

Living the Mission of After School



Purpose of session: To learn about the purpose of mission statements and how to use these as a guide in activity planning in after school programs.

Trainer Tips: *The author's experience with afterschool staff and mission statements is that few frontline staff people are aware of the existence of a program mission statement. Fewer still are aware of what that statement may say or mean. This workshop is a great way to establish a mission statement or to remind staff of the existing goals and values of the program and evaluate how well these are supported in the daily activities.*

Materials Needed: Small paper plates, scissors, stapler or tape, markers or crayons, yarn or string

Handouts: CT After School Quality Self Assessment Tool (CT-QSAT), Pike Place Fish Market

**Welcome/
Housekeeping:** Perform introductions, state the session topic, how long it will last, when/if refreshments will be served, and the location of restrooms. Thank the host.

Trainer Tips: *Welcomes set the stage for training. Be sure to thank the host agency for providing meeting space and/or refreshments. Sharing housekeeping details such as the location of restrooms and the schedule of activities prevents interruptions during your session. Letting people know when food will be served helps participants to stay focused. Introduce any new participants or guests so all feel comfortable.*

Opening Activity:	<p>Popcorn: Easy game for approximately 10 or more people No materials required (Optional: Music of your choice with a speaker) Rules:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain that in this game you are the leader and will call out a number and an object. As soon as participants hear this they must form a team of that number and then use their bodies to create the object. Example: "2, rocking chair." They must form teams of 2 and form a rocking chair. (You might have them do this to see and feel how it works.) Each time you call out a number and object they should seek out new people to team with. 2. Ask participants to stand in an open area and mill about. They must keep moving (option of using music to keep people moving). 3. Call out some of the following items: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Washing machine b. Hot air popcorn popper c. Toaster d. Car e. Piano f. Oak Tree g. Eagle h. Elephant i. For a final item call out "Everyone, Roller Coaster" 4. Congratulate and compliment the teams each time they make an object
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Trainer Tips: *Ice breakers or group activities can be used for introducing a topic, team building, or tension reducing activities. Make sure you include a debriefing time so participants understand the purpose of the activity. Adult learners want to understand why they are being asked to learn something that may be new to them.*

Debrief (1st Activity):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Each team produced a unique object but it was based on guidance or directions from the leader. 2. When we plan activities in our afterschool programs we have a great deal of flexibility yet we do have guidance in the form of the program mission statement or the "Connecticut Quality Self-Assessment Tool" from the CT Network for Children and Youth. 3. Our success as a unique program is <u>measured</u> by how well we meet the goals set in our mission. 4. This workshop will review the purpose of a mission statement and generate ideas for making sure we are meeting our goals.
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**CT-QSAT
Section 4:
Activities and
Programming**

Share the handout which includes the CT-QSAT Section 4: Activities and Programming. Starting with item 1, explain that these are indicators of high quality practice. Today's topic will help us to improve our skills in these areas.

Lecture:

What is a "mission statement"?

- I. A **mission statement** is a formal, short, written statement of the purpose of a [company](#) or [organization](#) that should:
 - a. guide the actions of the organization
 - b. spell out its overall goal
 - c. provide a sense of direction, and
 - d. guide decision-making – administratively and with daily interactions with children
 - e. be broad enough to allow for creative growth
 - f. be stated clearly enough to be understood by all.
 - g. A mission statement defines exactly what the organization's reason for existence.
- II. A mission statement should contain:
 - i. The purpose of the organization
 - ii. The organization's core values
 - iii. The organization's vision

Why do we need a mission statement?

- a. A mission statement should be used to:
 - iv. Define the organization
 - v. Define the aspirations of the organization
 - vi. Serve as a framework to evaluate current activities
- b. It makes sure that all stakeholders (families, staff, administration, and children, too) know what to expect.
- c. It establishes priorities
- d. Serves as a standard to evaluate success

Let's take a look at a mission statement ([use sample or your own program mission statement](#)). Sample mission statement: "Kool Kidz After School Program provides a safe place for children to learn, explore, make friends, have fun, and build skills to last a lifetime."

- a. Read, share copies, or post on the wall the program's mission or the sample and review the contents. Ask "How well do you think we are meeting the following goals?" (*Ask for specific examples.*)
 - vii. Do children feel "safe" from physical harm in this program?
 - viii. Do children feel "safe" from bullying or teasing?
 - ix. What are children "learning and exploring" at our program?
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- x. Do we actively support the skills children need to learn to “make friends”? How?
 - xi. Are we all having “fun”? Give examples.
 - xii. How do we support “skills to last a lifetime”? What are those skills?
 - b. Based on our collective responses to these questions how well are we meeting the mission?
 - xiii. Programs should celebrate the ways in which the goals of the mission are achieved.
 - xiv. Reviewing the mission focuses on areas of improvement:
 1. staff training
 2. facility improvements
 3. funding decisions
 4. long range planning

Practice makes perfect – How to make mission goals a reality.

