

# **Best Practice Guidelines for Connecticut After School Programs**

**Version 1.2**

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**Connecticut  
After School  
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# Best Practice Guidelines for Connecticut After School Programs

## Introduction

The Connecticut After School Network is a partnership of individuals and organizations working to make sure that Connecticut children and youth have the opportunity to participate in high quality, affordable after school programs. To reach this goal the Network sponsored the development of these *Best Practice Guidelines* and the companion *Self-Assessment Tool* with the assistance of leadership from the Connecticut after school community. To support the use of these tools, the Network offers training, technical assistance and other assistance as needed to support staff and program improvement. Visit [www.ctafterschoolnetwork.org](http://www.ctafterschoolnetwork.org) for additional information.

## **The Benefits of Self-Assessment**

The use of a self-assessment tool aids programs in determining both areas of strength and areas that may need support. Self-assessment helps planning for appropriate use of staff, time and resources. Regular use of self-assessment tools help programs sustain improvements and continue to provide better outcomes for children and youth. Staff members who use self-assessment find they can recognize high-quality programming and talk with ease and confidence when advocating on behalf of the program. In addition, self-assessment, when used as part of a team approach, supports the development of a more knowledgeable work force.

## **The Purpose of the Connecticut After School Best Practice Guidelines**

These guidelines are designed to specify those practices that most clearly identify high quality in after school programs. More than fifty Connecticut professionals in the field of after school programming met to discuss, review and determine these items as “best practice” for children and youth programming—kindergarten through high school—in the State of Connecticut. The National AfterSchool Association publication, “NAA Standards for Quality School-Age Care” was the framework for these guidelines. Additional information from similar work being done in other states was used to complement the material. Each item was reviewed and adjusted to reflect current research from a variety of sources such as the National Institute on Out-of-School Time, the Harvard Family Research Project and the Massachusetts Afterschool Research Study, as well as core competencies developed by the Connecticut After School Network. Please see the list of the many sources used to prepare these guidelines in the Bibliography.

These guidelines are meant to complement other quality efforts. In particular, the Connecticut Department of Public Health has set child care licensing regulations that establish basic quality standards. Programs exempt from licensing are encouraged to review those regulations to build a firm foundation for meeting the practices specified in this guide.

## **The Purpose of the Connecticut After School Self-Assessment Tool**

The companion tool that accompanies these guidelines is designed to be used by staff in after school programs to determine areas of strength and areas that need support. Timelines are included to aid staff in implementing strategies for improvement. Regular or periodic use of the tool aids in planning for and sustaining interesting and engaging activities, positive outcomes for children and youth and overall program quality.

The Self-Assessment Tool is **NOT** designed for program evaluation, comparison between programs or for determining future funding. Other states implementing similar self-assessment tools have found that using the tool for such purposes significantly hampers its effectiveness. Quality is an ongoing process. It is not expected that any program will have mastered all of the items included in the tool, but rather will use the tool to help keep the program focused on striving toward excellence.

Both the Best Practice Guidelines and the Self-Assessment Tool are available on the Connecticut After School Network Web site at [www.ctafterschoolnetwork.org](http://www.ctafterschoolnetwork.org). We encourage programs to customize the tool to meet their individual needs and program goals.

### **How to Use the Guidelines and the Self-Assessment Tool**

Each item on the self-assessment tool is linked to these guidelines as a reference for additional information about each item. Use a check mark to register if an item is “not begun,” “planned,” “in place” or “mastered.” Some items may be more easily observed than others and some may be reflected in documentation. Allow time to ask questions if necessary. Closely review items that are not yet “mastered.” Review these with staff to determine strategies for improvement and plot the timeline for implementation. Any items concerning child or youth safety should be addressed without delay. Repeat the use of the tool periodically to track improvements. Note those areas where progress is not being made and revisit improvement strategies. We recommend having a varied team use the tool and compare responses to get a variety of perspectives. Use this process as one of continuous improvement. Involve everyone—including children, youth and parents—in the effort to make your program the best it can be.

The age range of children and youth covered in this guide and tool is kindergarten through high school. Some items may be more appropriate for younger children rather than older; however, all the items represent a consensus on quality practices. Review the items carefully to see how each may apply to the children, youth and families that your program serves.

Both the Guidelines and the Self-Assessment Tool are divided into seven areas:

1. Human Relationships
2. Staff/Family/Community Partnerships
3. Indoor/Outdoor Environments
4. Activities
5. Safety, Health and Nutrition
6. Administration
7. Program Sustainability and Evaluation

The order of the areas is determined by their relative importance to quality programming. The Human Relationships area, (the relationship between the staff and the children and youth, between the staff and parents and among the children and youth themselves) is generally regarded as the most significant contributor to quality. Attractive equipment, materials and activities may be valuable, but the relationships among children, youth, families and staff are what matter the most.

## Acknowledgements

While the Connecticut After School Network initiated the development of these guidelines and the self-assessment tool, many others contributed their time and expertise to the process. Much careful thought, study and time was devoted to the cause of creating a set of best practices for after school in the state of Connecticut. Many thanks to all of the people, organizations, agencies and after school programs that assisted in the development of these tools:

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## **Best Practice Guidelines**

### **Human Relationships**

The relationships shared by staff, children, youth and families are vital to the successful achievement of a program's mission and goals. This section includes both staff to child/youth and staff to staff guides. It asks if the children and youth are happy in the program. Do they feel welcome? Do staff know what each child or youth's interests are and do staff encourage children and youth to pursue those interests within the program? How can you see that the staff serve as role models? Review each item carefully to determine how you meet these goals.

#### **1. Staff relate to all children and youth in positive ways:**

- a. Staff treat children and youth with respect and listen to what they say.
  - Staff encourage children and youth by using supportive language and showing appreciation of their efforts and accomplishments.
  - Staff take children and youth's comments seriously.
  - Staff do not intrude or interrupt children and youth.
  - Staff do not belittle children and youth.
- b. Staff make children and youth feel welcome and comfortable.
  - Staff project a welcoming tone in their voices and gestures.
  - Staff acknowledge children and youth when they arrive and depart.
  - Staff respond appropriately when children and youth show affection.
  - Staff stay calm in all situations. They handle conflicts in ways that reduce fear or disruption.
- c. Staff respond to children and youth with acceptance and appreciation.
  - Staff are kind and fair to all children and youth.
  - Staff include all interested children and youth in activities and events.
  - Games and sports are open to all regardless of their athletic skill.
  - Staff do not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, gender, ethnicity, family structure, appearance, disability, etc.
- d. Staff are engaged with children and youth.
  - Staff are energetic, enthusiastic and upbeat.
  - Staff talk and play with the children and youth.
  - Staff show interest in what the children and youth say and do.
  - When youth speak, staff listen actively, attentively and patiently.
  - Staff encourage attendance.

#### **2. Staff respond appropriately to the individual needs of children and youth:**

- a. Staff know that each child and youth has special interests and talents.
  - Staff are able to spend time with individual children and youth.
  - Staff bring in materials related to participants' interests: pets, music, sports, computers, chess, etc.

- Specialists are used for certain activities and to address particular programmatic needs of participants.
  - Staff are eager to hear about events in participants' lives outside the program.
- b. Staff recognize the range of participants' abilities.
- Staff vary their responses to match participants' ages and abilities.
  - Staff help children and youth become focused and engaged.
  - Staff help children and youth pursue their interests and improve their skills.
- 3. Staff encourage children and youth to make choices and to become more responsible:**
- a. Staff offer assistance in a way that supports a child and youth's initiative.
- Staff help children and youth find ways to pursue their own interests.
  - Staff say "yes" to children and youth's reasonable requests and ideas for activities.
  - Staff help children and youth plan and gather resources.
- b. Staff encourage children and youth to share control and responsibility and to take leadership roles.
- Staff give clear directions so that children and youth can proceed independently.
  - Children and youth help prepare snacks, serve themselves, set out materials for projects, etc.
  - Children and youth are encouraged to take the lead in selecting and initiating activities.
  - When asked or needed staff step in to help.
  - Staff encourage children and youth to proceed on their own.
- c. Staff give children and youth many chances to choose what they will do, how they will do it and with whom.
- Children and youth have frequent opportunities to choose their companions.
  - Children and youth can independently gather resources, materials and information, or take steps on their own to get help from peers or staff.
- d. Staff help children and youth make informed and responsible choices.
- Staff remind children and youth to think about how their actions may affect others in the program.
  - When providing assistance to children and youth, staff help them think through problems themselves rather than offer answers (e.g. asking "how," "why" and "what-if" questions) and brainstorm potential solutions.
  - Staff help children and youth understand the impact of their decisions on others.
  - Staff engage participants in structured time for reflection on how an activity went, what they learned and what next steps are necessary.
- 4. Staff interact with children and youth to help them learn:**
- a. Staff help spark children and youth's interests/curiosity and encourage them to think for themselves.
- Staff pursue children and youth's ideas.

