



CAN ASP Overview for Volunteers

Welcome to CAN's After School Program!

CAN After School Programs (ASP) are designed to ensure CAN students achieve their highest academic potential and become well-adjusted, self-supporting adults.

This is accomplished by providing academic support, personal growth and life skills, meals, and a safe, nurturing environment.



Five Unique Locations

CAN operates its After School Programs at four different locations in Ann Arbor and one location in Ypsilanti. While the components for ASP are the same across all of CAN's locations, each site has its own unique size and flavor!



(Okay--we might have some goofballs at *all* of our sites!)



Hikone (pronounced "Hi-Cone")

Hikone was CAN's first community center. It is located in a voucher-based (public) housing community with 29 units. There are about 15-20 students (K-12) who attend the After School Program.

Volunteers will mostly work with the elementary-aged students, since teen attendance is dependent on whether they have extracurricular activities at school, which will vary day-to-day and season-by-season.



This site is our "goldilocks" site, as we like to call it. It is smaller than Bryant and larger than Green Baxter Court.

The students here are energetic and creative! They love to learn through play and movement.



Green Baxter Court (GBC)



This site has a cozy feel, with a lot of homemade dinners and a close-knit community. It is CAN's smallest community.

The students who attend this program are goofy and they are curious learners.

GBC is also located in a voucher-based (public) housing community with 23 units. There are about 15 students (K-12) who attend the After School Program.

GBC's student population is aging up! Many of the students here attend the 5th grade and up. If you enjoy working with the teen population, this is a great location to do so!



Bryant (BCC)

Bryant is located in a low/mix-income neighborhood with ~175 homes. There are about 40-50 students (K-12) who attend the After School Program.

With new renovations came more space to operate program! There is now an elementary program and a separate teen program that will take place at the same time throughout the new, large building.



Volunteers can work either with the elementary students or the teens, based on their interest.

This is CAN's largest location, but students are divided into smaller groups/teams and rotate between math, reading, and additional enrichment activities. This is a busy site that radiates a whole lotta love!



Mitchell Elementary

CAN partners with Mitchell to operate its After School Program, the CAN Art & Design Program, and a food pantry out of the school building.

All participants of CAN's ASP qualify for free and reduced lunch and are referred to the program by Mitchell educators based on who they think can benefit the most from CAN's programs and services.

This program works with about 15 students who are in the 1st-3rd grades. The kids play in the gym or outside to let off some steam, eat a snack, and then rotate between completing their homework, reading, and additional enrichment activities.

These students are sweet, love to learn, and especially love to have dance parties!



Brick Elementary



Starting in 2019, CAN will now partner with Brick Elementary in the Lincoln Consolidated school district to operate its After School Program, the CAN Art & Design Program, its Educational Summer Camps, and a food pantry out of CAN's own community center space attached to the school building for Brick and Washtenaw families.

All participants of CAN's ASP qualify for free and reduced lunch and are referred to the program by Brick educators based on who they think can benefit the most from CAN's programs and services.

This program will work with about 15 students who are in the 1st-3rd grades. The kids play in the gym or outside to let off some steam, eat a snack, and then rotate between completing their homework, reading, and additional enrichment activities.



What can you expect during a typical day at After School Program?

Imagine CAN's After School Programs as a recipe for guacamole.

Each site is a little different; some might add a little more salt, others might add a little more tomato, but every site has the same key ingredients that make them successful (and oh, so delicious!).

Here are the **key components** at all of CAN's ASP locations:

- A healthy meal and/or snack
- Time to play after being in school all day
- Time to complete homework and practice math skills
- Time to read and practice literacy skills
- Time to work with volunteer groups, participate in enrichment activities, or participate in the CAN Art & Design Program
- Social-emotional development and building executive function skills intentionally sprinkled throughout



For example, a day might look like...

3:00pm - Staff and present volunteers meet to discuss the plan for the day and set up for the program. This Pre-ASP Meeting is a great way to get the whole team for the day on the same page to set everyone up for success!

3:30pm - Students arrive, fresh off the school bus, and play or make themselves at home, grab a snack, etc.

