



# ROTATIONS THE CORE OF YOUR PROGRAM

## Rotations

Rotations give youth a plethora of learning opportunities and implementing a schedule which accommodates the interests of youth and allows them to engage and explore in a relatively risk-free environment makes rotations a powerful draw for your program. A schedule provides you a framework for rotations.



**Rotations  
Overview**

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**Knowledge and  
Information**

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**Schedules**

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**Review**

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**Online Resources**

## **CONSULT 4 KIDS**

7850 White Lane  
Suite E-150  
Bakersfield, CA  
93309

[www.consultfourkids.com](http://www.consultfourkids.com)

(661) 665-8270

## Rotations-The Core of Your Program

### Key Points

When you complete this e-Book you will have a better understanding of things to consider when you are determining what rotations you will offer the youth in your program. You will also have an opportunity to review several possible schedules based on the amount of time your program operates each day. Finally you will understand the importance of engaging youth in decision making around not only what rotations to offer, but selecting which rotation they will attend.

### Terms/Glossary

**Rotation:** A rotation is a way to schedule a variety of opportunities into a defined time period. A rotation provides choices and options to participants.

**Choice:** Choice means having input into when you do something or what you participate in, or both. It is hearing the voice of the participant.

**Schedule:** A schedule is a way we look at time. Schedules can be based on hours, days, weeks, months, or any combination of these time frames. A schedule is also a way to look at both dosage (how much time you will spend on something), and duration (how long will you spend on something).

**Calendar:** A calendar is a broad look at the year. It contains the big buckets rather than the schedule. It is a way to holistically look at your year. A calendar can inform your schedule.



### Prior Knowledge

Think back to your high school and college schedules. How were they the same? How were they different? Chances are that your high school schedule had you “locked” in to the same class, during the same time period, every day for at least a semester. You had an opportunity to have some input on your schedule as far as content, but the orchestration of the day probably rested in the hand of a computer program or a counselor. In college you probably had a schedule that had you attend particular classes on a particular day, and you were able to choose not only the class (even though there was determination of the range of classes you would need to attend), but the time of the day that you attended. Think about how different the experience was. When we consider after-school programming, we want to figure out how to get the best of both worlds.

## Brain Power



Think about all of the ways you have scheduled time. Think about how important it is to have “time off,” whether that is a day, weekend, or a longer time in the world of work we know as vacation. Down time is important—a time to simply unwind. What about during your “work” day (be that your day at school or at work)? Do you have any options to rearrange the schedule? Perhaps you cannot change the schedule, but do you have options within the time frame? If that is not optional (for example if you are in after-school, homework may be scheduled from 3:00-4:00 and that is not optional), is it possible to arrange the order you do things during that time frame? Engaging youth in choosing any aspect of how you create a schedule will create buy-in and ownership. Think of how you can do that considering the constraints that exist.

## Introduction

Rotations provide youth in after-school programs with opportunities to experience a wide range of activities. In your mind imagine the biggest room that you can. Picture doors on every wall situated as close to one another as possible. Behind each door is a different learning opportunity. As an after-school professional, your job is to open as many of those doors as possible. You will encourage youth to enter many different doors. Certainly they will not “enjoy” each of the opportunities equally, and that is terrific. Enjoying or not enjoying allows youth to begin to define interest, talent, and aptitudes.

## Debrief

What did you learn from this overview? What will you utilize as you begin to think about your rotations? How will you include all staff and youth as appropriate?

## Knowledge and Information

### Understanding Student Needs

All students are not the same. Certainly that statement does not surprise you. However, much of what we do assumes that this statement is inaccurate. Rather than taking the time to discover what is best for individual students, it is easier to schedule without giving them a thought, and thinking strictly about the convenience of a pre-determined schedule that fits into the time frame. By the same token, it is also true that schedules are needed to be sure that deliverables and expectations are met. If you are thinking about after-school in particular, homework assistance is really not optional. It is expected; maybe by charter or legislation, maybe by parents or caregivers who have youth attend the program, certainly by the school day, and quite possibly by the youth themselves. So how do we balance the need for a schedule and the needs of individual students?

One of the ways we accommodate student needs is to begin program with an Opening that includes a snack, opportunities to talk and share the day with other students and adults, a chance to unwind and participate in group and team challenges, and celebrations that acknowledge special days and hard work for both staff and students. This type of an Opening offers youth the chance to decompress in a caring environment. Planning your Opening with youth and all of the staff will help you create 20 minutes that can set the stage for the remainder of the day.



