

Decision Framework Quick Reference

Six concise routines for youth-program decisions at the point of work.

How to use

Use the framework that best matches the dominant decision. Real situations can cross frameworks; in those moments, identify a primary routine and a secondary connection rather than forcing the situation into one box.

High-risk rule

For immediate danger, missing participants, medical events, threats, violence, suspected abuse or neglect, medication, transportation, or release concerns: protect safety and use the organization's current procedure and applicable law.

Behavior, Redirection & Boundaries

Connect -> Name -> Offer -> Follow Through

Regulate yourself and connect privately; name observable behavior and the expectation; offer a realistic choice or support; keep the boundary calmly and reconnect afterward.

Watch for: Do not confuse calm with permissive. Dignity and a clear boundary can coexist.

What it can sound like: "You look frustrated. The balls stay below shoulder height. You can rejoin with a bounce pass, or take two minutes beside me and try again."

Safety, Supervision & Transitions

Scan -> Count -> Position -> Hand Off -> Act

Notice people, space, activity, and changing risk; reconcile the count; place adults to see, hear, and respond; transfer responsibility to a named adult and receive confirmation; activate the written procedure when risk crosses the threshold.

Watch for: Local ratios, medical plans, transportation rules, and emergency procedures always control.

What it can sound like: "Maya, confirm you have all 11 in the gym. I am walking Devon to the office and will radio when I return."

Belonging, Conflict & Peer Dynamics

Stabilize -> Hear -> Repair -> Reconnect

Stop harm and lower the audience effect; hear brief accounts separately when needed; match repair to impact; create a supported return to the group.

Watch for: A forced apology can end a conversation without repairing anything.

What it can sound like: "I am stopping the game. You will each get a minute with me separately. Then we will decide what needs to happen before anyone rejoins."

Participation, Engagement & Facilitation

Observe -> Invite -> Adapt -> Rejoin

Look for the barrier; offer a low-pressure entry point and meaningful role; change task, grouping, pace, or support; build a visible route back into participation.

Watch for: Participation is broader than immediate full compliance; safety and core expectations still hold.

What it can sound like: "You do not have to perform first. Want to track points for one round, practice with me, or join the next team?"

Family, Caregiver & Team Communication

Listen -> Facts -> Boundary -> Next Step

Let the person finish; share only what you observed, know, and are authorized to disclose; state the policy or role boundary; name who will do what by when.

Watch for: Warmth does not require guessing, disclosing private information, or promising an outcome you do not control.

What it can sound like: "I hear that you are worried. I saw the disagreement at 4:10 and separated the students. I cannot discuss another child, but Dana will call you by noon tomorrow."

Professional Judgment, Reporting & Documentation

Protect -> Record -> Follow Policy -> Notify / Report

Address immediate safety; document timely facts and exact words; use the current written procedure without investigating; make required internal notification and any direct external report required by applicable law.

Watch for: Supervisor notification may not replace a legal duty that applies directly to an individual. Requirements vary by jurisdiction.

What it can sound like: "I am glad you told me. I may need to get help to keep you safe." Stay calm, preserve the words used, and follow current procedure promptly.

Supervisor prompt

After any decision, ask: What did you notice? What were you trying to protect? What risk did your response create? Which framework step would improve the next attempt?

Scope

These are original Brian Brown Works decision frameworks. They are thinking aids, not scripts, credentials, validated assessments, legal advice, or replacements for mandated training and local policy.