



# Homework Club Handbook for Critical Hours Programming

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*A special thank you to the Critical Hours Task Group for their ongoing commitment and passion to ensure that children and youth in Ottawa are accessing high quality critical hours programming.*



## **ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK**

Members of the Ottawa Child and Youth Initiative (OCYI) have expressed a need for more information on creating a homework club handbook for programs across the city.

This handbook is meant to be a resource for volunteers and staff who are looking for best practices, evidence-based strategies, and tools for either creating a new homework club or improving an existing one. Examples in the handbook were provided by local community partners when possible in order to offer real examples for reference.

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## **GETTING STARTED:** CRITICAL HOURS PROGRAMMING

# CRITICAL HOURS PROGRAMMING

The times during which children are left alone, either after school, on weekends, or during extended breaks (PA days, March break, summer, etc.), are known as the critical hours. It is during these hours when, because of the lack of supervision and social interaction, children and youth are put at risk for drug and alcohol use, stress, low self-esteem, and other mental health and/or behavioural challenges.

## The Three Pillars of Critical Hours Programming

Critical hours programming provides opportunities for participants to develop social and academic skills. When students are engaged in high quality after school activities, they experience great levels of intrinsic concentration and motivation.

In more recent years, the Critical Hours Task Group and Ottawa Homework Club Community of Practice have worked collaboratively to share best practices and create a system of high quality critical hours programming. The commitment to ensuring high quality programming lead to a consensus that homework clubs are based on three foundational pillars:

- a. Skill development;
- b. Safe and supportive spaces, and;
- c. Positive relationships

Throughout this handbook, you will take a deeper look at each of the three pillars of critical hours programming as well as learn how they can be integrated into your homework club program to help ensure its success.

## What is a Homework Club?

A homework club refers to regular sessions, typically held during critical hours, where, namely a volunteer, parent, or organization, offers academic support to children and youth. Homework clubs not only have a goal of providing children and youth a safe place to receive academic assistance, but they also foster positive relationships in safe and supportive environments allowing them to gain other essential lifelong skills.

Most homework clubs use an informal drop-in program type where the club operates under a first-come, first-served basis and the participant may be matched with a different tutor each week depending on who is available and the type of homework help needed. These students tend to need to be highly motivated to learn as they work with a different person every time. Other homework clubs are of the matching variety where the participant's learning need is matched with the tutor's strength and the same pairing is maintained throughout the duration of the club.

## Goals and Objectives

When developing the goals of any homework club, it is important to not include too much. The more specific you are in how you organize a homework club, the better.

- If your program works with a wide range of ages, consider age specific groupings within the larger group
- Reach out to programs who have proven success to identify best practices for high quality programming (i.e. 3 Pillars, Pathways to Education, etc.)
- Survey the academic needs/interests of the children in your community in order to serve them better
- Develop a routine to help keep volunteers and participants actively engaged (include a healthy snack at the beginning of a homework help session and a group activity at the end)



## **PILLAR I:** SKILL DEVELOPMENT



# SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Critical hours programs foster the social and academic skills of participants. When students are engaged in high quality after school activities, they experience higher levels of intrinsic concentration and motivation.<sup>1</sup>

## Academic Skills

Although critical hours programs are not strictly scholastic, they support their capacity to improve academic outcomes for participants. Activities which consist of academic enrichment or homework requires children and youth to develop skills which are invaluable to academic success, such as persistence, focus, and sustained attention and engagement.

The programs found to have the greatest impact on academic outcomes were those which offer participants “SAFE” activities (structured, active, focused, and explicit).<sup>2</sup> Another study further identified a diverse variety of structured, age-appropriate activities as being an important indicator of whether a program will influence academic outcomes, particularly as children get older – Grade 3 and above.<sup>3</sup>

## Recruiting Participants

When first starting up a homework club, begin with recruiting no more than 10 participants who really want to partake, by:

- Posting flyers
- Giving presentations to classes at a school and other community programs

- Asking for referrals from colleagues
- Talking to parents

Decide on the criteria for attending your homework club, i.e. First registered; school/organizational referral, learning needs, etc. If you have more individuals interested in participating, start a wait list and let the registered participants know so they can keep on top of their commitment of attending sessions.

**Registration.** Registration is essential in any homework club. Most programs can only accommodate a certain number of participants so registration is important for parents to confirm there is a place for their child. Registration forms are also important for staff and volunteers because they provide important information about the participant, such as their emergency contact information, allergies, or whether they have permission to walk home alone. Registration forms can be given to parents as a package which might include a description of the homework club program, rules and expectations, updates, and events. Asking parents to complete the registration form also solidifies their commitment to helping their child attend the program regularly.

If you are engaging parents who may have difficulty with literacy or have a different first language, you may want to condense the amount of written material and share rules and expectations verbally to make it more accessible. Renewing membership can also be as simple as printing off the previous year’s form, reviewing with parents and making necessary changes, and then signing off on the revisions.

- Make sure to get parental permission for students to participate in your program.
- Include a letter that describes the structure of your program (time, place, start date, end date, etc.) and provides an on-site contact number in case of emergency.
- If your homework club plans to take photographs of students, it is important to include a photo consent form and mention how the photos might be used (i.e. shared in brochures, on your social media page, or during an open house).

(See Appendices I-III for “HWC Registration Form” “HWC Rules and Expectations” and “HWC Permission Form to Walk Home Alone”)

1 Grogan, Kathryn E. Christopher C. Henrich, and Mariva V. Malinka. “Student Engagement in After-School Programs, Academic Skills, and Social Competence among Elementary School Students.” *Child Development Research*, 2014:1-9. Hindawi Publishing Corporation. Web. 18 Dec. 2014, at 7-8.

2 Vandell, Deborah Lowe, David J. Shernoff, Kim M. Pierce, Daniel M. Bolt, Kimberly Daisman, and B. Bradford Brown. “Activities, Engagement, and Emotion in After-school Programs (and Elsewhere).” *New Directions for Youth Development* 105 (2005): 121-29. Wiley Periodicals, Inc. Web. 18 Dec. 2014 at 126-27.

3 Pierce, Kim M., Daniel M. Bolt, Deborah Lowe Vandell. “Specific Features of After-School Program Quality: Associations with Children’s Functioning in Middle Childhood.” *American Journal of Community Psychology* 45 (2010): 381-93. Web. 18 Dec. 2014 at 390.

## Establishing a Routine

Ensure there is a mix and variety of activities. Spending long periods of time studying or doing homework may actually decrease the amount of information and quality of information the brain absorbs. Within critical hours programming, active engagement in a homework club is not only about maintaining a child's interest in their studies. The focus should also be about ensuring that all parties are enjoying their homework club experience and are eager to return each time. Taking a break from academics every now and again gives your brain time to retain, process, and store information it is subjected to, especially for those under the age of 25, when the brain is still creating neurons and forming pathways. So break up the hour (or however long it is) into segments where more active things are included.

