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An afterschool toolkit for implementing occupation-based activities

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An Afterschool Toolkit for Implementing
Occupation-Based Activities

by

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Approval Page

This Scholarly Project Paper, submitted by Kelsey Miller and Kayla Petersen in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Master’s of Occupational Therapy from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisor under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

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ABSTRACT

"Each day in America, millions of kids go home to an empty house after school" (Afterschool Alliance, 2009, p.1). The Afterschool Alliance (2009) indicates that based on a 2009 survey of 30,000 families, there are more children unsupervised each afternoon in the U.S. and the demand for afterschool programming is higher than ever. In the United States, 30% of middle school students and 4% of elementary aged children are responsible for taking care of themselves and only 15% currently participate in an afterschool program (Afterschool Alliance, 2009, pg. 4). Students are at particular risk during these hours, millions are unsupervised each afternoon and the unmet need is huge (Afterschool Alliance, 2009).

“According to the 2000 U.S. Census, minors constitute approximately 25.7% of the U.S. population and many live in environments that may limit their education, health, and social well-being” (Hishinuma, Chang, Sy, Greaney, Morris, Rehuher & Nishimura, 2009, p.g 988). “Evidence is mounting that where and how youth spend their time outside of normal school hours has important implications for their development” (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007, p5). The Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics (2009) states that youth who participate in a wide range of activities such as volunteering or after school activities are likely to have positive developmental outcomes.

The focus of this scholarly project was to develop an occupation-based toolkit to aid in the development of afterschool programs. Occupation-based refers to an
activity that is purposeful and meaningful to the individual who is performing it (Frank, Fishman, Crowley, Blair, Murphy, Montoya, et al., 2001). In addition to occupation-based activities, a number of areas are addressed to promote positive youth development using meaningful activities that have been shown to be effective in current afterschool programs.

A literature review was conducted to identify: 1) the youth most at risk who could benefit from afterschool programming; 2) what are the barriers to accessing afterschool programs; 3) the best practices of afterschool programming and; 4) what is the potential role of occupational therapy (OT) in afterschool programming. During the literature review best practices were identified as: meaningful, occupation-based activities, life skills, creative exploration, communication and social interaction and physical activity.

The findings from the literature review resulted in the development of an occupation-based toolkit. The best practices mentioned above, built the foundation upon which the toolkit was developed. Barriers found in the literature review, were also addressed in the toolkit. The toolkit is a resource that Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants and teachers can use to implement an occupation-based afterschool program.

The Afterschool Toolkit for Implementing Occupation-Based Activities was designed to meet the needs of youth in low-income households who would benefit from the opportunity to participate in an afterschool program. The goal of this toolkit was to provide occupation-based activities to increase the positive outcomes gained from participation in afterschool programs such as; positive youth interactions,
establishment of essential life skills and development of healthy physical routines and leisure interests.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The Afterschool Alliance (2009) indicates that based on a 2009 survey of 30,000 families, there are more children unsupervised each afternoon in the U.S. and the demand for afterschool programming is higher than ever. In addition, youth who attend afterschool programs are 30% less likely to participate in criminal activities than their peers who did not attend the program (Afterschool Alliance, 2009). For students from low-income families there may be a few additional barriers preventing them from participating in afterschool programs. The development of an afterschool program could provide students from low-income families in grades fourth through eighth with networks of peers and adult role models, as well as provide avenues to express themselves in ways that are not harmful or violent but rather promote positive youth development.

The focus of this scholarly project was to develop an occupation-based toolkit to aid in the development of afterschool programs. Occupation-based refers to an activity that is purposeful and meaningful to the individual who is performing it (Frank, Fishman, Crowley, Blair, Murphy, Montoya, et. al., 2001). In addition to occupation-based activities, a number of areas are addressed to promote positive youth development using meaningful activities that have been shown to be effective in current afterschool programs. The toolkit is a resource that Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants and teachers can use to implement an occupation-based afterschool program.
A theory or a theoretical model is what shapes the practice of a profession. It helps clinicians understand the occupational problems faced by a client and how to address the needs of that client. The theory that was chosen is the Ecological Model of Occupation and the Adult Learning Theory. The main premise of the Ecological Model of Occupation is to extend the possible ways that people can participate in daily tasks. It also has a preventative focus, which is complementary to the proposed program, which is looking at diminishing risk factors that youth from low-income households may be exposed to (Cole & Tufano, 2008). This model emphasizes providing choices, as individuals are more likely to engage in and benefit from various tasks if they find them meaningful (Cole & Tufano, 2008). This theory supports the toolkit protocol.

The Adult Learning Theory, developed by Malcolm Knowles has five main assumptions: (1) adults are autonomous and self-directed, (2) adults have accumulated a foundation of life experiences and knowledge, (3) adults are goal oriented, (4) adults are relevancy oriented, and (5) adults are practical (Lieb, 1991). These assumptions may assist the adult learner in implementing the toolkit. A benefit of utilizing this model is that it is developed for use by a number of disciplines, not strictly for occupational therapy use and supports interdisciplinary collaboration. The Adult Learning Theory helps the COTAs and teachers use the toolkit to implement the afterschool program effectively.

Throughout the scholarly project, several terms have been presented throughout the literature review and proposed program. These have been defined to enhance the reader’s ability to understand the information presented, as some terms may be unfamiliar or have multiple meanings.
Terms and Definitions:

1. Occupation-based – activity that is purposeful and meaningful to the individual performing it (Frank et al., 2001).

2. Meaningful occupations – described as those that are enjoyable, provide a challenge and allow creativity (Snyder, Clark, Masunaka-Noriega, Young, 1998).

3. Poor – “children living in families with incomes below the federal poverty level—$22,050 for a family of four in 2009 are referred to as poor” (The National Center for Children in Poverty, 2010, p.1).

4. Low-income – “children living in families with incomes below twice this level ($22,050 for a family of four in 2009) are referred to as low income” (The National Center for Children in Poverty, 2010, p.1).

5. Afterschool programming – “a safe place for children to go following completion of the school day as well as opportunities for education and enrichment” (ExCEL Afterschool Programs, 2010, p. 1).

6. Risk taking behaviors – tendency to engage in behaviors that have the potential to be harmful or dangerous (Anthony, 2008).

7. Youth – the stage where individuals start to build their identity and future social networks (Chen, 2009).

8. Positive youth development – process through which adolescents acquire the cognitive, social, and emotional skills in order to interact appropriately within a variety of contexts (Zarrett & Lerner, 2008).
9. Context – refers to the environment in which youth are a part of, including the social environment, physical environment and cultural environment (Cole & Tufano, 2008).

10. Life skills – defined as skills that are essential for growth and development. These could include skills necessary for engagement in a number of occupations, such as self-care, cleaning, laundry, cooking, employment, finances, etc. (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009).

11. Communication – involves either oral or written expression of language (Afterschool Alert, 2010).

12. Social interaction – how individuals interact with others in a variety of situations (Afterschool Alert, 2010).

13. Creative exploration – opportunities for students to express themselves, physically, mentally and emotionally, through creative mediums in order to understand and accept themselves (Katz & Shanklin-Peterson, 2007).

14. Physical Activity – any form of exercise or movement that enhances or maintains physical fitness and overall health (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009).

The scholarly project will be presented in the remaining four chapters. Chapter II is a review of the literature focusing on the impact of living in low-income families and afterschool program participation. Chapter II discusses barriers to participation as well as current best practices in afterschool programs. Chapter III describes the methodology used to design and develop the product. Chapter IV includes an introduction to the product, as well as the project in its entirety. Lastly, Chapter V summarizes the purpose,
key information found throughout the development of this product, as well as recommendation for implementation.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

"Each day in America, millions of kids go home to an empty house after school" (Afterschool Alliance, 2009, p.1). The Afterschool Alliance (2009) indicates that based on a 2009 survey of 30,000 families, there are more children unsupervised each afternoon in the U.S. and the demand for afterschool programming is higher than ever. In the United States, 30% of middle school students and 4% of elementary aged children are responsible for taking care of themselves and only 15% currently participate in an afterschool program (Afterschool Alliance, 2009, pg. 4). Students are at particular risk during these hours, millions are unsupervised each afternoon and the unmet need is huge (Afterschool Alliance, 2009).

"According to the 2000 U.S. Census, minors constitute approximately 25.7% of the U.S. population and many live in environments that may limit their education, health, and social well-being" (Hishinuma, Chang, Sy, Greaney, Morris, Rehuher & Nishimura, 2009, p.g 988). "Evidence is mounting that where and how youth spend their time outside of normal school hours has important implications for their development" (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007, p5). The Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics (2009) states that youth who participate in a wide range of activities such as volunteering or after school activities are likely to have positive developmental outcomes.
Youth who live in poverty have fewer resources available to them, such as afterschool programming and safe environments, and are therefore more likely to participate in risk-taking occupations such as vandalism, drugs and other violent activities (Snyder et al., 1998). Youth are less likely to engage in risk-taking behaviors if they have meaningful activities to participate in following the completion of their school day.

The purpose of this scholarly project was to review the literature to identify: 1) the youth most at risk who could benefit from afterschool programming; 2) what are the barriers to accessing afterschool programs; 3) the best practices of afterschool programming and; 4) what is the potential role of occupational therapy (OT) in afterschool programming.

**Youth**

Adolescence is the stage where individuals start to build their identity and future social networks (Chen, 2009). According to the American Medical Association (2001), youth ages 11-14 begin to form their identity by trying new clothing, hairstyles, exploring new friendships, music and hobbies. The Nemours Foundation (2008) also suggests that this is a critical age for youth to start developing their self-esteem. By engaging in a variety of activities that are interesting and challenging young adolescents are able to develop new skills and abilities as well as use their new talents to develop their identity and self-esteem (Afterschool Alert, 2010). Simple milestones that are met are sources of success for youth, thus raising their confidence in their abilities (Nemours Foundation, 2008). Young children often try and fail multiple times until they reach their goal. At this time, they’re identifying their own ideas of their capabilities and creating a self-concept. A healthy self-esteem makes youth feel good about themselves and they also appear to
have an easier time dealing with conflicts and resisting negative peer pressures (Nemours Foundation, 2008). While searching for self-identity and struggling to build self-esteem, moodiness is often common (American Medical Association, 2001). Youth who are having difficulty expressing their emotions may act out with risk taking behaviors in order to convey their emotions (American Medical Association, 2001).

The American Medical Association (2001) reports that preteens and teens are concrete thinkers; often viewing the world and things around them as good or bad, right or wrong. At this stage in a youth’s development they often believe that bad things won’t happen to them and they often take more risks because they have a difficult time understanding the long-term implications of their actions. They are in the stage in which they are just beginning to imagine possibilities, recognize consequences of their actions and anticipate what others are thinking (American Medical Association, 2001). Between the ages of 11-14, youth often begin to question family and school rules as well as challenge their parents, and thus they begin to spend more time with their peers and less time with family (American Medical Association, 2001). The American Medical Association (2001) also states that preteens and teens push the limits that adults put on them because they want to assert their independence. Youth should be provided with opportunities to explore their surroundings, try new things and discover consequences, develop their identity and assert their independence in safe environments.

Young adolescents are continually developing new social and intellectual skills. It is thought that through meaningful activities and a variety of activities they will be able to utilize these skills and gain a sense of who they are, along with developing a sense of responsibility (Afterschool Alert, 2010). The American Medical Association (2001) also
suggests that setting reasonable and appropriate limits helps preteens and teens to try out their independence while having some guidance. They also recommend allowing youth, ages 11-14, to make more decisions as they prove the ability to use good judgment (American Medical Association, 2001). The Afterschool Alert (2010) suggests that children and young teens need opportunities to prove themselves and do things well to increase their limited self-confidence.

Typically developing youth, from higher socioeconomic families often experience a number of different challenges as they explore their surroundings and develop their identity. Youth, from lower socioeconomic families, experience these same difficulties but are also exposed to a different set of challenges and situations that could affect their development such as limited opportunities for exploring positive and healthy leisure interests, fewer resources for academic assistance and restricted access to various environments and cultures (Afterschool Alert, 2010). This is somewhat due to the lack of resources available to low-income families and the stresses associated with living in a low-income household.

Currently, “youth from higher income families were more likely to participate in virtually all out-of-school-time programs and activities than youth from lower income families” (Harvard Family Research Project, 2007, p.1). The Harvard Family Research Project (2007) identified additional demographics of the youth who participate in afterschool programs:

1. Higher income families have the resources to enroll their children in lessons, clubs and sports and the longer they participate in these activities the more they benefit.
2. Tutoring: youth from lower income families were more likely to participate than youth from higher income families.

3. Across most programs and activities Latino youth were underrepresented, white youth overrepresented and black youth somewhere in between,

4. Disadvantaged families do not have the resources and often the opportunity to enroll their children in out-of-school-time programs.

5. A historical analysis revealed a general pattern of stability in these demographic differences over the past 10 years. The increasing policy emphasis on out-of-school-time programs, especially for the disadvantaged youth, is declining this socioeconomic gap in before and after school participation. A key component of this is the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers program.

