

TEENAGERS AS TEACHERS

Great for Kids... Teenagers can be extremely effective teachers of young children. Children respond well to teen teachers and teens can be positive role models.

Great for Teens... Attitudes toward teachers and school, self-confidence, and sense of accomplishment can all improve. Engaging in this meaningful and positive activity helps teens avoid issues such as alienation from families, schools, and communities and involvement in risk-taking activities.

Twelve Essential Elements... This booklet describes the twelve essential elements that programs need, as well as practical, everyday tips for creating a program that benefits teen teachers and the children they teach.

Research-Based... This booklet is based on in-depth study of fourteen cross-age teaching programs in the San Francisco Bay Area. Here's what some program directors told us:

"The real success in the whole program is the teen element. Teens have learned more than they ever thought they would."

"They had truly come—and they used to be tongue-tied and cowering—now they had actually done something and they could get up . . . they're just incredible."

"I had a teenaged girl who had attempted suicide. This year she will be graduating from Stanford."

Teenagers as Teachers Twelve Essential Elements



Faye C. H. Lee
Shelley Murdock
Carole A. Paterson



University of California
Agriculture & Natural Resources
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Preface

Audience

This booklet is intended for educators, youth program planners, cross-age teaching program directors, foundation officers, and others who want to learn about cross-age teaching programs. It is designed to share underlying principles, key ideas, and effective practices in cross-age teaching programs. It is not a detailed, step-by-step training manual as we hope the concepts described here can be integrated into varied situations in the field.

Program Characteristics

This booklet shares the findings from the in-depth research of 14 cross-age teaching programs in the San Francisco Bay Area. Although the teen teaching programs are varied, all of them share these common characteristics:

- Teenagers teach children who are at least 2 to 3 years younger than the teens.
- Teenagers are responsible for all teaching. They do not merely assist an adult.
- Teenagers teach small groups of children (usually 5 to 12), not one-on-one.
- Teenagers are trained and teach a particular subject-matter curriculum (not homework assistance or counseling).
- The curricula taught to younger children are for enrichment, not remediation.
- Programs are of sufficient duration so that teenagers develop relationships with one another and with the children they teach.

Teen teacher programs can occur in schools and nonformal educational settings such as after-school and summer programs, clubs, and other enrichment programs.

Benefits of Teen Teachers

Programs in which teenagers teach younger children can contribute to alleviating many of the problems faced by today's youth. Engaging in this meaningful and positive activity helps teens avoid issues such as alienation from families, schools, and communities, as well as involvement in risk-taking activities that can lead to teen pregnancy and substance abuse. Benefits are only derived, however, when a program meets the needs of the teen participants.

How Information Was Obtained

For this research we visited 14 program sites in the San Francisco Bay Area that used teenagers as cross-age teachers of younger children. Programs were selected to obtain a diverse sample. We included both large and small agencies, public- and privately-funded agencies, agencies with varying organizational structures, missions, clientele, and so forth. All of the sites selected were relatively well-established programs or pilot programs within established organizations. All offered direct service programs to children and youth on a regular basis. We observed programs and interviewed program directors and planners, and, most importantly, talked with teen teachers. Interviews were audiotaped, transcribed, coded, and analyzed. Based on our research and our own experiences at conducting cross-age teaching programs, we compiled this booklet to share what we have found to be the essential elements of successful teen teaching programs.

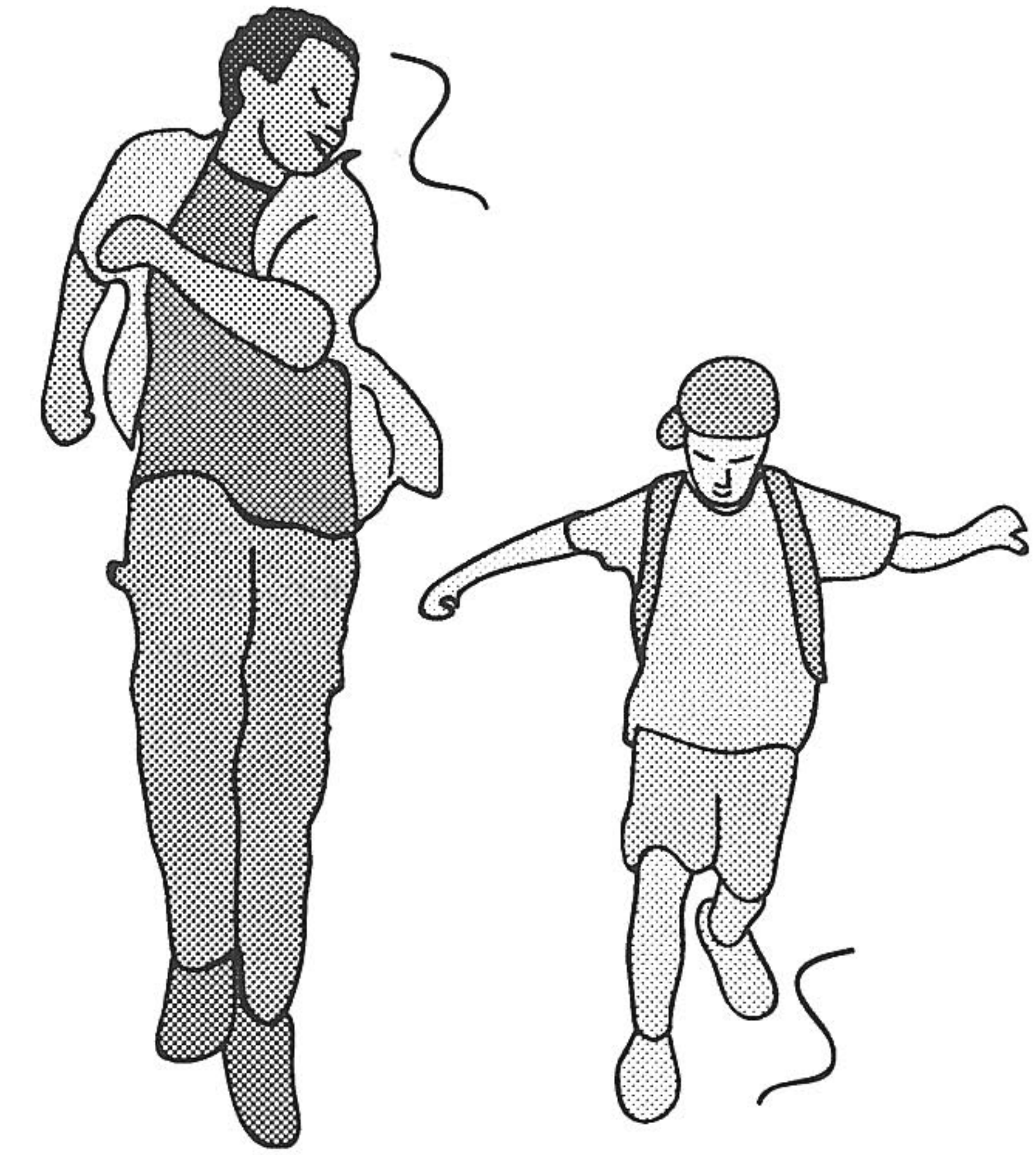
The Authors

The authors are academic staff with the University of California Cooperative Extension (Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources). Cooperative Extension's mission is to link the University's research to practical applications. Working in cooperation with community practitioners in the San Francisco Bay Area, the authors work to fulfill this mission in the field of youth development.

FAYE C. H. LEE received her M.A. and Ed.D. degrees from the University of California, Berkeley. Working for more than 20 years in San Francisco, she specializes in issues of low-income and ethnic minority youth, and families living in urban areas.

SHELLEY MURDOCK works in Contra Costa County, specializing in nutrition and health, adult learning theory, service learning, and cross-age teaching. She received her B.S. and M.Ed. degrees from the University of California, Davis.

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Teenagers as Teachers Twelve Essential Elements

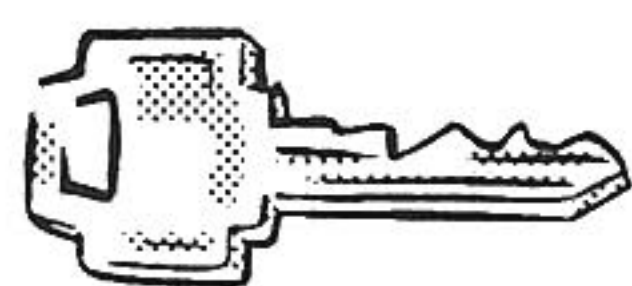
1 Teenagers as Teachers

Teenagers can be extremely effective teachers of young children:

- Children respond well to teen teachers.
- Teenagers can be positive role models for young children.
- Using teenagers as teachers is efficient. A team of eight teenagers can teach 60 or more children organized in small groups.

Teenagers benefit from being teachers:

- Attitudes toward teachers and school can improve.
- Self-confidence and a sense of accomplishment can increase.



Key Research Findings

- Teenagers were sometimes seen by program planners as convenient teachers for large groups of children. However, the benefits to the teenagers quickly became evident.
- With adequate training, teens were effective, innovative teachers.
- Teenagers with similar backgrounds to the children they taught (for example, from the same neighborhood) were often powerful, positive role models.
- As role models, teenagers often felt the most important lesson that they taught younger children was to “keep away from the bad stuff and go into the good stuff.”
- For many teenagers, their teaching position was their first job, providing the opportunity to impart positive work behaviors and attitudes.
- Teenagers who were struggling with the challenges of living in high-risk environments often benefited most from their experiences as cross-age teachers.

“When teens work in their communities, they learn about themselves, what they can do, and what options they have...they gain self-confidence, and they believe in themselves.”

—ASSISTANT DIRECTOR



Tips from the Field

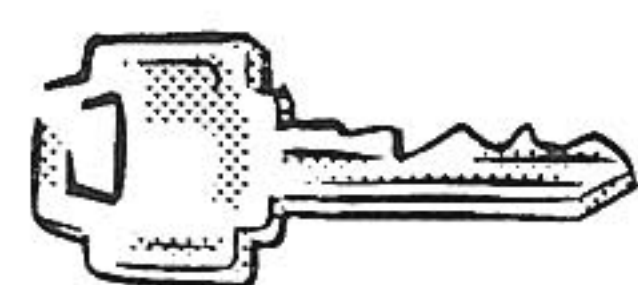
- Constantly promote the positive development of teen teachers.
- Provide adequate initial and ongoing training for teen teachers (chapters 4 and 5).
- Use plenty of positive reinforcement, recognition, and rewards to support cross-age teachers (chapter 9).
- Set up teenagers for success by having incrementally higher expectations (chapter 8).
- Make teenagers your highest priority; for example, scavenge for program supplies (garage sales, recycling office supply outlets, etc.) but treat teens as the most valued component of your program.

Basic Program Elements

- Teenagers teach small groups of young children.
- Teenagers teach an established curriculum.
- Programs are for enrichment, not remediation.
- Programs are long enough so that teenagers develop relationships with one another and with the children.

2 An Effective Program Director

The most prominent common element among successful programs in which teenagers taught younger children was a passionate, committed, adult program director.



Key Research Findings

- Successful directors were as varied as successful programs.
- There was a match between program directors and their programs.
- Program directors shared with the teen teachers their commitment to children.
- Most successful program directors worked long hours.
- The directors of successful programs were involved with their teen participants outside of work and often for years following a teen's participation in the program.
- Successful directors established respectful personal and professional relationships with the teen teachers.

“The program director is kinda, I don’t want to say charismatic but, verging on that. I mean, when she talks, they [teenagers] really listen.”