## Academic Help

("Academic Help" information provided by the tutors of Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre, "Homework Club Helpful Hints")

**Use resources.** Don't be afraid to consult the dictionary, text book or internet for help. Encourage students to do the same. Model good research techniques. It's okay not to know everything!

**Learning disabilities and cultural differences.** Try approaching homework in a new way. It's okay to scrap a teaching method and try something new, whether it be verbal help, written examples or role play. There are many ways to teach any single thing.

**Communicate with parents and teachers.** If you don't have direct contact with the parents or teachers, writing a note can be very helpful to them. It can highlight achievements and struggles or keep them up to date with their progress.

**Be aware Of time.** While it's great to be able to work one on one with a student, it's okay to say "I'm going to go see if \_\_\_ needs help. Try to do the next part on your own and I'll come back to check." Try to help all of those in need by managing your time effectively.

## Nutrition Break

As poor nutrition can reduce energy levels, it is a good idea to provide a snack to your participants and volunteers to not only encourage healthy eating but also brain functioning and positive mental health. A number of studies have shown that brain

development, functioning, and information processing are significantly impacted by a child's intake of micro-nutrients, such as vitamins A and B12, and iron.<sup>4</sup> And remember, ensure that your staff and participants stay hydrated and drink lots of water!

(See Figure 1.1)

**Allergies and dietary restrictions.** Be sure to always have alternative options available as it is very likely that someone in your program may have a dietary restriction because of cultural or religious reasons, or some sort of allergy or intolerance to a particular food. These often include:

- Lactose intolerance
- Veganism
- Vegetarianism
- Halal diet
- Kosher diet
- Peanut/nut allergy
- Celiac disease or gluten-free diet

(See Figure 1.1)



4 Gómez-Pinilla, Fernando. "Brain foods: the effects of nutrients on brain function." *National Institute of Health*, (2008): 1-26. University of California at Los Angeles, School of Medicine. Web. 27 Jun. 2016, at 7.



**Figure 1.1**

(Chart information obtained from Harvard Medical School: Harvard Health Publications “Listing of Vitamins” June 2009)

Nutritional Value	Snack
Vitamin B1 (thiamin) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• helps convert food into energy; needed for healthy skin, hair, muscles, and brain</li></ul>	Soy milk, watermelon, ham, acorn squash
Vitamin B2 (riboflavin) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• helps convert food into energy; needed for healthy skin, hair, muscles, and brain</li></ul>	Milk, yogurt, cheese, and whole grains/cereals
Vitamin B-12 (cobalamin) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• assists in creating new cells; lack of this vitamin can cause memory loss;</li></ul>	Fortified cereals and soy milk, cheese, eggs, poultry
Vitamin C <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• bolsters immune system and helps absorb iron; produces serotonin and norepinephrine neurotransmitters</li></ul>	Bell peppers, juices, kiwis, oranges, strawberries,
Choline <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• helps make and release neurotransmitter acetylcholine, which aids in many nerve and brain activities</li></ul>	Milk, eggs, peanuts
Vitamin D <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• helps maintain normal blood levels; strengthens teeth and bones and is responsible for healthy skin and energy</li></ul>	Fortified milk and cereals; sunlight
Calcium <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• builds and protects bones and teeth; muscle contraction and relaxation</li></ul>	Milk, yogurt, cheese, tofu
Iron <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• helps in producing healthy hemoglobin and carrying oxygen throughout body; increases energy levels</li></ul>	Red meat, eggs, green vegetables, lentils, fortified grain products

## Social and Emotional Skills

Research has highlighted after-school programs as key spaces where students expand their socio-emotional learning horizons. They offer more flexibility than academic classrooms and curricula, making them platforms which prompt students’ development of a sense of autonomy and the development of profound interpersonal relationships. Social competencies which are honed in such a setting include individual goal-directed behavior<sup>5</sup>, collaboration and teamwork. Self-esteem, self-regulation, psychosocial adjustment, empathy, and school bonding are some of the emotional faculties which are critical indicators of positive development

and successful outcomes, and are also a focus in after-school programs.<sup>6</sup>

After-school programs offer a variety of activity options which are age and developmentally appropriate. These activities provide enrichment for participants in areas including arts and culture, sciences, physical fitness, and many others. Because there is no singular program focus, such as for a karate lesson, a dance class, or classroom, students have the opportunity to develop several skills simultaneously. The longitudinal study of after-school program quality by Pierce, Bolt and Vandell found

<sup>6</sup> Shernoff, David J. “Engagement in After-School Programs as a Predictor of Social Competence and Academic Performance.” *American Journal of Community Psychology* 45 (2010): 325-37. Web. 18 Dec. 2014 at 326.

<sup>5</sup> Grogan, Henrich, and Malinka. *supra* note 1 at 7.

that the range of choice available to them incites the development of confidence in oneself, and thus the ability to take the most from the activity and confidently form rapports with others.<sup>7</sup>

### Check-in / Check-out

A perfect time to foster positive social and emotional skill development is during the check-in/check-out portions of a session. A check-in happens at the beginning of each homework club session, during which, the participants and volunteers would share something positive about their day (or week, since last session) that they enjoyed. Similar to the check-in, the check-out is implemented at the end of every session and involves every participant and volunteer sharing something they learned while in session and something they look forward to. These typically occur in a discussion circle but also as an activity.

It is possible that participants may not want to speak out in front of the group so it is extremely important to not force them. Give them a non-judgmental space and appropriate time to answer, but if not, just move on. It may be that they aren't comfortable sharing anything personal however it's important to keep providing them the opportunity to share at their own pace. To help facilitate check-ins and check-outs, the leader may provide a set of questions which may be in many different forms.

**Open-ended questions.** These provide the opportunity for more in-depth answers and a variety of answers. i.e. Can you think of a time where you helped someone?

**Closed-ended questions.** These generally provide yes or no answers or other one-word answers. i.e. Did you feel good when you figured out how to solve that math question?

**Probing questions.** A follow-up question that asks for expansion on a previous statement. i.e. Why would you say that?

**Polling questions.** Method of getting a group to quickly share their opinions on something, usually by raising hand. i.e. Who has a dog?

### Stress Relieving

There are times during a homework clubs session where you might notice a participant or volunteer looking a bit stressed or frustrated and it is quite clear they might need a break from homework. This could be a time where the group does a stress relieving activity. These activities (or games), require little to no equipment and are easy and quick to organize. They could also be integrated into the check-in portion as an ice-breaker, the check-out portion as a method to debrief, or even at its own scheduled time.

**Quick, Quiet Activities.** There are always going to be moments of down time... so kids can do the following:

- Have a quiet discussion about a current event
- Play a board game
- Create a memory card game with words
- Color or draw a picture
- Write a journal entry or story
- Read a book
- Play an educational computer game
- Practice basic math

("Quick, Quiet Activities" by the tutors of Western Ottawa Community Resources Centre "Homework Club Helpful Hints")

### Incentives

Setting up some type of reward system or incentive for showing up (on time) to homework club, being respectful, etc. may prove to be very successful for your program. It may be a field trip to a gallery or museum, a pizza party, a gift card, a theme day, movie/pajama day, or a banquet day at which they could receive certificates. Regardless of what system you choose to implement, make sure that it is attainable, that everyone is aware of it, and be sure to remind them every now and again.

