

Survey Administration Guidelines

This brief summarizes guidelines on preparing for and administering the Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) performance measures entry and exit surveys to youth. These surveys collect data on the measures of participants' characteristics, behaviors, program experiences, and perceptions of program effects.

Preparing to administer the survey

Before administering the surveys, it is important to consider several factors about staffing and logistics, parental consent (if required), assembling youth for the survey administration, and passing out the surveys.

- **Staffing and logistics**

- ◆ Plan for having at least two survey administrators in each room, even if you are administering the survey to a small number of youth. If someone needs assistance, one survey administrator can work individually with the person while the other continues to monitor and assist with the rest of the group.
- ◆ Determine where you will administer the survey. Although it might be logistically challenging to ensure this at each administration, arrange for a separate room for youth not taking the survey and ensure that someone will be able to oversee those youth while others take the survey. This might be necessary for youth without consent or assent (if required), or if a youth refuses to take the survey.
- ◆ Determine whether any youth require someone to read the survey aloud to them and prepare to make the necessary accommodations. You might need additional space to ensure privacy and that you will not disturb other youth taking the survey.
- ◆ Confirm you have all materials needed for the survey administration. These might include copies of the survey materials, a checklist or sign-in sheet to track survey completion, pencils, blank envelopes to return hard-copy surveys, cover sheets, list of consented youth (if required), and youth assent forms (if required).
 - If you are linking youth to a specific ID for your own evaluation purposes, you will also want a separate sheet with a list of IDs and corresponding youth names.
- ◆ Bring extra materials to the administration in case you have any new youth in the program or youth who have newly consented to the surveys, where required.
- ◆ Before administering the survey, determine how you will collect completed surveys. One suggested method is to ask youth to raise their hand, at which point a survey administrator would collect the completed survey. Another method is to provide youth

with a blank envelope and instruct them to place the completed survey in the envelope and bring it to the survey administrator when they are done.

- **Parental consent, if required by your IRB**

- ◆ Before administering the survey, collect any new consent forms youth might have returned and update your records accordingly.
 - If using active consent, confirm that the returned form indicates the parent or guardian has agreed for the child to participate.
- ◆ Consent only needs to be collected once. If the parent or guardian provided consent before the entry survey, you will not need to collect consent again for the exit survey.
- ◆ We recommend that only youth with consent are in the room during survey administration.

- **Assembling youth for the survey**

- ◆ Youth should be seated with some space between them to allow for privacy. If possible, arrange youth with at least one seat between each person. If youth must sit across from one another at a table, stagger them so they are not directly across from one another.
- ◆ You can provide a blank cover sheet to youth to use for privacy.
- ◆ If administering an online survey using tablets or phones, consider obtaining privacy screens to place over the device to prevent others from seeing the screens.

- **Passing out the surveys**

- ◆ If parental consent is required, ensure only youth with consent receive a survey.
- ◆ For PREP performance measures purposes, surveys do not need to be labeled with student names or identifiers to link them back to an individual, so you do not need to ensure that specific youth receive a specific survey.
- ◆ If you are linking youth to an individual identifier for your own evaluation purposes, confirm that the correct person receives the appropriate survey.

What should I do if I would like to add certain survey items to the entry and exit surveys? You can add items to the end of the entry and/or exit survey, after all of the *Office of Management and Budget (OMB)*-approved items. Do not incorporate items within the existing entry or exit survey or list them before the entry or exit survey.

Administering the surveys

During survey administration, you might need to respond to different situations such as responding to questions, monitoring youth, and handling sensitive situations.

• Beginning the survey administration

- ◆ If required, collect youth assent. Read the student assent form aloud, and then collect the completed forms. If someone does not sign the assent form, that person cannot take the survey.
 - We recommend that only youth with assent are in the room during survey administration.
- ◆ Read the instructions aloud and instruct youth to begin the survey.
 - Reassure youth that no one outside of the study team will see their answers, the survey is very brief, and they do not have to answer any questions they do not wish to answer.
 - Instruct youth how they are to return their completed surveys.

