



Y CHATS

Asking meaningful questions and listening to others builds trust, creating a safe space where youth can achieve, build relationships, and feel like they belong. This tool focuses on teaching social-emotional skills through intentional conversation.

Staff and youth learn to trust each other through by sharing with one another. When kids see and hear staff share, they feel welcome to share back and learn to listen with empathy to the ideas, beliefs, and perspectives of others.

INSTRUCTIONS



1. PREPARE

Hone your own conversation skills by practicing with other staff members. Think about how best to integrate Y Chats into your program.



2. CHAT

As a group, decide who will ask the first question.



3. LISTEN & REFLECT

Practice listening skills (e.g. maintain eye contact) by having youth or staff repeat back what the speaker shared and follow up with an open-ended question (e.g., "Why did that happen?") or affirmation (e.g., "That sounds like it was frustrating").

FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

STAFF COMPETENCIES

Relationships
Communication

FIDELITY

- Staff know that all youth have special interests and talents.
- Staff interact with youth to help them learn.

QUALITY

- Staff ask questions that encourage youth to think for themselves and follow up to get to know each youth as an individual.
- Staff gather youth into small groups listen with empathy.



IMPLEMENTATION IDEAS

- Practice with fellow staff before chatting with kids! Reviewing questions and following up with each other allows you to identify potential challenges and learn from them. It also builds empathy.
- Note body language—yours and others—as you chat.
- Groups similarly aged children to make for easier conversations.
- Set guidelines (e.g., no judgment, speak only on your turn) with children ahead of time so everyone understands expectations.

IDEAS & TIPS FROM LOCAL Ys:

- Use during free time or after snack time.
- Use at least once every day to make it a habit with staff and youth.
- Use with families.
- Ask an older child to read a question to younger groups.
- Post a question on each snack table.
- Cut up chat cards and put them in a shoebox. Have kids pull a question out and read it aloud to the group.
- Have a local printer print chat cards on heavy paper or laminate the cards to protect them over time.
- Write daily questions on a dry erase board.

The Y Chat questions on the following pages are organized around the five core competencies of social-emotional learning from CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning): self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. They are meant to prompt group reflection on ways to build these skills. Visit CASEL's website (www.casel.org/social-and-emotional-learning/core-competencies) to explore the competencies further.

BRIGHT SPOT

THE GRANITE YMCA

The Afterschool Program at the Granite City Y was struggling with kids taking unplanned “free time” at the end of snack. Introducing Y Chats has helped keep children engaged until everyone is done... and youth and staff learned lots of interesting facts about each other!



For more Bright Spots, visit:
yexchange.org/Afterschool

SELF-AWARENESS

Self-awareness is the ability to accurately recognize one's emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior. This includes accurately assessing one's strengths and limitations and possessing a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism.

QUESTIONS

What is your favorite part of your personality?	What is your greatest talent?	What are you curious about?	What is your favorite animal?
Is there a skill or talent you would like to build in yourself?	What hobbies are you interested in?	What is your favorite word?	What do you wish for?
Do you like to swim? Why or why not?	What is your favorite thing to do?	What do you like about reading or learning to read?	How did you learn to walk?
What do you like most about yourself?	What is your favorite book?	If you could be a car, what car would you be?	What is your favorite season and why?

SELF-AWARENESS CONTINUED

Self-awareness is the ability to accurately recognize one's emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior. This includes accurately assessing one's strengths and limitations and possessing a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism.

QUESTIONS

What happens when you start to feel tired?	How does being hungry affect you?	What do you want to learn more about?	Do you like to daydream?
What new thing have you recently tried?	What is your favorite physical activity?	What is the best part of the day for you?	What makes you smile?
What do you most like to build?	What is your favorite experiment?	What interests you most about the environment (the natural world)?	

SELF-MANAGEMENT

Self-management is the ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. This includes managing stress, controlling impulses, motivating oneself, and setting and working toward personal and academic goals.

QUESTIONS

How do you feel when you are trying something new?	What is something that is hard for you? How do you keep trying to do that thing better?	When did you feel left out?	How do you feel when you see others cry?
How do you feel when someone cares for you?	When you see a small dog, how do you feel? When you see a big dog, how do you feel?	What is something that frustrates you?	When did you laugh so hard, you cried?
What activity did you think was really hard at first but were able to do after working at it?	When was the last time you were frightened?	What helps you go to sleep at night?	Do you have a goal? What is it?
How do you act differently when you are inside compared to when you are outside?	What is it hard to be quiet during?	Is it ever OK to yell?	Have you ever had to do something you did not want to?

SELF-MANAGEMENT CONTINUED

Self-management is the ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. This includes managing stress, controlling impulses, motivating oneself, and setting and working toward personal and academic goals.