<sup>7</sup> Pierce, Bolt, and Vandell. *supra* note 3 at 391.



## **PILLAR II:** SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE SPACES

## SAFE & SUPPORTIVE SPACES

The second pillar which supports critical hours programming is known as “Safe & Supportive Spaces”. Critical hours programming provides two different aspects of these spaces: safe in terms of the program’s physical environment and in the sense of a stable emotional climate.

### Physical Environment

For critical hours programs to be considered safe it must have several components:

- a. Staff turnover should be low,<sup>8</sup>
- b. Staff training and ongoing supervision (the capacity to address academic questions, but more importantly, participants’ personal problems) should be strong and evidence based,<sup>9</sup> and
- c. Authority displayed by staff should be progressive, with lots of opportunity for participants autonomous choice.<sup>10</sup>

### Staff Turnover

Staff turnover or staff retention refers to the rate at which the staff of an agency or organization need to be replaced, either due changes in commitment or temporary/permanent leave. Recent studies regarding staff retention in child and family services, say that rates can range from 30% - 40% within a given year and can be higher for those working in front-line positions.<sup>11</sup> Having a high turnover can be

very detrimental to the a child’s learning pace as well as to the motivation of the other staff members. As a homework club manager, your responsibility for maintaining your club’s high retention rate does not begin once you notice problems, but rather from the moment you first hire on your team.

**Recruitment.** Start by recruiting no more than 10 keen individuals, who are (preferably) older than your participants and can commit to program time and duration. While there are a lot of potential tutors out there, not all of them may be suited to the age/grade, subject matter, or academic need/interests of your homework club so it important to thoroughly scope out potential tutors before committing to them. In Figure 2.1, you will find pros, cons, and recruitment strategies for taking on tutors at the high school, college/university, community volunteer, parent, and professional levels.

**Screening.** In order to ensure that you take on tutors and volunteers that are appropriate for your homework club, be sure to do some type of screening process. This would include a resume submission with a police records check and references as well as an in-person and/or phone interview which would involve going over:

- The homework club’s goals, objectives, and policies
- How the program functions and particular roles, responsibilities, and reporting hierarchy (preferably of every position)
- Commitment level - have the candidate sign a contract
- Expected salary - staff should be paid what they are worth: do some research to gauge the typical earnings of the particular position and adjust accordingly

**Team building.** Staff retention begins with the club manager, however its long-term maintenance becomes a collective issue.<sup>12</sup> In order to build a culture that supports this, it must be of high priority on every staff member’s part, to ensure: a) the use of

8 Cross, Amanda, Brown, Denise C. Gottfredson, Denise M. Wilson, Melissa Rorie, and Nadine Connell. “Implementation Quality and Positive Experiences in After-School Programs.” *American Journal of Community Psychology* 45 (2010): 370-80. Web. 18 Dec. 2014 at 377.

9 Noam, Gil G., and Beth Bernstein-Yamashiro. “Youth Development Practitioners and Their Relationships in School and After-School Programs.” *New Direction for Student Leadership* 137 (2013): 57-68. Wiley Online Library. Web. 18 Dec. 2014 at 67.

10 Deutsch, Nancy L., and Jeffrey N. Jones. “Show Me an Ounce of Respect: Respect and Authority in Adult-Youth Relationships in After-School Programs.” *Journal of Adolescent Research* 23.6 (2008): 667-88. Web. 18 Dec. 2014 at 671.

11 Anderson, Gary, Judith McKenzie, John McKenzie, Rosemary Jackson. “Staff Retention in Child and Family Services: The Role of Leaders (Workbook 1).” *Michigan State University, School of Social Work* (2007): 1-114. Web. 13 July 2016 at 4.

12 Ibid at 20.

**Figure 2.1**

(Chart obtained from Frontier College: "How to Start a Homework Club", pg. 8-9)

High School Students	
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• high energy; great role models</li><li>• many available, often on volunteer basis (need to fulfill graduation volunteering requirement)</li><li>• available during after school times</li><li>• better suited to tutoring elementary ages</li></ul>
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• often need to work in structured environment with onsite adult supervision</li><li>• must obtain parent/guardian permission if under age of majority</li></ul>
Recruiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• give class presentations at school</li><li>• ask teachers, guidance counsellors, etc.</li></ul>
College / University Students	
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• high energy; great role models</li><li>• very mature; little to no supervision</li><li>• many available (building resumes, gain experience, obtain references)</li><li>• flexible schedules (day, afternoon, evening)</li></ul>
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• often only available from September to April (end of study period)</li></ul>
Recruiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• post flyers on campus or ads on school website</li><li>• ask faculty members (education, social work)</li></ul>
Community Volunteers	
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• available all year round</li><li>• high retention (often volunteer for years)</li></ul>
Cons	
Recruiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• post advertisements in newspapers or posters in community centres and service clubs</li></ul>
Parents	
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• high retention (often stay committed after child is no longer involved)</li></ul>
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• parent-child dynamic can get in way of success in tutoring</li></ul>
Recruiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• upon selecting participants, ask if the parent would like to volunteer</li></ul>
Professionals	
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ideal role models</li><li>• provide knowledge and resources outside the typical homework club (especially if sessions are held within their place of business)</li></ul>
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• commitment can be a struggle</li><li>• negotiation to set up homework club at place of business can be slow</li></ul>
Recruiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• human resources at workplace</li></ul>



positive, yet constructive communication; b) that the staff atmosphere is free from exclusivity, and; c) there are plenty of opportunities to get together outside club hours.<sup>13</sup> If every staff member pledges to follow the guidelines (and management abides by its promises), their motivation to work will stay high.

### Staff Training & Ongoing Supervision

The more time put into training tutors/volunteers, the higher the quality of programming will be for your participants. In programs where participants are matched with tutors, leaders will train their staff first and then match them with students afterwards, but some do the opposite. Whatever you decide to do, make sure the option is best suited to what your program is trying to achieve.

**Orientation.** After selection, you may want to hold an informal orientation for all tutors and volunteers to:

- Offer them a chance to meet each other before actual homework club sessions begin
- Hand in signed forms (parent/guardian permission form, confidentiality agreement, emergency contact, etc.)
- Clarify particulars
- Ask questions

### Duty to Report

If a worker has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection, the worker must promptly report the suspicion and related information to the Children's Aid Society (CFSA s. 72(1)). This includes disclosure by an individual over the age of 16 where younger siblings are at risk. (Refer to your club's policies regarding this for proper procedure to follow).