Even after an Opening such as the one described, you may have youth who need an opportunity to participate in physical activity before they are ready to sit down and work on homework. You will have other youth who will do better if they get started on homework right away, so the school day can be completely finished before they join into after-school activities. If you have both types of students in your cluster, what can you do? Perhaps one way to address this would be to schedule Homework right after Opening followed by physical activity, two days a week, and then schedule physical activity followed by Homework on the other two. Mixing it up can meet the needs of all of the youth at least some of the time. In a schedule you would block out 1:20 minutes (or so) for both Homework and physical activity, and then split the time between the two.

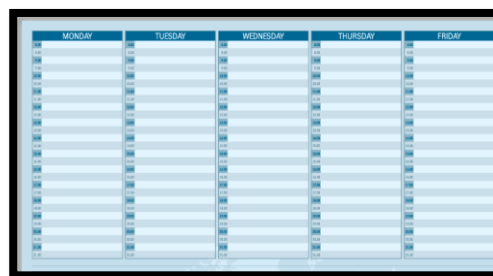
Another thing to consider when you create a schedule may seem to be counter-intuitive. Much of the time when youth do not complete a task (for example homework), it is easy to believe that providing more time will be the solution. Often the effect is the exact opposite. You've simply given them more time to "not" complete the task. Compressing the time (even by 5 minutes) can help focus youth on accomplishing the task. Also, it is important that students have something to look forward to participating in after the less desirable activity is over.

When you are creating your schedule, be sure to include time for both debriefing and transitions. It is important that you think this through as you are making a schedule or you will discover that debriefing is glossed over and transitions are chaotic. For example, if you want an activity to “last” for 25 minutes, then to schedule 35 minutes (10 extra for transitions and debriefing), would make sense. At the beginning of a program year you will want to include more time for debriefing and transitions until a routine has been established. Recognize also that there is a difference between being rushed and feeling a moderate sense of urgency.

Finally when you are creating a schedule, it is important to include at least some options where youth can choose what they want to participate in. Choices can be for a single time period—perhaps an activity on a Fun Friday or a Wacky Wednesday, that is really a “one and done.” Choices can also be focused on club selections (this e-book will look at this in more detail in the coming pages), which might run one or two times a week for several weeks. Finally choices could be around projects that interest youth, will be worked on for several months, and will end in a culminating event. For example, youth who are interested in art work, can work on a mural project that will depict a safety theme. Considering these aspects of scheduling will help you create a dynamic schedule that will meet the needs of the youth in your program.

### Possible Elementary Schedules

Creating a schedule begins with the time that is allocated to your program. Usually after-school programs are finished by 6:00 p.m. So are you going to operate a 3 hour, 3.5 hour, or 4 hour program? Certainly you could operate a program for less or more time, but following you will find possible schedules for 3, 3.5 and 4 hours programs. You will also see that the schedule is divided into “weeks,” and the variation of what occurs is in the week itself. Prior to looking at the layout or schedule by the week, a “master” schedule has been created that allocates the time, and all of the possible things that could be included in that time frame. Certainly you could rearrange the blocks of time to meet the needs of your students.



#### **3 Hour Schedule** (Program Begins at 3:00 p.m.)

15 minutes	Opening (include snack, role, announcements, celebrations, ice breaker activities)
10 minutes	Restroom/Drink Break
55 minutes	Homework (including activities that support Kidz Lit (or other literacy program) or Math Blast (or other math games) for when children are finished with Homework)
45 minutes	Literacy, Science or Math
10 minutes	Restroom/Drink Break
45 minutes	Healthy Living (physical activity, nutrition education, Conflict Resolution, Character Education), Visual and Performing Arts Activities (Drama, Dance, Art, Music)
	Sign out at 6:00 p.m.