—PROGRAM PLANNER



Tips from the Field

The program director is the key to success

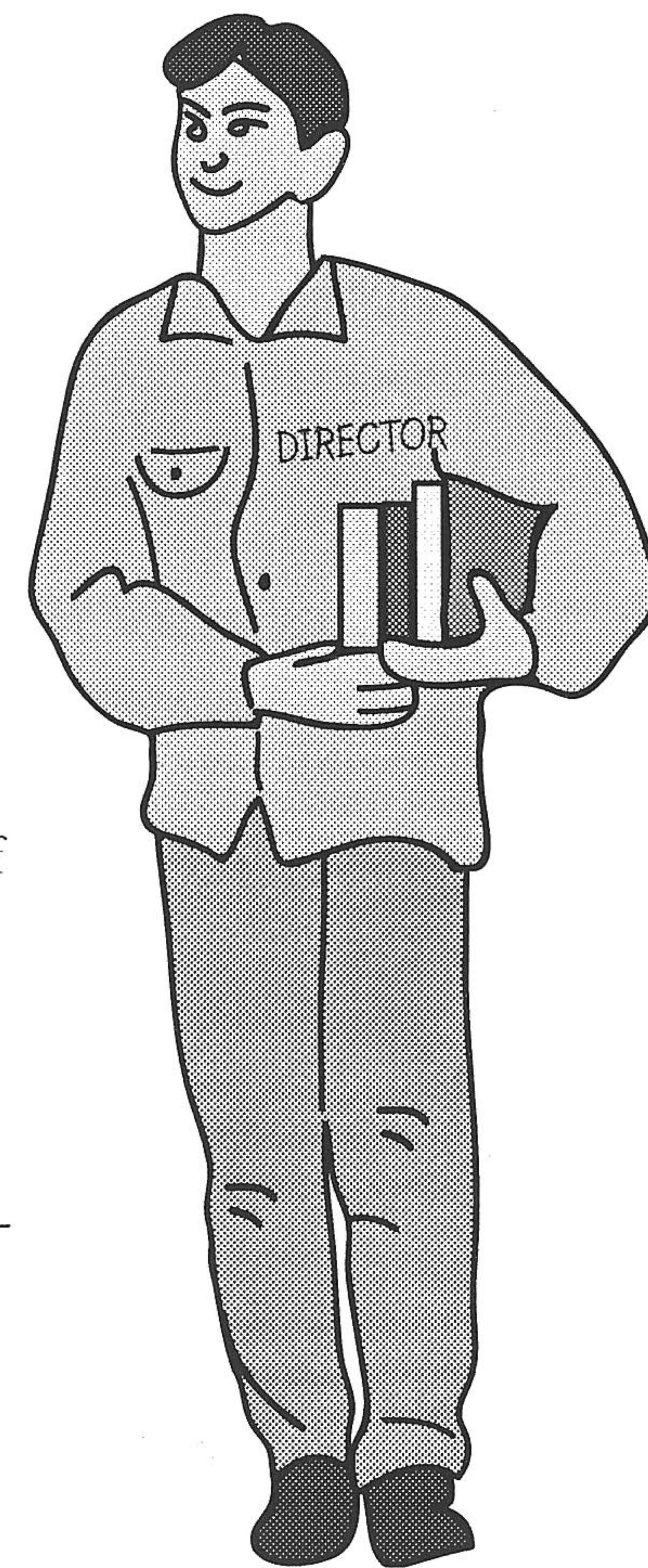
- Take time and care when selecting a director.
- Urge the program director to adjust the program to match his or her vision and philosophy.

Successful directors

- respect teenagers and children
- recognize, promote, and celebrate diversity
- build on the strengths of teenagers as individuals and as a team
- respect individual differences and work with teenagers within the scope of their individual development
- allow teenagers to be heard, encouraging them to improve the program
- support teenagers in and outside of work

Insider or outsider?

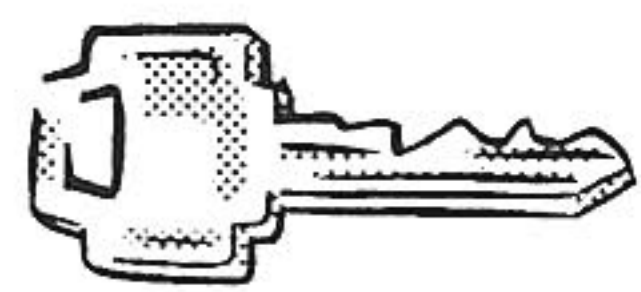
Successful program directors can be from within or from outside the communities where they work. Each situation offers unique advantages.



3 Teen Recruitment and Selection

Recruiting and carefully selecting a team of teenagers is an important process in developing the teens as teachers program. Recruiting from large, existing pools of youth, such as schools or service organizations, usually generates an adequate pool from which to select participants.

The selection process can be detailed and formal, such as with the use of a job application process with resumes and references, or as informal as a personnel data checklist.



Key Research Findings

- Program staff generally expected prospective teenagers to have a genuine interest in the teaching program.
- Experienced teenagers were often used to recruit new teen teachers.
- Interviews were usually required to help assess teenagers' strengths and weaknesses.
- A selection process that included application forms, interviews, reference letters, phone calls, and so on was often used to teach job application skills.
- Having prospective teenagers observe an existing program helped them understand what they would be doing.
- Agreements or contracts were usually part of the selection process.

"If I pick a bunch of teens who are all flunking out, I'm not going to get anywhere...so we chose some that had really high grades, some that were just not attending school and that balanced out the team."

—PROGRAM DIRECTOR



Tips from the Field

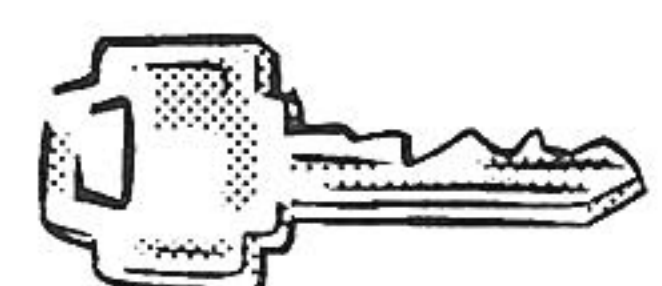
- Select teenagers who are at least 3 years older than the children they will teach.
- A contract specifying the rights and responsibilities of teen teachers, as well as the consequences for not honoring the contract, should be signed by teenagers and their parent(s). The contract should also include the agency's responsibilities and the expected benefits to the teens.
- Interviews should be used to match teenagers with programs that meet their interests.
- Select teenage teachers to form a strong team that capitalizes on individual strengths. Look for complementary strengths in individuals to make the team stronger.
- A teen's strengths may not be evident during an interview or in early training. Allow time for teens' strengths to emerge.

Some Useful Teen Interview Questions

- Why are you interested in working in this program?
- What skills and talents would you bring to this program?
- How would you like to contribute to this program?
- What would you like to get out of this experience?
- What experiences do you have to offer to this program?

4 Curriculum

A strong curriculum with a series of detailed lessons to teach the children is essential to developing strong, confident teen teachers. The subject matter can be anything that is of interest to children and teenagers. Science, nutrition and cooking, health, gardening, and reading are popular subjects.



Key Research Findings

- Teenagers taught many different subjects, including science, health and safety, nutrition and cooking, arts and crafts, and personal development.
- A strong curriculum consisted of at least five lessons of 1 to 1½ hours each.
- Most sites initially provided detailed lesson plans for teenagers. As teenagers gained confidence and skills, lesson plans became more flexible.
- Teenagers were particularly effective when using hands-on and interactive learning activities.
- A strong curriculum enabled teenagers to gain a high level of teaching competence quickly.
- Becoming competent, successful teachers was fundamental to the teenagers' self-confidence.

“For the children, there was always an agenda. There was always something to do...something about their culture, some holiday, or the community.”

—TEEN TEACHER



Tips from the Field

- Select curricula content that is relevant to both the teenagers and the children.
- Select curricula that are relatively simple so that teenagers can understand the content quickly and teach with more confidence.
- Provide full, detailed lesson plans, particularly at first when teenagers may lack the experience and skills to improvise during a lesson.
- Plan lesson activities so that there is something for every child to do at all times. Keeping every child busy with positive activities is the best way to avoid behavior problems.

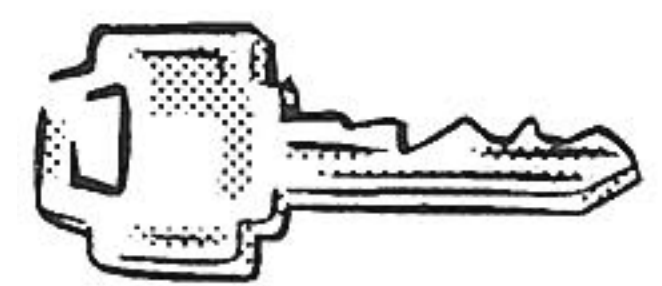
Sample Curricula for Teen Teachers

Reading Curriculum. *One Book at a Time: Teens Engaging Young Readers* is a curriculum based on five books, each accompanied by activities that promote oral language literacy in 5- to 8-year-old children in after-school programs, day camps, and community centers. Contact: Shelley Murdock, UC Cooperative Extension, 75 Santa Barbara Rd., 2nd Floor, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523; (925) 646-6540; swmurdock@ucdavis.edu.

Science Curricula. *4-H Youth Experiences in Science (Y.E.S.)* and *Science Experiences and Resources for Informal Education Settings (S.E.R.I.E.S)* projects offer hands-on, inquiry-based, science activities for children ages 5 through 12 years. Contact: Y.E.S.: Publication #3404A, University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources Communication Services, 6701 San Pablo Avenue, 2nd Floor, Oakland, CA 94608-1239; (800) 994-8849 or (510) 642-2431; <http://anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu>. S.E.R.I.E.S.: Human & Community Development, One Shields Avenue, UC Davis, CA 95616-3969; (530) 752-8824.

5 Attention to Details

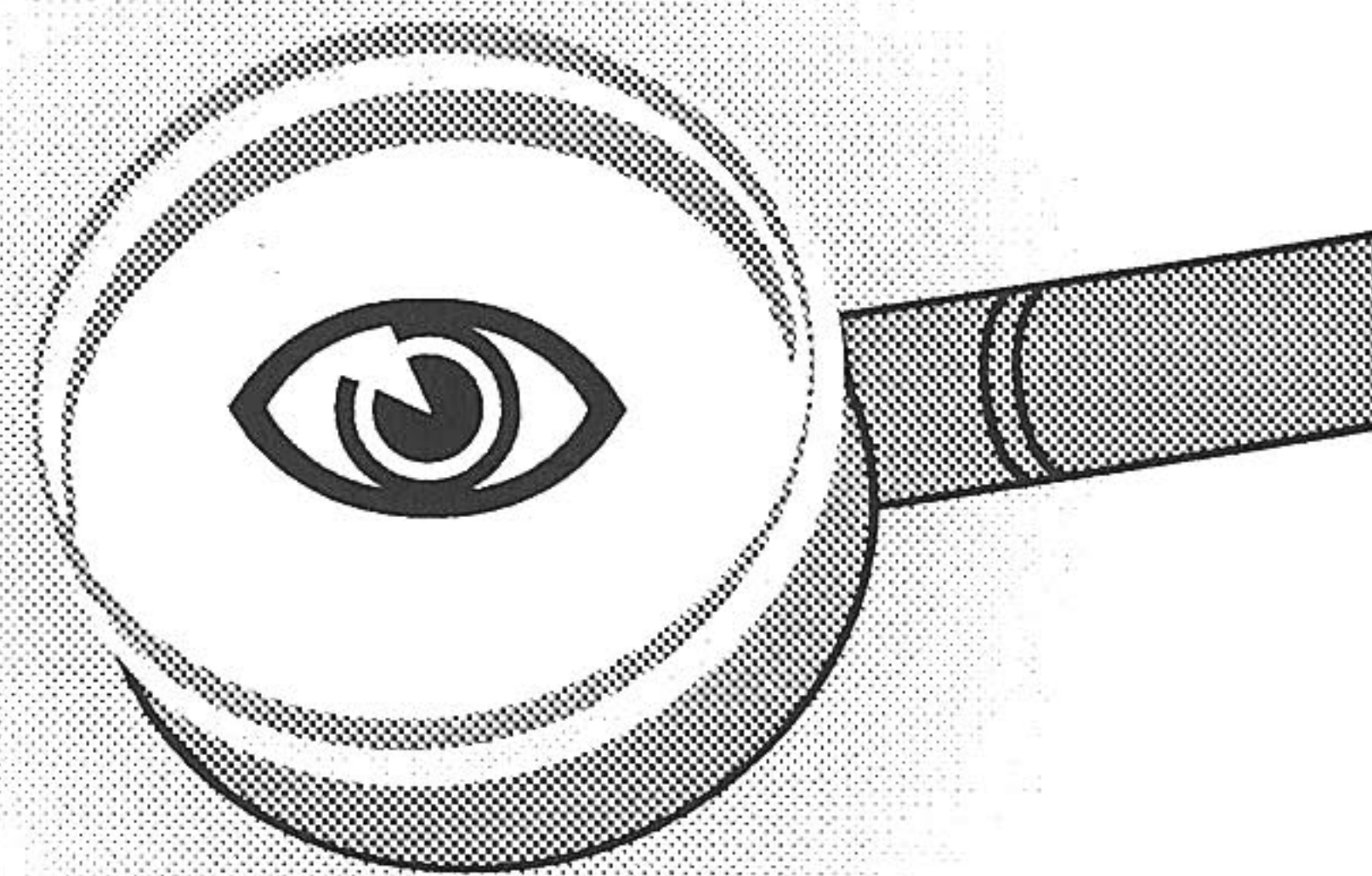
A well-coordinated and functioning program depends on attending to a myriad of essential details. Although seemingly unimportant compared with bigger, more pressing issues, attention to details contributes significantly to the quality of a program.