There are a number of disadvantages faced by youth who are from low-income households, as presented prior. Along with these disadvantages there are also a number of barriers present that discourage youth from participating in afterschool programs that could provide them with opportunities to develop and build skills like their peers.

**Barriers**

The barriers associated with participation in after-school programs are (Afterschool Alert, 2010; Sanderson & Richards, 2010; Howie, Lukacs, Pastor, Reuben & Mendola, 2010):

1. Poverty; financial constraints
2. Family responsibilities (responsibility for younger siblings, chores, parental work schedules)
3. Environment: Unsafe communities and neighborhoods
4. Disinterest or boredom with activities
5. The “relax” factor;
6. Transportation

Each of these barriers will be presented in more detail within the following sections.

**Poverty**

The National Center for Children in Poverty states that, "children living in families with incomes below the federal poverty level-$22,050 for a family of four in 2009 are referred to as poor. Children living in families with incomes below twice this level are referred to as low income" (2010, p.1). The National Center for Children in Poverty reports that children represent 25% of the U.S. population and 41% of children, under the age of 18 live in low-income households (Wright & Chau, 2009). According to the United States Census Bureau, child poverty in the 21st century America has increased from 2008 to 2009 and is currently 20.7%, while the poverty rate of the general population is 14.3% (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, & Smith, 2010).

The highest percentage living in low-income families is Hispanic, accounting for 62% of children who live in low-income households (Wright & Chau, 2009). The region that accounts for the most children living in low-income families is the south (Wright & Chau, 2009). Wright and Chau also state that urban areas account for the highest percentage (51%) of children living in low-income families (2009).

In 2010, poverty was shown to have the strongest correlation with dropout rates according to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2010). In addition, it was estimated that the dropout rates for youth living in the lower percentage of total family income were more than seven times higher than youth who live in a family with a higher total income (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2010). Many families, living in poverty or low-income households, have limited resources and time to develop networks...
and provide educational support for their children’s academic improvement (Li, Holloway, Bempechat, & Loh, 2008).

The resources available to support afterschool programs for youth may be limited or simply be nonexistent in some communities. According Halpern (1999), the cost to run an after-school program five days a week is around $4,000, with families having to pay $40 per week for their children to attend. With the high costs of living and additional expenses, paying for an after-school program is sometimes not an option. Although parents who are at the poverty level would like to have after-school programs available, they would need additional resources provided to them in order to enroll their children.

**Family responsibilities**

Family responsibilities such as taking care of younger siblings or doing chores around the house, is one of the larger barriers to participation in after-school programs with 20% of youth not participating due to these responsibilities (Afterschool Alert, 2009). When parents from low-income households are working, youth take on more responsibilities during the after-school hours, which makes it difficult for these youth to partake in after-school programming (Moving beyond the barriers, 2004).

Parental involvement is often difficult due to their demanding work schedules. Li, et al. (2008) focused on low-income Chinese American adolescents, and found that less than 5% of parents were directly involved in their children’s academic success. The reason for lack of involvement noted by these parents was that they had no time due to work schedules and that they did not know enough English to help with their children’s course work or communicate with school personnel. Although the parents were unable to
provide direct academic help to their children, the family designated at least one person in the home or extended family to help with schoolwork.

Youth who have grown up in poverty have limited social networks, which may become restricted to like-behaving peers (Najman, Clavarino, McGee, Bor, Williams, Hayathakhs, 2010). Najman et al. (2010, p. 543) state that, “priority given to living a healthy, non-violent lifestyle diminishes as their social exclusion becomes a more evident feature of their day to day lives.” Higher achieving students, in a low socioeconomic status, had a larger network of individuals providing academic support than did the lower achieving students. Li, et al. (2008) found that families with lower socioeconomic statuses have smaller social networks available to them and their children for help related to academics. The results suggest that parents from low socioeconomic households have less time and less knowledge to contribute to their children, thus involvement in afterschool programs could help youth from these households develop important networks and connections with positive adult role models (Li et al., 2008).

In addition to family responsibilities around the household, some youth have to take on the role of an employee at a young age to assist in supporting their families. Part-time employment reduces the amount of time these youth are allowed to participate in various activities such as afterschool programs, which may lead to a lack of peer interactions, and other age appropriate activities (Moving beyond the barriers, 2004).

Environment

Unsafe communities and neighborhoods are causing youth to be more likely to stay inside and not partake in any afterschool activities. According to Chen (2009), a greater level of exposure to violence in the community has been shown to increase the
level of emotional distress individuals have. In addition, adolescents with a greater amount of exposure to violence reported more internalizing symptoms, which are defined as depression and anxiety, and extended over a two-year period. This negative impact on adolescents’ mental health imposes an increased threat to their personal safety as well as others (Chen, 2009).

**Disinterests/Boredom**

As stated in the Afterschool Alert (2010), 25% of older youth participating in after-school programs drop out within the first two weeks of starting the program, due to disinterest in the activities provided. Part of this reason is that afterschool programs, in the past, have not looked at what the youth would like to participate in and simply choose activities for them to do. If provided with a variety of different activities, this would keep the interest of the participants while at the same time encouraging regular attendance (Weiss, 2004).

**The “Relax” Factor**

It has been found that 65% of afterschool non-participants would rather simply “hang out” rather than extend their day and participate in activities offered by afterschool programs (Afterschool Alert, 2010). That being said, the peak hours for juvenile crimes and experimentation with drugs, alcohol and sex is between the hours of 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. (Afterschool Alliance, 2009). Youth sometimes use this time afterschool to unwind and relax and are simply too exhausted to participate in any additional programming.

Children and youth who have more unstructured activities and free time following the school day have a greater likelihood of participating in risk-taking behaviors. “Unsupervised time puts youth at risk for such negative outcomes as academic and
behavioral problems, drug use and other types of risky behavior” (Weismann & Gottfredson, 2001, p.201). Mahoney and Stattin (2000) found that a higher proportion of peers were apprehended by the police among youth who engaged in unstructured activities versus structured activity participants. Therefore it is important to attract the attention of youth to keep delinquency rates down and interactions with others positive.

**Transportation**

Many children and youth participating in afterschool programs face the difficulty of finding transportation to and from the facility where the afterschool program is taking place. According to the Afterschool Alert (2010), this is the number one reason for non-participation in after-school programs with 49% of parents stating they are unable to drop off and pick their children up after completion of the day. Youth who live beyond the walking distance from the program and who are unable to be picked up by a responsible adult, simply cannot participate in the afterschool programming. The option of using the school busing system for transportation has been suggested, however this may be difficult to accommodate for a large number of youth as well as the program ending time (Grossman, J.B., Walker, K., & Raley, R., 2001).

The barriers listed prior can have a major impact on a child’s participation in afterschool programming, however, the need for participation in afterschool programs is essential. According to the Urban Institute (2005), youth from low-income families are less likely to be engaged in afterschool activities, due to the barriers presented, which results in a greater chance of exhibiting high levels of behavioral and emotional problems. Sanderson & Richards (2010) found that a social component is a necessity of afterschool programs to allow youth to have the opportunity to make new friends and
spend time doing positive activities. A positive social environment also offers youth a variety of opportunities to interact with adults who are viewed as caring, positive, respectful role models (Bazyk & Bazyk, 2009). Therefore it is important to find a solution in overcoming these barriers in order to encourage appropriate emotional and behavioral expressions.

Although there are a number of barriers noted that make partaking in afterschool programs difficult, the benefits of participation outweigh the barriers. Participating in afterschool programs that offer a variety of activities and choices promote positive youth development. The following section focuses on elements of afterschool programs that will encourage positive youth development and decrease the risk factors that youth from low-income households are exposed to.

**Afterschool Programming: Best Practices**

ExCEL Afterschool Programs defines afterschool programming as “a safe place for youth to go following completion of the school day as well as opportunities for education and enrichment” (ExCEL Afterschool Programs, 2010, p. 1). Fletcher, Nickerson, and Wright (2003) found that youth who participated in club activities (such as Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts or 4-H clubs) received higher academic grades and were rated by their teachers as higher in academic competence than were their peers who were less involved in such activities.

There are a number of benefits for engagement in afterschool programs. Such benefits include: 1) life skills development; 2) communication and social interactions; 3); creative exploration and; 4) physical activity. These benefits will be discussed in further depth in the following sections (Afterschool Alert, 2010). By including these components
in afterschool programs with an emphasis on meaningful, occupation-based activities, youth will gain skills and tools needed for positive youth development.

**Meaningful, Occupation-Based Participation**

Meaningful occupations are described as those that are enjoyable, provide a challenge and allow creativity. Providing youth with meaningful activities, positive relationships and education could be used as a means to decrease adolescent risk-taking behavior. Engagement in meaningful activities increases the likelihood that students will have greater skill development (Frank, et. al., 2001). Meaningful activities can give the students the opportunity to meet new people, build self-esteem, enhance social skills, and promote trust and positive behavior. According to Frank, et. al. (2001), there is an association between greater self-acceptance and higher levels of feeling comfortable when engaged in meaningful activities.

In addition to providing meaningful activities, academic and recreational activities should also be incorporated into the afterschool program (Sanderson & Richards, 2010). A balance of academic, recreational and social activities should be fundamental components of programs in order to meet the diverse needs of all participants. Providing choices to youth on what activities they want to engage in increases the likelihood that they will find it meaningful and will want to attend the afterschool program more often. Anderson Moore, Bronte-Tinkew and Collins (2010) report that out-of-school time activities should allow opportunities for youth to have input into the program activities. They state that when youth are engaged and have opportunities to select their own activities they have higher self-esteem, fewer behavioral problems and increased
likelihood of engaging in programming activities (Anderson Moore, Bronte-Tinkew & Collins, 2010).

One such area that would provide youth with the opportunity to engage in activities that are meaningful is life skill development. This area focuses on skills that will be used in everyday life, so youth will likely find them more meaningful than activities that involve paper and pencil tasks.

**Life Skills Development**

There are a number of reasons why life skill development is an important component of afterschool programs. Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2009) state that life skills addressed in their program focus on further developing the skills essential for education and, in the future, employment. The life skills addressed include: flexibility and adaptability, initiative and self-direction, social and cross cultural skills, productivity and accountability, and leadership and responsibility (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009). The 21st Century Learning programs offer opportunities to utilize technology and life skills and hold the belief that these two components are important factors in the development of various literacy skills such as information literacy, media literacy and information, communications and technology literacy (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009). Lippman and Rivers (2008) advise implementing life skills training as a means for increasing engagement and attentiveness to programming. 21st Learning programs and ExCEL Afterschool Programs have included cooking instruction in their programs, sometimes referred to as an enrichment program to enhance youth’s life skills and their ability to succeed in the future (ExCEL Afterschool Programs, 2010; Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009).
In addition to the components previously discussed, communication and social interaction are important for youth’s success in the future. A youth’s ability to interact in a positive manner will be important in all aspects of one’s future, such as relationship building, education and job attainment (Afterschool Alert, 2010; Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009).

Communication and Social Interactions

Afterschool programs allow children and youth to engage in positive social interactions with their peers as well as positive adult role models. The Afterschool Alert (2010) suggests that peers can offer support, companionship and criticism, while adults can be beneficial in the lives of young adolescents by sharing their experiences of adulthood, values and feelings and encouraging the development of positive peer relationships (Afterschool Alert, 2010). 21st Century Learning programs are designed to incorporate a wide range of skills, knowledge and expertise in a variety of areas that youth will need to achieve in their adult lives. These programs have been successful in incorporating communication and collaboration skills into their programs that youth will rely on in their adult lives (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009). Anderson Moore, Bronte-Tinkew and Collins (2010) have suggested a number of elements that are essential elements of out-of-school time programs. One of these elements is positive and sustained relationships with caring adults. They suggest that relationships are the most critical aspects of effective programs (Anderson Moore, Bronte-Tinkew & Collins, 2010).

Gottfredson, Gertenblith, Soule, Womer and Lu (2004) found that an emphasis on social skills and character development in afterschool programs reduced delinquent behavior. Positive peer association, even if limited, was shown to reduce delinquency in
adolescents (Gottfredson et al., 2004). Howie et al., (2010) suggest that adolescents who participate in either clubs or sports were found to have significantly higher social skills and lower delinquent behaviors than those who did not participate in out of school time activities.

Anthony (2008) suggests that interventions in afterschool programs should emphasize keeping youths engaged in positive adult relationships to enhance autonomy, positive identify and general social skills. Positive adult relationships can further help protect against antisocial peer influences. The Boys and Girls Clubs (2008) includes in their programs the opportunity for youth to build positive relationships with adults and peers and develop the skills needed to become caring, responsible citizens. One important aspect of these groups is the opportunity to interact with role models. Anthony (2008) found that role models and a large network of individuals providing educational support for youth, contributed to more successful academic achievement. Role modeling provided by teachers and other school personnel, is critical to student success and can provide a means for developing emotional resources needed for optimal academic achievement (Payne, 2003).

