

USING THE PROGRAM QUALITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Categories of the Needs Assessment are aligned with the Standards for Quality Programs:



1. Sound Management Practices



2. Knowledgeable and Qualified Program Staff



3. Positive Communication & Interaction



4. Intentional Programming



5. Safe and Healthy Program Environment



6. Purposeful Family & Community Engagement



7. Ongoing Quality Improvement

Read the Indicator

Each indicator describes a specific practice or standard of quality (e.g., a clear and accessible mission statement).

Reflect Using the Prompts

Consider the guiding questions provided under each indicator.

Discuss as a team or reflect individually on how well your program meets the indicator.

Record specific notes, strengths, or challenges in the space provided.

Select Your Level of Progress

After reflection, check the box that best describes your program's current status:

- **Not Applicable** – The indicator does not apply to our program.
- **Intend to Start** – We intend to start this practice and could use further assistance to implement this indicator.
- **In Progress** – We continue to work towards this indicator but could use further support and/or training.
- **Achieved** – We have evidence that our program has achieved this indicator.

Gather Documentation

When possible, attach or reference documentation that supports your selection (e.g., policies, flyers, websites, staff handbooks, or meeting notes).

1. Sound Management Practices



WHAT?

Quality in organizational practices provides a solid foundation for the program to operate. The organization is streamlined and efficient in policies, procedures, recordkeeping, and financial management. It has a clear mission and measurable goals.

WHY?

To positively impact the youth served, it is vital that a robust organization starts with a strong structure to ensure every aspect of the organization is sound. Sound organizational practices contribute to staff and youth recruitment and retention.

A. The mission statement is clear and easily accessible.

Consider whether your mission statement is easy to understand. Does your mission statement reflect the goals of the program? Think about how people can see your mission statement- on your website, posted in the center, published in your newsletter, available in the languages your parents speak, etc.)

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:

B. Organization maintains records and clear policies and procedures for staff, volunteers, participants, etc.

- Policies and procedures ensure that the program is adhering to federal, state, and local guidelines.
- Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined for staff, families, program youth, and community members.
- Adequate risk management policy is in place to protect staff, administrators, volunteers, and participants.

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Think about how your organization ensures alignment with federal, state, and local guidelines—and how do you keep staff engaged and informed as policies evolve. Reflect on how you ensure that staff clearly understand their roles and responsibilities and those of others around them.

Notes:

C. Organization has documents that lay out the way the program is governed.

- All staff, volunteers, and families have a handbook to reference.

Think about how your organization communicates its governance structure. Reflect on what ways staff, volunteers and families rely on a handbook or similar resource for information. Does your organization have key policies like youth pick-up, attendance, and discipline?

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:

D. The program has a strong fiscal management system, including a detailed, documented budget with line-item expenses and clear revenue sources tied to program goals.

- Strategic management planning addresses program sustainability and organizational growth.
- The program's budget supports goals and is informed by input from stakeholders during the budgeting process.

Consider how the organization completes its budget process. Think about how the organization documents and tracks expenditures to show where every dollar goes.

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:



2. Knowledgeable and Qualified Program Staff



WHAT?

Program staff are knowledgeable in out-of-school time (OST) best practices and youth development and are dedicated to developing and maintaining a positive environment for participating youth. Administrators provide program staff with a strong support system. Continuous learning is expected and offered through consistent professional learning opportunities. Learning reinforces the skills and knowledge necessary to work in a quality OST program. Program staff are focused on the needs of the children, families, and fellow team members.

WHY?

An out-of-school time (OST) program is only as good as the people who run it. It is vital to ensure staff are kept up to date on the newest learning trends in the OST space and are provided with opportunities to enhance their practice to better support youth. Supporting knowledgeable and qualified program staff promotes staff growth, retention, and alignment with program quality goals.

A. The program fosters a positive, culturally responsive work environment, where staff feel respected and valued, and provides clear pathways for professional development.

Consider the climate and culture of the organization how is that communicated? Think about how your organization supports the growth of team members including staff training, orientation, performance evaluations, etc.

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:

B. Staff have the appropriate education and experience to work with school-age youth.

- Staff have written position descriptions that outline the expectations of their individual roles, and the areas of expertise required.
- Site directors/coordinators have at least two years of experience working within an OST program or have at least a two-year associates degree in a early childhood education, youth development, or a related field.

