



Think Fast

Below is a short activity for you to use at your next staff meeting to encourage fast-thinking, improvised strategies for keeping youth engaged and entertained.

Time: 10+ minutes

Materials needed:

- Balls (These can be tennis balls, bouncy balls, volleyballs, etc.)

Initial Talking Points:

- Remind staff that engaged supervision means you are maintaining line-of-sight and line-of-sound to all youth in your care. This includes maintaining proper ratios at all times, including during bathroom breaks and transition times. It also means positioning yourself in a way that prevents blind spots.
- Engaged supervision means you are actively engaged and present—participating in youth’s activities, conversations and programming.
- Emphasize the fact that sometimes staff will need to adapt and improvise in the moment and this activity is meant to help them do that.

Instructions:

Break your staff up into groups of five and ask each group to form a circle. Give each group a ball to throw back and forth to each other. (If you don’t have balls, they can do the activity with an “imaginary” ball.) Set the scene for them. Explain that they are in charge of a group of youth and that the program is short-staffed today—so they are going to have to cancel some planned programming.

Ask the groups to now throw the ball to each other. Each time they throw, they should name an activity or strategy they can use to keep the youth engaged. Try to speed up the activity as they get into the swing of things. Once they begin to run out of steam, pause to discuss some of the strategies or activities suggested—and help them to see why they might be helpful to prevent boredom or distraction.

Optional Discussion Questions:

- What are some of the challenges/barriers that you face in keeping youth actively supervised and engaged?
- What strategies or activities suggested today might you implement into your everyday work?