# Illinois Statewide Afterschool Quality Standards

ACT NOW!
Afterschool for Children and Teens

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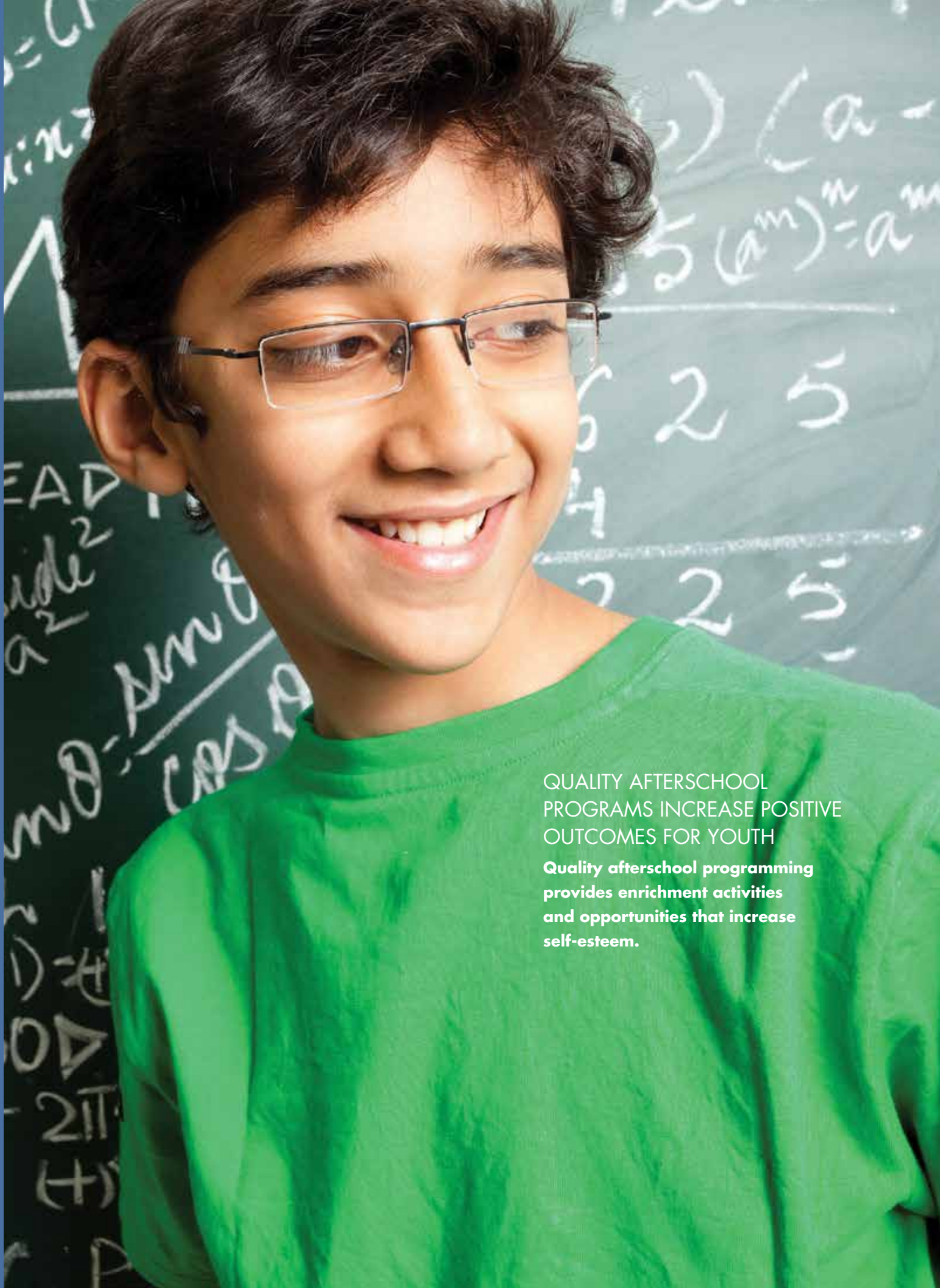
## VALUE TO STUDENTS BEYOND THE TRADITIONAL SCHOOL DAY

**Students who participate in afterschool programs have better school attendance, grades, standardized test scores, and behavior in school than those who do not go to afterschool programs.**



## QUALITY AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS INCREASE POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR YOUTH

**Quality afterschool programming provides enrichment activities and opportunities that increase self-esteem.**

# Introduction

## What Do We Mean by Afterschool? Why Is It Important?

**Out of school time programs are academic, social and emotional, and physical health learning opportunities that take place before school, after school, and during summer breaks. Afterschool programs provide a variety of enrichment activities, such as homework help, hands-on science and engineering activities, and opportunities to participate in performance and fine art. The organizations that sponsor these activities range from schools to faith-based organizations, community organizations, or city or county sponsored groups.**

According to America After 3PM, **433,390 children in Illinois are left alone and unsupervised between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.**[1] Currently, only 18 percent of children in Illinois participate in afterschool programs.[2] However, 41 percent of children in Illinois would participate in an afterschool program if one were available to them.[3] Young people only spend about 20 percent of their time in school, and how they spend the other 80 percent of their time has large implications for their well-being and future.[4]

Afterschool programs provide many benefits to youth and communities. Studies show that on the whole students who go to afterschool programs have better school attendance, grades, standardized test scores, and behavior in school than students who do not participate in afterschool programs.[5] Afterschool programs also keep children safe and dissuade them from choosing to involve themselves in crime. Studies have found that participants in afterschool programs are 30 percent less likely to participate in criminal activities.[6] When young people become engaged in the community through enrichment activities, volunteer work, or teams and clubs, they grow up to become adults who are committed to the community, which builds strong communities for the long term. Afterschool programs also provide necessary childcare for many working families.

## ACT Now and the Quality Standards

***ACT Now is a statewide coalition that works to ensure that young people in Illinois have access to quality, affordable afterschool and youth development programs.*** ACT Now is a diverse coalition supported by Illinois families, educators, business leaders, afterschool providers, community advocates, youth organizations, and policymakers across the state. ACT Now's work is split between its three standing committees:

- *Policy and Advocacy Committee*
- *Professional Development Committee*
- *Quality Assurance, Outcomes, and Evaluation Committee*

ACT Now's Quality Assurance, Outcomes, and Evaluation Committee has undertaken an initiative to develop quality standards in order to improve afterschool programming around the state. Our Quality Standards capture the practices that have been demonstrated, through research, to lead to quality programs and positive outcomes for children.

These Standards apply to programs that work with children and youth in out-of-school time settings, such as afterschool and summer programming. Some examples of programs that can use these standards are 21st Century Community Learning Centers, youth development programs, childcare programs, and recreation programs.

The Quality Standards provide afterschool programs with a common language for describing quality, as well as a "high bar" for individual programs to hold themselves accountable. The Standards are not intended to dictate policy and practices, but instead are intended to suggest and encourage a strong baseline of quality. Standards can be used by programs and local communities to stimulate conversation about quality, what it looks like, and why it matters. They also provide guidance for professional development focus areas.

## The Importance of Quality in Afterschool Programming

***Research shows that quality afterschool programs increase positive outcomes for youth.***[7] Quality afterschool programming provides enrichment activities, opportunities that increase self-esteem and prevent risky behaviors, time for recreational activities that promote healthy physical development and team building, and a chance to build on school day learning by explaining academic concepts through hands-on activities.

It is not enough for communities to just have access to afterschool programs. Communities need access to consistent and high-quality programs that benefit youth socially, emotionally, and academically. Positive outcomes for youth are more likely to occur when evidence-based methods are used in afterschool programming.[8] The David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality's 2012 study found dedication to continuous improvement strategies led to an increased quality of staff instructional practices.[9]

Defining what quality looks like is an essential first step to ensuring that all children and young adults have access to high-quality afterschool programs. Standards for afterschool programming are often created at the state level to accommodate the priorities of state agencies and to include providers as integral participants in the process of developing and implementing standards.

## Development of the Standards

***The Illinois Afterschool Quality Standards were developed through a two-year-long process involving key stakeholders from seven sectors—afterschool, child care, philanthropy, education, research, mental health, and state agencies—with a vested interest in the afterschool field in Illinois.***

The stakeholders came together to develop the Standards in three phases:

**WRITING.** The Writing Committee reviewed existing Illinois standards and research on afterschool standards nationwide to develop research-based quality guidelines for the state of Illinois. All members of the Writing Committee utilized their relevant content knowledge and experience in the field to contribute to the creation of Illinois' Quality Standards for afterschool. The Writing Committee was driven by the following general principles:

- *the Standards would be voluntary*
- *the Standards would be general and applicable to diverse programs that seek positive outcomes for school-age youth*
- *the Standards tools would be affordable to ensure buy-in and use*

The following organizations participated in the Writing Committee:

*WRITING COMMITTEE MEMBERS*

| | |
|---|---|
| *After School Matters* | *Illinois State Board of Education* |
| *American Institutes for Research* | *Loyola University Chicago* |
| *Chaddock* | *Outreach Community Ministries* |
| *Chicago Public Schools* | *Reaching for Kids and Youth of Massac County* |
| *Chicago Youth Centers* | *Regional Office of Education #47* |
| *Erie Neighborhood House* | *Tanglewood Research* |
| *Forefront* | *Tazwell County Health Department* |
| *Gary Comer Youth Center* | *United Way of Metropolitan Chicago* |
| *Illinois Action for Children* | *Urbana School District #116* |
| *Illinois Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs* | *YMCA of Metro Chicago* |
| *Illinois Network of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies* | |

**REVIEW.** The Review Committee consulted with the Writing Committee throughout the writing process to provide guidance on content, structure, and ease of understanding by various audiences. The Review Committee provided ongoing feedback by reviewing individual sections upon their initial completion, as well as a review of the entire completed draft. All members of the Review Committee utilized their relevant content knowledge, experience with standards development, and familiarity with diverse programs to provide expert guidance. Together, the work of the Writing and Review Committees, in coordination with the larger ACT Now Quality and Outcomes Committee, provided documents suitable for public distribution and feedback from afterschool providers statewide. The Review Committee members came from the following organizations and agencies:

*REVIEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS*

| | |
|---|---|
| *American Institutes for Research* | *Illinois State Board of Education* |
| *Illinois Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs* | *Illinois Network of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies* |
| *Illinois Department of Human Services* | |

**ROADSHOW.** The Roadshow Committee developed a concrete engagement plan for stakeholders statewide. This Committee helped plan a strategy for taking the Standards "on the road" to get feedback and buy-in from afterschool providers and stakeholders from around the state. The Roadshow Committee began by identifying key participants that we needed to reach and engage, including providers, community- and faith-based organizations, funders, educators, and youth and parents, for involvement and backing. The Roadshow Committee helped plan and execute meetings and events across the state to engage and inform stakeholders. ACT Now held 20 focus groups with 175 participants across the state to obtain feedback on our Draft Quality Standards. We then carefully analyzed the feedback data and incorporated it into a revised version of the Standards. The Committee consisted of partners from:

*ROADSHOW COMMITTEE MEMBERS*

| | |
|---|---|
| *After School Matters* | *Illinois Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs* |
| *America SCORES* | *Illinois Collaboration on Youth* |
| *American Institutes for Research* | *Illinois Department of Human Services* |
| *Chicago Lights* | *Illinois Mentoring Partnership* |
| *Chicago Pre-College Science & Engineering Program* | *Illinois State Board of Education* |
| *Children's Home and Aid* | *Illinois YMCA* |
| *Christopher House* | *Northern Illinois University* |
| *Columbia College Chicago* | *RYE Consulting* |
| *Communities in Schools of Chicago* | *SGA Youth & Family Services* |
| *Federation for Community Schools* | *Thrive Chicago* |
| *Field Museum* | *YMCA of Metro Chicago* |
| *High Jump* | *Youth Guidance* |
| *Illinois AfterSchool Network* | *Youtopia* |

## Standards, Core Areas, and Further Resources

***The Illinois Afterschool Quality Standards are intentionally broad and inclusive applying to a wide variety of afterschool and youth programs serving youth ages five through young adult, regardless of program content or location.*** This document offers a voluntary set of benchmarks that are not intended to be a regulatory checklist but rather a definition of quality that programs can use to pursue continuous improvement. The Standards are broken into seven overarching categories or **Core Areas** that represent the key areas of quality for programs. Each Core Area is framed with a guiding principle that introduces the category. The Core Areas are each broken into **Program Standards** which delineate the important components of that Core Area. Program Standards are in turn broken down into **Quality Indicators** which provide specific actions or initiatives programs can take to meet that Quality Standard and ways to measure growth for Quality Standards. While most Standards will apply to all programs, some are specific to particular program settings and service delivery models and may not be as generally applicable.

