

Managing Challenging Behavior in Children & Youth May 2010

The Article: "Assessing Peer Conflict and Aggressive Behaviors: A Guide for Out-of-School Time Program Practitioners"

Where It's From: Child Trends

The Findings: This research brief discusses the importance of healthy peer relationships for children and youth's healthy social and emotional development. Peer conflict can be harmful for young people when they lack the social skills to cope with frustration, and can lead to aggressive behaviors. This brief discusses ways that programs can identify peer conflict and aggressive behaviors, and promote positive peer conflict resolution techniques for young program participants.

Some Specifics: Many factors are associated with aggressive behaviors in children and youth, including an inability to process social information, poor coping skills, and a lack of support from adults. OST Programs can address these behaviors by:

- **Teaching social skills** including problem solving skills, building friendships, conflict resolution, and emotional regulation.
- **Defining behavioral expectations**, clearly defining boundaries, and enforcing appropriate consequences. Consistency can help to reduce aggressive behaviors.
- **Implementing a peer mediation program** in which peers help conflicting students to resolve their own problems.

Read the Full Article: http://www.childtrends.org/Files//Child_Trends-2009_10_29_RB_AssessingPeer.pdf

The Article: "After-School Programs Behavioral Issues Toolkit"

Where It's From: Department of Agriculture and Extension Education, Pennsylvania State University

The Findings: This toolkit provides examples of behavior management techniques that are helpful in working with children and youth, as well as suggestions for ways to integrate these techniques into OST programs.

Some Specifics: OST programs are an appropriate environment for the introduction of preventative techniques for behavior management due to the group settings of most programs, which can help young people to develop social skills and to establish positive social norms for behavior.

- **Positive behavior management** is an effective technique that focuses on what children and youth need to be successful. Elements of its implementation in OST Programs can include:
 - **Clearly communicated expectations for behavior**
 - **Fair and consistent treatment of youth**
 - **Ongoing positive and corrective feedback**
 - **Support for the development of self-monitoring skills**
 - **Persistence**
- Other **intervention techniques** that can be used in youth programs include:
 - **Discipline, not punishment**
 - **Emotion, Thinking, Acting**
 - **Expectations and rules**
 - **Teaching skills**
 - **Focusing on the positive**

Read the Full Article: http://cyfar.cas.psu.edu/PDFs/Behavioral_Toolkit_YET.pdf