### 3 Hour Week 1

	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
3:00-3:15	Opening	Opening	Opening	Opening	Opening
3:15-3:25	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom
3:25-4:20	Homework	Homework	Homework	Homework	Club Choice— P.E., art, music, drama, dance
4:20-5:05	Math	Science	Math	Science	
5:05-5:15	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom
5:15-6:00	Physical Activity/ Music	Nutrition Education	Physical Activity/ Art	Conflict Resolution/ Character Ed	Club Choice— Art, music, drama, dance

### 3 Hour Week 2

	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
3:00-3:15	Opening	Opening	Opening	Opening	Opening
3:15-3:25	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom
3:25-4:20	Homework	Homework	Homework	Homework	Club Choice— P.E., art, music, drama, dance
4:20-5:05	Literacy	Literacy	Literacy	Literacy	
5:05-5:15	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom
5:15-6:00	Nutrition Education	Physical Activity/ Music	Physical Activity / Art	Conflict Resolution/ Character Ed	Club Choice— Art, music, drama, dance

### 3 Hour Week 3

	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
3:00-3:15	Opening	Opening	Opening	Opening	Opening
3:15-3:25	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom
3:25-4:20	Homework	Homework	Homework	Homework	Club Choice— Art, music, drama, dance
4:20-5:05	Literacy	Literacy	Literacy	Literacy	
5:05-5:15	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom
5:15-6:00	Physical Activity / Music	Physical Activity / Art	Nutrition Education	Conflict Resolution/ Character Ed	Club Choice— Art, music, drama, dance



### 3 Hour Week 4

	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
3:00-3:15	Opening	Opening	Opening	Opening	Opening
3:15-3:25	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom
3:25-4:20	Homework	Homework	Homework	Homework	Club Choice— Art, music, drama, dance
4:20-5:05	Math	Science	Math	Science	
5:05-5:15	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom
5:15-6:00	Physical Activity/ Art	Physical Activity / Music	Conflict Resolution/ Character Ed	Nutrition Education	Club Choice— Art, music, drama, dance

### **3.5 Hour Schedule** (Program Begins at 2:30 p.m.)

20 minutes	Opening (include snack, role, announcements, celebrations, ice breaker activities)
10 minutes	Restroom/Drink Break
55 minutes	Homework (including activities that support literacy or math for when children are finished with Homework)
45 minutes	Literacy, Math, Science
10 minutes	Restroom/Drink Break
35 minutes	Healthy Living (Physical Activity, Conflict Resolution, Nutrition Education, Character Education)
35 minutes	Visual and Performing Arts Activities (Drama, Dance, Art, Music)

### 3.5 Hour Week 1

	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
2:30-2:50	Opening	Opening	Opening	Opening	Opening
2:50-3:00	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom
3:00-3:55	Homework	Homework	Homework	Homework	Club Choice: Open to interest of children, skill of staff—include P.E.
3:55-4:40	Math	Science	Math	Science	
4:40-4:50	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom
4:50-5:25	Physical Activity	Nutrition Education	Physical Activity	Conflict Resolution/ Character Ed	Club Choice: Open to interest of children, skill of staff
5:25-6:00	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	



### 3.5 Hour Week 2

	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
2:30-2:50	Opening	Opening	Opening	Opening	Opening
2:50-3:00	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom
3:00-3:55	Homework	Homework	Homework	Homework	Club Choice: Open to interest of children, skill of staff—include P.E.
3:55-4:40	Literacy	Literacy	Literacy	Literacy	
4:40-4:50	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom
4:50-5:25	Physical Activity	Nutrition Education	Physical Activity	Conflict Resolution/ Character Ed	Club Choice: Open to interest of children, skill of staff
5:25-6:00	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	

### 3.5 Hour Week 3

	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
2:30-2:50	Opening	Opening	Opening	Opening	Opening
2:50-3:00	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom
3:00-3:55	Homework	Homework	Homework	Homework	Club Choice: Open to interest of children, skill of staff—include P.E.
3:55-4:40	Literacy	Literacy	Literacy	Literacy	
4:40-4:50	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom
4:50-5:25	Physical Activity	Nutrition Education	Physical Activity	Conflict Resolution/ Character Ed	Club Choice: Open to interest of children, skill of staff
5:25-6:00	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	





### 3.5 Hour Week 4

	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
2:30-2:50	Opening	Opening	Opening	Opening	Opening
2:50-3:00	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom
3:00-3:55	Homework	Homework	Homework	Homework	Club Choice: Open to interest of children, skill of staff—include P.E.
3:55-4:40	Math	Science	Math	Science	
4:40-4:50	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom
4:50-5:25	Physical Activity	Nutrition Education	Physical Activity	Conflict Resolution/ Character Ed	Club Choice: Open to interest of children, skill of staff
5:25-6:00	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	