(See Additional Resources section for list of "Important Contacts")

### Display of Authority

No matter how large your homework club is, or how small, there will be a number of people involved in the operation of the club. Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of each individual will encourage a smooth operation and success in the club. What follows is a brief description of the typical roles involved in operating a successful homework. Depending on the scale of your club or organization, the roles and job titles may vary.

**Director/Manager.** Oversees administrative management of all critical hours programming; responsible for establishing work ethics and workplace safety for all staff and volunteers; communicates with partners, funders, Supervisor/Coordinator regularly.

**Supervisor/Coordinator.** Oversees behind-the-scenes operations of homework club and administration; is the go to person for tutor/volunteers, parents, and participants on more serious needs; may coordinate volunteers; developing, enforcing, and abiding by club rules, expectations, confidentiality agreements, privacies communicates with Director/Manager, Leader/Primary Instructor regularly.

**Leader/Primary Instructor.** Oversees on-site operations of homework club and communicates with tutors/volunteers, parents, and participants; developing, enforcing, and abiding by club rules, expectations, confidentiality agreements, privacies; is in constant conversation with the Supervisor/Coordinator in regards to resources, staffing/volunteer maintenance, participant attendance and progress;

**Tutor/Volunteer.** May take on many roles other than tutor (behaviour management, nutrition break, etc.) depending on club needs; works directly with participants and may speak with parents in regards to assigned role only; enforcing and abiding by club rules, expectations, confidentiality agreements, privacies; is in constant conversation with Leader/Primary Instructor in regards to resources, participants progress and attendance.

**Parent/Guardian.** Primary caretaker of child, Student/Participant; responsible for registering child, and signing all applicable forms, timely drop-off and pick-up of child; may meet with Tutor/Volunteer and Leader/Primary Instructor periodically to discuss child's progress and attendance.

**Student/Participant.** Responsible for bringing homework to club each session, showing on-time, abiding by club rules and expectations; meets with Tutor/Volunteer each session to work on homework, constantly updates Parent/Guardian on progress.

### Socio-Demographic Safety

The "Safe and Supportive Spaces" pillar also engenders socio-demographic security, for all children, but particularly for at risk children, in low

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid* at 23.



income neighbourhoods in urban centres. A study by Vandell, Shernoff et. al, on engagement revealed that children who attend critical hours programming spend more time involved in academic and arts enrichment, organized sports and physical activities, community service, and homework as compared to their peers not attending programming.<sup>14</sup> It is also worth noting that the Social Development Model contends that children learn patterns of behavior, prosocial or antisocial, based on their social environment and will replicate these behaviours.<sup>15</sup>

**Time and Location.** Choose a time and location for holding sessions that is accommodating to both the volunteers and participants. Homework clubs are typically held during critical hours in schools, community centres, or libraries but they could likely be held anywhere, as long as you ensure that the physical venue has:

- Easy and safe accessibility for volunteers and participants
- Accommodations for the amount of people and still provides plenty of space
- Minimal distractions (loud noises, crowded, dim lighting, etc.)
- Appropriate resources (tables and chairs, computers, chalkboard, washrooms, pencils, books, etc.)

Because the time of your homework club may depend on available space, once the location has been finalized, decide on the duration and frequency of the sessions (3 hrs once a week, 1 hr twice a week, etc.).

### Emotional Climate

Along with the physical environment, program participants (and staff) should experience a generally positive and respectful emotional and relational climate,<sup>16</sup> and the program environment should provide mental and emotional stimulation and challenge.<sup>17</sup> It is important to ensure that homework clubs are safe spaces for everyone, including our students, staff and volunteers. A safe space refers to a place where anyone can relax and be able to fully

express themselves, without fear of being made to feel uncomfortable, unwelcome, or unsafe on account of biological sex, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, cultural background, religious affiliation, age, physical ability, learning ability, or mental health challenges.

Children are vulnerable when left alone in their time outside of school. Critical hours programs provide a safe, structured space where these children can be engaged in constructive activities during these risky hours. High quality critical hours programs help children and youth establish positive, healthy behaviours which they will carry with them through their teen years and hopefully for the remainder of their lives.<sup>18</sup>

### Appropriate Language

(Section information provided by Pathways to Education)

Eliminating any comments that are homophobic, transphobic, racist, classist, ableist, sizeist, etc., in an immediate and safe manner will help create an environment that respects all people at all times. All staff, volunteers and students should be encouraged to interrupt this kind of language in a way that is *educational rather than confrontational*.

Things to consider when responding:

- Use methods that are genuine and fitting for your personality.
- Keep your tone non-confrontational and non-judgmental.
- Decide if the behaviour warrants a public and/or private response.

Some strategies for responding include:

#### Paraphrase or repeat back what they said.

Restating their comment clarifies it for you and for them. It can help them hear how biased or silly they sound. For example, “So, you’re saying that all people on welfare are just lazy and looking for a free ride?”

**Ask for more information.** This can be a follow-up to paraphrasing. Ask clarifying questions and point out contradictions. As people try to explain their comments, they often realize that what they are saying doesn’t make sense. “I’m wondering what’s led you to believe this about people on welfare?” or “How many people do you know that are on welfare?”

<sup>14</sup> Vandell et. al *supra* note 2 at 124-26.

<sup>15</sup> Wright, Robin, Lindsay John, Eric Duku, Giovani Burgos, Amanda Krygsman, and Charlene Esposto. “After-School Programs as a Prosocial Setting for Bonding Between Peers.” *Child & Youth Services* 31 (2010): 74-91. Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group. Web. 18 Dec. 2014 at 77.

<sup>16</sup> Deutsch and Jones. *supra* note 10 at 671.

<sup>17</sup> Shernoff, *supra* note 6 at 334.

<sup>18</sup> Wright et. al *supra* note 15 at 77.

**Express empathy.** Listen for the feelings behind the statement. Acknowledge the underlying feelings and address the bias after. If someone says, “I’m tired of losing jobs to those unqualified minorities just so they can meet their affirmative action quota.” Instead of launching into a lecture about their assumption that minorities are unqualified, first acknowledge their feelings. “You sound pretty frustrated about not getting that job. I know job hunting can be really difficult and disappointing.”

**Questioning/Feigning Ignorance.** “What do you mean by a ‘gay’ shirt?”

**Personalize.** “Hey that offends me! My aunt is gay and she’s amazing.”

**Encourage Empathy.** Remind them of a time when they complained about similar comments directed at them. “I know you hate it when people make Italian jokes. It’s not OK to make jokes about other ethnic groups.”

**Humour.** “That shirt is gay? I didn’t know shirts have a sexual orientation!”

**Education.** “Did you know what you just said is derogatory? Let’s brainstorm five words that better describe what you meant to say.”

**Assume the best.** Don’t automatically attribute bad motives. “I know that you’re a good person, and you’d never intend to offend someone, but what you just said was hurtful.” “I know you were just trying to be funny, but I found that joke offensive because...”

