



Creating a Group Norms Agreement

What to do: Review these best practices and prepare examples of norms that would be appropriate for your program. Have the examples on hand in case students need prompting, but let them take the lead in establishing the norms. It's a good idea to develop group norms at the beginning of each program year. Revisit them periodically with students, especially after long vacation breaks and after a series of norm violations. This provides an opportunity to revise the norms as needed and to recommit to following them.

Why it matters: Creating and sharing a group norms agreement makes everyone aware of expected routines and behaviors and supports a safe, positive environment for learning.

Group norms are ideals or standards of behavior shared by a group. Here are some best practices for developing norms, along with examples of norms and an example of a norms agreement.

Best Practices for Developing Norms for Your Program

- Involve students in creating norms for your program. This encourages buy-in and ownership. These questions can guide students through the process of developing, and agreeing to, group norms:
 - What's the difference between a rule and a norm? *(Help them understand that both rules and norms set boundaries, but rules are set and enforced by institutions, like schools, while norms are social agreements within a group. Rules are formal, and norms are informal. Norms can be changed without an institution having to change its policy.)*
 - What's the purpose of a rule? What's the purpose of a norm? *(Start by sharing an example: The program has a rule that students can't hit other students. The purpose is to keep everyone safe. The program has a norm that students treat each other with kindness and respect by using words like please and thank you. The purpose is to create a sense of emotional safety and belonging. See the next page for more examples.)*
 - Why do we need norms?
 - Why does everyone in the group need to agree on which norms to use?
 - What's something you like about the afterschool program? What norms can help us make sure we don't lose what you like most?
 - What language or behaviors show that someone is being kind?
 - How do you know someone respects you?
 - How do you know you're safe to share, discuss, or disagree?
- Agree on three to five norms for your program. This will ensure everyone can keep track of the norms as well as hold themselves, and others, accountable.
- Keep norms consistent across the program space. If necessary, you can create one or two additional norms that are unique to an activity or event.



Examples of Norms

- We will all listen to each other without judgment or interruption.
- We will use respectful language and a respectful tone with one another.
- We will take responsibility for our actions.
- We will always try our best and ask for help when we need it.

Group Norms Agreement

[DATE]

ABC 21st CCLC Program Norms Agreement

We at the ABC 21st CCLC program want to create a positive learning environment where we can all safely learn and grow. To create that environment, we commit to following these norms:

- We will all listen to each other without judgment or interruption.
- We will use respectful language and a respectful tone with one another.
- We will take responsibility for our actions.
- We will always try our best and ask for help when we need it.

Signatures of Students

[Have all students sign and date here.]

Signatures of Program Staff

[Have all staff sign and date here.]

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