



CHECKLIST FOR HOLDING A “CHILDREN’S GARDEN CONSULTANT” PROGRAM

Advance Preparation

Recruiting youth participants.

Although this experience focuses around children’s garden environments, any young person who is interested in a consulting experience may enjoy it. Teens with an interest in working with children, elementary education, any aspect of garden-based learning, or preparing for business administration would benefit from the opportunity. Remind teens that this is an experience for the resume. (see sample flyer)

Preparing youth.

Provide youth with specific information about the program in advance. As the role of consultant will likely be new for them, be clear about what duties, responsibilities, and expectations of being a consultant entail. (see sample letter to youth)

Where will the youth presentations be held, and who should be invited?

Well before the program begins, you will want to secure a location and invite people to hear what the teens have to tell adults about children’s gardens. Teachers, CCE educators, nature center staff, and youth bureau personnel are just a few examples of who might be interested in hearing a youth perspective of how this unique outdoor environment is viewed. (see sample letter to recruit attendees for final presentations)

Recruiting speakers.

You will need speakers on the following topics: “What is a Consultant?,” “Children’s Garden Design,” and “Children’s Garden Educational Programming.” It is important that speakers are 1) passionate about their topic, 2) very clear in advance about what they are to cover in their talk, and 3) comfortable with and able to relate well to youth. They should be comfortable and knowledgeable about the topic as well. Be sure to discuss these points with prospective speakers ahead of time, and give them templates for presentations, if they choose to use them, well in advance.

- Speakers should feel free to modify the sample presentations in the links below based on specific region/school/setting. For example, insert photos of your setting wherever possible; include photos of children and youth; and any other images that are relevant to your location.
- Try to stop every third slide or so and ask a question of the youth. For example, in the background about educational approaches, the speaker might ask: “Imagine that you’re a 4th grade teacher. How might you use a garden to teach something that the students are learning in class?” Or, “imagine that you have a public garden setting, and your main goal is to encourage children to use their imaginations in a garden setting. What kinds of activities might help kids to be imaginative outdoors?”

- Limit “talk time” to no more than 45 minutes, and again, stop often to engage youth.

Avoiding “adultism.”

Discussing roles ahead of time will help inform adult expectations for the program, and avoid confusion during the program. Adults may help with driving to sites, preparing snacks, taking photographs, and other program logistics. Encourage any adult assistants to otherwise observe quietly and refrain from 1) providing their opinions, 2) attempting to prepare presentations or 3) trying to influence the teens in their thinking. It may be difficult for well-meaning adults to relinquish “control.” It will be much easier if everyone’s roles are discussed well in advance. (see sample letter to adult assistants).

The Program

Program Location

- Where will the children’s garden consultants program be held? _____

Program Coordination

- Who will organize the program? _____

Presentations

- Who will give presentation “**What is a consultant?**”? _____
- Who will give **Design** Presentation: _____
- Who will give **Educational Programming** Presentation: _____

Tours to local school, children or community gardens

Ideally teens will visit at least two different sites. They will interview staff about aspects of design and educational programming, and listen to the process of how the design came about, elements that were chosen and why, garden-based learning activities included at the site, and how they were selected.

<u>Potential Sites</u>	<u>Contact Person</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>	<u>Notes</u>

Transportation logistics of getting teens to the sites:

(Identify vehicles, drivers, passengers, mileage tracking, and timing of arrivals and departure)

❑ Consider arranging opportunities for CGC participants to talk with younger children in a garden-based learning setting, such as a 4-H group or school garden. The goal is to have participants understand how children typically engage in garden-based learning.

- Talk with a 4-H group
- Visit a school garden so CGC participants may interview younger children.
- Observe a garden-based learning activity being carried out with younger children
- Attend a planting day, etc.

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❑ Access to computers for web searching

We found it was helpful to have students work in teams, rather than individually, taking notes to prepare for their presentations. We provided urls and students searched sites from the perspective of their team.

❑ Potpourri of garden-based learning activities

If time allows, you might consider having each group engage in pre-planned garden activities commonly used in garden-based learning programs. They can then evaluate the activities and share their findings with the other group while making suggestions for improvements. This might also function as an ice-breaker at the program start. In our original CGC program, teens indicated that it was ideal to have time for them to try garden-based learning activities, as well as time to observe younger children engaged in these activities, and time to talk with younger children about which activities they prefer. You will likely find an ideal mix of these for your program based on who is available, which activities are “typical” to your program, and the amount of time you have to devote.

❑ Distribute notebooks

Provide notebooks to youth during orientation on the first day of the event. The notebooks can be used by participants as a tool for notetaking, recording observations and thoughts, and preparation for presentations.

❑ Time to prepare presentations

After students have searched sites, they often have enough experience to begin formulating opinions about children’s garden design and educational program approach. They will likely need at least an hour to two hours to prepare their presentations. Using the templates ensures that they won’t get hung up on the logistics of the presentation, and they can instead focus on the content.(see presentation templates)

❑ Final Presentation time and location

Possible locations:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Program Evaluation

Make sure to allow time at the conclusion of the program to gather feedback from all CGC participants. You may also find it helpful to follow up with a focus group one week after the presentations (see sample feedback forms and focus group questions.)