**Share your own process.** Talk about how you used to say, think or feel similar things but have changed. Share an experience that caused you to change. “I used to laugh or tell jokes like that, but then I realized how hurtful they are to people. I don’t do it anymore and I’d like you to stop too.”

**Fall back on rules or policy.** “It is unacceptable to use language like that here.”

Remember, staff are here to help you navigate these conversations with students. Staff can offer you advice or debrief situations with you.

## Behavior Management

(Section information provided by the tutors of Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre)

**Consistency.** This is the most important thing you can do. Be fair with each child. Do not play favorites and do not do something one time and not the next. Sometimes you might feel like you’re being “hard” on the kids but students really do need structure to feel safe, respected and learn effectively.

**Know They Are Listening.** Make sure the whole group is listening before you speak to avoid repetition. Ask students to look at you or turn towards you. Exercise cultural sensitivity. Use a hand clapping method, verbal response or dim the lights as a sign that you will be speaking.

**Communication.** Say the rules verbally, write them on a poster board, use pictures if necessary. Having a variety of communication methods will help each child remember the policies and procedures.

**Reward System.** Sometimes, due to challenging behaviours or simply that the children are too excited (like just before March Break) we will reward academic achievement and good deeds. Consider a reward system for individuals and the whole group. Use stickers, small prizes or save up for a party. Ensure that all students have equal opportunity to access the reward/s. Set clear guidelines on how this system will work and ensure that it is delivered in a fair manner.

**Defiance.** Dealing with students who often seem to deviate from appropriate behavior can be challenging. Try sitting / standing near them or spending some one on one time with them. Remind him or her of the rules and why it is important to follow them, as their behavior affects themselves as well as the group. Provide at least one warning with expectations and consequences clearly stated. Follow through, be consistent and be firm. You can also devise a visual board to assist with this (spotlight system, three strikes system etc.).

(See Additional Resources section for “How Volunteers can Engage with Pathways Students”)



positive  
relationships

## **PILLAR III:** POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

# POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

The third pillar of critical hours programming is Positive Relationships. Evidence shows that the primary reasons children return to programs is because of the relationships they build there.<sup>19</sup> More than attendance, it is the peer-peer and child/youth-adult relationships that positively influence social and academic outcomes for participants.

## Peer-Peer Relationships

Positive relationships with peers increases participant engagement, social competency, and relationships with peers. On peer bonding in critical hours, programs show “an increase in prosocial development in youth when peer social support is present. As peer social supports increase, prosocial behavior and self-esteem increase while conduct disorder, emotional problems, hyperactivity and indirect aggression all decrease.”<sup>20</sup>

## Participant Engagement

(Section information provided by the tutors of Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre)

**Meet and greet.** Remember to introduce yourself and get to know at least one thing about each student. Ask them how their day was or get to know their favorite sports team, game, etc. A warm and friendly hello can really brighten a student’s day. Even if you don’t have time to have a long conversation with each child, you have made at least one point of contact with every student.

**Get their input.** Sometimes you have to talk *to* the students about important matters such as safety concerns. At other times, you can talk *with* the students more generally. We like to have “Homework Club Meetings” where one of us sits at the same level as the kids and conducts a meeting that encourages

the kids to participate and give feedback about special events, resources etc. You can also have the kids make up their own Club Rules at the beginning of the year.

**Help a friend.** We have a lot of kids at Homework Club and some of them finish their work quite early. We often encourage older or more experienced students to help the younger ones or their friends who are struggling when we are busy with other kids. Students love being able to help. We also get students to help us with set up and take down.

## Participant-Staff Relationships

The development of positive relationships between program participants and the adults who staff the programs can be complex due to various dimensions of social bonding but two studies found that they are in fact the singular most important program factor to enhance social and academic outcomes for youth.<sup>21</sup>

## Open Door Policy

Having an open-door policy lets program participants know you are always available to hear concerns. This is a key way to build trust. If a participant seems upset, one way to work towards resolving the issue is to say something like “It seems as though you are sad about something. Would you like to talk with me about that?” And if they open up about the things that are bothering them, follow up by saying, “I’m so sorry to hear that. I would really like to help you out with this. Do you think I could talk about this with you parent?”

19 Deutsch and Jones, *supra* note 10 at 682.

20 Wright et. al *supra* note 15 at 78.

21 Ibid at 76; and Gottfredson, Denise, Amanda Brown Crodd, Denise Wilson, Melissa Rorie, and Nadine Connell. “Effects of Participation in After-School Programs for Middle School Students: A Randomized Trial.” *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness* 3 (2010): 282-313. Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group. Web. 18 Dec. 2014 at 305.

## Cultural Competency

Canada is a multicultural place encompassing a vast array of nationalities, languages, religions, and traditions, and it is probable that you will encounter a parent and their child whose family background is none like your own. In cases like these, it is key for you to create an awareness of their family customs in order for them to feel like they are part of the homework club, and moreover, members of Canada's multicultural society. For instance, if a child has set times during the day of which they need to pray, it may happen that one of their praying sessions occurs during club hours. Accommodate them. Ask the child what they need to pray in terms of space, quiet, etc. and create an environment that invites them to practice their beliefs in a comfortable manner. With many cultures, it is inappropriate for a woman to be alone with a man that is not her husband. If the mother is wanting to discuss her child's progress but hesitant to do so because of her customs, try scheduling an appointment where the mother can meet with a same-sex staff member of your club, or at least have one present during the meeting to diminish any unease or offending any traditions.

Overall, don't make assumptions about children in your homework or their families as they may only be true for a small percentage of them. Take initiative and do some research about the types of cultures that may enter your club, and so long as it causes no offense, ask the parents what they need and how you can accommodate them.

**Welcoming Staff.** Having homework club staff members that reflect participants' diversity and, when possible, speak their first language is an invaluable way to create inclusive space. If your club has the ability, designating a staff member to coordinate communication so that parents have a point person they can build rapport with and know by name in case they have additional questions. As mentioned, hiring from within the community whenever possible is a great way to strengthen your homework club's ability to engage with its members and increase its knowledge of the community.

Ways to encourage your staff to promote a welcoming atmosphere:

- Incentives for staff to reach out to families
- Lead by example
- Don't generalize
- Focus on the positive
- Remind staff that what they contribute to the program (personality, skills, energy) is a contributing factor to the program's success.

**Resources.** If a homework club doesn't have the means to communicate in different languages or doesn't have the capacity to provide the additional support a family needs, it may be helpful to create a list of service providers in the community who can provide those services and programs. This begins with asking parents what they need and then helping them to meet those needs either directly or through referral and community partnerships.

Sometimes very clear obstacles can get in the way of parents being able to engage in homework club activities. Clubs might be able to help address these issues by providing assistance options such as food, transportation (bus tickets) or childcare for parents whenever you are hosting an event that you would like them to attend.

(See Additional Resources for list of "Important Contacts")







## GROWING YOUR PROGRAM



## Creating Awareness

There are many ways homework clubs communicate with participants, parents, volunteers, staff, and the public and it is important to communicate regularly in a variety of ways in order to engage all parties connected to your club. To make sure your communication methods are effective, it is wise to ask those involved whether the information being shared is useful and how it can be improved, both in terms of content and how it is presented and distributed.