Consider the organization's recruitment and hiring practices. Do position descriptions reflect the skills and expertise needed to work with children and youth? Think about your organization's hiring preferences.

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:

C. Staff meet the federal, state, and local requirements for working with children and school-age youth in an out-of-school time setting.

Be sure to consider all requirements that apply to your program, including those of funders and/or affiliate or parent organizations. How do you ensure staff are aware of and meet those requirements?

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:

D. The program follows the National Afterschool Association, OST Job Quality Standards, element nine and implements a written professional development plan based upon quality standards, local competencies, and individual needs.

- Annual professional learning plans are developed in consultation with each staff member and their supervisors.
- Staff are provided with a minimum of ten hours of professional learning opportunities annually.

Think about the organization's professional development and learning practices. Consider the onboarding process for new employees and the annual training requirements. Are there any standard trainings that your organization provides?

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:

E. All staff and volunteers have passed appropriate background screenings to comply with state and local regulations to remain eligible to work with children.

Reflect on your organization's background screening practices. Is this documented in an organization policy?

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:

3. Positive Communication & Interaction



WHAT?

Staff members use respectful communication with youth in the program to foster a sense of belonging and safety. Staff communicate positively and productively with each other and model positive relationships. They also encourage youth to form connections with each other.

WHY?

Good communication and positive interaction are shown to be key in determining retention and success in programs and support a safe environment for students. Ensuring that respectful, positive communication is at top of mind for the program encourages key relationship building for everyone involved. Research shows that positive staff interactions lead to more positive youth outcomes.

A. Program leadership speaks to staff members respectfully and gives them opportunities to provide input.

- Communication takes place through multiple channels to ensure it is accessible to all.

Consider your organization's communication style. Think about the stakeholder groups your organization communicates with and how messages are shared with those key individuals. Reflect on how often leadership communicates with program staff and parents.

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:

B. Staff encourage and allow youth to think and make choices for themselves.

Think about staff interaction with youth. Reflect on how staff encourage youth to make choices for themselves. Do they ask open-ended questions and prompt self-reflection?

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:

C. Staff members model appropriate communication by speaking respectfully to each other.

- Staff show youth how to practice resiliency traits such as kindness and respect to understand the feelings of others.

Reflect on relationships among staff members and how they communicate and interact with each other. Think about how staff model appropriate behavior for youth.

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:

D. The program structure fosters opportunities for staff and youth to develop trusting, appropriate relationships, promoting individual growth.

Think about how your organization supports staff in building a rapport with youth to ensure that they develop trusting relationships. Consider how relationships support improved student outcomes.

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:

E. Staff and youth share high expectations and adhere to consistent norms and behaviors, ensuring a positive and respectful environment.

Reflect on your organization's rules and procedures. Consider how the rules are developed and how those rules support youth development.

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:

F. Staff use positive guidance to direct youth behavior, modeling respectful and constructive behaviors both to the youth and among themselves.

Think about the strategies that your program uses to support positive youth behavior. How does your organization address challenging behavior? How do they support healthy peer dynamics?

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:

G. Program youth are encouraged to work with each other for various active learning activities.

Consider how your program supports youth sharing materials, taking turns, and communication with each other. Think about how program staff model collaborative behaviors.

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:

H. Program staff and management keep families up to date on what is happening day-to-day.

- Families are encouraged to give input where applicable.

Think about family involvement in the program: how is program information communicated with parents and adult caregivers? How are parents and adult caregivers able to provide feedback to the program staff?

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:



4. Intentional Programming

WHAT?

Programming is comprehensive with a variety of activities that support youth growth in all areas and has tie-ins to school day learning. Program design considers youth interests, needs, and learning styles. Staff, youth, and families give feedback to inform programming.

WHY?

The design of a program is vital to positive youth outcomes. Quality programming offers youth opportunities to gain real world knowledge and skills while also providing support for regular classroom learning.

A. Programming aligns with the afterschool program's mission and vision for the organization.

Reflect on the types of activities and programming the organization offers and how they align with the organization's vision, mission, and/or purpose.

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:

B. Activities and lesson plans are aligned with the abilities and interests of the program attendees.

- Youth are offered active learning activities.
- Program attendees are given opportunities to be creative and think critically while learning.
- Programming fosters autonomy, responsibility, leadership, and self-expression by integrating opportunities for youth to take on leadership roles and reflect critically on their experiences.

