

OST SETTINGS WORKSHEET

ADAPTING SEL TO OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME

Providing children and youth with opportunities to learn and practice social-emotional skills across settings can improve social and emotional outcomes, particularly when adult expectations are also aligned. However, it is important to consider the specific needs of each context and student population when selecting and adapting SEL programming for out-of-school time settings. The box to the right highlights four common principles underlying high-quality out-of-school time and SEL programming. Building upon these core principles, the following guide is designed to help leaders identify programs or program components that best fit the needs of their specific context. This guide provides three brief

case studies as well as a set of guiding questions intended to support program selection and/or adaptations.

Case Studies

The three hypothetical cases on the following page illustrate how OST organizations and their partners (schools, community centers, etc.) might use the information in this report to inform decision-making. In each case, we present a program *type*—a set of factors that often cluster together in OST spaces—that might shift the considerations listed above. In each of these cases, after considering the different programmatic elements available to them, organizational leaders must return to the four underlying principles of the work. Any program—no matter how it is adapted to fit the specific needs of its population—must be built on this foundation.

Four Principles Underlying High-Quality OST and SEL Programming

1. Provide safe and positive environments
2. Support the development of high quality relationships between adults and children
3. Developmentally appropriate, relevant, engaging
4. Provide opportunities for direct skill building

Case 1: Partnerships organized around a common structure

Imagine an OST organization whose mission and structure mirror that of a traditional school-day program. Likely, the OST program exists within a school building and/or shares students with a school-day program. In this program, students might be organized in classrooms and engaged in homework and other seated activities. Or, the program might have a stated mission that is aligned with the academic mission of a partner school (e.g., literacy).

Here, a leadership team might begin by considering the importance of consistency and the danger of redundancy. Is there an already-existing program in use at the school site? If so, how might it be adopted? If not, which SEL programs occur within classroom settings, focus on teacher-student relationships, or have implications for key academic domains (e.g., literacy)? A leadership team might further narrow the scope of possible programmatic elements by zooming in on components or content-areas that are most relevant for their student population.

With these considerations in mind, leaders could use the program overview chart to consider the programs whose materials best fit these structural, contextual, and content-related demands. Focusing on those programs that are the best match, a leadership team would want to carefully consider how to ensure that OST-based activities were additive (not repetitive) and aligned in their afterschool setting.

Case 2: Partnership organized around a mission

Imagine an OST organization whose mission and structure does not match that of a traditional school-day program. Instead, this OST program is driven by a set of offerings that are non-academic in nature. This program might exist within a school building, or it might be community-based. For example, we can imagine an OST program whose mission is to provide children with opportunities to express their life experiences through poetry, a program built around specific sports, or a program that engages children in arts-based exploration.

Here, one might begin by considering the OST program's mission and pedagogical approach. Which SEL programs appear to share similar goals and/or use similar pedagogical strategies to those already in place? Are there elements of different programs that might be used in tandem to best match the existing structure?

With these considerations in mind, a leadership team would turn to the program overview chart and consider its options in addition to identifying relevant activity types. The team might narrow down its scope by zooming in on the specific components and content-areas that are most relevant for their student population. Here, OST programs would be prioritizing programmatic elements that match the desired content type (skill focus) and pedagogical strategy (instructional method).

Case 3: Partnership organized around student or staff needs

Imagine an OST program whose desire to engage in SEL work is driven by a particular challenge that their staff or student body faces. For example, an OST program where staff struggle with stress management/emotional regulation or where students struggle with positive communication skills.

In this instance, the starting point might be a consideration of the target population, including data collection around the strengths and struggles of students and staff in the program. A leadership team might use the information within this report that summarizes domain focus across programs to identify which programs are most saturated with activities related to the SEL skills and/or domains of interest. What are the programs that focus on emotional regulation? Do any of them also target teachers? Which programs focus on building positive communication skills?

From there, a leadership team might explore questions of mission and pedagogy to narrow down the list of possible programs and/or identify the elements of programs best adapted for their purpose.

GOALS & PRIORITIES

When borrowing and adapting from in-school SEL curricula, it is important to consider how specific program components and strategies can be adapted to fit the specific needs of your population and context. The following questions are meant to facilitate planning and discussion for effectively integrating SEL in to OST, including identifying key priorities and goals, as well as limitations or challenges that may influence your selection of SEL programs or strategies. These questions are meant to facilitate deeper thought and discussion about the strengths, opportunities, and needs of your specific context, setting the stage for selecting or adapting SEL strategies that best suit the needs of your program and population.

