee members should be knowledgeable within the field of education, be connected to the local public school community, or be influential within the community you serve. Potential members include: superintendents, school board members, principals, ministers, business leaders, guidance counselors, professors, retired educators, board members, community members, parents, guardians, grandparents and high school seniors or college students.

Committee Description

Before asking anyone to serve on the committee, you should clearly define the following:

- ❖ Function and authority of the committee. (Be sure to specify that the role of the committee is purely *advisory*. Committee members do not set policy for the Club.)
- ❖ Importance of the committee's work
- ❖ Short- and long-term goals of the committee
- ❖ Individual service responsibilities
- ❖ Individual time commitment
- ❖ Individual financial commitment (if any)

- ❖ Importance of their skills, talents and resources to the success of the committee

A sample advisory committee member job description is included in this manual's Appendix.

Committee members should meet twice per year to review the progress of the program and provide advice on the direction of future programs. In between meetings, you should use phone calls, e-mails and individual meetings to keep advisory committee members apprised of the program.

Your First Meeting

The Advisory Committee is important for several reasons:

- ❖ It brings initial credibility to your educational efforts.
- ❖ Committee members can assist you in acquiring resources for the program.
- ❖ The committee can help the Club think critically about the implications of its educational programs.

It is important to get off to a good beginning by having a strong initial meeting. To assist in your first meeting, here are some suggestions for the agenda.

- ❖ Discuss the educational needs of your Club members.
- ❖ Explain the organization's commitment to the academic improvement of your Club members.
- ❖ Provide an overview of *Project Learn* and its evaluation.
- ❖ Discuss the function of the committee, its goals and the individual responsibilities of the members.

It is important to use committee members' time responsibly. At the same time, it is equally important to get the most out of each member. Here are some suggestions to maximize the production of each committee member:

- ❖ Keep meetings to an agreed-upon time (one hour, half-day, etc.).
- ❖ Give committee members information (an agenda, background reading, handouts, etc.) *before* the meetings, so they can make informed suggestions.
- ❖ Be prepared. Determine your goals for the meeting *before* it starts, and anticipate discussions.
- ❖ Keep all committee members on task. Allow for good discussion, but remind everyone of the goals of the meeting.
- ❖ Be sure everyone on the committee has a task or responsibility.
- ❖ Find the most efficient means to communicate with each member (e-mail, fax, phone, etc.).
- ❖ Keep all members updated on the progress of all programs (quarterly or semi-annually).

Developing a Learning Environment

The core elements of *Project Learn* provide programmatic structure for academic success, but you cannot neglect the environment in which learning takes place. A positive learning environment that incorporates both the physical plant and the culture of the Club provides the context for a successful program. Below are some of the themes you should consider in the development of a stimulating physical environment and a positive culture.

Developing a Stimulating Physical Space

A strong learning environment begins with the physical structure. The physical features (colors, space and lighting) of a room contribute to members' attitudes about learning. Specifically, rooms that are dreary and furniture that is too big, uncomfortable or unstable will distract learners.

The Learning Center needs to be so engaging that it can compete with other rooms for the attention of the child. If possible, the Learning Center should have a spirit to it – a soul. It is this presence that will make members want to inhabit it. If the environment is engaging, members will feel a sense of belonging to the Club and a sense of ownership of the Learning Center and its programs.

You will need to consider five elements when you are designing the Learning Center: space, color, lighting, flooring and wall displays.

- ❖ **Space** – Learning Centers should be visually exciting. Staff members should consider an unusual layout of the furnishings or display of materials to make the room interesting. If you are designing a room especially for teens, the Learning Center might convey a sense of “attitude,” chaos or even rebelliousness. The space should convey the idea that “In this room we think differently, problem-solve differently, and create or invent things. In here, we think ‘outside the box.’”

- ❖ **Color** –The skillful placement of colors creates a response. Warm colors (reds, yellows and oranges) are stimulating. Cool colors (greens, blues and purples) are calming. Consider using neutral colors (black, white, gray or brown) and then applying colorful accents.

Limit the number of colors you use and pay attention to the level of contrast between them. Be careful when choosing colors – bright colors can *over*-stimulate some children and be as detrimental to the learning process as a dreary room

- ❖ **Lighting** – Learning Centers should be well lit. The tone of the light (warm/cool) is less important than the available amount. Warm lights complement skin tones, while cool lights complement objects. Consider using warm fluorescent lights in the Learning Center.
- ❖ **Flooring** – Carpet is a must. First and foremost, carpeting cuts down on noise. Carpet also gives you the opportunity to create eye-catching patterns. Patterned carpet can make small spaces appear larger and unify irregular spaces. Look for a high-quality brand when you buy carpet because tables, chairs and bookshelves really punish it.
- ❖ **Wall Displays** – Wall displays need to be appealing to the eye. They should be changed on a regular basis (probably seasonal). Wall displays need to be intellectually challenging, and they should point to a world beyond the Club and the community.

The Learning Center should also have age-appropriate tables and chairs and an adequate supply of current, age-appropriate books, reference materials and computers. Outside the Learning Center, walls and bulletin boards should accentuate the importance of learning and promote a culture of academic success.

For additional information or ideas about designing your Learning Center, please contact BGCA's Club Safety & Design Department. Many resources are also available through www.bgca.net.

A Culture of Success

Staff members should transform the entire Club into a “Learning Center.” If our education programs are going to be successful, members must be learning in **every area of the Club**. Clubs should be fun, but the majority of a Club’s activities should be geared toward helping children use their brains.

All staff members must be involved with education programs, and learning must permeate *every* area of the Club. Staff members should be ready to take advantage of every potential learning experience for the child, and they should develop a culture where academic success is both valued and expected.

Staff members should not allow young people to be criticized for their academic goals and achievements. This type of criticism causes many children to resist participating in academic opportunities at the Club. Worse still, some children “play dumb,” make jokes, or cause distractions to show other children their opposition to learning. Club staff members can counter these behaviors by modeling interest in education and by praising children’s participation and success in educational activities.

A Club must also provide a safe environment where a failing student will seek academic assistance. Many adolescents become experts at hiding their academic deficits. If you are not actively looking for these problems, you may be surprised by the number of children in your Club who are having problems with reading, mathematics, etc.

When they are discovered, many young people are mortified by exposure of their weaknesses. This embarrassment may come in the form of anger or tears. These children are the lucky ones, however. If you discover their academic deficits, they have the opportunity to improve.

Trust is a major issue. Members must trust you with the initial exposure of their weakness, but they must also trust you in subsequent days as you work with them to improve their skills.

You should set high expectations for members and reinforce the notion that each of them has the potential to succeed. Tell members that you expect them to attend school each day, to behave while they are there, to be on time to class, and to earn good grades. Tell them you expect them to graduate from high school, to complete some form of postsecondary education or training, and to be a life-long learner. Tell them they can do these things because they are bright, intelligent and capable people who have special talents and a contribution to make to their community. You can initiate a self-fulfilling prophecy of academic success with words of faith and expectation.

Implementing *Project Learn*

Project Learn is Boys & Girls Clubs of America's educational enhancement program. BGCA took eight years to develop a model for an after-school education program that fit our unique structure. *Project Learn* is not merely a national program – it also provides the framework for implementing all other educational programs in the Club.

The *Project Learn* approach helps staff design a program schedule that provides academic enrichment and will benefit members academically. *Project Learn* has five components:

- ❖ Homework help and tutoring
- ❖ High-yield learning activities
- ❖ Parent and community adult involvement
- ❖ Collaboration with schools
- ❖ Incentives

A Framework – Not a Curriculum

The effectiveness of *Project Learn* in your Club will be based on three things: creativity, an ability to plan, and your ability to extend learning opportunities throughout the Club. The success of *Project Learn* will depend on your ability to create valuable hourly activities for your members. *Project Learn* gives you a framework to help you do this, but it is not a curriculum to be followed. Thus, *Project Learn* may look slightly different in each Club and each community.

Whether you intend it or not, your members are learning while they are attending the Club. The question is “What are they learning?” You need to plan the type of values, information, and skills you want to emphasize in your programs and activities. Moreover, you must begin to think about how these things help or hinder your members' success in school. *Project Learn* will be successful when each staff member supports the learning process of each member and when learning is a part of every room and activity of the Club.

One of the goals of *Project Learn* is to enable Club members to be self-directed learners. By “self-directed learner,” we mean two things. First, we want to encourage young people to increase their learning opportunities by making good choices in how they spend their non-school hours. Second, we want to enhance their learning opportunities by exposing them to new ideas, people and places. Through this exposure, we want to spark their interest, encourage questions, and help guide their exploration of these things.

A New Way of Thinking

The vast majority of our members do not attend Clubs because they want to be better students. They attend Clubs for three reasons:

- ❖ They have fun.
- ❖ They are attending with their friends.
- ❖ They have developed a relationship with an adult professional.

You must keep these marketing concerns in mind when you are doing your programs and activities. Boys & Girls Clubs should not be transformed into schools. If young people see a Club as just another school, our capacity to reach out to the children who are at greatest risk for academic failure is diminished.

A Club with a strong educational program does not have to be a boring place. Appropriate staffing is the key to finding the intersection between recreation and education. Engaging, energetic staff members who are thoughtful in their planning processes can transform the loud, bustling after-school and summer hours into powerful learning periods for kids.

A new way of thinking about education programs includes:

- ❖ Removing the dichotomy between learning and playing
- ❖ Finding learning opportunities in each Club activity
- ❖ Making all areas of the Club places for learning
- ❖ Making all staff members responsible for education programs
- ❖ Linking new ideas to things children already know

Homework Help

Homework help and tutoring are the first components of *Project Learn*. The following section is an overview of Boys & Girls Clubs of America's Power Hour program. For a complete set of program materials on Power Hour, please contact BGCA's Supply Services Department.

The homework help and tutoring program – Power Hour – has three components:

-  Homework help
-  Tutoring
-  Enrichment work (or Power Pages)

You should offer homework help 5-6 hours per week in a structured environment where all Club members can develop the daily habit of completing homework. Provide 1-2 hours per week of tutoring to Club members who need individualized assistance. You can use enrichment pages to provide supplemental work for Club members in a particular academic area. You can also use interactive media in place of the enrichment pages.

You will need to make several general adjustments if you are developing a homework help and tutoring program for teens:

-  Have a separate time or space for teens to complete their homework.
-  Students will need academic assistance, rather than room supervision, during the homework period.
-  Teens will need greater independence and more time to study than younger members.

-  Tutors will require greater academic skills to assist teens adequately.
-  Teens will require a greater number of resources (books, magazines and technology) to support their academic needs.

Key Points

Homework help encourages Club members to develop the daily habit of completing homework and preparing for class in a safe, quiet, allocated space with staff and volunteer encouragement for five to six hours weekly. When you are designing your homework help program, you may want to consider the following issues:

You cannot develop a strong homework help program overnight.

Children unaccustomed to the structure of daily homework completion may resist this process. They may come unprepared for homework help (no homework; without books, paper or pencils, etc.). They may also delay coming to the Learning Center or find reasons not to focus on their work. You must take into account the level of structure to which Club members are accustomed when you set your goals for the homework help program.

You should realize that before grades can improve, participants must first:

- ❖ Attend regularly
- ❖ Arrive on time
- ❖ Be prepared (bring homework and all necessary tools)
- ❖ Focus on work for the allotted time
- ❖ Complete homework assignments
- ❖ Have an adult review their work for accuracy
- ❖ Turn homework in

Rituals are important.

It is important that Clubs assist children in establishing rituals for daily homework completion. They need to complete homework at similar times each day, at least four days per week. They need a well-lit, comfortable room and access to computers, books and people to help them.

*It is important to know who does **not** attend homework help sessions.*

Homework help programs initially attract students who have established homework help patterns and/or who are already experiencing success in school. Although these children may need assistance also, you need to consider recruiting young people who are in need of academic help but who avoid educational opportunities at the Club. You need to evaluate what facet of the program design inhibits this latter group's participation. In particular, give special consideration to attracting teens and adolescents who need additional academic support.

Implementing the Homework Help Program

The following is a step-by-step guide to implementing your homework help program:

Form a partnership with the school.

Visit the neighborhood school and announce that you are establishing a homework help and tutoring program. Discuss with the teachers and principal the types of skills and information your Club members need to know to be successful in school. Ask them how the Club can support members' academic success and complement the work of the school.

Stock the Learning Center.

Assess the current inventory of Learning Center supplies and equipment. Assemble pens, paper, educational software, magazines, and textbooks that members will need to complete homework assignments.

- ❖ For 6-12-year-olds, you will need:
 - Age-appropriate tables and chairs
 - Textbooks from their schools
 - Extra paper and pens
 - Reference books
 - A globe
 - An atlas
 - Educational magazines
 - Two or three computers with printers and Internet access
 - Software – educational, word-processing, desktop publishing
 - Posters and messages for the walls

- ❖ Teens will need similar materials and an additional space (Teen Center) or a separate time frame. Be sure the software, furniture, magazines, books and wall design fit a teen population and appeal to their needs and interests.

Schedule the sessions.

Determine times and places for homework help sessions for each age group. Be aware of the “whole child” in making these determinations. Allow time for eating, playing and the release of anxiety built up during the day. For teens, allow time for school sports, extracurricular activities, travel from school and after-school jobs when you schedule homework support time.

Recruit students.

Although homework help and support is needed as soon as school begins, parents and students become acutely aware of the need to “buckle down” on homework after the first report card. Use this and other opportunities to talk to members, parents and teachers about the program.

Hire great staff members.

The Learning Center Coordinator typically manages the homework help program. It is important to have enough program support staff – volunteer or paid – to manage daily sessions. You should consider a recommended 8:1 ratio and a maximum 18:1 ratio of children to staff. Children who have questions may become restless or disruptive if they have to wait too long to get help from an adult.

On the other hand, you may not need this level of staffing for teens. Teens may use homework help for particular kinds of assignments, so they may not be as regular in attendance as adolescent members. Teens *will* need tutors with greater subject-matter expertise.

Managing the Homework Help Program

The way you manage your homework program can make or break it. The following suggestions will help you maximize the effectiveness of your program:

- ❖ Offer the homework program at the same time and in the same place Monday through Thursday or Friday.
- ❖ Depending on your staffing and space, designate specific hours for younger and older members or set up different hours for different

grades. For example, you might choose to use the following schedule: 3:00-4:00 p.m. for elementary students; 4:00-5:00 p.m. for middle-school students; and 5:00-6:00 p.m. for senior-high school students. This schedule generally makes things easier for both homework helpers and members.