Consider how activities and lesson plans are selected or developed. Think about how the program incorporates youth interests, skills, and abilities in the selection process. Reflect on how programming supports learning.

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:

C. Lesson plans and activities support program goals.

- Staff members and program management work to create lesson plans that continue classroom learning when applicable.
- Program staff incorporate youth input into program planning.

Reflect on the alignment between the program activities and the organization's goals. Think about how the program continues to support youth learning.

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:

D. A variety of planning methods are used to address different learning styles and keep youth engaged.

Reflect on the programming offered. Think about how programming fosters cognitive and non-cognitive skill development while taking into consideration youth's learning styles.

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:

E. Youth are encouraged to build life skills, make responsible decisions, and develop self-competence.

- Staff work to create a culture to teach youth how to work consistently toward understanding how their decisions impact others.

Reflect on how youth are supported in developing life skills and responsible decision making. Think about what resources are shared with staff to support skills development and create a culture that supports character development.

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:



5. Safe and Healthy Program Environment

WHAT?

Programming is comprehensive with a variety of activities that support youth growth in all areas and The program environment is clean and safe. The space adheres to state and local licensing requirements. The program provides access to healthy and nutritious foods for all youth who attend the program. Staff members are aware of any individualized needs for youth in the program.

WHY?

When youth are offered rewarding and challenging OST enrichment in a safe and healthy environment, they are less likely to engage in risky behaviors or to be victims of violence.

A. Staff welcome all youth into the program environment.

Reflect on how youth are greeted each day. Think about how program staff ensure that youth feel recognized.

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:

B. Staff ensure the safety and health of all youth in the program through constant supervision.

Think about the organization’s supervision practices. How do program staff ensure that youth are supervised and safe throughout the duration of the program? Reflect on how supervision practices encourage and support youth development.

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:

C. Program management keeps thorough records on health and safety procedures and routines.

- Security protocols are in place to protect children.
- Program staff are CPR certified.
- The program maintains an accessible list of participants with up-to-date emergency contacts and ensures staff know the whereabouts of participants at all times.
- The program maintains safe staff to student ratios.

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What is your organization's recordkeeping and records retention policy? How does your organization's policy reflect safety protocols and funder requirements? How often are these documents reviewed and updated?

Notes:

D. Staff are trained in safety, first aid, mandatory reporting, and identifying signs of suicidality, child abuse, sexual abuse, and trafficking.

Ponder your organization's training process and how the administration ensures staff are receiving consistent training.

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:

E. Clear documentation is maintained for incidents, including written reports and phone records.

Think about what happens when an incident occurs. How is documentation maintained? What is the process for informing the administration and family members when an incident occurs?

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:

F. Facilities, equipment, and materials meet state and local licensing requirements, and frequent access to outdoor spaces is provided where possible.

Reflect on the facilities you utilize for programming and how that facility meets state and local licensing requirements. Think about how the outdoor space is conducive to programming needs and physical activity.

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:

G. The program provides a physically safe environment for all participants

Examine your organization's physical environment. How does the program guarantee that the physical environment is safe and adequate for all participants? Think about how your environment supports the programming goals.

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:

H. The program maintains an environment free of bullying and harassment.

- Staff work with youth on resiliency building traits such as tolerance, respect, and integrity to increase character education.

Review your organization's policy on bullying and harassment. What proactive measures does your program take to foster resiliency among youth?

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:

6. Purposeful Family & Community Engagement



WHAT?

A quality program fosters meaningful relationships with families and communities. Communication is engaging, intentional, and inclusive. The program engages the youth and families it serves through clear, purposeful, and consistent two-way communication. Youth voice is highly valued by the program.

WHY?

Youth have the most success when the adults around them listen to their ideas and encourage them to pursue new interests. Families and communities support OST learning opportunities everywhere they go.

A. The program builds and maintains meaningful relationships with families and members of the community.

- Communications with these groups happen regularly across multiple channels.
- New participating families are offered an orientation to the program.
- The program actively engages families in their children's interests and development using appropriate strategies, ensuring meaningful involvement in program planning, implementation, and improvement.
- Program management finds new ways to engage communities and families.
- The program actively seeks input from the children and youth it serves and listens to their feedback.
- The program considers the community's needs when creating policies, such as hours of operation, fees, and location, to meet the needs of families, ensuring accessibility, and affordability.

