The purpose of this session is to cover the fundamentals of leadership theory in order to believe in, recognize, and harness the potential leadership skills of youth.
Activity:
Opening Activity – Worksheets
Tell the participants that for this opening activity you will be the afterschool program leader and they will be the children and youth in the program.
Distribute the attached handouts (use one or both) for “Math is Fun”
   Tell them that this is our fun activity for the afternoon. Take a look!
   Allow a minute for participants to review the content of the handout.
   Say “Finish your snack quickly so we will have plenty of time for fun.”
   Show great enthusiasm for the activity by saying, “I can’t wait to have fun with math!”
Debrief:
Ask participants:
   Are you excited to do these sheets?
   How do you think the children and youth in your programs feel about these activities?
   Many afterschool programs are required to include an academic component in their program. How can we do this while incorporating youth development principles and responding to youth voice?
   And, how can we do this so that youth are engaged in the program?
This workshop will look at ways we can foster positive youth development and respect youth voice in the activities we implement.
Best Practice Guidelines for Connecticut After School Programs

3. Staff encourage children and youth to make choices and to become more responsible:

• Children and youth are encouraged to **take the lead** in selecting and **initiating activities**.

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Best Practice Guidelines for Connecticut After School Programs #3 (See Handout)
Explain the guidelines to participants ([www.ctafterschoolnetwork.org](http://www.ctafterschoolnetwork.org))
Programs that support the expression of youth voice and foster leadership are examples of high quality programs.

**Leadership**

**Research:**

Research shows that when children can make choices and take leadership roles they become empowered, become more engaged in the activities of the program and feel more “ownership” of the afterschool program.

Research shows that there are academic benefits from youth engagement in leadership activities.

Programs that are recognized as high quality foster youth voice and participation.
What does a youth leader look like?

Children and youth come into our programs with many different types of personalities – which type is most likely to exhibit leadership characteristics?

All children and youth have potential to be a leader

We will use a “lens” designed to help identify the seeds of leadership
The key is empowering each youth by nurturing those seeds
The Lens- Leadership potential begins with recognizing where that potential is located.
Leadership Theory

- Trait Theory
- Great Events Theory
- Transformational Leadership Theory: “Leaders are made not born.”

Leadership theory
Bass (1990) Theory of Leadership

Trait Theory
Some personality traits may lead people into leadership roles

Great Events Theory
A crisis or important event may cause a person to rise to the occasion.

Transformational Leadership Theory: “Leaders are made not born.”
People can choose to become leaders
People can learn leadership skills
Transformational leadership theory is the most commonly accepted one.

Discussion Question
Break into pairs or small groups and discuss the three theories.
Which one do you believe? What have been your experiences? (both personally and in working with children)
Each group will summarize and share their thoughts for the larger group.
Allow 5 minutes for this discussion.

Ask participants if they can determine which of the two children in the photo has leadership potential. The point is that it is impossible to tell so each child must be nurtured to develop their potential to the fullest extent.
Believing, recognizing, nurturing and harnessing potential – Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence Theory (1983)

To recognize leadership potential we need to see how it can come in many forms. Gardner states that everyone has differing ways that we learn and certain areas that are strengths (multiple intelligences are eight in total).

Each person has intelligence in each area but are stronger in some areas than in others.
Linguistic: the ability to absorb information and communicate through reading, writing, speaking, and listening
Logical/Mathematical: The ability to use numbers, logic, and reasoning effectively
Spatial: The ability to visualize and create representations of what one sees
Body/Kinesthetic: The ability to understand and master both gross motor and fine motor skills
Musical: The ability to relate to music through the enjoyment, creation, and performance of it.
Interpersonal: The ability to interact with people and understand them and their behaviors
Intrapersonal: The ability to understand the self, including one’s own feelings and motivations
Naturalist: The ability to recognize, appreciate, and understand the natural world.

Activity – Distribute Handout “What are My Learning Strengths?”

   Explain instructions for completing the handout.
   Allow approximately 5-10 minutes for all to complete and tally scores
   Ask participants to respond to the following questions:
   Raise hands if you found yourself high in (go through each of the 8 intelligences). (This will show participants where their co-workers strengths may lie.)
   Were anyone high in more than one area?
   Was anyone surprised by what they scored?

Debrief:
Ask participants to think about the children we experience in our programs every day. Are there children who come to mind when you think about Linguistic Intelligence? (Go through each of the Intelligences)
How can we use their strengths to develop leadership opportunities for them?
Plan activities based on children’s strengths in MI Theory.

Combine areas of strengths to create group projects.

Most activities can be easily implemented and have the potential to foster youth leadership and voice.

By combining many of these activities you can create group projects based on children’s strengths.
A Lens for Recognizing Leadership Potential

There are three areas to use when recognizing leadership potential and encouraging youth voice.

Youth as Individuals
 Asset Based Framework
 Valuing Diverse Strengths and Perspectives Equally

Youth as Individuals

Remembering to see Youth as Individuals is the first step to giving youth a voice in their after school program.

Multiple Intelligence Theory shows us that each youth is an individual

Each child brings their own experiences and leadership potential

One child may be strong in art (visual-spatial intelligence) while another may be strong in Intrapersonal Intelligence

Together they can create a student led newspaper

Do we know the youth in our program well enough to be able to recognize their individual potential?

Do we see their perspectives, ideas, experiences, strengths, and dreams?

Do we respect their perspectives, ideas, experiences, strengths, and dreams?

Asset Based Framework

Look for each child’s strengths and build on these.

Recognition and exercise of each child’s strengths builds

Confidence
 Persistence
 Self control and
What does a leader look like?

Characteristics:
- High energy
- Respected by peers
- Socially, intuitively adept
And,
- Requires staff attention

Think of a child that has these characteristics. These are often the “class clowns,” “attention seekers,” “oh no, here he/she comes.”

We need to switch the way we perceive these children from a “deficit” model to an “asset” model.

Characteristics we find annoying are the characteristics of leadership. Learn to use these to foster leadership abilities.

Activity: Ask participants to think of a challenging child that they have worked with.
In small groups ask them to reflect and then share:
- Identify three to five strengths that this child possesses
- What makes this child stand out?
- What are some “leader actions” that they exhibit?
- List some steps you can take to harness and build leadership skills.

Allow 5-10 minutes for discussion.
If needed prompt with reminders of:
- Multiple Intelligence Theory
- “Lens for Recognizing Leadership Potential.”

Ask participants to share some of their thoughts with the larger group.
Points to Ponder (Use easel paper to record responses to the following questions)

What good does it do us as youth workers to be able to recognize what leadership looks like in action?

Thinking about the current structure of your after school program:

Three ways you can build opportunities for youth to practice these leadership skills

Three ways you can continue to foster these skills

Read the following quotes to participants:

Leadership is

“Believing in people before they have proved themselves is the key to motivating people to reach their potential.” John Maxwell

“Becoming a leader is synonymous with becoming yourself. That simple, that difficult.” Warren Bennis

We cannot help support youth on this difficult journey of becoming themselves and hence, becoming leaders, if we are unable to recognize and believe in the potential that they bring with them.
Ask participants to complete the Evaluation Form. Please return these to CT After School Network so we can continue to improve our services.

• For more information:
• Bass, B.M. (1990). From Transactional to Transformational Leadership: Learning to Share the Vision. Organizational Dynamics
• Bateman, J. (2008) Georgia School Age Care Alliance
• Whitaker, D. L. (2002). Multiple Intelligences and After School Environments, Nashville TN. School Age Notes
• CT After School Network: www.ctafterschoolnetwork.org