- ❖ Keep disruptive noises to an absolute minimum. Cooperative homework groups should speak quietly or be separated from members who are working individually.
- ❖ Encourage members to log their homework assignments using academic planners or organizers. This will help them remember their assignments and give homework helpers an idea of the amount of time and assistance members will need.
- ❖ Give participating members a folder to keep their logged homework assignments. Collect and save completed assignments and reference materials for upcoming tests and special projects. Adolescent members may decorate the covers of the folders to highlight their individual ownership. Also, provide members with space in a file cabinet to store their folders. If members do not have book bags or back packs to carry materials back and forth from school, offer them as incentives.
- ❖ When members complete their homework or have none, encourage them to do enrichment pages. You should also encourage adolescents to strengthen their math or reading skills by working on educational software on the computer. Encourage teens to explore the Internet in search of college and career sites; write e-mails to friends; read online newspapers, magazines or sports sites; and explore other interests such as music, science, history or art.
- ❖ Homework helpers should keep a separate, confidential file for each member. This file might include notes on how the member is doing, problems he is having, contacts with teachers and parents, skills she needs to improve, etc. Keep records in alphabetical order so you can find them easily and lock them in a confidential place so members do not have access to them. (Please refer to this manual's Appendix for helpful record-keeping forms.)

Staffing the Homework Help Program

The quality of your homework helpers can determine whether your homework program will be effective. Use special care to recruit homework helpers who model the values of education and who are genuinely caring and knowledgeable. You should hold homework helpers (paid or volunteer) to the same standards and procedures that you normally apply to paid Boys & Girls Clubs professionals. You can find volunteers in many different places:

- ❖ College fraternities and sororities
- ❖ Education, social work, child and youth development majors
- ❖ Civic clubs and organizations
- ❖ Local businesses and corporations

You can find another good source of helpers among your own members. Many Club teenagers assist with homework help programs for younger members. Through the incentive of the CLUBService program, teens are making a difference with younger Club members and receiving scholarship money for college. For more information about the CLUBService program, please contact Program & Youth Development Services.

In addition to the basic orientation to the Club's programs, policies and procedures, homework helpers need to know:

- ❖ the objectives of homework help
- ❖ why it is important for them to attend regularly
- ❖ how to manage the homework program
- ❖ how to evaluate learning needs and devise helping strategies
- ❖ how to use enrichment materials
- ❖ how to support self-directed learning
- ❖ how to structure and implement a cooperative homework group
- ❖ how members can earn incentives
- ❖

For Power Hour resources, contact BGCA's Supply Service department. Use the guidebook and customize it to meet your Club's needs.

Supervising the Homework Help Program

The Learning Center Coordinator is assigned to oversee the homework program and should:

- ❖ Recruit, train, schedule and supervise homework helpers
- ❖ Promote the homework program to members
- ❖ Oversee the incentive program
- ❖ Consult with teachers
- ❖ Get enrichment materials
- ❖ Secure resource materials
- ❖ Oversee recognition for members and homework helpers
- ❖ Consult with other Program Coordinators or Club Directors to integrate learning activities throughout the Club

Cooperative Homework Groups

Homework groups promote self-directed learning and increase the number of members a homework helper can work with at one time. Cooperative homework groups also help members to understand the perspective of others in the group, interact socially, build self-esteem and develop a positive attitude toward school.

All children can benefit from being part of a cooperative homework group. However, members who are struggling in school may avoid being part of a group because they fear being embarrassed. The following conditions must exist to make the cooperative homework group a positive experience for all members:

- ❖ Members must believe they are in it together, and that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. They must care about each other's learning.
- ❖ Members must be able to relate the material they are studying to material they have already learned. Making these links can give them valuable experience in explaining things, arguing about them, and elaborating on them.
- ❖ Members must understand they are accountable for learning and completing the tasks and helping others to do the same. Everyone has to pull his or her weight.
- ❖ Members must periodically assess how well the group is working together and how they could do even better.

Working successfully with cooperative homework groups takes practice. Consult your local Board of Education to ask about cooperative learning workshops being offered in your community.

Tutoring

The objectives of the tutoring program are to help members improve in selected subject areas and to assist them in becoming self-directed learners. To accomplish these objectives, the program needs to provide “one-to-one” assistance or no more than one tutor for three members.

Before starting a Club tutoring program, check out the tutoring programs that are already offered in your community. You may find that there are enough existing programs to meet the needs of your members, but the programs are too expensive or not accessible for the majority of your members. If this is the case, you may want to arrange scholarships or transportation for members, rather than set up your own program. If you find that the existing community tutoring programs do not meet the needs of your members, start your own.

Setting Up the Tutoring Program

Here is a simple blueprint that will make your tutoring program run on full power:

- ❖ Staff the program with tutors who are trained, knowledgeable, caring and reliable.
- ❖ Give tutors specific learning goals that you have developed jointly with the member, his or her parents and the teacher.
- ❖ Provide a quiet, comfortable space for the tutoring session.
- ❖ Never cancel a scheduled tutoring session. If the tutor does not show up, have an alternative staff member or volunteer fill in. If the member does not show up, ask the tutor if she or he would like to spend time with another member.
- ❖ Recognize the efforts and achievements of both members and tutors.

- ❖ Emphasize that the program is for everyone who is interested in academic success, not just for low achievers.

The Learning Center Coordinator assigned to oversee the tutoring program should:

- ❖ Recruit, train, schedule and supervise all tutors
- ❖ Recruit and schedule members in need of tutoring
- ❖ Meet with parents or teachers of members to develop learning goals
- ❖ Monitor the progress of the tutoring sessions
- ❖ Secure needed resource materials including enrichment pages
- ❖ Award Power Points for completed tutoring sessions

Staffing the Tutoring Program

Tutors provide the power source of a tutoring program. They work with individuals or in small group sessions to help Club members gain proficiency or excel in specific areas such as math, grammar, science or social studies. Ideally, full-time Boys & Girls Club youth development professionals would be available to provide this one-on-one service. However, there are too many members in need of tutoring to make this match. The Learning Center Coordinator should assume responsibility for recruiting, training and supervising both paid and volunteer tutors.

Recruiting volunteers for an adolescent tutoring program may be a challenge, but people like to be asked to use their expertise to guide and help others. Use the same standards and procedures you normally apply to paid Boys & Girls Clubs professionals to select tutors. Remember that tutor training and orientation are vitally important.

Tutors must be reliable and must agree to work a specific number of hours over a given time period. At the very least, they should tutor 30 minutes to an hour, once a week, for six weeks. In addition to the time for tutoring sessions, tutors must make a commitment to the time necessary for orientation, in-service training and pre-session preparation. To make certain that tutoring is taken seriously by all concerned, everyone involved (tutor, member and parents) should sign a clearly defined “contract.” Generic contracts are provided on the Power Hour microsite on www.bgca.net.

Tutoring is maximized by a genuine relationship between the tutor and the Club member. Encourage tutors to spend a few hours before or after the tutoring session in another Club area, so that they can get to know the student in another context.

Be sure tutors understand that the successes Club members have in these other areas may serve as catalysts for success in school.

For elementary-age members, tutors need a grasp of the basic skills, a love of children, a sense of humor, and a willingness to learn. For teens, tutors need specialized knowledge in a given subject area, a sense of humor, and an appreciation for and understanding of teenagers.

You can find adult tutors on the campuses of colleges and universities, in service groups, through the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), and among employees of local businesses and corporations. Community action groups also refer adults to volunteer positions, and more and more large corporations and businesses are paying employees for time spent doing volunteer work. Check out who is available in your community. If funds are available, you may also hire tutors.

Believe it or not, members of your own Club may be some of your best tutors. They are perfect for cross-age (older members tutoring younger members) or peer tutoring (same-age members working together). Both the tutor and the student benefit from this kind of tutoring, since both learn from the experience. You may find that members are more willing to listen to and learn from teenagers than from adults.

In addition to a basic orientation on the Club's core programs, policies and procedures, tutors will need specific information on how to conduct their sessions, how to request resources and supplies, how to help members become self-directed learners, how to get enrichment pages, and how members can earn program incentives. The Power Hour Resource Guide has information on how to orient tutors, help them in forging relationships with youth and providing them with ongoing training.

Before the first tutoring session, you should meet with tutors to go over their assigned members' goals. You will need to help tutors write future learning objectives for their members and show them how to evaluate members' progress.

Tutors should understand that it is not necessary or recommended that they perform any standardized or formal testing of members. They can get all the information necessary for successful tutoring from the member's family or school.

Monitoring the member's tutoring objectives will provide a good measurement of both the member's progress and the tutor's effectiveness.

Managing the Tutoring Program

When you have recruited and trained your tutors, and you have received referrals on your members, you should do the following:

- ❖ Meet with the referral source (teacher and/or parents) to determine each member's learning needs and learning goals. You should establish how participants will be evaluated, (i.e., the method, the time-period and what will constitute success) when you are setting learning goals.
- ❖ Match the tutor and the member. Schedule their tutoring session days and times. Have the tutor, the member and his or her parents sign a tutoring contract.
- ❖ Before the first session, meet with tutors to discuss learning goals and evaluation procedures.
- ❖ Develop a system for tutors to request supplies and resources. Have supplies ready for tutors before they start their sessions.
- ❖ Monitor the progress of the tutoring sessions. Drop in on sessions and talk to tutors and members individually. Check the outcome of the learning goals.
- ❖ Recognize tutor involvement both formally and informally. The time you spend showing appreciation for the tutor's time and effort will contribute to a successful program. Special occasions (i.e., annual awards banquets, fundraising dinners, etc.) are great events to recognize these educational contributors.

Reinforcement

The final component of the homework help and tutoring program consists of recognition and reinforcement through enrichment pages and Power Points. You can use enrichment pages to provide supplemental educational activities if members complete homework early or do not have homework. Power Points are a

means of tracking participation in the homework help and tutoring program, as well as tracking individual members' eligibility for program incentives.

Enrichment Pages

Enrichment pages give Club members an extra opportunity to practice and reinforce skills and concepts they learn in school by completing fun-filled work sheets and using educational software, flash cards, read-a-louds, etc. Here are some suggestions for enrichment activities:

-  Find and print pictures of the planets, stars, supernovas and black holes using NASA's website.
-  Read a story from the online magazines (i.e., *Discovery*, *SI for Kids*, *National Geographic*).
-  Work on math, spelling and reading skills with targeted educational software.
-  Read an online newspaper from a distant country or continent.

Please note that it is recommended that you do not become overly reliant upon Power Pages, but also provide members with a variety of high yield learning activities. More information on high yield learning activities is provided in this section.

Power Points

Power Points are a tracking mechanism for program participation and eligibility for program incentives. By participating in homework help, attending tutoring sessions, and completing these supportive activities, members accumulate points on the Power Hour Chart. The points can be "spent" to acquire school supplies or books, or to participate in special field trips, Club events, etc. The objective for both enrichment pages and Power Points is to assist members in becoming "self-directed learners." These learners not only take charge of their educational destiny – they also become life-long learners.

Additional Resources

The complete Power Hour manual is available through BGCA's Supply Services Department. This program includes forms, letters, contracts, a guidebook and incentive charts which enable you to jumpstart your program.

Please refer also to this manual's Appendix for additional tips and tools related to homework help, improvement of study habits and incentives and recognition.

High-Yield Learning Activities

The most critical component of *Project Learn* is the implementation of high-yield learning activities (HYLAs). These activities allow learning to be extended outside of the Learning Center and throughout the Club. HYLAs require the most time to plan, but they also yield the most substantial Impact on achievement.

There are many reasons why low-income children are failing in public school. Dr. Reginald Clark's research – the basis for *Project Learn* – demonstrated that the ways in which students from disadvantaged circumstances used their time, both in and out of school, is an important predictor of their academic success. Clark found that low-achieving students spend the majority of their non-school hours involved in activities that have little benefit to them in the classroom. On the other hand, high-achieving students participate in a variety of activities that reinforce the skills and knowledge they learn in school. Thus, these students are constantly learning and building upon knowledge they acquired in school.

What are High-Yield Learning Activities?

Clark's research suggests that Boys & Girls Clubs can help young people to become high-achieving students by incorporating HYLAs in the Club's daily program of activities. Clubs should schedule approximately 25 to 35 hours per week of these activities. These activities might include:

-  Discussions with knowledgeable adults (i.e., teen rap sessions, Keystone Club meetings, Toastmasters, Youth of the Year, etc.) – 4-5 hours
-  Leisure reading (i.e., silent reading, Read Across America, read-alouds, partner reads, reading game instructions, summer reading contests, etc.) – 4-5 hours
-  Writing activities (i.e., writing telephone messages, newspaper clubs, SMART Girls journal writing, pen pal clubs, etc.) – 1-2 hours

-  Homework help and study (i.e., POWER HOUR, tutoring, software usage, flash cards, Power Pages, etc.) – 5-6 hours
-  Helping others (i.e., Keystone Club community service projects, neighborhood clean-up, nursing home visits, Habitat for Humanity, etc.) – 2-3 hours
-  Games that sharpen cognitive skills (i.e., Monopoly[®], Scrabble[®], Sim City[®], Oregon Trail[®], Carmen San Diego[®], etc.) – 4-5 hours

HYLAs help young people apply in a practical way what they learn in the classroom. HYLAs are FUN activities that also encourage skills and impart information needed for school success. Many of these activities are common Club programs (i.e., Connect Four, Scrabble[®], Club newspaper, etc.). Other high-yield activities could be focused on developing specific skills (i.e., KidzLit, Read Across America, etc.). Most importantly, HYLAs occur in the *entire* Club; they require the work of *all* staff members.(i.e., community service projects, coaching basketball, score keeping). In this way, the entire Club becomes a “Learning Center,” and every moment a child is in the Club is a “learning experience.” HYLAs are not supposed to be dry, boring activities. They must be FUN! But their main purpose is to expose young people to skills and information that will enhance their success in school.

Implementing High-Yield Learning Activities

How do you implement HYLAs in your Club? You start by engaging in a lot of planning. From a member’s perspective, the daily operation of a Club changes very little. Staff members, however, must begin to think about their choice of activities and must be *intentional* about planning HYLAs for Club members. Moreover, the staff as a whole must consider the educational and life-enhancing values of all Club activities. The following questions will stimulate your thinking for the planning process:

- ❖ What beneficial skills (reading, counting, organizing, etc.) does this activity build?
- ❖ What information or knowledge is being reinforced?
- ❖ What values (i.e., fairness, honesty, sharing) are being transmitted to young people?

- ❖ What personality trait or ethic (i.e., punctuality, preparation, leadership) is being conveyed through their participation?

HYLAs force staff members to think proactively and consciously about the type of young people they are seeking to develop – and the specific traits they want to develop.

To implement HYLAs:

- ❖ The staff must gather regularly to plan daily, weekly and annual programs.
- ❖ The topic of the meetings should include the educational and social needs of Club members. Staff members should discuss the skills and information Club members need to be successful in school and plan programs and activities for all age groups and both genders that address these needs.
- ❖ Staff members should create a matrix with HYLAs across the top and Club age groupings (ages 6-9, 10-12, 13-15 and 16-18) in the first column on the left (please refer to this manual’s Appendix, “High-Yield Learning Activities Development, Chart 1: By Age”). For each column with a HYLA, staff members should design age-appropriate activities that address the skills and information embedded in the HYLA.
- ❖ When the chart is complete, staff members can tally the number of hours that a Club member can potentially be engaged in HYLAs. The idea is not to tally the number of activities in which individual kids participate. The long-term goal is that the majority of structured Club activities contain HYLAs. See example below.