Additionally, peer-mentoring opportunities that are available for students greatly contribute to additional success in education. Peer mentoring programs have been shown to be effective in the achievement of younger students. Older peers, who provide help with schoolwork to their younger counterparts, encouraged pro-social behaviors among younger children (Frazier, Cappella, Atkins, 2007). Association with positive peers who have no intention to use drugs is highly related to reductions in risk-taking and delinquent behaviors (Gottfredson et al., 2004). Mahoney and Stattin (2008) recommend that
positive adult role models can help youth learn how to incorporate structured activities into their day. They also discuss the importance of structured leisure activities versus unstructured leisure activities as a way to introduce youth to essential life skills and engage in structured activities (Mahoney and Stattin, 2008).

In addition to communication and social interaction skills, another important aspect of afterschool programs is allowing youth to express themselves creatively (Afterschool Alert, 2010). Allowing youth to partake in creative expression, not only helps them explore their identity and build self-esteem but it also allows them to further develop their social interaction skills when engaged in meaningful activities with peers (American Medical Association, 2001; Halpern, 2009; Nemours Foundation, 2008).

**Creative Exploration**

When youth are given opportunities to express themselves, physically, mentally and emotionally, through creative mediums they are able to understand and accept themselves (Afterschool Alert, 2010). According to the Afterschool Alert (2010) afterschool programs that provide opportunities for young adolescents and youth to engage a variety of expressive activities such as drama, literature, music, art, sports, etc. are encouraging self-expression and development. Halpern (1999) implies that being able to explore one’s interests and being able to foster special abilities in arts or sports is highly important to adolescents’ development.

Katz and Shanklin-Peterson (2007) recommend that encompassing an art component into afterschool programming not only provide the youth with opportunities to explore creativity and build student learning, but it also helps build responsibility, self-discipline, and academic skills. The authors also propose that there is a growing body of
research that links engagement in art with improvements in various academic and life skills areas, such as, language and math skills, social skills and motivation to learn (Katz & Shanklin-Peterson, 2007). Katz and Shanklin-Peterson (2007) mention the School Project, which is a theater-based program, and the number of benefits it has to youth development. The program is focused on providing a number of different opportunities to youth for creative expression such as art workshops, fieldtrips, and theater performances. The program focuses on tapping into creativity within each participant, building self-esteem, self-confidence and enabling students to assert their opinions and concerns. 21st Century Learning programs and ExCEL Afterschool Programs also had success while implementing art and music into their programs. When grouped together art and music are sometimes referred to as being part of an enrichment program that helps individuals promote creativity and explore a variety of possible leisure interests (ExCEL Afterschool Programs, 2010; Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009).

Youth can express themselves creatively through art, music, drama, etc., as well as through physical activity. Physical activity can include participating in teams in addition to individually. Along with providing opportunities for creative expression, physical activity also has a number of other benefits which will be discussed in the following (After-School Sports and Fitness, 2002; Ohio Afterschool Network, n.d.; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008).

**Physical Activity**

The Ohio Afterschool Network urges regular participation in physical activity in order to enhance academic learning, reduce sick days, improve behavior and attitude toward self, enhance skeletal development, manage weight control and reduce stress and
anxiety (n.d.). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2008) identified the benefits of building and maintaining healthy bones and muscles as well as helping to reduce the risk of developing obesity and other chronic diseases. Other than physical health benefits, mental health and emotional benefits are also noted, such as, decreasing feelings of anxiety and depression while promoting psychological well being (Center for Disease Control, 2010; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008).

Among other activities, 21st Century Learning programs, ExCEL Afterschool Programs and Boys and Girls Clubs include recreational and physical activity components to their programs (Boys and Girls Clubs of America, 2008; Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009; & ExCEL Afterschool Programs, 2010). The Boys and Girls Clubs (2008) offer at least three different programs emphasizing the importance of physical activity to decrease the prevalence of overweight youth. One way that 21st Century Learning programs incorporate physical activity into their programs is by providing intramural sports, structured physical activities, aerobics and various forms of dance. These activities not only provide opportunities for physical activity but also allow youth to develop teambuilding skills and express themselves in creative ways (ExCel Afterschool Programs, 2010: & Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009). Incorporating physical activity into afterschool programs allow youth to develop a number of different skills, such as social skills, teamwork, self-esteem, and leisure interests.

The Center for Disease Control (2010) reported that additional benefits of physical activity include keeping a child's learning, thinking and judgment skills sharp and continually developing. Providing physical education in afterschool programs helps youth learn to set and work on goals, recognize the benefits of lifelong participation in
physical activity, practice self-assessment, celebrate what they can do, and value others personal achievements, all of which are components of positive youth development (Ohio Afterschool Network, n.d.). The Ohio Afterschool Network (n.d.) recommends providing physical activities that allow skill building, are non-competitive, and are self-esteem sensitive.

After-School Sports and Fitness (2002) suggests that participation in physical activity and/or sports help youth develop personal and social skills that may help them in school and life. This includes a number of important academic and social skills such as the ability to focus, work in a team, and develop leadership skills and self-discipline (After-School Sports and Fitness, 2002). It has also been noted that participation in physical activity and/or sports provides opportunities for youth to gain respect from their peers and experience success, which contributes to self-esteem development and a greater interest in school (After-School Sports and Fitness, 2002).

All of the benefits to afterschool programming detailed prior have described a number of skills and competencies youth can develop by engaging in programs. These skills are important for succeeding in life, attaining employment, developing healthy relationships and avoiding risky situations (Afterschool Alert, 2010; Anderson Moore, Bronthe-Tinkew & Collings, 2010; Anthony, 2008; ExCEL Afterschool Programs, 2010; Hishinuma et al., 2009; Mahoney & Statin, 2000; National Institute on Out-of School Time, 2009; Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009; Zarret & Lerner, 2008). These skills allow youth to occupy their time with activities that promote positive youth development, while also allowing them to avoid risky situations.
Positive Youth Development

Zarret and Lerner (2008) suggest that the skills acquired through participation in an afterschool program, can be organized into the "5 Cs" of Positive Youth Development" (pg 2). These '5 Cs' are competence, confidence, connection, character, caring/compassion (Zarret & Lerner, 2008, pg. 2). These components have been discussed as positive outcomes of afterschool programming in the prior descriptions of the benefits of afterschool programs.

Zarret and Lerner (2008) identified several critical national youth organization groups who are conducting research to identify important elements of social contexts that are vital for positive youth development. The research, completed by these organizations, revealed that youth who participate in out of school time activities fare better developmentally than do their peers who are not involved in out of school time programs (Zarret & Lerner, 2008). They propose that reasons for the positive development is due to the opportunities they have to engage in growth-related activities, opportunities to build supportive relationships, engage in meaningful activities and make a contribution to the well-being of the community (Zarret & Lerner, 2008).

Hishinuma et al. (2009) revealed a number of achievements in youth development in their study of an afterschool program for 5th and 6th graders. They found positive gains for the following after one year in the program; self-esteem, antidrug use, violence prevention strategies, and healthy lifestyles. After two years in the program, positive gains were found for family cohesion, school success and violence prevention strategies (Hishinuma et al., 2009).
The literature suggests that providing an enriching environment for youth to learn positive social skills in a safe environment is important as well as providing an adequate amount of structure for youth (Fletcher, Nickerson & Wright, 2003; Mahoney & Stattin, 2000). Rules and structure are critical at this stage of adolescent development due to their self-criticizing nature (Afterschool Alert, 2010). Young adolescents require help with exploring boundaries and understanding limits (Afterschool Alert, 2010). Mahoney and Stattin (2000) found that youth who participated in structured leisure activities had lower antisocial behavior than youth who participated in unstructured activities. Fletcher, Nickerson and Wright (2003) documented that elementary aged children who participated in structured leisure activities experienced greater psychosocial development and academic competence than their less involved peers. Youth who did not participate in structured activities were noticed to have poorer school performance than those who participated in structured programming (Mahoney & Stattin, 2000).

**Summary**

The literature has suggested the need for afterschool programming to decrease the number of risk factors youth are exposed to. It also suggests a number of issues that should be considered when developing an afterschool program, which will be discussed in the following sections (Afterschool Alert, 2010; Frank et al., 2001; Ohio Afterschool Network, n.d.; Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009).

Meaningful activities promote positive youth development and decrease the amount of risk factors that youth in low-income households are exposed to. One way to promote positive youth development is to provide youth with meaningful activities that focus on building life skills, communication and social interaction skills, creative
expression and physical activity. Meaningful activities can provide youth with the opportunity to meet new people, build self-esteem, enhance social skills, and promote trust and positive behavior (Frank et al., 2001). Engaging in meaningful activities and providing students with choice is one way that the previously discussed barriers (disinterest/boredom, relax factor, environment, family responsibilities, poverty) can be overcome.

Boredom has been discussed as a barrier that keeps youth from attending afterschool programs. If youth are able to participate in occupations and activities that they enjoy and choose they will be less likely to be bored during programming and an increased likelihood of having regular attendance. The youth will have a break from their usual academic, paper and pencil work by engaging in the proposed program activities, however they will still be able to gain skills and may have greater academic skill gain. As mentioned earlier, youth are sometimes too exhausted to participate in any additional programming afterschool, therefore it is important to address this factor by making the activities fun and enjoyable. A second barrier that often prevents youth from partaking in afterschool programs is the neighborhood and environment that they live. They need a program that will offer a safe environment, free from violence so that the children can feel emotionally safe while participating in afterschool programs. A third barrier that limits participation in afterschool programming is poverty or limited resources. Families who are in the low-income bracket often can’t afford the high costs of afterschool programs, thus by providing afterschool programs that are free of cost to families, there will likely be more youth able to participate.
There are a number of barriers to overcome to allow programming to be successful, however occupational therapists (OT) can provide the guidance and programming development needed to ensure a successful program. Occupational therapists are trained in using meaningful activities to enhance skill development and positive outcomes in youth.

**Role of Occupational Therapy in ASP**

An occupation-based program is an effective way to provide an enriching context where children can learn and engage in meaningful activities and investigate “socially acceptable and productive occupations” (Synder, et al., 1998). An occupation-based activity is purposeful and meaningful to the individual performing the activity. Dowrick (2007) gives the example of the occupation-based activity cooking, which requires reading, arithmetic, and writing while selecting recipes. Providing fun, meaningful activities that youth can learn from have proven to be valuable and promote healthy development. OTs can provide “the just-right occupation and the just-right environment to promote trust, group cohesion, positive behavior and fun” (Bazyk & Bazyk, 2009). Programs with an occupation-based focus may help youth from low-income households achieve an occupational balance by engaging in activities they find to be meaningful as well educational.

Occupational Therapists can be beneficial in helping youth develop the skills essential to positive youth development. OTs are skilled at evaluating risk factors, contexts and tasks that impact youth’s development. Upon completion of the evaluation, OTs can provide activities that are geared at assisting youth to gain the skills needed for success in all aspects of their life. OTs are proficient in developing activities that are
meaningful as well as focused on improving skill development. The importance of incorporating meaningful activities in afterschool programs has been detailed previously. An OT's background in providing individualized, client-centered programming ideas is based largely upon meaningful activity, making them well suited to implement an afterschool program focused on these aspects.

The suggested program incorporates a number of different elements into afterschool programs in order to promote positive youth development. While not all of the barriers can be addressed in one program, the focus of the program will be to limit those that appear to be most inhibiting. The foundation of this program is directed towards the use of meaningful, occupation based activities to enhance the positive development of youth.

**Proposed Program**

**Introduction**

The *Afterschool Toolkit for Implementing Occupation-Based Activities* is designed for all children/adolescents to engage in but will have a preventive component, specifically for at risk youth. Youth in low-income families are often exposed to risky and/or dangerous environments and this program would be a way to alter the context in order to provide a safe environment with supervision rather than environments that many low-income youth go to.

The major components of this program will focus on implementing occupation-based activities to help youth at-risk establish new skills, such as social skills and leisure interests. There will be a focus on context and increasing the range of occupations that they can engage in. The program will also address barriers that impact youth’s
participation in afterschool programs. The specific barriers that are addressed in this program and were detailed throughout the literature are disinterest/boredom, the environment, and the "relax" factor. These barriers will be addressed using best practices that were presented in the literature.

The objectives of the *Afterschool Toolkit for Implementing Occupation-Based Activities* are:

1. To implement a program that meets the various needs of youth at risk in grades 4th through 8th.
2. To serve as a resource for COTAs and teachers to follow throughout the afterschool program to improve youths’ performance in a variety of occupations.

**Theory**

Theoretical models are an essential component of the profession of occupational therapy as they provide OTs with knowledge and a guide to effective practice. After researching various models of practice, it was determined that the Ecological Model of Occupation would provide a solid base for the *Afterschool Toolkit for Implementing Occupation-Based Activities*. The afterschool program will also utilize a second theory, the Adult Learning Theory, to guide the education of those who will be implementing the program, such as Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants (COTA) and professional educators. The two theoretical models will be described in more detail in the following sections as well as their application to the program.

**Ecological Model of Occupation:** The main premise of the Ecological Model of Occupation is to expand the possible ways that people can participate in daily tasks. It
also has a preventative focus, complementary to the proposed program, which is looking at diminishing risk-factors that youth from low-income households are exposed to (Cole & Tufano, 2008). This model emphasizes providing choices, as individuals are more likely to engage in and benefit from various tasks if they find them meaningful (Cole & Tufano, 2008). As stated in Cole and Tufano (2008) the Ecological Model of Occupation holds the belief that “the person is empowered as the *agent of change* as having the capacity to be the primary decision maker” (pg. 120). This suggests that the youth in the proposed program will be empowered to make decisions, based on their experiences and what they find meaningful.