Key Research Findings

Attention to these details is essential to a successful program:

- effective communication among all stakeholders: teenagers, director, parents, schools, and so on
- attention to the basic needs of teenagers, such as food, transportation, and rest
- teenagers trained and prepared to handle possible emergencies
- safety always a top priority
- requisite paperwork completed and organized
- some form of compensation (not necessarily money) provided for teenagers
- appropriate parental involvement



“You know me, I hate paperwork, so I hire a college Work Study student to do all that for me.”

—PROGRAM DIRECTOR



Tips from the Field

- Hold training and meetings close to public transportation if teenagers are traveling on their own.
- Take care of teenagers' need for snacks and recognize food as a team builder.
- Develop cooperative relationships with schools and agencies for access to potential teen participants.
- Maintain an active inventory of supplies.
- Have teenagers keep supplies organized so they can be easily accessed.

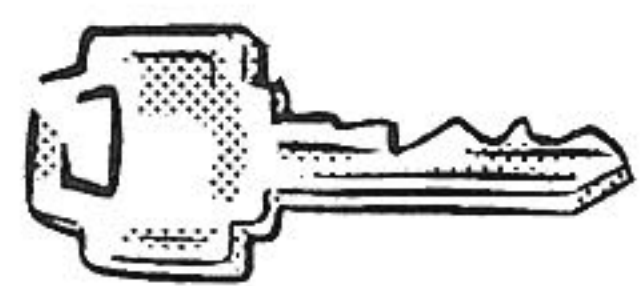
Commonly Used Forms and Paperwork

- ✓ medical forms
- ✓ insurance certificates
- ✓ contracts with teenagers, other agencies, parents, and so on
- ✓ schedules and transportation routes
- ✓ parent letters or family newsletters
- ✓ applications or letters of interest
- ✓ incident report forms

Keep all paperwork current, organized, and accessible.

6 Initial Training

All successful programs provide some form of initial training. At that time, teenagers should receive information about the agency and its mission, acquire skills for working with younger children, and become acquainted with the subject matter that they will teach. Teenagers must gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter than the level at which they will be teaching the children.



Key Research Findings

- Program directors preferred 30 to 40 hours of initial training, but 10 hours seemed to be the minimum.
- Interviewees indicated training in communication, team building, and multicultural understanding was of equal or greater importance than curriculum and subject-matter training.
- Effective training included modeling by the trainer and opportunities for teenagers to practice teaching.
- Teenagers needed and wanted to understand children's behavior and to acquire skills in managing groups.
- Teenagers appreciated training in "unrelated" areas of personal benefit such as library use and job interviews.

"For me it's all a training issue. Poor leaders could be good leaders. You can get those teens to be good, solid leaders. I think it has to do with training and then time."

—PROGRAM DIRECTOR



Tips from the Field

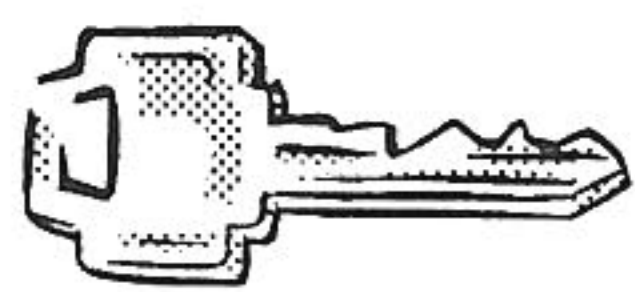
- Start the initial training with at least one-half-day, but preferably a full-day, interactive workshop.
- Include instruction on how to teach. Ask teens to think about strategies used by exemplary teachers or their own "Ah-ha" moments as learners.
- Use interactive training methods such as jigsaw, role-play, and communication games (see Teen Training Activities on p. 26).
- Teach teenagers effective group management techniques and positive discipline strategies (see Teen Training Activities on p. 26).
- Arrange for the teenagers to observe children in a learning situation. Have teens note effective teaching practices and typical behavior for children at different age groups.

Basic Steps for Initial Teen Training

1. Program background (purpose, philosophy, teenagers' roles and responsibilities)
2. Team building (always include icebreakers)
3. Modeling (perfect teaching) by trainer
4. Practice with peers, role-play
5. Practice with children

7 Ongoing Training and Support

The key to all effective teenager teaching programs is ongoing training and support. Even programs that provide comprehensive high-quality initial training offer ongoing training to the teen teachers.



Key Research Findings

- Successful programs provided frequent and regular training throughout the teaching experience.
- Effective, ongoing training included opportunities to debrief teaching experiences and to impart new knowledge and skills.
- Effective, ongoing training moved the group from the basics to higher levels of understanding and the skill to problem solve and think on their feet.
- Successful programs continued to foster team building and included opportunities for teenagers to give feedback (see chapter 12) to one another and to resolve work conflicts.
- Teenagers needed to be given increasingly greater responsibility in order to progress in their training.

“You can go over and over this stuff, but when you’re in the situation...that’s when the questions come up. So I’m a firm believer in ongoing training.”

—PROGRAM DIRECTOR



Tips from the Field

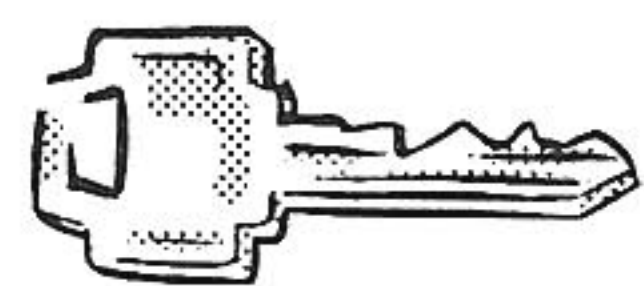
- Begin each session with an icebreaker activity. Have the teenagers choose and lead these activities.
- Give clear, timely feedback (see chapter 12). Give feedback of a general and positive nature to the entire group but give sensitive feedback to individuals in private.
- Introduce a new activity or technique at each session to keep the training fun and interesting.
- Adjust the program curriculum and retrain as needed. Give teenagers opportunities to make adjustments.
- Promote conflict resolution for settling disputes.

Conflict Resolution: Win-Win Guidelines

- Take time to cool off. Take a walk or count to 10.
- Have each person express thoughts and feelings about the conflict without blaming, name calling, or interrupting each other.
- Have each person state the other person’s point of view.
- Have each person explain his or her own responsibility for the problem.
- Brainstorm solutions and find one agreeable to both.
- Let conflicting parties know that even if they disagree on the issue, they should still respect each another.

8 Team Building

In the future, earning a livelihood will increasingly require cooperation and teamwork. Programs that use teens as teachers often teach these and other work-readiness skills. Encouraging teamwork capitalizes on the desire of many teenagers to draw support from peers.



Key Research Findings

- Teenagers viewed working with other teens as an important component of their cross-age teaching experience.
- Having teenagers team-teach in pairs reduced teens' anxiety and improved the quality of instruction.
- Team teaching increased teenagers' confidence and comfort level. They were more willing to be flexible, take risks, and try new things.
- Cross-age teaching programs often provided a peer support group for teenagers.

“In training, we would have a group discussion about problems that we have, major issues that we face—gangs, AIDS, teen suicide, date rape, sexually transmitted diseases, parents, racism...we talk about everything.”

—TEEN TEACHER

“It’s amazing! They [teens] will work with each other, and they support each other, and they listen to each other.”

—PROGRAM DIRECTOR

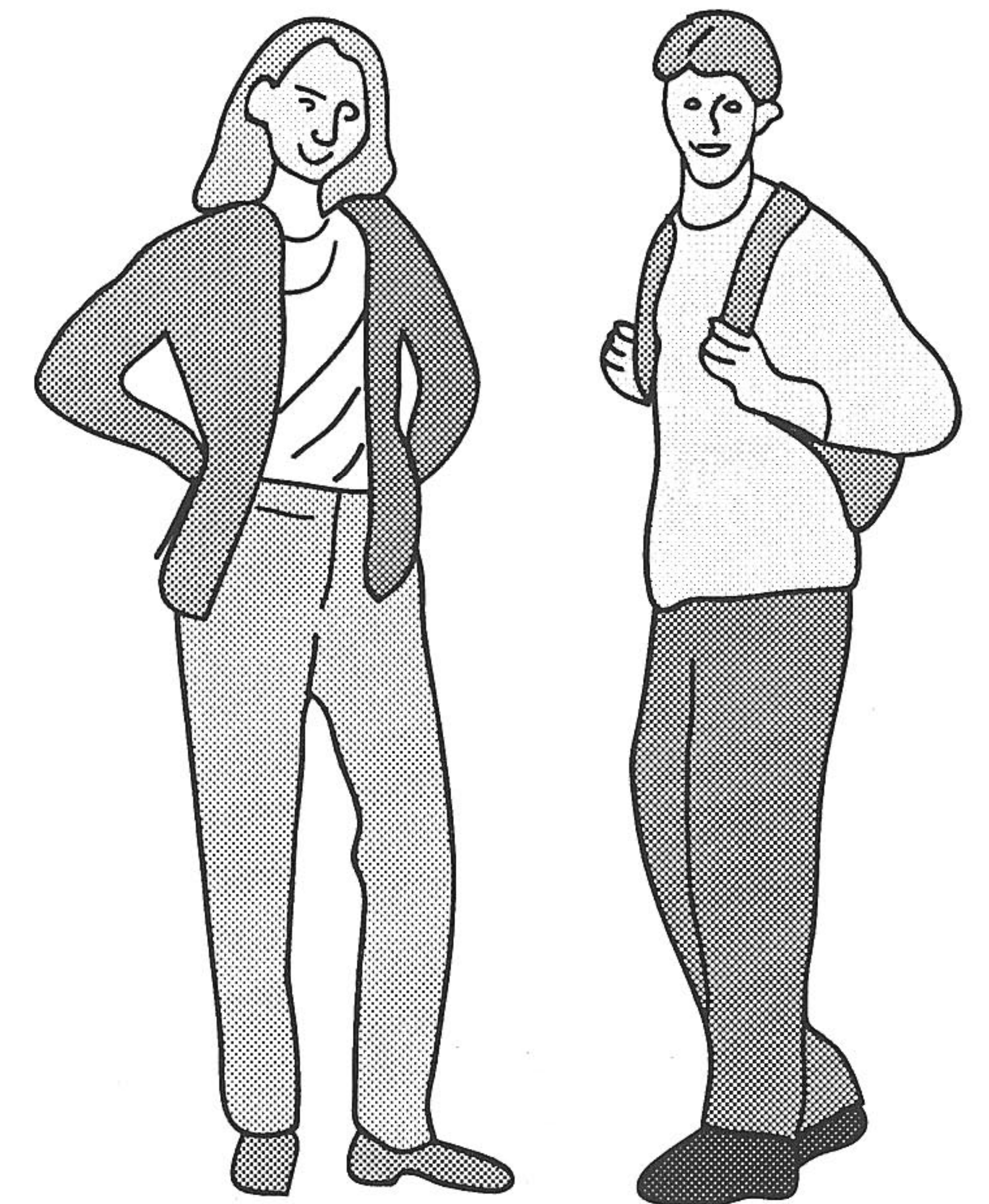


Tips from the Field

- Consider the strengths and weaknesses of the whole team when selecting cross-age teachers.
- Include team building activities in the initial and ongoing training of teenagers.
- Include activities especially for teenagers, such as field trips to colleges, throughout the program.
- Encourage teenagers to support each other. Encourage them to give and receive feedback (see chapter 12).
- To encourage teamwork, all teenagers should have equal jobs, and everyone should have a turn to do everything.

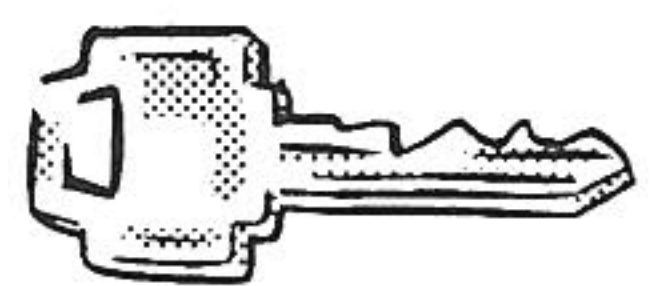
Quality Teams

- ✓ Share a common goal.
- ✓ Value the rights of every member.
- ✓ Critique ideas, not people.
- ✓ Capitalize on the strengths of individuals.
- ✓ Immediately resolve areas of conflict.