High-Yield Learning Activities by Age Group

Age Group	Helping Others	Cognitive Skills Games
6-9	Peer tutoring	Connect Four
9-12	Community clean-up	Oregon Trail
13-15	Story time for younger members	Scrabble, Battleship

16-18	Nursing home art project	Chess tournament
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- ❖ Staff members should then discuss and analyze the skills, information and values the suggested programs will provide. List major Club programs and activities on “High-Yield Learning Activities Development, Chart 2: By Programs/Activities” (located in this manual’s Appendix). Determine what other HYLAs are embedded in each of these activities. Think how these activities and programs could be strengthened through the addition or enhancement of other HYLAs.
- ❖ Take “High-Yield Learning Activities Development, Chart 3: By Youth Development Outcomes” (located in this manual’s Appendix). Read the five youth outcomes (Positive Self-Identity, Competencies, Health and Well-Being, Civic and Community Involvement and Moral Compass). List the same programs and activities along the first column. Determine which youth outcomes each of your programs and activities addresses.
- ❖ Analyze your program list. Eliminate programs that seem to have little value. Create new programs where gaps exist.
- ❖ Develop weekly, monthly and seasonal schedules around these “high-powered” activities and programs.
- ❖ Begin training staff members to think about all programs in terms of their impact on high-yield learning and youth outcomes.

Subject-Specific High-Yield Learning Activities

BGCA has developed subject-specific HYLAs, these can be found online through BGCA’s Activity Exchange (www.bgca.net/activityexchange). While these activities will be fun and exiting, they will also provide additional practice time with the critical information and skills young people need for success in school. You can implement these programs in conjunction with existing national programs and daily Club activities.

Using Technology to Improve Academic Achievement

Computers can be exciting tools for enhancing the education of Boys & Girls Club members. Members who have access to computers gain valuable practice at developing the skills necessary for success in their computer classes at school. Members can also reinforce their basic understanding of rudimentary computer parts and operations (e.g., handling a mouse, turning a computer on and off, using software, etc.).

Targeted education software can supplement basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. When members do not have homework or finish their homework quickly, they can use programs like Reader Rabbit[®] and Math Rabbits. Other games (Sim City[®], flight simulators, Oregon Trail[®], the card games Hearts and Solitaire, etc.) build critical thinking, planning and strategizing skills. Word-processing software enhances the quality of reports members produce. Grades on word-processed reports can be significantly better than similar quality hand-written work. Clip art and unusual fonts can also enhance the appearance of students' work. Relying on spell check features can decrease the focus on grammar and increase the clarity of a student's ideas.

One word of caution: Although computers can make tremendous enhancements in the appearance and actual quality of student work, they often cannot alert a student to a problem with grammar, spelling, organization or logic. Members should continue to edit and rewrite each paper several times.

The Internet is a gold mine for HYLAs, and provides a wealth of information for youth to access (see this manual's Appendix for a listing of kid-friendly educational websites). Club staff members could establish Internet scavenger hunt games for members to explore the web and retrieve information. They could also start an e-mail pal program that will improve members' reading, writing and keyboarding skills.

Caution: Although the Internet can open up the world to a child, staff members should exercise caution in what they allow children to view. While the accumulation of knowledge is a valued accomplishment, understanding the proper use of information is a sign of wisdom.

You can take advantage of technology with all these HYLAs:

-  Produce your Club's yearbook, newspaper or a book of poetry or essays
-  Play a stock market game
-  Create a virtual Club
-  Use iPads, Kindles or other devices to enhance your reading program
-  Create a sports scavenger hunt using the NBA, WNBA, Major League Baseball and NFL websites
-  Begin a family tree using the Internet for research

High-Yield Learning Activities for Teens

For teenagers, it is equally important to use technology as a source for HYLAs. Here are a few ideas for teen audiences:

-  Have teens research family histories for residents in nursing homes.
-  Have teens produce brochures and programs for area churches.
-  Train teens to be certified to maintain the computer system at the Club.
-  Have teens learn how to create an application for cell phone and computer usage.
-  Train teens to become the Club's webmasters.

Teens also enjoy activities focused on art, music, performing arts, career exploration and college searches. The National Fine Arts Exhibit Program, the National Photography Contest, DramaMatters and Music Makers are all examples of BGCA national programs that fit teen interests.⁷ Junior Staff and CareerLaunch programs are examples of national programs that deal with career exploration and job readiness. Finally, college tours, summer college experiences and college visits during Keystone Conferences and other field outings are ways to satisfy teens' interest in college exploration.

Integrating Boys & Girls Club of America's National Programs

One of the easiest ways to incorporate HYLAs in your program schedule is to implement more of BGCA's national programs. Most of these programs include at least two of Clark's high-yield learning activities. You can make minor

⁷ Recent research has demonstrated that music and art programs enhance the development of mathematical skills.

adjustments to individual sessions of national programs and incorporate additional HYLAs, such as writing, reading and helping others.

To learn more about BGCA's national programs, visit www.bgca.net. There are also fact sheets about several of BGCA's education-focused programs in this manual's Appendix.

Collaboration with Schools⁸

Why is it Important to Collaborate with Schools?

To implement *Project Learn* effectively, Clubs must work with their local school districts. Why is this important? First and foremost, the success of *Project Learn* is measured by how well Club members do in the classroom. If their academic performance does not improve, the program will be seen as minimally effective. Second, to provide adequate guidance to *Project Learn* participants and their parents, staff members must be aware of the activities, goals and policies of the school and school district.

How Local School Districts Are Structured

Because school districts vary in the way they are structured and in how people are titled, you should get an organizational chart from the district office. School districts are typically directed by school boards. School board members are responsible for approving the selection of teachers, administrators and other school personnel hired by the superintendent; developing and ensuring the implementation of organizational policies; and setting educational standards. Most communities elect school board members for three- to five-year terms; in some areas, school board members are appointed by the Mayor or other executive. In most small communities, school board members serve in volunteer positions; however, in some urban areas, school board members are paid.

The superintendent (director of schools) is the chief professional officer (CPO) of the public school system. The selection process for superintendents varies across the country. In most urban areas, superintendents are approved by local school boards; some may be popularly elected. The power of the superintendent varies with the size of the school district and the delegation of responsibilities by the school board. The chief responsibilities of the superintendent are:

⁸ This section is written for Clubs that do not share facilities with schools. Special relationship considerations are needed when Clubs and schools share facilities. Please contact BGCA's Field Services department for specific information pertaining to operating Clubs in schools.

- ❖ To serve as professional advisor to the Board of Education and to make policy recommendations for improving curricular and instructional programs
- ❖ To employ and supervise both teaching professionals and non-teaching professionals (i.e., janitors, cafeteria workers, etc.)
- ❖ To represent the schools in their relations with the community and to explain Board of Education policies to the community
- ❖ To develop policies for the placement and transportation of students within the district
- ❖ To prepare an annual school budget and adhere to the budget adopted by the Board of Education

The job of the superintendent is a thankless one. Due to the public's growing concern over student performance, superintendents have had to become politicians as well as educators. Because of this turbulent relationship with various interest groups and school board members, superintendents average less than three years on the job.

Principals are the chief administrators of their schools. Their role is to manage the operations of the school under the guidelines set by the Board of Education. Principals are typically hired by the superintendent and approved by the Board of Education. Although principals function under the direction of the superintendent and senior district personnel, they typically have a moderate amount of authority to run their schools as they see fit.

Principals then distribute this power to their classroom teachers. Although individual classroom teachers have the least amount of authority organizationally, they have almost total control over what happens day-to-day in the classroom.

Contacting School Personnel

Before making a visit to a school, communicate your intentions with others in your Club organization. Check to see if they have made contacts within the school district or have taken actions similar to the ones you are planning. Two or three

staff people acting with good intentions might unintentionally give the impression that the Club is disorganized.

For most Club directors and program professionals, the first stop is at the school level. Always check in with the principal first, even if you are just visiting a teacher or making a presentation about the Club to the school. Although you may have very little contact with principals after that initial visit, their control of the facilities and operations could make the difference in building a successful relationship with the school. In the end, make sure you meet with school principals at least once per year to update them on the program and the progress of your Club members.

The essence of a good school-Club collaboration is your relationship with teachers. Classroom teachers can assist Clubs with the individual needs of members. They can suggest activities that will help members improve their skill levels. They can also provide critical feedback on the effectiveness of *Project Learn*.

When you work with classroom teachers, it is important to recognize the size of their workload, the complexity of their work schedule, and their level of stress. Schedule meetings with teachers at *their* convenience. Do not show up unannounced at the classroom door with questions or requests. Be considerate of the paperwork or the activity requests you make of them.

Meetings with the superintendent and members of the Board of Education are more formal and political than programmatic. Please get the consent of the Club's chief professional officer before setting up these meetings.

At least once a year, brief the superintendent and school board members on the progress of *Project Learn* and place them on the Club's mailing list to receive relevant public relations documents. Superintendents and board members can open the door to school district-Club collaborations, but remember – true collaboration occurs in your relationships with teachers and principals.

How to Be an Effective Partner with Your Local School District

Being an effective partner with the local school district has as much to do with interpersonal relationships as it does with implementing quality programs. With that in mind, the following are suggestions for developing and sustaining solid relationships with key officials in your local district:

- ❖ Find out what the school district and individual school personnel want to accomplish.
- ❖ Take the time to figure out how the Club and *Project Learn* can assist the district and school officials in reaching their annual goals.
- ❖ Be careful not to oversell your potential. It is better to undersell and out-perform than oversell and under-perform.
- ❖ Schedule an “Open House” at the Club and invite your key school partners.
- ❖ Invite key partners to important Club functions where you can demonstrate Club programs and show the development of Club members. Take time to thank school partners and praise them for their contribution to the success of *Project Learn*.
- ❖ Be conscious of the schedules, class sizes, committee responsibilities, and management responsibilities of key contacts. Effective school personnel typically have the heaviest case loads. Strike a balance between involving them in *Project Learn* and contributing to their unreasonable schedules.

If you have never worked with your area schools before, here are some initial activities:

- ❖ Make annual visits to the Club’s feeder schools to provide school officials with details of the Club’s educational programs.
- ❖ Ask classroom teachers how the Club can help students improve their achievement levels.
- ❖ Visit neighborhood schools regularly to eat lunch with Club members. Establish the importance of school by your presence and by your communication with teachers.
- ❖ Invite school teachers to the Club to participate in social and recreational activities with Club members.

- ❖ Reinforce with Club members the importance of school attendance and punctuality. These are important character development issues.
- ❖ Attend school board meetings and PTA meetings regularly.

As you become more comfortable working with the local schools, here are some more intensive school-Club activities:

- ❖ Implement a Feature-a-Teacher Day at the Club.
- ❖ Host a PTA meeting at the Club.
- ❖ Elect a principal or the superintendent to your advisory board or board of directors.
- ❖ Agree to serve as a community representative on a school committee.
- ❖ Assist the school with at-risk Club members.
- ❖ Work with teachers of individual Club members participating in the program to ensure the Club is assisting the child in the best way possible.

For the veterans of school-Club collaborations, here are some innovative avenues to improve the lives of children through a continuum of services between the school and the Club:

- ❖ Offer the school system space during non-Club hours to implement alternative schools and other pull-out programs for young people.
- ❖ Work with the district office to make the Club a drop-off point on the bus routes.
- ❖ Work with the district office to hire teachers as program staff in the afternoon and during the summer program.
- ❖ Give the school system space during non-Club hours to implement GED, literacy, computer literacy, parent support, ESL programs,

athletic programs and swimming classes.

- ❖ Work with the district office to find funds that will provide non-academic support to low-income children and their families (Family Resource Centers, welfare reform initiatives, child health-insurance programs, etc.).
- ❖ Co-author grants with the district office for collaborative opportunities with your state's Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Education (21st Century Community Learning Center Grants, daycare or preschool initiatives, etc.).

Parental and Community Adult Involvement

Most Clubs currently have a limited number of parents and family members who are involved with the Club. The old model of Boys Clubs implied this was a “Clubhouse” for boys. Boys interacted with men, and parental participation was limited. Both recent research and changes in the contemporary social conditions of American families suggest that parents need to be more intimately involved in all aspects of their children's lives.⁹

Yet, given the growth in numbers of both parents in the workforce, getting parents involved in schools has become increasingly difficult. Local Clubs have similar issues. Many parents see the Club as a place to send their kids while they are engaged in other facets of their busy lives. Some parents drop off and pick up their kids, rarely coming in the building. Other parents allow their children and teens to walk to the Club, but they never visit the property at all. Finally, there are some neglectful parents who take little part in their children's lives. If *Project Learn* is to be successful, it is critical that we increase parent involvement for program participants. Remember – parents are still a child's first and most important teachers.

What is Parent Involvement?

⁹ See *Years of Promise: A Comprehensive Learning Strategy for America's Children*. New York: Carnegie Corporation, 1996. Accessed online Oct. 10, 2010. Available: <http://carnegie.org/fileadmin/Media/Publications/PDF/Years%20of%20Promise.pdf>

For the purpose of *Project Learn*, parent involvement refers to parents doing these things:

- ❖ Being accessible and available to Club staff to discuss the progress and needs of their child
- ❖ Working on academic issues with their children at home
- ❖ Obtaining the level of education needed to support and be a model for their children (basic literacy, GED, college degree, etc.)
- ❖ Finding the information and resources necessary to make good decisions about their children's education
- ❖ Promoting and reinforcing the values of education and the work of Club staff with *Project Learn*

From Parent Involvement to Community Adult Involvement

Parent involvement is a more perplexing issue for Clubs and educators when there is only one parent or guardian in the home. Club staff members may need to search for the “disciplining” adult in a child’s life – particularly if that child has a very young mother. The “disciplining” adult is the relative who has influence over the child, makes the decisions regarding the child, and is available to staff members. In this case, the adult with whom you have contact may not be the biological parent – a grandmother, grandfather, aunt, etc. In still other cases, a child may not have a relative who serves in this capacity, but a community adult who influences his behavior – a coach, a “play aunt,” a godmother, a Sunday School teacher, etc.

To level the family “playing field” and address all adult influences in a child’s life, staff members must consider the adult “safety net.”¹⁰ Staff members need to move from simply involving the biological parent to involving all of those influencing adults. Recent research by Dr. Reginald Clark suggests that there may be many community adults who influence a child. The more Club staff members try to involve the adults in a child’s life and to work collectively for that child’s development, the more likely that child will benefit from Club programs.

¹⁰ This concept is based on recent research by Reginald Clark on the extension of parent involvement to include all adults in the community.

Trite but true – it *does* take a whole village to raise a child. The “safety net” includes the teachers, counselors, janitors, clergy members, nurses, doctors, dentists, parents of friends, neighbors, public housing staff, Club staff members and extended family. This large network of caring adults can build many channels of communication and many levels of support on behalf of each child. Informal discussions at the grocery market, church, resident council meeting, health clinic and social gatherings lead to support for each child. Verbal expressions of support by these individuals to the child also send a very powerful message of expectation and pride.

