

summer activity guide

Implementing the
Summer Activity Guide

QUICK
GUIDE



About the Summer Activity Guides

Summers are for fun and engaged learning. In 2020 as the impact of the pandemic is widely felt, summer opportunities will be different for young people, families, and afterschool and summer program staff. The Summer Activity Guides were developed to help engage youth with supportive adults in a range of places.

The activities and resources in the Summer Activity Guides are intentionally designed to support youth-serving summer programs in driving consistent engagement and providing ongoing opportunities for youth skill-building and emotional well-being. In addition to the activities for youth, supplemental materials will be available to support professional development and enhance family engagement.

The Guides include 150 original activities and challenges organized by four different age groups (5-9) (10-12) (13-15) (16-18). The activities are adaptable for in-person and virtual instruction, or a hybrid of both, as well as sent as take-home packets.

All activities should be safely executed and aligned with state and local health guidelines.



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INTRODUCTION

During these uncertain times, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to reaching and engaging with youth. Your program may be using one or multiple approaches to support youth this summer. For instance, youth may be participating through virtual platforms now, but you may be considering switching to in-person programming later. Whichever approach(es) you choose, you should be thinking about how to effectively keep youth engaged and safe. The purpose of this Quick Guide is to aid you in implementing your summer programming via the approach that works best for your program and audience. The four approaches reviewed in this quick guide are virtual, digital, in-person and take-home programming.

This guide is a supplement to the Summer Activity Guide, which is a suite of activities and resources intentionally designed to support youth-serving summer programs in delivering programming through multiple approaches during the COVID-19 pandemic. The activities and challenges are organized by themes (Who I Am, Healthy Life, Passion & Purpose, Invention & Imagination, and Exploring My World) and by age groups (5-9, 10-12, 13-15 and 16-18) and include extension ideas that you can turn into ongoing projects. Each activity also has discussion questions and adaptations for various content delivery methods. The challenges are quicker and easier to implement, and have an ongoing component, whereas activities are a one-time event that are slightly more time-intensive.

What are the different approaches to delivering content?

- *Virtual* – programming is delivered through online facilitation
- *Digital* – programming is posted online and made available for youth and families
- *Take-Home* – programming is sent to the youth's home or other physical location
- *In-Person* – programming is delivered in-person for all or some populations of youth following your program's social distancing guidelines

The activities and challenges were designed to be easily implemented with limited support and readily available materials. They are also adaptable to allow for delivery through all approaches or a mix of approaches (in-person, virtual facilitation, digital delivery, or sent in a take-home packet.) Below are tips and considerations for each of the different approaches.

TIPS AND CONSIDERATIONS

- 1) **Cadence and Flow:** How often will you provide activities? Once a day? Twice a week? Once a week and then use the extension ideas to turn it into an ongoing project? Choose a cadence and stick with it through the summer.
- 2) **Materials:** Some of the activities require materials that youth may not have in their homes. If you are expecting some or all of the activities to be conducted at home, then think about a) sending out a materials or shopping lists in advance, and/or b) providing youth with materials they need to complete the activities.

VIRTUAL

PREPARATION:

- Think about how you will facilitate or deliver your activities virtually. Will you do a full virtual session or just offer components of each activity virtually? For example, you could introduce an activity and provide instructions in one session, and have youth complete the activity independently. Then, in the next session, you could participate in a group discussion using the discussion questions, then you could introduce the next activity.

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- Are you planning on having the youth complete the activity with you in real-time? If so, you will need to consider if they have the materials on-hand, and the facilitator will also need to have the materials as an example.
- Allow time at the beginning for youth to connect to the platform, and time at the end for questions. The majority of your time should be spent on implementing the activity. Have a practice session outside the activity, so you can make sure there is enough time to complete the objectives of the session.
- Be mindful of group size and the length of the session. Group sizes should be appropriate for the targeted age range. For example, if you are engaging youth that are younger, you should keep the group sizes to less than 8 to ensure that all youth can share and participate fully. The length of the session will also depend on the targeted age range, and should be kept shorter than in-person programming. A suggested timeframe is 30 minutes for younger participants (5-12) and 30 to 45 minutes for older participants (13+).
- Select a platform that you think works best for your youth and the content. Platforms such as Google Hangout, Adobe, GoToMeeting, Zoom and Facebook Live allow for more interactive programming and many of your youth may already be familiar with these platforms. For more information on virtual platforms and safety, please review the “Quick Guide for Safety Considerations for Virtual Programming”.
- Practice using the technology before the session and become familiar with all of the features.
- If you are planning to facilitate an interactive session where youth are engaging alongside you, you may need to get parent/guardian approval first. Be sure to follow your program’s safety policies and protocols, and maintain an appropriate staff/youth ratio, particularly if you need multiple facilitators for breakout rooms.

DELIVERING CONTENT EFFECTIVELY:

- At the beginning of the session, take time to ensure youth can hear and see you. If applicable, instruct them on how to use the features, such as muting/unmuting, using the chat box, and using their video.
- Set ground rules for the session. Use similar rules that your program uses for in-person sessions. These may include: a) Be kind to each other, b) Allow others to take turns speaking, and 3) Be present and pay attention to each other.
- Have fun! Be engaging and enthusiastic. Use polls and games in the chat features to keep things fun and moving.