The model is based on the relationship between these four core constructs: person, task, context, and performance (Dunn, Brown, & Youngstrom, 2003). The application of the Ecological Model of Occupation applies to this program as follows:

1. **Person:** There are three stakeholders in this program; youth, educators and OTs/COTAs. 1) Youth in grades 4th through 8th who are from disadvantaged, low-income families and who are considered at risk. 2) Afterschool educators who are unaware of the importance of including occupation-based activities as essential elements of programming. 3) OTs/COTAs who work in school communities and have the opportunity to implement such programs. The OTs can serve as a consultant.

2. **Task:** The youth and context work together to determine the range of tasks they are able to perform. A task is the behaviors needed to accomplish a set goal and context is defined as the environment in which youth are a part of, including the social, physical and cultural environment. An infinite number of tasks exist but the child, facilitator and context determine which tasks are available and are a priority for each child.

3. **Context:** There are a number of contexts that this program addresses to increase low-income youths participation in afterschool programming which results in a positive impact on their occupational performance. Context is where and individual participates in activities such as the classroom, the gym, home, a restaurant, etc. This program is being developed to include safe, supportive environments where youth can participate in a variety of activities. The role that these contexts play in relation to task performance is the main focus of this model. Assessing the context, allows a variety of disciplines to consider how changing or adapting these contexts could impact participation.
in a variety of areas such as activities of daily living, leisure and social participation.

4. **Performance**: Performance is a person’s engagement in everyday activities. The performance range is the number of tasks available to the person determined by the person, context, and task (Dunn, Brown, & Youngstrom, 2003). This program looks to affect youth’s performance by increasing the amount of positive and meaningful activities that youth are able to engage in throughout their day. This program will offer a supportive context in order to encourage positive performance in a variety of meaningful activities.

*Ecological Model Interventions*: The model “describes five therapeutic intervention strategies that address the complexity of the person/context/task relationship” (Dunn, Brown, & Youngstrom, 2003, p. 231). The ultimate goal of each of these intervention strategies is to support the performance needs of the youth and facilitator. The intervention strategies and their application to this project are:

1. **Establish/Restore**: The establish/restore strategy focuses on improving a child’s abilities by teaching new skills or restoring lost skills (Cole & Tufano, 2008). The goal of this program is to establish/restore skills in the areas of social, life skills, communication, creative exploration and physical activity.

2. **Alter**: The alter strategy involves altering the context to best match the individual’s needs and promote success (Cole & Tufano, 2008). The goal of this program is to alter an individual’s context by placing them in environments that are safe and decrease the number of risk factors they are exposed to. This will allow them to perform tasks while further developing their current skills.

3. **Adapt/Modify**: Adapt/modify strategies refer to changing the context or task in order to promote successful performance in multiple areas (Cole & Tufano, 2008). The goal of this program is alter/modify the social, physical and cultural contexts in which the youth are engaged in. The tasks will also be modified through use of grading activities to best fit the child’s skills and abilities.

4. **Prevent**: The prevention strategy focuses on minimizing risks which lead to negative outcomes (Cole & Tufano, 2008) The goal of this program is to minimize the risks associated with living in poverty which is a major focus of this program.

5. **Create**: The create strategy is directed at creating contexts that support optimal engagement and performance in occupations (Cole & Tufano, 2008). The goal of this program is to allow youth to make choices about what they want to participate in and what they find meaningful to them, creating opportunities for positive youth development.
A benefit of utilizing this model is that it is developed for use by a number of disciplines, not strictly for occupational therapy use and supports interdisciplinary collaboration. The Ecological Model of Occupation serves as the groundwork for the toolkit development. In addition to this model, the Adult Learning Theory helps the COTAs and teachers use the toolkit to implement the afterschool program effectively.

**Adult Learning Theory:** Andragogy is the art and science of helping adults learn, which was first described by Malcolm Knowles (Conlan, Grabowski and Smith, 2003). The adult learning theory has five assumptions, which describe adult learners. These assumptions and their applicability to this project are discussed in the following.

1. **Adults are autonomous and self-directed** The first assumption states that adults are self-directed and independent in their own learning (Lieb, 1991). The relation of this to this project is that the facilitators (OTRs) must allow the learners (COTAs and educators) to direct themselves and actively involve them in their learning process. Lieb, (1991) suggests that facilitators must act as such, and guide participants to their own knowledge rather than supply them with facts.
2. **Adults have accumulated a foundation of life experiences and knowledge.** The second assumption requires facilitators to involve the adult learners and their previous experiences to the objectives of the lesson (Lieb, 1991). While educating the adult learners on the essential components of this program, facilitators will ask for input and call on adult learners to share their experiences and expertise in order to grasp the concepts fully. Adult learners will also impact the program by suggesting new ideas that will possibly benefit the targeted population.
3. **Adults are goal oriented.** Based on this assumption facilitators must clearly define the goals and objectives upfront and state the relevance that these goals have to the adult learners. According to Malcolm Knowles as stated in, Conlan, Grabowski and Smith, (2003) adults are most concerned with learning about topics that are relevant to their personal lives or careers.
4. **Adults are relevancy oriented.** Letting adult learners choose topics and the manner in which they will learn the material can fulfill this assumption. Learning must correspond with their work and be of interest and value to them (Lieb, 1991). Because these adult learners (COTAs and educators) have chosen to be a part of implementing the program, it is assumed that all topics covered will be of interest and relevant to the learners.
5. **Adults are practical.** Adult learners will not be specifically interested in the knowledge that they are being educated on but rather the outcome of the knowledge (Lieb, 1991). When instructing adult learners explaining the intended
outcomes and their application to implementing the afterschool program can assist in accomplishing this assumption.

Organization

The program has been organized to facilitate logical skill development for at the youth who may be at risk. The sections are clearly defined so that the COTAs and educator can easily access information that is relevant to the curriculum focus of the day.

Organization of An Afterschool Toolkit for Implementing Occupation-Based Activities is outlined below in the Table of Contents of the product.

Table of Contents

I. Introduction to Manual
   a. Introduction
   b. Purpose
   c. Rational
   d. Program’s Theory Base

II. How to use the toolkit
   a. Goals & Objectives for COTAs and teachers
   b. Activity Selection
   c. Adult-Student Ratio
   d. The 5 C’s
   e. Example Template

III. Meaningful, Occupation Based Activities
   a. Life Skills (Self-care and Cooking)
      i. Rationale
      ii. Learning Objective
      iii. Templates
   b. Communication and Social Interactions
      i. Rationale
      ii. Learning Objective
      iii. Templates
   c. Creative Exploration
      i. Rationale
      ii. Learning Objective
      iii. Templates
   d. Physical Activities
      i. Rationale
      ii. Learning Objective
      iii. Templates

IV. References
The product in its entirety is available in Chapter IV. Chapter III will present the methodology and the activities used to develop the product.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The methodology process began during participation and learning in the OT curriculum, particularly during multicultural coursework. As the semester of multicultural coursework progressed, an awareness of the lack of resources available for families in low-income households became apparent. While developing a deeper understanding of the role poverty plays in child development, the interest of providing support to youth in low-income families increased.

This topic was discussed with an OT professor and initial groundwork began by contacting local organizations providing afterschool resources for youth in low-income households. The Grand Forks school district was contacted regarding current program options for youth in low-income households. It was discovered that there are no programs that specifically provide services for this population.

Following this finding, the OT students felt a need to research the literature and develop a program targeted at improving the resources provided to youth in the low-income bracket. Through this process it was realized that there was a lack of research in occupational therapy literature that focused on the role of OT in afterschool programming. Due to the limited available research on this topic, it was the OT students’ decision to pursue this as a scholarly project. Due to the lack of OT literature, it was necessary to research outside of the profession.

A review of the literature was conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the following:

1. OT’s role in afterschool programs,
2. Role of poverty on youth development,
3. Use of occupation-based activities in afterschool programs,
4. Afterschool program best-practices,
5. Barriers to afterschool programs,
6. Best practice methods for training those responsible for implementing the program.

The development of the toolkit is based on current research literature address the best practices for afterschool programs. A series of steps were created to address the needs of the program, as well as the needs of youth living in low-income households. This program addresses the needs of youth in grades fourth through eighth. This is due to the fact that youth in this age range are establishing their personal identities and are beginning to be left on their own during afterschool hours, making it a vulnerable time for youth in these grades (Afterschool Alert, 2010; American Medical Association, 2001; Chen, 2009; Nemours Foundation, 2008). The review of the literature presented various barriers and possible solutions for effective implementation of afterschool programs. From the review of the literature the most relevant aspects for afterschool programs were collected and the models that were most applicable were identified and applied.

The product was developed to address specific topics and how they should be implemented by COTAs and teachers. The proposed program would preferably be carried out by an OT, however due to financial considerations of most school districts, COTAs and teachers could be trained on how to implement the essential components of the program. The purpose of utilizing COTAs, for implementation, is based on their background knowledge in occupation-based activities. An occupational therapist will be serving as a consultant to train the COTAs and teachers on important elements of the program. A training section, based on a well-known theory, was used to ensure successful use by COTAs and teachers.
The OT profession could grow in this area and occupation-based afterschool programming would be a significant benefit for low-income youth. Occupation-based refers to an activity that is purposeful and meaningful to the individual who is performing it (Frank et. al., 2001). Through implementation of this toolkit during afterschool programming, it is proposed that youth that are from low-income households will be able to develop skills needed for success in future occupations. This program was developed to increase the positive opportunities for youth in low-income households to benefit from.
CHAPTER IV

PRODUCT

The ultimate goal of this program is to improve the opportunities for youth from low-income families to participate and benefit from afterschool programs. The program is designed to be implemented by a COTA and teachers in an afterschool setting for youth in grades fourth through eighth.

This product is designed to be a program for all youth/adolescents to participate in and it has a preventive component, specifically for youth at risk. Youth, in low-income families, can often be exposed to risky and/or dangerous environments and this program could be a way to alter the context in order to provide a safe environment with supervision rather than environments that many youth from low-income families may be going home to.

The major components of this program focus on implementing occupation-based activities to help at-risk youth establish new skills, such as social skills and leisure interests. There is a focus on context and increasing the range of occupations that they can engage in.

The objectives of the Afterschool Toolkit for Implementing Occupation-Based Activities are:

1. To implement a program that meets the various needs of youth at risk in grades 4th through 8th.
2. To serve as a resource for COTAs and teachers to follow throughout the afterschool program to improve youths’ performance in a variety of occupations.

Theory

Theoretical models are an essential component of the profession of occupational therapy as they provide OTs with knowledge and a guide to effective practice. After researching various models of practice, it was determined that the Ecological Model of Occupation would provide a solid base for the An Occupation-Based Afterschool Program. This program will also utilize a second theory, the Adult Learning Theory, to guide the education of those who will be implementing the program, such as a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants (COTA) and professional educators. The two theoretical models will be described in more detail in the following sections.

Ecological Model of Occupation: The main premise of the Ecological Model of Occupation is to expand the possible ways that people can participate in daily tasks. It also has a preventative focus, complementary to the proposed program, which is looking at diminishing risk-factors that youth from low-income households are exposed to (Cole & Tufano, 2008). This model emphasizes providing choices, as individuals are more likely to engage in and benefit from various tasks if they find them meaningful (Cole & Tufano, 2008). As stated in Cole and Tufano (2008) the Ecological Model of Occupation holds the belief that “the person is empowered as the agent of change-as having the capacity to be the primary decision maker” (pg. 120). This suggests that the youth in the proposed program will be empowered to make decisions, based on their experiences and what they find meaningful.
The model is based on the relationship between these four core constructs: person, task, context, and performance (Dunn, Brown, & Youngstrom, 2003). The application of the Ecological Model of Occupation applies to this program as follows:

5. **Person**: There are three stakeholders in this program; youth, educators and OTs/COTAs. 1) Youth in grades 4th through 8th who are from disadvantaged, low-income families and who are considered at risk. 2) Afterschool educators who are unaware of the importance of including occupation-based activities as essential elements of programming. 3) OTs/COTAs who work in school communities and have the opportunity to implement such programs. The OTs can serve as a consultant.

6. **Task**: The youth and context work together to determine the range of tasks they are able to perform. A task is the behaviors needed to accomplish a set goal and context is defined as the environment in which youth are a part of, including the social, physical and cultural environment. An infinite number of tasks exist but the child, facilitator and context determine which tasks are available and are a priority for each child.

7. **Context**: There are a number of contexts that this program addresses to increase low-income youths participation in afterschool programming which results in a positive impact on their occupational performance. Context is where and individual participates in activities such as the classroom, the gym, home, a restaurant, etc. This program is being developed to include safe, supportive environments where youth can participate in a variety of activities. The role that these contexts play in relation to task performance is the main focus of this model. Assessing the context, allows a variety of disciplines to consider how changing or adapting these contexts could impact participation in a variety of areas such as activities of daily living, leisure and social participation.