### 4 Hour Schedule (Program Begins at 2:00 p.m.)

20 minutes	Opening (include snack, role, announcements, celebrations, ice breaker activities)
10 minutes	Restroom/Drink Break
55 minutes	Homework (including activities that support literacy or math for when children are finished with Homework)
55 minutes	Literacy, Math, Science
10 minutes	Restroom/Drink Break
45 minutes	Healthy Living (Physical Activity, Conflict Resolution, Nutrition Education, Character Education)
45 minutes	Visual and Performing Arts Activities (Drama, Dance, Art, Music)

### 4 Hour Week 1

	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
2:00-2:20	Opening	Opening	Opening	Opening	Opening
2:20-2:30	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom
2:30-3:25	Homework	Homework	Homework	Homework	Club Choice: Open to interest of children, skill of staff—include P.E.
3:25-4:20	Math	Science	Math	Science	
4:20-4:30	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom

4:30-5:15	Physical Activity	Nutrition Education	Physical Activity	Conflict Resolution/ Character Ed	Club Choice: Open to interest of children, skill of staff
5:15-6:00	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	

#### 4 Hour Week 2

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2:00-2:20	Opening	Opening	Opening	Opening	Opening
2:20-2:30	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom
2:30-3:25	Homework	Homework	Homework	Homework	Club Choice: Open to interest of children, skill of staff—include P.E.
3:25-4:20	Literacy	Literacy	Literacy	Literacy	
4:20-4:30	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom
4:30-5:15	Physical Activity	Nutrition Education	Physical Activity	Conflict Resolution/ Character Ed	Club Choice: Open to interest of children, skill of staff
5:15-6:00	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	

#### 4 Hour Week 3

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2:00-2:20	Opening	Opening	Opening	Opening	Opening
2:20-2:30	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom
2:30-3:25	Homework	Homework	Homework	Homework	Club Choice: Open to interest of children, skill of staff—include P.E.
3:25-4:20	Literacy	Literacy	Literacy	Literacy	
4:20-4:30	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom
4:30-5:15	Physical Activity	Nutrition Education	Physical Activity	Conflict Resolution/ Character Ed	Club Choice: Open to interest of children, skill of staff
5:15-6:00	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	



#### 4 Hour Week 4

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2:00-2:20	Opening	Opening	Opening	Opening	Opening
2:20-2:30	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom
2:30-3:25	Homework	Homework	Homework	Homework	Club Choice: Open to interest of children, skill of staff—include P.E.
3:25-4:20	Math	Science	Math	Science	
4:20-4:30	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom	Restroom
4:30-5:15	Physical Activity	Nutrition Education	Physical Activity	Conflict Resolution/ Character Ed	Club Choice: Open to interest of children, skill of staff
5:15-6:00	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	Drama, Dance, Art, Music	

Although in these schedules the club choices were placed on Friday, you could easily place clubs in other sections.

#### Possible Middle School Schedules

Middle School schedules should certainly be different from elementary schedules. The schedules below have the segments of the day divided in Recharge, Count Down, Blast Off, Power Play and Sign-out.

#### Middle School 3 Hour Schedule (Program Begins at 3:00 p.m.)

30 minutes	<b>Recharge:</b> Snack (30 minutes)—Include music (screened), announcements, honoring birthdays, and an opportunity for young people to “chill out” after a day at school.
60 minutes	<b>Count Down!</b> Homework for 1 hour, divided by grade level or subject content (reading, math, science, etc.)
30 minutes	<b>BLAST OFF!</b> Team Building Activity—(30 minutes) can include things such as CATCH, Fear Factor, quick physical activity (relays, Steal the Bacon) done in a tournament format, counting points.
55 minutes	<b>Power Play!</b> (55 minutes) This is a choice of activities for students. They should select for one day only, two days a week (Monday/Wednesday, Tuesday/Thursday), 4 days a week (Monday – Thursday), 2 days a week for six weeks, etc. Students may choose the same activity every day.
5 minutes	<b>Sign out</b> at 6:00 p.m.

#### Power Play Activities

Power Play activities should be generated by students, and/or include specific academic support activities for 2 days a week, for 6 weeks. Young people should be invited to attend these academic sessions based on their need for the course. Other Power Play activities may include:



- Sports: Tradition sports (basketball, soccer, football) with a warm up (5 minutes), skill practice (10 minutes), game play (40 minutes), cool down, and debrief (5 minutes). Can offer 1 sport or more at a time depending on interest and supervision.
- Cheerleading/dance/drill team
- Physical Activity appropriate for Middle School students
- Teen Cuisine (Take cooking activity from Teen Cuisine—use no-cook recipes)
- Mad Scientist (Take experiments from Mad Scientist curriculum)
- Drama (Reader’s Theater)
- Strategic Games (Othello, Sequence, Chess, Checkers)
- Student Leadership Team (can be self-selected or coach-selected)
- Pay It Forward (working on community causes i.e. peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for the homeless shelter, planting the school flower beds....)
- Other offerings the staff can deliver (crochet, skate boarding, model car building, etc.)

