



Preparing for Day 1 / Week 1 of Summer Learning

Central to BellXcel’s approach to summer learning is its commitment to rapid-cycle continuous improvement. In the SCRI Research Brief, [Quality Can’t Wait: Cultivating Continuous Improvement](#), we describe BellXcel’s efforts to integrate continuous improvement from Day 1, with a combined focus on planning, professional development, data collection, coaching, and ongoing support to ensure needed improvements are addressed immediately. Unlike school year programming that has a 9-month window of time to make quality improvements, summer programs often have a short of 4-8 weeks to assess and adjust. First impressions—on Day 1 and Week 1—are critical to building trusting relationships with youth and families and paving the way for high attendance and engagement.

This tool guides summer learning leaders through a series of questions to help prepare for Day 1 / Week 1 and avoid common missteps. These questions were identified by BellXcel through its work with partners across the country and focus on key areas such as arrival/dismissal, staff expectations and communication, assessment and data collection, and contingency planning. The best way to use this tool is to work through responses collaboratively with the team that will be managing summer program implementation and operations.

Tasks	Plan in Place & Communicated (Yes, No, In Progress)	Who is responsible?	Notes
Arrival / Dismissal			
Families received information prior to the program launch about transportation (busing) and drop-off/pick-up procedures.			
Signs will be posted to signal drop-off/pick-up locations.			

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Arrival / Dismissal			
Signs will guide youths to the appropriate arrival location (e.g. cafeteria, morning meeting).			
A tour of the facility is planned, particularly for youths who attend a different school during the school year.			
Bus arrival/dismissal procedures have been developed and communicated.			
All staff has name tags.			
Name tags will be available for youths on Day 1 and throughout Week 1.			
Staff has been assigned and know their roles during arrival and dismissal.			
Staff will actively greet youths and families during arrival and dismissal. Consider adding music or some other element to signal the culture you're working to build.			
A greeter has been assigned to a "waiting area" for youths who arrive on Day 1 but are not yet enrolled / on a class roster.			
For youths who rely on public transportation, there are staff (e.g. crossing guards) posted to guide youths safely to the program location.			

Tasks	Plan in Place & Communicated (Yes, No, In Progress)	Who is responsible?	Notes
Arrival / Dismissal (cont.)			
Plans are in place for providing and cleaning up from breakfast, and staff has been assigned roles during breakfast.			
Clear plans and norms are in place to guide morning meetings, with a priority on building community and program culture.			
Staff Expectations & Communication			
The staff has t-shirts to wear on Day 1 and during special events (e.g. field trips, guest speakers) and/or is aware of expectations for summer attire.			
The staff has clear expectations for communication with youths and families throughout the program, including making initial contact during Week 1.			
The staff is clear on personal expectations while onsite, such as cell phone use.			
The staff knows how to track their time or log hours if needed.			
The staff has access to youth rosters and classroom assignments and knows what to do if youths in attendance are not on the roster.			
The staff has all curricular materials and supplies and know-how to request additional materials if needed.			

Tasks	Plan in Place & Communicated (Yes, No, In Progress)	Who is responsible?	Notes
Staff Expectations & Communication (cont.)			
The staff is aware of staff meeting times and expectations for participation.			
The staff is aware of youth assessment needs and schedules and has been assigned roles to support assessment as appropriate.			
The staff has been assigned to call absent youths, and has been provided with messaging to encourage attendance.			
Plans are in place to invite waitlisted youths to replace withdrawn youths. The staff has been assigned to update rosters as needed.			
A staff member has been assigned to confirm Week 1 guest speakers and field trips.			
The staff is aware of emergency plans and know how to contact families in the event of an emergency.			
The staff is aware of any youth health or medical needs (e.g. allergies), as appropriate			
The staff knows the policies and procedures for taking time off, including sick days.			
Substitute teachers are on call and prepared.			

Tasks	Plan in Place & Communicated (Yes, No, In Progress)	Who is responsible?	Notes
Assessment & Data Collection			
There is an assessment plan/schedule in place for pre-and post-assessment, which includes a process for late/make-up testing as well as distribution of data/reports to teachers			
Any testing materials (e.g. youth logins, scantron sheets) have been compiled and organized and there is a plan to distribute materials prior to testing.			
If computers or tablets are used for youth assessment, they have been tested and are operational.			
A plan is in place for using assessment data to group youths and drive instruction.			
There is a process/plan for youths who complete testing early.			
All confidential youth information is secured.			

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Contingency Plans: We have a plan to address the following questions:			
What if needed facilities are locked?			
What if breakfast/lunch/snack is not available?			
What if the electricity goes out?			
What if inclement weather disrupts planned outdoor / enrichment activities?			
What if a teacher/instructor is absent?			
What if unenrolled youths show up?			
What if a guest speaker cancels?			
What if a parent/guardian doesn't pick up his/her child?			
What if buses don't show up?			