**THE SEVEN CORE AREAS:**

1. *Indoor and Outdoor Environments*
2. *Safety, Health, and Nutrition*
3. *Administration*
4. *Professional Development and Qualifications*
5. *Family and Community Partnerships*
6. *Youth Development, Programming, and Activities*
7. *Partnerships with Schools*

After the Standards, you will find a glossary which provides definitions of key terms used throughout this tool. At the end of this booklet there is also an abbreviated Resource Guide to help providers implement the Standards. The Resource Guide breaks resources down by each Core Area to give providers greater clarity as to what the Standards should look like in practice and ways to implement the Standards in their programs.

## Using the Standards

***The Illinois Afterschool Quality Standards are recommended, voluntary guidelines for afterschool providers.*** The Standards are aspirational in nature and are intentionally broad so programs can tailor them to their specific context and strive to be a quality program. It is important to remember that while Quality Standards provide a shared framework for community collaborations and encourage programs to involve young people in meaningful ways, Standards alone cannot change the quality of programs or the skills of program staff and volunteers. The Standards provide a research-based framework for providers to understand and measure program quality and to plan for improvement.

The Standards are linked to what research shows makes a quality afterschool program and improves outcomes for children and young adults. By implementing these Standards and creating a plan to constantly improve in these core areas, providers will improve the quality of their programs and, simultaneously, the outcomes for youth.

## STRIVING TOWARD EXCELLENCE

Not all indicators are applicable to all afterschool programs and some programs may hit roadblocks in implementing the Standards, such as lack of resources, a lack of cooperation from external organizations or stakeholders, a lack of control over certain programmatic features, or issues with altering their physical space. The Standards are meant to act as a guidepost towards which programs should work. Programs may not have the ability to implement the Standards all at once, but instead should develop a plan so that one day their program will have aspects of all of the Standards. Quality is an ongoing process, and it is not anticipated that any program will have mastered all of the items included in the Standards but rather will use the Standards to help keep the program focused on striving toward excellence.

## FIRST STEPS FOR PROGRAMS

Building capacity to use the Standards in programs across Illinois will take time. Critical first steps for program leaders include sharing the Standards with staff to ensure understanding, and identifying an individual or team to lead the process of creating a comprehensive plan to achieve the Standards. A program plan should incorporate realistic and achievable goals so that programs can work toward meeting the Standards gradually and systematically through tangible steps. Providers should consider integrating existing quality measures like the Youth Program Quality Assessment[10] as well as available professional development opportunities. Program directors should also keep the Standards in mind when planning out budgets in order to allocate resources to areas where the program wants to target growth.

## WHAT IF I ALREADY USE A QUALITY TOOL?

Many programs also already use some sort of quality tool. As the Standards were developed, our committees reviewed many other types of tools used around the state and gathered feedback from programs that already have some sort of quality resource. These Standards were designed to be broad so that they would be able to work in tandem with other quality tools. Further, due to our thorough review process incorporating feedback from across the state, our Standards align with many quality tools around the state and provide programs a pathway to build upon and complement already existing quality tools. If programs already have quality tools that they are using, we suggest that you start by identifying which parts of the Standards overlap with the tool and finding ways to incorporate parts of the Standards that are not already encompassed in the current quality tool into the program.

### HOW OTHER STAKEHOLDERS CAN USE THE STANDARDS

Beyond program leaders, other afterschool and youth development stakeholders may find the Standards useful in the following ways:

***Parents and Families.*** These Standards help parents and families to understand the key elements of a high-quality program and to be able to advocate for quality programs in their own communities. The Standards also help families to identify quality programming for their children. Parents and families can use the Standards to find ways to collaborate with programs in order to have a greater impact on youth outcomes.

***Funders and Policymakers.*** The Standards help funders and policymakers to link funding to research-based practices that lead to measurable outcomes. Funders should look to see that programs are using the Standards to evaluate and improve their programs. This process of evaluation and improvement is what funders should value and not use the Standards as a measurement tool to withhold funding or cut programs. The Standards help funders and policymakers establish clear expectations for all stakeholders and a common language to assist in policy development.

***K–12 Educators.*** The Quality Standards help K–12 educators to understand the key elements of high-quality programs and provide a common language for partnership. These Standards provide principals and superintendents a guide to reinforce and advance key priorities. Quality afterschool programs drive student achievement, and school leaders can incorporate quality afterschool programming into plans to improve academic outcomes.

***Higher Education.*** The Quality Standards can assist higher education and training institutions in designing content for courses related to youth development providers and in choosing strategic partners for research initiatives.

## Next Steps

***ACT Now and its partners anticipate developing additional supports and resources over time as stakeholders share their feedback.*** The Standards are just the first step in the process of helping provide resources to the afterschool community in order to increase quality and improve outcomes. Although the Resource Guide at the back of this document will help providers to take a first step into understanding and implementing the Standards, it is not an exhaustive list of tools and does not provide exact methods for how to implement every Indicator. In the coming year, we will release a more thorough Resource Guide, which will provide a much more in depth tool to assist providers in implementing the Standards. You will be able to find the completed guide on our website: www.actnowillinois.org.

ACT Now is also in the process of developing an Assessment Tool to pair with Standards. This Assessment Tool will allow programs to gauge their progress in implementing the Standards, help programs to determine their strengths and weaknesses, help programs to prioritize areas for improvement, and assist programs in forming a long-term plan to create a quality program that achieves positive outcomes.

## QUALITY AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS INCREASE POSITIVE OUTCOMES

**Quality afterschool programming provides a chance to build on school day learning by explaining academic concepts through hands-on activities.**

# Illinois Statewide Afterschool Quality Standards[1] Core Areas

## 1 INDOOR AND OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENTS

The physical environment in which a program operates is a foundation for the youth's experience in a program. Indoor and outdoor environments should be able to adequately accommodate all program activities.

### *Program Standard 1*

***The program's indoor environment meets the needs of all youth and staff.***

#### QUALITY INDICATORS

**1.1** The environment can safely and comfortably accommodate the various activities offered and/or can be re-arranged to meet the various needs of the program (e.g., spaces for physical games, creative arts, individual/quiet work, and eating/socializing).[2, 3, 4, 5]

**1.2** The program provides adequate and convenient storage space for equipment, materials, and personal possessions of youth and staff.[6]

**1.3** The building adheres to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards for accessibility or there is a plan to ensure the program is accessible for individuals with disabilities when the building is not ADA accessible.

**1.4** The program includes a visibly designated area for staff to hold private or sensitive conversations with youth and parents/guardians without interruptions.

**1.5** The environment is designed to promote youth work and interests, allowing youth to take initiative and ownership of their activities.[7]

### *Program Standard 2*

***The program's outdoor environment is safe and meets the needs of all youth. (If applicable, as some facilities may not have access to outdoor space.)***

#### QUALITY INDICATORS

**2.1** The outdoor environment is suitable for a wide variety of activities, including physical activity, group games, and individual play (see endnotes 1 and 2).[8]

**2.2** The program has an alternative plan if an outdoor environment is inaccessible due to inclement weather or other external factors.

**2.3** The outdoor equipment (both permanent and temporary) is safe and well-maintained. There is a procedure in place for regularly documenting the safety and maintenance of equipment.

**2.4** The outdoor spaces are designed to engage youth in physical activity and to broaden youth exposure to play experiences.

## 2 SAFETY, HEALTH, AND NUTRITION

Ensuring the physical safety and security of youth and staff is a necessary foundation for all programs. The Standards in this section outline the minimum requirements for safe physical environments and adequate staff supervision, as well as Standards for promoting healthy environments.

### *Program Standard 3*

***The program protects the health and safety of all youth.***

#### QUALITY INDICATORS

**3.1** Indoor and outdoor facilities are clean, and there are no observable safety or health hazards.[9]

**3.2** The environment meets or exceeds local and state health and safety codes.[10]

**3.3** Heat, ventilation, noise level, and light in the indoor environment are kept at comfortable levels and can be adjusted.[11]

**3.4** The program has a written policy in place for regularly checking the safety and maintenance of the indoor and outdoor program environment and equipment.

**3.5** The program provides adequate supplies and facilities for hand washing.[12]

**3.6** First aid kits are stocked and available at all times.[13]

**3.7** The program is located in a safe place, and a process is in place regarding how youth enter and exit the program's facilities.[14]

**3.8** The program has clearly outlined procedures to ensure the safety of youth and adults in an outdoor environment during program hours.

### *Program Standard 4*

***Youth are carefully supervised to maintain safety, and there are clear protocols for responding to emergency situations.***

#### QUALITY INDICATORS

**4.1** The program has clearly outlined procedures for emergencies including, but not limited to fire, natural disasters, and lockdowns. Staff and youth are trained in emergency procedures.[15, 16]

**4.2** The program has clearly outlined procedures for staff if youth are injured or become ill during a program, including notification of parents/guardians as appropriate *(see endnote 9)*.

**4.3** Systems are in place to protect youth from harm. Staff provide appropriate supervision for youth according to youth ages, abilities, needs, and the level of risk involved in activities *(see endnote 18)*.

**4.4** Staff have a system for knowing where youth are at all times, especially when they move from one place to another or use the restroom.

**4.5** Staff note when youth arrive, when they leave, and with whom they leave as appropriate. There is a system in place to keep unauthorized individuals from taking youth from the program.

**4.6** Staff notify families regarding issues that could impact the health and safety of the youth in the program *(see endnote 18)*.

### *Program Standard 5*

***Staff work to protect the health of all youth.***

#### QUALITY INDICATORS

**5.1** Staff protect youth from potential hazards including but not limited to the following: caustic or toxic art materials and cleaning agents, medications, hot liquids, and overexposure to heat or cold.

