

About the Developmental Studies Center

Our Mission

Developmental Studies Center (DSC) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to children's academic, ethical, and social development. Since 1980, DSC has developed school-based and after-school programs that help children develop capacities to think deeply and critically so they will continue learning throughout their lives and strengthen their commitment to such values as kindness, helpfulness, personal responsibility, and respect for others.

DSC's Programs Develop Skills and Community

Programs for use in classrooms

Caring School Community™ • Grades K–6

The Caring School Community (CSC) program is a nationally recognized, research-based program that builds community—in the classroom, across grades, schoolwide, and with families.

Making Meaning® • Grades K–8

The Making Meaning program is a reading comprehension curriculum that teaches comprehension strategies through read-alouds, collaborative structures, and reflective partner work.

SIPPS® (Systematic Instruction in Phoneme Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words) • Grades K–12

The SIPPS program teaches decoding systematically. It is designed specifically for intervention and covers single-syllable decoding, short vowels, simple consonants, complex vowels, consonant digraphs, polysyllabic strategies, and high-frequency sight words.

Being a Writer™ • Grades K–5

The Being a Writer program is a yearlong writing curriculum—the first program of its kind to bring together the latest research in teaching writing with support for students' social and ethical development. (Available August 2007)

Programs for out-of-school time

AfterSchool KidzLit® • Grades K–8

The AfterSchool KidzLit program is a literacy enrichment program consisting of terrific read-aloud books, and discussions and activities that help kids make connections between the stories, their own lives, and the world.

AfterSchool KidzMath™ • Grades K–6

The AfterSchool KidzMath program provides academic enrichment using cooperative math games and literature-based activities. Kids deepen their understanding and practice important math skills—and have fun.

Science Explorer • Grades K–6

Science Explorer is an inquiry-based, interactive program of experiments using ordinary materials that inspire students to explore scientific principles.

Math Explorer • Grades 6–8

Math Explorer invites children to fly planes, launch rockets, learn card tricks, and make cool stuff to take home—all while practicing the important math skills middle-school students need extra help with.

For more information, please visit www.devstu.org or contact us by phone at 800.666.7270.



**DEVELOPMENTAL
STUDIES CENTER™**

Nonprofit. Research Based. Mission Driven. Since 1980.

Administration Manual

***AfterSchool KidzLit™* Youth Questionnaire**

Overview

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire is an opportunity for youth in after-school programs to give their opinions about things we are interested in, like how they feel about reading, or how much they are concerned about other people. They are *not* tests. There are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions. The questionnaires are composed of two types of questions: reports on behavior and attitudinal questions. They are being given to youth in 4th grade in the LA's BEST after-school program.

The questionnaire should take about 15-25 minutes for youth to fill out.

Research Principles

In order for the results of this questionnaire to be valid, the questionnaire should be given following the same guidelines at each site. Following the procedures in this manual will help to present the questionnaire in as uniform a manner as possible. This will help to minimize the effects of factors that might influence the youths' responses. For example, if some administrators read the questions very slowly, and others read very quickly, or if administrators differ in their expressions or the emphasis they place on certain words, this could result in differences in the youths' understanding of the questions and therefore in their answers to them. *It is very important that all administrators use the same procedures as much as possible!*

We put particular emphasis on maintaining a professional attitude and a positive relationship with all staff. It is important not to be a burden on the staff, not to cause unnecessary disruption on the days of the questionnaire administrations, and to treat everyone—youth and adults alike—with respect. We ask you to treat your experience at the program sites as *confidential*. Please don't talk about the questionnaire or about any of your impressions of specific sites, staff, or youth with anyone other than DSC research personnel.

INSTRUCTIONS

The questionnaire will be administered to groups of 5 – 25 youth. It is printed in both English and Spanish (English in one direction, Spanish in the reverse direction), so that youth can choose the language they are most comfortable with when responding to the items. The administration should be done in pairs, with one person reading the questionnaire instructions and items in English and the other reading them in Spanish.

