



## Podcast #2 Transcript: Review and Adapt Your Host Organization's Safety Plan

Welcome, listeners, to the second Y4Y podcast in our series on safety planning and practices. I'm Sherri. In this podcast, I'll share the process I use as a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers project director to make sure we followed our host organization's safety plan while adapting it to our program needs.

I care a lot about the safety of our staff and students. It's my number one priority, and it's an essential element of every afterschool program. In my first podcast, I explained that in most cases, your program's host organization already has a safety plan. It was likely created with help from safety experts, and it's specific to the building or facility you share with the host organization. If you've met with the host organization's Safety Lead and have a copy of the plan, congratulations. You're ahead of the game! If you don't have a copy, you'll need to contact the host organization's Safety Lead.

There's a tool you the You for Youth website has that can help. It's called the Safety Plan Request Letter. You can download the letter and modify it to request a copy of the plan, as well as a meeting with the Safety Lead. It's extremely important to examine the host organization's existing plan because your 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program must be able to implement the safety practices it outlines. Getting and reviewing the plan is always my first step.

Luckily, all safety plans tend to follow a similar structure. Knowing that structure will help you review and understand the given procedures. The most common sections in a safety plan are the

- Introduction
- Situation Overview
- Concept of Operations
- Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities
- Directing and Coordinating, and
- Training and Practice

Although these sections may be titled differently in your state, the information inside each section is similar. I'll tell you what's in each of these sections, and share some tips for reviewing each one.

In the **Introduction**, there's typically a list of people who signed off on the plan. You'll also see when and how often the plan is scheduled for review, and there should be a change record in the event the plan requires modification. First, I skim the list of signatories to note whether the individuals are still with the organization. Next, I look at the creation, review and change dates. By aligning the dates with the start date for our 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program, I gain insight into whether and how the program fits into the organization's safety plan. Often, afterschool programs aren't included in safety plans. This is especially true when the program is a collaboration of partners where one partner supplies the space, another manages logistics and a third supplies the students. As a project director, whenever I'm working within such collaborative projects, I include ownership and oversight of the safety plan in my partnership agreements. It's important to be transparent about who's responsible for every program element, especially program safety. If the program existed at the time the safety plan was developed or reviewed, there's a much higher likelihood that the plan's procedures and communication structures will work for the program. As I read through the plan, I mark any procedures that aren't feasible for the current 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program. More on that later.





## Podcast #2 Transcript: Review and Adapt Your Host Organization's Safety Plan

Next, I read the **Situation Overview** and the **Concept of Operations** sections. These sections explain the organization's approach to developing safety procedures. They also include the results of a Risk and Vulnerability Assessment, which identified risks and possible responses. Podcast 1 in this series tells more about that assessment. Because every physical space is different, a good safety plan applies best practices to the unique elements of the organization's space and location. This should be addressed in the Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Summary. Explanations within these sections help me better understand the considerations and musings of the developers when the plan was written.

The fourth section, **Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities**, tells me which positions and people within the host organization have what roles and responsibilities during the implementation of safety procedures. Contact information for these individuals should be included. I always ask the safety leader whether the people named are available and expected to perform their roles and responsibilities during 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program hours. If the answer is yes, I meet with each of those people to establish a connection and share contact information. If the answer is no, I work with the safety leader to identify appropriate alternatives.

The fifth section of the safety plan, **Directing and Coordinating**, should describe responses to natural and human-caused emergencies. Natural emergencies happen periodically and can disrupt our daily routines. These might include highway or roadway accidents due to weather, downed power lines, tornados, flooding and snow emergencies. Consider the events that have blocked your path to work, caused the power to go out or shut your facility for a day. Human-caused emergencies may be less frequent but must be considered in planning. Active shooter incidents might be the first thing that comes to mind, but fortunately, they aren't the most frequent emergencies that impact program facilities. Some other examples of human-caused emergencies are an abduction of a child by a noncustodial parent, domestic violence incidents, an armed robbery near the school, an escaped prisoner and arson. Responses to natural and human-caused emergencies take the shape of safety procedures. You may recognize these procedures by the names lockdown, evacuation, shelter in place, and active resistance.

I recommend that you ask the host organization's Safety Lead to do a physical walkthrough of the facility with you during your program hours, and to review each of the listed safety procedures with you. The walkthrough and review will help both of you determine whether the host organization's procedures will work as written, or if the safety plan needs adjustment. I always ask the safety leader three questions:

- First: Are the listed exit doors unlocked during the program?
- Second: Do I or other staff have access to the noted communication system, such as the PA or walkie talkies? and
- Third: Are any necessary supplies such as first aid kits, go kits, or shelter in place materials accessible?

Now let's talk about the sixth and final section of the safety plan, **Training and Practice**. Once I've confirmed with the safety leader which elements of the safety plan can be implemented "as is" and which ones need refinement, I'm ready to develop a Training and Practice Plan for my staff. It's



## Podcast #2 Transcript: Review and Adapt Your Host Organization's Safety Plan

always my responsibility in conjunction with the host organization's facility safety leader to properly prepare staff and students on how to respond to various incidents. If you'd like some tips on developing and implementing a Training and Practice Plan, listen to podcast number three in this series. Thank you.



This resource is in the public domain. Authorization to reproduce it in whole or part is granted. This resource was funded by the U.S. Department of Education in 2019 under contract number ED-ESE-14-D-0008. The views expressed here are not necessarily those of the Department. Learn more about professional development planning and 21st CCLC learning at <https://y4y.ed.gov>.

