



CLOSING ENDING THE DAY

Closing

The closing of your program is the final transition of the day. From a programmatic perspective, you are setting up for the following day. For the staff, they can reflect on the effectiveness of the day and set up for tomorrow. For youth, you are transitioning them back to the caregiver—and you can bank a “deposit” in the emotional bank account by sharing something positive with parents and guardians.



Closing Overview

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Closing-Wrapping Up the Day

Key Points

When you complete this e-Book you will have an understanding of the different elements of an effective Closing. While Closing seems like it should be just a matter of shutting the program down, it is a critical part of the after-school day.

Terms/Glossary

Look for the following terms when you read this e-Book:

Caregiver: A person who picks a student up from the after-school program. The caregiver may be a relative or simply someone who is taking on the role of the parent for a time.

Giving A Positive: This term refers to sharing a positive complement with the parent about something the youth have done in program. You can also share something you were told about during the school day as well.



Preparation: Part of the end of the day is getting ready for the following day. Preparation is something that can easily be done when you still have students who can support the effort.

Lock-Up: At the end of the program it is important that you secure the building. Lock-up refers to this effort.

Prior Knowledge

Have you ever attended an event that really doesn't have an Opening or a Closing? Have you asked yourself, "Does this mean we are finished?" or "Can we go now?" When an activity or event does not have a Closing it is like writing a sentence, but not including the ending punctuation mark. Things just don't feel complete.

Brain Power

When the Olympic Games come around every four years, there is a great deal of attention paid to the Opening and Closing Ceremonies. The Opening sets the stage for the Games and the Closing wraps them up. Think about the different ways that activities and events can be wrapped up. What is effective about this intentional closing?

Introduction

Being intentional about your Closing is as important as it is to be intentional about your Opening. One acts as a way to transition youth TO the program while the other transitions the youth FROM the program. A strong Opening has a variety of parts, but one of the most important is being sure that youth are going with the right person. Orchestrate your Closing to ensure that youth will have a good evening at home.

Debrief

Based on what you've read so far, what is important about an intentional Closing? How might parents react to a positive comment about their student? When will you commit to strengthening your program—next 72 hours, next 4 days, next week? Discuss what you will be implementing.



Knowledge and Information

The Closing of your program is the final transition for the student you are responsible for. During the Closing you are teeing up the evening the student will have with his/her parent or caregiver. It is important that you focus your Closing on positive family contact, preparation for the next day, and clean-up.

Your program may require that family members pick the youth up and sign them out. One of the ways you can see to it that the experience is positive is having sign-out sheets organized, and an established and a well-communicated clear sign-out procedure. You may want to use a class roster, individual student sign-out sheet for the month, or a weekly sign-out page. You can organize your sign-out by Program Leader or by the student's last name (alphabetical order of course). Whichever way you do it, you need to have a clear plan. Communicate the plan in a newsletter or a memo. Take the time to explain the procedure during the first few weeks or anytime you have a new student. It is also important to have a procedure to verify the identity of a person picking up a student who is unknown by staff. At the beginning of the program year staff should check everyone's identification. If students sign themselves out so they can walk home or ride the bus, the procedure should be similar. Either way, your challenge is to see that youth leave for home with a positive attitude.

If you have caregivers pick youth up and sign them out, be sure that you greet the parents with a welcoming smile and a "hello" that is reinforced with eye contact and body language that is congruent with the message that you are happy to see the adult. Your goal is to share something positive about the student with the parent or caregiver as often as you can. This is especially important if you believe you will need to share a concern about the child's behavior at some point. Remember, no one wants to hear negative comments every time you talk with them. They need to know you will share both the positive and the adverse. If you do need to share something about the child's poor choice(s) with the parent, let them know in advance if at all possible, and set an appointment so the parent doesn't feel ambushed when they come to sign the child out. If your students walk home or ride the bus, from time to time send a note home praising the student, or call home and leave a positive message. Taking the time to share "good news" with parents goes a long way.



Once when I was overseeing an after-school program, we had a young girl who was incredibly challenging. She was generally disrespectful and angry, and was more than willing to insult fellow students and adults alike. The Site Coordinator was determined to find something she could praise in this third grader.

After trying several things she discovered that she loved to collate and staple papers. She was very precise and really did a fine job. Actually, the girl was willing to cooperate or at least not be uncooperative if she could collate and staple newsletters, packets of information or anything else. After a particularly good day when the girl's father came to pick her up and sign her out, the Site Coordinator took the time to share with the parent how helpful his daughter had been during the program. He looked surprised and inquired, "Do you know who I'm picking up?" The Site Coordinator responded absolutely and then continued to share what his daughter had done. The father had tears in his eyes when he said to the Site Coordinator, "No one at school has ever told me anything good about her. Thanks." The Site Coordinator found out the next day that they had celebrated at McDonald's. It was a turning point for both the girl and her father.

Just like in the Opening, take the time to build relationships at the end of the day as well. Speak to each student individually, even if it is a simple, "Good bye—glad you came." If the student has shared something during the day that they anticipate will be exciting this evening, tell them you hope they have a great time. If the student has expressed some anxiety about the evening to come, then give them a word of encouragement. This will confirm for students that you are both interested in them and that you were paying attention to what they said.

As the day comes to an end, it is important that your energy and enthusiasm remain high. Youth will take a cue from you. If you begin to lose interest, two things will happen. Youth will lose interest too, but more



importantly, the youth may translate the letting down as disinterest in them on your part. They might even begin to apologize for still being in the program. It is important that youth understand that every minute you spend with them is important. Plan activities that youth can participate in until they are signed out or sign themselves out. Fun at 5:30 needs to be your goal. At the end of the day when only one student is left, maybe the activity you participate in is a conversation or a learning game that the two of you are participating in together. Keep the

energy level up—collapse can certainly happen when the last student has gone for the day.

