

# SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS



The goal of the following interview questions is to help you determine the thought processes and experiences of your candidates. There aren't always right and wrong answers, just responses that tell you if they have the ability or potential to develop within your particular program.

You may want to create some of your own questions based on what's important to you in a new hire such as timeliness, ability to get along with others, discipline, and other characteristics you would like to uncover.

## **1. What do you feel must be present in an after-school program for it to be successful?**

Listen for such themes as fun, safe, structured, nurturing, engaging, great people, kids feeling successful, communication, interesting and creative programs, and so forth that gauge whether or not the candidate's vision is already in line with your own and that of your organization. Do they have the wrong vision or a limited one? You may consider the latter, because it's far easier to teach new concepts than to break old habits.

## **2. How would you describe your supervision style with kids? What strategies and tactics do you employ for behavior management?**

Style is more philosophy driven. For example, they may say "firm but fair" or "I start out strict but relax as I get to know the kids and their individual needs." While the answer is subjective, you will be interested in their perspective. As they communicate strategies and tactics, you may look for such examples as proximity, verbal warning, time out, time in, positive reinforcement, modeling respect, non-verbal communication, and use of voice.

## **3. What does it mean to be accountable? As a program leader, what do you think you may be accountable for?**

This question may help you gauge the candidate's overall level of consciousness about the responsibilities and expectations of the job. Accountability is big in every industry, but none more so than caring for and overseeing the development of children and youth.

## **4. What three words describe you as a person? Or, what three words would previous co-workers and employers use to describe you as a person? How do you think students would describe you?**

Some of the more cliché job interview questions are great to get to know the candidate on a more personal level. Are they confident and self-aware? Hopefully, you use the opportunity to have students serve on your interview panel. These types of questions are great when asked by "the customer."

*(continued inside)*



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### 5. What are your greatest strengths that could be utilized by our after-school program?

Again, look for the right amount of confidence, heart, skill and openness to learning in their answers.

### 6. If granted the position, what challenges do you think you would face?

Do they know what they're getting into and will they be able to handle the challenges? Are they easily intimidated? Do they have the heart and commitment to overcome obstacles and help kids overcome theirs? Are they overly confident or oblivious to the reality of the task at hand?

### 7. Can you identify all the customers (or stakeholders) in an after-school program? How would you go about getting their support or participation in your after-school program?

After-school leaders must appeal to many masters. It's crucial to have individuals on your team that take relationships and communication serious and have the ability to work with parents, teachers, administration, custodians, coaches, and co-workers.

## Scenario Questions

The following are scenario questions that project what the candidate would do in a particular situation. The goal is to understand their thought processes and maturity level for the job. You may want to create your own scenario questions based on difficult situations or opportunities for improvement in your current program.

### 1. Describe an activity you think kids would have a lot of fun participating in after school. Now detail how you would incorporate academic content standards into that activity.

You may uncover what new and creative class ideas or activities the candidate might bring to the program. This question also assesses their level of knowledge about quality comprehensive programming and how well they think on their feet.

### 2. Put yourself in the shoes of someone facilitating an activity in a classroom full of students. An argument between two students appears to be escalating into a shoving match. What do you do to defuse the situation and discipline the parties involved?

Evaluate the candidate's thought process in addressing a conflict and managing student behavior. What steps do they take and is it in line with your program procedures?

### 3. You are checking students out of the program and you encounter the parent of a student that you can't locate. What do you do?

Assess how the candidate would manage a crisis and a potentially emotional parent. Would they take certain steps to locate the student and maintain a cool, calm, collected and "professional" demeanor?

### 4. Imagine that you enter your assigned classroom for the day and find it a big mess? The desks are pushed up against the wall, paper is everywhere and the whiteboard is tagged. Students are entering the room. What do you do?

What is the candidate's judgment of the situation and how would they manage the different variables (e.g. not leaving kids alone, contact site coordinator, take pictures, leave a note)?

### 5. While supervising a game of dodge-ball, a student gets hit in the face with the ball, falls backwards on the blacktop and hits the back of his head. How should you address the situation?

Does the candidate have formal training in safety, CPR or First Aid? When an accident occurs do they take precautionary steps to ensure the safety and health of youth participants at all times?

### 6. A student expresses to you that they are having a difficult time making friends, pleasing their parents, and getting good grades. They say things like they wish they were dead and may even talk about suicide. What do you do?

Does the candidate try to handle the situation alone or talk to a supervisor? Are they familiar with the law as it relates to mandated reporting?

## Experiential Questions

Experiential questions are designed to probe further into the candidate's past experiences and how they handled them. Not all your candidates will have worked in an educational environment, but experiential questions can help you uncover transferable skills, attitudes and behaviors.

### 1. Tell me about a time when you had a conflict with a co-worker. How was it resolved?

Let's be honest. Most of us have had this experience. Will your candidate be honest? If so, how did they find a resolution and still maintain good working relationships with their colleagues?

### 2. Have you ever had a young person, customer, or co-worker try to lie to you or manipulate you to get what they want?

Describe the situation and how it was handled.

We are often put into the position where kids will test our boundaries, which can also determine if we will be fair and consistent with the program and other co-workers. How will your candidate address this routine occurrence in a productive way?

### 3. Have you ever been in a situation in which a group of kids was not listening to your direction? How did you handle that situation?

Listen for specific approaches, strategies and tactics to regain children's attention and ensure they have the instructions, while still maintaining their dignity and respect.