- Staff start discussions by asking open-ended questions (e.g. “what if . . . ?” or “how can we . . . ?”) that pose a challenge and encourage participants to experiment and take risks.
  - Staff encourage use of journal writing, art projects and group discussion as a way to express ideas.
  - Staff take time to think about children and youth’s questions.
- b. Staff share skills and resources to help children and youth gain information and solve problems.
- Staff provide individualized help to children and youth.
  - Staff answer children and youth’s questions, explain how to do something, help find resources and help think through problems.
  - Staff show children and youth how complex skills can be broken into smaller steps.
  - Staff encourage children and youth to practice basic life skills.
  - When children and youth face problems they cannot solve themselves, staff pay attention and offer suggestions.
- c. Staff vary the approaches they use to help children and youth learn.
- Staff teach children and youth a new task or game by showing the steps as well as telling about them.
  - Staff write down instructions for activities so that children and youth can remember what to do.
  - Staff pay attention to variations in learning styles.
  - Staff recognize non-verbal as well as verbal responses.
  - Staff encourage children and youth to try new activities.
  - Staff help children and youth move beyond gender stereotypes in their choices.
  - Staff use pictures and visual aids to reach out to non-readers and speakers of other languages. Staff modify activities as needed so that all children and youth, including those with disabilities, can participate.
- d. Staff help children and youth use language skills through frequent conversations and find effective ways to communicate with all children and youth.
- Staff speak to children and youth on a level they can understand.
  - Staff are actively engaged in activities with children and youth.
  - Staff listen patiently as all children and youth try to express themselves.
  - Staff take extra time with children and youth who speak another language at home or have difficulty listening or speaking.
  - Staff sometimes use non-verbal signals to help children and youth understand.
- 5. Staff use positive techniques to guide the behavior of children and youth:**
- a. Staff acknowledge children and youth when they cooperate, share, care for materials or join in activities.
- Staff often show appreciation and encouragement.
  - Staff teach children and youth how to communicate and cooperate.
  - Staff celebrate children and youth’s efforts and progress.

- b. Staff set appropriate limits for children and youth.
    - Staff set limits to prevent children and youth from hurting each other physically or verbally.
    - If children or youth tease, scapegoat, threaten or exclude others, staff intervene.
    - Staff take steps to ensure that each child and youth understands the limits that are set.
  - c. Staff use discipline methods that are respectful in their interactions with children and youth.
    - Staff consistently use a neutral (or positive) tone of voice.
    - Staff quickly and positively gain children and youth's attention and cooperation when needed.
    - Staff use simple reminders to redirect behaviors.
  - d. Staff encourage children and youth to resolve their own conflicts. Staff step in only if needed to discuss the issues and work out a solution.
    - Staff listen and observe carefully.
    - Staff use negotiation, reasoning and redirection to help children and youth find alternatives. Staff do not impose their solutions on children and youth.
    - Staff do not lecture children and youth.
    - Staff help children and youth express their feelings.
    - Staff help children and youth understand how their behavior affects others.
    - Staff teach children and youth specific skills to work through conflicts (e.g., peace table or conflict resolution skills).
    - Staff intervene when negative peer interactions occur and are not resolved.
- 6. Children and youth interact with one another and with staff in positive ways:**
- a. Children and youth are comfortable and engaged with each other and with staff.
    - Peer interactions have a positive affect and tone.
    - Children and youth listen to one another and listen to staff.
    - Children and youth interactions with staff have a positive affect and tone.
  - b. Children and youth show respect for each other and for staff.
    - Teasing, belittling or picking on particular children or youth is uncommon.
    - Children and youth show empathy for each other and help each other.
    - Children and youth are respectful toward staff.
  - c. Children and youth cooperate and work well together and with staff.
    - Children and youth willingly share materials and space.
    - They suggest activities, negotiate roles and jointly work out the rules.
    - Children and youth include others with developmental, physical, cultural or language differences in their play.
    - There is a strong sense of community among children, youth and staff.

- d. When problems occur, children and youth often try to discuss their differences and work out a solution.
  - Children and youth listen to each other's point of view and try to compromise.
  - Children and youth know how to solve problems. Their solutions are reasonable and fair. They do not try to solve disagreements by bullying or acting aggressively.
  - Children and youth will seek help from staff when unable to resolve a conflict on their own.

**7. Staff work together to meet the needs of children and youth:**

- a. Staff communicate with each other while the program is in session to ensure that the program flows smoothly.
  - Staff communicate with each other to meet the needs of children and youth.
  - Staff check with each other to make sure all areas are supervised.
  - Conversations about personal matters are brief and appropriate, and do not interfere with transitions and activities.
- b. Staff cooperate with each other.
  - Staff are flexible about their roles. They pitch in to help each other with the children as needed. Work is shared fairly.
  - When problems occur, staff discuss their differences and work toward fair solutions.
  - Long or complicated discussions are saved for times when children are not present.
- c. Staff are respectful of each other.
  - Respect is shown to all.
  - Staff communicate their needs in a way that promotes cooperation.
  - Staff are aware of how their tone and demeanor convey respect.
  - Staff manage tense situations in a way that shows respect for other staff members.
  - **Staff exhibit appropriate professional conduct around children, youth and families.**
- d. Staff are role models of positive adult relationships.
  - Staff check in with each other and stay in touch throughout the day.
  - Staff model positive adult interaction through cooperation, caring and effective communication.
  - Staff notice and respond supportively to non-verbal cues and gestures.

**Staff/Family/Community Partnerships**

To achieve the best outcomes for children and youth it is important that programs and families work together as a team. Research shows that when families become involved, the child's achievement improves. This section addresses how to welcome families, respect their culture and language and make them true partners in their child's success. It also includes providing families with supportive resources and linkages to the school and the broader community.

**8. Staff and families interact with each other in positive ways and offer opportunities to promote family involvement:**

- a. Staff make families feel welcome and comfortable.

- Staff and family members greet one another by name.
  - Staff use friendly voices, expressions and gestures.
  - Staff are relaxed and not abrupt with each other.
- b. Staff and families treat each other with respect.
- Staff and family members show interest in each other's lives.
  - Respect is shown to all without bias.
  - Staff communicate with families in a variety of ways.
  - Staff recognize that some cultures like direct communication, while others prefer indirect.
  - Staff know to refrain from talking about confidential matters in front of the children or other adults.
- c. Staff are sensitive to the cultures and languages of families and communities they live in.
- The program's diverse staff reflect the cultures and languages of the children and youth in the program.
  - Whenever possible, staff will speak with families in their home language.
  - Staff ask translators to help communicate with families during individual and large group meetings.
  - Staff avoid using children and youth as translators if possible.
  - Staff provide information written in family's home language.
  - Displays and signs reflect the diversity in the community.
  - Staff encourage families to share their skills, hobbies or family traditions.
  - Interpreters are provided whenever needed.
- d. Staff collaborate with community agencies to meet the needs of each family.
- Staff maintain a list of services that address the needs of children, youth and families, and share services and community resources to enhance family well-being.
- e. Staff and families work together to plan and implement activities for social interaction that are responsive to the needs and interests of the families served.
- Families will have the opportunity to come to the program site to enjoy social interaction and to meet and interact with staff.
  - Staff and families work together to plan special events such as picnics and field trips. Family's schedules and availability are considered as part of this planning.
  - Staff work with children and youth to plan and host family appreciation events.
  - The program facilitates opportunities for families to meet with one another on a formal and informal basis, to work together on projects to support the program and learn from and provide support for each other.
  - The program may arrange transportation for special events and meetings.