- a. Interpret the mission statement and determine what it means to each individual staff person.
 - i. Example #1: Physical safety interpretations:
 1. No cooking activities because the children would have access to sharp knives and hot stoves. (*It is good to be vigilant about safety.*)
 2. Clear explanations and close supervision is needed during cooking activities to prevent cuts or burns. (*Small groups are best for potentially dangerous activities.*)
 - ii. Example #2: Activity planning is based on:
 1. Keeping children busy and out of trouble. (*Always a good idea!*)
 2. Finding out what the children are interested in this year and plan activities based on those interests. (*Activities are more successful if based on what the children are already interested in.*)
- b. One view is not necessarily better than the other. The question should be, “Does this interpretation meet our program goals and mission?” And, “Do we all share the same goals?”

FISH! – A business philosophy (share handout on Pike Place Fish Market)

- a. Explain that since this small business got excited about their mission statement they have achieved their goal of being world famous and are now the basis for a series of management books and seminars on the FISH! Philosophy.
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- b. FISH! Philosophy can be applied to any business by using four interconnected practices:
 - i. **Be There.** Be emotionally present for people. It is a powerful message of respect that improves communication and strengthens relationships.
 - ii. **Play.** This taps into your natural way of being creative, enthusiastic and having fun. Play is the spirit that drives the curious mind, as in “Let’s play with that idea!” It is a mindset you can bring to everything you do.
 - iii. **Make Their Day.** Find simple ways to serve or delight people in a meaningful, memorable way. It is about contributing to someone else’s life, not because you want something but because that is the person you want to be.
 - iv. **Choose Your Attitude.** Take responsibility for how you respond to what life throws at you. Once you are aware that your choice impacts everyone around you, you can ask yourself, “Is my attitude helping my team or my customers? Is it helping me to be the person I want to be?”

“Through The FISH! Philosophy, we build stronger relationships with the team members we work with, the customers we serve, the students we teach and the people we love.”

Make the commitment stick: follow up by using these steps:

- a. Proclaim it. When you tell others (customers, families, students) what you stand for, they expect it of you – and you expect it of yourself and thus increasing your performance.
- b. Live it. An effective team consistently lives the values it says it believes in. Your values point you toward behaviors that fulfill your mission, and away from behaviors that don’t.
- c. Celebrate it. When you celebrate each other for living your values, people know they are appreciated, increasing their engagement.

“Usually when we prepare for a celebration, we work hard to decorate the physical space with balloons, posters and streamers. What if we put as much effort into decorating our emotional space— with thanks, compliments and encouragement?”

What strategies can we implement to make sure we are “living

our mission”?

- a. Include the mission statement on our daily planning schedules to remind ourselves to review it each week. Here is an example:
 - i. Monday Snack: crackers, peanut butter, milk. Children sit in small groups with other children of their choice. A staff person sits with the children to model appropriate social skills and to chat with children about their interests and ideas for activities.
 - ii. Monday Craft: beading. To support the development of social skills staff will casually ask children who chose to participate a question related to the topic of making and keeping friends. Example: “I had an argument with a friend and now I want to apologize. What do you think is the best way to apologize?”
 - iii. Monday Gym: soccer: Staff will remind children of the rules before the game begins and include the explanation that following the rules not only keeps us safe but makes sure we all have fun.
- b. Regular self reflection: using the CT-QSAT several times throughout the year.
- c. Include all the participants
- d. Remind ourselves to “live a mission moment” each day at work.
- e. What are some other suggestions that staff can suggest?

**Group Activity
Option 1:**

Craft: Paper Plate Fish

- I. Materials needed: small paper plates, scissors, stapler or tape, markers or crayons, and yarn or string.
 - II. Cut a pie-sized wedge out of the paper plate. This is the fish mouth. Turn the wedge around and staple it on the opposite side of the plate so it forms a tail. Punch a hole at the top so string can be tied to hang the fish. Use markers to fill in eyes and gills.
 - III. As each person makes their fish ask them to reflect on how they can make the mission statement come alive. Ask them to write this thought on their fish.
 - IV. Allow approximately 5 minutes for this activity and ask those who are willing to share what they have written.
 - V. After the meeting concludes hang the fish in a prominent location:
 - a. To remind participants of their statements
 - b. To let others know of the staff’s commitment to the
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mission of the program.

