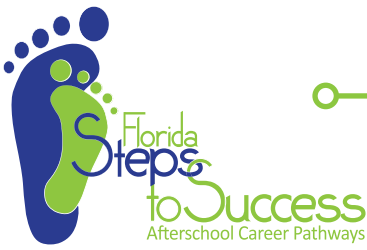




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To be effective, afterschool programs must be of high quality (have well-prepared staff and be SAFE—sequenced, active, focused, and explicit). Programs combining academic and extracurricular activities and offering services regularly over a sustained period of time are maximally beneficial.



Florida Core Competencies for Afterschool Practitioners

The Florida Core Competencies for Afterschool Practitioners is a set of knowledge and skill standards that define what afterschool practitioners that work directly with children and youth should know and be able to do in order to facilitate growth and development and partner effectively with families. The core competencies include expectations across a continuum of training, education, and experience ranging from the entry-level practitioner to practitioners with degrees, certifications, and extensive experience. The identification of a core body of knowledge defining the content knowledge expectations for those working in the profession

is a crucial and foundational component to the development and implementation of a professional development system in Florida.

The framework for the development of the core competencies has included a review of purpose and importance of competencies, an assessment of research and best-practice evidence in compiling the competencies, and a consideration of various pathways, both formal and informal, to attaining the knowledge and skills outlined in the competencies. Deliberations and work also addressed core knowledge subject areas and levels of expertise.

Purpose

The development of the Florida Core Competencies for Afterschool Practitioners was led by a steering committee of state leaders representing government agencies, higher education institutions, early care and education provider associations, training and technical assistance organizations and other afterschool stakeholders. The importance and purpose of the core competencies are summarized as follows:

- Identifies and defines what practitioners need to know and be able to do, the knowledge and behavioral expectations, to provide quality afterschool for children and youth and their families.
- Outlines a set of characteristics and attributes that define a continuum of professional development that develops over time, along multiple pathways, and supports effective job performance in afterschool settings.
- Creates a framework and common language for professional development, defining terms and expectations that can be used consistently among practitioners and across agencies, institutions, programs and organizations when communicating about afterschool.
- Serves as a standard for decisions and practices carried out by practitioners in all afterschool settings and programs.
- Provides guidelines for developing, tracking, supporting and promoting staff qualifications, curricula, distance learning and professional development tools and resources for practitioners in multiple afterschool systems and settings.
- Creates a framework to promote recognition of the significance of the afterschool profession, inform accountability systems, and guide training, education, articulation agreements between institutions, and interagency agreements.

About the Core Competencies

The core competencies might be used as follows:

- **Providers, Directors, Practitioners, Teachers**
 - A self-assessment tool to measure levels of knowledge and skill in each of the ten core knowledge areas
 - A guide to identify specific areas for future professional development
- **Directors, Program Administrators**
 - Create job descriptions and staff evaluation tools
 - Specify education and training requirements for teaching positions
 - Develop and track staff professional development and growth plans
 - Create compensation incentives based on levels of competency achieved by practitioners
- **Trainers, Training Entities**
 - Guide planning and development of education and training efforts and curriculum across levels of competence
 - Encourage cross-sector involvement in training
 - Promote training and education opportunities that address specific competencies
- **Higher Education Entities**
 - Coordinate and design course content to facilitate transfer and articulation agreements
 - Assess current program content to determine course development and modification
 - Design pathways leading to qualifications, degrees, and credentials
- **Federal, State and Local Agencies**
 - Develop and implement policies that will enhance professionalism in afterschool programs and settings
 - Link Core Competencies to other afterschool system efforts (e.g., Quality Rating Improvement Systems and Accreditation Systems)
 - Link Core Competencies to efforts to support expanded learning opportunities and school success for children
 - Promote use of Core Competencies across programs, agencies, and higher education institutions
 - Link Core Competencies to compensation initiatives to improve wages within afterschool, linking competence to compensation

The knowledge and skill requirements for directors, administrators, trainers, and coaches are significantly different from those required of practitioners that work directly with children and youth. These differences underscore the need for core competencies for these professionals.



Standards of Development

The Florida Core Competencies for Afterschool and Youth Development Professionals were developed after a thorough review of research and best practices and are grounded in developmentally appropriate practice. The Florida Competencies are based on the Nationally Recognized Core Competencies for Afterschool and Youth Development Professionals, which themselves involved a thorough review of research and existing core competency frameworks, and incorporated feedback from an extensive national audience of professionals in the field. A multitude of existing frameworks were reviewed and incorporated into the national core competencies including:

- Indiana Youth Development Credential Core Competencies,
- Achieve Boston Competency Framework,
- Kansas/Missouri Core Competencies for Youth Development Professionals,
- New York City Department of Youth and Community Development ,
- Colorado School Age/Youth Development Core Knowledge & Standards,
- Palm Beach County Core Competencies for After School Practitioners,
- Rhode Island Competencies for Afterschool & Youth Development Professionals,
- Competencies for Professional Child and Youth Work Practitioners,
- Mott Foundation Core Competencies for Afterschool Educators,
- National Collaboration for Youth Professional Development Competencies,
- 4-H Professional Research and Knowledge Base,
- U.S. Army School-Age Services Professional Development Program,
- Washington STARS, and Washington School-Age Skill Standards,
- The updated Washington State Core Competencies for Child and Youth Development Professionals,
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Professional Development, Program, and Accreditation Standards; the Child Development Associate Competency Standards developed by The Council for Professional Recognition;
- National Teacher Certification Standards; guidance regarding infant and toddler teachers developed by Zero to Three
- National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) Accreditation standards, and
- Professional development guidelines developed by the Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children

The Nationally Recognized Core Competencies were piloted nationally by six sites, and also underwent an extensive national review process by professionals in the field. The final document therefore reflects current research, best practices, and thinking in the field. Moreover, the Florida Afterschool Network participated as one of the six states in the pilot; therefore, this version underwent extensive review and modification by the Florida Afterschool Professional Development Steering Committee to ensure the competencies are aligned with the competencies for child/youth development practitioners and reflect the continuum of skills needed for those working with the afterschool population.

Formal and Informal Pathways

Practitioners develop knowledge and skill in a variety of ways, and the Florida Core Competencies for Afterschool Practitioners are designed to support formal and informal pathways of training and education. For those that choose a more formal route of college and university education, the core competencies provide a framework for the development of coursework and curricula for higher education institutions. In a similar way, local trainers and training systems can utilize the core competencies to plan and develop informal training programs and modules. Teachers and their supervisors can utilize the core competencies to develop personal professional development plans and

evaluate course and workshop offerings based on their alignment with identified needs. Still under development are mechanisms and linkages between formal and informal systems. As afterschool practitioners and directors become more accustomed to a professional development system and are afforded more financial and resource supports, it is likely that some individuals will want to move from the informal to the formal system. Ways to translate accomplishments within the informal system to the formal system need to be developed, possibly through competency exams and portfolio reviews. The core competencies will serve as a critical foundation to assist in the development of transition efforts.