**9. Program staff provide multiple opportunities for mutual communication between staff and families:**

- a. Staff establish intentional practices designed to foster strong reciprocal relationships with families from the first contact and maintain them over time.

- Staff offer orientation sessions for all new families.
  - When children or youth move into a different part of the program (e.g. the summer program or a special program for youth), staff meet with families to discuss the change.
  - Whenever possible staff offer orientation sessions in the home language of the families.
  - Each family receives a copy of written policies, including the program's hours of operation, fees, subsidies, illness policy, etc. This document also states the programs mission and philosophy.
  - Written material is translated for families into their home language when necessary. As much as possible, pictographs are used to convey written information to non-readers.
  - Translators are available when needed.
- b. Staff use a variety of strategies and mechanisms to promote dialogue and become acquainted with and learn from families.
- Staff seek to learn about families' preferred child rearing practices as well as information families wish to share about their socioeconomic, linguistic, racial, religious and cultural backgrounds.
  - The program staff asks adults to translate or interpret communications as needed.
  - Staff send home notices and newsletters about program activities and events.
  - There is a bulletin board that displays information for parents.
  - Written notes and notices are in the language of the families in the program.
- c. The program encourages families to regularly contribute to decisions about their child's goals and plans for activities and services.
- Program staff communicate any concerns with parents in a sensitive, supportive and confidential manner.
  - Documentation and explanation for concerns are provided with suggested next steps.
  - Staff and family members work collaboratively to find mutually satisfying ways to meet the needs of children and youth.
- d. Family members are welcome to visit anytime during the regular hours of the program's operation.
- Staff welcome families to the program whenever they visit.
  - When possible, staff interact with visiting family members.
  - Staff use newsletters, notices on bulletin boards and phone calls to remind parents that they are welcome to visit at any time.
  - Families are encouraged to attend special events such as field trips and picnics.
  - Families are invited to share their skills, hobbies and family traditions.
- e. Staff and families work together to make arrivals and departures between home and the program go smoothly.
- Family members can easily find their children and their children's possessions.
  - Conversations with family members happen in ways that allow children and youth to continue their activities without interruption.

- f. The program has policies and procedures to communicate with families about their child's well being.
  - Families are encouraged to inform staff of any major changes at home or at school.
  - Staff inform families in writing about injuries, accidents, illnesses, etc.
  - Staff provide parents with an opportunity for consultation or conference about their child's well being or progress in the program.
  - Staff share information about how to support children and youth's development.
  - Staff maintain a parent library of relevant books and articles. Staff inform families about timely opportunities related to childcare subsidies, parenting, medical, counseling and career services.

**10. Program develops strategies to engage families in the program and create linkages for families in the school and community (see Appendix B for suggestions on engaging families):**

- a. Families have frequent opportunities for input into program decision making and policies.
  - Staff ask families to comment on the program via notes, suggestion box, informal and formal surveys and parent meetings.
  - The program's advisory board includes families as members and active participants.
  - Staff or other families in the program encourage and support family members in taking on leadership roles.
- b. Program staff acts as a liaison between schools and families.
  - Staff develop a relationship with school day staff and families by offering workshops to increase parent knowledge about school resources, activities and expectations. For example: Staff invite a classroom teacher to talk to parents about grade-level expectations and appropriate activities for children and youth in different subject areas.
  - Staff keep informed about special school projects, curriculum and events. Staff share this information with families.
  - Staff help with homework and value children's and youth's academic efforts.
- c. Staff help parents develop advocacy skills.
  - Program staff develop an advocacy board and encourage parents to attend meetings on a regular basis to create awareness of program needs.
  - Staff invite parents to discuss and advocate for national and state policies on after school.
  - Program and families develop 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 children, youth and families that they serve.
  - Program staff include information gathered from stakeholders in planning for continuous improvement, building stakeholder involvement in the program, and broadening community support for the program.
- d. Program staff collaborate with local organizations.

- Staff provide information and develop lists about community resources to meet the needs of children, youth and their families. For example: mental health; nutrition; child welfare; parenting programs; early intervention; special education screening and assessment services; and basic needs (such as housing and child care subsidies; violence; food programs; substance abuse; crisis intervention; domestic violence; child development; language classes; and counseling services.)
- The program collaborates with community organizations in order to offer community service options for children and youth.

### **Indoor/Outdoor Environment**

The environment in which a program operates is fundamental to program quality. The program space must be safe for the children, youth and adults who participate in the program. The space, both indoor and outdoor, should be inspected regularly and be adequate for the needs and activities of the program.

#### **11. The program's indoor space meets the needs of children, youth and staff:**

- a. There is enough room in the indoor space for staff to plan various program activities. The space can be adjusted accordingly for older youth.
- b. Staff has access to adequate and convenient storage. Storage area is close enough to activity in order to obtain equipment in a timely manner.
- c. The indoor space meets or exceeds local health and safety codes.
- d. Written guidelines are in place regarding the use and maintenance of the program facility.
- e. The program is creative in meeting space constraints in shared spaces.
- f. There are no observable safety hazards in the program space.

#### **12. The outdoor space is large enough to meet the needs of children, youth and staff:**

- a. There is enough room in the outdoor space for all program activities.
- b. The outdoor space meets or exceeds local health and safety codes.
- c. Staff use outdoor areas to provide new outdoor play experiences.
- d. There is a procedure in place for regularly checking the safety and maintenance of the outdoor play space.
- e. There is an alternative plan in place for programs that don't have access to outdoor space on their premises that allows for regular physical activity.

### **Activities**

Research shows that intentionally planning structured program activities contributes significantly to program quality. While after school programs take many forms—from those focusing primarily on recreation or enrichment, to those centered on academics and remediation—there are many commonalities that are hallmarks of high quality programs. For example, activities that are engaging to the participants and reflect their interests are more successful at achieving their intended outcomes. Similarly, materials for activities should be safe, sufficient to meet the needs of the activity and appropriate for the ages of the children and youth in the program.

#### **13. Activities reflect and support the program's mission:**

- a. Activities address the academic, physical, social and emotional needs of the children and youth.

- b. The program offers project-based, hands-on activities that promote creativity and development of participant self-expression.
- c. The program provides opportunities for the development of personal responsibility, self-direction and leadership skills.
- d. Single purpose programs such as workforce development or academic enrichment programs have additional resources for self evaluation. (See appendix A for resources.)

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

- a. Materials are complete and in good repair.
- b. Materials are developmentally appropriate for the age range and ability of the children and youth in the program.
- c. There are enough materials so that several activities can occur simultaneously.
- d. There are enough supplies so that children and youth do not have to wait for materials to become available.

**15. The daily schedule is flexible and it offers enough security, independence and stimulation to meet the needs of all children and youth:**

- a. The routine provides stability without being rigid.
- b. Children and youth meet their physical needs in a relaxed way.
- c. Individual children and youth transition from one activity to another at their own pace.
- d. When it is necessary for children and youth to move as a group the transition is smooth.

**16. Children and youth can choose from a wide variety of activities:**

- a. There are regular opportunities for activities such as physical play, creative arts, dramatic play and quiet activities.
- b. Children and youth have a chance to join enrichment activities that promote basic higher-level thinking.

**17. Activities reflect and promote the development of all the children and youth in the program:**

- a. Activities reflect the styles, abilities and interests of the individuals in the program.
- b. Activities reflect the physical, emotional and social well-being of the individual child or youth.
- c. Activities are developmentally and age appropriate.
- d. Activities reflect the languages and cultures of the families served.

**18. The program uses assessment tools to identify individual learning needs and measure progress toward individual and program goals (see Appendix A for list of self-assessment tools for single purpose programs):**

- a. The program provides opportunities for youth to engage in self assessment and reflection on their learning.
- b. The program helps children and youth identify their personal assets and needs and develop a strategy for support services and asset building (see Appendix C for list of 40 developmental assets.)
- c. The program connects youth to appropriate support services, activities and opportunities at the program and/or within the community.

- d. The program provides progressive opportunities for all participants (staff, children, youth and families) to make meaningful contributions to program development, decision making and continuous improvement activities.
- e. The program regularly solicits and uses input from children, youth and families to tailor program offerings to their interests and needs.
- f. The program is encouraged to build strong positive relationships with families to support individual participants' goals as well as program goals.