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Consider how – and how often - communications are distributed to families and community stakeholders. Think about the type of information that is communicated, the reading level, the format, etc. Does the program ask for and listen to feedback from the kids youth in the program?

Notes:

B. The program is responsive to the community it serves.

- The program regularly assesses the needs of families, the community, and participating youth.
- The program connects with new community partners.
- The program seeks out partnerships at local, regional, and national levels to leverage resources and maximize impact, while maintaining consistent communication and visibility in the community.
- Strong partnerships and written agreements with external partners clarify roles and responsibilities, contributing to program success.

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Think about how the program assesses the needs of the community. Do stakeholders and community members have opportunities to provide feedback? Do they think positively of the program?

Notes:





7. Ongoing Quality Improvement

WHAT?

High quality programs have ambitious yet attainable goals with measurable objectives. They collect data and analyze results to inform continuous quality improvement. The programs promote best practices, uphold high standards, and demonstrate a commitment to ongoing improvement.

WHY?

Program evaluation examines youth outcomes, operational effectiveness, and staff retention and shows which elements of the program are working and which ones need improvement. Continuous quality improvement practices keep the organization accountable for what it strives to achieve in its mission statement.

A. Staff collect results from the needs assessment to gather feedback from program youth, families, and the community.

- Feedback is collected through surveys that are given throughout the year.

Reflect on how your program gathers feedback from youth, families, and the community. Think about how often this feedback is collected and how it is utilized.

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:

B. The program uses and analyzes any data and feedback collected to inform the strategic planning for the organization.

Contemplate how your program utilizes data to inform the strategic planning for the organization. Note the type of data collected and how it is utilized.

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:

C. Program management regularly assesses staff performance and programming.

Examine the assessment process for staff and programming. Think about how the results of these assessments are used to improve programming and youth outcomes.

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:

D. The program has a written plan to measure and track quality improvement using quantitative and qualitative data.

- The plan outlines goals and objectives and has actionable steps.
- The program uses a needs assessment to determine programming needs.

Reflect on how your program documents its assessment and evaluation process.

Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:



USING THE RESULTS

Beside each Standard on the rows below, record the number of indicator responses for your level of progress across the rows. For example, for the Standard 1, record the number of indicators you marked as “Intend to Start. Then record the number of indicators you marked as “In Progress,” and so on. This will allow you to see where you excel and where you may wish to focus your quality improvement efforts.

	Not applicable	Intend to Start	In Progress	Achieved
 1. Sound Management Practices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 2. Knowledgeable and Qualified Program Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 3. Positive Communication & Interaction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 4. Intentional Programming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 5. Safe and Health Program Environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 6. Purposeful Family & Community Engagement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 7. Ongoing Quality Improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Of course, indicators that are marked as ‘Intend to Start’ or ‘In Progress’ should be prioritized. However, indicators in the ‘achieved’ category should be reviewed as well to determine if additional support may be useful.

Refer to your notes for each indicator to pinpoint areas of highest need for improvement. Then determine which areas you have the resources to address first. Use the results to create a program quality improvement plan that identifies any needs for staff training, policy revisions, updated procedures, or resource development.

Quality assessment and planning can be overwhelming. Florida After School is here to help. We offer individualized technical assistance and professional learning opportunities to support your continuous quality improvement initiatives.

For more information, contact Florida After School:
info@flafterschool.com | flafterschool.com

Needs Assessment results are for your program’s internal use to inform ongoing quality improvement efforts. They are not intended to generate a ‘score’ or to be punitive in any way.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Florida After School is grateful for the leadership of its Board of Directors and the invaluable input from its Advisory Council. In particular, we wish to acknowledge the following members for lending their expertise in updating the Florida After School Standards for Quality Programs:

- Lynne Wilcox, President/CEO, Florida Alliance of YMCAs
- Lasheena Williams, Chief Enthusiast Officer, Nonprofit Enthusiast
- Hollie Booker, Programming Director, Boys & Girls Clubs of Palm Beach County
- Jenn Faber, Director of Grade-Level Reading, Florida Alliance of Children's Councils and Trusts
- Anita Winkis, Senior Quality Advisor, Prime Time Palm Beach County
- Gregory Snow, Regional Director, After School Programs, Inc.

As the State Affiliate to the National AfterSchool Association and member of the 50 State Network funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Florida After School appreciates the guidance from the national afterschool organizations and its affinity with its sister organizations across the nation, who all strive to bring recognition to the importance of high-quality programming.

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