Tiers of Competencies

Professionals in the field of working with children and youth become increasingly competent through their experiences and professional development opportunities. The Florida Core Competencies for Afterschool Practitioners have been organized from basic to high-level skills across four levels or tiers. Each tier is a prerequisite to the next, with knowledge and skill in one tier required before moving to the next higher tier. Knowledge and skill development generally progresses from knowing and following practices to planning and implementing activities and procedures to eventually analyzing and evaluating programs and practices. In some instances, however, skills and knowledge are not

completely linear and not all begin at the entry level, so some skills may seem similar across different levels.

The tiers of competencies are not awards or certificates but provide a pathway to enter and progress within the early childhood field. Each tier assumes greater knowledge and skill than the previous tier, and assessment documents have been developed to demonstrate alignment of the competencies to the formal educational system of credentials and degrees. The intent of the document is to describe knowledge and skills that can be obtained in a variety of ways; thus, tiers should not be tied to a particular job or position of employment.

TIER I

Tier 1 represents the knowledge and skills expected of an entry level practitioner across all ten core knowledge areas; that is, a practitioner new to the child/youth development field, with minimal specialized training/education or experience.

TIER II

Tier 2 includes the foundational knowledge and skills expected of someone with some experience in the field. Tier 2 includes Tier 1 plus the knowledge and skills commensurate with a Youth Development Credential, a certificate in child/youth development, or equivalent training/education or related work experience.

TIER III

Tier 3 describes a practitioner who can apply knowledge and information in the setting. It includes Tiers 1 and 2 plus knowledge and skills commensurate with an associate's degree in child/adolescent development or related fields (such as Social Work, Recreation, Special Education, Education) or related work experience.

TIER IV

Tier 4 describes a seasoned practitioner who can apply knowledge and information in increasingly nuanced ways. It includes Tiers 1, 2, and 3 plus the knowledge and skills commensurate with a bachelor's degree in child/adolescent development or related fields or related work experience.

TIER V (Directors, Supervisors and Administrators)

Tier 5 is considered a mastery Tier. Professionals at this Tier have advanced from basic knowledge and understanding to analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Tier 5 includes Tiers 1, 2, 3, and 4 plus knowledge and skills commensurate with an advanced degree in child/adolescent development or related fields or related work experience. Since this Tier reflects the level of skills and attributes of leaders (administrators, directors, supervisors), Tier 5 is included as a separate section for leadership staff.

Core Knowledge Areas

Core knowledge is defined as the specific knowledge, competencies, and characteristics needed by early care and education practitioners to work effectively with young children and their families. Each subject area describes the knowledge and skills that practitioners need in order to work with children and youth and their families. Information is applicable to a wide variety of settings and programs (e.g., school-based afterschool programs, YMCA settings, Boys and Girls Clubs, parks and recreation programs, child care centers, etc.). The Florida Core Competencies for Afterschool Practitioners includes the following knowledge or subject base areas:

- I. Safety and Wellness
- II. Child and Youth Growth and Development
- III. Family, School, and Community Relationships
- IV. Learning Environment and Curriculum
- V. Interactions with Children and Youth
- VI. Youth Engagement
- VII. Cultural Competency and Responsiveness
- VIII. Program Planning and Development
- IX. Child/Youth Observation and Assessment
- X. Professional Development and Leadership

Practitioner Disposition

Equally as important as the core knowledge and skills are key dispositions or temperaments. Practitioners with certain characteristics are more likely to interact successfully with young children and families and provide quality early care and education environments. These essential characteristics and dispositions are important at each tier of professional development and include:

- Interest in working with children and youth
- Appreciation for and curiosity about development in all children
- Flexibility
- Stable and responsible work habits
- Desire to learn
- Utilizes self-reflection
- Contributes positively to team efforts
- Ability to articulate own feelings and needs
- A sense of humor
- Respect for and acceptance of the diversity of children and families
- Ability to problem-solve
- Good interpersonal and communication skills with children and adults

Practitioners are encouraged to consider their own dispositions and how they do or do not align with the characteristics listed above in making decisions about entering or staying in the field of working with afterschool and youth. As with any profession, it is important to find work that fits individual personalities and skills in order to build competence, personal contentment, and professional satisfaction. Directors are encouraged to consider using these dispositional qualities in screening new job applicants, as part of annual performance evaluations and in developing staff professional development plans.

Core Knowledge Area 1:

Young children and youth's physical and emotional safety and wellness is vital for fostering development in all areas. Afterschool and Youth Development practitioners ensure children and youth's safety, promote sound health practices, recognize and respond to child abuse and neglect, and provide nutritious meals and snacks. They know and implement a broad array of prevention, preparedness, and health and safety practices. Practitioners communicate information regarding children and youth's health and safety to families while maintaining confidentiality.

Key Element: Knowledge of Regulations

TIER I

1. Identifies regulations or policies regarding health and safety, including emergency, illness, and injury procedures.
2. Identifies program policies and procedures on admitting and dismissing children/youth.
3. Practices and carries out disaster plans and drills (e.g., fire, flood, earthquake, and lockdown) including parent communication plan.
4. Explains emergency supplies and equipment when needed and as permitted by policies and procedures.
5. Describes supervision and staffing level requirements.
6. Identifies the mandated reporter role for child abuse and neglect.

TIER II

7. Uses diagrams, pictures, and words understood by children, youth, and adults to post instructions for emergency procedures.
8. Demonstrates emergency, illness, and injury procedures. Reports all incidences to supervisor.
9. Completes and maintains relevant first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certification, and blood borne pathogens training.
10. Assists with and involves children and youth in health and safety assessments, when possible.
11. Maintains that safety equipment, such as a smoke detector or fire extinguisher, is in place and operable.
12. Maintains and demonstrates proper use of emergency supplies and equipment.
13. Interprets and reports problems regarding supervision and staffing level requirements.
14. Demonstrates compliance with regulations and policies regarding the inclusion of children and youth of all cultural backgrounds and abilities.
15. Identifies, documents, and reports suspected emotional distress, abuse, and neglect of participants in an immediate and appropriate way.

TIER III

16. Designs, adheres to, and documents emergency, illness, and injury procedures.
17. Complies with all regulations and policies regarding health and safety.
18. Administers regulations and policies regarding the inclusion of children and youth of all cultural backgrounds and abilities.
19. Demonstrates regulations and laws pertaining to the children, youth, and families served by the program.

TIER IV

20. Engages children, youth, and families in the development and/or revision of health and safety procedures.
21. Assesses how regulations and policies affect the quality of the program and recommends revisions as needed.
22. Provides staff leadership and trains staff regarding regulations, policies, and protocols.
23. Develops and/or documents contingency plans to meet supervision policies and staffing level requirements in all situations.