- Trainer Tips:**
1. *Tying a physical action (such as a craft activity) to a concept helps people to remember that concept more clearly than a simple lecture.*
 2. *Incorporating a reflection activity (such as “what does this concept mean to me?”) also helps to create the personal change needed to be able to use this concept later on.*
 3. *Making a written response helps to build ownership of the concept and commitment to the principle.*
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- Conclusion:**
- I. Our goal is to be a topnotch after school program. The CT-QSAT is the standard we want to achieve.
 - II. Activities:
 - a. The activities that we do each day of the week are the proof of our quality.
 - b. Activities drive the connection to the mission.
 - c. To be a quality program we need to make sure we are actively supporting the mission through the activities we plan.
 - III. It takes a team working together to make the mission effective. This includes:
 - a. Reflection on what the mission statement means personally
 - b. Communicating our thoughts effectively, and
 - c. Making a commitment to the program and each other to see the mission in action.
 - IV. Does any one have any questions or thoughts they would like to share?
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For More Info go: Connecticut Network for Children and Youth www.ctncy.org
 Pike Place Fish Market
 86 Pike Place, Seattle, WA 98101 USA
 PHONE: 206-682-7181 | TOLL FREE: 800-542-7732 | FAX 206-682-4629
pikeplacefish@pikeplacefish.com
 FISH! Philosophy at www.charthouse.com

4. Activities and Programming

A quality program offers interesting, enriching, and engaging activities that foster creative thinking, spark curiosity, develop academic and social skills...and are fun!

A quality program is one where:

	PERFORMANCE LEVEL				PLAN TO IMPROVE		
	1	2	3	4	RIGHT NOW	SIX MONTHS	TWELVE MONTHS
1 Daily activities support the program mission and vision.							
2 Activities are linked to school day but offer expanded and enriched exploration of topics.							
3 Activities are hands-on, project-based, intentional, and build on previous activities (sequential).							
4 Activities promote reflection, problem solving, and independent thinking (active).							
5 A wide variety of activities are available that reflect the interests of the children/youth and their increasing maturity and skill mastery (focused).							
6 Children have an active role in activity planning and implementation.							
7 Activities build links to the community and include service learning projects.							
8 Activities are fun and engaging. Children and youth are active participants. 							
9 Staff facilitate and participate in all program activities with youth.							
10 Staff communicate with each other during program hours about youth and program needs as they arise.							
11 The program uses assessment tools to identify individual learning needs and measure progress toward goals (explicit).							

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS [CORESTANDARDS.ORG/THE-STANDARDS](http://corestandards.org/the-standards)

Activities in after school should align with what the children/youth are learning during the school day. Connecticut has adopted the Common Core State Standards in Language Arts and Math for preparing children/youth (K-12) to be college and career ready. After school programs that replicate the major goals of these standards are valuable partners in supporting that readiness to go out into the world. These goals, known as “Habits of Mind” are as follows:

Authors of the Common Core Standards add that a “belief in diligence and one’s own efficacy” are keys to mastering concepts in both math and language. Do the activities in your after school program support these concepts?

For more information on curriculum frameworks and guidelines, talk to the school day teachers and principals.

- INDEPENDENCE OF STUDY
- STRONG CONTENT
- UNDERSTANDING AND CRITIQUING
- KNOWING HOW TO USE TECHNOLOGY
- UNDERSTANDING CULTURES
- PERSEVERANCE
- CONSTRUCTING REASONABLE ARGUMENTS
- SEEKING PRECISION IN THOUGHT AND MEASUREMENT.



Zooming In!

Quality Indicator #8: Activities are fun and engaging. Children and youth are active participants.

PERFORMANCE LEVELS

1 = Entry

- Few choices are available and these do not address the children's interest areas.
- Only some of the children participate in these activities. Others are clearly not engaged in productive activities.
- There are a number of poor behavior issues as children/youth express "boredom."
- No strategies are used to invite participation or excite curiosity about the activity.
- Activities are mostly craft-based, one-day projects implemented to keep children/youth busy but have no relation to participant interest or school day content.

2 = Developing

- More choices are available and some are in direct response to interests the children/youth have expressed.
- Activities become more project based and are less craft based.
- Staff invite children to offer activity suggestions and include them in planning.
- As staff learn more strategies for engaging children/youth participation levels have increased (also leading to a decrease in poor behavior issues). Fewer children are observed as disengaged.

3 = Proficient

- Activity choices are project based and extend for a week or more at a time. These are based on the interests of the children/youth.
- Activities relate to school day content and are designed to stimulate curiosity and problem-solving skills.
- Staff create regular methods of collecting information about children's interests. This might include: monthly surveys, suggestion boxes, student councils.
- Most children can be observed as fully engaged in activities.

4 = Advanced

- Activity choices are project-based, suggested, planned, and implemented with the children/youth.
- Methods of collecting information on student interest are a regular part of program procedures.
- All children/youth are encouraged to participate in activities through multiple strategies.
- Both boys and girls are encouraged to be equally and actively involved in all activities.
- Children/youth with special needs are actively involved in all activities.
- Children express satisfaction with activities on surveys.