Getting Parents and Community Adults in the Door

Before you begin enhanced work with families and communities, you need to do a general inventory. Club staff members must clearly understand the current level of parent and community involvement with the Club. List the activities sponsored by the Club and show how frequently they occur. You should also count the number of participants and determine what level of interest parents and community members have in those activities.

- ❖ Do parents drop in?
- ❖ Do they volunteer with a particular program?
- ❖ Does the Club offer programs in which parents and adults can take part? If so, do they?
- ❖ How do you engage parents in the operation of the Club? Do you solicit their ideas?
- ❖ How do staff members talk to or treat parents?
- ❖ How do parents view staff members?

You should also inventory community involvement:

- ❖ Does the Club engage community volunteers in daily, weekly or monthly program activities?
- ❖ Is the Club family and community friendly?

- ❖ Is the Club always prepared for community members?
- ❖ Do you post timely and informative family messages and program schedules on bulletin boards at the entrance to the Club?
- ❖ Is the Club/Organization Mission Statement proudly displayed at the entrance? Does the statement include the need to involve parents and community in Club programs or recognize the importance of families?
- ❖ Can parents and community members find evidence that they are valued (bulletin boards, certificates, photographs of parents and community folks, etc.)?

For more information, refer to BGCA’s Family PLUS program manual. Copies may be ordered through Supply Services.

Program Engagement

All parents and community members can enhance *Project Learn*. The largest challenge is getting them in the door for the first time. Celebrations are often the best way to do this. A big “kick-off” for the new *Project Learn* program or a cook-out celebrating families would be a great beginning.

Remember that many parents and community volunteers may have had negative experiences with education in the past. Try to understand each individual’s capacity for program involvement.

You cannot ask an illiterate grandmother to read books to children or expect a parent to leave work early each week to attend field trips with Club members. You must match each parent or community member’s capacity to be involved with the activities you plan.

Parent involvement creates a win-win environment for community learning. The following are just a few opportunities for engaging parents and other adults in the community in homework help, tutoring, HYLAs and member incentives. Ask them to:

-  Help with homework
-  Work with study groups
-  Tutor a Club member

-  Conduct “brain buster” contests (spelling bee, math bee, Trivial Pursuit[®], etc.)
-  Read aloud to a group or individual
-  Tell stories
-  Help members with journal writing
-  Assist with book check-out in the library
-  Conduct discussion groups on current events
-  Accompany field trips or attend special events at the Club
-  Cook special foods for cultural events
-  Participate in the family talent show
-  Help with summer cook-outs
-  Encourage neighbors and other families to come to the Club (e.g., host a Family Night)
-  Plan bulletin boards celebrating Club members’ achievements
-  Print Power Pages
-  Monitor computer time
-  Prepare costumes for creative dramatics
-  Rehearse drama presentations
-  Supervise the drill team practice
-  Work with Club members to design and paint a mural featuring neighborhood cultures

You should note that many of these same activities support family involvement in education at home.

Parent Orientation

The key to sustained parental volunteer involvement is training, empowerment and advocacy. Once parents or community members are introduced to the *Project Learn* program and become engaged with one or more program facets, you should offer training to enable them to be an integral part of the whole program. This training should include the following:

- ❖ An overview of the *Project Learn* program that includes program goals and objectives
- ❖ Specific knowledge about opportunities for parents and community members to get involved

- ❖ Recognition of the importance of each individual’s contribution to the program
- ❖ Coverage of Club policies regarding discipline, violence, field trips, incentives, etc.
- ❖ Information about child and teen development and behaviors
- ❖ Information about possible opportunities for future employment

With training and knowledge, family and community members involved with *Project Learn* will have a greater sense of empowerment to sustain their program involvement and will certainly become program advocates. Always remember, Club members aren’t the only folks who “vote with their feet.” Parents and community volunteers need to be appreciated in a warm, welcoming Club environment. *Project Learn* encourages success for *everyone* involved in the program.

Helping Parents Help Themselves and Their Children

Another way to get parents and adults involved in *Project Learn* is to provide opportunities for parents to help themselves. During the school year, most Clubs do not open their doors to members until 3 p.m. Until then, the space in your facility is available for community use. Targeted use of your facility can dramatically enhance the entire Club program. During these daytime hours, Clubs can open their doors for adult education and enrichment activities.

In addition to GED programs, Clubs could also offer basic literacy programs, English-as-a-Second Language programs, word processing or other computer literacy programs. Do some research to see what is currently offered in your community.

When a Club helps parents acquire new skills by providing space for classes and workshops, there can be other benefits. Parents who educate themselves are then able to help their children with school work. Many parents lack vital knowledge and information to make good decisions about their children’s schooling. A Club’s ability to help parents acquire knowledge and skills may be critical to the academic development of our Club members.

Adult Education Programs

Many parents have had negative experiences with school. They may lack proficiency in basic skills: reading, writing and mathematics. For some, their negative experiences led them to drop out of school. Clubs can help parents and community adults in raising their educational achievement level.

Typically, your local school system or literacy council manages these programs – Clubs simply need to make their facilities available. Staff members may need to oversee the facility, and there will be some utility costs. You may also need additional resources to recruit parents of Club members and to provide transportation and child care.

Parent Workshops and Programs

Clubs can also offer workshops and programs on educational and parenting issues. This would mean reserving the Learning Center or group club room for one hour during the day or late evening. During the one-hour period, a local expert or school official could speak on an issue relevant to *Project Learn*. Suggested topics include:

- ❖ How to Help Your Child Learn to Read
- ❖ Ten Things You Should Know About Your School System
- ❖ Ten Things to Ask Your Child's Teacher
- ❖ How to Find Financial Aid or Scholarships for College

Clubs could also organize informal parent chats or coffee clubs. Parents could lead discussions about education and youth development. They could share their own expertise and experience in these areas. The topics for discussion are much less important than finding an appropriate time for the meeting, providing transportation and childcare, and serving food.

Knowledge is Power: Handouts

Handouts and brochures may be another way of attracting and communicating with parents. Many times parents lack critical information about schools, community resources, etc. Parents have another reason to walk through the front door and interact with staff members if they perceive the Club to be a source of information about school and community resources.

How do you create this perception? You might create a bulletin board that provides brochures and handouts on relevant issues and programs. The handouts would focus on topics such as:

- ❖ Tips for Managing and Monitoring Your Child’s Television Watching
- ❖ Helping Your Child Love Reading
- ❖ High-Yield Learning Activities at Home

Please refer to this manual’s Appendix for handouts on many topics appropriate for parents and community adults.

Staff members need not become experts in public schools or know everything there is to know about community resources – but it is important to have staff members who can answer general questions about these materials.

Tips for Success with Parent Involvement

Here are some general tips for creating an atmosphere that is inviting for parent involvement:

- ❖ Create communication methods to reach all parents – not just your core parent volunteers.
- ❖ Provide opportunities for parents to have more ownership in the Club.
- ❖ Be a resource for parents.
- ❖ Be aware of the history and culture of the community of the Club. Find positive ways to incorporate this information into the operation of the Club.
- ❖ Listen first to parents.
- ❖ Never talk down to parents.
- ❖ Be engaging to parents, yet never lose your professionalism.
- ❖ Create a Parents Booster Club, where you provide opportunities for parents to help their children.
- ❖ Be aware that parents may need transportation and childcare at certain parent-oriented events.

- ❖ Serve food at all functions.

For additional information on parent involvement, please consult the Family PLUS program manual or contact Program & Youth Development Services.

Incentives

Getting Members to Participate

Given that members attend the Club because it is a fun, it is not easy to get some members to participate in our youth development, prevention or educational programs. So staff members have used incentives as a way of encouraging adolescents and teens to participate in these activities. From the perspective of the child, *Project Learn* will be no different. Many members who have the greatest need for *Project Learn* will be the most resistant to participating in it. Staff members will once again have to become creative in getting those members in the door.

With *Project Learn*, the long-term goals of the incentive component are different. You are not simply trying to get a child through a 10-week program. The goal is to assist Club members in becoming self-directed learners. Self-directed learners are members who are motivated to learn and persist in doing so, even if learning is not easy. These members know how to “manage” their learning and can assume responsibility for their own education. In sum, the goal should be to move members away from expecting external rewards for participation to valuing their own internal rewards for succeeding in school.

Extrinsic vs. Intrinsic Motivation

For the purposes of this discussion, motivation refers to the reasons why members choose to participate in a program. There are two types of motivations: *intrinsic* and *extrinsic*. An *extrinsic* motivation is based on something in a member’s environment, such as the fact that the member’s friends are participating in the program. More than likely, there are some material incentives attached to participation: field trips, food, prizes, etc.

An *intrinsic* motivation comes from within. Members may enjoy reading, be very skilled at pottery, or want to learn more about baseball cards. These children may willingly participate in the program because they want to learn more about the thing in which they have an interest.

While it is perfectly fine to begin with extrinsic motivations and material incentives, the goal is to move to intrinsic motivations and incentives. Initially, material incentives for adolescents might be:

- ❖ Pizza parties
- ❖ Backpacks
- ❖ Computer time
- ❖ Field trips
- ❖ Praise

Teens involved in *Project Learn* should determine the type of incentives they want to receive. As members collect points, they become eligible for incentives (trips, prizes, etc.).

Moving from Extrinsic to Intrinsic Motivation

The chart uses an external system of rewards, but it lays the foundation for intrinsic rewards. As the number of points increases, members can say:

- ❖ “I’m almost there!”
- ❖ “Good job!”
- ❖ “I didn’t know I had this many points!”

As quickly as you can, move away from material incentives (food and products). Begin by verbally praising children and teens for their participation and successes. Let them know how proud you are of them. Reinforce for them that hard work and perseverance lead to achievement. Post their achievements on a Wall of Fame or take photos of them and post a snapshot indicating their accomplishment.

Finally, help them learn how to praise and reward themselves. Help them learn how to set goals for themselves. Teach young people (especially teens) to break up large projects into groups of short-term goals. These goals should be limited in scope and be achievable (i.e., completing math homework, reading Chapter 5). They should attach dates and times to complete these short-term projects. With the completion of each project, they should attach their own incentives.

- ❖ “When I finish this chapter, I’m going to watch the basketball game on television.”
- ❖ “When I finish this spelling homework, I’m getting some ice cream.”

When they complete the tasks, they should then praise and reward themselves:

- ❖ “I did it!”
- ❖ “I’m finished.”
- ❖ “This is pretty good work.”

Tips for Empowering Self-Directed Learners

Here are some more ways you can help members become self-directed learners:

- ❖ Help members to think positively about themselves.
- ❖ Teach members how to coax and coach themselves through tough spots.
- ❖ Teach members how to manage their time more effectively.
- ❖ Help members plan more effectively.
- ❖ Help members see what they already know and what skills they already have.
- ❖ Tell them the most important part of learning is asking questions.
- ❖ Teach members how to visualize their success.

For more information about on self-directed learning, please consult the Power Hour manual.

Measuring *Project Learn*

Over a three-year period, the national evaluation of *Project Learn* demonstrated both statistically significant grade improvements and increased attendance rates by program participants. Although local Clubs can work toward this high level of improvement, these changes may be too ambitious as short-term goals for a start-up program. More realistic goals for start-up programs are:

- ❖ Increases in the number of hours members spend doing homework
- ❖ Increases in the number of hours members are involved in HYLAs

Research suggests that if children are doing these activities, their academic scores will increase.

The evaluation of *Project Learn* will be divided into two phases: process measurement and outcome measurement. The process phase will show which activities were implemented and who participated in those activities (outputs). The outcome evaluation will test the kinds of behavioral changes that result from the program.

Process Phase

The process evaluation needs to answer two questions:

- ❖ Was the program implemented as planned? If not, what changes were made? Why?
- ❖ Who participated in the program? In what activities did they participate?

To answer these questions, you need to do the following things:

- ❖ Keep a folder on each child. This folder should include an intake form (see the Appendix) with:
 - Appropriate demographic information
 - The name of the child’s school and the names of her teachers
 - A list of his school subjects and the student’s areas of need.
- ❖ Keep rosters documenting daily attendance and activities (see the Appendix).
- ❖ Collect program schedules to document the implementation of HYLAs throughout the Club.
- ❖ The Education Director will summarize the collected information in a monthly report.

Outcome Phase

For outcome measurement, you must define measurable and achievable outcomes for *Project Learn*. Outcome measurement activities take systematic, sustained effort and buy-in from people at all levels of a Club organization. Clubs that make outcome measurement an integral part of their operations realize the following benefits:

- ❖ Outcome measurement data can be used to gauge the effectiveness of Club services and programs and make improvements as needed.
- ❖ The organization can align all of its activities around a common, prioritized set of outcomes it is trying to achieve.
- ❖ The organization can use outcome measurement data to illustrate the concrete Impact of the Club to donors and the community.
- ❖ The Club is able to respond proactively to the increased level of accountability demanded by its stakeholders (United Way, public dollars, parents, partners, funders, etc.) and objectively show them the “return on their investment.”

- ❖ Club organizations that successfully meet the demands of measuring outcomes have a competitive advantage over other youth-serving or nonprofit agencies.

The Boys & Girls Club Movement's strategic plan, Impact 2012, challenges Clubs to deepen their Impact in three outcome areas that are critical for youth to reach their full potential and become productive, caring, responsible citizens:

- ❖ Academic Success
- ❖ Good Character and Citizenship
- ❖ Healthy Lifestyles

In order to assist Clubs in meeting this challenge, Boys & Girls Clubs of America launched the National Outcomes Initiative, a concerted effort to define a common set of outcomes and recommended indicators that all Clubs can measure and develop the tools, resources and training that Clubs need to do so effectively.

What exactly do we mean by the terms *outcome measurement*, *outcomes* and *outcome indicators*? Here is a quick definition review:

- ❖ ***Outcome Measurement*** – the process for assessing, on a regular, ongoing basis, the results of a program for its participants.
- ❖ ***Outcomes*** – the benefits or changes experienced by individuals or populations as a result of participating in program activities. Outcome statements may relate to changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills, behaviors or status or condition.
- ❖ ***Outcome Indicators*** – the specific information collected to measure a program's progress or success in achieving its targeted outcomes.

For the Academic Success area, the following outcomes and key indicators have been established:

OUTCOMES	KEY INDICATOR: PROGRAM PARTICIPATION	KEY INDICATOR: CHANGES IN KNOWLEDGE OR ATTITUDES	KEY INDICATORS: CHANGES IN BEHAVIORS
<p><i>Increased engagement in school and learning</i></p> <p><i>Improved academic success</i></p>	<p>Participation in homework help/tutoring</p>	<p>Positive attitude toward learning</p>	<p>Consistent school attendance</p> <p>GPA/course grade improvement</p> <p>On-time grade progression</p> <p>High school graduation</p>

The key indicators range from program participation to changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviors. If Club organizations want to definitively demonstrate their Impact, they need to go beyond simply tracking program participation. Measuring changes in knowledge or attitudes (based on pre- and post-tests) and, ultimately, changes in behavior (primarily gathered using external data) are critical to demonstrating true Impact.