General Procedures

Upon Arriving at the Site: Arrive at the site in advance of the first scheduled questionnaire administration. You will need to inform staff that you have arrived, get oriented to the location(s) where you will administer the questionnaire, meet your partner, make sure there have been no last-minute changes in the schedule, verify materials and check the day's schedule. (Please remember to use the word “questionnaire” or “survey” with all staff and youth. Do *not* refer to the questionnaire as a “test.”). Try to do any necessary paperwork in a discreet, out of the way place. We do not want to infringe on the common areas that staff use for their private time (e.g. the staff lounge or workroom). We are visitors to the program, and you may be invited to use these areas,

but it is best to find an unoccupied room or hallway to prepare materials in. Remember never to discuss the research, site, staff or youth where anyone may overhear.

Upon Arriving at the Administration Area: Arrive promptly and prepared. Only a specific amount of time has been allotted for the questionnaire and it is important that it be finished within that time! Have an ample number of questionnaire booklets for the youth ready to hand out, and a supply of sharpened pencils for any youth who may need one. We want to avoid inconveniencing the staff unnecessarily by canceling administrations or running over the scheduled time because the administration was not begun on time or because there were not enough forms, etc.

Introduce yourself to the staff member. You may have to ask for some orientation (where does s/he usually stand when addressing the youth? How are things handed out and collected? What phrase or sign is used to call the group to order?). Try not to spend too much time getting organized, so that youth don't become restless and so that you have enough time for the administration.

Remember that we are visitors and would like to make the staff and the youth feel relaxed about this research. We want to be accommodating of their schedules, and we want you to be friendly and cheerful about the questionnaires. We want the youth to feel comfortable and not be concerned about the questionnaire, but we also want them to take it seriously and give us thoughtful answers. We are not there to be disciplinarians—we want the youth to like, not resent, us. On the other hand one also has to be well organized, consistent and sometimes somewhat firm to maintain order.

You might have to remind youth of proper conduct. Often, simply standing next to a youth who is talking or not paying attention to the questions will serve to solve the problem. ***However, it is important to avoid public disciplinary confrontations with the youth. If you must talk to a youth about behavior, please do so in private, in a whisper, or by taking the youth aside briefly.*** If other youth focus on a disciplinary confrontation, it is possible to lose everyone's good will and willingness to complete the questionnaire during the current visit or in later visits to the site.

If there are major problems (e.g. discipline, time shortage, fire drills, etc.) which would prevent the questionnaire from being administered properly, *please stop the administration*. Talk with the staff member about rescheduling the administration. Bring such problems to the notice of DSC research staff as soon as possible.

You will have a list of any youth whose parent or guardian has indicated that they do not give permission for the him/her to complete the questionnaire. Also, even with parental permission, a youth has the *absolute right* to decline to complete the questionnaire (or any portion of it) if he/she chooses. If an individual refuses to participate, you may tell the youth that his/her opinions are important to us (e.g., “we are very interested in your thoughts and feelings about the things in the questionnaire”) and ask him/her to reconsider (e.g., “would you be willing to try to complete the questionnaire for us?”), but you must *not* in any way try to coerce the youth into completing the questionnaire. If a youth refuses to participate, please try to excuse him/her without attracting the attention of other youth.

Administering the Questionnaire

Stand at the front of the room, and read all instructions and *each item in the questionnaire* aloud. Also, the first few sets of response alternatives for each group of items should be read aloud. One person will read the instructions and items in English, and the other will read them in Spanish. Decide at the beginning which language will be read first.

- ✓ Explain the purpose of the questionnaire. The purpose is "To find out what you feel or think about things." It is appropriate to tell youth that their answers are very important.
- ✓ Explain the nature of the questionnaire. It is important that the youth *not* think it is a test with right or wrong answers, and that they understand that whatever they think or feel is acceptable.
- ✓ Hand out the questionnaire booklets. You may ask a youth or staff member to help hand out the booklets.
- ✓ As soon as the questionnaires are handed out, read the instructions on the cover sheet and ask the youth to fill in the blanks on that sheet (name, gender, school, grade, and date; it may help to write the ones that are the same for everyone in the group—i.e., everything but name, and gender—on a blackboard, if available). *Please ask the youth to print neatly.*
- ✓ Answer any questions the youth have about the questionnaire before you begin reading the actual questions.
- ✓ It is important that the youth know that their answers to the questionnaire will not be seen by anyone else at the program site. Remind the youth: "No one in the LA's BEST program will see your answers."