DIGITAL

PREPARATION:

- Designate a space on your program’s platform (e.g., website, Google Drive, your program’s Facebook page) where you can post the activities and challenges, and where you can post responses, examples or photos of their work.
- Consider different methods of posting programming. For example, make a three-minute video where you introduce the activity and the activity instructions. Then, post the video alongside the pdf of the activity, so that youth can get started with some of the activities all by themselves.
- Send a list of materials or a shopping list to parents and caregivers at least a week in advance of posting the content, so they have sufficient time to acquire materials and youth can begin immediately. Another option is to send home kits with materials for several weeks of programming.

DELIVERING THE CONTENT EFFECTIVELY:

- Youth should be able to download and print from your website. However, if you are sending home materials, consider sending home the printed activities for youth that do not have access to a printer.

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- You may want to supplement the documents with short pre-recorded videos of a staff member introducing the theme and conducting the activity.
- Implement a way for youth to engage more deeply in the activity by creating a programming loop. For example, you could use an existing platform, like a Facebook group or a group chat, and ask youth to respond to the discussion questions listed on the activity or post a photo of their completed activity.

TAKE-HOME

PREPARATION:

- Think about how often you want to send home materials. Create a packet of printed activities and challenges for the amount of time you need.
- Are there other things being delivered to the youth, such as take-home meals? Try to coordinate with other times that items are being dropped-off at the youth's home to reduce the burden on your program, as well as to limit contact with the youth to adhere to social distancing guidelines. You can also make packets available for pick-up.

DELIVERING THE CONTENT EFFECTIVELY:

- Add a personal touch to your take-home package, like a hand-written note letting the youth know you are thinking about them. This will make them feel connected to you and incentivize them to engage in the activities.
- If possible, send home some or all of the required materials to complete the activities. This will make it possible for all youth to engage in the activity, regardless of their available resources.
- Find a creative way to create a programming loop for youth to engage with you. For instance, ask youth to respond to the discussion questions listed on the activity and send their responses back during the next coordinated delivery.

IN-PERSON

PREPARATION:

- Review the [latest guidance on social distancing for open child care programs](#) from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the [American Camp Association's Summer Operations Guide for 2020](#). Also, check your state-specific requirements that may affect how you serve youth this summer.
- All of the activities and challenges can be facilitated with attention to social distancing guidelines. Prior to implementing the activity, think about how you will divide youth in small groups and how they can participate and share materials safely.
- You may consider purchasing extra materials so that you can reduce sharing between youth. Also, have cleaning materials and PPE available for staff and youth as appropriate.

DELIVERING THE CONTENT EFFECTIVELY:

- At the beginning of the activity, remind youth of social distancing guidelines and demonstrate how they will complete the activity, so that everyone has fun and stays safe.
- Put youth into small groups based on social distancing guidelines. If possible, keep youth in the same small groups throughout the day/session to avoid exposure.
- Allow time for frequent handwashing and sanitizing materials and the program space after the activity. Make a game or "challenge" out of following proper hygiene practices.

The 50 State Afterschool Network



The Summer Activity Guide has been developed for the 50 State Afterschool Network with leadership from the Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network to engage and support children and youth nationwide.

In each state, the afterschool network is broadening opportunities for youth. Seeking equitable outcomes for underserved children to succeed in school and future jobs, a statewide afterschool network brings together cross-sector leaders with a common vision and coordinated strategy to advance quality afterschool and summer learning programs

Alabama Afterschool Community Network
Alaska Afterschool Network
Arizona Center for Afterschool Excellence
Arkansas Out of School Network
California AfterSchool Network
Colorado Afterschool Partnership
Connecticut After School Network
Delaware Afterschool Network
Florida Afterschool Network
Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network
Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance
Idaho Afterschool Network
Afterschool for Children and Teens Now (ACT Now) Coalition (IL)
Indiana Afterschool Network
Iowa Afterschool Alliance
Kansas Enrichment Network
Kentucky Out-of-School Alliance
Louisiana Center for Afterschool Learning
Maine Afterschool Network
Maryland Out of School Time Network
Massachusetts Afterschool Partnership
Michigan After-School Partnership
Ignite Afterschool (MN)
Missouri AfterSchool Network
Mississippi Statewide Afterschool Network
Montana Afterschool Alliance
Beyond School Bells (NE)

Nevada Afterschool Network
New Hampshire Afterschool Network
New Jersey School- Age Care Coalition
NMOST (New Mexico Out of School Time) Network
New York State Network for Youth Success
North Carolina Center for Afterschool Programs
North Dakota Afterschool Network
Ohio Afterschool Network
Oklahoma Partnership for Expanded Learning Opportunities
OregonASK
Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool/Youth Development Network
Rhode Island Afterschool Network
South Carolina Afterschool Alliance
South Dakota Afterschool Network
Tennessee Afterschool Network
Texas Partnership for Out of School Time
Utah Afterschool Network
Vermont Afterschool, Inc.
Virginia Partnership for Out-of-School Time
Washington Expanded Learning Opportunities Network
West Virginia Statewide Afterschool Network
Wisconsin Afterschool Network
Wyoming Afterschool Alliance