9 Preparing Teens for Success

Good program directors do not expect success to just happen. In addition to providing high-quality initial and ongoing training, they take active steps to ensure that teenagers will experience success as teachers.



Key Research Findings

- Programs that foster success believed that teenagers could be good teachers. Adult staff regularly expressed their confidence in the teens' abilities.
- Adult staff had high expectations of the teenagers. These, too, were regularly expressed to the teens.
- Adult staff paid attention to each teen's teaching readiness, providing the teenagers with incremental increases in responsibility and autonomy.
- Success was fostered by providing teenagers with flexible curricula that could be revised or adjusted as needed.
- Words like these were heard often at the sites of successful programs:

You can do it!

I'm impressed!

Good job!

Great thinking!

Way to go!

I'm proud of you!

You must be proud of yourself!

Thanks for your hard work.

"I don't take the teens out until I feel they're ready. Because I don't want them to go out and have a horrible experience... So, I make sure the teens are comfortable, and then I sort of take them out and bring 'em in, take 'em out and bring 'em in, and then I sort of push them on."

—PROGRAM DIRECTOR

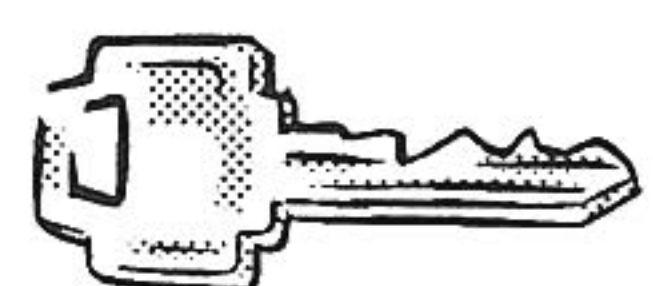


Tips from the Field

- Continually express your confidence in the teenagers.
- Teach with gusto and demonstrate your enthusiasm for your work. Teenagers will follow your example.
- Pay attention to the teen-child ratio. Too many children per teen can be overwhelming whereas too few can flatten the energy level of the entire group.
- Provide prompts for teens so they can teach without worrying about forgetting the material. The prompt may be a scripted lesson, a large piece of butcher paper with activity directions written out, or a chart that they fill out with children's help.
- In the beginning, use a rotation or center-based system of lesson organization. That is, have each teen teach at one activity center, and have small groups of children rotate through the centers. This reduces the number of activities the teenagers have to know.
- Provide extra activities to fall back on in case the planned activity does not work or the children complete activities early.
- Encourage teenagers to revise or eliminate activities that have not worked even though they have really tried.

10 Recognition and Reward

The need for recognition is universal and a vital part of programs with teenagers as teachers. Rewards take many forms: certificates, T-shirts and caps, logo pins, as well as remuneration. In addition to extrinsic rewards such as these, encourage teenagers to develop intrinsic rewards such as the satisfaction of a job well done or making a difference in their community.



Key Research Findings

- Recognition took many forms, but all successful programs had some significant form of recognition.
- Recognition was material, such as a certificate, or nonmaterial, such as a thumbs-up gesture following a teen's successful efforts.
- Rewards were also material, such as a cash voucher for a favorite store, and nonmaterial, such as gaining a child's trust or respect.
- Recognition through publicity benefited the teenagers and the overall program.
- The trust of adult leaders also served as a significant form of recognition and pride for teenagers.
- Teenagers expressed that service to others and making a difference through a real-world activity were forms of reward. Finding an entry into adult-centered programs was also reported as a benefit.

"I felt like I was giving back to the community and doing something. And that something I was doing was worthwhile."

—TEEN TEACHER

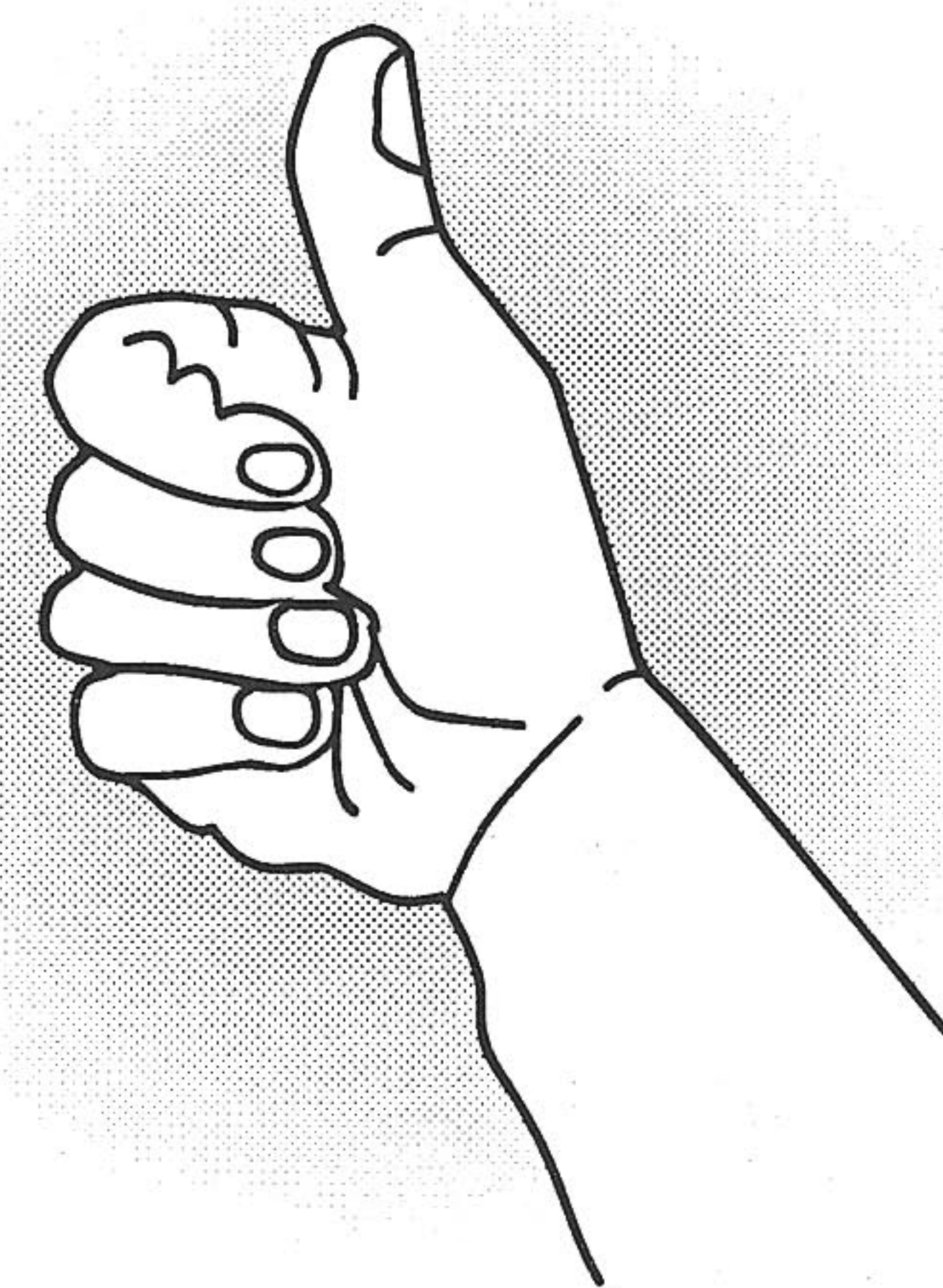


Tips from the Field

- Compensation helps to motivate and interest teenagers.
- Establish recognition opportunities to publicly thank and congratulate teen teachers.
- Recognition includes notes from child participants to teen teachers, letters to teenagers from program directors or leaders, and newspaper coverage about teenagers.
- Find fun, spontaneous, and sometimes silly ways to recognize the teenagers. This also builds teamwork and a sense of being in something together.

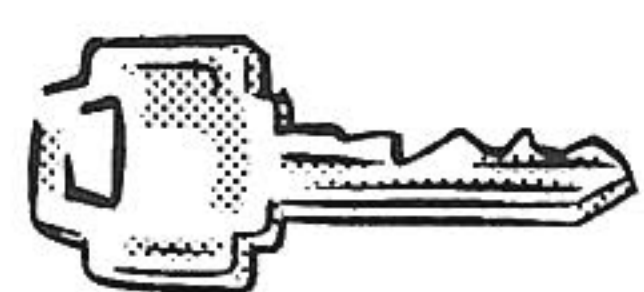
Alternatives to Pay

- ✓ team activities (skating, field trips, etc.)
- ✓ class credit in school
- ✓ receptions to honor teenagers
- ✓ letters of recommendation
- ✓ certificates of completion
- ✓ store vouchers
- ✓ small stipends



11 Teen Voice and Involvement

Resiliency research tells us it is critical that teenagers have opportunities to make real contributions to their communities. Effective cross-age teaching programs not only provide opportunities for teenagers to teach but also to have a voice in program planning.



Key Research Findings

- Effective programs gradually increased the amount of influence teenagers had in the program and the level of responsibility they were expected to assume.
- The ideas and energy that teenagers brought to programs was encouraged and valued by program staff.
- Most teenagers welcomed opportunities to plan activities, pilot games, and train other teens.
- Teenagers expressed both surprise and delight at the impact they had on the younger children. Teens came to see themselves as positive role models and contributors.

“But really, their honest motivation is that they want to feel they’re making a real contribution, that they can make a difference.”

—PROGRAM DIRECTOR



Tips from the Field

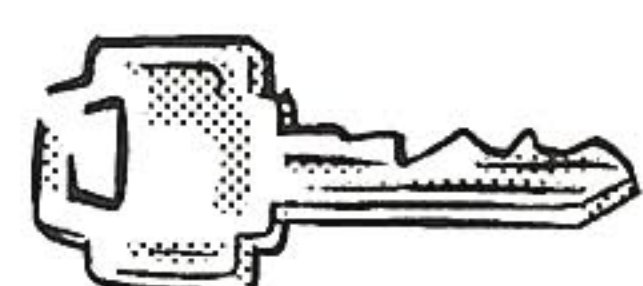
- From the beginning, involve teenagers in program planning.
- Allow teenagers to choose the activity or center they want to teach.
- Have experienced teenagers serve as mentors and trainers for new teens. Consider forming an advisory board of teens from past programs.
- Require the teenagers to propose alternatives for activities they consider too long or too boring.
- Involve the teenagers in program evaluation. Encourage them to keep journals or notes. Have them interview or survey the children at the end of each program.
- Give yourself a job to do, such as taking pictures or washing dishes, while the teenagers are teaching so you won’t be tempted to interfere.

What’s the Worst that Could Happen?

Empower teen teachers by encouraging them to propose original activities. If teenagers suggest activities that might be of questionable value, help them make responsible decisions by asking: What is the worst that could happen? If the worst that could happen is the children will be bored, this activity might be worth trying. If the worst that could happen is that the children will be hurt, then try something else.

12 Monitoring and Evaluation

Essential to the development of effective and confident teenagers are opportunities to receive feedback coupled with adequate time for reflection about their experiences. Working in teams gives teens more confidence and provides them with a mechanism to observe their partners and to give each other support and feedback.



Key Research Findings

- Feedback was generally most effective when it was immediate and directed to the individual teen, when appropriate.
- Effective teen evaluation provided positive and constructive support.
- Ongoing reflection and evaluation were essential components to the development of the teenagers and the program.
- Monitoring activities and end-of-the-day debriefing of teaching experiences provided teenagers with opportunities to express their concerns and adjust their teaching as needed.

“The program director had something positive to say about every teen leader, every day. She wrote encouraging notes to each teen daily.”

—RESEARCHER



Tips from the Field

- Meet with the teenagers at the end of each session to debrief the day's teaching experience.
- Give general feedback to the entire team of teenagers. Give each teen specific positive feedback individually in writing or orally.
- Have teenagers reflect on their experiences through notes in journals, essays on a specific incident, pictures or drawings to help remember an experience.

Tips for Teens on Giving and Receiving Feedback

- The person that is receiving the feedback begins by saying, I like the way I . . . [listing things done well]. This list is followed by, Next time, I wish . . . [listing planned improvements].
- Others giving feedback, use the same phrases: I like the way you . . . and Next time, I wish you. . .