Before beginning the administration, please make sure the following points are clear to the youth:

- ✓ Answers should not be spoken aloud. If you hear youth say their answers loud enough for anyone else to hear, say "Please don't say your answer out loud. We want everyone to think of their own answer and not hear other peoples' answers. We want your answer to be what you really think, not what your friend has answered."
- ✓ Explain that the youth should not go ahead "even if it's too slow for you." We do not want the youth to move at a faster pace because they may race through and circle answers randomly, they may not give each item much thought, and *especially* because they may not read or understand the new directions for a particular section. This is very hard for some youth, and you may have to give several reminders to youth who are going ahead. It's still best not to make this a confrontation, but to explain quietly to the youth *why* it's better not to go ahead.
- ✓ Tell youth to work quietly so other people can think about their answers.
- ✓ If youth feel that none of the response alternatives for a question exactly represents their thoughts or feelings, tell them to choose the "closest" or "best answer." *Be sure to tell them that if they cannot decide on an answer before the class moves on to the next item, they should skip the item and return to it later, after finishing the questionnaire.* Tell them they may have time at the end to go back and fill in answers.

- ✓ Instruct youth to raise a hand if they have a question or do not understand an item and you will come over and help them.
- ✓ Two example items are given on the cover of the questionnaire. Presenting these examples to the youth before reading the questionnaire items helps them see what the items are like, and also lets them know that we are interested in what they think.
- ✓ Each time the response categories change, read the new response categories aloud. Then read the first item of the section and clarify with "For example, if you think _____, then you would circle letter "A" on your answer sheet. If you think _____, then you would circle letter "B", etc...." (repeat for "C", "D" and "E"). Repeat this for the first several items to help assure that youth understand the response options.

Reading the Questionnaire Items

After reading the general instructions, ask if there are any questions, then ask the youth to open the booklets. Read the first set of instructions and the first set of response categories, and then begin reading the questions. Read clearly, briskly and neutrally, being careful not to lean youth in one direction or another by the use of emphasis, inflections, intonations, etc. (but use enough emphasis to make the meaning of the items clear). Please remember to clarify and explain the response categories!

Also, be aware of the time. As the time is limited, you may need to increase your pace if the administration was late getting started. Conversely, there is no need to rush if there is sufficient time. It will usually be necessary to start fairly slowly, making sure youth are following the procedures and understanding the directions, and then to increase the pace. With each change of directions, it will again be necessary to slow down at first, making sure these directions are understood, then to speed up again.

Walking around the room while reading allows quick glances to see how the youth are doing, and how your pace might need adjustment. At the end of the first page and again at the second, ask the youth "Am I reading too fast or too slow?" Adjust the pace of your reading accordingly.

As indicated above, there are certain times when the full set of response choices must be read aloud—at the beginning of the questionnaire, when a new set of responses begins, or if a new section presents a different type of question yet uses the same response alternatives. Read the new response alternatives aloud for the first three items. After the fourth question most youth will know what they are doing and you may just read the question, while periodically reminding them to circle the letter that best shows their answer.

If you notice that an instruction was not understood or not followed, stop briefly and clarify the problem.

Note: As previously stated, how you read the questionnaire is important as it may affect the responses of youth. Among the factors are your overall pace (e.g. how quickly you read the question, how much time the youth have to respond or turn the page), and any emphasis you give to particular words in the question or responses.

Ideally, the pace would be identical for all readers; however, there are natural differences between readers. More importantly, there are differences between sites which will dictate how fast

the youth should be read to. Youth will differ in reading ability and comprehension or they may be accustomed to the speed at which their teacher or another adult reads to them. Since the youth need both to understand the questions and to be relaxed, be aware of *their* pace while attempting to stay close to an average pace. After the youth become accustomed to the questionnaire items and responses they will be able to follow a faster pace. Your pace will also vary as some sections of the questionnaire may require a slower pace while others may permit you to accelerate.

