

# *Tips for Primary Team Managers*

## **Purpose of the Primary Challenge**

The primary challenge gives young and/or inexperienced children an opportunity to practice problem-solving in a non-threatening environment. Equally important, it gives Team Managers a chance to learn about and practice the rules governing the Destination ImagiNation program in a non-competitive format.

## **Goals**

The goals of the primary challenge are two-fold:

1. Students will learn and utilize basic skills in creative thinking, presentation, construction, and teamwork.
2. Primary students will have a **GREAT** time.

## **Know Your Team**

Students are typically ages 5 through 8 and are in kindergarten through second grade. Here are some of things to

Keep in mind when working with students at this level:

### *Physically*

Students are very active and enjoy higher level gross-motor activities like running, jumping, hopping, skipping, bicycling, hoops, and balls. They are just developing fine motor coordination (closely linked to vision development) and are likely to be awkward writing, sewing, cutting, and painting. They are still developing speaking patterns, and teeth may be missing as well, so they are not always easy to understand.

### *Cognitively*

Students learn best from sensory experiences. They are concrete thinkers who learn by seeing, hearing, touching, doing and following examples and models, relating all incoming information to an experience (strong associations). They are learning to process symbols, learning the alphabet, learning to read, increasing fluency and depth in spoken language, and learning math symbols and operations. They are beginning to lateralize and most will be in the process of becoming "left-brained" (right-handed). They have a fairly short attention span ranging from 1-20 minutes. Their auditory comprehension is still developing, so understanding directions may be challenging.

### *Affectively*

Students are developing empathy and a sense of humor (starting to tell jokes). They are starting to control emotions, but are still fairly volatile. They seek the approval of adults more than their peers.

### *Socially*

The students like to be with other children, but are fairly self-centered. They are just learning "social rules" (such as taking turns, apologizing, "please" and "thank you"). They need clear expectations and feel more secure if an adult is in charge.

### *Individuality*

Get a sense of each student by observing them with parents, children and in class, if possible. At the first or an early meeting ask children to make a list with parents indicating:

*likes dislikes strengths weaknesses*

## Typical Meeting

Keep meeting to 75 minutes or less and try to limit distractions in the environment. Keep topics brief (20 min. maximum) and if children are busy constructing, try to "rotate" tasks when they seem to be losing their zest.

### Here's an example of a typical meeting:

10 minutes snack, visiting, communications, introducing topics or tasks for meetings

20 minutes Instant Challenge solving

20 minutes long-term Challenge development

20 minutes teaching skills, researching, constructing (i.e., hands on activities)

5 minutes recap meeting and plan for the next meeting

If team is fairly restless and they are not hungry, try a few minutes of physical exercise to "recharge" their brains.

The Team Manager should set the "tone" for the meeting. Stay "on task" and keep your comments *positive, positive, positive!* When things get "thorny" try to deflect, go around, compromise, postpone, build a consensus, stop for a vote, etc. These are the problem-solving methods of a *facilitator* and you will need to model them in order for the students to learn and use these methods themselves.

## Team Challenge

Your primary team's Challenge, like most of the Team Challenges, will require that the team meet the criteria for a solution and then present their solution to an audience. The first step is to outline the steps of the Challenge so students can understand what their goal is. The Team Manager must have a thorough grasp of the Challenge before presenting it to the team!

The Team Manager must also understand the basic rules of the Destination ImagiNation *Rules of the Road* (rule book) in order to guide the team and answer questions correctly. **It is strongly recommended that Team Managers read the *Rules of the Road* at the beginning of the season, again in the middle of the season, and just before the Regional Tournament.**

### Content

1. Put rules in terms the team can understand.
  - a. Time Limit - 8 minutes includes set-up and solution
2. Look at challenge specifics for this year's challenge

### Are there:

- 1) Specific props that must be included?
- 2) Specific elements (i.e., humor, music or dance)?
- 3) Specific locations that must be incorporated?
- 4) Specific characters, animals, costumes?
- 5) Specific size requirements?
- 6) Note that some of the criteria also have specific requirements and that it is best to review those as your team is working on that part of the Challenge solution.

**Explain vocabulary** (e.g., fictional, lyrics) as you present the Challenge. Find out what students already know.

**Ask questions!** Allow the more knowledgeable students to share (teach) the less knowledgeable. Teach students what they don't know. You can share knowledge, techniques (e.g., problem-solving or voting), and skills (e.g., construction, music writing) as long as you do not apply the teaching to the Challenge solution (i.e., you can teach them about timing, but you cannot tell them to have four beats to a measure or you can show them how to mix paint colors or sew on a button, but you cannot mix the paint for them or sew the button on for them.)

**And above all . . . have fun!!!**

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