**19. Staff, children, and youth work together to plan and implement suitable activities which are consistent with the program's philosophy:**

- a. Staff ask participants to share their ideas for planning so that activities will reflect participants' interests.
- b. The program's daily activities are in line with its mission and philosophy.
- c. Staff keep their activity planning records on file.
- d. Staff plan activities that will reflect the cultures of the families in the program and the broad diversity of human experience.

**20. The program provides opportunities for children and youth to know and build links to the community:**

- a. Staff plan field trips such as walking tours, parks, museums, performances and cultural events.
- b. The program hosts visitors and special events from the community.
- c. The program offers service learning options, especially for older children and youth.

**Safety, Health and Nutrition**

Safety is the foundation upon which all other quality elements are built. Children, youth, staff and parents need to be physically safe within the program. The guidelines in this section stress that programs should have policies in place to address the health, safety and nutrition needs of the children and youth who participate in the program.

**21. The safety and security of children and youth are protected:**

- a. Policies of the program should ensure that programs operate, at a minimum, within CT Department of Public Health Child Care Licensing Statutes and Regulations even if not required to obtain a license to operate. Staff should be aware of licensing requirements regarding all health and safety procedures.
- b. Program has established procedures to prevent accidents and manage emergencies.
- c. All staff have current CPR, First Aid Training and Blood Borne Pathogen Training.
- d. During program hours a telephone is always accessible for incoming and outgoing calls. Written emergency numbers for police, fire, ambulance and poison control are posted near the phone.
- e. First Aid Kits are available at all times, including field trips.
- f. Children's emergency information is taken on all field trips.
- g. Parents are contacted immediately in case of emergency.
- h. Systems are in place to protect children and youth from harm when they move from one place to another or use the restroom.
- i. Materials and equipment are safe for active play. Regularly planned and documented checks are made on equipment and program space.

- j. A system is in place to manage effective arrival and dismissal procedures. For elementary school-age children, a system is in place to keep unauthorized people from taking children from the program.
- k. The program has established policies to transport children and youth safely; it complies with all legal requirements for vehicles and drivers.
- l. The program conducts all required fire/safety drills. Both staff and children know what to do in an emergency.
- m. The program develops, implements and shares with staff and families all approved safety plans and procedures regarding activities, emergency events and field trips.
- n. Program maintains current health and emergency contact information on each child.
- o. No smoking is allowed in the program.

**22. There are written policies and procedures to ensure the health and safety of children and youth contained in handbooks distributed to both staff and families. These policies contain the following:**

- Administering medications (only trained personnel in licensed settings are authorized to administer medications).
- Controlling communicable diseases.
- Material Safety Data Sheet (handling toxic materials).
- Responding to sick children and youth.
- Dealing with children and youth who have chronic health conditions such as allergies.
- Protecting children and youth from toxic materials.
- Administering first aid.
- Handling medical emergencies.
- Responding to natural disasters or lock downs.
- Reporting suspected child abuse or neglect.
- Dealing with out of control parents (ex. inebriate or aggressive behaviors).

**23. The program provides an environment that protects and enhances the health of children and youth:**

- a. The indoor and outdoor facilities are clean.
- b. There are no observable health hazards in the indoor or outdoor space.
- c. There are adequate supplies and facilities for hand washing.
- d. The heat, ventilation, noise level and light in the indoor space are comfortable.

**24. The program staff try to protect and enhance the health of children and youth:**

- a. Staff are responsive to the individual health needs of the children and youth.
- b. Staff protect children and youth from communicable disease by separating children who become ill during the program.
- c. Staff protect children and youth from potential hazards such as the following:
  - caustic or toxic art materials
  - cleaning agents
  - medications
  - hot liquids
  - over-exposure to heat or cold

- d. Staff and children and youth wash hands frequently, especially after using the toilet or before preparing food.

**25. Children and youth are carefully supervised to maintain safety:**

- a. Staff note when children and youth arrive, when they leave and with whom they leave.
- b. Staff know where the children and youth are and what they are doing at all times.
- c. Staff supervise children and youth appropriately according to children's ages, abilities and needs.
- d. Staff closely supervise activities that are potentially harmful.

**26. The program serves foods and drinks that meet the needs of children and youth:**

- a. The program serves nutritious foods and drinks that are timed appropriately and are adequate for the ages and sizes of the children and youth. (See reference to U.S.D.A. Child and Adult Care Food Program for portion sizes.)
- b. Drinking water is readily available at all times.
- c. The program recognizes and responds to nutritional preferences and values of the cultural communities being served.
- d. Children and youth are encouraged to assist in planning and preparing meals and snacks so that they may learn healthy eating habits.
- e. The program provides health and nutrition information through discussion, printed materials and workshops.

**27. The program strives to encourage the health and well being of staff so they may serve as role models:**

- a. The program provides health insurance benefits for its staff.
- b. The program encourages its staff to serve as role models for the children and youth in terms of healthy behaviors.

**Program Management**

The way in which a program is run creates the building blocks of quality. Appropriate administrative policies and managerial support are necessary for staff to be successful. This section addresses accounting, group size and teacher/child ratios, staff qualifications, supervision and professional development.

**28. The program is accountable for setting and meeting operational and programmatic quality goals:**

- a. The program should be aware of the CT General Statutes that require licensure of child care programs and their obligations under that law, C. G. S., Section 19a-80, prior to operation.
- b. The program has an established mission and vision statement and operates in accordance with such.
- c. The program has established written operating procedures/policies which it reviews with staff upon hire and reviews regularly and updates as necessary. Policies include but are not limited to the following:
  - Discipline Policy.

- Supervision of children and youth policy/guidelines that includes supervision of the bathroom.
- Arrival/dismissal policies/procedures.
- Parent communication and involvement.
- Operating schedule and facility access.
- Operating policies and forms: enrollment/admissions, parental access, withdrawal, food provision, vacation closures and inclusion statement.
- Personnel policies that include information on: job descriptions, employee benefits, staff supervision and probationary period, sexual harassment and non-discrimination policy.
- Records are maintained for children that include the names of individuals authorized to pick up children and youth, emergency contact information, attendance, incident/accident reports and medication administration.
- Records are maintained on staff that include evidence of continuing education, staff background checks and references.
- Those policies listed under Safety/Health and Nutrition # 22.

**29. Program policies and procedures are responsive to the needs of children, youth and families in the community:**

- a. The program makes itself affordable to all families by using all possible community resources.
- b. The program's hours of operation are based on families' needs.
- c. It is the program's policy to be inclusive of children and youth with special needs.

**30. Staff/child ratios and groups sizes permit the staff to meet the needs of children and youth:**

- a. Staff/child ratios are in accordance with CT Department of Public Health Child Care Licensing Statutes and Regulations.
  - 1 adult to 10 children.
  - Group size is not to exceed 20 participants.
- b. There is a plan to provide adequate staff coverage in case of emergencies.
- c. Substitute staff are used to maintain ratios when regular staff are absent.

**31. All staff are professionally qualified to work with children and youth. (See Appendix E for specific guidelines):**

- a. Staff meet the requirements for experience with children and youth in after school settings.
- b. Staff meet minimum CT Department of Public Health Child Care Licensing Statutes and Regulations for age and educational background requirements.
- c. Enough qualified staff are in place to meet all levels of responsibility. Qualified staff are hired in all areas to:
  - Administer the program.
  - Oversee its daily operations.
  - Supervise children and youth.
- d. The program employs staff who possess written, oral and marketing communication skills and are qualified to communicate and connect with school personnel on all levels.

- e. The program makes efforts to hire staff professionally qualified to work with families, children and youth.
  - Job descriptions include family, community and school engagement as part of responsibilities.
  - Program employs staff who are responsible to engage families such as a parent liaison.
- f. Programs that are licensed under the CT Department of Public Health Child Care Licensing Bureau are required to have health, mental health, dental health, education, social service and nutrition consultants identified and available to assist staff.