Good feedback

- focuses on behavior: what was said or done, not personality
- specifies suggested improvements for the future
- is nonjudgmental and a mirror of actions observed

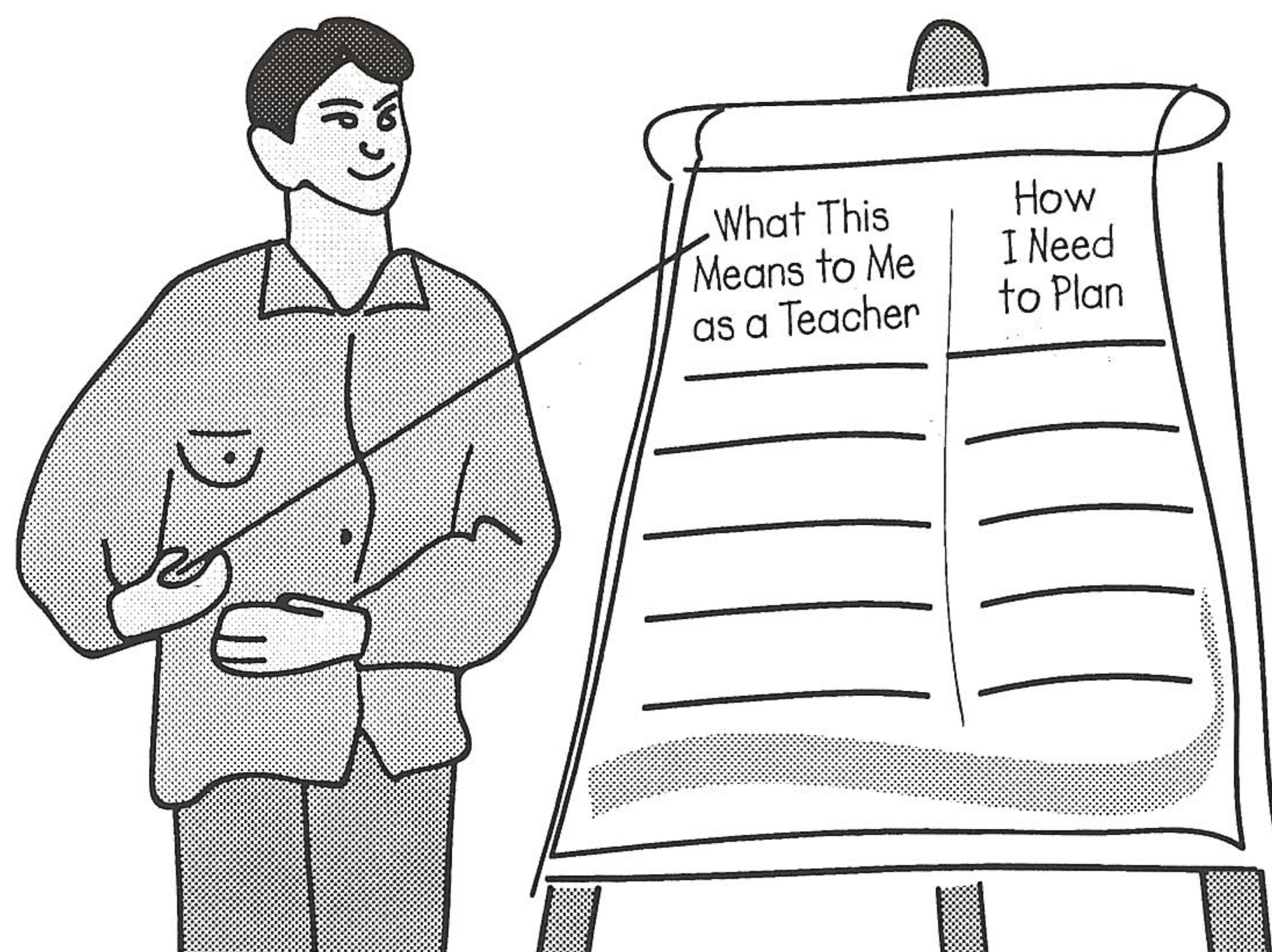
Teen Training Activities

The Puzzle of Children

Teenagers get less frustrated with younger children when they better understand the children's behavior. The purpose of this activity is to acquaint the teen teachers with normal behavior of young children and how this behavior can affect their work as teachers. It is a good activity to precede the situational or role-play activities.

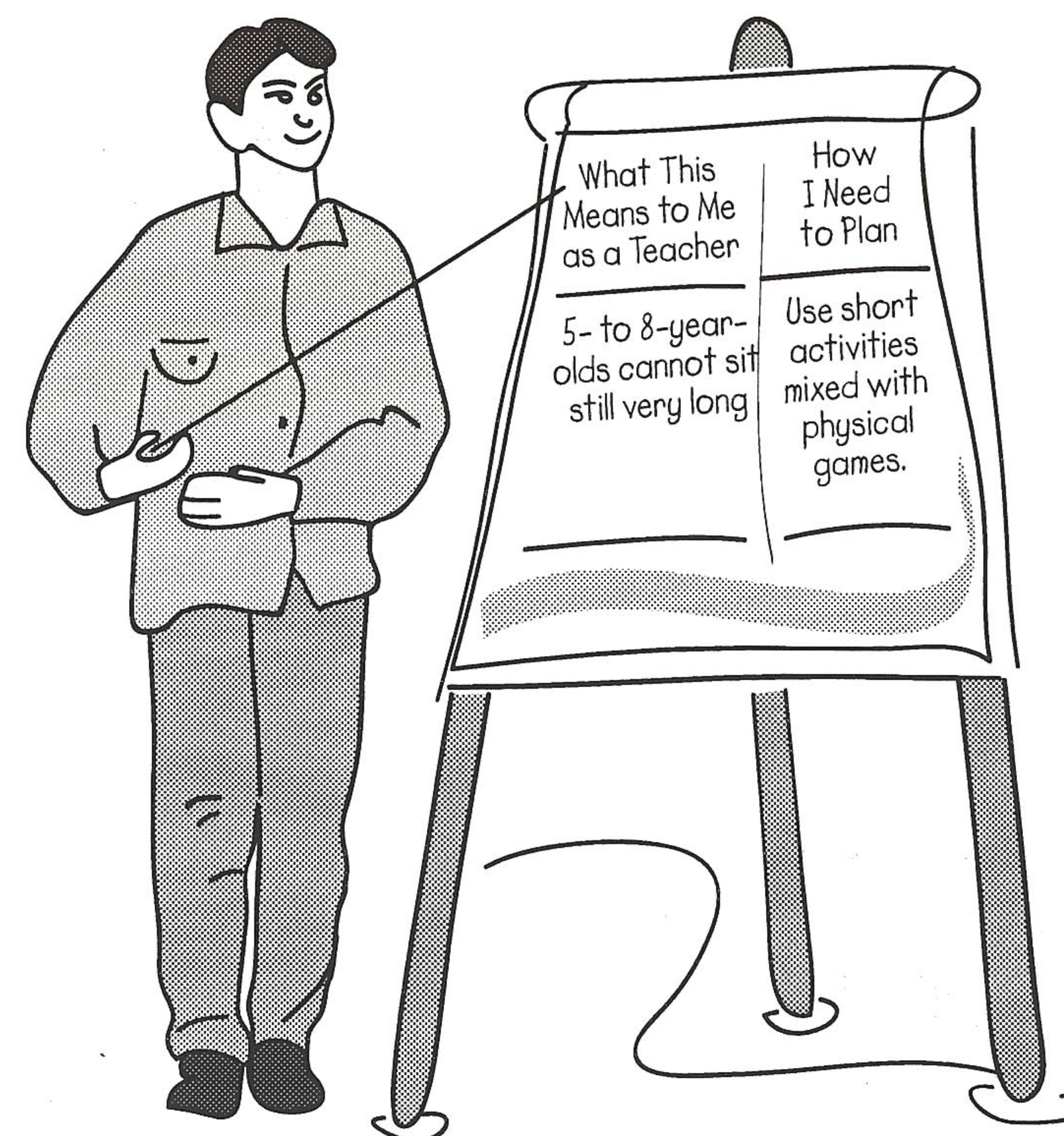
Preparation

- Photocopy the puzzles (one for each group of teenagers) (see pp. 29–30) onto colored card stock. Cut along the lines and put each set of puzzle pieces into a different envelope.
- Make a two-column chart on a large sheet of butcher paper. Label the columns with these headings: What This Means to Me as a Teacher and How I Need to Plan.



Activity Directions

- Divide teenagers into groups of three to four.
- Give each group a puzzle and 5 to 10 minutes to assemble the puzzle as a team (make sure to emphasize teamwork). Encourage each group member to read each puzzle piece and briefly discuss with their group what the characteristic will mean to them as teachers and how they will plan accordingly.
- After the groups have finished, reconvene the large group for a group discussion.
- Each teen names a behavior or characteristic and tells how it might affect the teaching experience. Write these ideas in the first column. Then ask the group how they might plan their teaching to accommodate each issue. Write these ideas in the second column. For example, the teenagers might note that children ages 5 to 8 cannot sit still for very long, and that short learning activities mixed with physical games would work best.



Tips on Working with 5- to 8-year-olds:

- The desire for affection may lead to squabbles over teen's attention.
- All children need lots of positive reinforcement, such as saying "good job" and "I like the way you are listening."
- Rules should be written and posted.
- Activities should be short and varied.
- Directions need to be short and broken into small pieces.
- Physical games often work well.

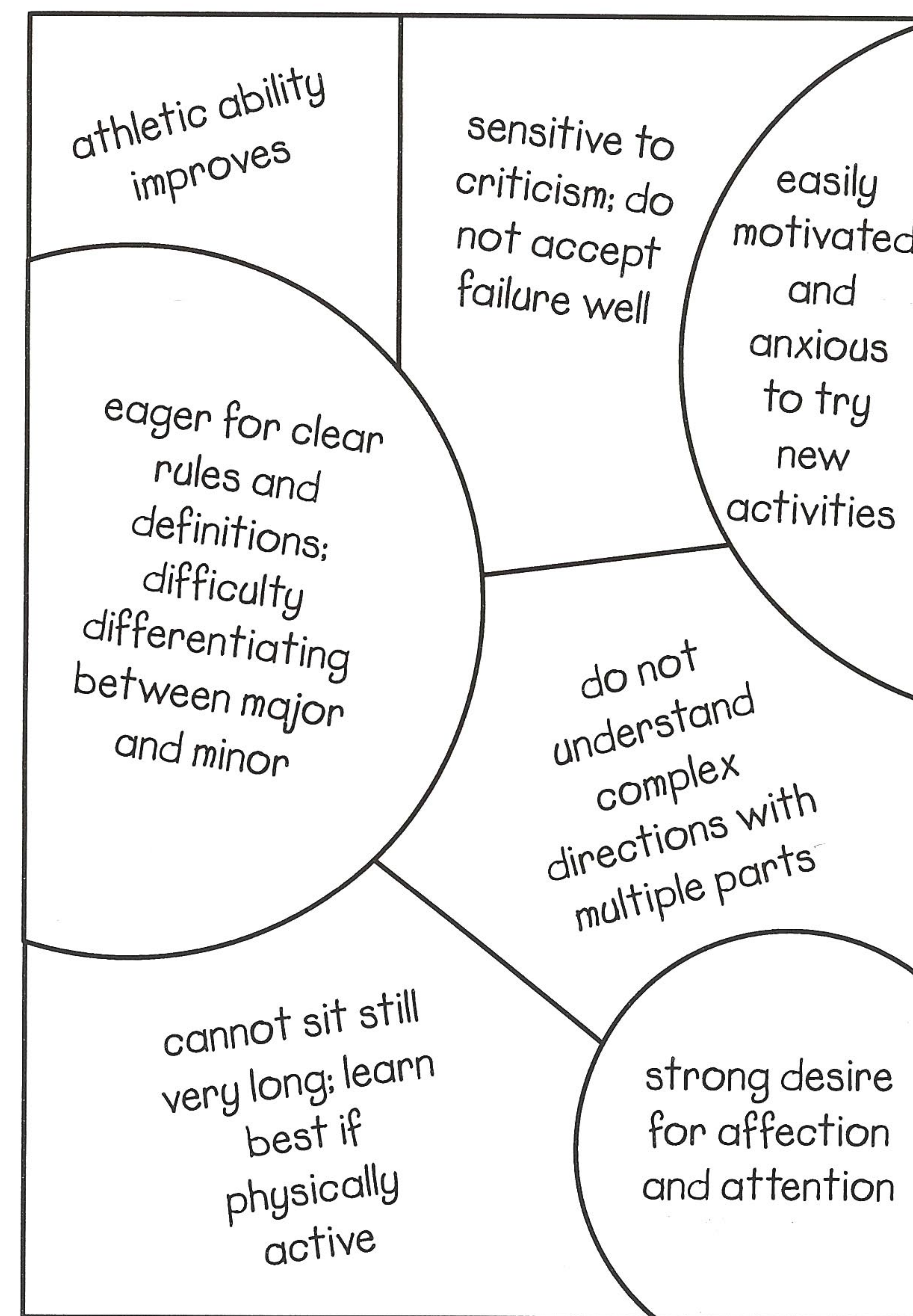
Tips on Working with 9- to 12-year-olds:

- This age group imitates teenagers, so teen teachers need to be good role models.
- Children may enjoy activities turned into verbal and physical games.
- It is helpful to break longer activities into sections.
- Allowing same-sex groups is OK as long as all groups are treated equally.
- Rituals and traditions can be developed within a group.

