

# ILLINOIS STATEWIDE QUALITY STANDARDS PROVIDER HANDBOOK

## INTRODUCTION

ACT Now recognizes that all of the quality indicators are not applicable to all afterschool programs and as was noted at the training, programs may hit roadblocks in implementing the Standards.

Each of the initial provider training sessions included an opportunity for participants to use the shared knowledge of the group to brainstorm detours for these roadblocks.

ACT Now and the trainers appreciate the provider's hard work in brainstorming and sharing during the training. We believe there is value in providers sharing knowledge with each other. This Provider Handbook includes the ideas that were captured from providers around the state.

### WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS FOR USING THE QUALITY STANDARDS AND THE REFLECTION AND PLANNING (RAP) GUIDE?

- To properly train staff
- Supplementing school curriculum
- Increase family engagement
- Professional Development
- Assessment (*everything especially program policies*)
- Program development
- Create a common language
- To advocate for the importance of afterschool with funders
- Self-evaluation
- As a road map
- Program improvement – what can we do better?
- Use them as a base foundation
- Use them in the summer in planning for new fiscal year
- Use them as reflection at the end of the year
- Use the Standards to determine whether we are meeting the needs of all children (*physically and emotionally*)
- Staff training and supervision
- Show funders that the program is well-designed and research-based
- Evaluate programs
- Continuous program improvement
- Board meeting
- Teacher-Staff-Administration Survey
- Survey with parents
- Providing worth of program (*bragging rights*) Standard #7
- Quality programming
- Professional development

- To improve community partnerships/family involvement, etc.
- Self-assessment
- At a staff meeting to provide perspective from: teachers, volunteers, aides, high school helpers
- As a guideline
- Checks and balances
- Training tools
- Clear and concise what to evaluate program
- Keep standards at the forefront in talking to partners
- Improvement plan
- Funding request
- Reflect on current daily practices
- Engage in developing a plan to increase using the standards more each day
- Creating new activities for youth
- Fostering community discussion about the importance of afterschool
- Tool for advisory committees
- Improve service delivery skills
- Give updates on Standards implementation in newsletters
- Incorporate Standards into staff orientation
- Incorporate into mission
- Blend with current policy practices
- Marketing your program
- Help understanding the community
- Giving youth a voice
- Budget planning
- Curricula planning

## HOW WILL THE STANDARDS AND THE RAP GUIDE HELP YOU?

- Staff feel supported
- To garner community support for program needs
- Continuous quality improvement
- More effective staff and programs
- Increase participation
- Sustainability
- Academic and other student achievement will improve
- Consistency across multiple sites
- Increase staff morale
- Planning
- Evaluating
- Staff Buy-in
- Use the RAP Guide as a self-assessment tool for your professional development training and also to make room for improvement.
- Improve programs
- Document growth
- Plan for training
- Guide programming
- Help fulfill requirements
- Educate staff
- Ensures consistency
- Show outcomes
- Know where improvement is needed
- Professional development ideas for staff
- Monthly reports

- Make a to-do list
- Reference guide
- Improve program
- Quality staff
- Develop and identify how to reach goals
- Identify new opportunities
- Providing additional training to Americorps volunteers
- Help build common language and understanding on what quality looks like
- Make data driven and informed decisions
- R/V data
- Supports funding requests
- Guide for future funding requests
- Ability to run centers/programs
- Grow as a professional
- Think more creatively
- Go beyond comfort zones
- Increase parents' support for afterschool programs
- Get administrators and staff on the same page
- Ensure practices are supported by research
- Grow number of community partners
- Build broader political support for afterschool programs
- Determine strategic priorities
- Plan for the future and create plans for issues programs may not have faced yet
- A tool to help administrative and front line staff work closer together
- Motivational tool
- Improve program safety
- Increase staff knowledge
- Help to become an expert in the field
- Improve program transparency
- Make better use of resources
- Improve relationships with the school day

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL ROADBLOCKS IN USE OF THESE MATERIALS AND/OR IN MEETING THE STANDARDS?	WHAT DETOURS MIGHT HELP YOU GET AROUND THE ROADBLOCKS?
Lack of Space	Organize space to maximize what you have. Creatively change options or activities to accommodate space. Come up with more creative activities.
Weather, Environment, and/or Safety Constraints on Space	Develop partnerships with school, community, and parents to see if other stakeholders can offer resources to solve these problems.
No Nurse or Clinicians	Make sure ALL staff is certified in first aid, CPR, and AED
Understaffed	Directors and coordinators might need to lend a hand. Recruit volunteers.
Mismanagement of Funds	More than one person should know about funds and accounts.

Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be flexible throughout the year.</li> <li>Schedule during work time.</li> <li>Delegate responsibilities.</li> <li>Be persistent.</li> <li>Create small achievable goals (make them SMART).</li> <li>Don't procrastinate.</li> <li>Set a timeline.</li> <li>Assign tasks.</li> <li>Look at what can be done immediately.</li> <li>Create schedules and deadlines.</li> <li>Imbed it into your programming.</li> </ul>
Unclear Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take time to work through the Reflection Guide and decide how the Standards fit within your vision and mission.</li> </ul>
Staff Buy-In	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invite staff to be involved in program design.</li> <li>Keep volunteers in the loop.</li> <li>Provide clear communication about goals and objectives.</li> <li>Create incentives.</li> <li>Build it into evaluations and individual team members' goals.</li> <li>Collaborate with and learn from other agencies.</li> <li>Get excited and be positive.</li> </ul>
Language of Standards – Effectively Communicate Core Concepts to All Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create one-page of key concepts.</li> <li>Define key terms.</li> </ul>
Staff Turnover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Having consistent one-on-one contact, listening to staff and following up.</li> </ul>
Parent Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop parent-child activities.</li> <li>Hold a potluck.</li> <li>Hold meetings at times convenient for parents.</li> <li>Add Standards feedback sessions onto already existing and popular parent engagement events.</li> <li>Use social media.</li> <li>Communicate updates in newsletter.</li> </ul>
Timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Know when to introduce new information or test it out with a small group.</li> </ul>
Changes are Sometimes Difficult: Resistance from Staff, Students, and Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Show the benefits – find the “HOOK.”</li> <li>Take baby steps.</li> <li>Celebrate the small things.</li> <li>Provide involvement opportunities/voice in development of policies and procedures.</li> <li>Bring all parties to the table.</li> <li>Have assessment activities that are fun for kids.</li> <li>Be empathetic to resistance.</li> </ul>

	<p>Emphasize that this isn't a punitive measure. Be a creative mediator.</p>
Too Regimented	<p>Know who you are providing services to and cater to their needs.</p>
Lack of Resources and Funds	<p>Branch out to be more proactive. Promote/ask community. Network, brainstorm, research. Create partnerships. Fundraise. Apply for grants. Recruit volunteers. Donations of funds and resources to help meet the Standards.</p>
Summer Maintenance	<p>Adapt to environment.</p>
Teachers	<p>Develop good working relationships.</p>
Things Out of Our Control	<p>Recognize out of control situations and let it go!</p>
Custodians	<p>Bring treats!</p>
Lack of Interest	<p>Pump it up/sell it! Use media to promote your program and its quality aspects. Be determined and passionate.</p>
Possible Discouragement of Not Meeting Standards	<p>Look at what is being done right. Look at Standards as a guide to know where improvement is needed.</p>
Program Communication and Professional Development Needed	<p>Professional development is a must – get Director in contact with ACT Now.</p>
Opposition to Change	<p>Find the connections between other tools being used. Help the staff see how it will improve the program. Create a broader advocacy initiative for change. Seek ways to compromise.</p>
Not My Program – “I Can’t Make You Do Anything.”	<p>This may not be your program, but we all serve the same kids (messaging.)</p>
Certain Programs That are Doing Things Well Do Not Want to Do More	<p>Create ownership and investment in the program.</p>
Thinking Outside the Box	<p>Daily pushes to encourage creative thinking.</p>
Scoring Accuracy and Knowledge of Indicator Content	<p>Provide training and mentoring.</p>
Already Have a Quality Tool	<p>Compare and contrast tools to avoid overlap. Remind about the positive outcomes linked to this tool.</p>

Connecting to on the Ground Work	<p>Create a structured plan for implementation.</p> <p>Only pick a few areas to focus on at once.</p> <p>Discuss Standards periodically at staff meetings.</p> <p>Intentional actionable training.</p>
Lack Experience and Education	Ask colleges and universities for support
Language Barrier	Translate materials.
Lack of Resources or Strategies to Fix Issues	<p>Reach out to administrators or ACT Now.</p> <p>Reach out to other area afterschool programs.</p> <p>Ask for suggestions from parents and youth.</p>
Communication with School District and Superintendents	Ask the district to bring school leaders together for a community conversation.
Adapting procedures to multiple sites.	Create clear policies and communicate them to make sure everyone is on the same page.