Students could be required to attend 3 Power Play Activities for a minimum of 12 sessions (one six week rotation, 2 days each week)

- Math
- Road to High School and College
- Leadership development

**Middle School 3.5 Hour Schedule** (Program Begins at 2:30 p.m.)

30 minutes	<b>Recharge:</b> Snack (30 minutes)—Include music (screened), announcements, honoring birthdays, and an opportunity for young people to “chill out” after a day at school.
60 minutes	<b>Count Down!</b> Homework for 1 hour, divided by grade level or subject content (reading, math, science, etc.)
25 minutes	<b>BLAST OFF!</b> Team Building Activity—(30 minutes) can include things such as CATCH, Fear Factor, quick physical activity (relays, Steal the Bacon) done in a tournament format, counting points.
45 minutes	<b>Power Play! 1</b> (45 minutes) This is a choice of activities for students. They should select for one day only, two days a week (Monday/Wednesday, Tuesday/Thursday), 4 days a week (Monday – Thursday), 2 days a week for six weeks, etc. Students may choose the same activity every day. You might want some classes to combine with Power Play 2 for a 1.5 hour time frame.
45 minutes	<b>Power Play! 2</b> (45 minutes) This is a choice of activities for students. They should select for one day only, two days a week (Monday/Wednesday, Tuesday/Thursday), 4 days a week (Monday – Thursday), 2 days a week for six weeks, etc. Students may choose the same activity every day.
5 minutes	<b>Sign out</b> at 6:00 p.m.

#### **4 Hour Schedule** (Program Begins at 2:00 p.m.)

30 minutes	<b>Recharge:</b> Snack (30 minutes)—Include music (screened), announcements, honoring birthdays, and an opportunity for young people to “chill out” after a day at school.
60 minutes	<b>Count Down!</b> Homework for 1 hour, divided by grade level or subject content (reading, math, science, etc.)
30 minutes	<b>BLAST OFF!</b> Team Building Activity—(30 minutes) can include things such as CATCH, Fear Factor, quick physical activity (relays, Steal the Bacon) done in a tournament format, counting points.
55 minutes	<b>Power Play! 1</b> (45 minutes) This is a choice of activities for students. They should select for one day only, two days a week (Monday/Wednesday, Tuesday/Thursday), 4 days a week (Monday – Thursday), 2 days a week for six weeks, etc. Students may choose the same activity every day. You might want some classes to combine with Power Play 2 for a 1.5 hour time frame.
55 minutes	<b>Power Play! 2</b> (45 minutes) This is a choice of activities for students. They should select for one day only, two days a week (Monday/Wednesday, Tuesday/Thursday), 4 days a week (Monday – Thursday), 2 days a week for six weeks, etc. Students may choose the same activity every day.
10minutes	<b>Sign out</b> at 6:00 p.m.

#### **Clubs and Competitions**

Clubs are an excellent way to help young people apply the academic skills they acquire during the school day. Clubs can be offered for one or multiple sessions. Often, a single club will operate two days a week for six to eight weeks. To select the type of club you offer, ask the students what they would like to learn more about. Clubs can cover a wide range of topics. C4K has observed the following clubs: Outreach to a Homeless Center, blanket making, Mean Cuisine, Mad Scientist, Battle of the Books, crochet, Salsa Dancing, strategic games, sports, debate, cheerleading, newspaper, yearbook, fitness, nutrition, Tole painting, scrapbooking, skateboarding, and many others. These clubs were all suggested by students. Program Leaders facilitated those clubs for one of two reasons: First, the club was something they were interested in and had expertise in; or they were interested in learning more about the subject and knew that if they facilitated the club they would learn a great deal.