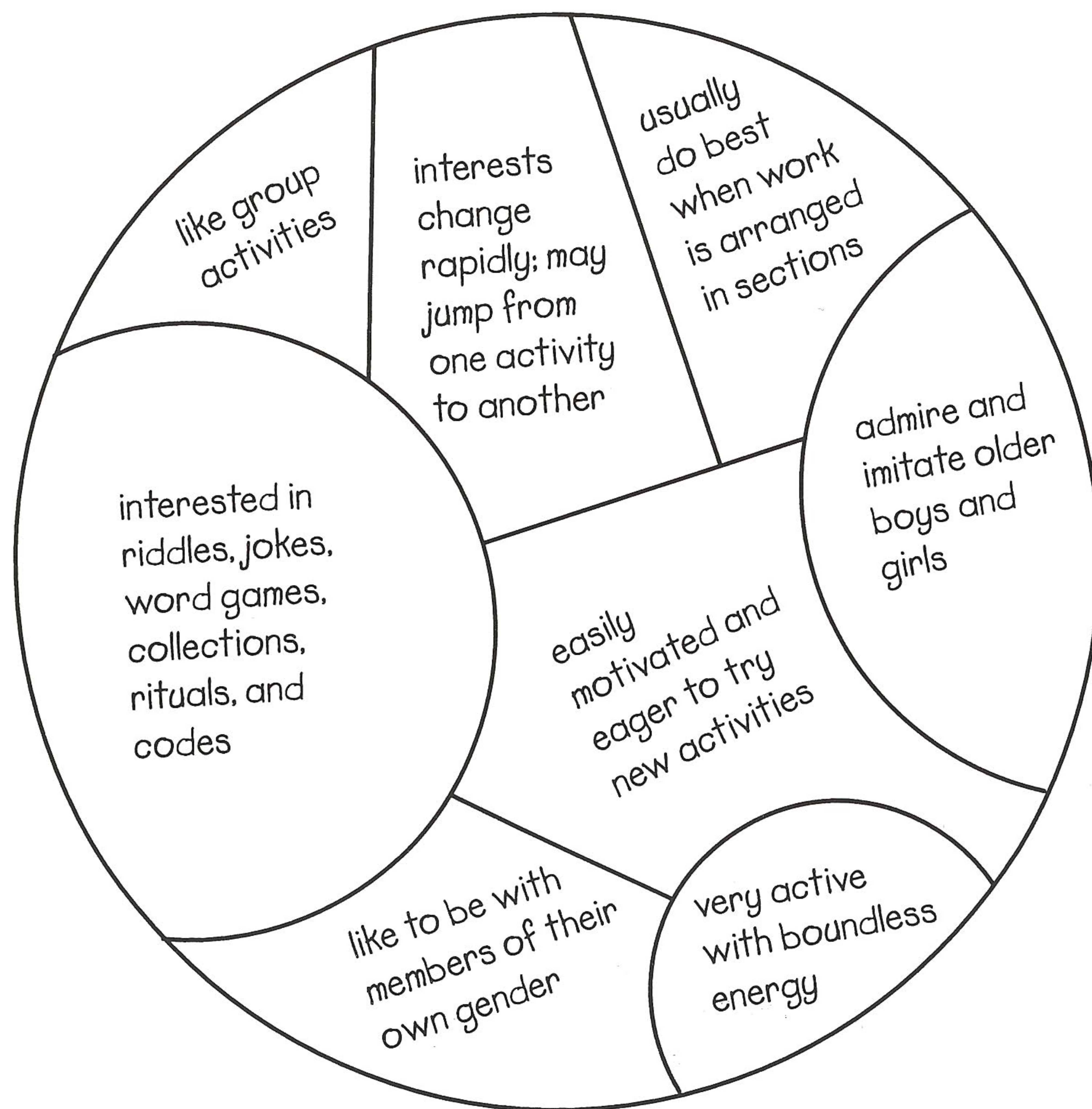
Source: Cole, M., and S. Cole, *The Development of Children*, 4th ed. (New York: Worth Publishers 2001).

The Puzzle of Children

5- to 8-Year-Olds



Enlarge to your specifications.



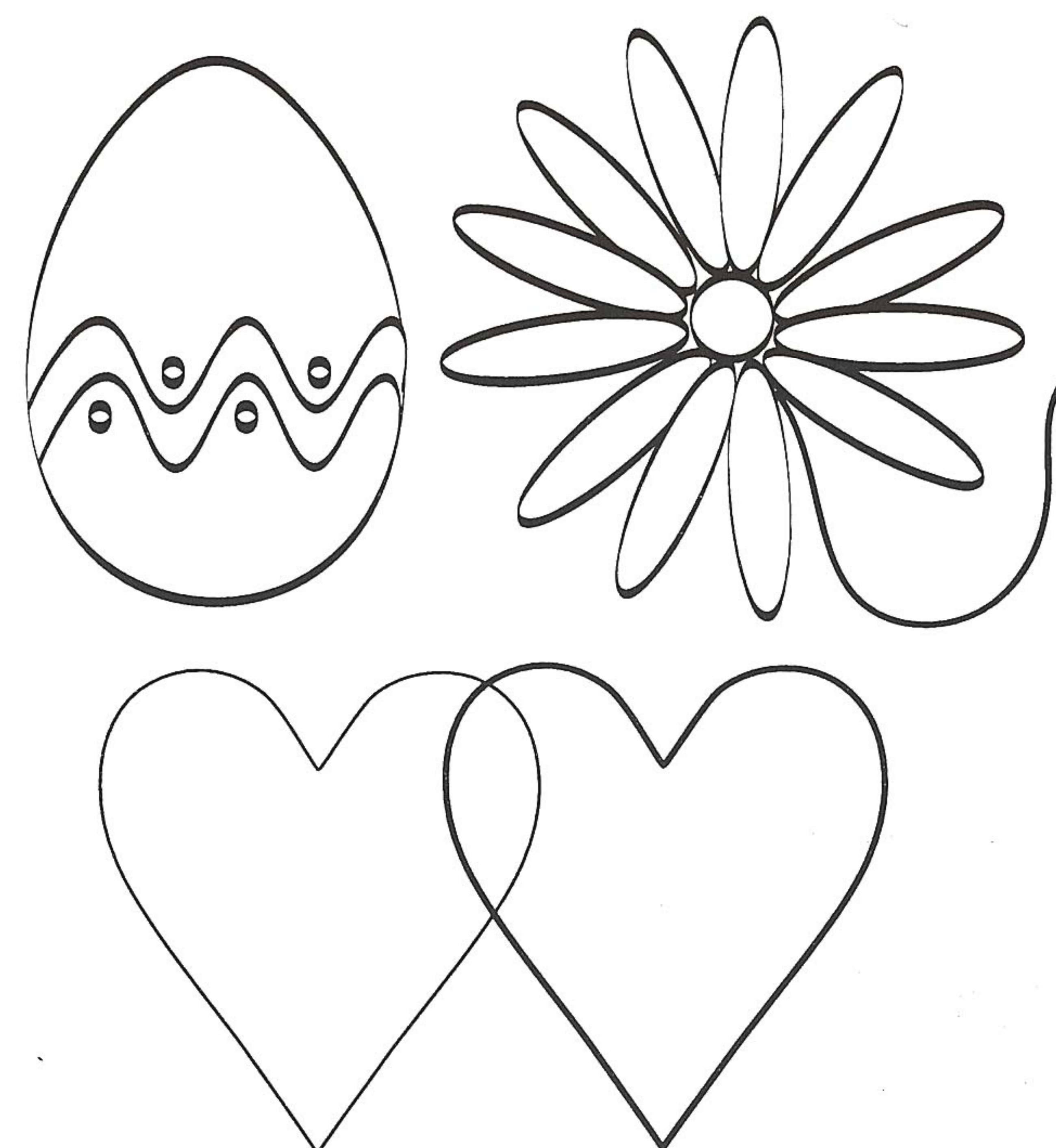
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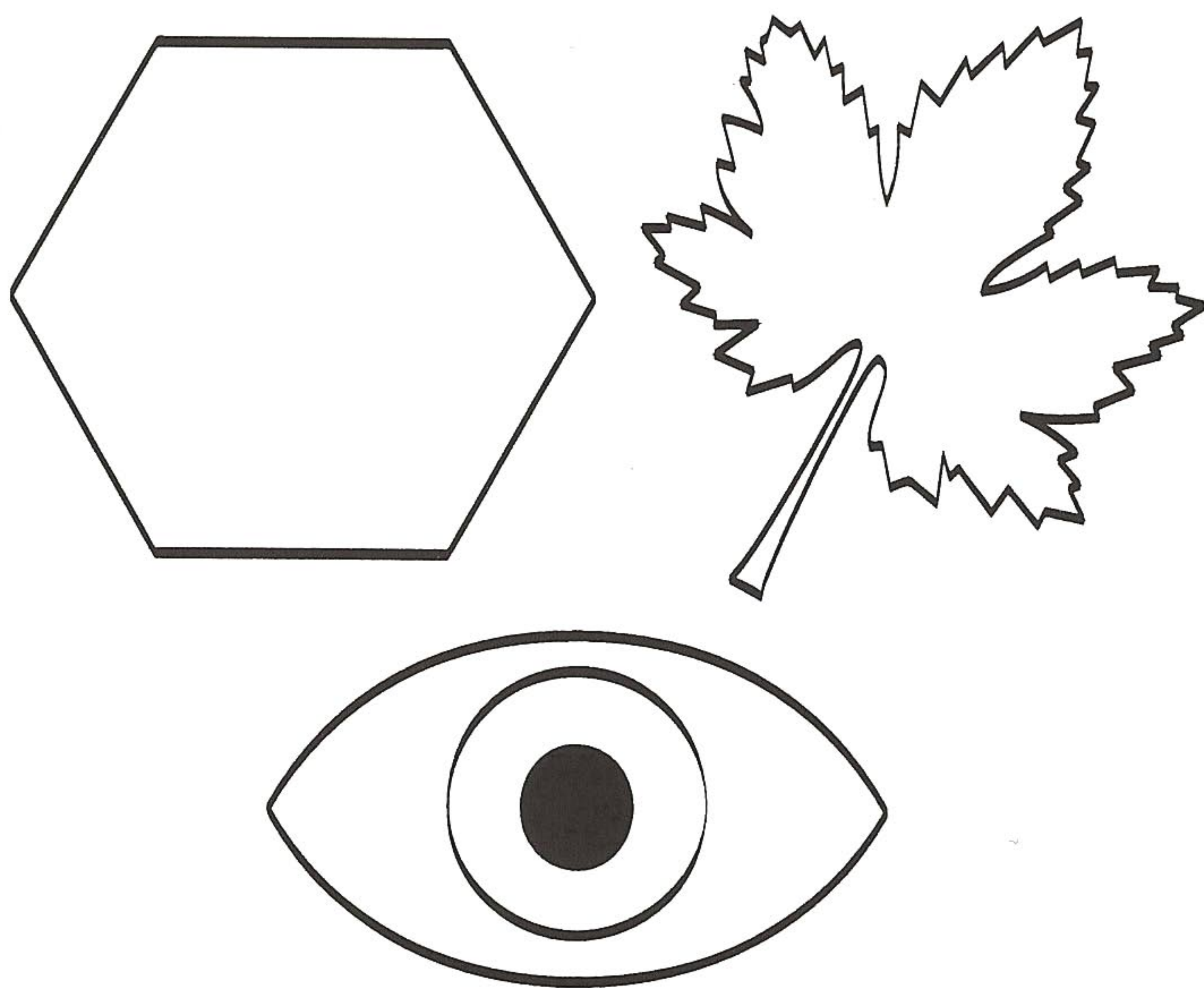
Directions, Please!

One of the most difficult tasks facing teen (and adult) teachers is giving clear directions to young children. The purpose of these communication activities is to give the teenagers practice in giving and receiving directions.

Preparation

- On a sheet of paper, draw three simple symbols such as a lightning bolt, an Easter egg, and a daisy. Add some, but not too much, detail to the symbols. Repeat this step two more times, using a different set of three symbols on each sheet of paper. You should then have three sheets of paper, each with a different set of three symbols.
- Reproduce the drawings on cardstock (enough so that each pair of teens has a set of three). Place each set in a large envelope.