Safety and Wellness

Key Element: Environmental Safety in the Program

TIER I

1. Identifies the environmental safety precautions of the program or center.
2. Identifies and ensures safety in all areas, both indoors and outdoors.
3. Recognizes safe materials and equipment for activities.
4. Identifies a healthy physical environment by following health, safety, and sanitation procedures.
5. Responds to and documents participants' injuries and notifies supervisor and families if appropriate, while ensuring the comfort and care of other children and youth.
6. Observes children and youth daily for signs of illness and/or signs of abuse and neglect.

TIER II

7. Communicates and maintains characteristics of a safe environment, including use of appropriate supplies, equipment, and materials to prevent and reduce physical injuries.
8. Adapts the indoor and outdoor environments to maximize the independence of children and youth with special needs.
9. Teaches safety precautions and rules to children and youth and enforces rules consistently.
10. Actively supervises and interacts with children and youth to ensure safety during all programmatic activities.
11. Keeps informed about and shares up-to-date safety information and resources with families and staff.
12. Interprets proper transportation policies and procedures involving program vans and buses.
13. Communicates transportation policies and procedures to children, youth, parents/guardians, and staff.

TIER III

14. Employs safe indoor and outdoor environments.
15. Facilitates child/youth participation in a process to identify and assess environmental safety issues.
16. Provides opportunities for children and youth to help improve environmental safety issues.
17. Creates indoor and outdoor environments that are structured so that all areas can be easily viewed.

TIER IV

18. Analyze environmental design and maintenance efforts, and implement strategies for improving environmental safety.
19. Develops policies and procedures for environmental safety

Core Knowledge Area 1:

Young children and youth’s physical and emotional safety and wellness is vital for fostering development in all areas. Afterschool and Youth Development practitioners ensure children and youth’s safety, promote sound health practices, recognize and respond to child abuse and neglect, and provide nutritious meals and snacks. They know and implement a broad array of prevention, preparedness, and health and safety practices. Practitioners communicate information regarding children and youth’s health and safety to families while maintaining confidentiality.

After-school programs also benefit the community. On school days, the peak hours for juvenile crime are between 3 PM and 6 PM. Students who spend no time in extracurricular

Key Element: Health and Wellness

TIER I

1. Identifies healthy and balanced snacks and/or meals within a socially, culturally, and emotionally supportive environment.
2. Identifies health hazards in meals (e.g., allergies, choking) and takes steps to prevent dangerous situations.
3. Identifies a variety of physical activities that meet the interests, developmental levels, and skills of children and youth.
4. Identifies healthy behavior, including healthy eating, active living, and socially responsible behavior.
5. Describes an awareness of risk factors and healthy living choices regarding nutrition, physical and mental health, physical activity, and healthy relationships.

TIER II

6. Promotes health and physical activity and provides an environment that contributes to the prevention of illness and chronic disease.
7. Practices, models, and teaches children and youth appropriate hygiene and sanitation procedures.
8. Communicates with children, youth, and families about the nutritional needs of children and youth, and responds to individual and cultural food preferences.
9. Identifies signs and symptoms of common childhood health problems, including mental health issues, and refers accordingly.
10. Complies with instructions for the administration of medicine and approved medical treatments, including related documentation.
11. Encourages physical activity appropriate to the developmental and physical abilities of all children and youth, and models physically active behavior.
12. Applies healthy living strategies in program activities and interactions with children and youth.
13. Responds to participant questions with balanced, fair, developmentally appropriate, and accurate information using program-approved referrals.
14. Facilitates age-appropriate discussions on healthy living topics.

Safety and Wellness

TIER III

15. Designs and assesses healthy environments, both indoors and outdoors.
16. Identifies and responds to nutritional issues, including food allergies.
17. Plans and evaluates menus; ensures that menus include healthy foods that reflect the preferences of youth and families.
18. Compiles wellness indicators that may impact the success of children and youth.
19. Provides an environment that promotes and incorporates daily physical activity.
20. Plans and conducts safe field trips following program procedures to assure safety.
21. Observes the effects of stress and trauma on children and youth and assesses their resiliency.
22. Assembles resources that address various health related issues, including mental health issues.
23. Helps children, youth, families, staff, and others recognize and report abuse and neglect.

TIER IV

24. Designs and documents appropriate health policies and procedures.
25. Assesses the program's nutrition plan and adapts practices accordingly, including practices that ensure staff know and are trained to respond appropriately to an allergic reaction to food.
26. Works with health care professionals in the community to address wellness needs of children and youth.
27. Explains the impact of health and fitness activities on children and youth and evaluates the appropriateness and effectiveness of such activities for groups and individuals.
28. Designs and implements activities that emphasize healthy bodies, healthy lifestyles, physical activity, and a healthy environment.
29. Develops policies and procedures, including an approved referral list, to address health-related issues
30. Plans activities that teach children and youth techniques to deal with stress and develop resiliency.
31. Trains staff to respond to participant questions with balanced, fair, and accurate information.
32. Establishes policies and procedures to comply with established laws for the documentation and notification of suspected abuse, neglect, and physical, verbal, and sexual harassment.
33. Designs and documents policies and procedures supporting a curriculum that addresses healthy living topics.
34. Designs programs that incorporate discussions and educational opportunities on healthy living topics.

..... activities are 49 percent more likely to use drugs and 37 percent more likely to become teen parents than those who spend time in supervised extracurricular activities.

Core Knowledge Area 2:

Afterschool professionals understand and are able to articulate the typical stages of growth and development (developmental milestones) and individual and developmental variations, including cultural differences and special needs, in order to provide a program that meets the multiple needs of children and youth. It is critical for practitioners to know and be able to apply commonly accepted research and development theories regarding children and youth and to know how to create safe, nurturing, and challenging learning environments that encompass developmentally appropriate practices, establish foundations for future growth, and engage young people in building social skills and knowledge.

Key Element: Use developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging early learning environments, which meet all needs of children and youth.

TIER I

1. Identifies the basic stages of child and youth development.
2. Recognizes different personalities and temperaments in children and youth.
3. Identifies that children and youth learn and develop through experience.
4. Explains that some children and youth have special needs and requirements.
5. Demonstrates awareness and respect for cultural and environmental differences, including family values and strengths.

TIER II

6. Describes physical, cognitive, social, and emotional stages of child and youth development.
7. Describes the changing role and influence of peers.
8. Explains and interprets current youth cultures, such as use of technologies, vocabulary, clothing and music.
9. Explains/summarizes individual differences in personalities and development and the ways in which those differences impact individual needs and participation in the program.
10. Adapts experiences to participants' individual and group needs, including different learning styles.
11. Identifies and responds to the individual needs of children and youth, including those with special needs.
12. Identifies and responds to the effects cultural differences may have on behavior and development.

Child and Youth Growth Development

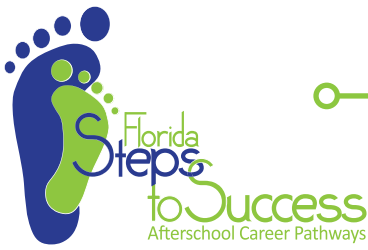


TIER III

13. Applies current theories and ongoing research related to child and youth development.
14. Examines child and youth development frameworks pertaining to positive youth outcomes.
15. Shares information with families about the general principles of child and youth growth and development.
16. Distinguishes physical, cognitive, social, and emotional differences among children and youth as they relate to individuals' programmatic needs.
17. Distinguishes possible risk factors, delays, or disabilities that may indicate a need for special services, program adaptations, and/or consultations with a supervisor.
18. Constructs environments and experiences that respect and affirm cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity.