Tying the club activities to academics is relatively easy to do. It is possible to always bring in writing. You might ask students to write a letter inviting someone to attend the club, a newspaper article trying to convince someone to try the club, or a feature that shares with others what the club is learning. Also, other academic areas can come into play. Mean Cuisine can include math (especially measurement), writing a set of directions explaining exactly how to make a particular dish, kitchen science which would explain why

soda makes cookie dough rise, and then the social etiquette required when eating together. Students could also research the history of the food, make a connection to a locale which first created the dish, explore where the ingredients could be raised, and map this to a world calendar. Clubs are similar to projects with the exception that they do not usually have a culminating event. Rather, each or every other club meeting has a mini culminating event.

Another value of clubs is that they provide young people with an opportunity to make a choice. It is important that you give kids a chance to explore a wide variety of interests, so changing clubs regularly will give students a wide variety of choices during the school year. Another advantage of giving young people a choice is the opportunity for teaching moments that choice provides. It is quite possible that a young person will make a club choice that they regret (maybe within a few sessions). This is an opportunity to talk



about how to make a “good choice,” and how to do research so that what you “get” is what you expected. While you might want to let students make a second choice once in a while, there is a key learning in this, and that is that sometimes you don’t get a second choice. For example, if you purchase a car, sign the papers, and drive off, two weeks later you do not get to take the car back and have your money returned. It is a choice that sticks. Many of the choices we make in life have long lasting consequences, so learning

to be careful and thoughtful when making a choice is important. Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations from 1997-2006, said this about choice: “To live is to choose. But to choose well, you must know who you are and what you stand for, where you want to go and why you want to get there.” If we think about this and help young people think about the meaning of this quote as well, students will not only learn about whatever the subject of the club is, they will also learn a valuable life lesson—if choice leads to an end—it ought to be the end you most desire.

It is also important that you have a clear understanding about how to facilitate activities that are both competitive and cooperative. When you are working with students in a club environment, in project-based learning, service learning or community service projects, the activities can be done in a cooperative or competitive way. If you are trying to create a win-win environment, then you will select cooperative strategies. Cooperative strategies allow multiple individuals and teams to work together to “defeat” the challenge they are working on. The entire group participates in the win and celebrates success. If you are trying to create a win-lose or lose-win environment, then you will select competitive strategies. In competition, one of us must win, and the other one must lose. It is the purpose of competition to celebrate the victor, not the loser. The winner does not defeat the challenge; he rather defeats another team or person. It is important to create an environment that is emotionally healthy, and to do that, cooperative activities tend to be the best way to go.



## Calendars and Special Days (Fun Friday or Wacky Wednesday)

A calendar is a look at the entire year and helps you to chart the course for the year. It helps you to tap into and connect with events that are happening both in the community and at a school site. Yearly and monthly calendars should be created so you can be sure to include special events (Thanksgiving, July 4,



Spring Break, President’s Day, and Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Birthday), surveys that need to be completed by parents and students, monthly themes, guest speakers, field trips, site assessments, and other events. Calendars do not have to be adhered to without change, but they do provide a frame from which the program can operate. A year-long plan, supported by a monthly calendar that is fleshed out, helps keep the program holistically on track.

Calendars and schedules are also helpful for families and school day partners. Include special school events (Back to School, Open House, Parent Conferences, and Staff Development Days) on your calendar as well. These school day events will affect your program—often by the unavailability of space or program closure. Monthly calendars can be distributed with monthly newsletters or Snack Menus.

Fun Friday or Whacky Wednesday, or whichever day your program determines to be a day devoted to fun and exploration of things not tried before, are looked forward to by youth and Program Leaders. Select several categories and offer a variety of activities. For example, you might want to offer activities in: Board or Card Games, Arts and Crafts, Cooking, Mini Sports, Conventional Sports, and the Performing Arts (music, dance, drama, an art). Certainly you can select other areas.

Start by giving a preview of the day’s activities to all students, and let them choose from among the activities. If you think you must limit the age groups you can, but try to lay out the activities so students of all ages can participate. If time in your program allows, have students self-select two activities, one for each period. Give 50 minutes for activity choice #1, reconvene students, and have them make a second choice. Bring them back together at the end so they can be at the Closing with their regular Program Leader for easy check out.

Ensuring that you have the right program components in place to meet the needs of your students is of the utmost importance. Operate on the theory of Current Best Thinking (CBT), and as you are scheduling components into your program day, be willing to change if that is what makes the most sense.

### Bullet Points

- Organize your schedule to accommodate student needs.
- Include time for both debriefing and transitions in your schedule.
- Recognize the importance of decompressing or unwinding.
- Recognize the importance of networking and interacting with one another.

