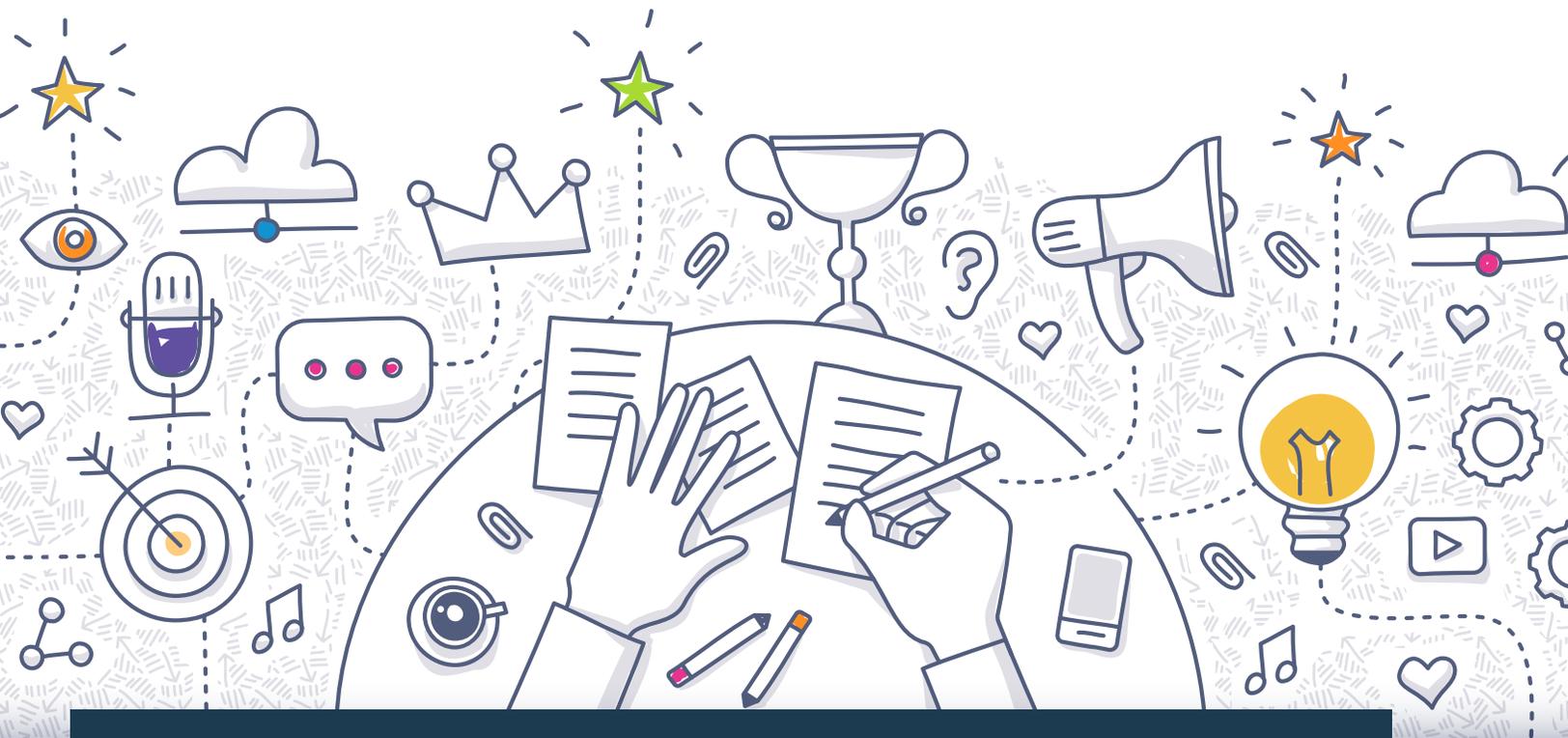




FLORIDA
AFTER SCHOOL
INC.



**FLORIDA AFTER SCHOOL STANDARDS
FOR QUALITY PROGRAMS**

Provider Reflection Workbook

flafterschool.com

Quality Standards



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

The Florida After School Standards for Quality Programs define the core principles and best practices that lead to the delivery of quality programming for children and youth in afterschool programs. The Standards provide a framework for the development of a caring, dynamic, stimulating and safe afterschool environment for children and youth.

Quality programs make a difference.

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.