**32. All staff are given an orientation to the job before working with children and youth. This includes paid, volunteer and substitute staff:**

- a. A written job description that outlines responsibilities to children, youth, families and the program is reviewed with each staff member.
- b. Written personnel policies are reviewed with staff.
- c. Written program policies and procedures, including emergency procedures and confidentiality policies, are reviewed with staff.
- d. New staff are given a comprehensive orientation to the program philosophy, routines and practices.
  - They are personally introduced to the people with whom they will be working.
  - They are assigned a mentor to work with during the probationary period.
  - They receive a tour of the facilities that includes meeting all staff, collaborating partners and school personnel.
  - All routines, curriculum, discipline policies and other program practices are reviewed prior to beginning work.

**33. The training needs of the staff are assessed and training is relevant to the responsibilities of each job. Staff receive training in the following areas:**

- a. Working with families, community members and school personnel.
- b. Ways to relate to children and youth in ways that promote their development.
- c. Child assessment and program evaluation strategies.
- d. Room arrangement and activity planning that supports program goals.
- e. Safety, health and nutrition of children and youth.
- f. Cultural diversity.
- g. Staff receive training hours as required by the CT Department of Public Health Child Care Licensing Statutes and Regulations.

**34. The program leaders inspire and motivate staff to contribute, learn and innovate:**

- a. Staff are regularly involved in setting and assessing staff performance goals.
- b. The program nurtures promotion from within.
- c. The program maintains a safe workplace climate that emphasizes respect and teamwork.
- d. The program communicates information internally and externally about the results of its activities.
- e. The program bases improvement efforts on facts, including performance data and feedback from staff, youth and other stakeholders.

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

- a. The program has a plan in place to offer the best possible wages and working conditions in an effort to reduce staff turnover.
  - Compensation takes education and experience into account.
  - Staff are compensated for time spent in training and planning.
  - Wages are above the minimum hourly wage and are competitive with other human services jobs.
- b. Full time staff receive benefits including health insurance and paid leaves of absence. Staff are also given paid breaks and paid preparation time.
- c. Staff are given ample time to discuss their own concerns regarding the program.
  - Staff meet regularly to discuss program operations and the changing needs of children and youth.
  - Staff are able to communicate daily about issues that need immediate attention (e.g. family crises, behavior issues, changes in health or medical needs).
  - Staff discuss new strategies for rough transitions.
  - Staff plan program-wide activities and get-togethers.
  - Staff have a process for negotiating interpersonal differences.
- d. Staff receive continuous supervision and feedback. This includes written performance reviews on a timely basis.
  - Staff participate in their own assessment.
  - The program keeps written, updated notes on staff performance and feedback.
  - It keeps records on file of staff participation in continuing education and training.

**36. Programs have sound fiscal accounting policies and procedures:**

- a. Financial policies and the procedures to implement them provide evidence of sound fiscal accounting using standard accounting practices.
- b. Financial policies and procedures are consistent with the program's vision, philosophy, mission, goals and expected child outcomes.
- c. Operating budgets are prepared annually and there is at least quarterly reconciliation of expenses to budget.
- d. Budgets are reviewed and amended as needed.
- e. Fiscal records are kept as evidence of sound financial management.
- f. The program solicits external evaluations at a minimum of every 5 years.

**Sustainability and Evaluation**

Common sense tells us that programs that are able to create long-term plans are more likely to achieve their goals than those that are uncertain how they will pay their staff next month. A high level of stability and clarity of purpose also builds staff morale, reduces turnover and builds community support. On-going evaluation promotes accountability and improves program outcomes.

**37. Programs have a clearly stated purpose that is consistent with their goals and activities and is based on the needs of the community and youth they serve:**

- a. The program has a written mission statement that accurately reflects its purpose as it relates to the needs of target youth and the community.

- b. Staff, children, youth, families and other stakeholders can easily articulate the purpose of the program.
- c. All aspects of the program form a coherent strategy for supporting and accomplishing the mission.
- d. The allocation of the budget and other resources supports the mission.
- e. The person directly responsible for program implementation (administrator, site manager, program manager or supervising teacher) is included in this process.
- f. Staff, youth and other appropriate stakeholders revisit the mission every three to five years to ensure its continued relevance.

**38. Programs employ a consistent strategy for managing resources effectively and achieving organizational longevity:**

- a. The program has both long and short term funding plans to support the mission and goals of the program.
- b. The program seeks to have multiple sources of financial and in-kind support.
- c. The program has sufficient resources, including staff, equipment and supplies to meet its goals and objectives.
- d. The program takes advantage of new opportunities and develops effective responses to potential challenges.
- e. The program is able to adapt to meet the shifting needs of the community while remaining true to its mission.
- f. The program forges relationships with advocates for program quality and availability such as parents, community leaders, businesses and elected officials.
- g. The program has an effective marketing strategy that publicizes the program and its achievements.

**39. Programs continuously examine themselves and seek ways to improve what they do:**

- a. The program bases improvement efforts on facts, including performance data and feedback from staff, youth and other stakeholders.
- b. At least annually, administrators, families, staff and other routinely participating adults are involved in an internal program evaluation that measures progress toward the program's goals and objectives. This may include general meetings and/or surveys.
- c. The program shares stakeholder feedback, performance data and information about resulting organizational decisions through its quality improvement plan.

**40. Quality programs hold themselves accountable for setting and meeting operational and programmatic goals:**

- a. The program establishes strategic organizational goals and creates action plans for how it will achieve its goals.
- b. The program engages members of related advisory or governing boards, staff, youth and other appropriate stakeholders in goal setting, planning and evaluation.
- c. The program sets goals and measurable objectives for organizational and program performance.
- d. The program compares its organizational and programmatic performance to relevant comparative data (i.e. available benchmarks).
- e. The program solicits external evaluation when feasible.

- 41. Quality programs develop systems to collect, store, analyze and report complete and accurate data on operational and program performance, participant demographics, services, progress and outcomes:**
- a. The program has a user-friendly, confidential and effective system for collecting and sharing data on individual youth and program activities.
  - b. The program collects data that is relevant to documenting progress and measuring performance outcomes.
  - c. The program develops and/or plans for program evaluation that includes gathering both qualitative and quantitative data.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Assessment Tools for Single Purpose Programs

Topic Area	Organization/Agency	Web site:
Youth Employment	National Youth Employment Coalition, PEPNet Quality Standards for Youth Programs	<a href="http://nyec.modernsignal.net/page.cfm?pageID=116">http://nyec.modernsignal.net/page.cfm?pageID=116</a>
Service Learning	Berkeley Service Learning Research and Development Center, Evaluation Tools	<a href="http://gse.berkeley.edu/research/slc/evaluation.html">http://gse.berkeley.edu/research/slc/evaluation.html</a>
Health and Fitness	National Recreation and Park Association, Hearts N' Parks Evaluation Tools	<a href="http://www.nrpa.org/content/default.aspx?documentId=2951">www.nrpa.org/content/default.aspx?documentId=2951</a>
Arts Education	SURDNA Foundation: Powerful Voices: Developing High-Impact Arts Programs for Teens	<a href="http://www.surdna.org/resources/resources_show.htm?doc_id=343592&amp;attrib_id=12040">www.surdna.org/resources/resources_show.htm?doc_id=343592&amp;attrib_id=12040</a>

## **Appendix B: Suggestions for Involving Parents in Your Program**

Most parents would like to be involved in their child's program, but they may not know about all the ways that they can contribute. Some parents can alter their schedule to participate in a special breakfast or to go on a field trip. Some parents cannot. All parents can contribute in some fashion. It is important to offer a variety of options for parent involvement that match parents' interests, skills and schedules. It is also important to be able to express appreciation for the ways in which they do participate. A parent who sews new curtains for the puppet theater may never see the theater in action. Be sure to write a personal thank you to this parent in appreciation of their efforts.