To access more information, tools and useful web links related to outcome measurement, visit www.bgca.net/demonstratingimpact. Be sure to download the most current version of BGCA's *Demonstrating Impact: A Step-by-Step Guide to Outcome Measurement*. Your initial focus should be on increasing the amount of homework completed and the number of HYLAs your members are engaged in; however, you are free to come up with your own outcome statements.

Participation in High-Yield Learning Activities

Attendance Sheet

On a daily or weekly basis, review attendance sheets to see in what activities members are participating. Then develop a chart to track these activities. Staff members can determine on a weekly basis if members are offered 25-35 hours of HYLAs.

Self-Report Survey

Develop a survey to find out what kind of after-school activities members were involved in before *Project Learn*. This will help you determine the baseline number of hours individuals spent at the Club doing homework and engaging in HYLAs before *Project Learn*. Members should complete a survey when they enter the program, and you should file it in the participant's folder. At the end of the school year, give a post-test to all participants and tabulate changes in how individuals spend their after-school hours. (For larger programs, you may want to perform a random sample of approximately 20 percent of your participants.)

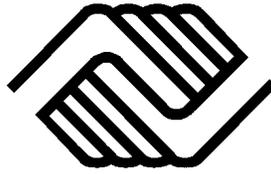
Completing Homework

Homework Chart

Homework helpers should check homework to be sure it is complete before dismissing members from the homework help session. Once homework has been checked, staff members should mark a notebook or chart that indicates the Club member has completed homework for that day.

Return of Completed Homework

Another way to evaluate homework completion is to have members bring their completed homework assignments back to the Club after their teachers have checked them. Many children complete their homework assignments at home or the Club but fail to turn them in at school. Having members return their completed homework ensures a stronger relationship between homework completion and future grade improvement.



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF AMERICA**

**Project Learn:
An Educational Enhancement Program**

APPENDIX

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Project Learn Intake Form

Name of Club: _____ Date: _____

Name of Person Completing Form: _____

Member's Identification Number: _____ Age: _____

Gender: Female _____ Male _____

Ethnicity: _____

Home Information

Member lives with:

Both parents _____ mother only _____ father only _____

Other guardians (list): _____

Number of siblings: _____

Number of others living in household: _____

Employment of heads of household: _____

Parent(s) say the member is well-behaved at home: Yes _____ No _____

Parent(s) would like to see the member become: _____
(career aspiration)

School Information

School Member Attends: _____

Name of Principal: _____

Grade in: _____

Name of Primary Teacher: _____

Average Grades from School Year (list subject and average):

Standardized Test Scores (list name of test and score; if this information is not available please state reason):

Number of Days Absent from School: _____

Number of Behavioral Problems: _____ times sent to principal's office
_____ times suspended

Member is perceived as well-behaved in school: True _____ False _____

Position of school staff person providing information: _____

Does member like school? Yes _____ No _____

List favorite school subjects:

List least favorite school subjects:

Club Information

Youth has been a Club member since: _____

Member attends the Club:

Daily _____ Every other week _____ Once a month _____

More than twice a week _____ Less than twice a week _____

List member's favorite activities at the Club:

List member's least favorite activities at the Club:

Project Learn Outtake Form

Member's Identification Number: _____ Date: _____

Name of Club: _____

Name of Person Completing Form: _____

Home Information

During the school year, parent(s) say the time their child spent at home involved in high-yield learning activities has:

Remained the same Increased Decreased

During the school year, parent(s) say the member's behavior has:

Remained the same Increased Decreased

Other comments parent(s) made about their child's involvement in the Club's Educational Enhancement Program:

School Information

Average Grades from School Year (list subject and average):

List any Standardized Test Scores which member completed since intake information was gathered (if this information is not available, state reason):

Number of Days Absent from School During: _____

Number of Behavioral Problems During:

_____ times sent to principal's office _____ times suspended

Is the member perceived as improving in school during:

Other comments school personnel made about the student's involvement in the Club's Educational Enhancement Program:

Position of school staff person providing information: _____

Club Information

Since the intake form was completed, has the member's:

Attendance

remained the same increased decreased

Involvement in high-yield learning activities at the Club

remained the same increased decreased

Other comments on the impact the Educational Enhancement Program has had on the member:

Project Learn Program Participation Roster

	Member I.D. No.	NAME	Check if Inactive	Age
1.				
2.				
3.				
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	Member I.D. No.	NAME	Check if Inactive	Age
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**Project Learn: The Educational Enhancement Program
High Yield Learning Activities Development
Chart #1**

AGE GROUPS	Discussions With Knowledgeable Adults	Involves Reading	Involves Writing	Homework help and Study	Helping Others	Games Utilizing Cognitive Skills
6-9 Years Old						
10-12 Years Old						
13-15 Years Old						
16-18 Years Old						

Project Learn Action Plan

A. List Club staff and volunteers who will work with Project Learn.

B. Describe how you will recruit and encourage member participation in Project Learn. What specific efforts for elementary age? Middle school? High school?

C. Describe the incentive program for both members and parents which will encourage and reward participation in Project Learn.

D. Outline a weekly schedule for Project Learn. (Include a list of High-Yield Learning Activities members will have the opportunity to participate in at the Club each week. Activities should include all five core areas of programming.)

E. Describe how you will involve parents to help them support the educational development of their children. (Will an orientation or training program be utilized?)

F. Describe how you will involve the schools to enhance the program.

G. Who will be responsible for directing Project Learn at your Club?

H. Outline efforts made to improve the learning environment of the Club (painting, furniture, bulletin boards, signage, division of space, etc.)

I. For budgetary planning, please refer to the budget page in the Sample Proposal found elsewhere in this Appendix.

PROJECT LEARN

WORKPLAN

	MONTHS											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Hire/Appoint Education Director												
Establish Project Learn Team												
Meet with Schools and parent groups to interpret program and initiate cooperation. Plan and schedule high-yield learning activities and homework help												
Design an incentive program and obtain recognition and prize items. Recruit homework helpers and tutors												
Work with schools to target Club members most in need to participate in the program.												
Promote program throughout Club, to parents and schools.												
Implement: * High-yield learning activities * Homework Help & Tutoring * Parent Program												
Monitor participation process and change activities												

Note: Check marks during months each activity will take place.

Education Advisory Committee Service Description

Boys & Girls Clubs of _____

Service Title: Member, Education Advisory Committee

B&GC Staff Leadership: Jane Doe, Education Director
John Parker, Club Director

Education Program Vision Statement: The Boys & Girls Clubs of _____'s education programs will enable young people to:

- Acquire the critical information and academic tools they need to graduate from high school
- Use technology proficiently
- Make informed decisions about post-secondary education
- Become life-long learners

Resource Needs of the Committee: Members who:

- Are knowledgeable of the social context of education for young people in the _____ community
- Are knowledgeable of the challenges public schools face in educating young people
- Are knowledgeable about local after-school programs
- Have access to and/or knowledge of resources necessary for implementing the Boys & Girls Club's education programs

General Duties of the Committee: The Educational Advisory Committee will provide the Boys & Girls Club's staff members with expert counsel on the:

- Educational needs of young people
- Design and implementation of after-school education programs
- Training of staff members

- Strategic planning for emerging education trends
- Impact of current Boys & Girls Club's education programs on young people

**Specific Service
Tasks of the
Committee:**

Committee members should:

1. Become knowledgeable of the mission, strategies and programs of the Boys & Girls Club.
2. Attend meetings (*indicate frequency*) of the Advisory Committee to:
 - Provide insight on emerging trends and issues affecting B&GCA's education programs
 - Review program materials and past program performance
 - Provide direction for future B&GCA education programs
 - Provide advice on potential partners with B&GCA
3. Be available by phone for consultation and advice about education program concerns
4. Be able to provide resources to assist the Boys & Girls Club in implementing educational enhancement programs
5. Serve as spokespersons for the Boys & Girls Club's education programs

Education Director Job Description

Title: Education Director

Supervisor: Program Director

Job Summary: Under the direct supervision of the Program Director, the Education Director will implement and manage a comprehensive educational enhancement program. The Education Director is responsible for working with all staff members to fully implement Project Learn, advise and assist the Club Director in developing a Learning Center, and provide direction and support in measuring the impact of Project Learn.

Qualifications:

Education: Bachelor's degree in education, business administration or related disciplines. M.A. or M.Ed. preferred.

Experience: Minimum of three years in education and/or youth development; Boys & Girls Club Movement experience is preferred.

Skills:

- Program development geared to ages 6-18, especially related to educational enhancement programs
- Knowledge of youth development principles and developmental characteristics
- Knowledge of education programs; how youth learn; how to work effectively with schools, parents and others in the community to support educational achievement
- Ability to plan, organize and manage complex initiatives with varied deliverables
- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Ability to cultivate and maintain positive relationships with individual, corporate and foundation donors
- Interpersonal skill development and maintenance
- Data analysis, record keeping and reporting
- Ability to market to internal and external audiences
- Knowledge of reading, math and science education

Environmental and Working Conditions:

Internally controlled office working environment; little overnight travel required.

Physical and Mental Requirements:

High energy level, comfortable performing multifaceted projects in conjunction with day-to-day activities; superior interpersonal and negotiation skills; ability to get along with diverse personalities; tactful; mature; flexible. Good reasoning abilities and sound judgment. Excellent oral and written communication skills. Physical requirements include: sight, hearing, sitting for more than four hours each day and other physical requirements required to complete essential functions of the position.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Implement the Project Learn in all areas of the Club.
- Train other staff members in the Project Learn strategy.
- Develop and coordinate all activities in the Learning Center.
- Maintain and care for all Learning Center supplies and equipment.
- Manage all Project Learn volunteers.
- Establish and maintain rapport with school teachers, principals and counselors.
- Conduct periodic exhibits and displays of the work done by Club members.
- Develop and maintain relationships and collaborations with organizations that can provide advice, direction and support to the organization's educational initiative.
- Collect, maintain, catalog and analyze records about program implementation and impact.
- Manage assigned programs that support specific education initiatives.
- Perform special assignments and assist with special projects as directed by the Program Director.
- Adhere to organizational policies and procedures as described in the organization's Employee Handbook and elsewhere.

I have read and agree to carry out the above-stated responsibilities.

Employee Signature

Date

The above declarations are not included to be an "all-inclusive" list of duties and responsibilities of the job described, nor are they intended to be such a listing of the skills and abilities required to do the job. Rather, they are intended only to describe the general nature of the job.

[Insert your Club logo]

Sample Proposal for

PROJECT LEARN

The Educational Enhancement Program

**A proposal by the Boys & Girls Clubs of _____
to [Name of Potential Funding Source] to support a program designed
to engage young people in learning, encourage them to succeed in school,
and help them become lifelong learners.**

Date

One of the most important, cross cutting social policy perspectives to emerge in recent years is an awareness that no single institution can create all of the conditions that young people need to flourish, not only in school but in their careers, and as parents.

An active, engaged community—beginning with parents, neighborhood leaders, public and non-profit service providers, community based organizations...has an enormous role to play supporting the mission not only during school but also before and after school, in the evenings and on weekends.”

***Learning Together: The Developing
Field of School – Community Initiatives***
Institute for Educational Leadership
National Center for Community Education
September 1998

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Evaluation of Project

Action Plan

Budget

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 Board of Directors

[ANY OTHER IMPORTANT CLUB INFORMATION (i.e., organizational brochures, press clippings, staff resumes, etc.)

Request

A grant of \$_____ will enable the Boys & Girls Club of _____ to implement the *Project Learn* program. This program will provide the support that **[Insert Number]** young people need to help them succeed in school and become lifelong learners.

Boys & Girls Clubs of America will promote this program through the media. Our press releases and other publicity materials will include the phrase: "...made possible through the financial support of **[Name(s) of Donor(s)]**."

About the Boys & Girls Club Of _____

In a world that seems threatening and devoid of promise for many of America's children, the Boys & Girls Club of _____ provides a tangible measure of hope. The Club offers young people what they need and want most: adults who respect and listen to them; a safe environment where they can have fun and be themselves; and interesting, constructive activities that channel youthful energy into challenging pursuits. All Boys & Girls Club programs are based on a youth development strategy that builds self-confidence and self-esteem and fosters a sense of belonging, competence, usefulness and influence.

For **[Insert Number]** years, the Boys & Girls Club of _____ has been in the forefront of youth development, working with young people from disadvantaged economic, social and family circumstances. The Boys & Girls Club of _____ has actively sought to enrich the lives of girls and boys whom other youth agencies fail to reach. The Boys & Girls Club of _____ is dedicated to ensuring that our community's disadvantaged youngsters have greater access to quality programs and services that will enhance their lives and shape their futures.

The Boys & Girls Club of _____ is part of a nationwide affiliation of local, autonomous organizations that work to help young people of all backgrounds develop the qualities they need to become responsible citizens and leaders. It is facility-based, employs **[Insert Number]** paid professional staff members, supplemented by **[Insert Number]** part-time volunteers. We offer daily access to a broad range of programs in five Core Program Areas:

- Education and Career Development
- Character and Leadership Development
- Health and Life Skills
- The Arts
- Sports, Fitness and Recreation

Today, more than **[Insert Number]** boys and girls are taking advantage of the programs, activities and services provided by the Boys & Girls Club of _____. They benefit from trained, caring, professional staff and volunteers who help young people take control of their lives, envision productive futures, and achieve their goals.

The Need

Academic Underachievement Among America's Youth

Ensuring a meaningful education for every child in America has never been more crucial than it is today. America's young people are performing poorly in school. Despite decades of reform, the American educational system is struggling to meet the increasing demands placed on it. According to the Carnegie Corporation's *Years of Promise: A Comprehensive Learning Strategy for America's Children*, underachievement is a crisis for all children, rich and poor.¹ Recent studies by the National Center for Education Statistics demonstrate this.

- In 1998, 70 percent of fourth graders, 67 percent of eighth graders, and 60 percent of 12th graders read below the proficient level.²
- In 1996, 79 percent of fourth graders, 76 percent of eighth graders, and 84 percent of twelfth graders performed below the proficient level in mathematics.³

The problem is especially critical for at-risk youth. At-risk children begin their early grades believing they can achieve. By the fourth grade, many of these young people lose their curiosity and interest in learning. Research indicates that these young people are critically influenced by the patterns set in their early years of formal schooling. "By the end of the third grade, most children are launched into achievement trajectories that they follow for the rest of their school years."⁴ Moreover, many middle-school students face additional feelings of uncertainty, increasing levels of alienation, diminishing engagement in learning, and increasing rates of absenteeism from school.

On the other hand, young people who enjoy school and feel a sense of accomplishment there will "seize opportunities for learning both inside and outside of school."⁵ They are much more likely to finish school and go on to higher education or additional job training – and to become the lifelong learners we want them to be.

