

CREATING SAFE SPACES

Elements of a Safe Space:

- Use of the scientific process
- Encouraging trial and error
- Mutually respectful, relaxed, supportive environment (between kids, adults, etc.)
- Conflicts resolved in a respectful manner
- Teamwork/cooperation is used
- Emotionally safe
- Physically safe
- Safe materials and use of materials

Creating a Safe Space for Your Team

To ensure an environment where kids can flourish and feel comfortable, coaches can work on the following:

1. Have non-negotiables – Have agreements, rules or procedures, defined by the group, that have immediate consequences. Make sure these are clear and understood by everyone from the first day.
2. **Admit when you don't know – As a coach, don't be afraid to say "I'm not sure", and encourage members to do the same. If you don't know something ask if others know or how you could work together to find the answer.**
3. Model kindness, respect and patience – When coaches model positive behaviors, kids will follow.
4. Learn with kids – Join their groups as they work on projects, ask questions, listen and learn.

Example Group Agreements (from TechBridge):

- 1) Be safe.
- 2) Be respectful.
- 3) Use materials appropriately.
- 4) Have fun.

Engaging Youth in a Positive Manner

What we do and say to kids matters. We can use our language and actions to help create an environment where kids feel free to share and grow. We can also teach kids to model the same behaviors with each other.

Potential prompts to engagement:

- "I really like how you...."



- “I wonder what might happen if...”
- “Have you thought about....”
- “That’s a great idea...”
- “Do you think we could try...”
- “Do you have ideas about...”
- “I never thought of that...”

Behaviors to use:

- Make eye contact when talking and listening.
- Show interest while listening by nodding.
- Summarize or repeat back what you got from listening.
- Think of questions while listening that can further the conversation or idea.
- Provide validation and support for feelings and thoughts.
- Include everyone by playing to their strengths. Allow youth to express themselves in a way that works for them (writing, drawing, talking, etc).

Modified from Click2Science PD lessons on welcoming youth, promoting a positive climate and creating a safe space. Learn more at <http://click2sciencepd.org/>.