**5.2** Staff are trained in CPR and first aid prior to working with youth.

**5.3** Staff model, teach, and promote health and hygiene practices, including hand washing, especially after using the toilet or before preparing food.[17]

**5.4** Staff are made aware in a systemized way of the individual health needs of youth (e.g., allergies or chronic medical conditions such as asthma or diabetes) and modify activities or meals to accommodate health needs.[18]

**5.5** If the provider dispenses medication, staff should ensure the following:

- *Medications are secured in locked cabinets out of the reach of youth.*
- *Medication dispensation is recorded daily as to dose, time, and by whom administered.*
- *Records are kept current and easily accessible to staff.*
- *Directions for dispensing medication are current and on file.*
- *Consent forms are on file permitting staff to administer medications.*

**5.6** The program provides current documentation showing that the program has met the state and/or local health guidelines and/or regulations.

**5.7** No use of tobacco, alcohol, or drugs is allowed in the program.

### *Program Standard 6*

***If the program serves food, it meets the following indicators.***

#### QUALITY INDICATORS

**6.1** The program serves healthy and nutritious foods.[19]

**6.2** Drinking water is readily available at all times.[20]

**6.3** The amount, type of food, and schedule of snacks/meals are appropriate for the ages and sizes of youth.

**6.4** Food preparation and storage adheres to local, state, and federal regulations for food safety. All food is kept in sealed containers and stored in closed cabinets or storage closets.

**6.5** Food allergy information is posted and readily available to staff along with action steps to address food allergy reactions.

## 3 ADMINISTRATION

The program has sound administrative practices supported by well-defined and documented policies and procedures that meet the needs of staff and youth.

### *Program Standard 7*

***Program policies and procedures are responsive to the needs of all youth and families in the community.***

#### QUALITY INDICATORS

**7.1** A written mission statement sets forth the program's philosophy and goals and is available to all stakeholders.[21]

**7.2** The program makes itself affordable to all families by using community resources.

**7.3** The program's hours of operation are based on families' needs and the agency's capacity.

### *Program Standard 8*

***The administration provides sound management of the program.***

#### QUALITY INDICATORS

**8.1** Financial management of the program supports the program's goals.

**8.2** Financial management of the program supports professional development (PD) opportunities for staff.[22]

**8.3** Administration oversees the recruitment and retention of program staff.

**8.4** Systems are in place for the director to involve the staff and board in long-term planning.

**8.5** Systems are in place for the director to involve staff, youth, and families in decision making.[23]

**8.6** Administrators include staff, youth, and families in ongoing evaluation activities, aiming for continuous improvement in all areas of the program.

### *Program Standard 9*

***The program develops and implements a system for promoting continuous quality improvement.***

#### QUALITY INDICATORS

**9.1** The program creates and maintains a culture that promotes excellence and continuous quality improvement and focuses on achieving positive program outcomes.[24]

**9.2** The program has goals and outcomes that are aligned with its mission and conducts ongoing monitoring.[25, 26, 27]

**9.3** The program works with key stakeholders, including staff, youth, families, and the community, to collect and analyze data relevant to desired goals and outcomes.[28, 29]

**9.4** The program communicates goals and outcomes to key audiences and stakeholders, including staff, youth, families, and the community, and works to make any needed improvements.[30]

### *Program Standard 10*

***Program policies and procedures are in place to protect the safety of all youth.***

QUALITY INDICATORS

**10.1** Staff, youth, and families know what to do in case of emergencies.

**10.2** The program has established policies to transport youth safely; the program complies with all legal requirements for vehicles and drivers.

**10.3** Staff plan for different levels of supervision according to the level of risk involved in an activity.

**10.4** Written polices exist, and regular drills are scheduled and implemented to prepare for potential accidents and emergencies.

**10.5** Weapons are prohibited on the program site, and there is a policy/procedure in place to handle incidents involving weapons brought to the site.

### *Program Standard 11*

***Staff receive appropriate support to make their work experience positive.***

QUALITY INDICATORS

**11.1** The program has a plan in place to offer the best possible wages and working conditions in an effort to retain quality staff.

**11.2** Staff receive benefits, including health insurance and other benefits in accordance with state law.

**11.3** Staff are given ample time to discuss their concerns regarding the program with the appropriate supervisor(s).

**11.4** Staff receive continuous supervision and feedback that promote personal development and positive outcomes, including written performance reviews on a regular basis.

### *Program Standard 12*

***The program maintains personnel records of all staff.***

QUALITY INDICATORS

**12.1** Personnel records are kept up to date and contain hiring documents, results of background checks, emergency contact information, job descriptions, records of training and certification(s), performance evaluations, and when applicable, health information.

**12.2** Access to personnel records is limited to authorized staff on a need-to-know basis, and personnel records remain confidential.

**12.3** Staff may review, add, and correct information contained in their records, in accordance with applicable law.

**12.4** Personnel files are maintained and disposed of in accordance with federal and state regulations.

### *Program Standard 13*

***Files of youth contain accurate and sufficient information and are properly maintained.***

QUALITY INDICATORS

**13.1** Authorized program staff maintain and keep files for all youth in the program.

**13.2** Files of youth comply with all legal requirements and contain essential information, including registration forms; emergency contact information; information about special needs, including medical needs; copies of all signed permission or consent forms; authorizations for pick up; accident report forms; and, if applicable, medication permission forms.

**13.3** Files of youth are maintained and disposed of in a manner that protects privacy and confidentiality.

**13.4** Access to confidential files meets legal requirements in accordance with federal and state regulations.

### *Program Standard 14*

***Staff/youth ratios and group sizes permit the staff to meet the needs of youth.***

QUALITY INDICATORS

**14.1** Staff/youth ratios vary according to the ages and abilities of youth.[31]

**14.2** The program provides a plan to provide adequate staff coverage in case of emergencies.

**14.3** Substitute staff are used to maintain ratios when regular staff are absent.

**14.4** Volunteers must complete the appropriate training and orientation to be considered in the staff to student ratio.

## 4 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND QUALIFICATIONS

The program recruits and retains high quality staff and volunteers who are focused on creating a positive learning environment, and provide ongoing professional development based on assessed staff needs.

### *Program Standard 15*

***Staff are professionally qualified to work with all youth.***

QUALITY INDICATORS

**15.1** All staff, subcontractors, and volunteers have undergone appropriate background checks and child abuse clearances in accordance with program policies.[32]

**15.2** Staff have the appropriate education and experience to work with school-age youth.[33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38]

**15.3** Education, training, and experience of key program staff are appropriate to the level of responsibility assigned.[39]

**15.4** Staff are trained to interact effectively with people of different cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds.[40]

### *Program Standard 16*

***Staff are given an orientation to the job before working with youth.***

#### QUALITY INDICATORS

**16.1** A written job description that outlines responsibility to youth, families, and the program is reviewed with each staff member.

**16.2** Written program policies and procedures, including emergency procedures and confidentiality policies, are reviewed with staff.[41]

**16.3** New staff are given a comprehensive orientation to the program philosophy, routines, and practices *(see endnote 40)*.

### *Program Standard 17*

***The training needs of the staff are assessed, and training is relevant to assigned responsibilities as provided.***

#### QUALITY INDICATORS

**17.1** The agency provides ongoing training and professional development.[42, 43, 44, 45]

**17.2** The agency conducts an informal assessment of staff training needs.

**17.3** Staff receive training appropriate to their positions and responsibilities regarding working with families and relating to youth in ways that promote positive development.[46]

**17.4** Administrators receive training in program management and staff supervision.[47]

**17.5** Staff receive training in arranging the program environment and designing and implementing activities to support program goals.[48, 49]

**17.6** Staff receive training in the promotion of safety, health, and nutrition to youth *(see endnote 9)*.

**17.7** Administrators and staff receive training in cultural competency *(see endnote 9)*.

**17.8** Staff receive training and certifications required by all funding sources.

## 5 FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Meaningful family and community engagement are based on the premise that families, program staff, and community members share responsibility for the academic, physical, social, emotional, and behavioral development of youth. Family and community engagement occurs when there is an ongoing, reciprocal, strengths-based partnership. Family and community partnerships are fostered through a deliberate process that is embraced throughout the program and beyond.

### *Standard 18*

***The program has a systemic approach and structure for family and community engagement.***

#### QUALITY INDICATORS

**18.1** A jointly developed vision for family and community engagement is shared and integrated into the program policies and practices.[50]

**18.2** The program develops and implements an effective family and community engagement system on an ongoing basis that is mindful of diverse school-communities and responsive to youth and family needs and assets.[51]

**18.3** The program monitors, evaluates, and shares community and family engagement outcomes through an ongoing data collection system. This includes but is not limited to staff requesting feedback and participation from families regarding program planning.[52]

**18.4** Program partners and staff build their capacity to support youth learning and healthy development by leveraging partnerships with families to improve youth outcomes, engaging with parent organizations, and regarding families as valuable sources of knowledge and information to enhance curriculum and instruction.[53]

**18.5** The program develops partnerships and professional relationships with agencies, consultants, and organizations in the community that further the program's capacity to meet the needs and interests of the youth and families they serve.

**18.6** The program connects families with specific community resources to assist in meeting the needs of youth and families *(see endnote 9)*.

### *Standard 19*

***The program builds a welcoming environment that is responsive to youth and family needs.***

#### QUALITY INDICATORS

**19.1** Staff have developed trusting relationships with families and community members.[54]

**19.2** Staff share student accomplishments with his/her family.

### *Standard 20*

***Staff engage in ongoing and meaningful two-way communication with families to support youth learning and healthy development.***

#### QUALITY INDICATORS

**20.1** The program and staff serve as liaisons among schools, families, and community stakeholders.[55]

**20.2** Program staff maintain an ongoing relationship with school staff and community stakeholders.[56]

**20.3** The program works to increase family, staff, and youth knowledge of community resources.

**20.4** The program promotes civic engagement opportunities for families and youth in the community.

### *Standard 21*

***A quality program develops, nurtures, and maintains strong relationships with community organizations to fully support youth.***

QUALITY INDICATORS

**21.1** Program staff maintain an ongoing relationship with community stakeholders.[57]

**21.2** The program promotes civic engagement opportunities for families and youth in the community.

## 6 YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, PROGRAMMING, AND ACTIVITIES

The program staff acts in partnership with youth to create a high-quality learning environment and implements age-appropriate curricula and program activities that adhere to the typical benchmarks of growth and development and meets the multiple developmental needs of children and youth.

### *Program Standard 22*

***Staff encourages all youth to make thoughtful and responsible decisions.***

QUALITY INDICATORS

**22.1** Staff assist youth without taking control and encourage them to take leadership roles.[58]

**22.2** Staff encourage youth to think through their options and weigh the pros and cons before arriving at a decision.

**22.3** Staff empower youth to exercise their voice.[59]

**22.4** Staff encourage youth input through structured opportunities to influence the format or content of the program based on their interest, preference, and or satisfaction.[60]

### *Program Standard 23*

***Programs provide flexible and supportive activities for all youth.***

QUALITY INDICATORS

**23.1** The daily schedule is flexible and provides structure.[61, 62, 63]

**23.2** The program allows enough time to complete activities to ensure smooth transitions.

**23.3** The program allows opportunities for youth to engage in a combination of individual and group tasks, usually at their own pace.[64]

**23.4** The program provides the right amount of support and challenge to meet the cognitive, physical, and emotional needs of the youth.[65, 66]

### *Program Standard 24*

***The program is intentional about creating a positive afterschool climate that is emotionally and physically safe and that supports and accelerates student academic, social, and emotional learning.***

#### QUALITY INDICATORS

**24.1** The program makes connections to school-day learning and is aligned with relevant standards to promote academic, social, and emotional learning.[67]

**24.2** The program establishes connections with schools and families about youth academic, social, and emotional needs and learning goals *(see endnotes 9, 51, and 66)*.[68, 69, 70]

**24.3** The program makes connections between learning activities and real-life applications that are relevant and clear to the participants, families, and staff.[71]

**24.4** The program provides tools and resources for families to reinforce and/or expand on the academic, social, and emotional learning opportunities provided by the program.[72]

**24.5** The program communicates with families about any academic, physical, social, emotional, or behavioral concerns in a timely manner.

