



OHIO Youth Advisory Board Toolkit Instructions

The Overcoming Hurdles in Ohio (OHIO) Youth Advisory Board exists to be the knowledgeable statewide voice that influences policies and practices that effect all youth who have or will experience out of home care.

PURPOSE OF OHIO YAB TOOLKITS

The OHIO YAB toolkits have been designed #ByYouthForYouth in order to provide their peers with hands-on experience using specific tools and activities designed to develop their leadership skills.

Leadership skill development assists young people in and from foster care in preparing for their future, and increases the likelihood of positive outcomes post-emancipation. This includes the ability to analyze personal strengths and weaknesses, to establish social networks, to set goals and map out action steps, and to proceed with confidence to make those goals a reality.

We ask that agencies safeguard the purpose of the toolkits to support their local youth advisory boards. The supplies purchased by the OHIO Youth Advisory Board are not to be used for independent living classes, unless YAB youth members are facilitating those activities.

Part of empowering today's youth to be tomorrow's role models is providing them with opportunities to take the lead. The goal is for youth to first participate in the activities themselves, and then be empowered to facilitate activities for other youth.

If your agency wishes to purchase similar supplies for your independent living classes, please contact Lisa Dickson at lisa@fosteractionohio.org for information on where to purchase supplies.



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ELEVATOR SPEECH

Supplies needed:

Drawstring bag: "Ask me about my Youth Advisory Board"

Definition

- An elevator speech is a clear, brief message or "commercial"
- It's typically about 30 seconds, the time it takes people to ride from the top to the bottom of a building in an elevator

Facilitator instructions:

1. Youth take turns wearing the drawstring bag
2. While wear the bag, they act out how they would explain about their youth advisory board to others

Learning Outcomes:

- Networking
- Practice in sharing the purpose of youth advisory boards
- This skill translates over to the workplace and job interviewing strategies



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CONFLICTS and RESOLUTIONS

Supplies needed:

1. Conflict Resolution cards
2. Buzzers

Facilitator instructions:

1. Have youth each take a card and take turns acting it out
2. Have them use the buzzers to reflect on how effective that advocacy message might be
3. Discuss with youth how each advocacy message might be changed to be even more effective

Rules:

1. The applause button indicates an effective advocacy message
2. The other buzzer indicates that the message could be improved upon, in order to advocate more effectively

Learning Outcomes:

- Developing the ability to resolve conflicts positively
- Being aware of verbal and nonverbal communication
- Practicing calm, non-defensive, and respectful reactions
- Addressing conflicts as they arise, rather than ignoring them



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COMMUNICATION EXERCISE

Supplies needed:

1. Puzzle pieces and trays
2. Two chairs (facing in opposite directions from one another)
3. Two tables

Facilitator instructions:

1. Have two youth sit back-to-back
2. Have them decide who will be the instructor and who will be the listener
3. The “instructor” places the shapes on the tray however they please. Once, accomplished, they give instructions to the other person on how to mimic their design.
4. Switch roles when done, and try it again.

Rules:

1. Listener cannot look at instructor’s tray
2. Bystanders may not help the listener

Learning Outcomes:

- Listening skills
- Sharing clear messages
- Open-ended vs. close-ended questions

Quick Tip:

- This activity can also be done with drawing. Two youth sit back to back, and one of them draws a picture, and describes it to the other person, to see if he/she can draw the same thing.



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HOW DO WE STACK UP AS LEADERS?

Supplies needed:

1. Cups
2. Rubber bands
3. String
4. Two tables

Facilitator instructions:

1. The goal is to build a tower of cups by working together
2. Each person must hold onto one of the strings that is attached to the rubber band
3. Afterwards, have youth discuss how they worked as a team.
4. Ask youth why teamwork is important on a youth advisory board.

Rules:

1. Teams must communicate without speaking
2. Youth can't touch cups with their hands or any other part of their bodies

Learning Outcomes:

- Nonverbal communication
- Paying attention to others
- Working as a team



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GETTING TO KNOW YOUTH

Supplies needed:

Icebreaker balls

Facilitator instructions:

1. Have the group make a circle
2. Have them throw the icebreaker ball to one another, and answer the questions
3. At the end of the activity, ask them what they learned about one another
4. Ask them how this activity helps with networking
5. To extend this activity, have youth use the topics to practice public speaking

Learning Outcomes:

- Youth advisory board members get to know one another
- Making sure every youth in attendance feels included
- Public speaking practice



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CRAFTING A MESSAGE

Supplies needed:

1. Mini dry-erase board
2. Dry erase markers

Facilitator instructions:

1. Youth take turns using the dry-erase board(s) to write a short message
2. Examples might include: #OhioFosterYouthMatter

Questions to reflect after the activity

1. How might other people receive this message?
2. Is it clear, short and to-the-point?
3. Would the reader feel attacked or supported/informed?
4. Could the wording of this message be misconstrued?
5. What additional research/statistics could help to strengthen this message?

Learning Outcomes:

- Communication skills
- Youth advisory boards serve as a voice to educate others regarding policies and practices that affect current, former and future foster youth
- Crafting an informed and persuasive message is a skill that will assist youth in education and the workforce



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BUILD A BRIDGE

Supplies needed:

Fiddlesticks

Facilitator instructions: (Option 1)

1. Youth work in groups
2. The goal of each group is to build the tallest and most stable tower possible
3. Work as a team to come up with a design and a strategy
4. Each member of your group should play an important role
5. Follow up by discussing the role that each member of your team played in this activity

Facilitator instructions: (Option 2)

The instructions are the same, but the goal is to sit on opposite sides of the table and build a bridge from one side of the table to the other

Learning Outcomes:

- Teamwork
- Communication skills
- Strategic planning

Quick Tip:

- These two activities can also be done with uncooked spaghetti and marshmallows of various sizes