TIER IV

19. Selects and applies major theories of child and youth development to all curricular areas.
20. Assembles information on individual growth, development, and learning styles to improve programming and professional practice.
21. Utilizes appropriate resources and makes programmatic adaptations for children and youth with special needs.
22. Prioritizes and integrates cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity into the daily curriculum by partnering with children, youth, families, and community partners to incorporate and value aspects of linguistic and cultural practices.



Core Knowledge Area 3:

Afterschool and youth development professionals understand that children and youth live and learn across a continuum of settings including in their homes with family, in schools and other learning environments during the school day, and in a multitude of other community settings as well as in afterschool and youth development programs. Practitioners build on respectful, reciprocal relationships across settings to promote optimal development for children, youth and families and enhance the quality of afterschool and youth services. This includes implementing culturally competent practices, knowing about and connecting families to community resources, and taking advantage of opportunities for appropriate, positive collaborations with other family, school, and community services.

Key Element: Relationships with Families

TIER I

1. Identifies the role of the family as central to the development of children and youth.
2. Demonstrates awareness and respect for similarities and differences in the varying cultures and structures of families.
3. Maintains confidentiality.
4. Establishes positive communication and relationships with families.

TIER II

5. Supports the relationships of children and youth with their families and recognizes families' strengths and stress factors.
6. Communicates with family members about program activities and goals.
7. Uses inclusive language that acknowledges all family types/structures, values family strengths.
8. In relating to families, demonstrates problem-solving skills, listens actively, validates different perspectives, and recognizes when additional assistance is needed.
9. Works effectively with families from a variety of cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.
10. Shares knowledge of child/youth growth and development with families.

Students in quality afterschool programs
have better academic performance,
behavior and school attendance and
greater expectations for the future.

~U.S. Departments of Education and Justice, 2000

Family, School and Community Relationships

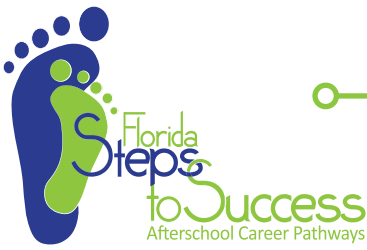


TIER III

11. Plans and conducts family events designed to highlight families' strengths, shared interests, and diverse cultures; reduce isolation; and build community.
12. Works to ensure that the diversity of family and community cultures are reflected in all aspects of the program.
13. Partners with families in addressing developmental and behavioral issues experienced by their children/youth.
14. Uses communication strategies that do not escalate conflict.
15. Provides families with appropriate referrals to community resources.
16. Communicates effectively with families about the progress and development of their children/youth.

TIER IV

17. Facilitates and models a strengths-based, family-centered approach.
18. Creates opportunities for families and children/youth to be actively involved in program and policy development.
19. Demonstrates knowledge of the potential impact of cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity and legal factors that can exist between the home and setting.
20. Creates and facilitates opportunities for the development of social and support networks between families.
21. Implements effective conflict resolution techniques with families.
22. Participates with families in the development of Individual Education Plans (IEPs), if requested.



Core Knowledge Area 3:

Afterschool and youth development professionals understand that children and youth live and learn across a continuum of settings including in their homes with family, in schools and other learning environments during the school day, and in a multitude of other community settings as well as in afterschool and youth development programs. Practitioners build on respectful, reciprocal relationships across settings to promote optimal development for children, youth and families and enhance the quality of afterschool and youth services. This includes implementing culturally competent practices, knowing about and connecting families to community resources, and taking advantage of opportunities for appropriate, positive collaborations with other family, school, and community services.

Key Element: Partnerships with Community

TIER I

1. Defines the larger community context within which children, youth, and families live.
2. Identifies the community as a resource for services, activities, and volunteers; shares information with families.
3. Works cooperatively and appropriately with volunteers and partners.

TIER II

4. Values and uses community resources that support and assist children, youth, and families.
5. Assists assigned volunteers in participating effectively in program activities.
6. Helps children, youth, and families see themselves as contributors to the community.

TIER III

7. Demonstrates effective working relationships with partners.
8. Helps families identify community resources specific to their needs and makes appropriate referrals.
9. Demonstrates effective working relationships with volunteers.
10. Develops opportunities for children, youth, and families to participate meaningfully in community awareness and community service activities.

TIER IV

11. Chooses to expand relationships with community partners to meet the needs of children, youth, and families.
12. Implements and supports volunteer program best/promising practices; trains and supervises volunteers as needed.
13. Assists with community outreach.
14. Promotes public awareness about family and child/youth development.
15. Develops relationships with community leaders, schools, businesses, and arts organizations to introduce children and youth to career opportunities.

Family, School and Community Relationships



Key Element: Partnerships with Schools

TIER I

1. Identifies that the school and afterschool program should work collaboratively
2. Describes appropriate communication and information sharing between the program and schools.
3. Explains education standards in place at schools attended by program participants.

TIER II

4. Contributes to positive relationships between school and the afterschool program.

TIER III

5. Develops relationships with relevant school staff to better meet the individual needs of students.
6. Regularly shares family communications with schools, as appropriate.

TIER IV

7. Maintains ongoing dialogue with the school as needed.
8. As appropriate, participates in shared professional development with schools attended by program participants.

Core Knowledge Area 4:

Afterschool and youth development professionals understand and utilize strategies that are characteristic of high quality environments such as consistent schedules and routines, transition activities for moving from one activity or place to another, offering interesting materials and activities appropriate to the age group, and arranging the space to enhance learning. They know and understand a variety of developmentally appropriate curriculum models to promote physical, social, and cognitive development, communication skills, and creative expression.

Nobel Laureate Economist, James Heckman concluded that a complement to early education and participation in afterschool programs reduces initiating drug use among youth by nearly 50 percent and also reduces the likelihood of skipping school by half.

~Investing in Our Young People, University of Chicago, 2006

Key Element: Promote Positive Outcomes for Children and Youth.

TIER I

1. Defines that lesson plans are the blueprint for implementing curriculum and follows an activity plan.
2. Describes that children and youth learn best through fun, engaging, hands-on experiences.
3. Identifies the importance of providing children and youth with choice in the process and content of curricular activities.
4. Describes how the physical space/environment can impact teaching and learning.
5. Identifies the existence of state academic standards.

TIER II

6. Maintains and monitors a daily schedule that balances active and quiet, youth-directed and adult-directed, individual and group, and indoor and outdoor activities.
7. Identifies individual assets and risk factors that may impact the success of children and youth.
8. Encourages child/youth engagement in a variety of developmentally appropriate activities that facilitate fun and learning through experimentation and exploration.
9. Selects materials appropriate to participants' developmental levels and has sufficient materials prepped and ready for use at beginning of activity.
10. Provides an interesting, physically and emotionally safe, and inclusive environment.
11. Uses appropriate space and equipment, devices, and technology in support of teaching and learning.

