

TRAINING SESSION PLAN

COMMITTEES

Committees are a great way to include student voice and choice in your program. When children are working in committees to plan and carry out projects or aspects of the program, committee time itself becomes program activity time. In committees, children are learning independence, group work, and leadership, while leaving staff more time for activities that need direct support.

MEETING GOAL: Learn strategies and techniques to create, support, and get the most out of student-led committees.

PREP: On large flip chart sheets, write the following headings. Post them and place markers nearby.

- Tasks During the Program (for example, set up snack, get out art materials)
- Jobs in Preparation for the Program (for example, plan field trips, order supplies)
- Decisions that Staff Make (for example, projects to do, themes to work with)

Print out and cut up the Committee Cards, to have one card for each small group.

MATERIALS:

- ☐ Flip chart paper or whiteboard
- ☐ Handout: Committee Planning Worksheet, page 4, two per participant
- ☐ Committee Cards, page 5
- ☐ Handout: Observer Checklist, page 6, one per group of 4–5

STEP-BY-STEP

OPENER

10 MINUTES

Activity

- Post the flip charts labeled Tasks During the Program, Jobs in Preparation for the Program, and Decisions that Staff Make.
- As staff enter the room, ask them to list jobs and decisions under the headings.
- After a few minutes, ask staff to take seats and look at the lists.
- Ask if anyone wants to add anything.
- Ask: Could children's committees help or take care of any of these?
- Check or star items identified as opportunities for committees.



INTRODUCTION

Explain: Committees take skill and time to set up, but once done, they run themselves all program long, and even for years. Staff working with committees need to be open and flexible. Children’s committees can come up with great ways of doing things adults hadn’t thought of!

To be successful, committees need (1) a clear function, purpose, or task, with clear instructions; (2) time to plan and develop—children and adults need to learn how to work in and with committees; and (3) dedicated time for committees to do their work.

PLANNING FOR GOOD COMMITTEES

10 MINUTES

Activity

- Divide the group into pairs and distribute the Committee Planning Worksheet.
- Ask each pair to select from the list on the wall a committee they’d like to form.
- Using the Worksheet as a guide, ask pairs to flesh out and share their ideas.
- Talk about any stumbling blocks and discuss possible solutions.

FACILITATING EFFECTIVE COMMITTEES

25 MINUTES

Explain: Working with committees takes practice. The trick is learning how much direction to give and when to let kids lead. This activity will provide an opportunity for practice.

Role Play

- Divide into groups of up to four or five to role play a committee.
- Distribute one Committee Card and the Observer Checklist to each group.
- One person plays “Adult,” and one person, “Observer.” The rest are “Children.” Ask participants to be authentic—and not all be the kid who gives the teacher a hard time! The goal is to look at the committee process, not manage difficult behaviors.
- Allow 10 minutes for committees to plan their first steps.
- After 10 minutes, ask: In your roles as children or staff, rate the effectiveness of your committee on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 as very effective and 1 weak.



Ask and Discuss

Each committee had different levels of information, a different purpose, and different parameters. Who gave the committee a 4 or 5? Who gave it a 1 or 2?

What made one work, and the other not?

- Those playing staff members: When and how did you participate? Did you need to take charge? When were you able to give over leadership to the kids?
- Observers: What did you see?

PLANNING FOR ACTION

5 MINUTES

Ask staff which committee could be set up in the next four weeks to start doing some of the program tasks or making some program choices.

Thinking about that committee possibility, brainstorm a list of roles and committee work the kids could take on. Discuss how to involve English language learners and children with special needs in committees.

Use the *Committee Planning Worksheet* to get started. What is needed to carry it out?



COMMITTEE PLANNING WORKSHEET

Committee Name: _____

Possible Age Groups: _____

COMMITTEE PURPOSE

Example: Committee will plan monthly snack menu using a budget

GUIDELINES

Example: Committee must submit menus to director on the 15th of each month and stay within budget and nutrition guidelines

SUPPORTS NEEDED

Example:

Children: How to use a budget; how to read nutrition information

Staff: Facilitating committees

Resources: FDA guidelines, calculators, or computers

TIME

Example: Committee will meet the first two Mondays of each month during enrichment time

ADULT SUPPORT

Name a staff person who will support this committee

ROLES ON COMMITTEE

Example: Note taker, researcher, math checker, etc.



COMMITTEE CARDS

LIBRARY COMMITTEE

Purpose: To determine a system for a lending library of program books and games

Grades: 3rd–5th grade

FIELD TRIP COMMITTEE

Background: Committee was formed after complaints that the last few trips were too babyish

Purpose: To be determined by group

Grade: 5th grade

SERVICE COMMITTEE

Purpose: To plan service projects for entire multi-aged program

Grades: Kindergarten–5th grade

SNACK COMMITTEE

Purpose: To be determined by group

Grades: Kindergarten and 1st grade

HOMEWORK COMMITTEE

Background: Program is required to have 45 minutes of homework time. There are mixed opinions from the kids about how it should be structured.

Purpose: To be determined by group

Grades: 1st grade–5th grade

BEHAVIOR COMMITTEE

Background: Was suggested by a staff person who was tired of giving time outs and yelling at the kids.

Purpose: To be determined by group

Grades: Middle School



COMMITTEE OBSERVER CHECKLIST

COMMITTEE WORK

DID COMMITTEE MEMBERS...	YES	NO	SOMEWHAT	COMMENTS
Work together?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Create a plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Understand and follow directions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Meet the deadline?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Express opinions/ disagree respectfully?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Actively participate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

How do committee members rate their effectiveness on a scale of 1-4? _____

(1 is "Not at All Effective" and 4 is "Completely Effective")