4:30pm - Staff lead mindfulness activity to re-center and transition physically and mentally into academic rotations

4:40pm - Students split into groups and one group completes homework while the other group reads, and then they switch (if the number of students is smaller, all might rotate together)

5:20pm - Dinner is served and then everyone participates in a "cool down" activity after dinner

6:00pm - Sometimes, the students participate in an enrichment activity or free time until 7:00pm; sometimes the students go home at 6:00pm

6:00pm or 6:30pm (*depending on the day*) - Staff and present volunteers participate in a Post-ASP Meeting to talk about how the day went, behavioral or academic successes or challenges they noticed with individual students, and ways they can work together as a team to encourage support and growth in their students



Academic Rotations

Young people thrive within a structured environment. When expectations and routines are clear, students are more likely to stay organized and on task.

During a typical day, a schedule with the daily rotations is displayed and reviewed. There will always be a math/homework and a reading/literacy rotation, since helping our students be successful in school is the “avocado” in our guacamole metaphor (the most important ingredient!).



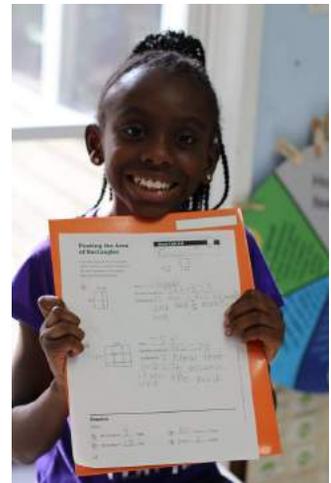
Math/Homework

Most elementary students either receive a packet of math homework to complete at their own pace throughout the week, or they receive about 10 minutes worth of homework for the day (and sometimes, they might not have any homework at all).

Teens typically have more homework and need more time to complete it during After School Program.

If you are helping a student with homework:

- **Consider how your student might learn best** (instead of how you might learn best); approach a problem from a few different angles if it doesn't seem to be clicking. **Visual aids are a huge help!** CAN has many resources on-site.
- **It's okay to admit that you don't know how to solve the problem either.** Many young people respond well to honesty, and you are role modeling perseverance and problem-solving through teamwork by working through the problem--even if math isn't your strength.



Visit www.can-academy.org/math to learn more tips about how to help students with math.



Math/Homework (cont.)

If a student doesn't have homework or is finished early:

Pick out a math-based academic board game or game on a CAN iPad and help them continue to develop their math skills through play. The on-site Volunteer Liaison will show volunteers where to find games when they get started.

Teaching Tip:

Help establish a "growth mindset" with the power of "YET."

- I can't do this...YET
- This doesn't work...YET
- I don't know...YET
- It doesn't make sense...YET
- I don't get it...YET
- I'm not good at this...YET



Reading/Literacy

CAN's goal related to literacy is to instill a love of reading. When young people realize the joy of stories, even if the technical aspects of reading might still be challenging -- it's a game-changer!

Reading strengthens vocabulary, spelling, and reasoning skills, and it boosts empathy, social-emotional development, and curiosity.



Reading/Literacy (cont.)

Volunteers might read with a student or a few students.

Either party can pick a book or a few books and find a cozy spot to get comfortable.

It helps to establish a 2-minute timeframe the student can pick a book so he or she does not procrastinate and spend the entire rotation "picking a book." If a student is having trouble deciding on a book, pick a few for the student instead.

Depending on the student(s), the volunteer may read the entire book aloud, switch every other page or sentence with the student(s), or the student(s) may read to the volunteer.



Any combination is great since your #1 goal is to create a safe space for students to practice and enjoy the act of getting lost in a story.

Because reading with our young people is a great way to plug in at ASP, there is an additional training with more information about "Reading with Children & Youth" for staff, interns, and volunteers to complete.



Free Play



Free Play is an intentional component of CAN's ASP.

Studies show that time for young people to have unstructured play allows them to independently develop their social, cognitive, and physical skills. "Playing pretend" is a way to practice roles in society, to try out new things you've learned, and build necessary social and gross motor skills.

At CAN, staff and volunteers are strongly encouraged to jump in and play with the students. This is not only developmentally beneficial, but provides a perfect opportunity for adults to build closer relationships with the students, which in turn helps with behavior management and creating closer bonds as a mentor & role model, which helps build resilience and combat the effects of childhood trauma.



Social-Emotional Development

This happens throughout the entire program as students are taught how to identify and name their emotions, as their emotions are validated, and as they are given new "tools" to learn how to best manage their emotions.

CAN uses many tools, including the "Weather Wheel" that helps students identify their emotions as they enter the center, activities/games designed to develop social-emotional skills, and through role modeling by staff and volunteers. It is important that every site is a safe space and strong community where all members feel encouraged and supported by one another.