Learning Environment and Curriculum

TIER III

12. Implements creative, engaging, hands-on experiences in the curriculum and recognizes that these experiences should apply across all areas of development (e.g., cognitive, social, emotional) and all aspects of the curriculum.
13. Provides materials that expose youth to a variety of cultural backgrounds and practices.
14. Plans and adapts activities and the physical environment to make them appropriate for the developmental levels of all participating children and youth, including those with special needs.

TIER IV

15. Combines activities that are balanced between concrete, participatory experiences and adult-directed experiences.
16. Creates a curriculum and learning environment that uses authentic materials and technologies; promotes youth decision-making; and incorporates experimentation, exploration, simulation, and play to enhance development and facilitate active learning.
17. Plans and evaluates the learning environment and curriculum to maximize learning for all children and youth, including those with special needs and a variety of learning styles.
18. Collaborates with other agencies to maximize opportunities for children and youth within the integrated curricular areas.
19. Organizes the environment so it facilitates learning in all curricular areas.
20. Constructs knowledge and ability to modify the environment to manage behaviors and accommodate different learning styles as necessary.



Core Knowledge Area 4:

Afterschool and youth development professionals understand and utilize strategies that are characteristic of high quality environments such as consistent schedules and routines, transition activities for moving from one activity or place to another, offering interesting materials and activities appropriate to the age group, and arranging the space to enhance learning. They know and understand a variety of developmentally appropriate curriculum models to promote physical, social, and cognitive development, communication skills, and creative expression.

Key Element: Promoting Physical, Social and Cognitive Development

TIER I

1. Engages in cognitive, social, and physical activities with children and youth while maintaining a supervisory role.
2. Identifies healthy behavior for children and youth.
3. Encourages children and youth to ask questions for understanding and actively listens to the responses given.
4. Discusses recognition and expression of feelings.
5. Encourages children and youth to exhibit empathy and acknowledge the rights and possessions of others.
6. Understands that family, school and community have different cultural experiences that play a role in how children and youth respond socially to adults and peers.

TIER II

7. Encourages the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of children and youth through experimentation, exploration, and play.
8. Leads activities in a manner that engages children and youth and builds on their interests.
9. Uses a variety of indoor and outdoor physical activities, including structured, unstructured, staff-directed, and child/youth-directed activities.
10. Asks children and youth relevant open-ended questions to extend their learning.
11. Encourages children and youth to perceive events and experiences in their lives as opportunities for growth.
12. Helps children and youth learn to communicate and practice communication and cooperation with others.
13. Promotes feelings of empathy and mutual respect among children, youth, and adults and helps participants feel valued as members of a group.
14. Supports children and youth's development of self-awareness and identity.
15. Supports children and youth with special needs as they participate in physical, social, and cognitive activities.
16. Facilitates a variety of physical, social, and cognitive activities that meet the interests, developmental stages, and skill levels of children and youth.

Learning Environment and Curriculum

TIER III

17. Plans and guides exploratory activities in response to child/youth interests.
18. Incorporates cognitive, social, and physical activities into all curricular areas.
19. Intervenes appropriately to promote the social, cognitive, and physical development of children and youth.
20. Provides an environment that is conducive to exploration and the development of physical, social, and cognitive skills.
21. Revisits learning activities with children and youth so they can reflect and build upon previous learning to develop and refine thinking and reflection skills.
22. Provides a meaningful curriculum emphasizing social skills, relationships, and friendships.
23. Guides children and youth in expressing their feelings and asserting themselves in positive ways.
24. Facilitates child/youth participation in problem solving and conflict resolution.
25. Adapts physical, social, and cognitive activities for children and youth with special needs.
26. Facilitates learning opportunities that reflect the cultures represented in the community of the program.



TIER IV

27. Integrates physical, social, and cognitive activities into all curricular areas and articulates the importance of an integrated curriculum.
28. Incorporates multiple program strategies to correspond with multiple learning styles.
29. Develops and implements strategies that encourage the social, physical, and cognitive development of children and youth through various leadership and citizenship roles.
30. Facilitates child/youth involvement in curriculum design, implementation, and evaluation.
31. Understands the impact of health and fitness activities on children and youth.
32. Engages children and youth in planning problem-solving and critical-thinking activities.
33. Creates an inclusive and collaborative program community.
34. Designs learning opportunities that reflect the cultures represented in the program community.

Core Knowledge Area 4:

Afterschool and youth development professionals understand and utilize strategies that are characteristic of high quality environments such as consistent schedules and routines, transition activities for moving from one activity or place to another, offering interesting materials and activities appropriate to the age group, and arranging the space to enhance learning. They know and understand a variety of developmentally appropriate curriculum models to promote physical, social, and cognitive development, communication skills, and creative expression.

Key Element: Promoting Communication Skills

TIER I

1. Describes effective listening and verbal skills, including the use of proper grammar.
2. Describes body language and tone of voice and its impact on others.
3. Responds to verbal and nonverbal forms of communication.
4. Stimulates conversation with and between children/youth.
5. Identifies the importance of using open-ended questions.
6. Recalls that children and youth communicate in a variety of ways.

TIER II

7. Expands own and participants' vocabulary in a variety of ways.
8. Provides an environment that is conducive to the exploration and development of communication skills.
9. Encourages children and youth to use appropriate verbal and nonverbal means of communicating thoughts and feelings.
10. Offers a variety of communication opportunities that meet the individual interests and skill levels of all children and youth, including those from diverse cultures and those with special needs.
11. Identifies barriers in communication.

TIER III

12. Offers programming opportunities for children and youth to learn effective communication skills.
13. Incorporates communication skills into all curricular areas
14. Uses open-ended questions in one or more content areas.
15. Plans and implements communication experiences and activities based on the population of the program.

TIER IV

16. Adapts and organizes interactions with children and youth based on culturally appropriate assessment and evaluation tools.
17. Evaluates the appropriateness and effectiveness of communication activities for groups and individuals.
18. Develops and teaches strategies for integrating communication development activities into all curricular areas.
19. Continually reflects on own skills for helping children and youth solve conflicts.
20. Helps children and youth who are learning a second language by providing them with the supports necessary for them to fully participate in programming opportunities.

Learning Environment and Curriculum

Key Element: Promoting Creative Expression

TIER I

1. Identifies the value of the process and product of creative expression.
2. Demonstrates awareness of and respect for cultural differences that may affect the ways in which children and youth express individual creativity.
3. Demonstrates awareness of and respect for individuality in children and youth.

TIER II

4. Explains that a balance between process and product is important.
5. Models and encourages creativity through various art forms.
6. Provides opportunities that encourage youth to experiment with sound, rhythm, movement, language, materials, space, and ideas in individual ways.
7. Provides time and materials for spontaneous, unstructured, and self-directed activities.
8. Identifies the community as a resource for creative experiences.

