

SAMPLE MANUAL

**ready
set
action**



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Ready, Set, Action: Facilitator's Guide

Foundation of Ready, Set Action

The *Ready, Set, Action* curriculum has been conceptualized and developed through the collaboration between developmental psychologist, Gil Noam, Ed.D., Ph.D., (Habil). and PEAR (Partnerships in Education and Resilience). Through theory, practice, and research, *Ready, Set, Action*, along with the other Clover Groups, aim to provide an inclusive, strength-based model of intervention that helps build youth competence and resilience through relationships with peers and positive adult figures, and works in collaboration with families, teachers, school administrators, community programs, mental health professionals and others to support youth success.

About PEAR

PEAR works with schools, afterschool programs, and other youth-serving organizations to update educational practices by taking into account the critical tie between social emotional development and health and life success. PEAR redevelops capacity of school systems to assess and address the challenges youth face through assessments, data analysis, professional development and school interventions. Dedicated to building resiliency in young people, PEAR helps schools and after-school programs to know every child, strengthen school support teams, find youth promotion, prevention and intervention opportunities, and use data to drive decision making in school planning.

Development of *Ready, Set, Action* Curriculum

Ready, Set, Action is a 12-session curriculum that engages youth by tapping into their strength of being action-oriented. Participants learn to become more reflective and able to control their impulses and learn the skills necessary to develop healthy relationships. The goal is not only for youth to develop these strengths in the group, but also to teach them to apply what they have learned to their daily lives. While *Ready, Set, Action* primarily engages participants kinesthetically, each activity can be facilitated to help youth feel part of a caring community, find their true voice, and understand the importance of reflection in acquiring new knowledge and developing more awareness of their behavior.

Ready, Set, Action Curriculum Goals

Objective	Description
Teamwork	Youth are able to share their ideas, listen to others and compromise in order to solve problems within a group.
Perseverance	Youth are able to stick with something that they find hard to do.
Self-Awareness	Youth can recognize their own feelings, thoughts, and actions.
Self-Control	Youth are able to think before they act.

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Group Structure and Participant Selection

Group Structure

Below is a description of the basic structure of *Ready, Set, Action*. The group can and should be adapted to meet the needs of your population and the context in which it is being implemented.

Component	Details	Recommendations
Group Size	Small Group	Small group counseling or advisory
Ages	9-15 years old	Age of participants no more than 2 years apart
Number of sessions	12	1 session per week
Length of session	50-60 minutes	Can customize activities based on time available
Co-Facilitators	1-2	Educators and youth workers

Group Participant Selection

It is important to understand a youth from multiple perspectives in order to determine whether or not he or she is a good match for the group. Considering all of the following factors, rather than relying on any one, is the best way to determine who will be *Ready, Set, Action* group participants.

- **Key Strengths:** High energy, fully engaged in the body, athletic, quick to act, playful, hands-on, doers, living in the moment and the here and now. These youth may be the first to jump into the water to save someone, be the star of the track team, or excel as engineers building models with their hands.
- **Key Struggles:** Fidgeting, distraction, difficulty focusing, lack of concentration, poor impulse control.
- **Key Needs:** Opportunities to move and be in their bodies throughout the day; to create more balance by developing their ability to reflect; and better control of impulses by learning to pause and think before acting.

When selecting participants, it is important to use your school/program's policy for guardian permission. PEAR may supply you with a consent form, or you can use the sample one in the Evaluation Documents Pocket.

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Suggested Materials

The materials listed below are a guide to plan ahead for purchasing and budgeting. **You may not need to purchase all of the materials listed, as there are many activity options in this manual and alternatives can be used.** Please look through the activities to determine which you'd like to run. Within each session's description in the curriculum there is a more specific "Materials" section. Always look ahead at the following session for more specifics about materials needed and preparation. You will need to have access to a printer or copy machine to make copies of materials provided in the manual itself.

Recommended Materials	Amount
Stopwatch	1
Blank poster paper	1 -2
Markers	1 per member
Glue	
Scissors	
Masking or duct tape	1 roll
Magazines/images cut from magazines	1-2 images per member
Long jump rope	1
*Parachute (large bed sheet)	1
*Frisbees (heavy paper plates)	5
*Rubber chicken (Soft foam ball)	1
*Blindfolds (Fabric, bandanas)	1 per member
*Hula hoops (Tape)	9
*Colored flags (Towels, t-shirts or scarves)	6 (3 of each color)
Construction paper	30+ sheets
*Rubber gym spots (Construction paper, carpet squares)	1 per member
*Cones (Water bottles, balls, books, etc.)	5-10
Soft foam balls	5
Large ball of string/yarn	1
Glitter jar – Plastic container, water, glitter, glue	1

* can be substituted with recommended material in parentheses

Perseverance Ritual Options: The facilitator will choose one Perseverance Ritual to complete throughout the entire cycle of Ready, Set, Action. You will only need the materials for one of these five options.