Executive Function

Executive function skills are the mental processes that enable us to plan, focus, remember instructions, and multi-task. These are essential skills that need to be taught and developed to function in school and in society.

Students can learn these through established routines, modeled behavior by adults, and creating and maintaining supportive, reliable relationships.



Free play, social-emotional learning, and executive function intertwine as children exercise their developing skills through activities that foster creative play and social connection, stress-coping mechanisms, and practice, practice, practice!



A quick note about meals

CAN serves dinner and snacks because we know how hard it can be to focus and learn on an empty stomach. Our food is just for the kids, but mealtime is a great opportunity to get to know CAN's young people.

Conversations happen organically over the dinner table and this is a time when your relationship with CAN's students can really grow.

Volunteers who have built a great relational foundation during the "down times" in the program are more successful when working with CAN's students during the academic rotations.

We strongly encourage you to not be a wallflower or sit only with your friends/other adults, but to dive in and use this time to your advantage.



Volunteer Q&A

What do I do when I arrive?

Volunteers will meet with the on-site Volunteer Liaison. This person will help you make a name badge, show you where to sign in, give you a tour, and help you get settled. After your first day, **you will always be expected to wear your name badge and sign in every time you volunteer.**

Then what?

The best way to learn is to dive into the program! Join the activity and start getting to know the students like you would any individual. If you aren't sure what to do or if you tend toward the introverted side, ask the Volunteer Liaison or the Director what you can do to help!

What should I bring with me?

CAN has secure places where you can store your personal items -- just ask and we will show you! **If you need your phone on your person, please keep it on silent and do not have it out during program.** We have a new No Phone policy in our centers, with exceptions for key staff members.



Volunteer Q&A, cont.

There are too many volunteers, or the student I was paired with doesn't seem to need my help. What should I do?

First of all -- what a great "problem" to have (we try to make sure it doesn't happen often)! We are so glad you are taking time out of your busy schedule to work with CAN's children and youth.



If you are not working specifically with a student, your help in other ways is still greatly appreciated. Some days will look more busy than others, but there is always something we can use help with. You are still helping CAN operate a successful program, even if it's not working one-on-one with a child. Let a staff member know and they will help you find a new task to help out.

If you are working with a student who doesn't seem to need your help, know that **there is power in your presence!** As an adult who is available, present, and willing to jump in and help if and when a question comes up, you are showing this student that there is an adult who cares about them and is there for them, even if they aren't asking for help at the moment. What an awesome message to send CAN's young people!



Volunteer Q&A, cont.

Wow--these kids are busy. They don't seem to be able to sit still and focus. I don't feel comfortable with behavior management. How are we ever going to finish this book/homework/project/etc.?

We get it. Sometimes this volunteer experience can be a challenge--especially if you are only just getting started with building relationships with our students and learning the rules and expectations yourself!

Many of our students attend CAN's After School Programs for a reason: they **need** the academic and social-emotional support!



So how can you help?

1. CAN's students might need to be more active and take more breaks than other students. How they work and learn might feel different, but different does not mean bad.
2. Work on accomplishing small, achievable goals each day. Each small success will build upon itself and even if you do not see it, believe that growth is happening!



How you can help (cont.)

3. You are the adult and you have the power to enforce the expectations of the center (if they are not being safe, respectful, or responsible, then like all rules, there should be consequences to breaking them).

When you enforce the rules instead of always referring to the staff or Director, the students learn that they can and should be respectful towards you, and not just the staff.

Of course, becoming comfortable with enforcing expectations will take time and practice, and the Director always has the final word. Always ask if you aren't sure and use this experience as a learning opportunity.



How you can help (cont.)

4. Be flexible and remember the big picture. You are there to be a stable, caring adult in the lives of children and youth that might be experiencing trauma, toxic stress, and instability. **Know your caring presence is enough**, even if your student(s) don't get to finish a task you had hoped to finish that day.



Your help matters!

Even if you don't see it immediately...

- **97% of CAN's students graduate from high school!**
(Compared to 70% of their AAPS economic peers, 2017-18)
- **88% of CAN's elementary-aged students either maintain or improve their GPA by 1 letter grade (2017)**
- **CAN students attend 8 more days of school, per student, per year!** (Compared to all of their AAPS peers, 2017-18)



These milestones not only represent success now, but success for CAN's children and youth for years to come!



Why Are Afterschool Programs Valuable to Children and Youth Across America?

The Afterschool Alliance makes the case at <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/researchIssueBriefs.cfm>

