



Positive Learning Environment Implementation Checklist

Creating a Positive Learning Environment



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Implementation Checklist

Use this checklist to record ideas and track your positive learning environment planning process as you apply the strategies listed below.

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Key Strategy 1: Define Organizational Culture and Climate

Build a strong foundation by defining your program’s organizational culture and climate. Start by creating or revisiting the vision and mission statements. A vision statement describes what your program aims to achieve in the long run. A mission statement briefly summarizes how the organization will achieve its vision. Have you reviewed your vision and mission statements? Use the space below to record your current vision and mission, or add words you want to include in new statements.

Create or revisit your program’s vision and mission statements.

Program Vision Statement:

Program Mission Statement:

Identify your program’s core values and write culture statements.

Next, work with your program team to brainstorm three to five values related to your program vision and mission. Here are some questions to consider. Add notes for each as you begin your planning.

What core values must our organization have to accomplish our vision and mission?

What words come to mind when you envision a positive learning environment?

What qualities would our staff have in a positive learning environment?

Once your team decides which values are most important, record them and write a culture statement for each one.





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Turn your culture statements into climate statements.

Now turn your culture statements into climate statements by describing what your program's values look like in action and what behaviors you expect to see from staff. During a brainstorming session with your staff, review each culture statement and ask, "What would the values expressed in this culture statement look like in action?"

Use the Y4Y **Establishing Your Organization's Culture** tool to record all your values, and your culture and climate statements.

Key Strategy 2: Assess Your Current Culture and Climate

Once your team has clarity about your program's vision, mission, culture and climate, it's time to assess how well your program lives up to those ideals. To assess your program, it's helpful to have at least one measuring tool handy. Here are some options to consider; check any you want to use.

Identify measuring tools.

- The **Culture and Climate Perception Surveys** from the Y4Y **Building a Positive Organizational Culture and Climate Click & Go**
- Your state's or territory's recommendations or guidance on program evaluation
- Tools or frameworks used by partnering schools
- Observation (camera, checklist, and/or consultation)

Observe, analyze and reflect.

Look for indicators that your program aligns with your program's culture and climate statements. An important part of observation is identifying when values and culture and climate statements are violated. Here are some questions to consider; discuss them with your program team and record notes for each one.

- What strategies will you use to address staff violations?
- How will you reduce or avoid culture and climate violations?

Use the Y4Y **Positive Learning Environment Culture and Climate Observation, Techniques for Building Culture and Climate** and **Organizational Culture and Climate: Tips From Research** tools; all are included in the **Building a Positive Organization Culture and Climate Click & Go**.

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Key Strategy 3: Plan for Behavior Management

Consider design elements that will ensure a positive learning environment with few student disruptions. Discuss the following elements with your program team and brainstorm ideas for using them in your program. Check any you want to incorporate in your environment.

Identify elements of a well-managed classroom.

- Use anchor charts.
- Give youth an opportunity to unwind.
- Create procedures such as hand signals.
- Commit to creating a safe place.
- Use a timer or a song for transitions.
- Share a calendar.
- Have extra pencils.
- Have a clear bathroom policy.
- Institute acts of kindness.
- Build a compassionate program environment.
- Have students use journals for processing and reflecting on feelings and learning.
- Other: _____
- Other: _____

Use the Y4Y **Positive Learning Environment Classroom Management Resources** and **Transition Strategies** tools to expand your learning.





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Key Strategy 4: Build Relationships

Building trusting relationships among staff and students can have positive, long-term effects for students' academic performance and social growth. Doing this takes intentionality and perseverance on the part of your staff. Consider the following elements during discussions with your program team and record strategies that you'd like to implement in your program.

- Show an interest in getting to know each student.
- Listen to students and honor their interests and talents.
- Encourage students to interact positively with one another.
- Be patient and accepting.

Here are ideas for strategies to help build relationships with your students. Check any that you'd like to use!

- Start the day or an activity with an icebreaker.
- Conduct a student survey.
- Talk to school-day teacher(s).
- Make home visits.
- Ask about a favorite (or not-so-favorite) thing.
- Share your favorite (or not-so-favorite) thing.
- Create a safe environment for discussion.
- Attend student activities outside of the school day.
- Honor student interests and talents.
- Encourage students to interact positively with one another.
- Provide consistent support.

Use the Y4Y **Building Relationships Questions** and **Icebreaker Activities** tools for more ideas.



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Key Strategy 5: Be Intentional in Your Program Design

In addition to building relationships with and among your students to ensure a positive learning environment, you must also be intentional about program design. There are many things to consider, from creating a welcoming environment to how best to use your space. Identify the elements and strategies you want to incorporate into your program.

Create a Welcoming Environment

- Greet students at the door.
- Invite students into the classroom.
- Say something positive about students and ask how they're doing.
- Praise in public but discipline in private.

Make Learning Fun

- Allow students to work in teams.
- Make learning hands on and active.
- Incorporate technology.
- Limit rules.

Adapt Activities to Meet the Needs of Individual Students

- Give students some freedom.
- Praise individual effort and personal growth and development, not just academic achievement.
- Consider any special needs your students might have that would require additional support.
- Be sure each student has opportunities to experience success.
- Teach social and emotional skills.
- Arrange the program space with diverse student needs in mind.



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- Consider Physical, Social and Emotional Safety**
 - Coordinate with the school to align safety plans and procedures.
 - Have staffing and procedures to ensure safety.
 - Review policies, procedures and behaviors to remove bias or discrimination.
 - Address bullying, including cyberbullying.
 - Connect students and families to community resources and mental health supports.

Visit the Y4Y **Developing and Implementing a Safety Plan Click & Go** for tools and resources to help your students and families feel safe in your program.

Key Strategy 6: Plan for Continuous Improvement

Having a concrete plan for creating a positive learning environment doesn't mean everything is guaranteed to work perfectly. Likely you'll find some aspects didn't work exactly as you'd hoped. To ensure that you're able to make changes, you'll need a plan to continually monitor your environment, identify problem areas and decide what to do next. Review each step of the continuous improvement process and determine which you will use in your program.

- Define**
 - Finalize your culture and climate statements, and ensure staff understand them.
 - Create a logic model that includes short- and long-term goals.
- Implement With Fidelity**
 - Assess whether staff are adhering to the program values.
 - Consider whether your climate reflects your culture.
 - Consider whether your culture reflects your mission.
 - Consider whether your mission reflects your vision.
 - Assess whether staff members are building positive relationships with students and with one another.

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- Assess whether staff are intentional about program and activity design.
- Assess whether staff are considering safety.

- Collect Data**
 - Develop a data collection plan.
 - Ensure that you have indicators for your culture and climate statements.
 - Use a variety of tools and methods to help you measure the goals described in your logic model.
 - Collect data from students, families, staff and partners to provide a well-rounded picture for determining whether you're meeting intended outcomes.

- Analyze**
 - Use your data to answer the questions you raised during the Implement With Fidelity step.
 - Discuss findings as a team.

- Improve**
 - Think about how you can make adjustments or improvements for the next day, next week, next month or next year.
 - Determine whether you met the specific goals you set out to achieve.
 - Consider which strategies helped you meet your goals.
 - Reflect on what kept you from meeting your goals.
 - Brainstorm ways to use these data to make timely adjustments or change your long-term practices.

Use the Y4Y **Continuous Improvement Planner** to plan steps for assessing and improving your program.