- Elementary and Middle School schedules can (and probably should) be different.
- Clubs and competitions are an important part of scheduled activities.
- Clubs should reflect the interests of students and staff.
- Create a calendar to capture the big picture and to correlate with the school day and community.

### C4K Minute—Making It Real

Think about the schedule you have at your program. How does it incorporate the thoughts that have been shared in this e-Book? How could you strengthen the schedule to be more in alignment with youth needs? Consider making one or two simple changes. Be sure before you make changes that you have the buy-in from the youth and staff.

### Debrief

Consider what you have read in this e-Book. What were your key learning's? What commitment are you making to execute on in the next 72 hours?





## Review

### Tricks of the Trade

Invite youth and staff to have input on the schedule. Organize it in modules (time blocks), that can be rearranged so you maintain flexibility.

### Gem of the Day

Elementary and Middle School schedules are different because the needs of the youth are different. Being sure to consider the age and needs of youth when you are creating a schedule.

### Important Take-A ways

Choice is an essential part of ownership and buy-in. Too often we think that the choice is to do something or not to do something. In reality, choice can also be about when you do something, where you do something, how you do something, and with whom you work. These choices can be accommodated in most any environment and schedule.

### Troubleshooting

I work with Kindergarten students. To have a 45 minute block of time for math or language arts is a LONG time. Should I shorten the scheduled time?

Kindergarteners and young children have a shorter attention span (unless of course they are really interested). Instead of shortening the block of time you spend on math or language arts, include a wide variety of activities that each last 5-10 minutes. Keep them busy by mixing up the activities, how the kids partner with one another, and the “product” that you are asking for at the end.



For example, during a language arts session you might orchestrate your lesson in this way:

- 15 minutes: Phonemic Awareness activity—rhyming words
- 10 minutes: Sound-symbol relationship (phonics lesson)
- 15 minutes: Concepts of Print
- 5 minutes: Debrief

### Best Practices

- Schedule Opening activities that help youth transition from the school day to after-school. Be sure to include time for them to unwind and decompress as well as connect with their peers.
- Think about time in “buckets” during the day to ensure you have a balanced schedule.
- Begin with a calendar, your program goals, and then create your schedule.

### FAQ's

How did you determine the names for the Middle School schedule activities: Recharge, Count Down, Blast Off, and Power Play?

Those designations were collected from a variety of programs who had worked through scheduling with Middle School students, and discovered how important it is for the time of the day to be “cool.” You can certainly use these designations, or you can work with the youth in your program to identify the components of your program.

### **Universal**

A schedule gives you a framework in which to plan. It also provides you with flexibility. If you do not have a schedule, you are really operating by “the seat of your pants.” Most people cannot operate effectively for very many days in this emergency, “Fire’s burning!” environment.

### **After-School**

Having a schedule will allow you to include all the learning opportunities that kids both need and desire. A good schedule is a blueprint for success.

### **Positional**

As an after-school leader, stick with the schedule long enough to know what you could do to make it stronger. Then talk with your supervisor and explain your thinking. Changes in schedules should be made programmatically to be successful.

### **Review**

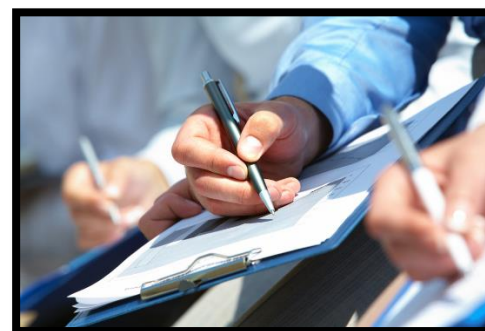
In your journal, write about the information that you are taking away from this content. Highlight your key learning’s.

## **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 to be successful I need to have a schedule AND the flexibility to adjust it as needed.

**Professional:** I want to remember that publishing a schedule helps to establish a routine, and that youth enjoy the predictability of a routine.



### **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**

We all have more than one aspect to our lives. We have personal and professional lives. We also have a number of commitments. Understanding that your day “rotates” through a series of activities and aspects helps you get set for the day. Be sure to leave enough time in your day to transition successfully from one aspect to another.

#### **Practical Application:**

During this time you are transitioning from one aspect of your life to another. Be sure to schedule enough time to get to work on time without being rushed. Set yourself up for success by using this “rotation” period as a time to get your mind-set organized around the work you are to do.