Local Patterns of Underachievement

We can find similar patterns of underachievement in our community. In **[Local Community]** the drop out rate is **[Local Percentage]** by the 12th grade. **[Insert Other Local Statistics Which Might Include]:**

- Population served—targeted ages and numbers
- Description of educational needs and what is happening in your community

¹ Carnegie Task Force on Learning in the Primary Grades (1996) *Years of Promise: A Comprehensive Learning Strategy for America's Children*. New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York.

² National Center for Educational Statistics (1999) *NAEP 1998 Reading Report Card for the Nation and the States*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Education Research and Improvement.

³ National Center for Educational Statistics (1997) *NAEP 1996 Mathematics Report Card for the Nation and the States*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Education Research and Improvement.

⁴ Carnegie Task Force on Learning in the Primary Grades (1996) *Years of Promise: A Comprehensive Learning Strategy for America's Children*. New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York.

⁵ Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1992) *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century*. New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York.

- Specific statistics related to these needs—achievement test scores, report card grades, behavior and truancy statistics, etc.
- Local Club anecdotes of need (i.e., Jamal is 15 and cannot read Dr. Seuss; Maria skipped school, got pregnant at 14, has limited skills, and cannot find a job, etc.)

Why Are At-Risk Youth Failing?

Many factors contribute to the academic failure of young people from disadvantaged circumstances. Research by Dr. Reginald Clark demonstrates that the way children use their time – both in and out of school – is an important predictor of their academic performance. Clark found that low-achieving students spend most of their non-school hours involved in activities that have little benefit to them in the classroom. High-achieving students, on the other hand, participate in more activities that reinforce the skills and knowledge they are learning in school.

Clark’s research suggests that Boys & Girls Clubs can enable young people to become high-achieving students by incorporating academically beneficial activities – known as *high-yield learning activities* – into the Club’s daily program schedule. Clubs are encouraged to provide approximately 25 to 35 hours per week of these activities.

The Need for Supplemental Educational Opportunities

Recent research, synthesized by the U.S. Department of Education, documents that after-school programs can improve educational outcomes for school-age youth. This report states that after-school programs can:

- Increase achievement in math, reading and other subjects
- Help children develop greater confidence in their academic abilities
- Increase school attendance rates
- Improve the quantity and quality of completed homework
- Improve rates of high school graduation
- Improve student behavior⁶

Dr. Clark’s work exhibits an increasing need for supplemental educational opportunities during non-school hours. Although schools have the primary responsibility for children’s formal education, families, communities and after-school programs have a profound impact on children’s learning. All of these institutions have a collective responsibility to improve the academic development of children.

Children need supplemental opportunities for enhanced learning and reinforced application of the skills they learn in school. They ought to be able to find these opportunities in the home, in the community, after school, in the evenings, on weekends and during summer vacations.

⁶ Carnegie Task Force on Learning in the Primary Grades (1996) *Years of Promise: A Comprehensive Learning Strategy for America’s Children*. New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York.
U.S Department of Education (1998) *Safe and Smart: Making the After-School Hours Work*. Washington, D.C.

Summary

Although America's young people are not achieving as they should, all is not lost. Research suggests that positive learning opportunities in primary and middle school years can have a substantial effect on the learning pattern throughout a young person's school years. Moreover, these positive learning opportunities can be organized effectively during non-school hours and in informal settings like the Boys & Girls Club.

An important aspect of these informal, out-of-school learning opportunities is their continuity with the skills and information needed for success in the school. The following program – *Project Learn* – outlines a set of steps to provide these opportunities for at-risk youth in Boys & Girls Club of _____.

Responding to the Need

Project Learn: An Educational Enhancement Program

Boys & Girls Clubs of America used Clark's research to design and field-test *Project Learn: An Educational Enhancement Program*. The program features five major components:

- Homework help and tutoring
- High-yield learning and leisure activities
- Parent and adult involvement
- Collaboration with schools
- Incentives

Through these five components, Clubs mobilize their resources to help children succeed in school.

Homework Help and Tutoring

We offer homework help and tutoring five to six hours weekly. This enables Club members to develop the daily habit of completing homework and preparing for class in a safe, quiet, allocated space with staff and volunteer encouragement and assistance. We use Power Hour, a homework help and tutoring program developed by Boys & Girls Clubs of America, to help our members complete their daily school assignments. Club professionals, volunteers or even older Club members assist younger members.

Our incentive program, Power Points, gives Club members an extra opportunity to practice and reinforce the skills and concepts they learn in school. Club members receive points for completing fun-filled worksheets or using educational software, flash cards, etc. They can use the Points to acquire books and school supplies or participate in special field trips and Club events.

Tutoring is another component of Power Hour. Tutoring helps Club members gain proficiency or excel in specific areas, such as math, grammar, science or social studies. We offer both individual or small-group tutoring sessions. An important objective of the program is to help our members become self-directed learners.

Most Clubs offer Power Hour Mondays–Thursdays for one to two hours each day. Fridays are usually reserved for special events or activities related to education, such as field trips, tournaments, guest speakers, etc.

High-Yield Learning Activities

High-yield learning activities (HYLAs) help young people to see the practical application of lessons taught in the classroom. HYLAs also help them to plan self-directed learning enrichment. We encourage our members to make positive and productive choices about how they spend their leisure time at the Club. We offer the following high-yield learning activities each week:

- Writing activities (one to two hours). These activities include writing recipes and grocery lists for cooking classes; taking phone messages as an office assistant; or writing letters to a pen pal or friend, etc.
- Leisure reading (four to five hours). Reading opportunities include age-appropriate periodicals like *Sports Illustrated for Kids* or *American Girl*, newspapers, bulletin boards, game instructions, recipes, etc.
- Discussions with knowledgeable adults (four to five hours). These include casual discussions with Club staff members, mentoring programs, career exploration, teen summit discussions on current events and issues, etc.
- Helping others (two to three hours). Service activities could include cleaning up local neighborhoods, visiting nursing homes, assisting with a Club service project, etc.
- Games that sharpen cognitive skills (four to five hours). Skill-building games might include Scrabble[®], Monopoly[®], Jenga[®], chess, pool, foosball, ping pong, etc.

Clubs vary their schedules to engage the largest number of members in the greatest variety of enhancement opportunities. The result is that the total Club becomes a learning center. Members use math skills in the gymnasium for score keeping, in the kitchen for cooking, in the art room for measuring, etc. They practice literacy skills by reading rules to a new game, writing an article in the Club newsletter, or writing poetry for the bulletin board. Learning becomes synonymous with Club activities and Club members cannot wait to be a part of the fun!

Parental Involvement

Unfortunately, not every parent has had positive experiences with schools. Thus, the Club needs to encourage a positive environment for parents. We encourage parents to support their children in school and Club. We also encourage them to create a positive home environment that supports education.

In order to encourage parental participation at the Club, we provide activities for the entire family. Club activities include family fun nights for parents, teachers and children; hamburger cook-outs and game tournaments; basketball games for adults and teens; and guest speakers or panelists to discuss college and other post-high-school options.

Collaborations with Schools

When we work with schools, we are able to help our members develop competency in challenging subjects. As part of our partnership with schools, we host a PTA open house at the Club for neighborhood schools. We also honor teachers who have supported and assisted both the *Project Learn* program and participating Club members. It is critical that Club staff members develop a relationship with each school represented at the Club to encourage communication between and among teachers, parents and Club professionals. This strengthens the “educational safety net” for Club members.

Incentives, Recognition and Goal-Setting

Members and staff use recognition and goal setting to plan achievement and improvement daily, weekly and monthly. As an incentive, we offer our members the opportunity to participate in special events and field trips when they improve their academic achievement levels.

Our goal, however, is to help young people move away from the need for material rewards for their successes. Our guidance strategy helps them learn to appreciate the intrinsic feelings of success that come from realizing their potential.

Benefits

Young people participating in *Project Learn* can be expected to receive the following benefits:

Benefits to Learners:

- Individualized, structured learning experience
- Improved attitude toward learning in the school and Club
- Self-paced and self-directed learning
- Practical application of skills taught in the classroom
- Remedial support as needed
- Improved self-esteem
- Improved grades in school
- Improved behavior

Benefits to Peer and Cross-Age Tutors:

- Heightened sense of competency in conforming to a new role
- Encourages higher levels of thinking
- Permits older students to study below-level material without embarrassment
- Increases motivation to learn in order to maintain new position
- Increases ability to manage learning and improves study strategies
- Increases knowledge of specific subjects
- Improves attitude toward learning in school and the Club

Staffing

A full-time Director of Education will be recruited to coordinate *Project Learn*. His/her responsibilities will be to manage all aspects of the program including:

- Leading the staff team in developing high-yield learning opportunities in every program area in the Club
- Establishing and maintaining a relationship with schools
- Recruiting Club member participants
- Recruiting and training tutors and volunteers
- Purchasing equipment and supplies
- Establishing parent support and activities to encourage involvement
- Scheduling
- Monitoring individual progress and performance
- Keeping records
- Handling publicity
- Evaluating the program and compiling the year-end report

In addition, Boys & Girls Club of _____ will hire **[Insert Number]** part-time staff members and tutors and enlist and train **[Insert Number]** volunteers to serve **[Insert Number]** Club members in the *Project Learn* program. We will also recruit older Club members to serve as Homework Helpers.

Evaluation of *Project Learn*

Overview

Over a three-year period, the national evaluation of *Project Learn* showed statistically significant grade improvements and an increase in attendance rates for program participants. While local *Project Learn* programs can aim for these results, more realistic goals for start-up programs are:

- Increases in the numbers of hours spent doing homework
- Increases in the number of hours spent doing high-yield learning activities

Research suggests that if children are doing these activities, their academic scores will increase.

The evaluation process will be divided into two phases: process and outcome. The process phase will document what activities were implemented and who participated in those activities. The outcome evaluation will test what behavioral changes members have made due to the program.

Process Evaluation

The process evaluation will answer two questions:

- Was the program implemented as planned? If not, what changes were made? Why?
- Who attended the program? In what activities did they participate?

To answer these questions, we will do the following things:

- We will keep a folder on each child. This folder will include: an intake form with appropriate demographic information, the name of the school, the names of the child's teachers, a list of the child's school subjects, and a list of her areas of need.
- We will keep rosters documenting daily attendance and activities.
- To track high-yield learning activities, we will collect program schedules to document the implementation of these activities across the Club.
- The Education Director will summarize the information collected in a monthly report.

Outcome Evaluation

The outcome evaluation will answer two questions:

- Was there a change in the number of hours participants spent completing homework?
- Was there a change in the number of hours participants engaged in HYLAs?

To answer these questions, we will document changes in behavior in the program records and we will also ask members for self-reports.

Self-Reports

We will develop a survey to determine what type of after-school activities members engaged in before *Project Learn*. This survey will help us determine the baseline number of hours individuals spent at the Club doing homework and other HYLAs. Each child will complete a survey when entering the program, and we will keep the survey in the participant's folder. At the end of the school year, we will give another survey to all participants and analyze how individual members have changed the way they spend their after-school hours. [For larger programs, you may want to randomly sample about 20 percent of your participants.]

Program Records

We will use daily attendance forms to track the hours members spend completing homework at the Club.

Finally, staff members and volunteers will document incremental changes in the behavior of participants. They will summarize notes as qualitative support for the numeric and self-reported data they collect.

Action Plan

The following Action Plan identifies specific steps that the Boys & Girls Club of _____ will take to implement the *Project Learn* Program.

TASK	COMPLETION DATE
Hire Director of Education	
Fully inform and train Club staff for <i>Project Learn</i>	
Meet with school officials to coordinate activities	
Set up learning environment in Club including furniture, equipment and supplies	
Recruit homework helpers and tutors	
Train homework helpers and tutors	
Create program enhancements which include integrated activities in other Core Program Areas	
Implement academic goal setting	
Implement recognition and incentive system	
Announce program to parents and schools by mail, telephone and open house at Club	
Publicize program with press event and celebration	
Recruit Club members, parents and community members	
Conduct joint orientation for helpers, tutors, Club professionals, parents and school representatives	
Establish support programs for parents	
Begin program	

Budget

(Note: This proposal can be written to request funding for a one-year or multi-year program and should be budgeted accordingly.)

I. Salaries	
Director of Education (full-time)	_____
Assistant to Coordinator (part-time)	_____
II. Benefits	
@ ____ (%)	_____
Total Salaries & Benefits	\$_____
III. Training	
One day training for <i>Project Learn</i>	\$_____
IV. Equipment	
Desks, chairs, file cabinets, bookshelves, computers, software, etc.	\$_____
V. Supplies	
Office supplies	_____
Program supplies (textbooks, newspapers and magazines, dictionaries, atlas, almanac, encyclopedias, notebooks, pens, etc.)	_____
Total Supplies	\$_____
VI. Printing/Photocopying	\$_____
VII. Postage and Shipping	\$_____
VIII. Telephone	\$_____
IX. Transportation	\$_____
X. Field Trips/Incentives	\$_____
GRAND TOTAL	\$_____

APPENDIX

Annual Report

Board of Directors

Other Important Club Information



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF AMERICA**

Fact Sheet: BE GREAT: Graduate

- GOAL:** To help young people who may be at risk of dropping out of school develop the academic, behavioral and social skills needed to be successful in school and beyond.
- WHY:** BGCA's five-year strategic plan, Impact 2012, seeks to positively affect the lives of Club members by emphasizing outcomes that help ensure academic success. When Boys & Girls Clubs intentionally target young people who show warning signs that put them at a heightened risk for school failure, they can successfully intervene to address the individual needs of each child to achieve academic success.
- WHO:** Youth, ages 6-18, who shows signs that they could be at risk for dropping out of school.
- WHAT:** BE GREAT: Graduate is an initiative that targets young people most vulnerable for dropping out of school. This comprehensive strategy is based on the University of Minnesota's evidence-based model, Check and Connect. The strategy consists of three components:
- **Mentor–Youth Relationship** – A long-term mentoring relationship that is built on trust and open communication, with the goal of building the member's belief that "they can, they want to and they belong."
 - **Intentional Tracking** – Clubs regularly check the warning signs of withdrawal from school (attendance, behavior and course failure) and work with the youth to develop a timely intervention that focuses on decreasing the negative risks while increasing the protective factors (i.e., strengths) through the mentor relationship, problem solving and persistence.
 - **Enhancing Club-School-Home Partnership and Communication** – Clubs and schools work together to share information and resources; Clubs work to engage parents in their child's education.

Club staff and volunteer mentors are trained to use strength-based strategies and problem-solving techniques through strong relationships to support young people at risk for future school failure.

With the generous funding from ConocoPhillips, BGCA is providing grants to Clubs in communities with high dropout rates to help youth at risk of dropping out achieve their academic potential.

WEBSITE: www.bgca.net/Programs/EduCareer/Default.aspx

CONTACT: Mary Thornton, Program Assistant, mthornton@bgca.org, (404) 487-5951



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF AMERICA**

Fact Sheet: Goals for Graduation

GOAL: To enhance young people's ability to develop, set and achieve appropriate academic goals and further their success in school.