- Hold a new parent orientation.
- Involve parents in building or landscaping projects and be sure to hold an appreciation/celebration party when the project is concluded.
- Keep a "job jar" in the room containing index cards with program-related jobs you never get around to doing that a parent could do without coming to the program. This might include repairing broken materials, creating science and nature kits or shopping at yard sales for cooking utensils or costumes.
- Organize a family breakfast or dinner when parents can eat at the program on their way to work or home. Breakfast could be simply bagels and juice and dinner might be a meal planned and prepared by the children and youth.
- Invite parents to share their interests and talents. Parents might loan items for display such as paintings, photographs, collections or photo albums.
- Hold a family movie night planned and hosted by the parents. Sell popcorn and drinks to raise funds for extra materials or field trips.
- Schedule a "fix-it" night or a Saturday when children and parents can work together to spruce up the program facility, paint walls, give all the bikes tune-ups or prepare a plot of ground for a garden.
- Hold an open house on an evening or weekend where parents can come with their children and gain insight into a typical day's activities.
- Set up a parent corner. Include books, magazines, brochures and other resources of interest to parents.
- Ask a parent to organize a photo album about the program. You can provide the pictures and the book; parents and children can assemble it. Display the photo album in the reception area. Be sure to include a cover page thanking the family that organized it.
- Provide copies of a frequently updated wish list of resource materials and people you would like to have at the program. Parents might make contributions themselves, or they could help by putting you in touch with businesses, community organizations or individuals who would be willing to contribute time, talents and materials.
- Organize a series of parent workshops on topics related to raising school age or pre-adolescent children.
- Create a grandparent collage with photos of the children's actual or adopted grandparents.
- Create a family cookbook or craft idea book with projects that families can share together.
- Encourage intergenerational activities.

All these activities are important to include as part of your program, but it is only “lip service” if you truly feel that parents cannot or should not contribute to your program. Examine your own motivations for including parents in your program. Make family respect and partnership a bold thread that runs through every aspect of your program.

## **HELPING PARENTS LOCATE RESOURCES**

- Encourage parents to connect with one another by introducing them to families that live in their neighborhood or have children and youth the same age.
- Develop a parent exchange list that helps parents support one another through the sharing of responsibilities and errands such as carpooling, grocery shopping, meal preparation and car repairs.
- Call parents’ attention to resources, newspaper or magazine articles, workshops and television or radio shows on child development, positive guidance and family life.
- Display books on topics of interest to parents – step parenting, juggling home and work responsibilities, fast and healthy meals—and invite parents to check out these resources.
- Tell parents about services and special programs provided by organizations in the community. Provide names, phone numbers, locations and hours of operation when you suggest a program or event.
- Offer parents the opportunity to contribute to your newsletter on issues in parenting, events or helping to prepare it. It is important to acknowledge in writing any assistance.
- Offer reluctant parents help in contacting other resources.

## **INTERGENERATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Involving older people in your program benefits everyone. Many children do not have grandparents or are separated from them by long distances. Many older people are lonely and have time they would like to use productively. These two needs can be met by including an intergenerational component in your program.

- Plan with, not for, senior participants.
- Don’t skip the planning stages to rush into an activity.
- It is okay to use your informal or personal contacts to help you start a program.
- Don’t get discouraged if your early attempts are not successful.
- Do use the strengths and experience of your children and youth in designing a program. Much of what you already do can become an intergenerational program.

Example: Several children and youth who like pets could plan on taking some animals to a nursing home on a regular basis.

Example: Several children interested in a special craft such as “fly tying” could be assisted by a senior with that skill.

### **Appendix C: 40 Developmental Assets®**

Through extensive research, Search Institute has identified the following 40 building blocks of healthy development that help young people grow up healthy, caring and responsible.

The asset definitions shown in this chart are based on research on adolescents (grades 6 – 12).

<b>Asset Type</b>	<b>Asset Name &amp; Definition</b>	
<b>EXTERNAL ASSETS</b>		
<b>Support</b>	<b>Family support</b>	Family life provides high levels of love and support.
	<b>Positive family communication</b>	Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parent(s).
	<b>Other adult relationships</b>	Young person receives support from three or more non-parent adults.
	<b>Caring neighborhood</b>	Young person experiences caring neighbors.
	<b>Caring school climate</b>	School provides a caring, encouraging environment.
	<b>Parent involvement in schooling</b>	Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.
<b>Empowerment</b>	<b>Community values youth</b>	Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
	<b>Youth as resources</b>	Young people are given useful roles in the community.
	<b>Service to others</b>	Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.
	<b>Safety</b>	Young person feels safe at home, at school and in the neighborhood.
<b>Boundaries and Expectations</b>	<b>Family boundaries</b>	Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.
	<b>School boundaries</b>	School provides clear rules and consequences.
	<b>Neighborhood boundaries</b>	Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.
	<b>Adult role models</b>	Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
	<b>Positive peer influence</b>	Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.
	<b>High expectations</b>	Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.

<b>Constructive Use of Time</b>	<b>Creative activities</b>	Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater or other arts.
	<b>Youth programs</b>	Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs or organizations at school and/or in community organizations.
	<b>Religious community</b>	Young person spends one hour or more per week in activities in a religious institution.
	<b>Time at home</b>	Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.
<b>INTERNAL ASSETS</b>		
<b>Commitment to Learning</b>	<b>Achievement motivation</b>	Young person is motivated to do well in school.
	<b>School engagement</b>	Young person is actively engaged in learning.
	<b>Homework</b>	Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
	<b>Bonding to school</b>	Young person cares about her or his school.
	<b>Reading for pleasure</b>	Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.
<b>Positive Values</b>	<b>Caring</b>	Young person places high value on helping other people.
	<b>Equality and social justice</b>	Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
	<b>Integrity</b>	Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
	<b>Honesty</b>	Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy."
	<b>Responsibility</b>	Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
	<b>Restraint</b>	Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.
<b>Social Competencies</b>	<b>Planning and decision making</b>	Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
	<b>Interpersonal competence</b>	Young person has empathy, sensitivity and friendship skills.
	<b>Cultural competence</b>	Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
	<b>Resistance skills</b>	Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
	<b>Peaceful conflict resolution</b>	Young person seeks to resolve conflict non-violently.

<b>Positive Identity</b>	<b>Personal power</b>	Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."
	<b>Self-esteem</b>	Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
	<b>Sense of purpose</b>	Young person reports that "my life has a purpose."
	<b>Positive view of personal future</b>	Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

This list is an educational tool. It is not intended to be nor is it appropriate as a scientific measure of the developmental assets of individuals.

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## Appendix D: Staff Development Guidelines for After School Programs

<b>Orientation / New to Position</b>		<b>Ongoing Training – year to year</b>	<b>Growth and Development for experienced staff</b>	
<p>Effective Orientation includes: clearly written, comprehensive policies and procedures – clearly communicated to all staff (staff handbook).</p> <p>Written personnel policies, job descriptions and expectations of staff: Rules &amp; Regs., Guidance for their behavior in all Center situations and places, proper dress and Guidelines to ensure safety.</p> <p>Necessary employment forms: Time sheets, medicals, calendar, etc.</p>				
<p><b>Program Admin.</b> And/or <b>Site Director</b> *Some programs have either an Administrator or a Site Director not both, therefore we propose the same training for both positions</p>	<p><b>Should include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Review of all licensing requirements</li> <li>-Policies and Procedures as they relate to program/agency; particularly as it relates to: confidentiality, complaint policy, working with parents; maintaining healthy boundaries with families</li> <li>-Registration process/paperwork</li> <li>-Discipline policy and Child Abuse/Neglect mandated reporting requirements</li> <li>-Organization chain of command</li> <li>-Risk Management</li> <li>-Stress Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Effective Supervision of Staff”</li> <li>• “Appropriate delegation, fostering staff growth and development”</li> <li>• “Budget management”</li> <li>• “Healthy Food and nutrition”-if applicable as it relates to Federal Child and Adult Food Program</li> <li>• “Networking, developing partnerships with community resources”</li> <li>• “Introduction to community resources as a resource for family referrals”</li> <li>• “Effectively working with families/ideas for family involvement”</li> <li>• “Asset based approach for working with families”</li> <li>• “Creating a welcoming environment for families”</li> <li>• Training related to accreditation if program is already accredited and individual must uphold policies</li> <li>• “Working with a Board of Directors”-if applicable</li> <li>• “Effective work with volunteers” (could also be in on-going training)</li> <li>• Review of “Developing an appropriate environment”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Effective supervision and leadership”</li> <li>• “Working with staff with varying working styles”</li> <li>• “Conducting effective staff evaluations, staff training”(could also be part of training for those new to position)</li> <li>• “Working with difficult people”</li> <li>• “Motivating and retaining staff”</li> <li>• “Teambuilding”</li> <li>• “Effective problem solving or mediation techniques”</li> <li>• “Organizational skills”</li> <li>• “Appropriate delegation, fostering staff growth and development”</li> <li>• “Cultural Competency”</li> <li>• All mandated trainings, i.e.:</li> <li>• First Aid/CPR</li> <li>• Mandated Reporting</li> <li>• OSHA safety standards</li> <li>• Medication Administration</li> <li>• “Ethical Conduct”</li> <li>• “Curriculum Development”</li> <li>• “Child Development”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Facilitator training”</li> <li>• “How to become an effective consultant/mentor”</li> <li>• Master’s Degree in administration, human services, education, or related field.</li> <li>• Training related to accreditation if program is not accredited</li> <li>• Training as a valuator if program is accredited</li> <li>• Training on program assessment, i.e. SACERS</li> <li>• Advocacy training/promoting a child friendly legislative agenda</li> <li>• Public speaking</li> <li>• Developing parents as leaders/advocates for school age children- “effective models of parent leadership development”</li> <li>• Fundraising/grant writing</li> </ul>

