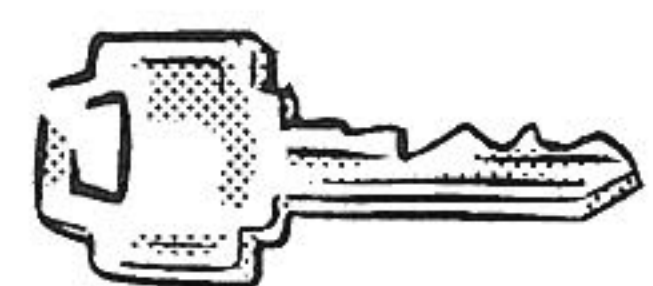


# 6 Initial Training

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