

# A Starting Point

## *Best Everyday Practices*

1. Staff engage in 1:1 conversations with youth
2. Staff addresses each youth's special interests and talents.
3. Staff ask youth to share their ideas and input for activities so that programming reflects youths' interests.
4. Staff encourage youth to find ways to pursue their own interests and, at times, with their own companions.
5. Start discussions by asking open-ended questions such as, "what if...?" or "how can we...?".
6. Staff encourage youth to share control and responsibility and to take leadership roles.
7. Activities provide opportunities for the development of personal responsibility, self-direction, and leadership skills.
8. Program and activities address the academic, physical, social, and emotional need of participants.
9. Activities are in line with the age and skill level of the participants and promote the development of new skills.
10. Staff provide specific feedback to youth about positive behavior and accomplishments.
11. Staff implement programming and activities that reflect the cultures of the youth in the program and the broad diversity of human experience.
12. Youth can choose from a wide variety of activities with a balance of group sizes (e.g., opportunities for physical play, creative arts, dramatic play, quiet activities, etc.)
13. Staff vary the approaches they use to help youth learn.
14. Project-based, experiential activities are offered to promote creativity, self-expression, and higher level thinking.
15. Staff engage youth in structured time for reflection on how an activity went, what they learned, and what next steps are necessary.