



Promoting Positive Behavior Policy & Procedure

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Policy Statement

At the Boys & Girls Club, we recognize our responsibility to set our members up for success. We prioritize the creation of positive and structured environments where youth can thrive socially and emotionally, guided by positive role models. We celebrate and acknowledge the valuable contributions of our youth, fostering an atmosphere of encouragement and support.

Supportive Youth-Centered Environments and Routines

When a youth's environment doesn't meet their needs, they can behave negatively. A supportive environment feels welcoming and safe, it uses established routines to support consistency and to communicate expectations.

- **Review the daily schedule:** Starting each day by reviewing the daily schedule and group agreement allows members to know what to expect for the day.
- **Group agreements:** Establishing Group Agreements is an essential routine that creates physical and emotional safety. Group Agreements provide a developmentally appropriate structure with clear expectations for behavior. They answer three key questions – How do you want to feel during our time together? What will we do to feel this way? What will we do when conflict happens. Collaborate with youth to set and post group rules and expectations then review the Group Agreements to reinforce and recognize positive behaviors.
- **Teach youth how to use the environment:** Youth need routines to know how to use program spaces and understand the expectations of their behavior. As you design various program spaces, identify the rules for using them and teach these to youth. Once you teach them, practice them with youth, and hold youth accountable.
 - Which materials can youth freely use, and for which do they need permission to use?
 - Do materials need to stay in a specific space or are they free to move them?
 - Which spaces are youth allowed to use freely and which require using a pass?
- **Provide opportunities for youth choice in your program space:** Providing 3 clear activity spaces within your program space provides opportunities for youth to exercise choice and freedom of movement to regulate their needs. When youth can choose their environments, they can select the environment that best fits their needs. Consider this example, within the 4-5th grade room:
 - A structured tabletop game that can be played independently
 - A low-key space where youth can independently relax or cool down
 - A high-energy, highly facilitated group game
- **Facilitating intentional transitions:** Transitions are times in the program day when youth move from one physical space to another. Transitions should have a consistent routine and be highly engaging to best support positive behavior. Provide a 5-minute warning to let youth know that a transition is about to happen. Use audiovisual cues to signify the transition and provide time constraints for

youth so they know when the transition should be ending. You can also set youth up for success in the new program space by using a transition to increase or decrease the energy level. Create transition routines that have elements of activity, fun, clear structures and limits to help youth choose positive behavior.

- **Chill Zone:** To support positive behavior, youth may need a space to step away from the Club activities. A chill zone is a comfortable area where youth can play games alone or engage in manipulatives that help them calm down.
 - Members may request to use the Chill Zone as needed to help regulate their own behavior.
 - If staff notice that a member may benefit from time in the Chill Zone, they can offer the choice, but it should NEVER be mandated or used as a punishment.
 - Only one member may use the Chill Zone at a time.
 - Members may not use the Chill Zone for more than 15 minutes without a staff check in.

Staff Model Positive Behavior:

Modeling is when youth development professionals intentionally use and demonstrate behaviors that they expect youth to use. It's essential to model the following social-emotional skills as a foundational staff practice to support positive behavior:

- **Teamwork and respect:** model teamwork and respect in interactions with staff. Emphasize positive communication, cooperation, and support. Assist colleagues, express gratitude publicly, and highlight youth cooperation and encouragement. Debrief activities to spotlight teamwork behaviors like passing, encouragement, and collaborative problem-solving.
- **Setting healthy boundaries:** model healthy boundaries with youth by respectfully declining personal questions and expressing preferences for interactions (e.g., high-fives over hugs). Share nonjudgmentally if boundaries are crossed, emphasizing care while maintaining limits. Developing and communicating boundaries is crucial for safety and preventing misconduct.
- **Identifying emotions and impulse control:** stay mindful of your emotions, acknowledge their influence on behavior, and respond positively. Share your feelings with youth, explaining positive choices amid frustration. Acknowledge and encourage youth who express emotions and exhibit positive behavior despite challenges.
- **Inclusion:** model inclusion by intentionally inviting youth to participate, using language that includes all people, and adapting programs and spaces so that all youth can participate meaningfully.

Recognition of Positive Behavior

Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is an incentive-based system used to reinforce a member's positive behavior. PBS is always the first step in behavior management and provides youth with the opportunity to model positive behaviors and be recognized for them in front of their peers.

- **Recognize positive behavior with BGC Bucks:** When staff witness a member exhibiting a positive behavior they should use the member's name, name the SPECIFIC behavior, and give them a BGC buck (e.g. I see Sam is following directions right away, here's a BGC Buck!)
 - Try to give BGC Bucks within 60 seconds of seeing the desired behavior for the biggest impact
 - Only give members one BGC buck at a time
 - Remember that BGC bucks are to reward positive behavior only and SHOULD NOT be used as rewards for winning games
 - NEVER take BGC bucks back – they have already earned the buck for displaying a positive behavior, we cannot show that one undesirable action negates all the positive actions.

- All youth should receive at least one buck per day. If there are youth that are not receiving bucks, staff need to intentionally look for things those members do throughout the day.
- **Positive behavior incentives:** Members can use their BGC bucks to earn daily incentives, the options for the day should be posted so youth have something to look forward to. In addition to daily incentives, sites may also offer more specialty weekly or monthly incentives at their discretion. Incentives may include:
 - A treat at check-out (e.g. stickers, candy, chips, etc.)
 - Choice time activities (e.g. structured open gym, use of gaming systems, Just Dance, etc.)
 - Leadership roles (e.g. dinner helper, YDP assistant, line leader, etc.)
 - Specialty activities (e.g. slime making, popcorn and movie night, paint party, etc.)