WHY: BGCA's five-year strategic plan, Impact 2012, seeks to positively affect the lives of Club members by emphasizing outcomes that help ensure academic success. As part of their educational enrichment programming, Boys & Girls Clubs provide young people with the practical support and encouragement they need to stay in school, improve their performance and graduate from high school. This includes helping youth develop the skill of setting and achieving goals and a lifelong love of learning.

WHO: Boys & Girls Club members ages 6 to 12

WHAT: **Goals for Graduation** introduces members to academic goal-setting by linking their future aspirations with concrete actions today. The program's recognition strategy is designed to give members constant, intentional encouragement as their successes are acknowledged and reinforced at every step of their journey.

The program uses one-on-one, small-group and large-group activities to support academic goal setting, learning and success in school. Members practice initial goal-setting on achievable goals with the leadership, guidance and encouragement of the Club's staff. In goal-setting sessions, members set more challenging goals. Through this incremental goal-setting approach, members create an action plan with daily and weekly goals leading to short- and long-term academic gains.

WEBSITE: www.bgca.net/Programs/EduCareer/Default.aspx

CONTACT: Mary Thornton, Program Assistant, mthornton@bgca.org, (404) 487-5951



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF AMERICA**

Fact Sheet: Power Hour: Making Minutes Count

GOAL: To help young people develop academic, behavioral and social skills through homework completion.

WHY: BGCA's five-year strategic plan, Impact 2012, seeks to positively affect the lives of Club members by emphasizing outcomes that help ensure academic success. When Boys & Girls Clubs offer extended learning opportunities and educational enrichment programming during the non-school hours, they help improve young people's academic performance and encourage them to graduate from high school, pursue a post-secondary education and develop a lifelong love of learning. Homework completion is a critical component of young people's academic success.

WHO: Boys & Girls Club members ages 6 to 18

WHAT: **Power Hour: Making Minutes Count** provides Club professionals with strategies, activities, resources and information that address:

- How to conduct engaging homework help programs for Club members
- How to implement a one-on-one tutoring program for all ages
- Research strategies for teens
- Strategies to make homework fun
- Recognition and incentive strategies, tips and a poster for tracking progress
- Volunteer recruitment and training
- Collaboration with outside institutions
- Scheduling considerations
- Philosophy and purpose of homework help in a Boys & Girls Club
- Character development through homework completion
- Homework help and tutoring with hard-to-reach youth
- Integration of technology and the Internet in Power Hour
- Supplemental activities
- Promising Club practices

With generous funding from Charity Projects Entertainment Fund (CPEF)/Idol Gives Back, BGCA is providing grants to 180 Clubs in communities with high poverty rates to help low-income youth achieve their academic potential.

WEBSITE: www.bgca.net/Programs/EduCareer/Default.aspx

CONTACT: Mary Thornton, Program Assistant, mthornton@bgca.org, (404) 487-5951, or PowerHour@bgca.org



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF AMERICA**

Fact Sheet: Skill Tech: Basic Training

- GOAL:** To familiarize youth with technology, particularly basic computer skills, productivity software and Internet use.
- WHY:** Increasingly essential for ensuring success in school and the workplace, technology skills also enrich and organize personal lives.
- WHO:** Boys & Girls Club members ages 6 to 18
- WHAT:** Skill Tech: Basic Training, a Club Tech program funded by founding partner Microsoft and Best Buy Children's Foundation, teaches Club members advanced, yet practical technology skills. Members explore not just what computers do, but also how they work. Through three levels of animated, interactive lessons and hands-on, instructor-led group activities, members learn skills for Microsoft software including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, Publisher and Digital Image Pro. The online lessons can be delivered in English or Spanish.
- Each session begins with an interactive tutorial delivered on courseware developed exclusively for Boys & Girls Clubs. It is available on www.myclubmylife.com, BGCA's Web site for Club members. Each tutorial ends with a fun, animated quiz or game measuring and reinforcing skills members learn from the session. Tutorials prepare members to complete a hands-on activity led by a Club professional. The activities encourage emotional development by emphasizing responsibility and respect for peers and equipment in the technology center.
- WHERE:** Skill Tech: Basic Training courseware is available on myclubmylife.com. For staff, facilitator's guides are found under the Downloads link on the first screen of the courseware. Club staff can print facilitator's guides and keep them in a binder for easy reference.
- WEBSITE:** www.myclubmylife.com (under Arts & Tech)
- CONTACT:** Christine Kotula, Director, Technology Programs, (404) 487-5968, ckotula@bgca.org



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF AMERICA**

Fact Sheet: Skill Tech II

- GOAL:** To teach Club members basic computer hardware and networking skills.
- WHY:** Computer hardware and networking knowledge helps youth be productive, responsible users of technology and prepares them for future careers.
- WHO:** Boys & Girls Club members ages 6 to 18
- WHAT:** Skill Tech II, a Club Tech program, funded by founding partner Microsoft and Best Buy Children's Foundation, is designed to teach advanced yet practical technology skills to Club members. Using animated, interactive tutorials and hands-on, instructor-led group activities, members explore not just what computers do but how they work. Participants learn about hardware, networking and basic programming languages. They survey career and education opportunities in technology-related fields and learn to make informed consumer decisions about high-tech products and services. The safe, ethical use of technology is emphasized throughout the program. Each session begins with an interactive tutorial on courseware developed exclusively for Boys & Girls Clubs. Each tutorial ends with a fun, animated quiz or game measuring and reinforcing the skills members learn in the session. Tutorials prepare members to complete a hands-on activity led by a Club professional. For example, younger members can take apart and identify parts of a computer and build mock computer networks with boxes and string, while older members assemble computers from scratch and configure actual networks.
- The program is designed with a spy-related theme – members use their newly acquired skills to thwart the high-tech antics of a ring of ne'er-do-well secret agents – to maintain a fun, light-hearted tone.
- WHERE:** Skill Tech II courseware is offered in English and Spanish and available exclusively on www.myclubmylife.com, BGCA's Web site for Club members. For staff, facilitator's guides are found under the Downloads link on the first screen of the courseware. Club staff can print the facilitator's guides and keep them in a binder for easy reference.
- WEBSITE:** www.myclubmylife.com (under Arts & Tech)
- CONTACT:** Christine Kotula, Director, Technology Programs, (404) 497-5968, ckotula@bgca.org



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF AMERICA**

Fact Sheet: Teen Goals for Graduation

GOAL: To enhance teens' ability to develop academic plans for high school graduation.

WHY: Each year, almost one-third of all public high school students fail to graduate on time with their class. The dropout process is a gradual one that is influenced by a host of factors, including inadequate reading ability, low academic performance, poor attendance and lack of parent involvement. New research suggests that Boys & Girls Clubs can play a role in improving high school graduation rates – especially for at-risk students. Goals for Graduation is designed to help youth develop short- and mid-term goals for education that can help improve their school performance and help them reach their long-term goal of high school graduation.

WHO: Boys & Girls Club members ages 13 to 18

WHAT: **Teen Goals for Graduation** helps youth set immediate goals related to school attendance and punctuality, homework completion, positive study habits, improved grades and test scores as well as long-term goals such as high school graduation.

The program guides youth, one step at a time, through the development, planning and achievement of their goals. Interactive activities help youth learn the process of goal setting and, at the same time, focus their attention on the importance of developing academic goals. Youth practice setting a variety of academic goals as they progress through seven stages:

- Step 1: Understand Goal Setting
- Step 2: Assess Where You Are Now
- Step 3: Think About What You Want
- Step 4: Make A Plan To Get There
- Step 5: Go For It!
- Step 6: Meet the Challenge
- Step 7: Reach Your Goal

Through successful goal-setting experiences, members' self-esteem and self-confidence increases.

WEBSITE: Log on to www.bgca.net; Click on 1) Programs; 2) Education & Career Development

CONTACT: Mary Thornton, Program Assistant, (404) 487-5951, mthornton@bgca.org

More than 50 Ways Parents and Adults Can Help Children Succeed*

- Attend parent/teacher conferences
- Volunteer at the Club
- Take children to library
- Picnic with your kids
- Go to the park
- Encourage team activities like volleyball, soccer, basketball, baseball, swimming
- Utilize community support and resources
- Monitor TV viewing
- Read for entertainment
- Read to your children
- Plant a tree
- Know Club friends
- Recycle
- Be kind to others
- Encourage and participate in lifelong learning
- Sing with children
- Exercise with children
- Teach responsibility
- Draw with children
- Enjoy nature
- Write thank you notes
- Listen to children
- Chaperone a dance or party
- Make puppets
- Coach a sport
- Reminisce about happy family memories
- Encourage random kindness
- Recognize and discuss sadness or grief
- Water the garden together
- Use your imagination
- Watch a sunset together

* Adapted from the U.S. Department of Education, "Get Involved," *How Parents and Families Can Help Children Do Better in School*.

- Chaperone a post-prom party
- Take a walk with children
- Jump in a puddle with kids
- Be kind to animals
- Monitor movies watched
- Listen to children read
- Bird watch together
- Teach respect for the elderly
- Encourage creativity
- Laugh together and celebrate happiness
- Eat together
- Go ice skating
- Hug for no reason
- Keep your word
- Feed the homeless
- Play board games
- Learn about cultural heritage together
- Discuss honesty
- Play games with children
- Set goals together
- Go to plays

What Is Parent Involvement?

- Parent involvement is the active role parents accept in the education of their children and youth.
 - Parents as first educators in the home
 - Parents as partners with the school
 - Parents as advocates for all children and youth in society
- FACT: All parents love their children.
 - The school is not solely responsible for a child's academic achievement
 - Parents, regardless of ethnic group, socioeconomic status or educational background, are a key resource in their children's education.
- Inform parents:
 - Exchanging information
 - Sharing in decision making
 - Helping at the Club
 - Become a partner in the educational process with children by collaborating in children's learning
- Reach out to encourage participation of families who might have low level literacy skills and/or for whom English is not their primary language.
- Provide regular information for families about programs, their child's participation and progress.
- Provide training for staff to enhance their effectiveness with families.
- Knowledge and linkage with special service agencies and community groups to address key family issues
- Opportunities for families to share in decision-making regarding policies and procedures at the Club affecting their children
- Recognition of diverse family structure, including differences that might impede parent participation
- 3 F's for successful involvement: food, families and fun
- Learn how to deal with angry parents:
 - Separate the parent from the argument
 - Use active listening
 - Never get angry
 - Look for areas of agreement
 - Find a win-win solution.
 - If not sure about a parent suggestion, say, "I'll keep that in mind"
 - If necessary, devise a temporary solution

- Produce a newsletter for families and communities – one page preferred
 - Remember the 30-3-30 writing rule newsletters – Eighty percent of people will spend 30 seconds reading it. Nineteen percent will spend three minutes. One percent will spend 30 minutes (your mother).
- Develop a written policy encouraging parent involvement; if it is not a policy, the message is we do not care.
- Try “quick notes” home to inform and encourage parents the day something great happens at the Club, e.g., their child won a word search contest – Project Learn is working!
- Take parents’ pictures with children and post them at the Club. Makes a great “thank you” at the end of the year as a framed gift.
- Put up a “Welcome” sign in every language spoken by Club members and families. Ask parents to help.
- Provide staff training on parenting skills for single parents.
- Before school starts send Club staff out into neighborhoods to welcome families to the Club.
- Apathy and exhaustion are sometimes confused regarding parents’ lack of interest in their child’s education.
- Try a day-long parent academy with short repeated workshops on topics such as encouraging reading, discipline, building self-esteem, language and literacy, talking with kids, helping with homework, etc. Serve lunch, give certificates and lots of thanks for participation.
- Know why parents say they are not involved:
 - Do not have time
 - Do not know it’s important
 - Do not speak English
- Be a parent advocate – push for written school district policies on parent involvement.
- Reach out to new families – again. Use parent volunteers.
- How about a Parents Hall of Fame?
- Six keys to making parent programs work:
 - Empower parents – encourage parents, work with them to set and carry out goals. Do not assume you know what is best for parents. They know themselves best.
 - Focus on the needs of both parents and child. Parents cannot help their children if they need help themselves – a job, food, housing, simple support from others.
 - Adjust to the needs of specific parents in the program. There is no one-size-fits-all program.

- Allow plenty of time for parent discussion. Programs should be parent dominated.
- At parent/family nights, provide childcare for younger children and food/refreshments.
- Recognize what parents are doing to help children – praise them.

Steps to Grade Improvements with Homework Help

1. Encourage members to participate in homework help. Get them in the door!
2. Encourage regular attendance of homework help sessions.
3. Ensure members bring their tools and resources (i.e., paper, pencils, textbooks, workbooks and worksheets).
4. Ensure members bring their homework assignments.
5. Help them focus on their work for an age-appropriate amount of time.
6. Make sure members complete their homework.
7. Check homework for accuracy.
8. Make sure members turn homework in the next day.

Tips for Success with Teen Homework Help Programs

- Have a separate time or space for teens to complete their homework.
- Middle and high school students will need academic assistance, rather than room supervision, during the homework period.
- Teens will need greater independence and more time to study than younger members.
- Tutors will require greater academic skills to assist teens adequately.
- Teens will require a greater number of resources (books, magazines and technology) to support their academic needs.

Students' Tips for Success in School

1. Before beginning homework, take an energy break. Eat a piece of fruit, have a light snack like popcorn and fruit juice or a granola or power bar and “chill out” for a few minutes.
2. Exercise or stretch your body for a few minutes.
3. Find a quiet, safe place to do your homework with the proper utensils (pencil, paper, pen, books, dictionary, encyclopedia, etc.)
4. Work on your least favorite subject first. Get that assignment out of the way and the rest will be “smooth sailing.”
5. Only work on one subject at a time. Don't clutter your brain or confuse your focus with several subjects at once.
6. Form a study club. Get three or four friends to work together on homework or at least phone each other for homework help.
7. Check out local homework help hotlines. If your community doesn't have one, talk to teachers and community leaders about developing one.
8. Check out the local public libraries and churches for after-school homework help.
9. Don't put off homework until late at night. You'll feel much better getting it done early and then have more time for friends and family.
10. Don't give up! If you don't understand an assignment, ask for help from teachers, parents, Club staff or other Club members.
11. Don't let a “mole hill” become a mountain. Stay current with your homework, daily.
12. Read as many different things as you can: comics, newspapers, cartoons, age-appropriate magazines, short stories, poetry, street signs, advertisements. Stay “hungry” for words.
13. Discuss what you've read with friends and family. You may become an expert on something you've read.
14. Don't starve your brain – feed it daily!

