

Classroom/Youth Organization Exercises for a Prosecutor and Police Officer

Ages 7–8

These exercises are designed to provide a positive experience for young students through collaborative and educational exercises with a prosecutor and police officer. By starting a program in early grades, children will be introduced to Law Enforcement (LE) in a positive way at a young age.

Programming at this age should begin with a program where prosecutors and LE visit classrooms (or other locations such as afterschool programs, camps, youth programs, etc.) monthly throughout the school year. Wherever possible, it should be the same prosecutor and LE member visiting the same classroom(s) over the course of the school year to build the relationship over the time. *Given time constraints, most of the exercises can be done as a “stand alone” one time exercise if the school/organization is unable to implement all segments.*

Try to identify in advance any children that may have an adverse reaction to seeing a police officer or prosecutor in their classroom. Make sure that child's parent or guardian is aware of the program and the goals of the program, and consents to the child's participation. Should consent be gathered from all parents/guardians? This is something for each jurisdiction to figure out as some student populations may have been impacted by an event requiring police to respond and seeing police in the school again could be triggering/dysregulating and interrupt their entire school day.

Segment 1: What a Police Officer Does/What a Prosecutor Does; What is a Rule?

- Introductions should include a very brief explanation of what a police officer does and what a prosecutor does along with a statement that in future classes they are going to learn more about those roles.
- Have the children write on a sticky note, a law or rule they must follow.
- Post the notes on a board.
- Facilitate a conversation with the children about the laws/rules; focus on the importance of the individual laws/rules; ask them why they think each one is important.
 - What if they do not understand a rule? What should they do?
 - What if they don't like a rule? What should they do?
 - What if they have an idea for a new rule for home or school or their community? What should they do?
- Facilitate a conversation with the children about who enforces those laws/rules: teachers, parents/andparents/guardians, other family members, police, etc.
- Facilitate a conversation about the positive things that happen when laws/rules are not followed.

- Share examples of other laws/rules that adults must follow.
 - Are grown-ups expected to know the rules?
 - What can happen to adults if they do not follow the rule?
 - What if the grown up did not mean to break the rule? Does it matter? Sometimes it does, sometimes it does not. It depends on the rule.
- Praise the children for following the law/rules.
- Let them know that you will come back to the classroom next month (if applicable).

Segment 2: Reading a Book about the Police, Laws, or United States Supreme Court

- Read an age-appropriate book to the children about the police, laws, or the United States Supreme Court. Consider utilizing the *Supreme Court of the United States Kids' Activity Booklet* for K-4 which can be found [HERE \(www.supremecourt.gov/visiting/activities/pdf/KidsActivityBook_Jul2022_web.pdf\)](http://www.supremecourt.gov/visiting/activities/pdf/KidsActivityBook_Jul2022_web.pdf).
- Facilitate a conversation with the children about the book, including how it relates to what the officer and prosecutor do in their roles, and types of cases the Supreme Court may hear involving police officers and/or prosecutors.
- Ask to see a show of hands of students who have seen TV shows or movies with police officer characters or prosecutor characters/courtroom. What shows? What did think about it? Discuss what parts of the show are real or made up for audience entertainment.

Segment 3: What a Police Officer Does; Learn about Calling 911

- Ask the children to write down things a police officer does and ask for volunteers to read their answers to their class.
- Facilitate a conversation about what a police officer does, that incorporates the children's responses.
- Go over different assignments within a police department that an officer, detective, etc. may have.
- Go over what the 911 system is and how it works.
- Go over how to call 911 in an emergency, such as a fire, accident, when someone is seriously injured.

Segment 4: Courtroom Roles

- Use an example of a non-violent crime such as stealing from a store to illustrate in basic terms what a prosecutor does on a case, such as talking to witnesses from the store; watching video from the store; writing/typing out charges; looking for a program; going before the judge; explaining what the judge does, etc.
- Ask them to talk about TV shows they may be familiar with that include court cases and/or courtrooms.
 - Roles in the courtroom: have the classroom set up like a courtroom or go to the local courthouse if a courtroom is available. Give each student an opportunity to sit in the judge's seat and take a picture of each student sitting there (assuming you have parental permission to take a picture). This video may be helpful in explaining what a courtroom looks like and what the various roles are of the people who may be observed in a courtroom. Note that jurisdictions may differ in terms of what a courtroom looks like and who may be observed in a courtroom. www.youtube.com/watch?v=_MCArcEr5Hk

- Explain the roles of a judge, court reporter, prosecutor, defense attorney, respondent/ defendant, witnesses, etc. and where each one sits. Include the role of a facility dog if your jurisdiction has one. Use the case of a theft of a store to explain in simple terms what each role would do during a trial. Ask questions of the students throughout to get their input on things such as:
 - What evidence would the prosecutor want to use to prove the case?
 - What would the defense attorney want to say, if anything, about the case?
 - If the respondent/defendant is found to have committed the theft, what disposition/sentence should the court impose?
- Give options such as community service, restitution, probation, and an explanation of what each one involves.

Segment 5: What Police Use to Do Their Jobs

- Facilitate a conversation about what police use to do their jobs: include the different types of vehicles officers may have: cars, vans, bikes, scooters, etc.
- Explain how a body camera works and what officers like about them.
- Explain how police radios and computers work.
- Explain how police use dogs such as canines and how canines are taken care of.
- Explain what officers do at parades, large sporting events, etc. and how they help keep people safe.

Segment 6: Safety for Children

- Go over how to stay/how to be safe:
 - Bicycle safety.
 - Crossing the street.
 - Carrying a phone/knowning their home phone number and emergency numbers.
 - Stranger danger.
 - On-line safety (e.g., keeping phones/computers/tablets out of bedrooms, bathrooms, etc. and letting parent/guardian see what you are doing on it).

Segment 7: Interact with the Children

- Play with the children during recess or play games in the classroom with them.

Segment 8: Art Project

- Do an art project with them in their classroom. Have them draw or paint pictures pertaining to laws/ rules; staying safe; what a police officer does; or what a prosecutor does; what a safe world looks like to them. Offer an option for children to write a poem if they prefer that to drawing or painting.

Segment 9: Careers in Law Enforcement/Certificate Ceremony

- Discuss careers in law enforcement and the law and all the positive aspects of those careers.
- If the children have done multiples segments, provide them with Certificates of Appreciation for participating in the program and let them know how much you enjoyed working with them. Invite the parents/guardians to the school to attend the certificate ceremony and have a celebration when the ceremony ends.

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