

# PEACE POWER TOOLS

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## *Peer Monitoring*

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### **Summary:**

Peer monitoring is where one or two youth are identified and assigned to report the positive actions of other youth to school personnel or youth-serving organization staff. The positive peer monitoring report is then posted (without identifying the source) in a public space for all to see. This recognition tool is geared toward helping to increase the level of recognition youth receive.

### **Resources Needed:**

- Peer monitors selected (youth can rotate as peer monitors on a regularly scheduled basis)
- Clear specification of positive actions to be monitored (can and usually should be developed with participating youth)
- Pad of paper or index cards
- Blank space on a painted wall or bulletin board

### **Implementation Steps:**

- Although the name of this recognition tool is “peer” monitoring, children and youth can report the positive behaviors of staff and other adults in a particular setting.
- Peer monitoring should be completed often, with an effort to ensure that all are recognized often.
- Once participating staff receives a report (i.e. notes or index cards), the note is then publicly posted without identifying the report’s source.
- Staff may find it useful to read some of the index cards or posted notes on a daily basis.
- Depending on the number of notes or cards, teachers or other staff person are encouraged to count the notes on a weekly basis to track them for program evaluation.

### **Variations:**

- Under the direction of participating staff, youth who show interest may decide to establish a secret peer monitoring society.
- Peer monitoring can also be used to monitor the academic progress of other youth, which reinforces positive gains of those being monitored as well as those who serve as monitors.
- There is also evidence that adults can serve as peer monitors in the workplace using similar resources and implementation steps.

### **Rationale and Evidence Base:**

Substantial evidence shows that having youth establish and strengthen positive behaviors is more powerful than requiring youth to refrain from engaging in negative behavior. (Particularly powerful is monitoring positive alternatives to negative behaviors.) Much like recognition notes and boards, evidence shows that peer monitoring can be an effective means of increasing the level of recognition and praise offered by adults to youth. There is also evidence that peer monitoring may reinforce higher rates of prosocial behavior. Similar research associated peer monitor verbal reports of prosocial behaviors with improvements in social status and quality of interactions of rejected adolescents. With regard to monitoring academic progress, there is good evidence that peer monitors who monitor the academic progress of others may begin to show improvement in their own academic achievement. The available evidence suggests that positive peer monitoring works best when the monitoring role is confidential.

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