**24.6** The program has scheduled times and provides quiet places for academic support and social and emotional learning.

**24.7** The program uses active, meaningful, and engaging learning methods (including, for example, service learning) that promote collaboration amongst youth.[73]

**24.8** The program expands youth horizons by building on interests, talents, and skills that are unique to each youth.

**24.9** The program helps inspire and prepare youth for success in school, higher education, and careers.[74, 75]

**24.10** The program's goals are linked to learning skills that prepare youth for the 21st century.[76]

### *Program Standard 25*

***Staff relate to all youth in positive ways.***

#### QUALITY INDICATORS

**25.1** Staff treat youth with respect and listen to what they have to say.[77]

**25.2** Staff create a welcoming, emotionally safe, and comfortable environment for youth.[78]

**25.3** Staff respond to youth with respect and without bias.[79]

**25.4** Staff engage with all youth.[80]

**25.5** Staff encourage youth to establish rules for maintaining an environment that is free from bias and is respectful *(see endnote 65)*.[81, 82, 83, 84, 85]

### *Program Standard 26*

***There are sufficient materials to support program activities.***

#### QUALITY INDICATORS

**26.1** Materials are complete and in good condition.[86, 87]

**26.2** There are enough materials for the number of youth in the program *(see endnote 86)*.[88]

**26.3** Materials are developmentally appropriate for the age range of the youth in the program.[89]

### *Program Standard 27*

***Program activities and curricula integrate a variety of areas (e.g., recreation and fitness, fine arts, academic support, life skills, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), and personal growth and development), ensuring that the physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and creative domains are addressed in a comprehensive manner.***

#### QUALITY INDICATORS

**27.1** Activities and the curricula are in line with the authentic and individual learning styles, abilities, and interests of youth in the program *(see endnote 88)*.[90]

**27.2** Activities and curricula are well suited to the age range of youth in the program.[91, 92]

**27.3** Activities and curricula serve diverse youth and their families with cultural competence *(see endnote 9)*.

**27.4** Activities and curricula reflect best practices in the field of youth development, 21st century skills, and are research-based.[93]

## 7 PARTNERSHIPS WITH SCHOOLS

Quality afterschool programs create structures for formal and ongoing communication, collaboration, and information sharing with school staff to strengthen continuity around student learning. A program has its staff work closely with school staff to ensure academic components and activities are aligned with and complement school standards, curricula, and the continuous school improvement planning process.

### *Program Standard 28*

***The program maintains two-way/reciprocal communication with school-day staff to monitor academic and behavioral progress of youth.***

#### QUALITY INDICATORS

**28.1** Program staff maintain communication with school-day educators and administration to identify youth needs and monitor progress.[94]

**28.2** Program staff build partnerships with school staff *(see endnotes 55 and 66)*.

### *Program Standard 29*

***School-day and afterschool programs collaborate on curriculum planning and development to strengthen continuity around student learning and development.***

QUALITY INDICATORS

**29.1** Program staff actively pursue opportunities to collaborate with and support the school's improvement processes.

**29.2** Program staff incorporate programming that integrates and complements school-day activities *(see endnote 66)*.

**29.3** Program staff understand school-day curriculum and what youth are doing during regular school-day hours *(see endnote 66)*.

### *Program Standard 30*

***The program staff coordinates effective use of services and programs toward aligned goals.***

QUALITY INDICATORS

**30.1** The program staff maintain communication with the school principal and administration to align youth/school goals with program goals.

**30.2** The program staff actively pursue an ongoing commitment of resources (e.g., classroom environment, bulletin boards, storage space, computer facilities, and site coordinator's office) from school principal and classroom teachers.[95]

## AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS PROVIDE MANY BENEFITS TO YOUTH AND COMMUNITIES

**When young people become engaged in the community through enrichment activities, volunteer work, or teams and clubs, they grow up to become adults who are committed to the community.**

# Illinois Statewide Afterschool Quality Standards Abbreviated Resource Guide

This resource guide was developed to bring clarity and practicality to the Quality Standards and to assist afterschool programs in the initial implementation of the Standards. The resources listed support the outlined Core Areas and the corresponding Program Standards and Indicators. They have been categorized by Core Area and are listed alphabetically. Each source is accompanied by a brief statement describing how it is useful in implementing the Standards. ACT Now will be publishing a more in depth resource guide in the summer of 2016. This guide will be posted on our website: *www.actnowillinois.org*.

## 1 INDOOR AND OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENTS

### Child Care Center Design Guide

This guide provides criteria for planning and designing child care centers in GSA-owned or controlled spaces. It contains recommendations based on the needs of multiple users, including children from kindergarten through school age, parents, staff, administrators, and service personnel.

U.S. General Services Administration. (2003). *GSA child care center design guide.* Retrieved from http://www.gsa.gov/graphics/pbs/designguidesmall.pdf

### Community Investment Collaborative for Kids Resource Guide: Creating Quality School-Age Child Care Space

This report provides best practices in designing high-quality physical environments that support school age children from kindergarten through eighth grade. The strategies provided take into account space constraints as well as shared, borrowed, and rented facilities.

Winter, K., & Gyuse, R. (2011). *Community investment collaborative for kids resource guide: Creating quality school-age child care space.* Retrieved from http://www.lisc.org/media/filer_public/06/51/0651584f-6cc6-489d-be01-5a510edd20a5/2011_cick_school_age_guide.pdf

### U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission: Playground Safety

This webpage provides free playground safety alerts, guides, posters, brochures, handbooks, and other materials. These resources can be downloaded, or printed copies can be requested via the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. (n.d.). *Playground safety.* Retrieved March 29, 2016 from http://www.cpsc.gov/en/Safety-Education/Safety-Guides/Sports-Fitness-and-Recreation/Playground-Safety/

## 2 SAFETY, HEALTH, AND NUTRITION

### Dietary Guidelines for Americans

This guide is based on the 2010 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee's recommendations. It is "intended to be used in developing educational materials and aiding policymakers in designing and carrying out nutrition-related programs." It also provides information and advice for choosing foods and beverages that support a pattern of healthy eating.

U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2010). *Dietary guidelines for Americans (7th edition).* Retrieved from http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/sites/default/files/dietary_guidelines_for_americans/PolicyDoc.pdf

### Healthy Choices Afterschool: Investigation of the Alignment of Physical Activity and Nutrition Programs/Curricula and the National AfterSchool Association Program Standards

This report aims to assist afterschool providers with incorporating physical activity and nutrition initiatives into their afterschool programs. It includes an analysis of various health and nutrition curricula that can be adapted to meet a program's capacities, interests, and priorities. The report also indicates where/how the curriculum detailed aligns with the National AfterSchool Association's Standards.

Hall, G., & Gruber, D. (2006). *Healthy choices afterschool: Investigation of the alignment of physical activity and nutrition programs/curricula and the National AfterSchool Association Program Standards.* Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED496276.pdf

### National AfterSchool Association Standards for Healthy Eating and Physical Activity

These standards were adopted by the National AfterSchool Association in 2011. It provides best practices for afterschool programs serving foods and beverages, including amounts and types. It also provides practical applications that programs can implement to support healthy eating and physical activity.

Wiecha, J., Hall, G., Gannett, E., & Roth, B. (2011). *National AfterSchool Association standards for healthy eating and physical activity.* Retrieved from http://www.niost.org/pdf/host/Healthy_Eating_and_Physical_Activity_Standards.pdf

### The School-Based Afterschool Snack Program

This fact sheet describes the federally assisted School-Based Afterschool Snack Program. It also identifies the specific components that constitute a snack in afterschool.

U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2013). *The school-based afterschool snack program.* Retrieved from http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/AfterschoolFactSheet.pdf

## 3 ADMINISTRATION

### Illinois Nonprofit Principles and Best Practices

This document is designed to support nonprofits of varying experience, resources, and structure. It offers 10 principles/best practices on a wide range of issues aimed to assist nonprofits with compliance and accountability.

Donors Forum. (2008). *Illinois nonprofit principles and best practices.* Retrieved from https://donorsforum.org/sites/default/files/files/pages/Purple%20Book%20PDF.PDF

### Making Afterschool Programs Better

This policy brief is based on National Center for Research, Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) evaluations and encompasses U.S. Department of Education supported 21st Century Community Learning Center programs, state-supported afterschool programs across California, and multiple evaluations of the LA's Better Educated Students for Tomorrow enrichment program. The report identifies five components as key to effective afterschool programs. Each component is accompanied by common evaluation findings as well as examples of best practices or useful observations from the field.

Huang, D., & Dietel, R. (2011). *Making afterschool programs better.* Retrieved from http://www.cse.ucla.edu/products/policy/huang_MAPB_v5.pdf

### Principles & Practices for Nonprofit Excellence: A guide for nonprofit staff and board members

This document contains 11 accountability principles and 192 management practices. The guide is meant to help build strong nonprofits by serving as a strategic planning and operation evaluation tool.

Minnesota Council of Nonprofits. (2014). *Principles & practices for nonprofit excellence: A guide for nonprofit staff and board members.* Retrieved from http://www.minnesotanonprofits.org/principlespractices.pdf

### Principles for Good Governance and Ethical Practice

This guide offers 33 principles that support ethical practice and high governance standards. Taking advantage of the outlined principles will assist charitable organizations and foundations in achieving goals of being accountable and compliant.

Independent Sector. (2015). *Principles for good governance and ethical practice: A guide for charities and foundations.* Retrieved from http://www.independentsector.org/uploads/PrincipleResources/The_33_Principles.pdf

## 4 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND QUALIFICATIONS

### A Conceptual Model for Training After-School Program Staffers to Promote Physical Activity and Nutrition

This article provides recommendations on how afterschool staff can incorporate physical activity and promote nutritional snacking in their afterschool programs. The training framework employs the 5Ms to assist programs in meeting national physical activity and nutrition policies.

Weaver, R., Beets, M., Webster, C., Beighle, A., & Huberty, J. (2011). A conceptual model for training after-school program staffers to promote physical activity and nutrition. *Journal of School Health.* Retrieved from http://www.researchgate.net/publication/221883525_A_Conceptual_Model_for_Training_After-School_Program_Staffers_to_Promote_Physical_Activity_and_Nutrition

### Getting It Right: Strategies for After-School Success

This report is based on research and program evaluations. The provided recommendations are targeted to afterschool programs that are funded to produce measurable outcomes in the lives of youth who are at risk. The report offers strategies for youth and staff recruitment as well as program sustainability. The "Developing Strong Management" and "Pulling It All Together: The Budget Challenge" sections (pages 29–41) provide guidance on building a strong staff.