### Social Networks

Having a website, twitter account or Facebook page for your homework club is a fairly new tool for engaging the public with your club. Social media can be a great real-time communication method, but its use can be challenging at times. Homework Clubs may be interested in allowing participants and parents to engage with them via social media, email, text, etc., but if your homework club is considering using any of these tools, remember it is important to establish boundaries between staff or volunteers' personal and professional lives. Even though social media can be a great tool for learning and engaging with families, it can also welcome inappropriate behavior and misuse if not used responsibly.<sup>8</sup> Some organizations and agencies have developed social media policies so please refer to them for specifics if they are available.

**Be aware of your tone.** Try not to write anything that can be misinterpreted (i.e. sarcasm).

**Be clear.** Share your information clearly and in a few words.

**Ensure positives outweigh negatives.** This type of communication should be on a more frequent basis than negative communication. Consider various purposes for using online communication such as celebrating successes, identifying things participants need to work on, etc. Use the "sandwiching effect": for every negative comment, say a positive one before and after.

**Know your audience.** Be careful of what you share and with whom. For example, don't share information about other participants with a parent.

**Monitor all online accounts.** Designate a staff (full time) to make posts and read comments to avoid any breaches of confidentiality.

**Use privacy settings.** Control who can post to your page, reply to posts or have access to its content.

**Gain media consent.** Don't post photos of your homework club participants online unless you have signed photo and web consent forms that confirms that parents are aware of how your club plans to use the photos.

### Open Houses

A great way to increase awareness of a homework club in a community is to host an open house. This isn't the same as a registration day, as this event will lead to new people registering with your program. The benefit of hosting an open house is to provide your community with an understanding about the different activities and services provided by your homework club. Organizing an open house is not difficult, but it does require planning.

Here are some things to consider when planning an open house:

- Host your open house during a non-program time and day. Invite people in to see what the space looks like and the services offered.
- Take at least two weeks to advertise. Use participant artwork and maintain consistency amongst your promotions to ensure that the general public instantly recognizes what the event is and who it is for. Be brief (i.e., where, why, when) because too much information doesn't typically work.
- Contact local schools, community agencies, and newspapers to see if they're willing to share your event. Always let them know how they will benefit from sharing your information.
- Use different methods to promote your event (i.e. social media, flyers, parent newsletters, word of mouth).
- Make sure you advertise where your audience is, not just where the event is.
- Tell people about the open house in person. Tell your current participants and community contacts, then ask them to tell others.

- Make sure you have an agenda for the open house and know who is doing what, when, why, and how.
- Be aware of cultural or religious dates that may impact attendance or ability to fully engage.
- Have incentives like a community BBQ, raffle, free giveaways, games for kids to play
- Weather can affect turnout (often winter events have a poor turnout)
- Consider community partnership opportunities when hosting an Open House. Information booths highlighting local service and program information might be very helpful to the families attending your homework club.

If you don't have the ability or resources to put on an Open House for your homework club, an alternative is to offer individual or group tours of your location to new members and their families or those considering joining. (See Figure 2.2). It may also be worth the while to attend open houses at nearby schools or even "meet the teacher night" and set up an information table or booth to promote your homework club. Just be sure to check with the school's principal or administration to get permission.

## Research & Evaluation

The evaluation of your homework club is meant to help you find out whether or not your homework club met the goals as a critical hours program. As well, it is important to celebrate successes and to show potential funders anecdotal evidence of the success of your program. Many different strategies exist for evaluating your program, some of which are done at every session, every couple of weeks, or after the very last session. Start by reviewing your initial program goals and the three pillars of critical hours programming, and determine whether you have met those goals by gathering information.

### Staff Debriefing

The success of any program (however small or large) hinges upon the strong communication of its team members. Even though it may be that only one tutor spends time with a certain participant, talking about that participant's learning challenges and triumphs with the rest of the volunteers and leaders may allow your team to be more sensitive and inclusive towards that participant (all while keeping in line

with confidentiality). At the end of every session, spend about 10-15 minutes doing a team debrief and discuss the ups, downs, and in-betweens of the session (or homework club as a whole), and how to improve upon them. Also take this time to assess the homework and study skills of the participants at the end of the session and be sure to review those skills prior to next session.

**Keep attendance records.** Monitor any increase or decrease for participants and volunteers, and contact any that stop showing up and find out why.

### Media

Photographs and video footage are great evidences of the enjoyment experienced in your homework club. As long a media consent is given by the parent or guardian of all participants (and any volunteers under 18), these can be posted online (Facebook or Twitter) or included in monthly newsletters or annual reports alongside anecdotal stories, all of which are very useful to show to funders.

### Feedback

**Questionnaires.** These are very useful as they are completed anonymously by participants, parents, and volunteers, especially if done once at the start of programs and once at the end of programs. It is usually a simple one page that includes questions pertaining to the structure of the program and their level of satisfaction.

**Comment cards.** Gather pencils, paper, and a closed box with a slot on it to collect comments about the program. Place them in an area accessible to participants, parents, and volunteers during program hours. These often warrant very honest comment because of the anonymity.

**Discussion groups.** Invite parents, community partners, and/or tutors to a space that is easily accessible (maybe the homework club location) in order to gain valuable insight about your club. Remember, it is your job as the discussion leader to ensure that the group's discussions remain inclusive, positive and constructive, and encouraging by guiding the conversation and not controlling it.

**Parent surveys.** During a homework club session, converse with the volunteers, parents, and participants and really listen to what they say; try not

to become defensive. There are many reasons why using parent feedback surveys is good practice for homework clubs:

- They are a useful tool for reviewing and promoting a homework club participant's academic success.
- They can help homework club staff get a better understanding of how well the homework club is set up and functioning.
- They allow homework club staff to know whether parents' views of the homework club change over time.
- They can identify areas for program improvement.
- They can reveal if the program is meeting their needs and the needs of their child.

A great time to provide a parent survey is during membership renewal so both the registration form and feedback survey are completed at the same time. Mailing out parent surveys tends to be an ineffective method due to very low return rates. It is best to have parents complete the survey in person. If not, send a paper copy home (ideally on brightly coloured paper) or through email. Surveys need to be simple and

straight to the point. They should be easy to read as they may need to be translated by children if the parent has a different first language than the written survey. If possible, consider having it available in the multiple languages. Also, try to have the parents fill out the survey twice per year so that you can identify any issues and make the necessary changes to improve your program.

Remember, it is important to know and share what your homework club plans to do with the results. For example, homework clubs might present parent feedback surveys at a staff meeting and take the opportunity to reflect on the results, consider the possible changes to improve their program, and begin to identify the necessary steps to implement the changes.

(See Appendix IV for "Parent Survey")

Visit the Ottawa Child and Youth Initiative: Growing Up Great website to find out how we are supporting evaluation for critical hours programs.