In general, the pace should not be too fast for all youth to keep up with, but not so slow that the process becomes boring and tedious.

Again, please make sure that you read the questions carefully and with enough clarity to help the youth understand the questions.

Finishing Up

At the end of the questionnaire, instruct the youth to look over the questionnaire to make sure all of the questions have been answered. Give youth help filling out any questions they left blank. Collect the material (possibly using youth), say thank you and good bye.

Be sure to collect all of the questionnaires! Do not leave any questionnaire booklets—even blank ones—at the site, with staff or with youth. Please be very careful about this!

If there is time, you may say a few friendly things to the group (for example, ask if the questionnaire was fun or interesting, what did they like, what parts were hard). Record important comments that the group seems to agree on. It is important that staff do not feel the administrators let the youth become too unruly. It is also important that we maintain a continued control over the group and not *ever* have to discipline youth in a forceful manner.

Responding to Questions

Most questions arise from youth confusion or from not understanding the meaning of a word. Thus, your answer need only clarify the topic or procedure. It is important when responding to a question that the youth not be “led” toward a particular answer or a particular type of answer. Remember, the best answer is what the youth thinks, not what might be the most socially desirable, or what we think is most appropriate.

In general, the *only* clarification we make to a general question about the item itself is repetition. There are, however, some vocabulary words that may be difficult for some youth. There is a list of those words that may need explanation. Please use the standard explanation on the list we have provided. If there are other words that give the youth difficulty, please let us know what they are. In most cases, when a youth is unsure about how to answer, simply re-read the question and answers, then pose one of the following questions: “What do you think? How often do you think? Do you agree or not? How much do you agree/disagree?” Below are other types of questions youth may ask:

"What should I put?"	"Circle the answer that is closest to what you think."
"What if I don't know?"	"Circle the answer that is closest to what you think."
"What does this word mean?"	Explain the word. If it is in the response stem, explain how it relates to the other responses. Ask if the youth understands.
"Is this right?" (asking if answer is correct)	"There are no right or wrong answers. Put whatever you think."
"Is this right?" (procedural)	"Yes, good job" or if not correct explain how and where to indicate answer. <i>Don't say "No"!</i>
"Are these graded?"	"No. This isn't a test, and there are no right or wrong answers. Your answers are what you think. And remember, no one in the LA's BEST program sees your answers.
"Do we have to do it?" "What if I don't want to?"	"You don't have to do it, but we would really appreciate if you would. It is important that as many people as possible in this group fill it out." Be gentle; if the youth makes a fuss, is unhappy, obviously anxious, etc. then assure him or her that it is OK not to do it and see that s/he has something to do.
"Will anyone see my answers?"	"We keep your answers private. Other people in the program don't see them."
"Will my parents see my answers?"(answer only if youth ask specifically about parents).	"If you would like to talk to your parents about the questionnaire that's fine, but we send the questionnaires straight to the research office, and the answers go into a computer."

Reader's Reminder List

- ✓ Introduce yourself and your partner.
- ✓ Explain purpose of visit/questionnaire:
"Would like to know what kids your age think."
- ✓ Explain nature of questionnaire-
No right or wrong answers; people can have different answers.
Confidential—answers are not seen by others at the site.
- ✓ Instruct the youth to *print* their name, school, grade, and date, and check off their gender on the cover sheet.
- ✓ Things to say to youth:
Don't say answer out loud—"remember everyone can have a different answer."
Don't go ahead—"you might not know what to do."
If you can't think of an answer, you will have time at the end to come back and finish. (Raise hand for a question.
Please keep quiet, so others can work on their questionnaire.

After youth complete the questionnaire, thank the youth and remember to pick up **all** questionnaire booklets. **Do not leave any booklets anywhere or with anyone at the site!**

After Completion of Questionnaire Administration

- ✓ Place questionnaires that have problems you are aware of (e.g., patterning, random responding, etc.) on top of the stack of questionnaires from this group and indicate the suspected problem on the cover sheet.
- ✓ A reminder: Please do any paperwork in an out of the way, discreet place. We do not want the staff to feel that we are imposing on their private space and time.