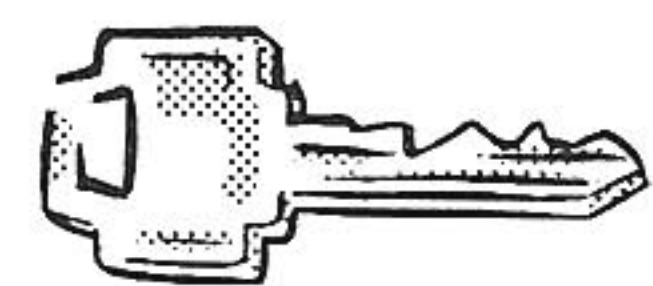


# 8 Team Building

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.