- [www.growingupgreat.ca](http://www.growingupgreat.ca)





## **ADDITIONAL** RESOURCES

## Important Contacts

### Academics

**Ottawa Public Library.** Provides literary resources such as books to support programming that are appropriate for a child's reading level and even offers one-time workshops.

- Phone: 613-580-2424 ext. 32131

### Health and Nutrition

**Ottawa Public Health.** Offers free confidential information and advice on a variety of health topics like physical activity, healthy eating, and food safety. Service is available Monday to Friday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm (closed on statutory holidays).

- Phone: 613-580-6744
- Toll free: 1-866-426-8885

### Child Safety

**The Children's Aid Society of Ottawa.** A legally mandated non-profit that works to protect children and youth from abuse and neglect. Office hours are open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, however protection services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

- General Inquiries and allegations of child abuse in the Ottawa area: 613-747-7800
- Email: [yourcasquestion@casott.on.ca](mailto:yourcasquestion@casott.on.ca)

**Kids Help Phone.** 24-hour, bilingual and anonymous phone counselling, referral and Internet service for children and youth.

- Toll free: 1-800-668-6868

### For Parents/Guardians

**Parent Resource Centre.** Provides information related to education, food bank, counselling, transportation, etc. Service is available in the Ottawa area Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

- Phone: 613-565-2467 ext. 222

**Parenting in Ottawa.** A resource developed by Ottawa Public Health and community partners that is designed to make parenting in Ottawa a little easier by connecting families to various health and social services.

- Phone: 613-580-6744
- Toll free: 1-866-426-8885

### General

**Community Information Centre of Ottawa.**

A free, non-emergency telephone number that connects a caller to a full range of community, social, government and health service information in Ottawa. Certified information and referral specialists answer calls 24/7. Confidential and multilingual (150 languages).

- Phone: 2-1-1

**Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres.** A 13-member coalition committed to the eradication of poverty in Ottawa by connecting families to basic supports, including shelter, food, income, childcare, recreation and transportation in their community.

- Visit: [www.coalitionottawa.ca](http://www.coalitionottawa.ca) to find your CHRC

# How Volunteers Can Engage With Pathways Students

## Volunteer Feedback Using Pathways Engagement Profiles

Profile A – Low engagement in Pathways/Low need for academic support	
Identified as...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student taking locally developed, low level classes</li> <li>• Students with no homework</li> <li>• Student in high level class with no homework</li> <li>• Exempted students</li> </ul>
Lagging Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lacking “buy in”</li> <li>• Reluctant to ask for help</li> <li>• Low skills in prioritizing academics</li> <li>• Shy</li> <li>• Students with disabilities or personal challenges</li> </ul>
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent</li> <li>• Self-sufficient</li> <li>• Career focused</li> <li>• Efficient and good time management skills</li> </ul>
Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask them about post-secondary goals (or goals in general) and future plans</li> <li>• Build on already existing skills and strategize on building new skills</li> <li>• Have them mentor another students with subject they are strong in and have them ask other students for help</li> <li>• Ask the student to help you with something</li> <li>• If the student is shy ask about life outside of academics</li> <li>• Prioritizing: help with scheduling (what is pending?)</li> <li>• Act as an audience or caring adult to showcase for group</li> <li>• Pathway/career planning</li> <li>• Extension activity</li> <li>• Engage through community opportunities</li> <li>• Observe the students’ academic endeavours and comment as an icebreaker</li> <li>• Be a career role model to them to engage</li> <li>• Engage through small talk</li> <li>• Use trivia to explore current views</li> <li>• Relate personal interests to academics</li> <li>• Get to know the students personality prior to exploring their academics</li> <li>• Introduce/speak about other students at the centre with similar interests</li> <li>• Tell them a bit about yourself</li> </ul>



## Profile B – High engagement in Pathways/Low need for academic support

Identified as...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Keeners,” students who are typically exempted, quite and self reliant</li> <li>• Student using the site as a safe space: disclosures, comfort, socializing, coming with friends</li> <li>• Disruptive students/time-vampires</li> </ul>
Lagging Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding boundaries</li> <li>• Using appropriate behaviour</li> <li>• Ability to fail</li> <li>• Understanding when to ask for help</li> <li>• Time management</li> <li>• Taking on too many tasks at once</li> </ul>
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-motivated and academically strong</li> <li>• Likeable</li> </ul>
Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach them strategies to be more affective with time, i.e. way out tasks and their importance by using time management objectives (let them guide their own use of time)</li> <li>• Help with prioritizing, scheduling, what is pending, etc. (focus on simple tasks)</li> <li>• Encourage connecting with other students</li> <li>• Identify leadership/mentoring roles for them within the group</li> <li>• Find an activity to challenge them, work with them to let them know it is OK to fail or make multiple attempts</li> <li>• Impose a structure-keeping their attention on a subject</li> <li>• Make up an assignment (i.e. short essay) on a particular subject that the student is interested in</li> <li>• Add to their knowledge foundation</li> <li>• “May I” as an open ended strategy (point out additional knowledge, introduce a related subject)</li> <li>• Be the teacher of personal boundaries, set boundaries for behaviour (maybe set up a gesture as an appropriate cue to let them know their behaviour is inappropriate)</li> <li>• Have them summarize the most important things they want to talk about</li> <li>• Discuss something new: i.e., book, certain news story relevant to their interests</li> <li>• Make a mistake in front of them and show that it is okay to make a mistake</li> </ul>

Profile C – Low engagement in Pathways/High need for academic support	
Identified as...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Irregular attendees</li> <li>• Students with no homework or don't bring any</li> <li>• Student just showing up for hours</li> <li>• Students that make socialization a priority</li> <li>• Students that are failing but do not ask for help</li> </ul>
Lagging Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literacy skills</li> <li>• Will not ask for help even if it is needed</li> <li>• Lacking self-motivation</li> </ul>
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong social skills</li> <li>• Can be involved in activities outside of school (i.e. teams, mentoring, etc.)</li> </ul>
Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure to continually approach</li> <li>• Open up conversation with a focus on life outside of academics</li> <li>• Engage using like interests (refer to books to encourage literacy)</li> <li>• Try to pinpoint areas of strength to emphasize and praise to build confidence</li> <li>• Encourage areas of weakness</li> <li>• Students that might find it hard to approach volunteers: "mind if I sit with you and work with you on your homework...." etc. Also would help to break up any distracting conversations.</li> <li>• Use role modelling to motivate them in their school work</li> <li>• Simplify problems/simplify exercises to academics through progression</li> <li>• Use exercises to engage and encourage them to complete</li> <li>• Use trivia on celebrity success to show them that adversity is a measure of learning</li> <li>• Communicate strategies</li> <li>• Tie in newspaper articles/magazines related to their interests as a resource</li> <li>• Ask them what they would like to talk about</li> <li>• Ask them what they dislike about school. What they would change?</li> <li>• Ask them about future goals (what do you want to be when you grow up?)</li> <li>• See if the centre provides any additional workshops in their areas of interest</li> <li>• Split up time between homework and something they like doing, i.e. playing a game</li> <li>• Share stories about different high school experiences and how it was like when we were in high school (how we got through it)</li> <li>• Use computers to develop reading skills that target areas of interest</li> </ul>