Grossman, J., Raley, R., & Walker, K. (2005). *Getting it right: Strategies for after-school success.* Retrieved from http://ppv.issuelab.org/resource/getting_it_right_strategies_for_after_school_success

### Keys to Quality Afterschool: Environments, Relationships, and Experiences A Best Practices Guide

This toolkit is designed as a professional development resource for out-of-school-time (OST) providers. It utilizes knowledge transfer and reflection to assist practitioners in examining their program practices as well as exploring their roles in developing continuous quality OST programs.

Ollhoff, L., Ollhoff, J., & Newman, R. (2012). *Keys to quality afterschool: Environments, relationships, and experiences.* Retrieved from https://www.pakeys.org/uploadedcontent/docs/sac/Keys%20to%20Quality%20Afterschool.pdf

### Strong Directors/Skilled Staff: Guide to Using the Core Competencies

This guide is informed by research as well as input from the OST field. It encompasses eight core competencies designed to support professional development. The guide also includes a core competency self-assessment tool for both youth workers and supervisors.

Gredler, M., Gannett , E., Gallagher, J. (2013). *Strong directors/skilled staff: Guide to using the core competencies.* Retrieved from http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/quality-and-cost/Documents/Strong-Directors-Skilled-Staff-Guide-to-Using-the-Core-Competencies.pdf

## 5 FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

### Family Engagement Framework: A Guide for Illinois School Districts, Schools, and Families

This guide is a collaborative effort based on research, best practices, and legislative requirements to assist schools, school districts, and communities in developing and expanding school-family partnerships. It offers a list of key principles and standards, essential elements, and field notes that support family engagement.

Illinois State Board of Education, American Institutes for Research & Academic Development Institute. (2014). *Family engagement framework: A guide for Illinois school districts, schools and families.* Retrieved from http://www.isbe.net/family-engagement/pdf/fe-guide.pdf

### Families and Expanded Learning Opportunities: Working Together to Support Children's Learning

This brief acknowledges the role parents play in their children's learning experiences as well as the role of ELOs amongst parents and their children. It lists four areas in which both the ELO and family must be fully engaged to ensure that the learning opportunities offered are beneficial. Examples and policy implications are also provided.

Harris, E., Rosenberg, H., Wallace, A. (2012). *Families and expanded learning opportunities: Working together to support children's learning.* Retrieved from http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/publications-resources/families-and-expanded-learning-opportunities-working-together-to-support-children-s-learning

### Focus on Families! How to Build and Support Family-Centered Practices in After School

Section 2 presents four overarching strategies that afterschool programs can employ to engage families after school. These strategies are broken down into specific action steps programs can take to achieve this goal.

Kakli, Z., Kreider, H., Little, P., Buck, T., & Coffey, M. (2006). *Focus on families! How to build and support family-centered practices in after school.* Retrieved from http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/publications-resources/focus-on-families!-how-to-build-and-support-family-centered-practices-in-after-school

### A New Wave of Evidence: Advancing Research, Improving Education: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement

This report examines the impact of parent and community involvement on student achievement. It provides a synthesis of 51 research studies, key findings, and nine recommendations for engagement.

Henderson, A., & Mapp, K. (2002). *A new wave of evidence: Advancing research, improving education: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement.* Retrieved from https://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf

## 6 YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, PROGRAMMING, AND ACTIVITIES

### Afterschool Programs That Follow Evidence-Based Practices to Promote Social and Emotional Development Are Effective

This research brief addresses the research-based design elements of successful afterschool programs. The findings identify four evidence-based practices as being significant in promoting personal and social development in young people.

Durlak, J., & Weissberg, R. (n.d.). *Afterschool programs that follow evidence-based practices to promote social and emotional development are effective.* Retrieved March 29, 2016 from http://www.expandinglearning.org/docs/Durlak&Weissberg_Final.pdf

### Community Programs to Promote Youth Development

This report focuses on the design, implementation, and evaluation of community-based youth programs. The report is divided into four parts and includes a framework for promoting adolescent development, an examination of program evaluation tools, and recommendations for program enhancement.

Eccles, J., & Appleton Gootman, J. (Eds.). (2002). *Community programs to promote youth development.* Retrieved from http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?isbn=0309072751

### Engaging Older Youth: Program and City-level Strategies to Support Sustained Participation in Out-of-School Time

This study examines the practices and structure of OST programs that primarily serve disadvantaged middle and high school youth. Provided in this report are the characteristics of high-retention programs, practices for sustained participation, and implications for future out-of-school time programming/initiative-building efforts.

Deschenes, S., Arbreton, A., Little, P., Herrera, C., Baldwin Grossman, J., Weiss, H., & Lee, D. (2010). *Engaging older youth: Program and city-level strategies to support sustained participation in out-of-school time.* Retrieved from http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/publications-resources/engaging-older-youth-program-and-city-level-strategies-to-support-sustained-participation-in-out-of-school-time

### Pathways to Success for Youth: What Counts in After-School

This study looks at the relationship between program quality, youth outcomes, and program and staff characteristics. It provides six indicators that offer insight on creating and sustaining high quality programs.

Massachusetts After-School Research Study. (2005). *Pathways to success for youth: What counts in after-school.* Retrieved from http://www.wcwonline.org/proj/mars/MARSfinalexec.pdf

### Positive Youth Development Resource Manual

This manual is divided into six sections and includes educational strategies and materials that promote positive youth development. It offers training activities, handouts, presentation slides, facilitation tips, and references to other resources.

ACT for Youth Upstate Center for Excellence. (2006). *Positive youth development resource manual.* Retrieved from http://ecommons.cornell.edu/bitstream/1813/21946/2/PYD_ResourceManual.pdf

### Putting It All Together: Guiding Principles for Afterschool Programs Serving Preteens

This report outlines six guiding principles and key indicators of afterschool programs that are associated with positive developmental outcomes for preteen youth. The identified principles align with research on the social and emotional health of preteens and can be implemented at a program level.

Metz, R., Goldsmith, J., & Arbreton, A. (2008). *Putting it all together: Guiding principles for afterschool programs serving preteens.* Retrieved from http://www.issuelab.org/resource/putting_it_all_together_guiding_principles_for_quality_after_school_programs_serving_preteens

### Putting Positive Youth Development Into Practice: A Resource Guide

Positive Youth Development (PYD) principles view a youth's positive contributions to society as contingent upon the guidance and support from caring adults. This guide offers research-based characteristics of effective youth development programs as well as practical steps for building collaborations that promote PYD.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2007). *Putting positive youth development into practice: A resource guide.* Retrieved from http://ncfy.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/PosYthDevel.pdf

### The Quality of School-Age Child Care in After-School Settings

This brief identifies the characteristics of high-quality afterschool settings and their link to positive developmental outcomes. It also offers program standard considerations for policymakers and a listing of program quality assessment tools.

Little, P. (2007). *The quality of school-age child care in after-school settings.* Retrieved from http://www.researchconnections.org/childcare/resources/12576/pdf

## 7 PARTNERSHIPS WITH SCHOOLS

### Partnerships for Learning: Promising Practices in Integrating School and Out-of-School Time Program Supports

This report is based on interviews with 11 national child/youth organizations with differing service models. It shares lessons for forging successful partnerships between schools/school districts and OST programs. It also identifies the benefits of partnerships and provides principles, strategies, and examples for sustainable school-OST partnerships.

Harvard Family Research Project. (2010). *Partnerships for learning: Promising practices in integrating school and out-of-school time program supports.* Retrieved from http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/partnerships-for-learning-promising-practices-in-integrating-school-and-out-of-school-time-program-supports

### Sustainability in School-linked After-School Programs

This report was prepared through a literature review and telephone interviews with afterschool programs meeting the 21st CCLC requirements. It provides strategies for program long-term sustainability and addresses community partnerships, program quality, and program leadership.

Policy Studies Associates. (2002). *Sustainability in school-linked after-school programs.* Retrieved from http://www.policystudies.com/studies/?id=41

## 8 GENERAL RESOURCES

### Continuous Quality Improvement in Afterschool Settings: Impact Findings from the Youth Program Quality Intervention Study

This study examines the impact of the Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI) model on program improvement and staff tenure.

Charles Smith, C., Akiva, T., Sugar, S., Devaney, T., Lo, Y., Frank, K., Peck, S., & Cortina, K. (2012). *Continuous quality improvement in afterschool settings: Impact findings from the youth program quality intervention study.* Retrieved from http://cypq.org/sites/cypq.org/files/YPQITech%20_2-29_12.pdf

### Core Knowledge and Competencies for Afterschool and Youth Development Professionals

This tool identifies 10 content areas that are significant for the programming and professionalization of the child and youth development arena. It is research-based and reflective of current happenings within the field. It provides a framework applicable to practitioners working in various settings and with young people ages five to 18.

National AfterSchool Association. (2011). *Core knowledge and competencies for afterschool and youth development professionals.* Retrieved from http://naaweb.org/images/PDFs/NAA_CKC_Blue_Cover.pdf

### Improving After-School Program Quality

This paper looks at the implications of Sequenced, Active, Focused, Explicit (SAFE) programs and measurements indicative of program quality. It also addresses implications for program improvement.

> Granger, R., Durlak, J., Yohalem, N., & Reisner, E. (2007). *Improving after-school program quality.* Retrieved from http://files.givewell.org/files/Cause4/East%20Harlem%20Tutorial%20Organization/Improving_After-School_Program_Quality.pdf

### Measuring Youth Program Quality: A Guide to Assessment Tools

This guide was created to inform practitioners, policy makers, researchers, and evaluators in the afterschool field of various quality assessment tools. It compares the tools of several youth programs and provides a brief description of how the tools are being used in the field.

> Yohalem, N., Wilson-Ahlstrom, A., Fischer, S., & Shinn, M. (2009). *Measuring youth program quality: A guide to assessment tools.* Retrieved from http://forumfyi.org/content/measuring-youth-program-quality-guide-assessment-tools-2nd-edition

### Quality Afterschool: Helping Programs Achieve It and Strengthening Policies to Support It

This brief takes into account research conducted by the University of Connecticut and the Harvard Family Research Project in the area of afterschool program quality. It identifies eight program characteristics that have been associated with proven outcomes.

