

QUALITY TIPS FOR QUALITY PROGRAMS

Cooperative Learning

Quality Tips for Quality Programs (QTQP) is a series of short tips created by the Youth Development Advisory Committee (YDAC) for YEN programs to consider. YPQA Helpful Hints are designed to help programs score better on the Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) one item at a time.

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A LOOK AT



THE COLLABORATION SCALE ON THE YPQA

The Collaboration scale on the YPQA consists of 3 items. The following are the "5s" for each item:

Staff provide opportunities for all youth to work cooperatively as a team or in a group.

Staff provide all youth opportunities to participate in activities with interdependent roles (e.g. note-taker, treasurer, spokesperson for planning committee; tennis players, singles or doubles).

Staff provide opportunities for all youth (groups or individuals) to work toward shared goals (e.g., each youth contributes a section to a story, youth build a catapult together).

COOPERATIVE LEARNING

When youth are encouraged to work with their peers in pairs or small groups, opportunities for cooperative learning arise. Cooperative learning is a purposeful learning structure, coordinated and facilitated by staff where youth work interdependently with one or more peers. There are many benefits to using cooperative learning in YEN programs, including youth having the chance to get to know each other better, practicing their communication and leadership skills and learning new things in a group setting. Shy or introverted youth are also more likely to share their ideas in a small group rather than in a larger group setting. Cooperative learning is measured in the "Collaboration" scale on the YPQA.

DOS and DON'TS to score a 5 on the almost every time:

- **Do** ensure that all youth have the opportunity to work in pairs or small groups.
- **Do** provide structure and circulate to all of the groups. Staff should be nearby to ensure the youth are focused on the activity and to offer assistance if youth need help with the work or in their communication with one another. This is also an ideal time to ask youth open-ended questions to ensure they are thinking critically about what they are doing.
- **Do** ensure all youth have different tasks/roles/assignments and that they work together to accomplish a larger goal or project. This means that each small group can have a note-taker, spokesperson, researcher, time keeper, facilitator, etc. or tasks can be split up so that each youth is responsible for an integral part of the activity. For example, to create a skit, two youth can write the dialogue, two can make masks, and a fifth youth can plan an introduction.
- **Do** provide all youth with clear, shared goals. This means that all youth in a small group are working toward the same outcome. **Don't** ask the youth to sit in small groups but then assign them a project to work on by themselves such as a resume. This does not offer youth a chance to work together with their peers and does not involve a shared goal.

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