TIER III

9. Emphasizes the importance of the balance between process and product during activities.
10. Incorporates activities for self-expression that reflect diverse cultural traditions.
11. Engages children and youth in curricular activities that promote creative expression.
12. Modifies curriculum and experiences to ensure that all participants, including those with special needs, have access to opportunities that allow for individual creative expression.
13. Articulates the value of creative expression as necessary to the development of the individual.
14. Incorporates creative activities into all curricular areas.
15. Provides an environment where children and youth feel free to explore and develop their creative skills.
16. Involves children and youth in the development and implementation of creative activities.
17. Uses the community as a resource for creative experiences.

TIER IV

18. Celebrates creative expression through appropriate documentation and exhibition (e.g., displaying, publishing, creating portfolios).
19. Educates families about the importance of individual creative expression.
20. Advocates for the importance of children and youth representing their thoughts, feelings, and ideas through creative outlets.
21. Evaluates the appropriateness and effectiveness of creative activities for groups and individuals.
22. Assesses and uses specialists in artistic disciplines to incorporate the arts into the curriculum.
23. Introduces children and youth to and helps them develop an appreciation for creative experiences in their community.

Core Knowledge Area 5:

Afterschool and Youth Development professionals recognize the critical importance of relationships and communication in the practice of quality child and youth care (NACP). Practitioners have realistic and developmentally appropriate expectations regarding the behavior of children and youth and understand developmentally appropriate guidance techniques. They are aware of factors that may impact behavior and implement strategies to support children and youth individually and in group experiences to develop self-regulation, self-concept, coping mechanisms, and positive interactions with their peers and adults.

Key Element: Providing Individual Guidance

TIER I

1. Identifies activities for a safe, fun learning environment.
2. Builds rapport and establishes relationships with individual children and youth (e.g., addresses participants by name and knows their basic interests).
3. Identifies and maintains personal boundaries with children and youth (e.g., physical space, time, etc.)
4. Identifies established guidelines for supervision and behavior management.
5. Describes positive behavior guidance in responding to behaviors or situations of concern.
6. Identifies the reasons for the behavioral issues of individuals.

TIER II

7. Modifies activities to ensure a safe, fun learning environment.
8. Builds trusting relationships with children and youth, providing physical and emotional security.
9. Interacts in a manner reflecting respect for self and others.
10. Uses strategies to assist children and youth in learning to express emotions in positive ways, solve problems, and make decisions.
11. Interacts with children and youth in a positive, warm, nurturing manner, and avoids interactions that would cause physical and/or emotional harm to participants.
12. Uses a variety of positive direct and indirect guidance methods to respond constructively to participants' behaviors.
13. Provides a supportive environment that helps each child/youth know, accept, and take pride in himself or herself and develop a sense of independence and belonging.
14. Communicates with families regarding areas of concern about the child/youth's participation in the program and develops cooperative strategies to help children and youth be successful in the program.

Interactions with Children and Youth

TIER III

15. Uses knowledge of child/youth culture as a strategy to connect with participants.
16. Encourages child/youth participation in establishing program/group rules.
17. Interprets strategies that involve participants in solving problems and establishing guidelines and limits for behaviors.
18. Interprets the reasons for the behavioral issues of individuals and responds appropriately.
19. Establishes and communicates guidelines for acceptable behaviors.
20. Selects guidance practices based on participants' personalities and levels of development.
21. Demonstrates realistic expectations about the child/youth's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive abilities and needs.

TIER IV

22. Adapts the learning environment and curriculum to minimize potentially disruptive behaviors.
23. Applies theories of child/youth growth and development to improve guidance techniques.
24. Evaluates child/youth assessments to individualize and improve guidance.
25. Collaborates with families, schools and communities to develop individually appropriate expectations for child/youth behaviors.





Core Knowledge Area 5: Interactions with Children and Youth

Afterschool and Youth Development professionals recognize the critical importance of relationships and communication in the practice of quality child and youth care (NACP). Practitioners have realistic and developmentally appropriate expectations regarding the behavior of children and youth and understand developmentally appropriate guidance techniques. They are aware of factors that may impact behavior and implement strategies to support children and youth individually and in group experiences to develop self-regulation, self-concept, coping mechanisms, and positive interactions with their peers and adults.

Key Element: Enhancing Group Experiences

TIER I

1. Demonstrates awareness of age-specific group dynamics.
2. Provides consistency by following established routines and proactively communicates changes.
3. Identifies the role of organization and flexibility when working with children and youth.
4. Utilizes prepared activities and adapts them when necessary to ensure that all children and youth are engaged.
5. Identifies positive relationships between participants.

TIER II

6. Builds trusting relationships with children and youth.
7. Discusses expectations and boundaries and ensures that children and youth understand them.
8. Anticipates and defuses disruptive behavior.
9. Identifies each child/youth's abilities and uses guidance techniques accordingly.
10. Integrates children and youth of all abilities into the group, following appropriate instructional and guidance procedures.
11. Creates a balance of meaningful activity choices for children and youth to engage in.
12. Develop youth's or child's sense of belonging by supporting positive peer relationships.
13. Leads group activities in a positive, relaxed, and pleasant atmosphere.
14. Handles activities and changes in the schedule with clear directions and patience.

TIER III

15. Encourages positive communication, problem solving, negotiation, and relationships.
16. Works effectively with staff team to enhance group experiences.
17. Provides experiences that engage children and youth and respond to their interests.
18. Examines individual strengths of participants to maximize group dynamics and promote active cooperative learning.
19. Develops activities that foster cooperative group skills that focus on negotiating, compromising, and problem solving in both large and small groups.
20. Involves children and youth in planning and leading activities that promote supportive relationships with peers, families, staff, and the community.

TIER IV

21. Combines observation, evaluation, and direct input from children and youth to improve group experiences.
22. Designs and implements responsive systems that result in the continued participation of children and youth.
23. Integrates opportunities for children and youth to demonstrate their learning and be acknowledged through presentations, reflections, etc.



Core Knowledge Area 6:

Youth engagement is both a goal and a practice through which young people gain the knowledge and skills that support their ability to create change in their lives and the world in which they live (Fletcher). Afterschool and Youth Development practitioners act in partnership with children and youth and foster personal, cultural, social, or institutional relationships by supporting child and youth-led efforts, creating partnerships, and providing formal and informal mentoring. This includes fostering youth leadership and seeking out youth voice. Youth engagement is important at all age levels, but will look different depending on participants' ages and developmental stages

TIER I

1. Identifies positive group management practices and ensures program participant safety by developing healthy relationships and appropriate physical and emotional boundaries with children and youth.
2. Incorporates children and youth in the implementation of lessons and activities.
3. Identifies different leadership roles for children/youth within programming.
4. Listens to child/youth input, recognizes that young people are assets to and experts about their communities, and gives children/youth choices.
5. Identifies child/youth successes and supports opportunities to learn from trial and error.