What should I do if someone refuses to take the survey? Youth should not feel pressured in any way to complete the survey. You might remind them that they can skip any questions they do not want to answer, and that no one outside of the study team will see their responses. If they do not wish to take the survey, they can refuse. We recommend that only youth responding to the survey are in the room during survey administration.

• Handling late arrivers

- ◆ If some youth have not yet arrived for the survey administration, do not hold up an entire group for a few youth.
- ◆ As one survey administrator continues to lead the group through the survey, another person should work with the late arrivers to bring them up to speed with as little disruption as possible.

• Handling questions about the survey

- ◆ Clarifying instructions or skip patterns is permitted, but survey administrators should not clarify words or phrases or define any of the terms used in the survey.
 - Responses to questions about content should be “Answer the question the best you can.”
- ◆ For some questions, youth might feel there is not an appropriate response for them (for example, question about race or sex). Remind youth they can skip these questions if they want to.

- **Monitoring youth**

- ◆ During the administration, walk around the perimeter of the room, monitoring youth as they complete the survey. Try not to walk in between rows, if possible. Youth should feel they have privacy and that no one is looking at their answers.
- ◆ Keep an eye out for youth who might have questions.
- ◆ As youth begin completing the survey, remind them to please be courteous and quiet and wait until everyone is finished.
- ◆ Some youth might react as they read the questions, such as laughing or making comments aloud. For the most part, you should not react to minor incidents, as it is not likely to interfere with the survey administration and will quickly pass. If necessary, remind them to be quiet and focus on completing the survey.

Why are we not providing definitions? For best practices in data collection, it is important to ensure consistency and standardization across all survey administrations. Not everyone will receive a definition, so we do not want some youth responding to the survey with information that is not provided to all youth. Additionally, if youth do not already know what something means, survey administration is not the appropriate environment to explain something new to them; it is best to do this during program delivery where staff can provide context and follow-up.

- **Handling sensitive situations**

- ◆ Some of the questions could upset some youth, because the surveys contain sensitive topics.
- ◆ If someone does not want to answer a question, remind the person it's OK not to respond and that he or she can skip to the next question in the survey.
- ◆ If someone appears to be upset, follow the trauma-informed procedures established by your organization (for example, refer youth to a teacher or counselor). If someone needs to leave the room because he or she is upset, make sure you take the person to the appropriate person (that is, a teacher or counselor)—do not leave the person alone to find assistance.

Closing out the survey administration

After youth have completed the surveys, you will collect the materials and maintain confidentiality.

- **Collecting completed surveys**

- ◆ Track completes on the sign-in sheet or checklist and ask youth to sign it when they turn in their surveys. If some youth do not complete the survey, record this on the sign-in sheet as well, noting the reason they were unable to complete the survey (for example, absent, transferred classes, no longer attending program, moved).
- ◆ When you have collected the materials, batch them with a cover sheet that summarizes the number of completes and incompletes and any other important information such as date and location.
 - Keep any documents with names or other identifying information separate from documents that contain data (the surveys).

- **Keeping surveys and other materials safe**

- ◆ Never leave completed materials out in the open or unattended for others to see.
 - If you have to step away—even for a moment—put away materials so others cannot view them.
- ◆ Be careful not to leave any of the survey materials (completed or not completed) in the administration room. Be sure to walk around the room and do a thorough search for materials before leaving.
- ◆ Do not discard any materials while on-site—wait until you get back to the office to properly dispose of any materials.
- ◆ When you are not working with the surveys, keep the materials in a locked closet or file cabinet.
- ◆ If you are unable to secure the materials in your office or file cabinet immediately after the survey administration and must take them in your car with you to another location, lock the materials in your trunk or take them into the building with you.

Additional information about the Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) performance measures is available at www.prepeval.com. For further support, contact the Mathematica PREP Performance Measures technical assistance team at PREPPerformanceMeasures@mathematica-mpr.com or call toll-free 1-855-267-6270.