8. **Performance**: Performance is a person’s engagement in everyday activities. The performance range is the number of tasks available to the person determined by the person, context, and task (Dunn, Brown, & Youngstrom, 2003). This program looks to affect youth’s performance by increasing the amount of positive and meaningful activities that youth are able to engage in throughout their day. This program will offer a supportive context in order to encourage positive performance in a variety of meaningful activities.

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7. Alter: The alter strategy involves altering the context to best match the individual’s needs and promote success (Cole & Tufano, 2008). The goal of this program is to alter an individual’s context by placing them in environments that are safe and decrease the number of risk factors they are exposed to. This will allow them to perform tasks while further developing their current skills.

8. Adapt/Modify: Adapt/modify strategies refer to changing the context or task in order to promote successful performance in multiple areas (Cole & Tufano, 2008). The goal of this program is to alter/modify the social, physical and cultural contexts in which the youth are engaged in. The tasks will also be modified through use of grading activities to best fit the child’s skills and abilities.

9. Prevent: The prevention strategy focuses on minimizing risks which lead to negative outcomes (Cole & Tufano, 2008). The goal of this program is to minimize the risks associated with living in poverty which is a major focus of this program.

10. Create: The create strategy is directed at creating contexts that support optimal engagement and performance in occupations (Cole & Tufano, 2008). The goal of this program is to allow youth to make choices about what they want to participate in and what they find meaningful to them, creating opportunities for positive youth development.

A benefit of utilizing this model is that it is developed for use by a number of disciplines, not strictly for occupational therapy use and supports interdisciplinary collaboration. The Ecological Model of Occupation serves as the groundwork for the toolkit development. In addition to this model, the Adult Learning Theory helps the COTAs and teachers use the toolkit to implement the afterschool program effectively.

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2. **Adults have accumulated a foundation of life experiences and knowledge.** The second assumption requires facilitators to involve the adult learners and their previous experiences to the objectives of the lesson (Lieb, 1991). While educating the adult learners on the essential components of this program, facilitators will ask for input and call on adult learners to share their experiences and expertise in order to grasp the concepts fully. Adult learners will also impact the program by suggesting new ideas that will possibly benefit the targeted population.

3. **Adults are goal oriented.** Based on this assumption facilitators must clearly define the goals and objectives upfront and state the relevance that these goals have to the adult learners. According to Malcolm Knowles as stated in, Conlan, Grabowski and Smith, (2003) adults are most concerned with learning about topics that are relevant to their personal lives or careers.

4. **Adults are relevancy oriented.** Letting adult learners choose topics and the manner in which they will learn the material can fulfill this assumption. Learning must correspond with their work and be of interest and value to them (Lieb, 1991). Because these adult learners (COTAs and educators) have chosen to be a part of implementing the program, it is assumed that all topics covered will be of interest and relevant to the learners.

5. **Adults are practical.** Adult learners will not be specifically interested in the knowledge that they are being educated on but rather the outcome of the knowledge (Lieb, 1991). When instructing adult learners explaining the intended outcomes and their application to implementing the afterschool program can assist in accomplishing this assumption.

**Organization**

The program has been organized to facilitate logical skill development for at the youth who may be at risk. The sections are clearly defined so that the COTAs and educator can easily access information that is relevant to the curriculum focus of the day.

Organization of *An Afterschool Toolkit for Implementing Occupation-Based Activities* is outlined below in the Table of Contents of the product.
Table of Contents

I. Introduction to Manual
   a. Introduction
   b. Purpose
   c. Rational
   d. Program’s Theory Base

II. How to use the toolkit
   a. Goals & Objectives for COTAs and teachers
   b. Activity Selection
   c. Adult-Student Ratio
   d. The 5 C’s
   e. Example Template

III. Meaningful, Occupation Based Activities
   a. Life Skills (Self-care and Cooking)
      i. Rationale
      ii. Learning Objective
      iii. Templates
   b. Communication and Social Interactions
      i. Rationale
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      i. Rationale
      ii. Learning Objective
      iii. Templates
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      i. Rationale
      ii. Learning Objective
      iii. Templates

IV. References

The program, An Afterschool Toolkit for Implementing Occupation-Based Activities, is presented in its entirety in the following. Chapter V will present the conclusions and recommendations.
Table of Contents

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      ii. Learning Objective
      iii. Templates

IV. References
Introduction to Manual

Introduction

This toolkit is designed to help Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants (COTA) and teachers implement an occupation-based afterschool program. Occupation-based activities are purposeful and meaningful to the individual performing them (Frank, Fishman, Crowley, Blair, Murphy, Montoya, et. al., 2001).

COTAs and teachers are chosen because of their training in the areas of child development and their experiences of working with youth. COTAs have an understanding of meaningful and occupation-based activities and understand the basic concepts of using occupation as a means for skill development. Teachers have an extensive background with child education and understand how youth learn and appropriate ways to teach them new skills.

Purpose

This toolkit was developed as part of an occupation-based program for all children/adolescents to engage in. It has a preventive component, specifically for youth at risk. Children in low-income households can often be exposed to risky and/or dangerous environments and this program could be a way to alter the context in order to provide a safe environment with supervision rather than environments that many youth in low-income households may have to go to. Context refers to the environment in which youth are a part of, including the social, physical and cultural environment. This toolkit places an emphasis on context and increasing the range of occupations that youth can engage in. The major components of this toolkit focus on using occupation-based activities to help youth at risk to establish or restore new skills, such as social skills and leisure interests.
An occupation-based program is an effective way to provide an enriching context where children can learn and engage in meaningful activities and investigate “socially acceptable and productive occupations” (Synder, Clark, Masunak-Noreiga, & Young, 1998). An occupation-based activity is purposeful and meaningful to the individual performing the activity. Dowrick (2007) gives the example of the occupation-based activity cooking, which requires reading, arithmetic, and writing while selecting recipes to scale up or down. Providing fun, meaningful activities that youth can learn from have proven to be valuable and promote healthy development. Programs with an occupation-based focus may help youth from low-income households achieve an occupational balance by engaging in activities they find to be meaningful as well educational. A benefit of this program is that it places an emphasis on keeping youth engaged in positive adult relationships to enhance autonomy, positive identify and general social skills. Positive adult relationships can further help protect against antisocial peer influences (Anthony, 2008).

Occupational therapists can be beneficial in helping youth develop the skills essential for positive development. OTs are skilled at evaluating risk factors, contexts and tasks that impact youth’s development. Upon the completion of evaluation, OTs can provide activities that are geared at assisting youth to gain the skills needed for success in all aspects of their life. OTs are proficient in developing activities that are meaningful as well as focused on improving skill development. In addition, OTs can provide “the just-right occupation and the just-right environment to promote trust, group cohesion, positive behavior and fun” (Bazyk & Bazyk, 2009). The importance of incorporating meaningful activities in afterschool programs has been detailed previously. An OTs background in providing individualized, client-centered treatment is
based largely upon meaningful activity, making them well suited to implement an afterschool program focused on these aspects.

The objectives of the *Afterschool Toolkit for Implementing Occupation-Based Activities* are:

1. To implement a program that meets the various needs of youth at risk in grades 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>.
2. To serve as a resource for COTAs and teachers to follow throughout the afterschool program to improve youths’ performance in a variety of occupations.

**Rationale**

According to the Afterschool Alliance (2009) children who attend afterschool programs are 30% less likely to participate in criminal activities than their peers who did not attend the program. The literature review also suggested that many families living in poverty or low-income households have limited resources and time to develop networks and provide educational support for their children’s academic improvement (Li et al., 2008). The development of an after-school program could provide students from low-income families with networks of peers and adult role models to support what their parents provide for them. There are a number of benefits for engagement in afterschool programs. Such benefits include: 1) life skills development; 2) communication and social interactions; 3) creative exploration and; 4) physical activity. By including these components in afterschool programs with an emphasis on meaningful, occupation-based activities, children will gain skills and tools needed for positive youth development. In the following sections the rationale will be given for the chosen theories followed by a description of how to use the toolkit in an afterschool setting.
Programs Theory Base

There are two theoretical frameworks that provide the foundation of the design of this entire project, one is the Ecological Model of Occupation and the second is the Adult Learning Theory:

1. The **Ecological Model of Occupation** is applied to the activities and is designed to meet the needs of the students/youth. The main premise of the Ecological Model of Occupation is to expand the possible ways that people can participate in daily tasks. It also focuses on prevention, to decrease risk factors that youth from low-income families are exposed to (Cole & Tufano, 2008). This model emphasizes providing choices; individuals are more likely to engage in and benefit from tasks if they find them meaningful (Cole & Tufano, 2008). As stated in Cole and Tufano (2008) the Ecological Model of Occupation holds the belief that “the person is empowered as the agent of change as having the capacity to be the primary decision maker” (pg. 120). This suggests that youth in the program will be encouraged to make decisions, based on their experiences and what they find meaningful, enjoyable and fun.

The model is based on the relationship between these four core constructs: person, task, context, and performance (Dunn, Brown, & Youngstrom, 2003). The application of the Ecological Model of Occupation applies to this program as follows:

1. **Person:** There are three stakeholders in this program; youth, educators and OTs. 1) Youth in grades 4th through 8th who are from disadvantaged, low-income families and who are considered at risk. 2) Afterschool educators who are unaware of the importance of including occupation-based activities as essential elements of programming. 3) Occupational therapists that work in school communities and have the opportunity to implement such programs and serve as a consultant.
2. **Task:** The youth and context work together to determine the range of tasks they are able to perform. A task is the behaviors needed to accomplish a set goal and context is defined as the environment in which youth are a part of, including the social, physical and cultural environment. An infinite number of tasks exist but the child,
facilitator and context determine which tasks are available and are a priority for each child.

3. **Context:** There are a number of contexts that this program addresses to increase low-income youths participation in afterschool programming which results in a positive impact on their occupational performance. Context is where youth participate in activities such as the classroom, the gym, home, a restaurant, etc. This program is being developed to include safe, supportive environments where youth can participate in a variety of activities. The role that these contexts play in relation to task performance is the main focus of this model. Assessing the context, allows a variety of disciplines to consider how changing or adapting these contexts could impact participation in a variety of areas such as activities of daily living, leisure and social participation.

4. **Performance:** Performance is a person’s engagement in everyday activities. The performance range is the number of tasks available to the person determined by the person, context, and task (Dunn, Brown, & Youngstrom, 2003). This program looks to affect youth’s performance by increasing the amount of positive and meaningful activities that youth are able to engage in throughout their day. This program will offer a supportive context in order to encourage positive performance in a variety of meaningful activities.

**Ecological Model Interventions:** The model “describes five therapeutic intervention strategies that address the complexity of the person/context/task relationship” (Dunn, Brown, & Youngstrom, 2003, p. 231). The ultimate goal of each of these intervention strategies is to support the performance needs of the youth and facilitator. The intervention strategies and their application to this project are:

1. Establish/Restore: The establish/restore strategy focuses on improving a child’s abilities by teaching new skills or restoring lost skills (Cole & Tufano, 2008). The goal of this program is to establish/restore new skills in the areas of social, life skills, communication, creative exploration and physical activity.

2. Alter: The alter strategy involves altering the context to best match the individual’s needs and promote success (Cole & Tufano, 2008). The goal of this program is to alter an individual’s context by placing them in environments that are safe and decrease the number of risk factors they are exposed to. This will allow them to perform tasks while further developing their current skills.

3. Adapt/Modify: Adapt/modify strategies refers to changing the context or task in order to promote successful performance in multiple areas (Cole & Tufano, 2008). The goal of this program is to alter/modify the social, physical and cultural contexts in which the children are engaged in. The tasks will also be modified through use of grading activities to best fit the child’s skills and abilities.
4. Prevent: The prevention strategy focuses on minimizing risks which lead to negative outcomes (Cole & Tufano, 2008). The goal of this program is to minimize the risks associated with living in poverty which is a major focus of this program.

5. Create: The create strategy is directed at creating contexts that support optimal engagement and performance in occupations (Cole & Tufano, 2008). The goal of this program is to allow children to make choices about what they want to participate in and what they find meaningful to them, creating opportunities for positive youth development.

A benefit of utilizing this model is that it is developed for use by a number of disciplines, not strictly for occupational therapy use and supports interdisciplinary collaboration. The Ecological Model of Occupation serves as the groundwork for the toolkit development. In addition to this model, the Adult Learning Theory helps the COTAs and teachers use the toolkit to implement the afterschool program effectively.

**Adult Learning Theory:** Andragogy is the art and science of helping adults learn, which was first described by Malcolm Knowles (Conlan, Grabowski and Smith, 2003). The adult learning theory has five assumptions, which describe adult learners. These assumptions and their applicability to this project are discussed in the following.

1. **Adults are autonomous and self-directed** The first assumption states that adults are self-directed and independent in their own learning (Lieb, 1991). The relation of this to this project is that the facilitators (OTRs) must allow the learners (COTAs and educators) to direct themselves and actively involve them in their learning process of this program. Lieb, (1991) suggests that facilitators must act as such, and guide participants to their own knowledge rather than supply them with facts.