The Boys & Girls Club Movement's Youth Development Strategy*

The philosophy underlying Boys & Girls Club programming is the *Youth Development Strategy*. This strategy defines how youth development professionals and volunteers interact with young people. All programs and activities are designed to maximize opportunities for young people to acquire four basic “senses” which help them build self-esteem and grow into responsible and caring citizens. These four “senses” are:

- **A sense of competence** – Young people feel proud and confident when they acquire new skills and know they can do something and do it well. This happens naturally through participation in programs, but it can be enhanced through a conscious effort to help girls and boys develop skills and to recognize them formally and informally for their achievements.
- **A sense of usefulness** – Young people know the satisfaction of doing something of value for others. It is important to seek out opportunities for young people of all ages to do something useful for others, whether it is helping at the Club or participating in community service projects.
- **A sense of belonging** – Young people know they are welcome and feel that they fit in and are accepted. This occurs naturally in Boys & Girls Clubs. It is enhanced through warm greetings from staff members when young people arrive at the Club, the use of membership cards, small group programs, Club T-shirts, publishing and posting names and photographs of young people involved in programs, or anything else, tangible or intangible, that helps young people feel safe, comfortable and accepted at the Club.
- **A sense of power and influence** – Young people know their opinions are heard and valued and that they can influence decisions. This can be enhanced through participation in youth councils, discussion groups, interest surveys and other opportunities to contribute to the development of Club programs and rules.

The Youth Development Strategy should be consciously employed in *every interaction* youth development professionals, junior staff and volunteers have with young people in the Club. A friendly greeting, an acknowledgment of a new skill or improved behavior has a profound impact on all members. Youth development occurs in all aspects of Boys & Girls Club participation. Boys & Girls Clubs create a climate in which these important “senses” are fostered in every participant, member and guest involved in program or just “hanging out.”

The principles of the Youth Development Strategy should be used when developing every program and activity. Seek to identify and incorporate ways to enhance programs and activities through the conscious utilization of these youth development principles. For example, a sports program can be the vehicle for the enhancement of all four “senses”:

- **Competence** through skill instruction, practice and the opportunity to utilize their newly acquired skills in competitive situations as well as developing capabilities described in our Movement’s Youth Development Outcomes:
 - *Employment competence*, through learning to be on time, working hard in practice and contributing to the success of the team
 - *Social competence* and *a moral compass*, through learning to work together, follow rules and demonstrate good sportsmanship
 - *Emotional competence*, through learning to adapt to and perform under adverse conditions (the stress of competition)
- **Usefulness** through contributing to the success of the team, helping other members acquire or improve their skills, or coaching younger members
- **Belonging** through the use of team names, uniforms, shirts and hats
- **Power or influence** through contributing to the success of the team, helping to officiate or coaching younger members.

Child & Adolescent Developmental Milestones

The developmental characteristics outlined here offer Club staff a general idea about what to expect from youth of different ages. However, young people develop at different rates and in different ways. Consider these guidelines only as a general rule of thumb; use this information to implement age-appropriate programs and services that best meet the needs of the youth in your Boys & Girls Club.*

Ages 6 to 9

Physical Development

- Boys and girls experience steady growth in size, strength and coordination.
- Large muscles are well-developed; small-muscle growth has begun.
- Children enjoy testing muscle strength with activities such as running and throwing; fine motor skills are honed by copying letters, shapes, numbers, etc., and using small tools such as scissors.
- Generally, gender differences are not yet noticeable; however, some girls may begin puberty as young as 5 years old.
- First experiences with competitive team sports are appropriate. However, ***rules and directions must be simple.***

Cognitive Development

- Children are learning rapidly, with advances in memory, attention span, logic and creative thinking. ***Learning how to focus is critical*** for mastering skills, but children still need help solving problems.
- The ability to describe experiences, talk about thoughts and feelings, and express ideas helps children carry on conversations with adults and peers.
- Children become better able to think about others, understand cause and effect and cooperate with adults and peers.
- Children develop a “sense of industry” and have a great need to demonstrate – and receive praise for – mastery of skills.

Emotional Development

- Children demonstrate a desire to do more by and for themselves, based on a growing independence, particularly from parents.
- Youth continue to need love, attention and approval from adults, but are less willing to ask for it.

- Boys and girls are very susceptible to hurt feelings as their peers' opinions become more important.
- Children may fear failure (e.g., in school) and may ***need help expressing emotions*** when upset or worried.
- Children have a strong sense of self and know right from wrong.

Social Development

- Children begin to develop independence from parents and family as relationships with friends become more important.
- Children increasingly want to be liked and accepted by friends.
- Children want to play more with friends who are similar to themselves (i.e., boys with boys, girls with girls, etc.); however, they are willing to care for and play with younger children.
- As children develop sympathy and empathy, they are anxious to please and show consideration of others.
- Small groups and organized play offer security; doing something well can earn children social status. ***Developing self-esteem is important.***

Ages 10 to 12

Physical Development

- There is wide variation in the onset of puberty, creating early and late maturers. Girls begin puberty, on average, two years earlier than boys.
- The physical changes of puberty become outwardly apparent, and children are more aware of their changing bodies.
- ***Body image and eating problems*** sometimes start at this age. Some children become overly concerned with weight and physical appearance and will take steps to lose or gain weight.
- Rapid growth and physical changes cause fidgeting, squirming and difficulty being still. Children benefit from lots of physical activity.

Cognitive Development

- Thinking matures as children's attention, memory and problem-solving abilities improve.
- Children develop greater abilities for logic and reason; their thinking is predominantly concrete rather than abstract.

- Children begin to question rules and beliefs they previously accepted at face value; for example, they begin to realize that fairness cannot be measured or quantified.
- Special athletic, artistic, academic or musical *talents may emerge*.
- Girls move ahead of boys in terms of cognitive development.

Emotional Development

- Youth are more self-conscious and worried about what others think of them. However, because of the onset of puberty, children are less able to recognize the emotions of others.
- Children seek independence and test adult authority, but retain a great need for parental support and guidance. *Adult role models and heroes are important.*
- Self-esteem issues may develop. Early developing boys often have higher social status/ self-esteem; early developing girls may experience more attention from boys, but are uncomfortable with the attention.
- Some boys repress their emotions and, instead, express themselves more physically.

Social Development

- It becomes more emotionally important for children to have and keep friends, especially of the same sex; although, some opposite-sex interaction begins.
- Peers' attention and approval is very important. Young people feel peer pressure intensely and may develop "best friend" relationships and cliques.
- Children are beginning to *learn social skills* (i.e., how to enter groups, how to read social cues and how to deal positively with conflict) and appreciate the social value of conversation.
- Youth may begin experimentation with sexual behaviors and illicit substances.

Ages 13 to 15

Physical Development

- *Puberty continues*. Both boys and girls show outward, physical signs of maturation. Boys' voices deepen and many girls are menstruating.
- By age 15, boys have begun their growth spurt and are taller and more muscular than girls. By age 14 or 15, most girls have reached their final adult height.

- Rapid physical growth may cause clumsiness and many youth worry that this transitional awkwardness will last into adulthood. **Regular exercise and games** help develop coordination, reduce stress and provide an outlet for excess energy.
- Acne and body odor, along with other characteristics of their changing bodies, are concerns for adolescents.
- Young teens' need for sleep and physical rest increases.

Cognitive Development

- Youth develop a greater ability for complex thought (i.e., they can think abstractly, use reasoning skills, show more intellectual curiosity and can understand the hypothetical).
- Goal-setting, including for long-term goals, becomes important.
- Youth need guidance to avoid risky behaviors as they may not recognize the consequences of their actions.
- Young teens often feel all-powerful, all-knowing and invulnerable. There is a focus on the self, alternating between high expectations and lack of confidence.
- The distance between those who are succeeding in school and those who are struggling is magnified. Youth experience anxiety from more challenging school work.
- **Youth in this age group are the most likely to drop out of school.**

Emotional Development

- Young teens often show less affection toward parents, with occasional rudeness. They seek independence but still need structure and limits set by parents and other adults.
- Although teens want some distance from their parents, they often want close relationships with other adults outside the family.
- They may return to childish behaviors, particularly when under stress.
- **Youth are adept at masking their true state of mind;** they often give neutral responses about whether they are happy or sad.
- Young teens have intense desire for privacy.
- Teens' self-esteem may suffer as rapid hormonal and body changes reduce their confidence.

Social Development

- Friendship and romance are increasingly important. Teens may feel confusion over emerging sexuality and may worry about sexual orientation.

- ***Peer pressure is at its peak***; young teens want to spend time with older teens. Teens are trying to establish their own identities separate from their families.
- Parental influence lessens, and increased tension is an issue between teens and parents regarding rules and relationships.
- Relationships deepen and become more mutual and trusting as young teens learn to step outside themselves and see others' points of view.
- Young teens may form opinions and beliefs based on unreliable sources of information (Internet and other forms of media) and are not easily persuaded to seek the real truth.
- ***Teens experiment with sexual behaviors and illicit substances.***

Ages 16 to 18

Physical Development

- Physical changes are leveling off. Most girls have completed puberty and achieved their full height. Boys may still be maturing physically; in particular, boys' muscles continue to develop. Boys also develop greater heart and lung capacity.
- Boys are generally ***considerably taller and heavier*** than girls at this stage.
- Appetite increases and eating disorders may become common, especially among girls, as concerns about body image remain intense.
- Most older teens experience strong sexual feelings.

Cognitive Development

- Most older teens can now think abstractly and hypothetically; can discern the underlying principles of a situation and apply them to new situations; can ***think about the future***; and can consider many possibilities and logical outcomes of possible events.
- A teen may not be fully able to connect knowledge and consequences with appropriate actions because the brain continues to develop until about age 24.
- Separation from caregivers toward independence, including choices about vocation, post-secondary education and parenting, is the central development task.
- Older teens develop an increased capacity to understand multiple perspectives, leading to the ability for many to grasp bigger societal issues and become interested in justice or politics as they clarify their own values and morals.

Emotional Development

- Youth continue to form their own identity and may experiment with different styles, sexuality, friendships and occupations. Minority youth, in particular, may explore several different patterns of identity formation, possibly by identifying closely with their own racial or ethnic group.
- As older teens develop a sense of personal identity, *self-esteem continues to develop*.
- Older teens continue to worry about their bodies and physical appearance.
- All experiences are intense and emotional.
- Some will experience sadness, hopelessness or depression, which can lead to (or be caused by) poor grades at school, further experimentation with sexual behaviors and illicit substances, thoughts of suicide and other problems.

Social Development

- Friendships with peers remain important, but older teens rely less on their peer group for their sense of identity as they begin to define themselves on their own.
- One-to-one relationships are becoming increasingly important, as *friendships are based more on real intimacy* rather than simply on common interests and activities. Cross-gender friendships become more common.
- Peer pressure levels off and there is an increased ability to view parents as individuals with their own perspectives.
- Teens need a balance between time spent with peers and with parents or other adults.
- The senior year of high school is particularly stressful for teens and his/her relationships with parents or other adults.

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Additional Resources

Internet Sites

Below are a few of the thousands of Internet sites that could be useful to members and parents of your Boys & Girls Clubs. This list is simply a starting point for you. Take a few minutes each day to explore the web and add to this list.

References

Merriam-Webster Dictionary	www.m-w.com
B.J. Pinchbeck's Homework Helper	www.bjpinchbeck.com
National Geographic Map Machine	www.nationalgeographic.com/resources/ngo/maps/
Scholastic, Inc.	www.scholastic.com
Weather Channel	www.weather.com

Family Involvement

Parent Soup	www.ivillage.com
Black Families.Com	www.blackfamilies.com
Family.Com	www.family.go.com
National Education Association	www.nea.org
Parent Power	www.parentpowernow.com

Sports

NBA.Com	www.nba.com
NFL.Com	www.nfl.com
WNBA.Com	www.wnba.com
Major League Baseball	www.mlbc.com
Sport Illustrated for Kids	www.siforkids.com
Sports Illustrated	www.si.com

Newspapers

USA Today	www.usatoday.com
New York Times	www.nytimes.com
Los Angeles Times	www.latimes.com

Science/Math/History

NASA	www.nasa.com
National Geographics	www.nationalgeographics.com
Discovery Online	www.discovery.com
Cool Math.Com	www.coolmath.com
A+ Math	www.aplusmath.com
Smithsonian Institute	www.si.edu

College and Career Exploration

Peterson's (College Exploration) www.petersons.com
Career Builders www.careerbuilders.com/
Careers <http://careers.org>
Career Mosaic www.careermosaic.com
Princeton Review www.princetonreview.com

Educational Programs

Reading is Fundamental, Inc.
www.rif.org

FAMILY MATH
University of California at Berkley
EQUALS Publications
www.lawrencehallofscience.org/equals/books.html

READ ACROSS AMERICA
National Education Association
www.nea.org/readacross
readacross@nea.org

Tutoring Resources

Tutor/Mentor Connection
www.tutormentorconnection.org

Thinkfinity Literacy Network
<http://literacynetwork.verizon.org>

LEARNS: Youth Impact (formerly The Tutor)
www.nationalservicerresources.org/learns/tutor

Learn to Mentor
<http://apps.mentoring.org/training/TMT/index.adp>

Tools for Mentoring Adolescents
<http://www.mpmn.org/ToolsforMentoringAdolescents.aspx>

Books

Safe and Smart: Making After-School Hours Work for Kids
U.S. Department of Education
Partnership for Family Involvement in Education
www.ed.gov
partner@ed.gov

Getting Ready for College Early: A Handbook for Parents of Students in the Middle and Junior High School Years

U.S. Department of Education
Partnership for Family Involvement in Education
www.ed.gov
partner@ed.gov

Bringing Education into the After-School Hours

U.S. Department of Education
Partnership for Family Involvement in Education
www.ed.gov
partner@ed.gov

Yes, You Can: Establishing Mentoring Programs to Prepare Youth for College

U.S. Department of Education
Partnership for Family Involvement in Education
www.ed.gov
partner@ed.gov

Years of Promise: A Comprehensive Learning Strategy for America's Children

Carnegie Corporation of New York
www.carnegie.org
ccny@tasco.com

Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century

Carnegie Corporation of New York
www.carnegie.org
ccny@tasco.com

A Matter of Time: Risk and Opportunity in the Out-of-School Hours

Carnegie Corporation of New York
www.carnegie.org
ccny@tasco.com

Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools

Jonathan Kozol

School and Society

John Dewey

Urban Sanctuaries: Neighborhood Organizations in the Lives and Futures of Inner City Youth

Milbrey McLaughlin, Merita A. Irby, and Judith Langman

Starting Out Right: A Guide to Promoting Children's Reading Success

National Research Council

The Moral Intelligence of Children
Robert Coles

Caring for Children in School-Age Programs
Teaching Strategies, Inc.

Behavior Smart!
Ready-to-Use Activities for Building Personal and Social Skills for Grades K-4
The Center for Applied Research in Education

Multicultural Discovery Activities for the Elementary Grades
Ready-to-Use Interdisciplinary Activities
The Center for Applied Research in Education

Geography Skills
Ready-to-Use Projects & Activities for Grades 4-8
The Center for Applied Research in Education

Brain Teasers!
Activities & Worksheets That Make Kids Think
The Center for Applied Research in Education

The Kids Multicultural Art Book
Art & Craft Experiences from Around the World
Williamson Publishing Company

Science Linkages in the Community
In Touch With Magnetism, Electricity and Mathematics
American Association for the Advancement of Science
Directorate of Education and Human Resources

HIGH-YIELD LEARNING ACTIVITIES

PARENT INVOLVEMENT



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SCHOOL COLLABORATIONS