Activity Directions

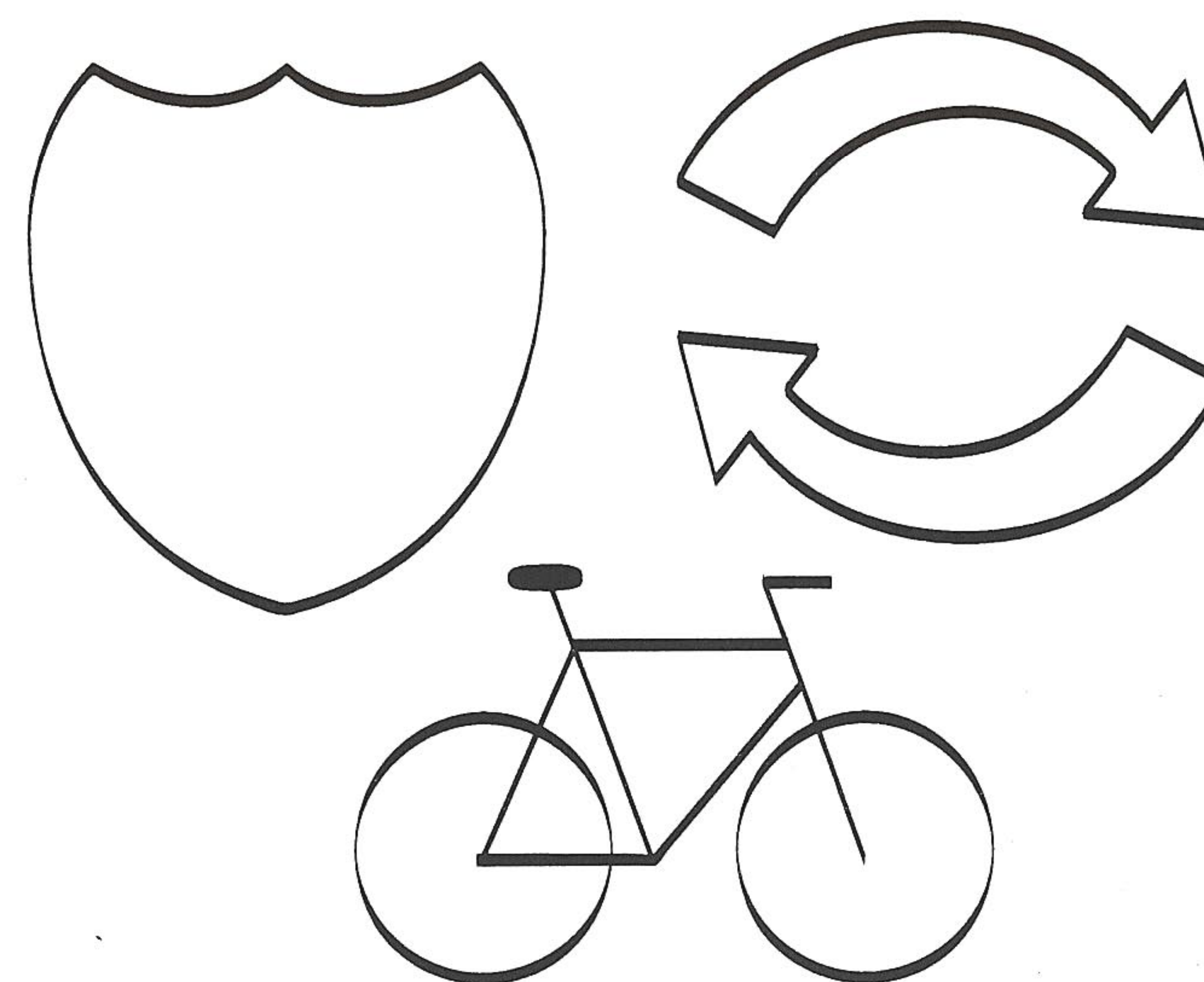
- Teenagers are paired. Give each pair an envelope of pictures (instruct them not to look at the pictures), three sheets of blank paper, and a pencil. Have the pairs spread out so they are not watching or hearing other pairs' work.
- The activity is conducted in three parts. In each part one teen will be the "director" and one will be the "artist." It is the director's role to provide the artist with instructions which are clear enough that the artist can reproduce the picture the director describes.
- Part 1. The pair sits back-to-back. The director pulls a picture from the envelope without letting the artist see it.
- The artist is given a sheet of blank paper and a pencil. The director then describes the picture to the artist, who attempts to draw the exact same picture on his or her paper. The director may not watch the artist at work. The artist may not ask the director questions. When finished, the artist and director compare the two pictures and discuss: Do the pictures look alike? How are they different?
- Part 2. The teenagers switch roles and repeat the above steps with a new picture except the artist is allowed to ask the

director questions. Again, the pictures are compared and discussed: Do the pictures look alike? Is the task easier when the artist can ask questions?

- Part 3. The teenagers switch roles again and repeat the activity with the third picture. This time the director may watch the artist at work (although he or she does not show the artist the picture) and the artist can ask questions throughout. Compare the pictures and discuss: Do these pictures look alike? Was this process easier?

Reconvene the large group and discuss the process: What is difficult about giving directions? What techniques were used with good results? When did the pictures most resemble each other? What are effective methods of giving directions to young children? The following are some key ideas to discuss:

- It helps to give an overview of the picture before talking about picture details; the same is true when giving directions for an activity.
- Using a frame of reference is helpful, such as: The symbol looks something like a stop sign.
- When giving instructions, make sure the child is paying attention before beginning.
- A child should be able to repeat your directions back to you.



Problem-Solving Activity

Teen teachers need to learn to plan for problems. That is, they should be encouraged to think about problems that could arise during an activity, how they might prevent the problem from occurring, and how they might resolve it. Teenagers who feel confident that they can handle difficult situations are more successful as teachers.

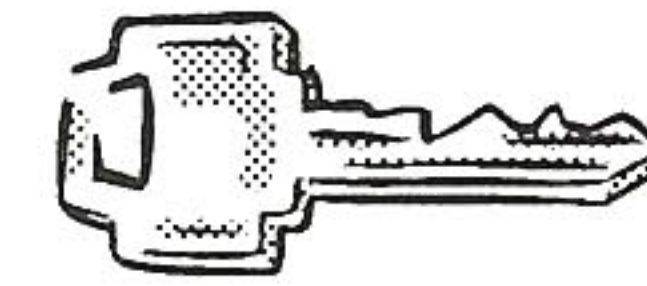
Preparation

- Use the situations common to group activities with young children, below, or think of some of your own. Print each situation on a separate index card. (Do not include the key ideas on the index card.) You will need at least one situation for each pair of teenagers.

Activity Directions

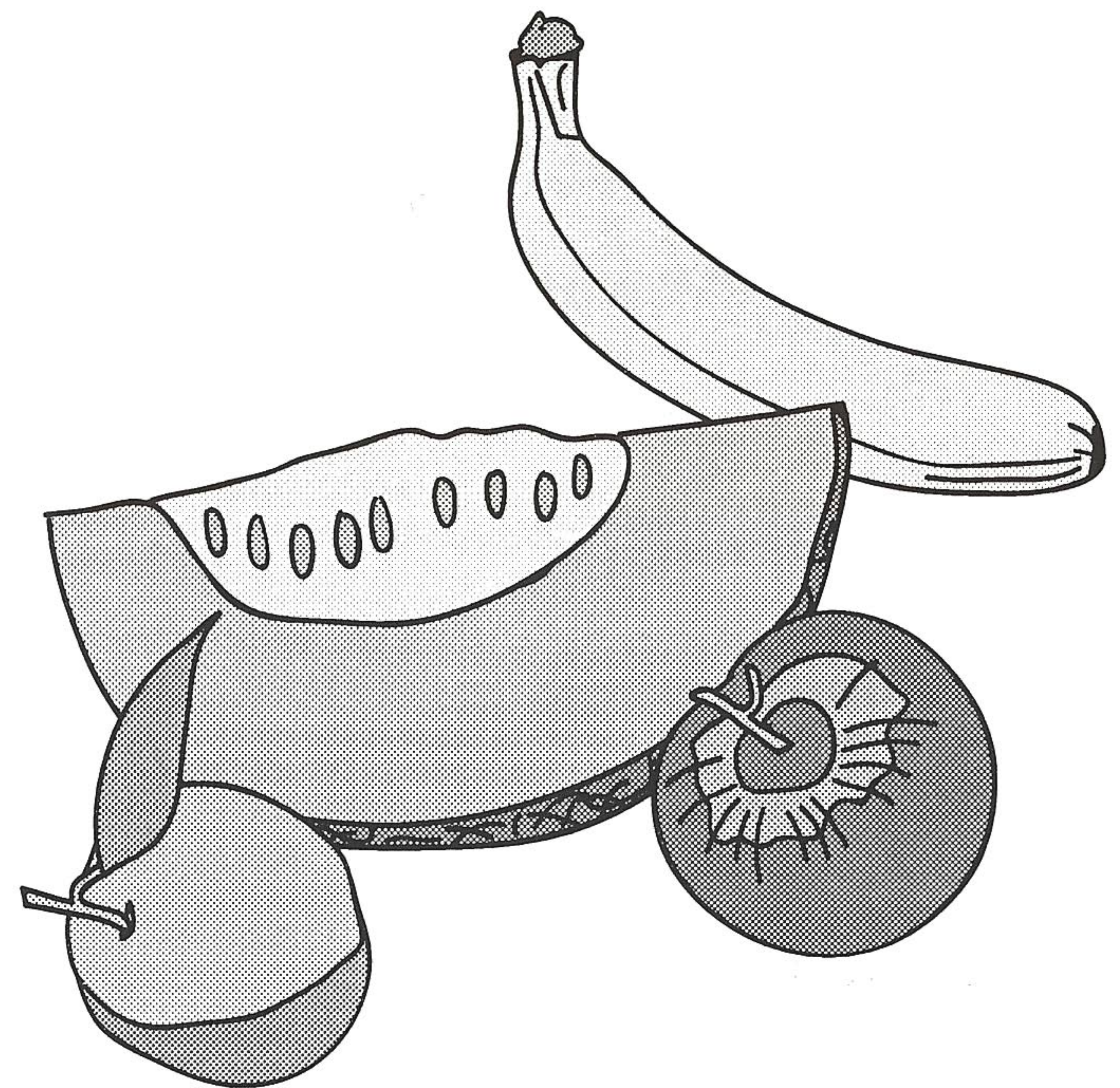
- Teenagers are paired. Each pair of teens pulls a card from a “hat” and discusses the situation for 5 to 10 minutes. They should write down ideas for preventing and resolving the problem.
- Reconvene the large group. Ask a teen from each pair to read their situation and to describe the ideas they wrote.
- Invite the entire group to give additional ideas. Mention any of the key ideas from the list below that the pair did not include.
- Continue until all situations have been discussed.

Situation 1. There are 10 children in your group. They are going to make a fruit salad. You have 1 peach, 1 cantaloupe, 1 banana, and 1 plum. All the children want to cut up fruit. What should you have done to avoid this and what do you do now?

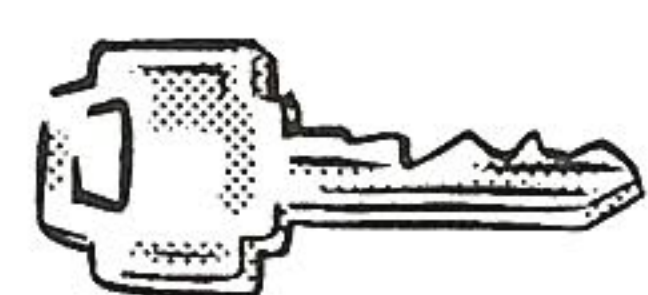


Key Ideas for Situation 1

- Each child must be able to participate.
- When children have nothing to do, they become bored and problems arise.
- Precut some large pieces of fruit so there is something for each child to cut.
- If some children do not get to cut fruit, give them another important job like serving the salad; however, do not punish them with cleanup.



Situation 2. Your group of children is going to prepare the garden for planting. While you are giving instructions, children pick up the tools (some are sharp) and begin playing with them. What should you have done to avoid this and what do you do now?