2. **Adults have accumulated foundation of life experiences and knowledge.** The second assumption requires facilitators to involve the adult learners and their previous experiences to the objectives of the lesson (Lieb, 1991). While educating the adult learners on the essential components of this program, facilitators will ask for input and call on adult learners to share their experiences and expertise in order to grasp the concepts fully. Adult learners will also impact the program by suggesting new ideas that will possibly benefit the targeted population.

3. **Adults are goal oriented.** Based on this assumption facilitators must clearly define the goals and objectives upfront and state the relevance that these goals have to the adult learners. According to Malcolm Knowles as stated in, Conlan, Grabowski and Smith, (2003) adults are most concerned with learning about topics that are relevant to their personal lives or careers.
4. **Adults are relevancy oriented.** Letting adult learners choose topics and the manner in which they will learn the material can fulfill this assumption. Learning must correspond with their work and be of interest and value to them (Lieb, 1991). Because these adult learners (COTAs and educators) have chosen to be a part of implementing the program, it is assumed that all topics covered will be of interest and relevant to the learners.

5. **Adults are practical.** Adult learners will not be specifically interested in the knowledge that they are being educated on but rather the outcome of the knowledge (Lieb, 1991). When instructing adult learners explaining the intended outcomes and their application to implementing the afterschool program can assist in accomplishing this assumption.

**How to Use**

COTAs and teachers should follow the basic guidelines of the Ecological Model of Occupation as explained previously. There are multiple areas of occupation that this program is addressing. All of the sections include activities that are meaningful, occupation-based and appropriate for the age group of the participating youth. The sections are:

1. Life Skills,
2. Communication and Social Interactions,
3. Creative Exploration and
4. Physical Activity

**Goals and Objectives for COTAs and Teachers**

The goals and objectives guiding the implementation of the program by COTAs and teachers on how to interact with youth positively are as follows:

1. Develop a safe environment that is supportive and encouraging,
2. Be positive,
3. Be a resource and advocate,
4. Be a positive role model,
5. Provide choices and opportunities for feelings of empowerment.
Activity Selection

Each section provides a rationale, objectives and example templates to demonstrate how they can be used effectively as activities in the program. This is a brief list of activities, other activities should be used in combination with what is provided in the templates and should also be based on youths’ interest. A variety of activities should be chosen for use each week from the different sections to ensure the youth are gaining skills in a variety of areas. The OTR will consult with the COTAs and teachers to ensure appropriate activities are chosen. It is also recommended that prior to each activity, the COTA/teachers review all aspects of the activity to ensure proper follow-through. During this review, COTAs/teachers should develop a list of choices to provide the students with in order to decrease boredom and ensure that activities are meaningful.

The following is a blank template (pg 13-14) that has incorporated the Ecological Model of Occupation. It is hoped that COTAs and teachers will use this template to identify skills, abilities and resources needed for activities. Provided in each template is a section identified as alter. This section can be used to modify activities based on the needs of youth. If the teacher and COTA are having a difficult time altering activities, it is suggested that they consult with the OTR for recommendations on adaptations.

Activities should be graded to meet the skills and abilities of the youth participating. This means that the activities should get progressively more complex and challenging as skill development is noted or less complex if the youth are struggling. For example in the section of communication and social interaction one might start with the activity of social bingo, which requires less social skills and interaction with peers and progress to a communication scavenger hunt as this requires the youth to interact and seek out peers. There is less guidance and structure
provided with communication scavenger hunt, thus it would follow the social bingo. These two activities are laid out in a template form in the communication and social interaction skills section.

**Adult-Student Ratio**

The suggested ratio of adults to students depends on the complexity of the task and the directions required for successful completion. In more complex tasks, such as a cooking activity, a recommended ratio would be ten students to one adult, while during more simple tasks, such as kickball or social skills bingo, a larger ratio of twenty students to one adult would be sufficient. If there is difficulty determining an appropriate ratio, it is recommended that you error on the side of caution and have more adults present, especially while implementing the activity for the first time.

**The 5 C’s**

The 5 C’s are intended to promote positive youth development (Zarrett & Lerner, 2008). The following chart as listed in Zarret and Lerner (2008, pg. 2) lists the 5 C’s along with their definitions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“C”</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competence:</strong></td>
<td>“Positive view of one’s actions in specific areas, including social, academic, cognitive, health, and vocational. Social competence refers to interpersonal skills (such as conflict resolution). Cognitive competence refers to cognitive abilities (e.g. decision making). Academic competence refers to school performance as shown, in part, by school grades, attendance, and test scores. Health competence involves using nutrition, exercise, and rest to keep oneself fit. Vocational competence involves work habits and explorations of career choices.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Confidence:</strong></td>
<td>“An internal sense of overall positive self-worth and self-efficacy.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Connection:</strong></td>
<td>“Positive bonds with people and institutions that are reflected in exchanges between the individual and his or her peers, family, school and community in which both parties contribute to the relationship.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Character:</strong></td>
<td>“Respect for societal and cultural norms, possession of standards for”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
correct behaviors, a sense of right and wrong (morality), and integrity.”

| Caring/Compassion: | “A sense of sympathy and empathy for others.” |

One or more of these should be incorporated into each activity. For example, having youth engage in creative exploration could help them to develop confidence in themselves and their abilities. While each “C” doesn’t need to be addressed with every activity, within each of the main activity areas (life skills, communication and social interaction, creative exploration and physical activity) all 5 “C’s” should be addressed.
Focus of Activity (life skills, communication and social skills, physical activity, creative expression)

Approach Used: (Establish/Restore, Alter, Modify, Prevent, Create)

Objectives:
1. 
2. 
3. 

Activity Description
Directions:

Time:

Supplies:

Alterations:

Person (describe how each persons skills and abilities will influence the activity, keeping in mind their sensorimotor, cognitive and psychosocial skills.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensorimotor</th>
<th>Physical motor and sensory abilities (ex: how high they need to be able to reach, if they need to be able to visualize things, hear, manipulate objects with their fingers, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Problem solving skills, decision making skills, sequencing, memory, etc. (ex: do they need to be able to organize information into steps?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosocial</td>
<td>Includes mental and social aspects such as feelings, the way an individual responds to certain situations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13
**Task** (describe essential task components of activity)

Break the task down into its separate components (ex: cooking has multiple components such as finding a recipe, making a list of needed ingredients, gathering ingredients, following directions, and so on.)

**Context** (describe each as it relates to the activity)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temporal (age, developmental stage)</th>
<th>Who the activity is appropriate for (age group).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical (objects, tools, equipment)</td>
<td>What is the environment like that activity is taking place in and what is being utilized? (ex: a gym with basketballs, dodge balls, bats, etc.)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social (role expectations, social routines, norms)</td>
<td>Who is involved in the activity and what is expected during the activity (participation expectations, sportsmanship, taking turns, etc.)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural (activity patterns, behavioral standards)</td>
<td>What is typically expected during the activity and the person participating (sportsmanship during a baseball game or washing hands prior to cooking, waiting for others to eat, etc.)?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Performance** (describe each as it relates to the activity)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills &amp; Abilities</th>
<th>What skills do the individuals need to have in order to do the activity (reading, writing, attention, etc.)?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>What is the main reason for why youth would engage in the activity (academic success, friends are doing it, its fun, etc.)?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Meaningful Occupation Based Activities

Meaningful occupations are those activities and/or tasks that are described as enjoyable, provide a challenge and allow creativity. Providing youth with meaningful activities, positive relationships and education could be used as a means to decrease youth risk-taking behavior. Engagement in meaningful activities increases the likelihood that students will have greater skill development (Frank, Fishman, Crowley, Blair, Murphy, Montoya, et. al., 2001). Meaningful activities can give the students the opportunity to meet new people, build self-esteem, enhance social skills, and promote trust and positive behavior.

The following describes the use of meaningful, occupation-based activities and the rationale for use within each section.
Life Skills
Rationale

Life skills are defined as those skills that are essential for growth and development. These could include skills necessary for engagement in a number of occupations, such as self-care, cleaning, laundry, cooking, employment and finances. The life skills addressed include: flexibility and adaptability, initiative and self-direction, social and cross cultural skills, productivity and accountability, and leadership and responsibility (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009). Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2009) states that life skills focus on further developing the skills essential for education and, in the future, employment. Lippman and Rivers (2008) advise implementing life skills training as a means for increasing engagement and attentiveness to programming. Dowrick (2007) gives the example of the occupation-based activity cooking, which requires reading, arithmetic, and writing while selecting recipes to scale up or down.

Potential activities that could be used to establish life skills include:

1. shopping,
2. cooking,
3. grooming,
4. hygiene,
5. laundry,
6. employment searches,
7. money management, etc.

Learning Objective

Students will establish life skills that address a variety of occupations, preparing them for future life events.
A template of two life skills activities follows on pages 19-22.
Shopping in Preparation for Cooking/Baking

Focus of Activity: Shopping is a necessary life skill. Shopping involves budgeting, preparing a list of what is needed, transportation, writing, reading, communicating with others and planning.

Approach Used: (Establish/Restore, Alter)

Objectives:
1. Students will be provided choices by determining what they want to learn to cook.
2. Students will establish the skills needed to prepare grocery lists and sequence steps of a recipe.
3. Students will establish social and communication skills while working in pairs during the activity.

Activity Description

Directions: Prepare a list of 5-10 recipes for the students to choose from. Students will then develop a grocery list of items they will need for their recipes. After developing a grocery list, students will develop a roles and responsibilities chart to assist them in delegating responsibilities of the cooking tasks.

Time: Students will choose 1-2 recipes and then prepare a grocery list. This activity will take approximately 45 minutes to an hour.

Supplies: paper, pen/pencil, recipes, transportation, money.

Alterations: Facilitators will alter the tasks or context as needed for the students to be able to perform the tasks with their current skills and abilities. For example:
1. If a student has a difficult time reading, the facilitator can read the choices to the student.
2. If a student has a difficult time sitting still and remaining focused during an activity (possibly due to a diagnosis of ADHD) the facilitator could allow the
individual to stand, offer spicy gum or provide them with a fidget (small object to be played with quietly in their hand).

Person

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensorimotor-</th>
<th>Students will need to be able to manipulate a pencil or pen in their hand and have the visual acuity to read the information on the recipe.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Decision making skills, organization skills, simple problem solving.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosocial</td>
<td>Cooperation with peers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Task

Students will decide on a recipe, look in the cupboards and problem-solve which ingredients they need and which ones are readily available.

Context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temporal</th>
<th>This activity is appropriate for school-age youth aged 9 and up.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>This activity should take place in the kitchen so that the individuals can determine which ingredients are needed, table space will also be needed in order to have a hard surface to make a grocery list on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Cooperation and delegation of roles is needed. Patience is also expected of the students and staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>There may be certain cultural foods significant to the youth that can be included on the list of recipe choices.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills &amp; Abilities</th>
<th>Students need to be able to read (although the recipes could be altered to meet the needs of all individuals), students will also need to pay attention and work cooperatively with others.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>Individuals will most likely be motivated to engage in this activity because of the long-term outcome, which is that they get to make a meal/food dish of their choice and eat it with their peers. Learning to cook for family and friends is also a motivating factor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Focus of Activity: Cooking is an essential life skill. Cooking involves planning, sequencing, communicating with peers and decision making.

Approach Used: (Establish/Restore, Alter)

Objectives:
1. Students will develop basic cooking skills
2. Students will establish social and communication skills while working in pairs during the activity.
3. Students will establish and/or enhance their mathematical skills, including measuring, sequencing, counting, etc.

Activity Description
Directions: The students will cook/bake and clean-up following the activity. Students will take out the needed ingredients and follow the directions from the recipe in order to prepare their dish, seeking out help when needed. The students will then be allowed to eat a portion of the item they made, and take the remainder home. Following the activity the students will be asked to clean-up their work area.

Time: The time will vary depending on the number of staff present, the amount of direction needed by the students and the time frame of the recipes themselves but is estimated to take approximately 2 hours, including clean-up.

Supplies: cooking utensils and cookware, recipes, ingredients, kitchen timers, kitchen appliances, cleaning supplies, eating utensils and plates.

Alterations: Facilitators will alter the tasks or context as needed for the students to be able to perform the tasks with their current skills and abilities. Facilitators will ensure safety precautions are taken. If an individual has a physical limitation, facilitators can adapt equipment used, through the use of built-up handles, Dicem (for a non-slip surface), increased work surface area, additional assistance from facilitators, less physically demanding steps of the activity, etc.
**Person**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensorimotor-</th>
<th>Students will need to be able to manipulate small-medium sized objects such as spoons, bowls, measuring cups, ingredients, etc. Additional skills needed include ability to reach, see objects, listen to timers, move around the work space.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Students need problem solving skills such as, decision making skills, sequencing, organization, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosocial</td>
<td>Students need to be able to ask for help if needed, cooperate within a group, and respond appropriately in social situations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Task**

Gathering needed ingredients, following directions, adding ingredients, baking/cooking for appropriate amount of time, let stand until cool, eat appropriate portion, clean-up kitchen area.

