

5-step plan to develop strong work habits and a positive attitude: Examples for use in ELOs and at home

Use at the ELO program: Use this 5-step plan to get children and youth in the habit of doing what needs to be done before they engage in leisure activities. Use the ideas and sample talking points at each step to support activities, such as homework or daily cleanup, in your after school program.

At home: When children get used to this structure, share the steps and worksheet with parents at a parent meeting so parents can reinforce children’s developing work habits at home.

1. Warm up Prepare mentally, gather materials and supplies	2. Focus To earn the right to “chill” the child commits to complete important tasks. (Explain the importance of the task.)	3. Finish To earn the right to “chill” the child commits to complete important tasks well. (What a “job done well” looks like needs to be clearly explained. BE SPECIFIC!)	4. Outlook To earn the right to “chill” the child commits to complete important tasks well and with a good attitude. (Explain why it is important to have a good attitude.)	5. Cool down Assess whether the goals have been met. If not, child makes corrections. Discuss and reflect on the process.
Example task: Child is doing homework in ELO program				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare mentally and make sure there is enough time. • Gather supplies such as pencils and paper. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult emphasizes importance of practice in learning repetition and new skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult emphasizes the importance of effort for learning a new skill. Done well means . . . <i>Neat and legible.</i> <i>Followed the directions.</i> <i>Child did his best.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult emphasizes the importance of a good attitude. Good attitude means . . . <i>Child respects environment and people around her.</i> <i>Asks for help respectfully, does not complain.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult emphasizes . . . <i>Review the work and compares to the directions.</i> <i>Ask a staff member to check her homework.</i> <i>Make any suggested corrections.</i>
Example task: Child is doing after dinner cleanup at home				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare mentally and make sure there is enough time. • Gather supplies: soap, sponge, dishes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult emphasizes importance of a clean kitchen and contributing to the family. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult clearly explains what a “job well done” looks like for each task. Done well means . . . <i>Rinse and scrape before washing.</i> <i>Stack dishes neatly.</i> <i>Scrub the stove, counters, and table.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult emphasizes the importance of a good attitude. Good attitude means . . . <i>Child respects environment and people around her.</i> <i>Asks for help respectfully, does not complain.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult emphasizes . . . <i>If child missed something, he cleans it up.</i> <i>Asks a family member to review the task.</i> <i>Make any suggested corrections.</i>

Use this template in your afterschool program or at home to fill in notes for specific tasks you want the children to complete.



Example task:				
1. Warm up	2. Focus	3. Finish	4. Outlook	5. Cool down
Prepare mentally, gather materials and supplies	To earn the right to “chill” the child commits to complete important tasks. (Explain the importance of the task.)	To earn the right to “chill” the child commits to complete important tasks well. (What a “job done well” looks like needs to be clearly explained. BE SPECIFIC!)	To earn the right to “chill” the child commits to complete important tasks well and with a good attitude. (Explain why it is important to have a good attitude.)	Assess whether the goals have been met. If not, child makes corrections. Discuss and reflect on the process.

Activity adapted from: California Department of Education, Early Education and Support Division, John McLean and Faye Ong, eds. 2014. School's Out California: An Out-of-School-Time Program Guide. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education.
 Reference: Sheffield, D. E. 2009. Practice Makes Perfect—Not! Understanding High Performance: Excellence is a Habit. Pittsburgh, PA: Dorrance Publishing Company.