IMPROVEMENT EXAMPLES

RIGHT NOW:

addressed within the first 30–60 days of assessment

- Implement staff training on methods of engaging the interest of children/youth.
- Review activity planning procedures and research new resources.
- Survey the children/youth to determine areas of interest.

THIS YEAR:

addressed by the end of the program year

- Implement staff training on methods of inclusion so that all children with special needs can be full participants in program activities.
- Provide training on gender equity, particularly in STEM fields, so that all children have full access to activities.

NEXT YEAR:

addressed at the beginning of the new program year

- Establish a student council that will plan and implement project-based activities (service learning projects, fundraising efforts, special event planning, etc.).
- Orientate new staff on strategies that are successful in engaging children/youth participation.

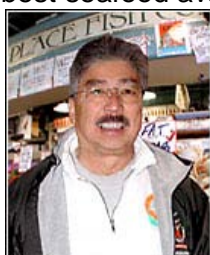


Try This! Including children/youth in planning will most likely be a new challenge for all. Children/youth will need support in participating in planning processes.

Remember that this is also an opportunity to learn. Clarify roles, **be an active listener**, ask open-ended questions that will help children think about the possible ways to implement their ideas. Be sure to acknowledge the **contributions and efforts** of all children/youth involved in the process.



You can find us in Seattle's Pike Place Market, an historic, open air market located in the heart of Seattle, Washington. People come from all over the world to see our world famous crew of fishmongers throwing fish and having fun with customers. They also come to buy some of the best seafood available anywhere in the world and have it shipped home.



John Yokoyama purchased Pike Place Fish in 1965. At that time, John was one of several employees of the quiet, unassuming little fish stand. After numerous unsuccessful attempts to sell the business, John's employer offered him the opportunity to purchase Pike Place Fish. As a young man of 25, John was at first hesitant to buy the business. The monthly payments on his new 1965 Buick Riviera, however, were taking much of his \$150.00 weekly pay. He decided he could do better on an owner's salary. John purchased Pike Place Fish to help make his car payments - amazing how things turned out!



The first step for us at Pike Place Fish was to decide who we wanted to be. In the words of John Yokoyama: "In one of our early Pike Place Fish meetings with Jim (our coach from bizFutures), we began an inquiry into "Who do we want to be? We wanted to create a new future for ourselves. One of the young kids working for me said, "Hey! Let's be World Famous!" At first I thought, "World Famous...what a stupid thing to say!" But the more we talked about it, the more we all got excited about being World Famous. So we committed to it. We added "World Famous" to our logo and had it printed on our shipping boxes.

Then, after a while, we asked ourselves, "What does this mean - being world famous?" And we created our own definition. For us it means going beyond just providing outstanding service to people. It means really being present with people and relating to them as human beings. You know, stepping outside the usual "we're in business and you're a customer" way of relating to people and intentionally being with them right now, in the present moment, person to person. We take all our attention off ourselves to be only with them...looking for ways to serve them. We're out to discover how we can make their day.



We've made a commitment to have our customers leave with the experience of having been served. They experience being known and appreciated whether they buy fish or not. And it's not good enough just to want that - it takes an unrelenting commitment. We've made it our job to make sure that experience happens for every customer." To us, being 'World Famous' is a way of being. You can't manualize it. It gets created by each one of us, newly every time. It comes out differently for different people. It also depends on who the customer is...how they react. It's about taking care of people. We're always on the lookout for how we can make a difference in people's lives.

Originally we wondered, 'How are we going to become world famous? We don't have any money to advertise!' Jim told us we didn't have to know how to become world famous. He told us that when you're generating a powerful vision, the future just unfolds. He told us not to believe in it. We just had to be it. Muhammad Ali didn't say, 'I believe I am the greatest.' He said, 'I am the greatest.' It's the difference between believing in the idea of being great, versus being your commitment to being great right now. Jim said, 'Your commitment to being world famous will naturally give you what to do.' So, as individuals, each of us choose to align ourselves with the commitment and declared, 'I Am World Famous Pike Place Fish.' Jim was right. Once we declared our commitment, things really started happening.



People want to copy us - to do what we're doing. We keep telling them, 'Your success isn't in doing what we do; it's in discovering your own way. Don't do what we do - we made it all up...do what inspires you...make it up! You just have to be (yourself...what inspires you). And it means commit yourself to who you say you are: act like it, think like it, look like it, feel like it, speak it...be it! You will create your own way by just being yourself, doing what inspires you. The secret to our secret lies in our commitment to being who we say we are. JUST BE IT. Your challenge is to 'just be' who you want to be...for free...just because you said so.

Pike Place Fish Market
 86 Pike Place, Seattle, WA 98101 USA
pikeplacefish@pikeplacefish.com