<p><b>On-going training will be required if program is on Federally funded Food and Nutrition program</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Advanced curriculum development” training</li> <li>• “Anti-bias” or training on “cultural sensitivity”</li> <li>• “Working with diverse family structures”</li> <li>• “Developing family focused policy and environment” or</li> <li>• “Good customer service”</li> <li>• Marketing your program</li> <li>• Running effective meetings</li> <li>• Assessment and evaluation (developing a logic model)</li> <li>• “Effective enrichment program components for after school youth”</li> <li>• “Integrating children with special needs into after school programs.”</li> <li>• “Understanding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)”</li> <li>• “Facilitating smooth transitions for children-between school and program; between program and parents; between school year and summer”</li> <li>• “Maintaining a safe environment/Playground Safety-“How to conduct a Safety Audit”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facility maintenance and development</li> <li>• Strategic Planning</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Sr. Group Leader</b> And/or <b>Group Leader</b> Some programs have either a Senior Group Leader or a Group Leader. For those programs, training for Senior Group Leader</p>	<p><b>Should include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of all licensing requirements</li> <li>• Policies and Procedures as they relate to program/agency; particularly as it relates to: confidentiality, complaint policy, working with parents; maintaining healthy boundaries with families</li> <li>• Registration process/paperwork</li> <li>• Discipline policy and mandated reporting requirements</li> <li>• chain of command</li> <li>• other required trainings (may be included as new to position instead):</li> <li>• OSHA safety standards</li> <li>• Sexual Harassment Prevention</li> <li>• Food and nutrition guidelines may be required if program on Federal Funded Food and Nutrition Program</li> <li>• Medication administration (if licensed)</li> <li>• First Aid &amp; CPR s/b required before or immediately upon employment</li> <li>• Emergency Preparedness – crisis planning, e.g., fire drills, evacuation plan, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Effective supervision”</li> <li>• “Appropriate delegation, fostering staff growth and development”</li> <li>• “Healthy Food and nutrition”-if applicable as it relates to Federal Child and Adult Food Program</li> <li>• Training related to accreditation if program is already accredited and individual must uphold policies</li> <li>• Review of “Developmentally appropriate practice” or “Best Practices” in field</li> </ul> <p><b>Group Leader</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Healthy Food and nutrition”-if applicable as it relates to Federal Child and Adult Food Program</li> <li>• Training related to accreditation if program is already accredited and individual must uphold policies</li> <li>• Introduction to:</li> <li>• “Developmentally appropriate practice” or “Best Practices” in field</li> <li>• “Behavior Management techniques”</li> <li>• “Curriculum Development”</li> <li>• “Maintaining a safe environment/Playground Safety”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Advanced workshops in areas of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Behavior Management”</li> <li>• “Staff supervision”</li> <li>• “Curriculum Development”</li> <li>• “Creating a healthy environment”</li> <li>• “Cultural Sensitivity-anti-bias curriculum”</li> <li>• “Effectively working with families/ideas for family involvement”</li> <li>• “Working with diverse family structures”</li> <li>• “Effective supervision and leadership”</li> <li>• “Working with staff with varying working styles”</li> <li>• “Conducting effective staff evaluations”</li> <li>• “Effective enrichment program components for after school youth”</li> <li>• “Integrating children with special needs into after school programs.”</li> <li>• “Facilitating smooth transitions for children-between school and program; between program and parents; between school year and summer”</li> <li>• “Ethical Conduct”</li> <li>• All mandated trainings, i.e.:</li> <li>• First Aid/CPR</li> <li>• Mandated Reporting</li> <li>• OSHA safety standards</li> <li>• Medication Administration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage coursework towards Master’s Degree in related field.</li> <li>• Encourage coursework in Administration or beginning Director for those interested in this career move.</li> <li>• Training on mentoring junior staff.</li> <li>• Facilitator or “Train the Trainer” training</li> <li>• Training on program assessment; environmental assessment (i.e. SACERS); and/or Accreditation (for those without previous exposure)</li> <li>• Validator training for those with Accreditation knowledge/previous experience.</li> </ul> <p><b>Group Leader</b> Continued coursework to complete degree or complete degree or certification in related field. Continued workshops to work towards promotion to Senior Group Leader. Workshops regarding Accreditation if program or individual is not familiar. Workshops on self-assessment to improve performance and understanding.</p>
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**On-going training will be required if program is on Federally funded Food and Nutrition program**

- “Working with difficult people”
- “Effective problem solving or mediation techniques”
- “Organizational skills”
- “Using community resources to benefit programs (through collaboration) or to benefit families (through resource and referral)”
- “Maintaining a safe environment/Playground Safety-“How to conduct a Safety Audit”

**Group Leader:**

- Continued workshops in areas of:
- “Behavior Management”
- “Developmentally Appropriate Practice”
- “Creating a healthy environment”
- “Cultural Sensitivity-anti-bias curriculum”
- “Effectively working with families”
- “Working with diverse family structures”
- “Working with Co-workers with varying working styles”
- “Effective enrichment program components for after school youth”
- “Integrating children with special needs into after school programs.”
- “Facilitating smooth transitions for children-between school and program; between program and parents; between school year and summer”
- “Ethical Conduct”
- All mandated trainings, i.e.:
- First Aid/CPR
- Mandated Reporting
- OSHA safety standards
- Medication Administration
- On-going training will be required if program is on Federally funded Food and Nutrition program
- “Working with difficult people”
- “Maintaining a safe environment/Playground Safety-“How to conduct a Safety Audit

<p><b>Assistant Group Leader</b></p>	<p><b>Should include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• -Review of all licensing requirements</li> <li>• -Policies and Procedures as they relate to program/agency; particularly as it relates to: confidentiality, complaint policy, working with parents; maintaining healthy boundaries with families</li> <li>• -Registration process/paperwork</li> <li>• -Discipline policy and mandated reporting requirements</li> <li>• -chain of command</li> <li>• -other required trainings (may be included as new to position instead):</li> <li>• OSHA safety standards</li> <li>• Sexual Harassment Prevention</li> <li>• Food and nutrition guidelines may be required if program on Federal Funded Food and Nutrition Program</li> <li>• First Aid &amp; CPR maybe required before or immediately upon employment</li> </ul>	<p><b>Introduction to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Developmentally appropriate practice” or “Best Practices” in field</li> <li>• “Behavior Management techniques”</li> <li>• “Curriculum Development”</li> <li>• “Maintaining a safe environment/Playground Safety”</li> <li>• “Healthy Food and nutrition”-if applicable as it relates to Federal Child and Adult Food Program</li> <li>• Basic training on Accreditation for individuals working in accredited centers who are expected to uphold standards</li> </ul>	<p><b>Continued workshops in areas of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Behavior Management”</li> <li>• “Developmentally Appropriate Practice”</li> <li>• “Creating a healthy environment”</li> <li>• “Cultural Sensitivity-anti-bias curriculum”</li> <li>• “Effectively working with families”</li> <li>• “Working with diverse family structures”</li> <li>• “Working with Co-workers with varying working styles”</li> <li>• “Effective enrichment program components for after school youth”</li> <li>• “Integrating children with special needs into after school programs.”</li> <li>• “Ethical Conduct”</li> <li>• All mandated trainings, as required by program, i.e.:</li> <li>• First Aid/CPR</li> <li>• Mandated Reporting</li> <li>• OSHA safety standards</li> <li>• Medication Administration</li> <li>• On-going training will be required if program is on Federally funded Food and Nutrition program</li> <li>• “Working with difficult people”</li> <li>• “Maintaining a safe environment/Playground Safety”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of coursework towards certificate in field. Related college coursework.</li> <li>• Continued workshops to improve knowledge of all aspects of program implementation.</li> <li>• Continued workshops to increase knowledge in pursuit of Group Leader position.</li> </ul>
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## Appendix E: Staff Qualifications for After School Programs