Recommended Materials	Amount
Tap Ball: Beach ball or soft foam ball	1 per member
Hacky Sack: Hacky sack bean bag	1 per member
Peacock Feathers: Peacock feathers	1 per member
Juggling: Scarves or bean bags	3 per member
Hula Hoop: Hula Hoops	1 per member

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Session Components

1 Opening Perseverance Ritual	2 Check In	3 Team Pledge	4 Challenge	5 Stop, Think, Go Activity	6 Cool Down	7 Group Cheer
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1. Opening Perseverance Ritual

Every session starts with the ritual of tap ball or an alternative activity such as hacky sack. Every session should have the same ritual activity in order to give a sense of structure, rhythm and continuity. This activity should start as soon as the first participant enters the room. The activity as detailed in the directions becomes more challenging. The challenge engages the participants and helps them to work on perseverance and experience the delayed gratification of getting better with sustained effort. By capitalizing on the youths' clover strength of active engagement, they learn perseverance with a fun, physically energetic activity. After Session 1, you'll do the same thing each session and track the progress. Facilitators should choose the ritual from the Perseverance Rituals pocket. It a chance to start off with the same routine and movement each session!

2. Check In

Each group will begin with an opening circle check in. The purpose of the opening circle is to assess the group's "emotional temperature," as well as create a period of centering and transition into the work of the group. The opening check-in is meant to be brief and in a turn-taking style. If someone does not feel comfortable sharing on that given day, they are allowed to "pass."

3. Team Pledge

The Team Pledge is an agreement that is read out loud every session. The purpose of the Team Pledge is to remind everyone of the reasons they are in this group, introduce the goal of that session, and what the group agreements are. Ideally, each session a different member will have a chance to read the Team Pledge. It is not necessary to review all of the group agreements every session; just choose two or three that you (or the group) feel are most important. The group may also want to choose different agreements every session, so the group is reminded of all of their group agreements. It may feel repetitive but keep it up – it helps the group members internalize the agreements, purpose and goals of their time together.

4. Challenge

The Challenge is a problem-solving/team building activity that will help the group work towards one of the four goals- Self-control, Teamwork, Perseverance and Self-Awareness. Many of the challenges require groups to plan, communicate and work as a team. Challenges are found in the Challenge pocket. Rules are also included in the backside of the pocket, for facilitators to hang as a visual reminder for the group.

Challenge Debrief: An essential component of group work is for participants to be able to take what they have learned in the group and apply it to their lives. A way to facilitate this process is to use debrief questions to empower the group members to think about how they can apply what they have observed, experienced and learned from the activity to their lives. This format of debriefing provides a structure for group leaders to aid the group in processing what just occurred.

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5. Stop, Think, Go Activity

Each session includes opportunities to practice physically controlling one's body to achieve a group or individual goal. For example, players in the classic game of "Red Light, Green Light" are going to be most successful when they can exhibit control over their bodies through stopping and starting, running and freezing. This body control is built by increased mindfulness on the part of the group members. *Ready, Set, Action* is built with practice, opportunities and verbal prompts to encourage youth to become more self-aware and to take notice of their physical states: "Is my heart beating fast? Are my muscles tense?" After Session 3, it's facilitator's choice. Pick an activity from the Stop, Think, Go pocket every session.

6. Cool Down

A major goal for *Ready, Set, Action* is to increase group members' ability to control their actions and emotions. Mindfulness techniques can be effective tools in helping children to accomplish this not only during the group, but also more importantly outside of the group setting. Mindfulness should be an integral part of each closing activity. Each group will end with a cool down activity. These mindfulness activities vary in how much movement is involved and the length of time for each one. You should choose an activity that fits the energy level of your group at the time that you are doing a closing as well as the amount of time you have. After Session 1 it's facilitator's choice. Pick the activity from the Cool Down pocket.

7. Group Cheer

The group will end with a quick cheer, a group handshake, or some other quick closing ritual. This serves as the bookend for every session. In combination with the opening ritual, this provides a structure and rhythm to the group. After they create the team cheer in Session 1, the group will close out every session this same way. Record your cheer and keep it in the Group Cheer pocket.