> Afterschool Alliance. (2011). *Quality afterschool: Helping programs achieve it and strengthening policies to support it.* Retrieved from http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/issue_briefs/issue_quality_47.pdf

### Youth Program Quality Assessment

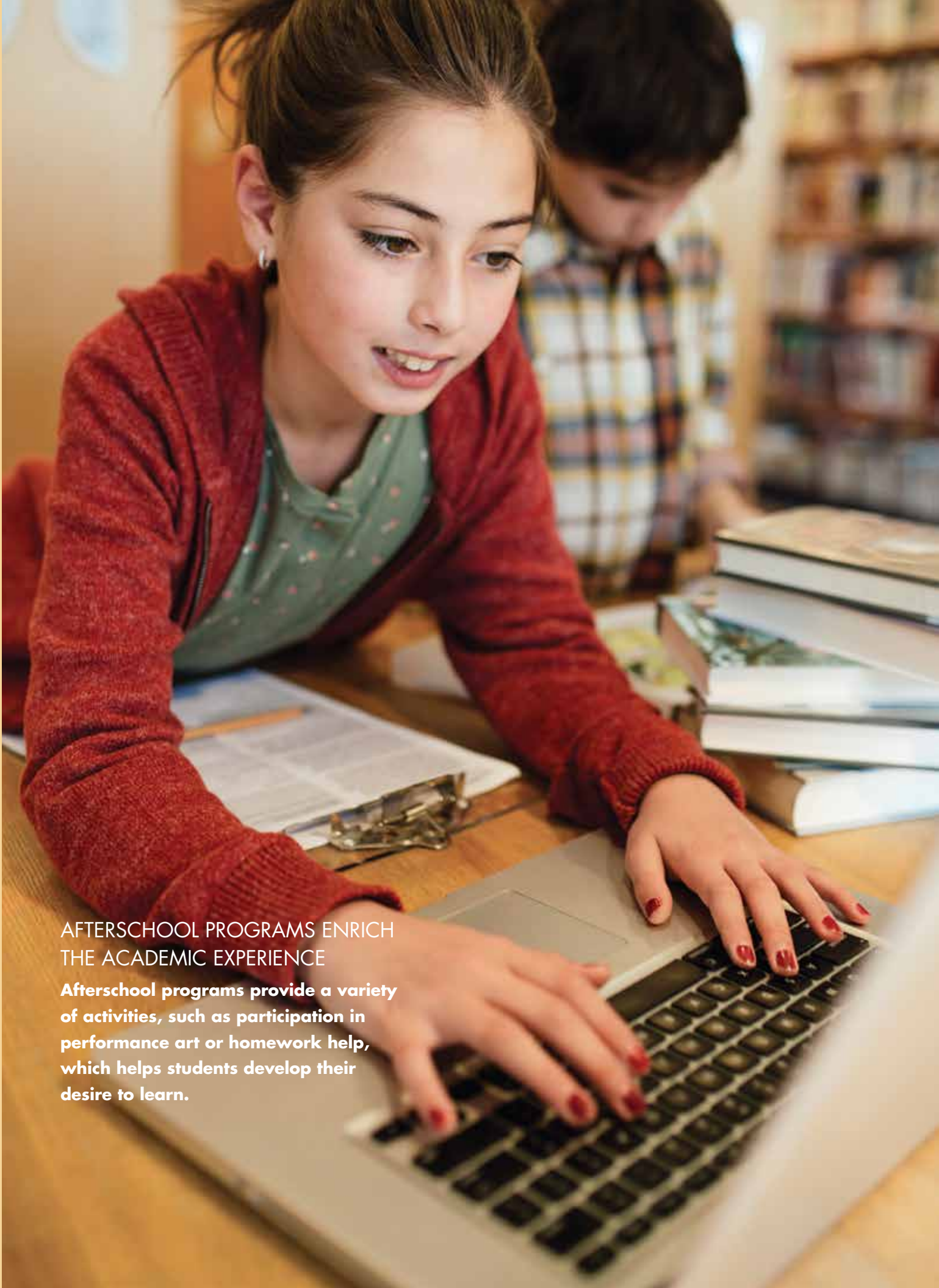
The Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) assesses the quality of the out-of-school time environment as well as the professional development needs of the afterschool staff.

> David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality. (2012). *Youth program quality assessment (YPQA).* Retrieved from http://cypq.org/assessment

## 9 STATE STANDARDS

*The following lists quality standards and quality work being conducted in states throughout the country.*

| | |
|---|---|
| ALABAMA | Afterschool Community Network Afterschool Quality Standards (draft) |
| ARKANSAS | Arkansas Standards for Quality Afterschool Programs |
| ARIZONA | Quality Standards for Out-of-School Time Programs: School's Out, Make It Count |
| CALIFORNIA | Quality Standards for Expanded Learning in California: Creating and Implementing a Shared Vision of Quality |
| CONNECTICUT | Best Practice Guidelines for Connecticut After School Programs |
| FLORIDA | Florida Standards for Quality Afterschool Programs 2nd Edition |
| GEORGIA | Georgia Afterschool & Youth Development Quality Standards |
| INDIANA | Indiana Afterschool Standards: A Guide for High Quality Programs Serving Youth in Out-of-School Time |
| IOWA | Iowa Afterschool Alliance Quality Standards |
| KANSAS | Kansas Afterschool Program Quality Guidelines and Self-Assessment Tools |
| KENTUCKY | The Kentucky School-Age Quality Framework |
| MAINE | Reaching Potential Through Quality Afterschool |
| MARYLAND | Maryland Out-of-School Time Programs' Quality Standards Framework |
| MASSACHUSETTS | MA-QRIS After School/Out-of-School Time Standards with Guidance |
| MICHIGAN | Michigan Out-of-School Time Standards of Quality |
| MINNESOTA | Minnesota Believe It. Build It. Framework Guidebook |
| MISSOURI | Missouri Afterschool Program Standards |
| NEBRASKA | Common Elements of Quality |
| NEVADA | OST Quality Standards for Nevada |
| NEW JERSEY | New Jersey's Quality Standards for Afterschool |
| NEW MEXICO | New Mexico Quality Afterschool Standards |
| NEW YORK | Program Quality Self-Assessment Tool User's Guide 2nd Edition |
| NORTH CAROLINA | North Carolina Center for Afterschool Programs Self-Assessment and Planning for Quality |
| OHIO | Quality Guidelines For Ohio's Afterschool Programs |
| OKLAHOMA | Oklahoma Afterschool Quality Standards |
| OREGON | Oregon's Quality Standards for Afterschool and Summer Programs |
| PENNSYLVANIA | What We Deserve: A Statement of Quality in Afterschool |
| RHODE ISLAND | Rhode Island: Guide to Afterschool Quality Standards |
| SOUTH CAROLINA | Components of a Quality Program |
| TEXAS | Texas Standards of High Quality Afterschool, Summer and Expanded Learning Programs |
| UTAH | Utah Quality Standards at a Glance |
| WASHINGTON | Quality Standards for Afterschool and Youth Development Programs |
| WEST VIRGINIA | 13 Indicators for a Quality Afterschool Program |
| WYOMING | 2015 Quality Briefs |



## AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS ENRICH THE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

**Afterschool programs provide a variety of activities, such as participation in performance art or homework help, which helps students develop their desire to learn.**

# Glossary of Terms

**21st Century Skills** 21st century skills are those skills that are needed to successfully negotiate the world of school, work, and home. 21st century skills are the indispensable currency for participation, achievement, and competitiveness in the global economy. Beyond the assessment of reading, mathematics, and science, the United States does not assess other essential skills that are in demand in the 21st century. All Americans, not just an elite few, need 21st century skills that will increase their marketability, employability, and readiness for citizenship, such as:

- *Thinking critically and making judgments*
- *Solving complex, multidisciplinary, open-ended problems*
- *Creativity and entrepreneurial thinking*
- *Communicating and collaborating*
- *Making innovative use of knowledge, information, and opportunities*
- *Taking charge of financial, health, and civic responsibilities*[1]

**Civic Engagement** Civic engagement "is defined as working to make a difference in the civic life of communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes."[2]

**Common Core Standards** Illinois joined more than 40 states in a collaborative effort to raise learning standards and improve college and career readiness for all students, regardless of where they live. The new Common Core State Standards establish clear expectations for what students should learn in English language arts and mathematics at each grade level. The standards are high, clear, and uniform to ensure that students are prepared for success in college and the workforce. You can access these standards at www.isbe.net.

**Developmental Assets** "The Developmental Assets are 40 research-based, positive qualities that influence young people's development, helping them become caring, responsible, and productive adults. Based in youth development, resiliency, and prevention research, the Developmental Assets framework has proven to be effective and has become the most widely used approach to positive youth development in the United States and, increasingly, around the world. The framework has been adapted to be developmentally relevant from early childhood through adolescence."[3]

**Family Engagement** Meaningful family engagement is based on the premise that parents/families, educators, and community members share responsibility for the academic, physical, social, emotional, and behavioral development of youth. Family engagement is fostered through a deliberate process that is embraced throughout the school. It empowers adults to jointly support student growth, address any barriers to learning, and ensure college and career readiness. Foremost, effective family engagement systems are mindful of diverse school communities that are rich in language, culture, and school experiences. Family engagement systems are also responsive to student and family needs.[4, 5]

**Illinois Learning Standards** The state of Illinois has standards to guide the academic, social and emotional, career, and arts of our youth. Those standards can be found at www.isbe.net. These standards define what students in Illinois Schools should know and be able to do at each age level.

**Positive Youth Development** Positive youth development is an intentional, pro-social approach that engages youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a manner that is productive and constructive; recognizes, utilizes, and enhances youths' strengths; and promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing multiple opportunities, fostering positive relationships, and furnishing the support needed to build their skills, sense of mastery, and leadership strengths. Positive youth development programs promote a number of outcomes in youth, including social skills, emotional competence, positive relationships with peers and adults, and civic and school engagement.[6]

**Social and Emotional Learning** Social and Emotional Learning is a process for acquiring skills to:

- *Recognize and manage emotions*
- *Demonstrate caring and concern for others*
- *Establish positive relationships*
- *Make responsible decisions*
- *Handle challenging situations effectively*[7]

The state of Illinois adapted the Social and Emotional Learning Standards in 2004. These standards are available at the Illinois State Board of Education website located at www.isbe.net. These standards have three goals:

- *Develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success*
- *Use social awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships*
- *Demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts*[8]

**Staff** For the purpose of this document, the term "staff" refers to all frontline staff, program directors, and anyone charged with the execution of delivering program services. The term "staff" does not include organization administrators or boards of directors.

**STEM** STEM is an acronym referring to the fields of study including science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The term is typically used in addressing education policy and curriculum choices in schools from kindergarten through college to improve competitiveness in technology development. It has implications for workforce development, national security concerns, and immigration policy.[9]

**Youth** For the purpose of this document, the term "youth" refers to anyone involved in the after-school program as a recipient of services. This term replaces child, teen, student, or adolescent.