QUESTIONS

What are you afraid of?	Can you feel happy and sad at the same time?	What is a good surprise? What is a bad surprise?	Is it hard for you to wake up in the morning?
How do you act when you are excited?	How do you feel in the morning if you go to bed late the night before?	What does it mean to practice something?	How do you feel later in the day if you miss eating a meal earlier?
What do you think it takes to be good at science?	What do you think it would take to be someone who builds bridges? (Or, What do you think it would take to be an engineer?)	What do you think you would have to do in school to go to space some day?	

SOCIAL AWARENESS

Social awareness is the act of being conscious of others. This includes empathizing with people from diverse backgrounds or cultures, to understanding social and ethical norms, to recognizing the needs and resources provided by families, schools, and communities.

QUESTIONS

What is your favorite thing about your community?	What can we learn from elderly people?	What if we all looked the same?	What can we learn from younger people?
How would life be different if humans could fly?	If you could visit another country, where would you go?	How should we treat grandparents and other elderly people?	Why do you think people sing?
How do you feel when you receive a balloon?	What would be different if kids could vote?	Why do humans smile and laugh?	Why do babies cry?
What would it feel like to be president of the United States for a day?	Why do we sleep?	Do you know anyone younger than you? What have you learned from that person?	What makes someone a grown-up?

SOCIAL AWARENESS CONTINUED

Social awareness is the act of being conscious of others. This includes empathizing with people from diverse backgrounds or cultures, to understanding social and ethical norms, to recognizing the needs and resources provided by families, schools, and communities.

QUESTIONS

What is one thing you have learned from another culture?	What does being polite mean to you?	How is your family different from other families?	Who is someone you go to for help?
Do you know any of your neighbors?	How would you feel if you could not talk anymore?	Does everyone celebrate the same holidays?	In what situation is it important to use good manners?
What would you do if you wanted help building something?	How do you feel when you use a chemistry set with friends?	What would it be like to be an engineer? (Or, What would it be like to build a bridge?)	What do you think you could do at a science museum?
What is the first thing you would do with 1,000 Legos?	How would you find out how to test your water at home to see what is in it?		

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

Relationship skills establish and maintain healthy and rewarding connections. This includes communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking or offering help when needed.

QUESTIONS

<p>Pick a family member. What do you love about him or her?</p>	<p>What makes a good friend?</p>	<p>How does it feel to meet new people and make new friends?</p>	<p>How can you comfort someone who is feeling sad?</p>
<p>How do you show respect to another person?</p>	<p>Who do you feel understands you?</p>	<p>Who is the oldest person you know? Tell us about him or her.</p>	<p>Who do you look up to?</p>
<p>What makes your family proud of you?</p>	<p>What does it mean to keep a promise?</p>	<p>How do you respond if a friend wants you to do something you do not want to do?</p>	<p>What is one way you can help someone else?</p>
<p>Have you ever gotten into a fight with someone? How did you feel?</p>	<p>What does working together mean to you?</p>	<p>How do you feel when someone tells you did a good job?</p>	<p>What does it mean to listen to someone?</p>

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS CONTINUED

Relationship skills establish and maintain healthy and rewarding connections. This includes communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking or offering help when needed.

QUESTIONS

What do you do if you need help with something?	What does it mean to you to share with others?	Who can always make you feel better when you are sad?	How does it feel when someone is nice to you?
Who can make you laugh and why?	How do you show someone special to you that you care?	How do you feel when someone thanks you?	What does agreeing with someone mean?
What do you think it takes to work as a team to build something?	What do you most like to do when you are working with others to solve a problem?	How do you think people worked together to create the iPad?	

RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

Responsible decision-making is the ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions. These are based on the consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic evaluation of the consequences of one's various actions, and the well-being of one's self and others.

QUESTIONS

Is it ever OK to break the rules?	How do you know when someone is lying or telling the truth?	If you could have a superpower, what would it be?	How do you keep yourself from yelling or hurting someone?
If you could be the director of your Afterschool program for a day, what would you change?	When was a time you said you were sorry?	What does being honest mean?	What happens if you break the rules?
How do you learn from a mistake?	How do you keep yourself safe when you are outside?	What would happen if you forgot your coat in the winter?	Have you ever accidentally broken something?
What happens when you do not get your work done?	Why is cheating not fair?	Are there any chores you do not like to do?	What would happen if you had ice cream for breakfast every day?

RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING CONTINUED

Responsible decision-making is the ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions. These are based on the consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and the well-being of self and others.

QUESTIONS

Why is it good to brush your teeth?	What happens if you do not listen well to others?	Why is it important to wait your turn?	Do you think stealing is bad?
What do you have to ask permission for?	Is name-calling hurtful? Why?	When is it OK to run? When is it not OK?	Can our decisions hurt other people even when we do not mean them to?
What do you think people did when they made mistakes creating the smartphone?	What happens when a scientist makes a mistake?	What is one lesson you've learned from a mistake?	

Fill in your own questions here to continue adding to the Y Chats experience!
