

Collaboration Tips and Tricks

When collaborating with others, it's important to keep some tips and tricks in mind. Keep reading to find out more!

Tips for Working with Others

Know what you want. Prepare a specific, brief statement of the kind of help you need. Be ready to explain how this help fits into your project and why it is important to your project's goals.

Know what your partners want. Meet the people, and find out why they might be interested in your project. How does the project fit their overall goals? Sell the project to fit their interests. Prepare a specific, brief statement that explains the benefit of the project to both groups.

Don't ask for too much. Most often, the best volunteers come from among those who agree to help "a little".

Speak out with your ideas and concerns.

Share concerns before they become big problems. It's easier to find solutions early in the collaborative process. Don't let things build up.

Remember that respect works both ways. Showing simple respect for those you work with will usually get you their respect in return.

Be reliable. Don't offer to take on tasks you can't complete.

Dress the part. If you're going to ask a company executive for help, wear "nice" clothes and pay attention to your image.

Will You Join Me?

Partnering with Adults

Your project partners might be other teens or adults. It may seem "natural" to work with peers, but consider partnering with adults, too. Mixing teen and adult experiences and energy can be an exciting, fun way to really get your project off the ground. It does take time and flexibility to work together, but the rewards are huge. Keep the following tips in mind.

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DO

DO speak up!

DO commit time and energy to the project.

DO take your responsibilities seriously.

DO show up to meetings on time.

DO have confidence in your abilities. You live in the community—that makes you an expert, too!

DON'T

DON'T be afraid to ask questions.

DON'T expect to have everyone agree with everything you say.

DON'T overcommit or promise to do things you don't have the time to do.

DON'T hesitate to be creative and make unique suggestions.

DON'T quit and let your team down.

DON'T be afraid to make a mistake!

Tips for Working with Adults

Set clear expectations about what their roles are. Do you want them to act as advisers or coordinators? Do you want them to take a lead role in fundraising or simply support your efforts?

- Keep them informed. Communication is the key to building good working relationships.
- Teach them the basics of how you wish to be treated.
- Ask for what you want.
- Find out the best way to communicate with them.
- Acknowledge their contributions. Thank them for what they do.
- Utilize their expertise, power, influence, and contacts. Remember adults want to feel useful, too. •

Treat them with the same respect that you want from them.

- Be honest. It's OK to disagree. © FCCLA 2017

Working with Administrators

School administrators – like the principal, vice-principal, superintendent, career and technical education director, etc. – can be important partners for your projects. Here are ideas for how you can get their support.

Meet with your administrator(s) before kicking off your project. Share what you'd like to do, ask for their feedback, and then ask for their support. Ask them if they have any questions or ideas. Share with them how the project fits the goals of the school.

If the topics you plan to address are even slightly controversial, work closely with your administrator(s) to choose activities and develop projects that are acceptable to the school.

Give administrators copies of newsletters, project reports, and publicity.

Invite administrators to participate in project activities and events, especially ones that demonstrate benefits to students and the school.

Ask if you can speak to the school board about the program and their projects.

If school funding is needed for the project, find ways for members to present the need to administrators and the school board.

Thank and report to administrators and the school board about how your project went. Share your success! Make sure you give credit to administrators once the project is finished.

Involving Parents and Families

It just makes sense to involve parents, guardians, and other family members in projects that relate to families! Families and youth benefit when they participate together!

Parents and families are important resources because —
adults bring knowledge and experience to project activities;
kids and teens bring enthusiasm and fresh ideas;
teens can be leaders for families;
adult family members may be able to help publicize and increase participation in projects;
family members may be able to donate supplies or get funding for projects.

Parents and family members could—
participate in project activities with teens;
be honored guests at recognition and other events;
speak about their experiences and careers;
help chaperone and drive teens to events;
prepare meals and complete other "background" activities while members take the lead; advise youth leaders in a number of areas, such as evaluating projects, writing award applications, etc.

Remember—

families come in many shapes and sizes – let everyone know they are included;
don't overwhelm families – offer them small ways to be involved at first;
be flexible – try to schedule and locate events so many families can participate;
practice good character; say thank you!

Working with Kids

Think about these ideas when working with younger children.

Safety First!

Plan activities and settings that are safe for children.

Remember that it is your responsibility—not the children's responsibility—to look for any problems and remove anything that could be dangerous.

Work with adult supporters to make sure all permission forms are turned in and any liability or insurance issues are covered.

Have an emergency plan.

Make sure adults are on hand to help if an emergency happens.

Always have at least one other teen and/or adult in the room when you are with children.

Respect

You can be an awesome role model for children. Treat them with the same respect you want to receive from them. Show respect to your fellow members and to adults, too!

Preparations

If you're going to work with children at their school, the first step is to contact the day care center director or principal for permission.

Work with the teachers whose classes you will visit. Give them an overview of your project and the information you will teach the children. If possible, leave some follow-up activities the teacher can use on another day. Find out how many children are in the group so you can prepare materials. If possible, visit the classroom before your activity so you know what the set-up is like.

Creative Presentations

Plan fun, hands-on activities that are appropriate for the children's age, maturity level, and prior knowledge. Speak at a nice, even pace—not too fast, not too slowly. Speak clearly so that all the children can hear. Use costumes, puppets, and other props to make the information really come alive.

Be confident! If you practice ahead of time and know what you want to say, you can relax and have fun with the kids.

Finishing Touches

Ask children what they learned. Reinforce the lesson with them.

Be ready for questions! Answer them as simply and quickly as possible. (Otherwise, kids are likely to ask the same question again and again!)

Give them a sheet with project-related information and activities to take home and work on with their parents/ guardians.