**Youth Engagement** "Youth engagement is the meaningful participation and sustained involvement of a young person in an activity, with a focus outside of him or herself. The kind of activity in which the youth is engaged can be almost anything—sports, the arts, music, volunteer work, politics, social activism—and it can occur in almost any kind of setting."[10]

# Notes

## INTRODUCTION *pages* 3–9

1 Afterschool Alliance. (2014). *America after 3PM: Illinois.* Retrieved from http://afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/detail.html#s/IL/benefits/p_of_children_in_programs_2014

2 Afterschool Alliance. (2014). *America after 3PM: Illinois.*

3 Afterschool Alliance. (2014). *America After 3PM: Illinois.*

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5 Durlak, J. A., & Weissberg, R. P. (2010). *Afterschool programs that follow evidence-based practices to promote social and emotional development are effective.* Retrieved from http://www.expandinglearning.org/docs/Durlak&Weissberg_Final.pdf

6 Afterschool Alliance. (Feb. 2014). *Taking a deeper dive into afterschool: Positive outcomes and promising practices.* Retrieved from http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/Deeper_Dive_into_Afterschool.pdf

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8 Durlak, J. A., & Weissberg, R. P. (2007). *The impact of after-school programs that promote personal and social skills.* Retrieved from https://static1.squarespace.com/static/513f79f9e4b05ce7b70e9673/t/526a2547e4b0dda0159b1acb/1382688071013/the-impact-of-after-school-programs-that-promote-personal-and-social-skills.pdf

9 Smith, C., Akiva, T., Sugar, S., Devaney, T., Lo, Y., Frank, K., Peck, S. C., & Cortina, K. S. (2012). *Continuous quality improvement in afterschool settings: Impact findings from the Youth Program Quality Intervention study.* Retrieved from http://cypq.org/sites/cypq.org/files/YPQITech%20_2-29_12.pdf

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## ILLINOIS STATEWIDE AFTERSCHOOL QUALITY STANDARDS *pages* 11–22

1 The American Institutes for Research (AIR) provided additional research support for ACT Now's Quality Standards. To compile detailed research, AIR focused on three main sources of information. The first was a widespread review of firsthand research on afterschool or out-of-school time (OST) programs, including literature reviews of research that involved quasi-experimental design. This review was completed using online journal databases. Second, AIR had access to two nationally validated afterschool program measurement quality tools, which provided research-based quality indicators that often aligned with the ACT NOW indicators. These tools included the

Dimensions of Success (DoS) observation tool created by the Program In Education, Afterschool, and Resiliency (PEAR), and the Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) created by the David P. Weikart Center. The third method of gathering research was to review the existing standards in the National Afterschool Association's (NAA) "Core Knowledge and Competencies For Afterschool and Youth Development Professionals."

Some indicators did not appear to be supported by direct research. However, this does not necessarily mean that no research exists on these topics or that they are not best practice. The nuances of some of the indicators make it difficult to align them with the research that was reviewed. It proved challenging to find research studies that supported Standards which related to the administrative side of programming. This is not surprising, given that much of the research reviewed focused on studies of student and/or staff outcomes.

**2** "Ample indoor and outdoor space is safe and designed to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of youth" (Beckett, Hawken, & Jacknowitz, 2001, p. 23).

**3** Bodilly & Beckett, 2005, pp. 68, 72–73.

**4** "Program space allows youth and adults to move freely while carrying out activities (e.g., room accommodates all participants without youth blocking doorways, bumping one another and crowding). Program space is suitable for all activities offered (e.g., furniture and room support small and large groups: if athletic activity is offered, then program space supports this). Physical environment can be modified to meet the needs of the program offering (e.g., furniture and/or supplies can be moved)" (David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality, 2012, p. 6). Validation reports include High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (2005a; 2005b).

**5** "The space is utilized in a way that is conducive to learning in OST. It has the set up and resources to feel more informal, and to allow for exploration and learning" (Program in Education, Afterschool, and Resiliency, 2014, p.11). Validation report is Shah, Wylie, Gitomer, and Noam (2014).

**6** "Space should be used effectively as possible and ideally not shared, with opportunities for storage" (Bodilly & Beckett, 2005, pp. 65–66).

**7** "Use space (indoor or outdoor), regardless of space differences, in ways that promote youth choice, independence, and creativity" (Hall & Gruber, 2006, p. 7).

**8** "Program space allows youth and adults to move freely while carrying out activities (e.g,. room accommodates all participants without youth blocking doorways, bumping one another and crowding). Program space is suitable for all activities offered (e.g., furniture and room support small and large groups: if athletic activity is offered, then program space supports this). Physical environment can be modified to meet the needs of the program offering (e.g., furniture and/or supplies can be moved.)" (David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality, 2012, p. 6). Validation reports include High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (2005a; 2005b).

**9** "The program space is free of health and safety hazards. The program space is clean and sanitary." Excerpt taken from David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality (2012, p. 4). Validation reports include High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (2005a; 2005b).

**10** National Afterschool Association, 2011.

**11** "Ventilation and lighting are adequate in the program space. The temperature is comfortable for all activities in the program" (David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality, 2012, p. 4). Validation reports include High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (2005a; 2005b).

**12** Common colds are the main reason that children miss school/afterschool. Children have an average of over three colds per year. Programs can reduce the risk of spreading colds by participants and workers washing hands often (Center for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2016).

**13** "At least one complete first-aid kid it accessible and visible from the program space" (David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality, 2012, p. 5). Validation reports include High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (2005a; 2005b).

**14** "All entrances to the indoor program space are supervised for security during program hours. Access to outdoor program space is supervised during program hours" (David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality, 2012 , p. 5). Validation reports include High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (2005a; 2005b).

**15** "Written emergency procedures are posted in plain view" (David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality, 2012, p. 5). Validation reports include High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (2005a; 2005b).

**16** Train staff in emergency and general health and safety procedures (National Afterschool Association, 2011).

**17** Programs should implement procedures and plans experiences to promote health and fitness (National Afterschool Association, 2011).

**18** High-quality programs recognize that children and youth have individual mental health needs and require an individualized response. They support the physical health of each child and youth (National Afterschool Association, 2011).

**19** "Available food and drink is healthy (e.g., there are vegetables, fresh fruit, real juice)" (David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality, 2012, p. 7). Validation reports include High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (2005a; 2005b).

**20** David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality, 2012. Validation reports include High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (2005a; 2005b).

**21** A review of high-quality programs found that "the best programs had clearly defined goals in a written plan…and program leaders who could articulate a clear program mission and vision statement" (Huang & Dietel, 2011, p. 3).

**22** A review found that high-quality programs had leaders that "provided all staff with professional development opportunities that improved individual and team skills" (Huang & Dietel, 2011, p. 4).

**23** A review of high-quality programs found that leaders involved staff in collaborative decision making processes (Huang & Dietel, 2011, p. 4).

**24** A review of high-quality programs found that "the best programs had clearly defined goals in a written plan, curricular design and specific practices aligned to these program goals, and both internal and external evaluations in place" (Huang & Dietel, 2011, p. 3).

**25** Setting of clear goals and desired outcomes is essential for program success (Bodilly & Beckett, 2005).

**26** Continuous evaluations of program progress and effectiveness were found to be important to ensure quality programs and that goals are met (Beckett et al., 2001).

**27** "Systematic observations, documentation, and other effective and appropriate assessment strategies—in partnership with families and other professionals serving the same children—positively impact the development and learning of children and youth" (National Afterschool Association, 2011, p.17). The preceding statement is based on the following research: Bandy, Burkhauser, & Metz, 2009; Bowie & Bronte-Tinkew, 2008; Hammond & Reimer, 2006; Harris, 2008; Sheldon & Hopkins, 2008.

**28** Research found that high-quality programs established clear goals with input of program stakeholders, such as community leaders, community members, program staff parents, and youth (Beckett et al., 2001).

**29** Parent feedback can serve as an important vehicle to inform program improvements (Harris, 2008).

**30** A high-quality program "communicates with family members about program activities and goals and shares appropriate services and resources" (National Afterschool Association, 2011, p. 26).

**31** For groups of children age six and older, the ratio of group size should be between 1:10 and 1:15 (U.S. Department of Education & U.S. Department of Justice, 2000, p. 39; Beckett et al., 2001, p. 20).

**32** National Institute on Out-of-School Time, 2000.

**33** Researchers stress the importance of recruiting the highest quality teachers, not just teachers who are available for summer work or those who need additional instructional support (McCombs, Augustine, Schwartz, Bodilly, McInnis, Lichter et al, 2011, p. 64).

**34** Successful afterschool programs are characterized in part by having well-qualified and well-trained staff (Hammond & Reimer, 2006, p. 10; Huang & Dietel, 2011; Scott-Little, Hamann, & Jurs, 2002, pp. 387–419; U.S. Department of Education & U.S. Department of Justice, 2000, p. 2).

**35** Providing PD to staff can help retain qualified staff (Fashola, 1998).

**36** "Academic subjects taught during the afterschool period require qualified, preferably certified, instructors familiar with and who can be held accountable for student outcomes" (Fashola, 2002, p. 60).

**37** U.S. Department of Education & U.S. Department of Justice, 2000, p. 39.

**38** Programs with better outcomes provided opportunities for PD that took place before, during, and after the summer program (McCombs et al., 2011, p. 34).

**39** A review of high-quality programs found that a majority of staff had baccalaureate or masters' degrees, and a minimum of three years of experience in working with youth (Huang & Dietel, 2011).

**40** "High quality programs have recruitment and staffing processes that intentionally yields culturally competent staff with relevant skills" (McCombs et al., 2011, p. 35).

**41** "[High quality programs have] intensive mandatory orientation sessions, ranging in length from several days to a full work-week. At these meetings, staff members met and interacted with one another, learned project policies and procedures, contributed to planning the activity schedules, and discussed common behavior management techniques. They typically received their assignments during orientation and made plans with their co-leaders" (Birmingham, Pechman, Russell, & Mielke, 2005, p.17).

**42** High-quality programs have ongoing staff meetings and supervision, and consistent feedback on what worked and what didn't (Birmingham, et al., 2005, pp.18 and 24; Ingvarson et al., 2005, pp.15–19.).

**43** Programs with better outcomes provided opportunities for professional development that took place before, during, and after the summer program (McCombs et al., 2011, p. 34).

**44** High-quality programs train staff (Hamman & Reimer, 2006, p.11; Beckett et al., 2001; Brown, McComb, & Scott-Little, 2003; Vandell, Reisner, Brown, Pierce, Dadisman, & Pechman, 2004, pp. 60–61; Noam, Biancarosa, & Dechausay, 2003; Fashola, 1998, pp. 51–52).

**45** A review of high-quality programs found that all "programs provided all staff with professional development opportunities that improved individual and team skills as well as some form of technology-related professional development" (Huang & Dietel, 2011, p. 4).

**46** It is important to provide PD to staff members to increase their ability to develop and implement developmentally appropriate curriculum; improve their skills in supporting and encouraging curiosity and exploration; support their function as role models; and foster their ability to instill a healthy self-image in students (U.S. Department of Education & U.S. Department of Justice (2000) as cited in Huang, Cho, Mostafavi, & Nam, 2008, p. 26).

**47** A review of high-quality programs found that site coordinators were more likely to receive PD opportunities related to programs management (Huang & Dietel, 2011).

**48** It is important to provide PD to staff members to increase their ability to develop and implement developmentally appropriate curriculum; improve their skills in supporting and encouraging curiosity and exploration; support their function as role models; and foster their ability to instill a healthy self-image in students (U.S. Department of Education & U.S. Department of Justice (2000) as cited in Huang et al., 2008, p. 26).

**49** Staff should have training in the program curriculum being implemented and have content knowledge (Hammond & Reimer, 2006, pp.10 and 20; Ingvarson, et al., 2005).

**50** A study of seven programs that combined school and family involvement showed improved communication with family members and showed positive student outcomes when they included one or more of the following three strategies: parental participation in the program design or organizational strategies, direct parent training or education strategies, and program strategies in the home setting. Participants in those programs showed improved achievement, school attachment, focus, and emotional and social development (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004).

**51** "Works effectively with families from a variety of cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Provides opportunities for continual family involvement throughout the program. Facilitates and models a strengths-based, family-centered approach. Shares appropriate services and resources [with families]" (National Afterschool Association, 2011, p. 26).