Needs and Goals

1. What is the specific mission/goal of your OST organization or program? Do you have a specific content focus or set of activities and requirements you must accommodate when adopting SEL programs or strategies? Examples include physical activity, service-learning, the arts, etc.
2. Is there a specific focus or urgent need you hope to address by adopting or adapting SEL strategies? Examples include bullying prevention, character education, behavior management, etc.
3. Are there specific skills or social-emotional or behavioral needs you are hoping to address? For example, empathy, growth mindset, conflict resolution, etc.

EXPERT TIP

Use data to guide decision-making. This may include student and staff school climate data, disciplinary records, or qualitative data from focus groups or interviews with key stakeholders (program participants, OST coordinators, parents, schools/community centers, etc.). Employing data will aid in the selection of programming that best suits your specific needs and context, and will allow you to monitor results over time.

Time and Structure

4. Do you have any schedule or timing constraints that would influence SEL programming?
 - Is there dedicated time available during your program for SEL programming?
 - And/or, does the use of SEL programming or strategies need to be integrated with other program activities?

EXPERT TIP

SEL programming is most effective when it extends throughout the entirety of a setting, such that it is embedded into daily interactions and improves the quality of relationships. Limiting SEL programming to a specific time-block or location can minimize effectiveness, and can limit the extent to which children learn and apply skills in their daily lives. Look for ways to embed SEL across the day, across micro-settings (classroom, art room, lunchroom, playground, buses, etc.), and among all the adults who interact with students/children.

Leadership and Training

5. Who are the stakeholders involved in both selecting and implementing new SEL programming?
 - What process will you use to discuss SEL priorities and review options for SEL programming?

- Who will be involved in each stage, and how will you ultimately decide which program to implement?
- Who will implement the program? What kind of training will this require?

EXPERT TIP

SEL programming is most effective when a diverse range of stakeholders are involved in the program selection process. Making decisions from the top-down can undermine buy-in and compromise effectiveness.

Alignment and Adaptation

6. If you are collaborating with a school or other organization, are they already using any SEL initiatives, strategies, or programs that might be extended to your program? Do they align with your program mission or goal? What steps will you take to align programming while also limiting redundancy?
7. How can program components and strategies be differentiated for your specific population and context? Consider timing, structure, instructional methods, etc.

Prioritizing Needs

There are a great number of SEL programs to choose from, offering a wide variety of skill focus, teaching strategies, implementation support, evidence of effectiveness, and general approach toward SEL. Determining the program that best suits your school or organization depends on both the goals and needs you have identified, as well as specific factors that may illuminate the importance of different program features and components (e.g., training, cost, skill focus, lesson structure, etc.) Using the questions on the previous page, consider which program features and components are most important for your school or program. Record your top five priorities below. Once you have determined priorities, continue to the following pages for guidance on finding specific programs that align with your priorities.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

FOR EXAMPLE, an OST organization might identify the following top priorities:

1. Population – appropriate for grades 4-5
2. Evidence of effectiveness – has shown positive impact among low-income students
3. Culture/Climate – to be used as/integrated with/inform approach to behavior management
4. Family & Community Engagement – has lots of resources and components related to parents, families, and the broader community

PROGRAM FEATURES AND COMPONENTS

The following pages will help you to narrow in on specific programs based on your priorities. Keep in mind the program features that you have identified as most important. If you are unsure about which program features to prioritize, the following exercises may help you to further clarify the needs and goals of your school or program, as well as identify programs that may be a good fit. We have focused this worksheet on the skill focus, instructional methods, and program components, but you may have identified additional top priorities which further narrow the programs you are most interested in (such as evidence of effectiveness, specific population, etc.). See program profiles for information not included here.

SKILL FOCUS

SEL SKILLS				
Skill Domain	Skill			
Cognitive Skill	Attention Control	Working Memory/Planning	Inhibitory Control	Cognitive Flexibility
Emotional Skills	Emotion Knowledge/Expression	Emotion Behavior/Regulation	Empathy/Perspective-Taking	
Interpersonal Skills	Understanding Social Cues	Conflict Resolution	Prosocial Behavior	
Character				
Mindset				

Looking at the chart above, consider specific skill domains and skills that are most important for your school or program. For a more detailed description of each skill domain and skills, please refer to p. 15-18 in Section 1 of the guide.

