



## **Adventure Day Thoughts & Suggestions from Staff**

The following thoughts and suggestions were gathered from staff working the Adventure Day program over the course of several years.

Keep in mind that this resource was developed by staff who led programs in public schools during the course of the regular school day. This document references a two facilitator program (two facilitators working with one class for the entire school day).

1. You're the authority. You're taking the place of the teacher for the day. You may have to be a little like the teacher in order to get some of the Adventure Day agenda accomplished.
2. Be aware of how "groovy and loose" you are. This program is not just about having fun. It's about learning important life skills. Our job is not to be a kid's best friend, our job is to create positive long-term change.
3. Fifth graders are not so good at sharing "air time." Staff need to help them do this. Raise hands. Wait your turn to be called on. What you (the facilitator) have to say AND what the kids have to say is important.
4. Be able to manage your time. Have a watch and use it. We have one six hour block of time to work with these kids so let's not waste any of it.
5. Enter into your day with the kids with the intent of completing a small (vs. big) set of goals. Observe the group in the morning big group session and try to get a read on what you'll work on in your small group session.
6. Kids need to feel safe and comfortable (hierarchy of needs). We want to open some windows for these kids. Some of the kids will be ready to look through these windows and others will not. Meet the kids where they are.
7. Be aware of gender issues.
8. Be able to get a group to stick with something even when it gets hard and/or takes a long time.
9. Fifth graders can have a hard time accepting differences (i.e. boy/girl, jocks/geeks, big/small, black/white, etc.). Some possible responses: What does it feel like to be treated poorly?

# International Association of Teamwork Facilitators

What does it feel like to be accepted for who you are? How does this impact our team / community?

10. Fifth graders can have a hard time focusing and concentrating during a full day program. You must be a showman / showwoman.
11. Remember, teams produce positive results on a consistent basis by CHOICE (not by accident). Some teams are conscious of their choices and others are not. The Adventure Day program helps kids become aware of the choices their making and then linking those choices with outcomes (positive and negative).
12. Review, repeat, have structure.
13. Be prepare, especially with your props. These kids are excited and it's easier to direct their energy if you're well prepared and have a minimal of down time due to lack of preparedness.
14. You need to be aware of how you look, dress, act, talk in the eyes of the students, teachers, and administration. We're on their turf. We must follow and enforce the school rules (ex. line-up at the door, send kids to the office for fighting, food policies around gum and candy, etc.).
15. You need to be assertive. We mean business. Hold the students to a high standard. Don't let the kids railroad you or the program.
16. Think about what you're saying and how you're saying it. Be extra clear. Show what you're talking about so you're more likely to engage the visual learners.
17. Make the last activity fool proof and positive so as to end on a good note for the day.
18. It's okay for a group to experience "failure" or non-success as long as the group learns something important.
19. For most of these kids, the Adventure Day program will be one of the first times working in a team. some have experience playing on sports teams but most have very little practice working with other people.
20. We want to empower the students to realize they have choices and that their choices affect their outcomes. There are many kids who do not see a relation between their actions and what happens to them (and around them). Adventure Day can help kids see and experience this "link". A learning experience of this type can positively impact the trajectory of a child's life.
21. Learn how to ask good questions. A good question will get the kids talking. If you ask a question and no one responds, it could be your question is poorly languaged. Ask questions

# International Association of Teamwork Facilitators

that create openings, not dead-ends. A good question can draw out the genius of the individual and the group. Talk with the kids, not at the kids.

22. Don't back kids into a corner.
23. Ineffective leaders often *direct* or tell kids what to do instead of *inviting* kids to join the experience. Learn how to make your invitation enticing.
24. Listen to what the kids are saying. Really listen. Ask clarifying questions.
25. Be sensitive to the kids agenda. Know how to read the group and adjust the activities to meet the needs of that particular group.