**52** "Another strategy some programs have found successful is to develop a comprehensive data-sharing plan with families. Such a plan may include tracking data on a child's performance and learning progress at school, in the program, and at home and sharing that data among teachers, program providers, and family members. This comprehensive data sharing requires parent permission and alignment between the program and the school but ensures all parties have the most comprehensive picture of a child's achievement and growth to better tailor support services to a child's needs (Harris, Rosenberg, & Wallace., 2012, p. 3)."

**53** A study of seven programs combining school and family involvement found improved communication with family members and showed positive student outcomes when they included one or more of the following three strategies: parental participation in the program design or organizational strategies; direct parent training or education strategies; and program strategies in the home setting. Participants in those programs showed improved achievement, school attachment, focus, and emotional and social development (Catalano et al., 2004).

**54** High-quality programs adopted policies that established a tone of welcome, respect, and inclusion [with families] (Birmingham et al., 2005, p.16).

**55** A study of seven programs combining school and family involvement found improved communication with family members and showed positive student outcomes when they included one or more of the following three strategies: parental participation in the program design or organizational strategies; direct parent training or education strategies; and program strategies in the home setting. Participants in those programs showed improved achievement, school attachment, focus, and emotional and social development (Catalano et al., 2004).

**56** Programs with strong connections to schools can support both academic and social outcomes for youth (Little, Wimer, & Weiss, 2008, pp. 3 and 9)

**57** Programs with strong connections to schools can support both academic and social outcomes for youth (Little, Wimer, & Weiss, 2008, pp. 3 and 9)

**58** "Program staff assist youth without taking control of the activity, for example, by coaching or employing scaffolding techniques to help youth gain a better understanding of a concept or complete an action on their own" (Birmingham et al., 2005).

**59** More youth input into activities was correlated to higher youth reports of engagement and enjoyment of an activity (Grossman et al., 2013).

**60** "[In high quality programs] staff share control of most activities with youth, providing guidance and facilitation while retaining overall responsibility (e.g., staff uses youth leaders, semiautonomous small groups or individually guided activities). Staff provide multiple opportunities for youth (individual or group) to make plans for projects and activities (e.g., how to spend their time, how to do a task). All youth have the opportunity to make at least one open-ended content choice within the content framework of the activities (e.g., youth decide topics within a given subject area, subtopics, or aspects of a given topic). All youth have the opportunity to make at least one open-ended process choice (e.g., youth decide roles, order of activities, tools or materials, or how

to present results). Staff initiates structured opportunities for youth to give feedback on the activities (e.g., staff asks feedback questions, provides session evaluations)" (David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality, 2012, pp.17 and 19). Validation reports include High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (2005a; 2005b).

**61** Meta-analysis of studies determined that the ability for youth to select from a variety of activities of their choosing was an important best practice for programs (Beckett et al., 2001, p.18).

**62** High-quality programs are flexible in modifying program components to accommodate diverse student needs (Hammond, & Reimer, 2006; Lauer, Akiba, Wilkerson, Apthorp, Snow, & Martin-Glenn, 2004).

**63** A review of successful academic programs illustrates that these programs had clear goals as well as structures, materials, and training procedures (Fashola [1998] as discussed in Beckett et al., 2001, p.18).

**64** "Freedom of children to choose among an array of interesting activities (or select being alone if desired) is strongly supported as a practice" (Beckett et al., 2001, p.18).

**65** Instructors need to be firm enough to control a group but flexible enough to allow youth to express themselves and have fun (Grossman, Price, Fellerath, Jucovy, Kotloff, & Walker, 2002).

**66** Youth who report receiving positive adult support also report higher levels of enjoyment, engagement, and learning in programs, especially for middle and high school youth (Grossman et al., 2013).

**67** Programs with strong connections to schools can support both academic and social outcomes for youth. High-quality programs demonstrate alignment across the school and OST program (Little et al., 2008; Bodilly & Beckett, 2005, p. 70; McCombs et al., 2011).

**68** Establish clear goals with input of program stakeholders, such as community leaders, community members, program staff parents, and youth (Beckett et al., 2001).

**69** "Another strategy some programs found successful is to develop a comprehensive data-sharing plan with families. Such a plan may include tracking data on a child's performance and learning progress at school, in the program, and at home and sharing that data among teachers, program providers, and family members. This comprehensive data sharing requires parent permission and alignment between the program and the school but ensures all parties have the most comprehensive picture of a child's achievement and growth to better tailor support services to a child's needs" (Harris et al., 2012, p. 3)."

**70** A literature review of high-quality afterschool programs "emphasize the importance of trying to integrate community, program, and family efforts to support youth, including coordination with formal schools, use of volunteers, and community services and organizations" (Bodilly & Beckett, 2005, pp. 65, 72, and 88).

**71** "Staff help youth connect current activity to broader societal problems or ethical issues, and personal experiences, applications, or previous knowledge. Staff help connect activities to careers, career preparation, or job-related activities (David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality, 2012, p. 21)." Validation reports include High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (2005a; 2005b).

**72** A study of seven programs combining school and family involvement had improved communication with family members and showed positive student outcomes when they included one or more of the following three strategies: parental participation in the program design or organizational strategies; direct parent training or education strategies; and program strategies in the home setting. Participants in those programs showed improved achievement, school attachment, focus, and emotional and social development (Catalano et al., 2004).

**73** Researchers have found that high-quality programs generally implement activities that are sequences, active, focused, and explicit (SAFE). These high-quality programs have the presence of a sequenced set of activities to achieve skill objectives and the use of active forms of learning. At least one program component is focused on developing personal or social skills and the target of specific personal or social skills. Programs with these SAFE elements have demonstrated youth outcomes in areas of improved feelings of self-confidence and self-esteem, school bonding, positive social behaviors, school grades, and achievement test scores, together with reduced problem behaviors and drug use (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Larson & Verma, 1999; Miller, 2003).

**74** High-quality programs provided "opportunities for skill building and mastery: Each after-school project created opportunities to build participants' literacy skills through reading, story-telling, writing activities, and use of formal curricula" (Birmingham et al., 2005, p. i).

**75** "Staff help connect activities to careers, career preparation, or job-related activities" (David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality, 2012, p. 21). Validation reports include High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (2005a; 2005b).

**76** Opportunities for skill building and mastery: each after-school project created opportunities to build participants' literacy skills through reading, storytelling, writing activities, and use of formal curricula (Birmingham et al., 2005).

**77** "Staff mainly use a warm tone of voice and respectful language" (David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality, 2012, p. 8). Validation reports include High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (2005a; 2005b).

**78** "The emotional climate of the session is predominately positive (e.g., mutually respectful, relaxed, supportive; characterized by teamwork, camaraderie, inclusiveness, and an absence of negative behaviors)" (David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality, 2012, p. 3). Validation reports include High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (2005a; 2005b).

**79** "There is no evidence of bias; rather, there is mutual respect for and inclusion of others of a different religion, ethnicity, class, gender, ability, appearance or sexual orientation" (David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality, 2012, p. 3). Validation reports include High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (2005a; 2005b).

**80** Staff in high-quality programs were equitable and inclusive with all youth, encouraging the participation of all and engaging any students who appeared to be isolated (Birmingham et al., 2005).

**81** Meta-analysis of research studies highlighted the importance of positive and warm relationships between staff and students (Beckett et al., 2001; LaFleur, Russell, Low, & Romash, 2011).

**82** High-quality programs were found to offer emotional support that involves the warmth, care, and encouragement that give youth the security to take on new challenges and grow (Rhodes, 2004).

**83** A meta-analysis of more than 100 studies found that teachers who shared high-quality relationships with youth had 31 percent fewer discipline problems than those teachers lacking high-quality relationships (Marzano, 2003; Beckett et al., 2001).

**84** "The staff of effective afterschool programs intentionally create a culture of high expectations that affirms the potential of each participant and communicates clear expectations and standards concerning participation and behavior…high expectations combined with opportunities to meet those expectations leads to increased motivation and engagement" (Hall, Yohalem, Tolman, & Wilson, 2003, p. 33).

**85** Research has consistently found that verbal reinforcement, like praise and encouragement, can increase motivation (Cameron & Pierce, 1994, pp. 363–423; Akin-Little, Eckert, & Lovett, 2004).

**86** There are enough materials and supplies prepared for all youth to begin activities (David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality, 2012)." Validation reports include High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (2005a; 2005b).

**87** High-quality programs have an "adequate amount of materials and supplies to ensure youth have a variety of activity choices." (Beckett et al., 2001, pp. 25–26).

**88** "Adequate amount of materials and supplies to ensure youth have a variety of activity choices and decreases the chance of conflict among participants and between the program and other programs or institutions (if a program is operating in a shared environment)." (Beckett et al., 2001, p. 26).

**89** "All of the materials are very appropriate for supporting the learning goals and appealing to the students" (Program in Education, Afterschool, and Resiliency, 2014, p. 9). Validation report is Shah, Wylie, Gitomer, and Noam (2014).

**90** OST programs should incorporate "appropriate content and pedagogy relative to the children's needs and the program's mission, with opportunities to engage" (Bodilly & Beckett, 2005, p. 73).

**91** A literature review shows age-appropriate activities are an indicator of program quality (Bodilly & Beckett, 2005, p. 73).

**92** OST programs should incorporate "appropriate content and pedagogy relative to the children's needs" (Bodilly & Beckett, 2005, p. 73).

**93** Learning is more likely to occur when evidence-based training approaches are used (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2003; Durlak, 1997; Durlak, 2003; Elias, Zins, Weissberg, Frey, Greenberg, Kessler et al., 1997; National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2002; Payton, Wardlaw, Graczyk, Bloodworth, Tompsett, & Weissberg, 2000; McCombs et al., 2011).

**94** Researchers stressed the importance of collaboration on curriculum between OST programs and school-day educators as well as sharing information about students between afterschool and school-day personnel (Beckett et al., 2001; Walter, Caplan, & McElvain, 2000; Birmingham et al., 2005).

**95** "Arranging for classroom libraries, manipulatives, and games to be available to support homework and other after-school academic activities" (Birmingham et al., 2005, p. 12).

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS *pages* 35–36

**1** Partnership for 21st Century Skills. (2010). *21st century knowledge and skills in educator preparation*. Retrieved from http://www.p21.org/storage/documents/aacte_p21_whitepaper 2010.pdf

**2** Ehrlich, T. (2000). Preface. In *Civic responsibility and higher education*. Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press

**3** Search Institute. (n.d.). *Developmental assets: Preparing young people for success*. Retrieved March 25, 2016 from http://www.search-institute.org/what-we-study/developmental-assets

**4** Illinois State Board of Education. (2015). *Draft Illinois State Board of Education family engagement framework: A guide for Illinois school districts, schools and families*. Retrieved from http://www.isbe.net/family-engagement/pdf/fe-guide.pdf

**5** National PTA. (n.d.). *National standards for family-school partnerships*. Retrieved March 25, 2016 from http://www.pta.org/nationalstandards

**6** Youth.gov. (n.d.). *Interagency working group on youth programs develops common language on positive youth development.* Retrieved March 25, 2016 from http://youth.gov/feature-article/interagency-working-group-youth-programs-develops-common-language-positive-youth

**7** Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. (n.d.). *What is social and emotional learning?* Retrieved March 25, 2016 http://www.casel.org/social-and-emotional-learning/

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