## Profile D – High engagement in Pathways/High need for academic support

Identified as...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESL students or students with IEPs</li> <li>• Students with special needs</li> <li>• Students with mental health issues</li> <li>• Students who are failing but are trying</li> <li>• Students that do not bring homework</li> </ul>
Lagging Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low skills in: learning raw material, recollecting material, social skills, language, focus and attention</li> <li>• Lack of confidence</li> </ul>
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are present at tutoring</li> <li>• Have a pleasant demeanor</li> <li>• Motivated</li> <li>• Actively ask for help</li> </ul>
Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Normalize learning difficulties</li> <li>• Communicate the same learning information in different ways to assist in the students understanding of the material being learned.</li> <li>• Find the students areas of strength and engage with PFs to discuss learning accommodations</li> <li>• Be patient with students and modify any homework to meet the students strengths and needs</li> <li>• Take breaks if needed and engage in something fun, i.e. games, discussion</li> <li>• Empathize with the students struggles</li> <li>• Use technology such as internet resources to make learning fun</li> <li>• Review what the students understand by having them communicate their understanding of the material and paraphrase</li> <li>• Be encouraging and give the students praise when they have accomplished homework tasks</li> <li>• Ask the student what their learning needs are</li> <li>• Set up achievable goals with them during their sessions so they can see their progress</li> <li>• In the case of communication barriers, ask for assistance from staff or another student that speaks the same language to help. If no one is present be creative with gestures and pictures and move to a quieter area of the tutoring space.</li> <li>• Assist them in using their strengths towards harder subjects</li> <li>• Try to figure out their learning styles and use it towards areas of struggle (i.e. visual aids)</li> <li>• Engage in small talk to get them talking</li> <li>• Be supportive and build up confidence by letting them complete easy tasks</li> <li>• Build social skills by engaging in meaningful conversations</li> </ul>



## **APPENDICES | - IV**

# Homework Club Registration Form

## Participant Information

☐ New ☐ Returning

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

First Name

Last Name

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Number

Street

City

Province

Postal Code

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

First Name

Last Name

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Available phone number during club hours: ☐ Cell Phone ☐ Home Phone ☐ Work Phone

## Health Information

Health Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Version Code

Allergies or special health concerns: ☐ Peanuts/Nuts ☐ Asthma ☐ Seasonal ☐ Diabetes

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Medication Needed: \_\_\_\_\_

## How will your child get home?

☐ I will pick up ☐ My child will walk \*Please complete the Permission Form To Walk Home Alone.

Allowed to pick up child: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

First Name

Last Name

Not allowed to pick child: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

First name

Last Name

## Academic Information

Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Best subject(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Challenging subject(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**Students cannot attend Homework Club unless all forms have been completed.**

## For Club Staff use Only

Indicate the forms that are completed and submitted:

☐ Permission Form to Walk Home ☐ Homework Club Rules and Expectations

## Homework Club Rules and Expectations

### Participating in the Homework Club...

This is a list of guidelines that are expected of the participant, his/her parent/guardian, and the Homework Club Leader. Please read the rules and sign below to confirm that you understand.

#### Please keep this sheet to remind you of the rules.

- All forms must be completed before the student is allowed to participate in the club.
- Students must arrive with homework.
- Tutors are not responsible for finding work for the students to do.
- Students will be picked up at a designated time or will walk home on their own (permission form must be completed).
- Parents are asked to check in with the tutors when dropping off/picking up their child and to sign their child in/out. Parents are to come into the building to pick up their child.
- Students are to respect the environment, equipment, the tutors/volunteers and other students participating in the Homework Club. Failure to act appropriately may result in the loss of the privilege of attending the club.
- Access to the computers and the internet is strictly for school work purposes. Printing will be supervised and kept to a minimum.
- Parents must leave a number where they can be reached during the Homework Club so that the child can contact their parent/guardian for pick-up, in the event of an emergency or for other concerns.
- Students are to bring all necessary items with them to complete their homework. Limited supplies will be available.
- Parents are to be prompt when picking up their children, no later than (time program ends).
- A cell phone is available to students to call home or for parents to contact the tutors. This cell phone is only active during club hours: [cell phone number].

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

mm/dd/yyyy

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

mm/dd/yyyy

Staff Leader/Tutor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

mm/dd/yyyy



## Homework Club Permission Form to Walk Home Alone

To be completed **ONLY** if you give permission for your child to walk home alone.

I: \_\_\_\_\_, give my permission for

First and Last Name of Parent / Guradian (please print)

my child: \_\_\_\_\_ to walk home alone.

First and Last Name of Child (please print)

I acknowledge that my child is: \_\_\_\_\_ years old. In case of any discrepancy or emergency, I can be

reached at the number(s) listed on the Registration Form or: \_\_\_\_\_.

Other information I would like the [Homework Club] to be aware of: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

mm/dd/yyyy

Parents, please review the safety rules of walking alone with your child.

## Parent Survey

**We would like to know what YOU think about your child's experience at the [homework club].**

The information from the survey will help us improve [our homework club] program and services, communication, staff training and the [homework club's] overall environment.

YOUR answers are confidential and your answers will be combined with those of other parents.

This survey is voluntary.

If you choose to complete the survey we would like to thank you as we really appreciate your feedback.

### Instructions

1. Please read the following statements and indicate how much you agree or disagree by circling the number that fits with your opinion.

- a. The [homework club] environment is clean and well-maintained.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

- b. I feel that the [homework club] provides a safe place for my child.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

- c. I feel my child is developing positive relationships at the [homework club].

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

- d. I am satisfied with the programs and activities at the [homework club].

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

- e. I feel my child is developing skills that will help him/her in the future.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

- f. The [homework club] staff are professional and welcoming.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

- g. Communication with families occurs in an open and respectful manner.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

- h. I feel I can address my concerns regarding my child with the [homework club] staff.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

i. I am interested in being more involved with the [homework club].

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

1

2

3

4

5

2. How many times per year does your child come to a [homework club]?

☐ Daily

☐ 2-3 times a week

☐ Once a week

☐ Once a month

☐ Few times per year

3. Please list the main reasons why your child attends the [homework club]? (e.g. After-school care, Specific programs, Sports, Close to Home, Safe Place, Homework Help)

4. What skills do you think your child has learned/developed because of coming to the [homework club]?

5. Do you have any suggestions on what we could do to make your child's experience at [homework club] better?

## Comments

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## OTHER REFERENCES

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**Ottawa Child and Youth Initiative: Growing Up Great**

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*“Working together to foster the healthy development of all children and youth through research, advocacy and program development.”*