TIER II

6. Implements positive group management; shares power and work with children and youth.
7. Engages young people in self-reflection on leadership experiences.
8. Develops strong relationships with children and youth that encourage youth voice and foster youth leadership.
9. Explains differences in cultural practices, individual personalities, and individual developmental stages in children and youth and the ways in which those differences impact their capacity, needs, participation, and leadership opportunities in the program
10. Provides an environment that helps each child/youth know, accept, and take pride in herself or himself and develop a sense of independence.
11. Develops participants' capacity for self-reflection, communication, empathy and tolerance of diverse opinions and cultures.
12. Fosters decision-making, problem-solving, and goal setting skills.
13. Engages children and youth in program design, implementation, evaluation, and group management according to developmental abilities.
14. Explains youth culture and power dynamics within the larger community context in which children, youth, and families live.
15. Understands and recognizes adultism.
16. Acts as an ally for young people.
17. Works comfortably with young people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Youth Engagement

TIER III

18. Shares power and fosters leadership by providing opportunities for youth-driven programming while effectively fulfilling the role as facilitator.
19. Creates opportunities for participant involvement in program design, implementation, evaluation, and group management.
20. Provides tools to foster youth empowerment and leadership opportunities for participants that align with individual developmental needs.
21. Provides children and youth with leadership opportunities that serve others.
22. Combines research, theory, and best/promising practices related to individual growth, development, and learning styles, and applies it to young people in group settings.
23. Analyzes own strengths and limitations in engaging children/youth and adults in effective partnerships.
24. Educates children and youth about their democratic, social, and legal rights.



TIER IV

25. Models positive group management practices and actions to ensure program participant safety by developing healthy relationships and appropriate physical and emotional boundaries with children and youth.
26. Encourages participants to take responsibility for the content and process of group work, learn from each other, and demonstrate increased leadership.
27. Develops strategies that support child/youth voice in program design, implementation, evaluation, and group management according to developmental abilities.
28. Encourages and embraces youth voice by celebrating youth culture and cultural diversity within the organizational culture and structure
29. Manages and interrupts overt and internalized adultism.
30. Involves children and youth in developing organization/program policy, including program budgeting, financial strategies, and organizational priorities as is age-appropriate.
31. Supports the implementation of meaningful curricular activities that are informed by youth culture, youth voice, and the cultural beliefs and practices of participants.
32. Advocates for the importance of children and youth representing their thoughts, feelings, and ideas through creative outlets.

Core Knowledge Area 7:

Culture is defined as the intersection of one's national origin, religion, language, sexual orientation, socio-economic class, age, gender identity, race, ethnicity, and physical and developmental ability. Afterschool and Youth Development practitioners actively promote respect for cultural diversity, and seek self understanding. They integrate current and relevant knowledge related to cultural diversity in developing respectful and effective relationships and developmental practice methods. Knowledge and skills are employed in planning, implementing and evaluating respectful programs, services and workplaces. The indicators below are intended to provide a framework for the development of complex, interconnected, and evolving cultural competencies. Deep engagement in cultural competency work on both personal and organizational levels requires dedication and cumulative and consistent work.

Key Element: Cultural Competency and Responsiveness TIER I

1. Develops awareness of own cultural beliefs and practices.
2. Willingly seeks new knowledge regarding cultural beliefs and practices.
3. Follows program guidelines that include respect and use of non-discriminatory language.
4. Identifies fairness and consistency when interacting with children and youth.
5. Shows genuine caring and respect for individual children and youth.
6. Provides an inclusive, welcoming, and respectful environment for all children, youth, and families.

TIER II

7. Demonstrates awareness of and respect for cultural differences that may affect the ways in which children and youth express individual creativity.
8. Provides opportunities for families to share cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and practices.
9. Demonstrates awareness of and sensitivity to different cultural values and expectations.
10. Familiar with a variety of world cultures, along with associated music, art, literature and trends.
11. Uses material that demonstrates acceptance of all races, ethnicities, genders, cultures, families, languages, and physical and developmental abilities.
12. Explicitly address negative stereotyping and discriminatory statements or practices when they occur.
13. Creates a safe environment for children and youth to explore their own identities, including cultural beliefs and practices.
14. Identifies culturally specific organizations as resources for staff and community.

Cultural Competency and Responsiveness



TIER III

15. Thinks critically and engages in dialogue about culturally complex situations.
16. Continuously increases own understanding of different cultural groups, including one's own cultural identities, beliefs, practices, and biases
17. Identifies cultural and environmental factors and the effects those factors may have on behavior and development.
18. Partners effectively with all families by developing reciprocal relationships to support healthy development of children and youth.
19. Builds relationships with culturally specific organizations and other relevant community partners.
20. Identifies and addresses factors that create feelings of exclusion among children and youth.
21. Creates an environment where individual children and youth take pride in their cultural identities, beliefs, and practices, and value those of their peers.
22. Designs learning opportunities that are reflective of the cultures in the community and exposes children and youth to the community's cultural diversity.

TIER IV

23. Possesses and utilizes skills to challenge oppressive behavior, assumptions, and stereotypes as they surface among children and youth and within the organization.
24. Develops understanding of own role and empathy for the struggle of others in creating system change.
25. Analyzes how issues of social equity impact interactions with children, youth, families, and communities.
26. Advocates for social equity and serves as an example and mentor to other staff regarding cultural competency.
27. Engages children, youth, families, and staff in genuine ways and integrates their perspectives into organizational decision-making.
28. Integrates international content, issues and perspectives into program plans, events and activities.

Core Knowledge Area 8:

Program managers understand planning, organizing, and implementing best business practices. Additionally, practitioners understand the importance of relationships and positive communication among colleagues, especially those working together to create a nurturing learning environment for children and youth. Developing a shared understanding with staff and families of regulations, applicable laws, policies, staff supervision and quality standards and how to meet regulations and standards is essential to quality environments for children. Management supports staff and serves as role models around professional development plans, building healthy relationships with colleagues and families, providing developmentally appropriate practices, and connecting with and utilizing resources.

Key Element: Program Planning and Evaluation

TIER I

1. Identifies the role of a responsible staff member and contributes to the program staff team.
2. Identifies and complies with program policies and standards.
3. Keeps appropriate records.
4. Defines the program's purpose and supports the program's mission statement.
5. Involves children and youth in the planning process.
6. Defines and follows the program's personnel policies and procedures.
7. Identifies the importance of evaluations and assists in evaluating the program's effectiveness

TIER II

8. Organizes, plans, keeps records, and communicates with children, youth, families, and staff effectively.
9. Assists in gathering information for program evaluation.
10. Selects and uses appropriate equipment, materials, and resources.
11. Implements activities to meet goals and objectives.
12. Involves children and youth in developing activities and learning experiences.
13. Possesses operational proficiency in use of the technology needed to function effectively in current position



Program Planning and Development

Annual performance report data from 21st CCLC grantees across the country demonstrated that students attending 21st CCLC programs improved their reading (43 percent) and math grades (42 percent). Students who attended more regularly were more likely to improve their grades and their performance on state assessments.