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		1 Opening Perseverance Ritual (5 minutes)	2 Check In (5 minutes)	3 Team Pledge (1 minute)	4 Challenge & Debrief (10-20 minutes)	5 Stop, Think, Go Activity (10-15 minutes)	6 Cool Down (3 minutes)	7 Group Cheer (1 minute)
Goals		Perseverance	Self-Awareness	Teamwork		Self-Control		Teamwork
Setting up RSA	Pre-Session	N/A	Name Impulse	N/A	Introduction to RSA & Initial Group Survey (30 min)	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Session 1	Group Juggle with Names (10 min)	Goals Gallery Walk & Session Overview (20 min)	N/A	Group Norms (15 min)	N/A	Glitter Jar (2 min)	Create Group Cheer (5 min)
Self-Control	Session 2	Facilitator Choice	Review Group Norms	Intro to Team Pledge	Turnstiles	Butterfly Game	Facilitator Choice	Group Cheer
	Session 3	Repeat from Session 2	Facilitator Choice	Read Team Pledge	Number Smash	Red Light, Green Light	Facilitator Choice	Group Cheer
Teamwork	Session 4	Repeat from Session 2	Facilitator Choice	Read Team Pledge	Choose one: <input type="checkbox"/> Fox & Hound <input type="checkbox"/> Human Knot <input type="checkbox"/> Flip Me the Chicken	Facilitator Choice	Facilitator Choice	Group Cheer
	Session 5	Repeat from Session 2	Facilitator Choice	Read Team Pledge	Choose one: <input type="checkbox"/> Fox & Hound <input type="checkbox"/> Human Knot <input type="checkbox"/> Flip Me the Chicken	Facilitator Choice	Facilitator Choice	Group Cheer

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Session 3

NUMBER SMASH

Goal of Challenge:

- **Self-control:** Youth are able to think before they act.

Materials:

- Rope, string or tape (long enough to make a 15' diameter circle)
- Rubber gym spots, paper plates, etc. numbered 1-30 (Numbers 1-30 included at end of session)

Challenge Preparation:

- Lay out a rope circle approximately 15 feet in diameter. Within this circle place the rubber gym spots, paper plates etc. that are numbered 1-30. Make sure that you lay the numbers in a way that they are not laying in numerical order.

Aim of Challenge:

For the group to step on numbered spots in numerical order in the shortest time possible.

Number Smash Rules:

- Numbers must be smashed in order (1,2,3).
- There may only be one person in the rope circle at a time.
- Everyone should touch at least one number.
- Five seconds will be added to the final time if:
 - You smash numbers out of order
 - You smash more than one number at a time
 - There is more than one person in the circle at a time.

Facilitator Guide:

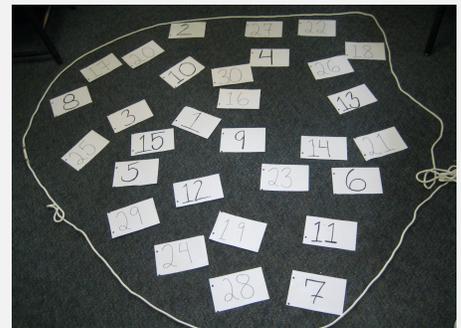
- Tell the group that they will be given five rounds (or however many you have time for) to step on each of the numbers in order. The goal is to do it in the shortest time possible.
- Penalties: Five seconds will be added onto their time if they smash numbers out of order, smash more than one number at a time, or if there is more than one person in the circle at a time.
- Give the group 60 seconds to plan how they will accomplish the challenge.

Facilitator Notes

Considerations:

- **Movement/Pace:** Medium movement, medium pace
- **Physical Touch:** None
- **Be Prepared For:** Conflict can arise about plan & execution of plan, risk of being in middle of circle and others telling that person what to do

Challenge Preparation:



Active Witnessing Roles:

Group members can be the timekeeper and offer strategies to the group.

SED in Action:

- + Taking turns
- + Focusing on task at hand
- + Listening to/following directions
- + Being calm/quiet for set amount of time
- Δ Using materials for other purposes
- Δ Rushing/Disorganization
- Δ Being upset or frustrated with another person
- Δ Blaming others

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- Time will start when you say go, and stop when the last number has been touched and that person has exited the circle.
- Motivate group to work faster by giving them a time to beat that's shorter than their previous time. (e.g., "You just smashed all the numbers in 2 minutes and 30 seconds, let's see if you can get it under 2 minutes on this turn.").

Debrief:

- Gather the group in a small circle.
- Share the goal of the activity: **Self-control**.
- Ask what, so what, now what debrief questions, based on your group's readiness for reflection.

What?

Invite group members to share observations, thoughts, and emotions about their **self-control** experience during the activity.

So What?

Ask questions about why **self-control** was important in this activity.

Now What?

Explain the skills of self-control (taking your time, thinking before acting, coming up and sticking with strategies to accomplish the challenge's aim) and ask about what it looks like outside of the group and why it is important in their daily lives.

- Be sure to hold time and space for each youth to reflect.

Example Debrief Questions:

"When did you notice yourself using self-control? When did you notice others using self-control?"

"Why was it important to think before we acted in this challenge?"

"What happened when we followed a strategy or waited before trying to pass through the rope?"

"What happened if you did not wait before trying to pass through the rope?"

"The skills of self-control are taking your time, thinking before acting, coming up and sticking with strategies to accomplish the challenge's aim. Where do the need for these skills show up outside of group?"

"Why is it important to have these skills in our day to day lives?"

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