#### **Pre-Opening**

Now that you have arrived at work, you are getting ready to move from one rotation to another. Be sure you have thought through each segment of your daily schedule so you can have all of the supplies and materials you need to have a successful and smooth day.

#### **Practical Application:**

Make a checklist of the things you need for each of your scheduled activities. Also consider that you may have more time than activity so be sure you have a “serendipity” or filler activities that you can draw on to keep your program on track.

#### **Opening**

This is the first rotation for the youth in your program. Be sure that you have an Opening that is fun and engaging, as well as an opportunity to provide youth with time to connect and decompress.

#### **Practical Application:**

Schedule your Opening to have a sense of urgency (they should be fast paced), as well as a relaxed atmosphere (time to talk and share). Over the program year release the Opening to your Leadership Team or a “DJ” Club. To release this responsibility, set the routine and then turn it over piece by piece.

#### **Rotations**

Rotations are the point of this entire e-Book. Rather than identifying the what of the rotation, it is important to understand that schedules provide the framework for the rotations, and the flexibility means you can add to or remove different components of the day to take advantage of the teaching moment or special events. One of the most important take-aways should be to schedule enough time for the transitions between the rotations.

**Practical Application:**

When the program year begins, one of your goals should be to have effective rotations. This will take practice and debriefing with the youth until you have a routine or plan to have successful rotations. Throughout the program year relook at the rotations to be sure they are still meeting the needs of the youth, and supporting the accomplishment of your program goals.

**Closing**

This is the last rotation of the day. This is the time you are closing down the program and helping the youth to transition or rotate to the parent or caregiver. Help this rotation be successful by sharing positive information with both the parent/caregiver, and the student. The words you share at this point in the day can potentially set the student up for a “successful” evening.

**Practical Application:**

Be sure to let youth know every day that you have enjoyed spending time with them. Be appreciative of their cooperation and hard work. If the day has been less than successful, wet up the next day by asking for their cooperation tomorrow.



## Connect to Online Instruction

Program Leader Online Instruction Support

### Club/Enrichment

➤ **KEY INDICATOR: Selection of Activities**

- **Evidence of Disguised Learning**
  - Mini #26      Engaging Activities
  - Mini #62      Engaging the Maverick
  - Mini #75      Disguised Learning
  
- **Student Input on Activity Content and Delivery Evident**
  - Mini #32      Class Meetings
  - Mini #65      Getting Student Input
  - Mini #76      Giving Kids Choice
  - Mini #77      Planning a Club
  - Mini #86      Forced Choice
  - Mini #88      Involving Students in Decision Making
  - Module #14    Planning an Event
  - Module #13    Middle School Team Challenge
  - Module #28    Exploring Student Interests
  - Lesson #7     Fun Friday
  - Lesson #15    Middle School Academic Clubs
  - Class #11     Strong Clubs
  
- **Varied Schedule (As Appropriate)**
  - Mini #78      Service Projects
  - Mini #80      Centers
  
- **Culminating Events Showcase Student Work**
  - Module #24    Student Showcase
  
- **Students Demonstrate Leadership**
  - Mini #30      Debriefing
  - Mini #65      Getting Student Input
  - Module #4     Activity to a Learning Opportunity
  - Module #5     Effective Input from Students





Module #6      Effective Feedback from Students

- **Visible Signs of Fun and Engagement**

- Mini #79      Interactive Activities
- Mini #138     Working as Partners and in Small Groups
- Mini #145     Art Appreciation
- Mini #146     Reader's Theater
- Mini #150     Fun Friday Themes
- Class #20     Exploring Careers in After-School
- Class #21     Service Learning
- Class #22     Community Service
- Class #23     How to Use Technology to Support Learning

- **Visual and Performing Arts**

- Lesson #20    Visual and Performing Arts in After-School

Site Coordinator Online Instruction Support

**Enrichment**

- Mini #68      Varying Schedules
- Mini #81      Student Interest Surveys
- Mini #120     Middle School Advisory Board
- Mini #136     Planning a Career Fair
- Module #24    Student Showcases
- Lesson #18    Showcasing Students
- Lesson #23    Importance of Visual and Performing Arts in Your Program
- Class #5       Recruiting Students for Middle School
- Class #8       Strong Clubs
- Class #9       Project Based Learning
- Class #16      Successful Team Challenges
- Class #23      Career Clusters/Exploration