INDICATORS:

- A. The mission statement is clear and easily accessible.
- 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.
- C. Organization has documents that lay out the way the program is governed.
 - » All staff, volunteers, and families have a handbook to reference.
 - Handbooks include topics such as youth pickup, attendance, any disciplinary protocols, etc.
- 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.

Guided Reflection

What is my program doing well in this area?

What are three ways we can improve our management practices?

Which of our policies or procedures need updating?



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.

INDICATORS:

- A. The program fosters a positive, culturally responsive work environment, where staff feel respected and valued, and provides clear pathways for professional development.
- 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.
- C. Staff meet the federal, state, and local requirements for working with children and school-age youth in an out-of-school time setting.
- D. The program follows [National Afterschool Association's guide to a thriving workforce, section 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.
 - This includes training in best practices, leadership, and new
 - research in out-of-school time programs.
 - Staff are trained to help students learn perseverance and to overcome challenges in order to build character and resiliency skills.
- E. All staff and volunteers have passed appropriate background screenings to comply with state and local regulations to remain eligible to work with children.

Guided Reflection

What opportunities are staff offered for continuous learning?

How are we fostering a positive environment for program staff?

What ways are available for staff to provide input?



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.

INDICATORS:

- 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.
- B. Staff encourage and allow youth to think and make choices for themselves.
- 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.
- D. The program structure fosters opportunities for staff and youth to develop trusting, appropriate relationships, promoting individual growth.
- E. Staff and youth share high expectations and adhere to consistent norms and behaviors, ensuring a positive and respectful environment.
- F. Staff use positive guidance to direct youth behavior, modeling respectful and constructive behaviors both to the youth and among themselves.
- G. Program youth are encouraged to work with each other for various active learning activities.
- 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.

Guided Reflection

In what ways are the lines of communication kept open in our program (for staff, families, and youth)?

What steps can we take to improve our program's positive communication?



Guided Reflection

Which of the indicators do we think our program does particularly well?

Which of the indicators do we think our program needs work in?

What does our program do to incorporate youth voice in programming?



5. Safe & Healthy Program Environment

WHAT?

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.

INDICATORS:

- A. Staff welcome all youth into the program environment.
- B. Staff ensure the safety and health of all youth in the program through constant supervision.
- 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.
- D. Staff are trained in safety, first aid, mandatory reporting, and identifying signs of suicidality, child abuse, sexual abuse, and trafficking.
- E. Clear documentation is maintained for incidents, including written reports and phone records.
- F. Facilities, equipment, and materials meet state and local licensing requirements, and frequent access to outdoor spaces is provided where possible.
- G. The program provides a physically safe environment for all participants
- 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.
- I. The program consults [National Afterschool Association's Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Standards \(HEPA\) section one](#) when making nutritional decisions regarding food and food safety.
- J. The program connects families to additional support services, such as food security, health, and mental health resources.

Guided Reflection

How does our program provide youth a welcoming and safe environment?

How often do we review our health and safety procedures to ensure they are up to date?

What are the steps we can take to improve in this area?



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.

INDICATORS:

- 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 culturally and linguistically 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.
- 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.

Guided Reflection

How does our program form meaningful relationships with families and with other partners within our community?

What are three ways we can improve engagement with youth and families?



Guided Reflection

What are our program's current plans for continuous quality improvement?

How are we currently collecting feedback from staff, youth, and families?

How do we measure outcomes?



NEXT STEPS

Thank you for taking the time to reflect on how your afterschool or summer program is supporting high quality experiences for the children and youth you serve.

As a next step, you may work with your program leadership to do a more comprehensive self-assessment of your program to determine specific opportunities for continued improvement. The accompanying Florida After School Program Quality Needs Assessment is a tool designed to allow programs to identify its own needs for improving organizational capacity, developing staff learning plans to support high quality programming, consider implementing 'best practices,' and more.

Florida After School exists to support ALL afterschool and summer programs in Florida, regardless of size, location, or funding source. We offer an ever-expanding menu of support services including but not limited to the following:

- Online, on-demand Florida After School Learning Academy
- Specialized Peer Learning Communities
- Individual Technical Assistance
- Customized Trainings
- Virtual Training Sessions
- Regional/Local Professional Learning Workshops
- Annual Afterschool Conference
- Library of Program Resources
- Legislative and Advocacy Updates



For more information about all that Florida After School offers, please contact us



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- Gregory Snow, Regional Director, After School Programs, Inc.

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The mission of Florida After School is to advocate for and equip out-of-school time stakeholders with resources to build the profession and support high-quality programs for all children and youth.

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