

DROP-IN CENTRE HELP PAGE

The following is a list of suggestions to help program employees develop and implement a successful drop-in centre. It is in no way a complete guide to running a drop-in, but outlines some basic ideas that will help you get started. Generally, drop-ins that are creatively structured achieve the most success, so try to have fun with the possibilities that such an opportunity affords. It is important to check with the authorities involved (supervisors, parents, etc.) before going ahead with any of the suggestions.

GETTING STARTED:

1. Planning -

Since the best drop-ins are usually those that are the most organized, it's important to plan ahead as much as possible. You can start by making a calendar of planned activities for each day or week out of poster-board. Specific games, crafts and outings that appear on the calendar help to structure your time, while giving the youth that attend your drop-in something to anticipate. To maintain interest further, you might try to separate your weeks into themes with corresponding activities. See the example calendar for further explanation.

2. Advertising -

It's a good idea to start advertising for your summer programming as early as possible. If you are starting in May or June, try visiting the schools in your area to reach a wide range of youth. There, you can also ask the school's administration for permission to put up posters or copies of your calendar. You can also contact community newspapers, or post flyers elsewhere in the community like supermarkets or the local neighbourhood centre.

IMPLEMENTATION:

3. Games -

If you have access to a gym or park, try organizing games. You can always stick to the more traditional sports, but, depending on the interests of the youth, it might be a good idea to familiarize yourself with a range of games and activities so that you can involve everyone. Indoor games with prizes for the winners often excite kids as well. For ideas, try these links:

<http://homepage.tinet.ie/~seaghan/play/games.htm>
<http://www.gameskidsplay.net/>

4. Crafts -

Indoors and in a smaller setting, making crafts with the youths allows for a structured environment that actually produces something for them to take home. Making bookmarks or picture frames, or even tie-dyeing clothes are ideas that have been successful in the past. For craft ideas and instructions, try these links:

<http://www.kidsdomain.com/craft/>
<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/>

5. Food -

If you have access to the ingredients, making a simple snack is an activity that most kids will enjoy. Make sure you check for allergies before going ahead with any plans. If you would like some ideas, try this snack recipe web site.

<http://familycrafts.about.com/cs/craftyrecipes/a/022800a.htm>

6. Outings -

Try organizing a field trip if your budget allows for it - there are plenty of free and inexpensive places available. Arranging transportation can be a problem in some cases, so you may have to rely on bus service or a parent who is willing to drive. You can also familiarize yourself with the resources in your drop-in's neighbourhood that are within walking distance and if you call ahead, places like swimming pools or local museums can sometimes accommodate a larger group.

It is very important that the proper authorities be informed of your plans and you have written consent for any outings.

7. Other Resources -

If you have access to a TV and VCR, watching a movie can be a good idea (please make sure movies are appropriate for age groups). Computers can also be interesting for the youth, as well as a good book. For tips on the most effective ways to read aloud, try this website: <http://www.rif.org/parents/tips/tip.msp?View=11>

EXAMPLE CALENDAR:

This example shows how to plan a theme week. The week's theme is "dinosaurs" and features games, crafts, a movie, and a dinosaur dig. The example will not work for everyone, but should give you an idea of what is involved in planning a daily drop-in. Below is an image of the kind of calendar that you might want to design and display at your drop-in. Though the dinosaur-based activities won't fill enough time for a whole day, they do provide a governing structure for the week.

Monday:

Dinosaur Diorama: Create a scene using dinosaur cutouts. If you're short on supplies, have the youth bring some items from home, like a shoebox or some construction paper.

For full instructions see:

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/dinosaurs/activities/diorama/>

Tuesday:

Dinosaur movie: Rent a dinosaur movie that is appropriate for the age group.

Wednesday:

Jurassic Park Tag: If you have access to a gym or park, this game should work for a medium to large-sized group. Some of the instructions will be difficult to follow depending on the equipment available to you, so some alterations to the rules may be necessary. The basics should provide you with a worthwhile activity.

For full instructions see: <http://pazz.tripod.com/jurassicpark.htm>

Thursday:







Funny Dinosaur Poem: If it works out, the results of this writing exercise will be something that everyone can enjoy.

For instructions see: <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/dinosaurs/>

Friday:

Create your own Dinosaur Dig using sand, small shovels, buckets, paint brushes and buried dinosaur toys, plastic bones or puzzles.

For instructions see: http://www.creativekidsathome.com/games/dinosaur_dig.shtml#more

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
			 	
Dinosaur Diorama	Movie	Jurassic Park Tag	Dino-Poetry	Dinosaur Dig

SIMPLE CRAFT IDEAS:

- **Paper Maché -**

Mix: equal parts of water and flour to make a thick paste

Tear: strips of newspaper

Soak: the newspaper in the paste and use for sculpting.

There are many things you can do with this simple recipe. Using paper plates, string and other decorations, you can make elaborate masks. Cut holes out of the plate for eyes, sculpt a mask, let it dry over night and paint. Using balloons as a form, you can make 3-D animals and other creatures. This is great for a themed week, in which you can suggest almost any animal as a craft idea. Construction paper can form hands, feet or other details, and drinking straws can work as limbs. Paper maché sculptures are only as limited as the imagination of the sculptor.

- **Playdough:**

Mix: 4 cups flour, 1 ½ cups salt & 2 cups of water

Knead well, split into four pieces and add food colouring to each. Store in airtight containers.

- **Paints -**

These can be bought, but on a tight budget, quality paints can easily be made. Store in glass jars with tight fitting lids.

Finger Paints:

Mix:

¼ cup laundry starch

2 drops food colouring.

Works best on shiny-surfaced paper or wax paper.

Poster Paints:

Mix:

1 tbsp. clear liquid detergent

2 tsp. powder paint

- **Paint Ideas -**

Textured:

Texture your painting by placing coarse materials under the paper to be painted on.

Abstract:

Dip string into paint, and then use it to make abstract designs on paper.

Wash:

Crayon drawings can be washed over by paint to give an entirely unique look.

Stenciling:

Cut a shape(s) out of construction paper, lay it out on a larger sheet and paint over top.

Stamping:

Potatoes or corks can be cut out to make inexpensive stamps for designs.