Finally, the Closing should be used to prepare for the next day and clean up. Engage the youth in helping to set up for the following day. They can sharpen pencils, reorganize the crayons or colored pencils, consolidate the supplies in a math kit, or any number of things. Youth can also help with clean-up. Remember that you are leaving the program space ready for students the following morning. If you are in the cafeteria or multi-purpose room where breakfast is served, make sure the tables are wiped down and that all of the garbage is in the outdoor trash. If the classroom still needs to be cleaned, be sure to put the chairs up on the desks and the trash by the door. Leave the room the way you would like to find it in the morning. This will be good for everyone.

Bullet Points

- Closing should be intentionally planned. Create a routine.
- If parents sign youth out of your program, speak to them and welcome them to the program.
- Share positive comments with parents and caregivers. If you don't see them to do this verbally, send home a note congratulating the youth.
- Be sure to have a routine to check ID until you know a parent by sight.
- Use the Closing to clean up and get ready for the next day.

C4K Minute—Making It Real

Consider the youth in your program that tend to act out. Think about something you could praise them for. What do they enjoy doing and do well? How can you get them involved in this activity? How will you share this complement with the youth's parent? Provide a positive every day.

Debrief

What have you learned about running an effective Closing? How will you put this knowledge to work in your program in the next 72 hours?



During this Closing time, once you have debriefed the day or the final activity, youth might want to finish up any unfinished homework, play a game, participate in a project, or hang out with friends. It is important that they are NOT sitting and waiting.

Universal

Establishing a routine for ending an activity or event will help everyone in the audience or in attendance have a sense of closure. The book-ends of events are important.

After-School

Remember that in most cases parents and caregivers have been working all day. They have experienced a set of challenges, opportunities, disappointments and excitement throughout the day. Remember to greet them by name. You are building relationships with them.

Positional

Sometimes you will need to speak with a parent about the child's inappropriate behavior. Focus on the behavior and help the parent understand how the behavior demonstrates either a lack of respect, responsibility or safe behavior.

Review

In your journal, write about the information you are taking away from this content. Highlight your key learnings.

Key Learning

Since you have reviewed the material, ask yourself how you can translate the information into a learning for you, and then how will you practice that learning by implementing it or executing on a specific action. Think in terms of your personal and professional life. For example:

Personal: I have learned that sharing a praise or complement with the parent can make the transition to home easier for youth and the parent.

Professional: I want to remember that Closing is as important to program quality as is every other aspect of programming.



Journal Entry

I did this well and celebrated by _____.

I did not do so well at _____, and I will strengthen my performance in the future by doing _____.



Walk Through the Day

The Openings

Pre-Pre-Opening: Even though this is the Pre-Pre-Opening of program, it is the Closing of some other aspect of your life. Take the time to think about what you have done, your success, and lessons learned.

Practical Application: Make a list of what you will do after you are finished with work. Once you have a list, you can be more focused on the here and now because you know you will remember with the help of a list.

Pre-Opening: During this segment, determine who will do what during the Closing. Whether it is you or you are delegating some of the load, you need to know who is doing what during Pre-Opening.

Practical Application: Talk with a colleague about how you will focus on giving a compliment to one of the students in your cluster who has a brother in her cluster. You will need to decide if the parent is to receive two compliments or whether you need to orchestrate it differently for each child.

Opening: Youth are just arriving at program. You will be setting up for a successful sign-out while you are in the Opening. Take roll accurately so there is no ambiguity at the end of the day.

Practical Application: Remind youth that at the end of the day they will probably be asked what they did today. Your expectation is that they will have something to share. If time permits, have them practice.

Rotations: Each of your rotations has a mini-closing. Determine how you will “close” each activity in advance. Will you call time, will the winner have the most correct answers, and will the teamer have resolved the issue? Whatever you do to close the activity during the rotation should be setting up the broader Closing at the end of the day.

Practical Application: Begin with the end in mind. Know how you want to end the activity before you ever begin. Ask yourself how you want each rotation to end, enlist the help and support of the kids, and then move forward.

Closing: This moment in the day will happen routinely. Having parents see first-hand how your program is organized, how you ensure that their youth is safe, and so on should be revealed during the Closing.

Practical Application: Create a lesson plan for the Closing. Keep as much the same as possible—this would be the routine, but also plan what extra activities you will have available for youth to participate in, and designate which youth will be responsible for the Closing procedure.



Connect to Online Instruction

Closing



- **KEY INDICATOR: Ending the Day, Preparation for Tomorrow**
 - **Greeters for Parents**
 - Mini #19 Greeters
 - **Activities for Kids to Do While They are Waiting to Be Picked Up**
 - Mini #12 Serendipities
 - Mini #43 Serendipities 2
 - Mini #110 Fun at 5:30
 - **Sign Out Sheets**
 - Mini #59 Signing Out
 - **Intentional Relationship Building**
 - Mini #15 Building Relationships
 - **Communication with Parents**
 - Mini # 41 Talking with Parents
 - Mini # 74 Communication Logs
 - Lesson #4 Communication with SC's, Parents, School Day, Students
 - **Preparation for the Next Day**
 - Mini #22 Preparation for Next Day
 - **Clean Up**
 - Mini #6 Clean-up
 - Mini #42 Student Monitors
 - Module #9 Agreements/Clean-up