Step 1: What, if any, specific skill domains would you like to prioritize? Are there particular skills with which students or instructors struggle (e.g., conflict resolution or behavior management)? Please list your top priorities below using the left hand column on the following page.

EXPERT TIP

While some programs focus more heavily on specific skills, many programs provide a balanced focus across a wide variety of skills. If you would like a program that provides a balance of skills, write “balanced” in top left hand column.

Step 2: Now that you have filled in your top skill domain and/or skill priorities, please refer to Table 1 on p. 33-34 in Section 3 of the guide to find programs that meet these needs. Fill in the names of programs that fit

the criteria in the right hand column on the following page. To learn more about the programs on your list, please refer to the program snapshots and more in depth program profiles in Section 4.

Skill Domain	Programs
<i>Example: Cognitive Regulation</i>	<i>ICPS, We Have Skills, SECURe, Second Step, MindUP, Responsive Classroom</i>
1.	
2.	
3.	
Skills	Programs
<i>Example: Prosocial Behavior</i>	<i>Caring School Community, Good Behavior Game, Before the Bullying, Lions Quest, We Have Skills</i>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

COMMON INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS			
Art/Creative Projects	Drawing	SEL Tool/Handout	Visual Display
Book/Story	Games	Skill Practice	Vocabulary
Didactic Instruction	Kinesthetic	Songs	Writing
Discussion	Role-Play	Video	

Consider the chart above. Are there specific instructional methods that you are most interested in using? Think about both students and instructors. For a more detailed description of each instructional method, please refer to p. 19-20 in Section 1 of the guide. Here are some questions to consider:

- Are there certain instructional methods that have been more/less effective for either students or instructors at your organization?

- Are there any instructional methods that you would like to introduce or see more of relative to current instructional methods?
- What instructional methods are most developmentally appropriate for your students?

Step 1: List the instructional methods that you would like to prioritize in the left hand column below. If you do not have a strong preference or would like to find a program that employs a variety of instructional methods, indicate “variety” below. If there are any instructional methods you would prefer not to employ, write the method(s) below with a note or asterisk alongside.

Step 2: Now that you have filled in your instructional methods priorities, please refer to Table 2 on p. 35-36 in Section 3 of the guide to find programs that meet these needs. Fill in the names of programs that fit the criteria in the right hand column below. To learn more about the programs in your list, please refer to the program snapshots and more in-depth program profiles.

Instructional Methods	Programs
<i>Example: Songs</i>	<i>Before the Bullying, Conscious Discipline, Second Step, Too Good for Violence</i>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

COMMON PROGRAM COMPONENTS		
Academic Integration	School Climate/Culture	Adult SEL
Family Engagement	Assessment Tools	Support for Implementation
Community Engagement	Adaptability/Flexibility	Supplementary Activities
Professional Development	Out-of-School Time	

The chart above lists common program components and features that are available at varying degrees in different programs. Consider your priorities and the list above to determine if there are any program components that are particularly important to your school or program. For a more detailed description of each component, please refer to p. 25-26 in Section 1 of the guide.

Step 1: List the program components that you would like to prioritize in the left hand column below. Include any notes about the specific characteristics that you are looking for.

Step 2: Now that you have filled in your program component priorities, please refer to Table 3 on p. 37-38 in Section 3 of the guide to find programs that meet these needs. Fill in the names of programs that fit the criteria in the right hand column below. To learn more about the programs in your list, please refer to the program snapshots and more in-depth program profiles.

Instructional Methods	Programs
<i>Example: Community Engagement—integrated into program/core component</i>	<i>Caring School Community, Girls on the Run, Lions Quest, MindUP, WINGS</i>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Now that you have identified several potential programs, it's time to select one. Read through the program snapshots and in-depth profiles to learn more about the programs you have identified. Start with programs that appear more than once on your list (i.e. meet multiple criteria). As you learn more about the program, consider making brief notes below including standout components, pros/cons, or anything else that might help you look across programs and select the best fit. Keep in mind your priorities, including areas of need, time and structure, training, cost, evidence of effectiveness, specific population, etc.

Program	Notes
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