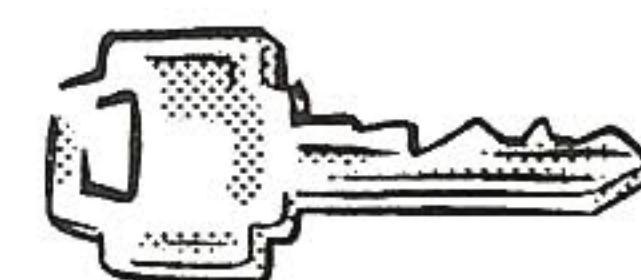


Key Ideas for Situation 2

- The tools should not be accessible until you are ready to begin the activity.
- Be sure the children know safety rules before being allowed to use tools.
- Pair older children with younger ones.
- When children play with the tools, take the tools away until they demonstrate they can handle them safely.



Situation 3. Your group has finished preparing and eating their afternoon snack. The table is sticky, there are crumbs on the floor, and the children are running around. You yell at them to clean up but they don't listen to you and they don't help. What should you have done to avoid this and what do you do now?

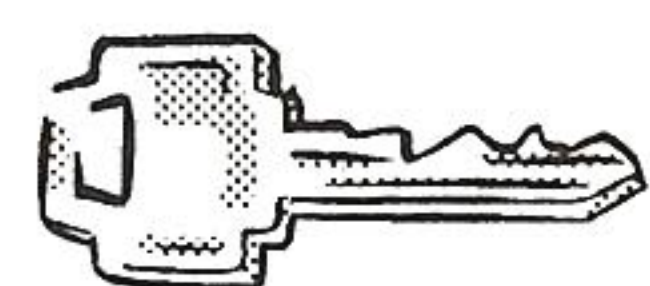


Key Ideas for Situation 3

- Have the children clean up before letting them eat their snack.
- Have enough cleaning materials (rags, etc.) so they can all help.
- Give specific instructions such as: Wash the table until it no longer feels sticky.
- Don't yell. Use a soft whistle, a bell, or a soft voice to get attention.



Situation 4. Your group is mixing poster paint. John is measuring water into a cup over the bowl of dry paint when the cup overflows and turns the paint very watery. The other children yell at him and he begins to cry. What should you have done to avoid this and what do you do now?

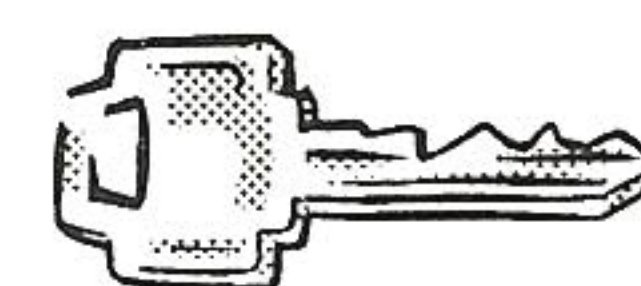


Key Ideas for Situation 4

- Have children measure materials away from the final product.
- Use resilient recipes that can be fixed.
- Let the group know that put-downs are not allowed.
- Have John fix the paint by draining off water or adding more powder: It is important to his self-esteem that he, and not you, correct the mistake.



Situation 5. You decide to play a team game. You pick two children to be captains and to choose their own teams. Most children noisily volunteer for the team of their choice, the quiet children refuse to play, and the selection process takes a very long time. What should you have done to avoid this and what do you do now?



Key Ideas for Situation 5

- Do not use this method for creating teams. It creates hurt feelings and becomes a game of popularity.
- Use an alternate method, such as numbering off, dividing by color of clothing, or putting in pairs, and then put half on one team and half on the other.
- Stop a process if it is not working and use another method.

Jigsaw

The jigsaw is a method of teaching that was developed about 20 years ago to decrease segregation and polarization in the classroom. It is a very powerful method of involving all participants as teachers of each other.

Preparation

- Write or find three short articles on subjects the teenagers need to learn. For example, if the teens are studying nutrition, you may find or write three articles on topics such as fruits and vegetables, grains, and dairy products.
- Create three picture location signs. For example, for a nutrition jigsaw you might make signs with pictures of a carrot, a slice of bread, and a piece of cheese. Place the signs in the three locations where the “expert” groups are to meet.

Activity Directions

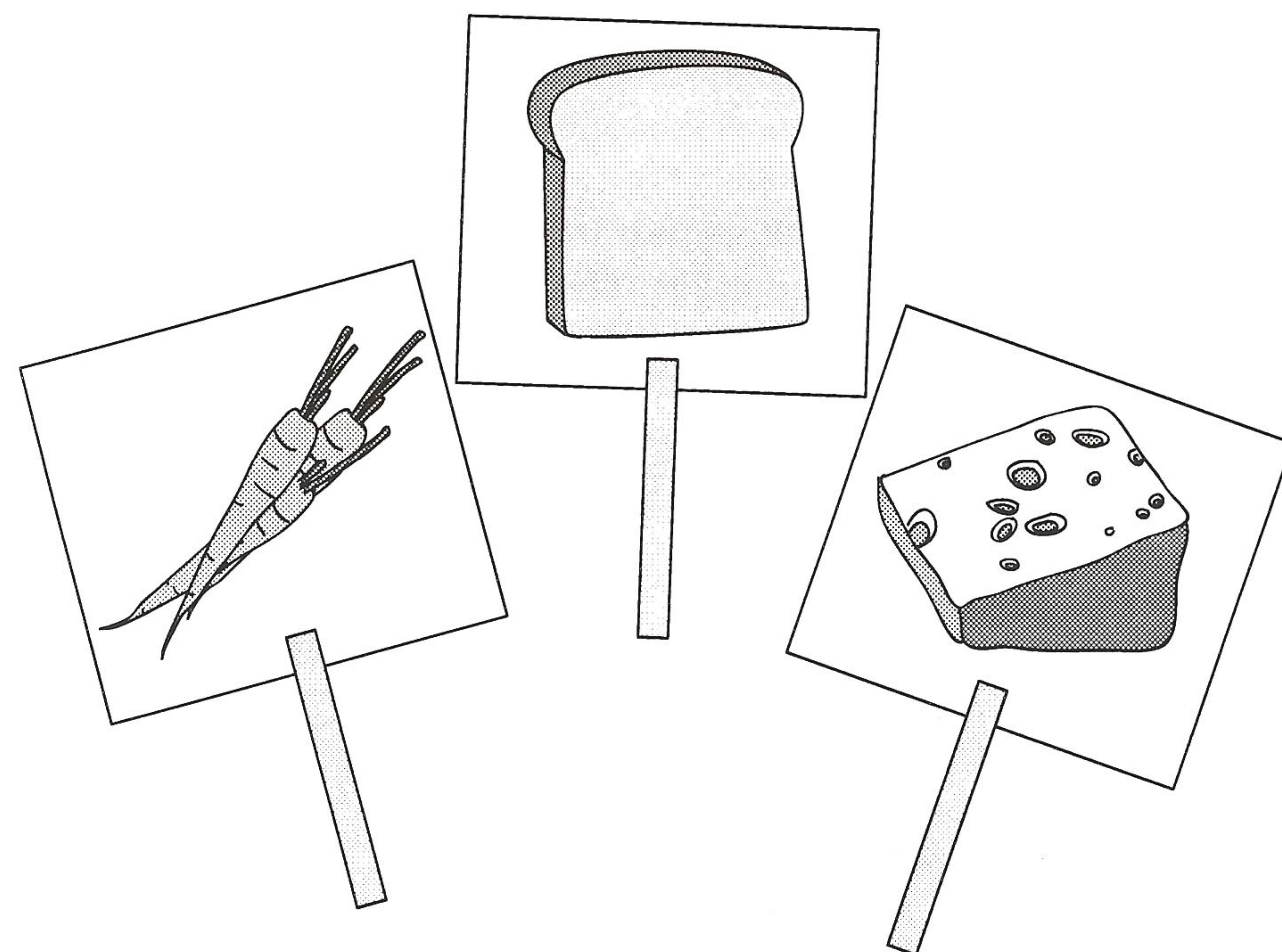
- Teenagers form “home” groups of three. Then a member of each home group chooses a different “expert” group and goes to that picture location so that each home group has a representative at each picture.
- Each teen in an expert group is given the same written information about a topic and 5 to 10 minutes to read it. For example, each teen in the fruit and vegetable group receives an article about fruits and vegetables to read and learn from.
- Within the expert group, the teenagers discuss (pairs work best) the major concepts presented in the article and what information they will teach members of their home group. This requires another 10 to 15 minutes.
- The teenagers then return to their home groups. Each teen is given 5 minutes to teach the other home group members about his or her topic. For example, for 5 minutes the fruit and vegetable expert teaches the other two what he or she

learned, then the grains expert teaches about grains, and so forth.

- At the conclusion of the 15 minutes, the large group is reconvened and the information processed. This can happen through a large group discussion or by having the teenagers generate the most important concepts they learned and writing these on chart paper.

Tips

- The articles used in the activity should be short and concise. Full-length articles can be available at the end of the activity for those who want them.
- This method could also be used as a means of teaching games or becoming more effective at giving directions.



Role-Play

Role-play is an interactive (and sometimes entertaining) method of involving teenagers in resolving issues that they may encounter as teachers. It is also a good way for the adult trainer to get a sense of what issues the teen might bring to the job that need to be addressed. For example, if a teen playing the part of an adult teacher responds to a mock discipline problem with threats of violence, the trainer will know to discuss and promote a program's nonviolent discipline philosophy.

Role-play can be conducted using several methods. Two are described here. In the first, teenagers are given their roles without knowing what the other actors are assigned to say or do. Then they ad lib based on the other actors' performances. This method requires that they think and respond quickly, and it allows the trainer to see how the teenagers might respond to a problem on their own. With the second method, teenagers work in small groups and plan the entire role-play and present it to the rest of the group (like a skit). This method fosters teamwork and allows the teens to present thoughtful solutions to issues.

Preparation

- Prepare handouts on normal childhood behavior to give to each teen.
- Prepare roles to be played.
- Method 1: Write a scenario in which you list the characters involved and some background of the issue (see p. 44).
- Method 2: Write one role description and some background information on an index card for each player (see p. 45).

Activity Directions

- Form role-play groups and distribute development handouts to each member. According to method being used, distribute either a scenario or index cards to the teens. Give them time to think about and plan their roles.
- Each group of teenagers then spends 5 to 7 minutes acting out their skit for the rest of the group.
- Discuss the resolution each small group of teens proposes in their skit. Ask questions such as: What was going on with the children? Was this an effective method of resolving the issue? What other methods might be used to resolve an issue?

Tips

- Encourage teenagers to act like the person being portrayed would really act (teens with a flair for drama sometimes put entertainment value before education).
- Provide props to support the activity. For example, for the role-play about a fight in the garden, provide a toy shovel or a trowel.
- This is a very difficult activity for teenagers who may be shy. Remember to thank each group for its great performance.

Sample Roles for Using Method 1 (each teen gets one description)

Teen Leader: You are working in the garden with three children, all age 7. There is only one shovel. You have asked them to share.

Child 1: You are 7 years old and working in the garden with a teen leader and two other 7-year-old children. There is one shovel that you are supposed to share. But the other two children want it and there is some shoving and arguing among all three of you.

Child 2: You are 7 years old and working in the garden with a teen leader and two other 7-year-old children. There is one shovel that you are supposed to share. But the other two children want it and there is some shoving and arguing among all three of you.

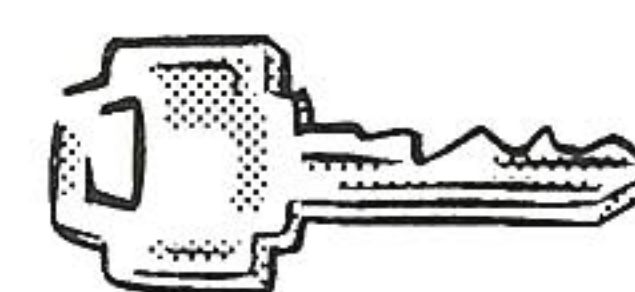
Child 3: You are 7 years old and working in the garden with a teen leader and two other 7-year-old children. There is one shovel that you are supposed to share. The other two children want it, and you are tired and frustrated with them. In the process of fighting over the shovel you become angry enough to throw dirt at them.



Sample Scenario Using Method 2 (give the same scenario to EACH group member)

One teen and three children, all age 7, are working in the garden. There is one shovel. The children begin arguing about who gets to use the shovel, and a little bit of shoving begins. One of the children becomes frustrated and angry and throws dirt at the other two children.

Show how the teen resolves the issue.



Key Ideas to Discuss

- Establish rules of sharing before beginning an activity (for instance you can give each child 5 minutes or 5 scoopfuls of dirt then he or she must give the shovel to the next child).
- Think of tasks for the children who are not using the shovel.
- Throwing dirt is never allowed. You may say “dirt is not for throwing” and give a short time-out for the child who threw dirt.