### **LEVELS OF RESPONSIBILITY - Overall direction of the program**

#### **Program Administrator**

##### **(Executive Director)**

- Developing a mission, goals and policies for the program
- Program implementation and evaluation
- Administration, including fiscal management
- Organizational development, including management of human resources

#### **MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS – (Experience; Education; Professional Preparation)**

Two years (Supervised in the field)

Associate's or Bachelor's Degree in Related Field

Twelve credit hours:

- child and youth dev. (3)
- administration (3)
- other areas related to sac programming (6)

-----or-----

Three years

Bachelor's Degree in Unrelated Field

Twelve credit hours:

- child and youth dev. (3)
- administration (3)
- other areas related to sac programming (6)

#### **Site Director**

##### **Daily operations of the program**

- Supervising staff
- Communicating with families
- Building relationships with the host community
- Overseeing all program activities

#### **MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS – (Experience; Education; Professional Preparation)**

One Year (540 hrs)

Bachelor's Degree in Related Field

Twelve credit hours:

- child & youth dev. (3)
- administration (3)
- other areas related to sac (6)

-----or-----

Eighteen months

Bachelor's Degree in Unrelated Field

Twelve credit hours:

- child & youth dev. (3)
- administration (3)

- other areas related to sac program (6)

-----or-----

Two years

AA Degree or two years of college in a related field or equivalent

Twelve credit hours:

- child & youth dev. (3)
- administration (3)
- other areas related to sac program (6)

### **Senior Group Leader**

**Supervision and guidance of children in the program**

**(Head Teacher)**

- Program planning
- Communicating with families
- Supervising support staff
- Relating to the community

### **MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS – (Experience; Education; Professional Preparation)**

Three Months (135 hrs)

Bachelor's Degree in a related field

Twelve credit hours:

- child & youth dev. (3)
- administration (3)
- other areas related to sac program (6)

Min age: 20

-----or-----

Six months

Bachelor's Degree in Unrelated Field

-----or-----

Twelve credit hours:

- child & youth dev. (3)
- administration (3)
- other areas related to sac program (6)

-----or-----

One year

AA Degree or two years of college in a related field or equivalent

Twelve credit hours:

- child & youth dev. (3)
- administration (3)
- other areas related to sac program (6)

-----or-----

Eighteen months

AA Degree or two years of college in an unrelated field

Credential in After School Education or Twelve Credits in areas related to sac programming

### **Group Leader**

**Supervision and guidance of children in the program under the direction of a Senior Group Leader**

- Same as the Senior Group Leader

**MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS – (Experience; Education; Professional Preparation)**

Six Months (270 hrs)

Bachelor's Degree in a related field

Six credit hours

- child and youth development (3)
- other areas related to sac programming (3)

Min age 18

-----or-----

Six Months

Bachelor's Degree in an unrelated field

-----or-----

Six credit hours

- child and youth development (3)
- other areas related to sac programming (3)

Nine months

AA Degree in related field

Nine credit hours

- child and youth development (3)
- other areas related to sac programming (6)

-----or-----

One year

AA Degree or two years of college or equivalent

-----or-----

Nine credit hours

- child and youth development (3)
- other areas related to sac programming (6)

Eighteen months

HS Diploma or GED

Credential in After School Education or Twelve Credits in areas related to sac programming

**Assistant Group Leader**

**Supervision and guidance of children in the program under the direction of a Group Leader**

**MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS – (Experience; Education; Professional Preparation)**

None

Minimum age: 16

On the job training (in all categories)

- Orientation
- In-service training

## Appendix F: USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program

USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program plays a vital role in improving the quality of day care and making it more affordable for many low-income families. Each day, 2.9 million children receive nutritious meals and snacks through CACFP. The program also provides meals and snacks to 86,000 adults who receive care in non-residential adult day care centers. CACFP reaches even further to provide meals to children residing in emergency shelters, and snacks and suppers to youths participating in eligible **after school** care programs.

### Child Care Centers

Eligible public or private nonprofit child care centers, outside-school-hours care centers, Head Start programs, and other institutions which are licensed or approved to provide day care services may participate in CACFP, independently or as sponsored centers. For profit centers must receive title XX funds for at least 25 percent of enrolled children or licensed capacity (which ever is less) or at least 25 percent of the children in care must be eligible for free and reduced price meals. Meals served to children are reimbursed at rates based upon a child's eligibility for free, reduced price, or paid meals.

### "At-Risk" After School Care Programs

Community-based programs that offer enrichment activities for at-risk children and teenagers, after the regular school day ends, can provide free snacks through CACFP. Programs must be offered in areas where at least 50% of the children are eligible for free and reduced price meals based upon school data. Reimbursable suppers are also available to children in eligible after school care programs in seven States--Delaware, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, New York, Oregon and Pennsylvania.

For information on reimbursement rates visit [www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/)

For information on nutrition and the national school lunch program visit these addresses:

- ◆ [www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/ProgramBasics/Meals/Meal\\_Patterns.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/ProgramBasics/Meals/Meal_Patterns.htm)
- ◆ [www.fns.usda.gov/fns/nutrition.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/nutrition.htm)
- ◆ [www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/lunch/](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/lunch/)

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Newman, Roberta, 2002, Training New After-School Staff: Welcome to the World of School-Age Care, School Age Notes	
Minnesota School Age Core Competencies	<a href="http://www.mnpdcouncil.org/core/SACoreCompetenciessinglepages_2006.pdf">www.mnpdcouncil.org/core/SACoreCompetenciessinglepages_2006.pdf</a>
Connecticut School Age Core Competencies	<a href="http://www.ctafterschoolnetwork.org/PDF%20Files/CTCompetency%20Goals%20for%20School.pdf">www.ctafterschoolnetwork.org/PDF%20Files/CTCompetency%20Goals%20for%20School.pdf</a>
Harvard Family Research Project	<a href="http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/">www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/</a>
Connecticut Statutes and Regulations for Child Day Care Centers – Oct. 2005	<a href="http://www.dph.state.ct.us/DayCare/statutes.htm">www.dph.state.ct.us/DayCare/statutes.htm</a>
New York State Office of Children and Families School Age Child Care Regulations	<a href="http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/beccs/regs/414_SACC_regs.asp">www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/beccs/regs/414_SACC_regs.asp</a>
New York State Afterschool Network: Program Quality Self-Assessment Tool	<a href="http://www.tascorp.org/content/document/detail/1612/">www.tascorp.org/content/document/detail/1612/</a>
National Youth Employment Coalition: PEPNet Quality Self Assessment	<a href="http://www.ctafterschoolnetwork.org/PDF%20Files/PEPNet_Quality_Self_Assessment.pdf">www.ctafterschoolnetwork.org/PDF%20Files/PEPNet_Quality_Self_Assessment.pdf</a>
CIS/MetLife Foundation: Building Sustainable After-School Programs Checklist of Core Elements	<a href="http://www.cisnet.org/library/download.asp?file=CISNDPC_2006_01-30.pdf">www.cisnet.org/library/download.asp?file=CISNDPC_2006_01-30.pdf</a> .
Afterschool Alliance	<a href="http://www.afterschoolalliance.org">www.afterschoolalliance.org</a>
MENTOR After School Web Resources	<a href="http://www.mentoring.org/program_staff/afterschool/after_school_web_resources.php">www.mentoring.org/program_staff/afterschool/after_school_web_resources.php</a>
National After-School Association	<a href="http://www.naaweb.org">www.naaweb.org</a>
National Institute for Out-Of-School Time	<a href="http://www.niost.org">www.niost.org</a>
Promising Practices in After School	<a href="http://www.afterschool.org/featured.cfm">www.afterschool.org/featured.cfm</a>