**Context**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temporal</th>
<th>This activity is appropriate for school-age youth aged 9 and up.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>A kitchen space at the school will be utilized. This includes a fridge, stove, sink, tables and appropriate cooking utensils.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Cooperation and delegation of roles is expected. Patience is also expected of the students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>There may be certain cultural foods significant to the youth that can be included on the choices of what to bake/cook.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Performance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills &amp; Abilities</th>
<th>Students need to be able to read (although the recipes could be altered to meet the needs of all individuals), they should have basic math skills, the ability to pay attention and listen to directions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>Students will likely engage in this activity because they are presented with a choice of what they would like to make, they will be able to enjoy the end product and they can interact with their friends while completing the activity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communication and Social Interaction
Rationale

The toolkit will allow children and youth to engage in positive social interactions with their peers as well as positive adult role models. A suggestion is that this program will place an emphasis on keeping youth engaged in positive adult relationships to enhance autonomy, positive identify and general social skills. Positive adult relationships can further help protect against antisocial peer influences (Anthony, 2008).

Most of the activities included in this program have social components that will allow students to establish and enhance their communication and social interaction skills. The following are examples of activities that will assist in developing communication and social interaction skills:

1. social skills BINGO,
2. communication scavenger hunt,
3. using proper phone skills,
4. body language charades,
5. build a city or stranded on an island games

Learning Objective

Students will strengthen positive social and communication skills needed to interact appropriately with peers and adults in a variety of settings throughout their lives.

Two templates for communication and social interaction are presented on pages 25-32.
Social Skills BINGO

Focus of Activity: Social skills are an important component of everyday life and required for communicating on a variety of levels. Social skills bingo provides students with opportunities to voice various opinions as well as learn appropriate social interaction skills.

Approach Used: (Establish/Restore)

Objectives:
1. Students will be able to engage in a game of social skills BINGO to establish effective communication and social skills.
2. Students will establish skills necessary to initiate and carry on conversations with peers.

Activity Description

Directions:
1. Facilitators will be prepared with BINGO cards (see page 28 for example BINGO card), small pieces of paper to cover up numbers and prizes for individuals who win.
2. Facilitators will call numbers and if an individual has the number they will read the question or statement on their card and follow the directions, such as "ask the person sitting to your right what his/her favorite hobby is."
3. The individual must do what the statement says in order to cover up their space.
4. BINGO rules will be followed and individuals will be allowed to pick a prize when they get a BINGO.
5. Following about 45 minutes of playing BINGO the facilitators will lead a discussion with the students asking questions such as "what did you learn about your peers?" "how did you feel when you were asking these questions?" "what did you learn from playing this game and why is it important?"

Time: The time required for this activity is approximately one hour, including the game and a brief discussion.

Supplies: BINGO cards, pieces of paper (to cover numbers), prizes, BINGO numbers.

Alterations: Facilitators will alter the tasks or context as needed for the students to be able to perform the tasks with their current skills and abilities.
1. For students who have limited attention spans the game can be shortened to a duration that is appropriate for their level of engagement.
2. An individual who has a learning disability may benefit from simple questions or an assistant to help them better understand what the question is asking.

**Person**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensorimotor</th>
<th>Students need to be able to hear what other students are saying while completing this activity. Students also need to be able to pick up and place small pieces of paper over the numbers.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Students need to be able to remember what is asked of them to participate in the activity. Students need to be able to read the questions and restate them appropriately to their peers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosocial</td>
<td>Students need to be able to respond appropriately in social situations. They also need to be able to cope with uncomfortable situations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Task**

This activity involves playing a game of social BINGO to allow the students to feel more comfortable when engaging in conversations.

**Context**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temporal</th>
<th>This activity is appropriate for ages 9 and up.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>This activity can take place in a room that allows the students to be seated together around a circular or square table, so that each student can see and talk to one another. The room must also be quiet enough for the individuals to hear one another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Students need to be patient and take turns when waiting to ask their peers questions. Students are also expected to follow the rules of the activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>Students are expected to act in a respectful manner, taking turns, asking questions politely and adhering to social expectations. The questions asked during the activity should also be reflective of the students' background and the activities they complete in their day-to-day routines.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Performance**

| Skills & Abilities | The students need to be able to listen and pay attention to their peers. They also need to be able to speak loudly and clearly enough for their peers to hear them. |
| Motivation       | This activity will allow students to get to know one another while engaging in a game where they are rewarded with prizes. |
# Social BINGO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>O</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Give the person to you left a compliment.</strong></td>
<td><strong>What is the best part of having friends?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Give an example of a conversation starter.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Name two things that you shouldn't talk about when you first meet someone.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tell the group what your favorite food is.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ask the person three chairs to your left what their favorite hobby is.</strong></td>
<td><strong>What do you say when someone gives you a gift?</strong></td>
<td><strong>What do you do when talking to someone?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Why is it wrong to interrupt someone who is speaking to you?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Name 1 thing that you shouldn't do when talking to someone.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How should you look when having a conversation with someone?</strong></td>
<td><strong>With the person sitting two chairs to your right, act out how you would show interest in a conversation.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Free</strong></td>
<td><strong>If you have plans with a friend and something else comes up, what do you do?</strong></td>
<td><strong>What is your favorite activity to do with friends?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Show an example of good body language.</strong></td>
<td><strong>When talking to others, what is the hardest part?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Give the person to your right a pat on the back.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Name one thing you like about the person sitting 2 chairs to your left.</strong></td>
<td><strong>What do you do if you hurt a friend's feelings?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Why is it important to be honest?</strong></td>
<td><strong>What is body language?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Show an example of bad body language.</strong></td>
<td><strong>What is gossip?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Why is gossip bad?</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communication Scavenger Hunt

Focus of Activity: Social skills are an important component of everyday life and are required for communicating on a variety of levels. A communication scavenger hunt will allow the students to practice their interaction skills with their peers in order to increase comfort levels.

Approach Used: (Establish/Restore, Create)

Objectives:
1. This activity is working on positive communication skills for students by teaching them appropriate ways of introducing themselves and asking questions.
2. The activity is creating opportunities for students to interact with one another while using appropriate social skills.

Activity Description

Directions:
1. Explain the purpose of this activity and the process.
2. Ask the students initially how you would introduce yourself to someone you are just meeting.
3. You may choose to discuss proper body language and polite vs. un-polite topics to talk about.
4. Hand out the activity sheet. The handout has questions that allow the students to go up to one another and ask questions. An example may be, "have you ever been to a hockey game?" When all the students have finished filling out the scavenger hunt worksheet, go over with them what they found out about one another and how it felt to ask/be asked questions.

Time: This activity will vary depending on how many students are involved in the scavenger hunt, however it should not take longer than one hour.

Supplies: Handout, pen/pencils.

Alterations: Facilitators will alter the tasks or context as needed for the students to be able to perform the tasks with their current skills and abilities.
1. This activity can be done in pairs for individuals who have limited confidence in their social interaction skills.
2. The amount of questions can be decreased and/or simplified to reduce activity duration which will assist an individual with a learning impairment or decreased attention span to participate in the activity.

**Person**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensorimotor</th>
<th>Students need to be able to hear what other students are saying while completing this activity. Students also need to be able to utilize a writing device when putting names next to each question.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Students need to be able to remember what is asked of them to participate in the activity. Students need to be able to read the questions and state them appropriately to their peers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosocial</td>
<td>Students need to be able to respond appropriately in social situations. They also need to be able to cope with uncomfortable situations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Task**

Initially, the facilitator will discuss proper social skills and ask questions such as: 1) "what are appropriate things to talk about when first meeting someone?" or 2) "what are some topics you may want to avoid talking about until you get to know them a little better?" You can also discuss proper body language when interacting with someone.

After discussion of social skills, the facilitator may then hand out the scavenger hunt worksheet (found on page 32). Explain the rules to the students that everyone is expected to fill out all the questions with another peer's name by going up to them and asking them a question such as, "have you seen a funny movie lately?" If they have not, tell them to move onto another peer and ask the question. After everyone has filled out their handout, go over what the students learned about one another. End the game with prizes for everyone who participated.

**Context**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temporal</th>
<th>This activity is appropriate for children ages 9 and up.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>This activity can take place in a variety of spaces, as long as the individual is able to move around. A writing surface would be beneficial however; students can carry around books to write on if needed. Pencils or pens are also needed to write individuals names next to the question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Students need to be patient and takes turns when waiting to ask their peers questions. Students are also expected to follow the rules of the activity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students are expected to act in a respectful manner, taking turns, asking questions politely and adhering to social expectations. Questions that will be asked during the activity will reflect the students' background and activities they complete in their day to day routines.

### Cultural

- **Skills/Abilities**: The students need to be able to listen and pay attention to their peers. They also need to be able to speak loudly and clearly enough for their peers to hear them.
- **Motivation**: This activity will allow students to get to know one another while engaging in a game where they are rewarded with prizes.
COMMUNICATION SCAVENGER HUNT

DIRECTIONS: INTERVIEW EVERYONE IN THE GROUP AND GET THE AUTOGRAPHS OF SOMEONE WHO....

1. HAS BROWN EYES
2. HAS BEEN TO A GOOD MOVIE RECENTLY
3. PLAYS AN INSTRUMENT
4. HAS AN OLDER BROTHER
5. HAS TAKEN AN AIRPLANE TRIP
6. ENJOYS SPORTS
7. HAS A SISTER
8. HAS BEEN TO A UND SPORTING EVENT
9. FAVORITE SUBJECT IS MATH
10. HAS A BIRTHDAY IN THE WINTER
11. RIDES THEIR BIKE TO SCHOOL
12. LIKES TO BAKE OR COOK
13. WAS BORN IN ANOTHER STATE
14. SINGS IN THE SHOWER
15. ENJOYS MAKING CRAFTS
16. LIKES THE SAME MUSIC AS YOU
17. HAS WON SOMETHING
18. HAS BEEN TO ANOTHER COUNTRY
19. HAS A PET
20. LIKES TO READ
Creative Exploration
Rationale

When youth are given opportunities to express themselves, physically, mentally and emotionally, through creative mediums they are able to understand and accept themselves (Afterschool Alert, 2010). According to the Afterschool Alert (2010), afterschool programs that provide opportunities for young adolescents and youth to engage a variety of expressive activities such as drama, literature, music, art, sports, etc. are encouraging self-expression and development. Halpern (1999) implies that being able to explore one’s interests and being able to foster special abilities in arts or sports is highly important to adolescents’ development. Katz and Shanklin-Peterson (2007) recommend that encompassing an art component into afterschool programming not only provides the children/adolescents with opportunities to explore creativity and build student learning, it also helps build responsibility, self-discipline, and academic skills (Katz & Shanklin-Peterson, 2007).

Creative exploration could encompass a number of different activities that allow youth to express themselves and engage in fun and meaningful activities. Possible activities that could address the area of creative exploration include multiple art projects such as:

1. clay,
2. painting,
3. decoupage,
4. making cards,
5. scrap booking,
6. wood projects,
7. photography
Creative exploration could also be addressed by engaging in leisure activities such as:

1. card games,
2. board games,
3. beading,
4. music,
5. poetry,
6. creative writing.

Community outing activities could also be beneficial, however may be difficult due to financial constraints. It is recommended that you be creative and see what is free in the community, such as museums and libraries.

Learning Objective

Students will express themselves creatively by participating in positive leisure activities and hobbies.

Templates focusing on creative exploration are presented below on pages 36-41.
Focus of Activity: Creative exploration allows youth to express themselves in a variety of ways to help build confidence, understand themselves and develop their identity. By providing choice during creative exploration, students will be allowed to express themselves in meaningful ways.

Approach Used: (Establish/Restore, Create)

Objectives:
1. Students will continue developing skills such as sequencing skills, problem solving skills, decision making skills, etc.
2. The students will explore possible leisure interests and express themselves creatively.

Activity Description

Directions:
1. Allow the students to choose what container they would like to use for the activity.
2. Give them choices of the tissue paper they would like to cover their container in.
3. Explain that the modge podge is used to glue the tissue paper pieces in place. Once all the tissue paper is on the container, have the students cover the container again, with modge podge. Provide a sample container to demonstrate the outcome.

Time: The time for this activity will take approximately two hours if utilizing a smaller container, however may take longer if the container is larger.

Supplies: Modge podge, tissue paper in various colors, variety of container sizes, paint brushes.

Adaptations: Facilitators will alter the tasks or context as needed for the students to be able to perform the tasks with their current skills and abilities.
1. If a student is unable to hold onto a paintbrush due to fine motor impairments, a built-up handle paint brush can be provided.

Person

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensorimotor</th>
<th>Students need to be able to grasp onto a paint brush, while also utilizing fine motor skills to tear tissue paper and stick it on the container.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Students need to be able to sequence the steps for this activity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
decoupage activity. They also need to be able to organize their supplies and find out what is needed for each step. Decision making skills may also be required to identify how the student wants to cover his/her container.

**Psychosocial**

Students may have to share supplies with their peers so they should be able to communicate appropriately when in this situation.

