"Can I Play With You?"
Exploring the Development of Children's Social Skills
The goals of this workshop are to introduce:
1. The set of social skills required for children to be able to make friends, resolve conflicts, and control emotions;
2. That after school program staff can actively support the growth of those skills.
Wrap the Mummy:   Equipment:  2 single rolls of toilet paper per group. Instructions: One person on each team will be the mummy and each team will be given 2 small roles of toilet paper. They will have 5 minutes to complete the game. They need to work out who will be the mummy(s) and how he/she/they will be wrapped. (If somebody refuses to participate that is okay. This person(s) could be your observer(s) to monitor levels of cooperation and to judge the quality of the wrapped mummies.)

Compliment the creative efforts of each team. Ask participants to think about the steps needed to accomplish their mummy (Who would be mummy, how to wrap, why did they start where they did, etc.). Was this decision making process challenging in any way? (Did they argue? If so, how did they resolve the disagreement?) Ask the observer(s) what he/she observed about levels of cooperation. Explain that in any group task decisions must be made. This requires a basic set of social skills. Think about the children you work with each day. Who struggles to make and keep friends? Who struggles to play well in groups? Who collapses when losing a game? How can afterschool staff support the development of strong social skills?
The Best Practice Guidelines for Connecticut After School Programs is our state’s model for high quality standards. Each of the 41 keys focuses on a specific attribute of quality. This workshop focuses attention on standard #5 as shown in the slide. The Guidelines are available for download at www.ct afterschoolnetwork.org.
(See Handout) Working successfully in groups requires the 7Cs—a list developed by Jim and Laurie Ollhoff in the book *Getting Along: Teaching Social Skills to Children*.

1) Communication—being able to explain ideas as in “We could wrap the mummy this way because…”
2) Conflict resolution—being able to disagree without escalation of emotion. “I think it might work better if we…because…”
3) Control of emotions—modulating excitement, anger, envy. “The other mummies look better than ours. I hate this game!”
4) Confidence “We did alright!” (mastery of new skills builds confidence).
5) Curiosity—“What is this for? Why are we doing this?”
6) Coping—“The first method we tried didn’t work so we tried it another way.”
7) Community building—“I learned my coworker is a terrific mummy wrapper! Who knew?!?” and “I had so much fun working with this team.”

Follow this slide with a group activity to explore ways staff can support development of these skills.
Form groups and use “team” or “community building” skills to brainstorm strategies for activities that support growth in the 7Cs.

Use either Group Activity 1 or 2. Debrief as described in the guide.
Mummy Wrap – Revisited

Did we use the 7Cs as we did the Mummy Wrap?
Share examples of specific skills.

Recap
Let’s go back to the Mummy Wrap
Discuss the 7Cs as they applied to the behavior of the teams as they dressed their mummies.
   Did your confidence increase as the activity progressed?
   What communication skills did you need to use?
   Did you enjoy cooperating with your group?
Helping children to grow their social skills can help to make your program a safe, happy place, where kids can make friends.
Our goal is to be a topnotch after school program.
The CT Best Practice Guidelines is the standard we want to achieve.
Learning appropriate techniques for the ages and developmental stages of the children and youth we work with will help achieve the goals of quality programming.
Helping children to grow their social skills can help to make your program a safe, happy place where kids can make friends.
For more information read:

*Getting Along: Teaching Social Skills to Children*, by Jim and Laurie Ollhoff

Or ask for further training through the CT After School Network’s Training and Consultation Service