**Task**

1. Students will first identify what container and tissue paper they want to use for the activity.
2. The facilitator will then explain how to complete this activity:
   a. put modge podge on the container,
   b. rip tissue paper,
   c. place tissue paper wherever the student chooses,
3. Let dry for 20 minutes,
4. Then cover with an additional layer of modge podge.
5. The final stage will be to let the container dry.

**Context**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temporal</th>
<th>This activity is appropriate for children ages 9 and up. Younger students may require additional help.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>This activity should take place at a table large enough to allow each student space to reach for supplies and decorate their container. The supplies needed for this activity include: multiple colors/patterns of tissue paper, various shapes/sizes of small/medium sized containers, modge podge, paper plates to put modge podge on, and sponge brushes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Students are required to take turns with supplies and be patient while waiting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>Students are to be respectful of their peers projects and are also expected to follow the rules and utilize the supplies appropriately.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Performance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills/Abilities</th>
<th>Students need to be able to maintain their attention/focus while completing their project. Students also need to be able to manipulate a sponge brush and utilize fine motor skills for picking up/placing tissue paper on container.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Motivation           | This purpose of this activity is to allow students to express themselves creatively. The activity is also fun and allows time
for students to interact with one another while working on their projects.
Card Games

Focus of Activity: Creative exploration allows youth to express themselves in a variety of ways to help build confidence, understand themselves and develop their identity.

Approach Used: (Establish/Restore, Create)

Objectives:
1. Students will add to leisure interests by engaging in different card games.
2. Students will establish or strengthen skills needed to play card games, such as patience, sequencing, memory, and problem solving.
3. Students will establish positive leisure interests.

Activity Description

Directions:
1. Students will play the card games following each card game rules.
2. Facilitators will encourage the students to be respectful while still being allowed to demonstrate competitive behavior. Possible card games are included on page 41.

Time: Time for card games varies depending on the card games played and if the students have played them before. Thirty minutes to an hour would be a reasonable amount of time to allow for the card games.

Supplies: Cards needed specific game and printed directions.

Adaptations: Facilitators will alter the tasks or context as needed for the students to be able to perform the tasks with their current skills and abilities.
1. Students can be allowed to play the games in pairs if they are having difficulty grasping the concepts of the game.
2. If an individual has a physical limitation they could use a cardholder to compensate for weak hand grasps.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sensorimotor-</td>
<td>Students will be required to manipulate the cards in their hands. Students will need to be able to visualize the cards and possibly interact with their peers depending on the game played.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students will need problem solving skills, decision-making skills, and memory skills. Depending on the game they may need to have sequencing, counting or other various math skills.

Individuals will need to respond in appropriate manners during the game. If they are feeling frustrated they must be able to react appropriately and cope with their feelings. Students should be able to consider the feelings of their peers while playing card games.

The task of playing cards has several steps, many of which depend on the game being played. For all of the games the individuals should read and agree upon the rules prior to the start of the game. Students must then play the game according to the rules, demonstrating patience and respect for one another. The game may require that the students keep score throughout the game. The directions provided with the games should provide a more comprehensive breakdown of each game.

Card games are appropriate for all individuals within this program. More challenging and complex games could be used with older children who have developed the skills needed to play the games. However there are card games that all individuals ages 9 and up can benefit from. Card games can be played in essentially any environment. Preferably the environment would be quiet enough for individuals to concentrate and would provide a surface for playing the cards on, such as a table. Card games can be played with various numbers of students, typically 2-6 players. Students should take turns, interact with their peers and be respectful. Sportsmanship and respect are considered important cultural elements of playing card games. Games that students play with their families or friends and are reflective of their background and culture can also be used as a way to encourage leisure exploration and engagement.

Students should have the ability to physically manipulate the cards, pay attention for longer periods of time (10-60 minutes). Students must have memory ability in order to learn...
the rules of the game.

| Motivation | Students motivation for engaging in the activity of cards is because their friends are doing it and it is a fun leisure activity that would provide them with a way to "relax" after a long school day. |

Possible Card Games include:

- Phase 10
- Go Fish
- Old Maid
- Thirty-One/Blitz
- Kings in the Corner
- UNO
- Crazy Eights
Physical Activity
Rationale

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2008), identifies the following benefits of physical activity in afterschool programs:

1. decreasing feelings of anxiety and depression while promoting physical well-being,
2. building and maintaining healthy bones and muscles and
3. helping to reduce the risk of developing obesity and other chronic diseases.

Not only are there physical health benefits of being physically active but there are also emotional and mental health benefits of engaging in regular physical activity. The Center for Disease Control reported that benefits include keeping a child’s learning, thinking and judgment skills sharp and continually developing (2010). The Ohio Afterschool Network recommends providing physical activities that allow skill building, are non-competitive, and are self-esteem sensitive (n.d.). Providing physical education in afterschool programs helps children learn to set and work on goals, recognize the benefits of lifelong participation in physical activity, practice self-assessment, celebrate what they can do, and value others personal achievements, all of which are components of positive youth development (Ohio Afterschool Network, n.d.).

There are a variety of activities that can address physical well-being. It is recommended that activities be included that provide opportunities for physical engagement targeting a variety of energy levels. Some examples of activities that could be included in the program are:

1. kickball,
2. dancing (bunny hop, polka, waltz, line, electric slide, etc),
3. dodge ball,
4. sports (basketball, volleyball, soccer, flag football, ping-pong, badminton, softball),
5. tag games,
6. mission impossible (focuses on teamwork and encouragement),
7. parachute games

Learning Objective

Students will create routines to promote healthy lifestyles.

Two templates of activities with a focus on physical activity are on pages 45-49.
Kickball

**Focus of Activity:** Kickball is creating opportunities for youth to work as a team and practice good sportsmanship as well as create healthy, physical activity routines.

**Approach Used:** (Establish/Restore, Create)

**Objectives:**
1. The students will participate in a game of kickball that allows them to focus on having fun and using their current skills and abilities.
2. Students will strengthen their self-esteem while working with peers on a team.

**Activity Description**

**Directions:** Initially, split the group into two teams, so that some student's feeling are not hurt. Explain the directions of the game to the students participating, including the score you're going up to or the time line. You may also offer the option of changing teams later on so that the students are able to be on a team with a variety of different individuals.

**Time:** The duration of this activity will range depending on the level of enthusiasm the students are experiencing. The games could be short, allowing the students the option of switching teams (girls vs. boys, grade level, etc.) or they could be longer in duration.

**Supplies:** Bases (can be drawn with chalk or actual bases can be used) and a ball.

**Adaptations:** Facilitators will alter the tasks or context as needed for the students to be able to perform the tasks with their current skills and abilities.

1. If a student is unable to participate due to physical limitations, the facilitator should find a different way for the student to feel part of the team such as being an all time "pitcher" or being a scorekeeper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Person</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sensorimotor</strong></td>
<td>Students need to be able to kick, catch and throw the ball (can be adapted if needed). Students also need to be able to stand for long periods of time and run.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cognitive</strong></td>
<td>Decision making skills (where to run to or where to throw the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ball to) and memory (to know what the rules are) are skills needed to play kickball.

| Psychosocial       | Cooperation with team and responding appropriately when in social situations. |

Task

The students will be divided into two teams followed by an explanation of the directions. The facilitator should also explain what is expected of the students in regards to sportsmanship prior to starting the game. The game can go as long as the facilitator chooses and can be stopped at any point to switch up teams.

Context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temporal</th>
<th>This activity is appropriate for children ages 9 and up.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>The game can either be played in the school gymnasium or outside depending on weather. Items that will be needed include bases and a ball.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Taking turns and sportsmanship are important to discuss with the students prior to participation to indicate to them what is expected. Discuss the importance of teamwork and that the game is just for fun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>Sportsmanship and taking turns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills &amp; Abilities</th>
<th>Students need to be able to pay attention to what is going on during the game. They also need to be able to run, catch, kick and throw the ball during the game.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>Students would like to participate in this activity because it will provide a fun experience where they will be allowed to work together as a team to achieve success.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Focus of Activity: Dance allows students to gain physical, mental, emotional and social benefits as well as being able to express themselves creatively.

Approach Used: (Establish/Restore, Create)

Objectives:
1. The students will participate in dance, allowing them to focus on having fun and establish new skills and abilities.
2. Students will create possible leisure interests.
3. Students will establish self-esteem.
4. Students will create routines to promote a healthy lifestyle.

Activity Description

Directions:
1. Students will be instructed in dance styles such as polka, bunny hop, waltz, line dance, electric slide, etc.
2. Facilitators will play music and teach the dance moves, encouraging students to follow directions, imitate the moves and practice the different types of dance.
3. Facilitators will then engage the students in a discussion asking which dances they liked best, what they learned about themselves and why dance is important.

Supplies: CD or tape player, CDs or tape.

Time: The time needed for this activity is approximately one hour, depending on the depth of instruction given for each dance.

Alterations: Facilitators will alter the tasks or context as needed for the students to be able to perform the tasks with their current skills and abilities.
1. If an individual has difficulty learning the dance moves due to a learning impairment, the steps can be broken down into simpler steps (one-step directions) or marks can be placed on the floor as a visual cue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sensorimotor</strong></td>
<td>Students need to be able to move their arms and legs in a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>coordinated fashion in order to engage in this activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students will need to be able to imitate movements, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>listen to the rhythm of the music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cognitive</strong></td>
<td>Students will use their memory in order to recall the parts of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the dances that were taught, they will need to be able to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>follow directions and sequence their actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Psychosocial</strong></td>
<td>Students will have to respond appropriately in social situations, respecting others and being aware of boundaries.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Task                        | Facilitators will demonstrate the dance steps, encouraging students to help demonstrate the dance moves. Students will then be divided into pairs in order to practice the dance moves. Students will then engage in a discussion regarding the different dances. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>This activity is appropriate for individuals age 9 and older.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Temporal</strong></td>
<td>A large open room will be required for this activity, possibly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the school gym. A CD player or MP3 player with a variety of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>music types will also be required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical</strong></td>
<td>The students are expected to respect one another (no making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fun of or laughing at peers). Students are encouraged to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>participate in the activity with their peers. They will be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>expected to be polite and patient while learning the dances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social</strong></td>
<td>Facilitators will ask that students respect one another during</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the activity. There are many cultural components to dance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>These can provide the students with an enriching learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>experience if they are taught a variety of different dances.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance</th>
<th>Students need to be able to coordinate their movements,</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skills &amp; Abilities</strong></td>
<td>engage in physical activity for longer durations, they need to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>be able to pay attention and follow directions and adhere to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>motivation</td>
<td>The motivating factor of this activity is that students are able to engage in physical activity and express themselves creatively while having fun with their peers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References


CHAPTER V
SUMMARY

The Afterschool Toolkit for Implementing Occupation-Based Activities was designed to meet the needs of youth in low-income households who would benefit from the opportunity to participate in an afterschool program. The goal of this toolkit was to provide occupation-based activities to increase the positive outcomes gained from participation in afterschool programs such as; positive youth interactions, establishment of essential life skills and development of healthy physical routines and leisure interests. Occupation-based activities are those activities that are purposeful and meaningful to the individual who is performing them (Frank et. al., 2001). The occupation-based programs would be beneficial for youth in low-income households to support positive youth development by providing positive opportunities. Through the use of meaningful occupation-based activities, this toolkit will assist COTAs and teachers to effectively implement the program.

OT Implications

The Afterschool Toolkit for Implementing Occupation-Based Activities can be valuable to the profession of occupational therapy because it may increase awareness related to the role of occupational therapy in afterschool programming. Currently occupational therapists have a limited role in afterschool programs. The profession of occupational therapy needs to begin placing more emphasis on meaningful, occupation-based activities to increase positive youth development in those attending afterschool
programs. Occupational therapists have beneficial resources that may help improve positive youth development by incorporating meaningful, occupation based activities in afterschool programs.

Proposed Project Implementation

The ideal implementation for this project would be that an OTR would execute the proposed program. However, considering the financial constraints of most school districts, it is more practical for COTAs and teachers to implement the program with an OTR as a consultant. Also, additional barriers would have been addressed in an ideal program but again, due to financial constraints all barriers were unable to be addressed.

Limitations

1. One of the challenges of this product will be the cost of implementation. In order for the use of this toolkit to be successful, there needs to be complete investment by parents, students, OTs/COTAs, school personnel and community members. Grants should be pursued in order to fund the program. Barriers such as transportation could then possibly be addressed if additional funding was received.

2. Targeting youth who are from low-income families successfully, will be difficult due to social opinions of other students and community members and how the program is presented. It would be difficult to single out youth from low-income households due to possible judgment from peers.

Recommendations

1. Program assessment to determine effectiveness of toolkit

2. Research to support occupation-based program implementation
3. Modifications of toolkit as necessary based on programming experiences in combination with current literature.

4. Expansion of the program to promote positive youth development for all students

5. Adding a peer mentoring/role modeling component as suggested in the literature.

In conclusion, many of the risk factors, associated with living in poverty, can be positively improved by providing a safe environment to establish skills for successful engagement in occupations. The proposed toolkit would be a valuable asset in providing positive occupation-based activities during afterschool programming. The profession of OT needs to take a preventative approach to educate students, family and community members on the benefits in participating in afterschool programs in order to increase positive youth development.
REFERENCES