~Learning Point Associates, November 2007

TIER III

14. Conducts program observations.
15. Plans and acquires appropriate equipment, materials, and resources for the program.
16. Verbalizes the relationship between daily practices and the program's philosophy.
17. Creates opportunities for child/youth involvement in program planning and evaluation.
18. Participates in strategic planning and goal setting for the program.
19. Plans family orientations and activities.

TIER IV

20. Applies knowledge of federal, state, and local legislations, regulations, and professional standards to provide healthy, safe, and effective practices for all children and youth.
21. Develops goals and objectives and implements program policies and procedures.
22. Communicates and works effectively with stakeholders.
23. Manages program evaluation methods and understands their purposes and limitations.
24. Develops curriculum framework and approaches for the program.
25. Facilitates the development of child/youth leadership in planning and evaluating the program.
26. Designs and facilitates strategic planning and goal setting activities that involve staff, youth, families, and the community.

Core Knowledge Area 9:

Systematic observations, documentation, and other effective and appropriate assessment strategies, in partnership with families and other professionals serving the same children, positively impacts the development and learning of those children and youth. Well prepared practitioners understand the goals, benefits, and uses of individual observation and assessment, including how to use this information to adapt the program to meet the needs of each child or youth.



TIER I

1. Identifies children and youth as individuals and acknowledges that individuals develop at their own pace.
2. Describes child/youth development frameworks pertaining to positive child/youth outcomes.
3. Identifies behavior and environmental factors that may place children and youth at risk.
4. Identifies various ways to get to know each child or youth as an individual, including his or her strengths, needs, interests, family, and life situation.
5. Maintains confidentiality between the program and participants' families regarding observation and assessment information.

TIER II

6. Explains the behaviors of children and youth in the context of normal growth and development and uses age-appropriate expectations as the basis for observation.
7. Explains indicators of positive child/youth development.
8. Shares concerns about behavior and environmental factors with authorized individuals, such as staff and educators.
9. Collects and organizes information to measure child/youth outcomes (e.g., using samples of a participant's work, completing skill lists, recording anecdotal notes).
10. Assists with collection of information about child/youth behaviors.
11. Communicates observations in written and oral form.
12. Follows appropriate procedures for observing children and youth (e.g., remaining objective, asking open-ended and non-judgmental questions).

Child/Youth Observation and Assessment

TIER III

13. Identifies and accommodates the range of development and skills among children and youth.
14. Identifies the role of risk factors on children and youth development.
15. Continually observes children and youth, analyzes and evaluates findings, and applies learned knowledge to practice.
16. Administers and interprets formal and informal assessments objectively.
17. Engages youth, staff, and families in the ongoing assessment process.
18. Organizes various assessment methods.
19. Interprets observation information to develop services, opportunities, and supports for children and youth.

TIER IV

20. Plans relevant and culturally appropriate assessments.
21. Communicates observations with staff, educators, children, youth, and families in a clear and supportive manner, while maintaining confidentiality.
22. Recommends that children and youth seek further evaluation, when needed.
23. Selects and considers assessment and screening information when making curriculum and program decisions for individuals.
24. Incorporates observation information into program and/or individual plans (e.g., supporting school Individual Education Plans).
25. Works cooperatively with assessment, school, and health care teams for children and youth with special needs.

Core Knowledge Area 10:

Afterschool and Youth Development practitioners understand that their profession originates from a history and a core base of knowledge rooted in research that together serve as a foundation for the profession. Practitioners' behavior and actions must be grounded in a professional code of ethics and other professional standards related to their practice. Practitioners are continuous, collaborative learners who demonstrate and share knowledge, reflect on and have a critical perspective of their work, and make informed decisions. They are role models and advocates for best practices and policies.

Key Element: Displaying Professionalism in Practice

TIER I

1. Defines that employees' personal behaviors and actions within the work setting are reflected on the program.
2. Identifies and demonstrates quality work habits.
3. Enjoys working with children and youth and models a positive attitude.
4. Demonstrates respect for self and others.
5. Supports and complies with program and government regulations and standards.
6. Exhibits good hygiene and a neat personal appearance.
7. Describes the value of working as a team and cooperates with other staff.
8. Values and acts upon feedback on performance.
9. Identifies ethics, maintains confidentiality and impartiality.
10. Recognizes awareness of professional ethics for the child/youth development field.
11. Identifies and complies with the program's philosophy and goals.

TIER II

12. Manages demands of personal and professional commitments.
13. Demonstrates fairness and consistency.
14. Uses effective problem-solving skills.
15. Performs well as a team member.
16. Identifies the components of a team and the purpose of a team approach.
17. Identifies performance improvement and reflection on teaching and learning, using staff interaction, training/education, and journals.
18. Demonstrates a commitment to professional ethics.
19. Explains and promotes quality in programs for children and youth.
20. Models non-discriminatory behavior.
21. Demonstrates acceptance of and respect for cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and practices among children and youth.

Professional Development and Leadership



TIER III

22. Participates in program decision-making based on accepted professional standards.
23. Demonstrates ability to ensure one's own mental and physical health.
24. Participates in group problem solving of program issues.
25. Explains how educational practices affect the behaviors of children/youth and incorporates changes based on routine self-reflection.
26. Seeks feedback from colleagues, parents and participants; receives the feedback in a respectful manner and acts upon it as appropriate.
27. Promotes professional ethics and seeks to diminish unethical practices.
28. Maintains professional boundaries in relationships with staff, participants, and families.
29. Keeps informed about cultural competencies and trends in the field of child/youth development.

TIER IV

30. Examines causes and symptoms of excessive stress and/or low morale and develops strategies to reduce stress and improve morale.
31. Initiates and facilitates group problem solving.
32. Collaborates with other organizations and agencies to meet goals.
33. Evaluates current trends in the field of child/youth development and revises practices as appropriate.
34. Articulates a personal philosophy of education based on knowledge of child/youth growth and development, cultural competencies, and best/promising practices.
35. Advocates for children, youth, and families.
36. Mediates conflict resolution between others.

Core Knowledge Area 10:

Afterschool and Youth Development practitioners understand that their profession originates from a history and a core base of knowledge rooted in research that together serve as a foundation for the profession. Practitioners' behavior and actions must be grounded in a professional code of ethics and other professional standards related to their practice. Practitioners are continuous, collaborative learners who demonstrate and share knowledge, reflect on and have a critical perspective of their work, and make informed decisions. They are role models and advocates for best practices and policies.

Key Element: Ongoing Professional Growth

TIER I

1. Identifies knowledge to improve professional competence and practice.
2. Accepts feedback and advice and uses it to improve professional competence and practice.
3. Identifies professional development requirements of the field.

TIER II

4. Aware of and utilizes professional resources.
5. Modifies practice based on new knowledge.
6. Makes use of opportunities to improve competence, both for personal and professional growth, and for the benefit of children, youth, and families.
7. Studies and learns from one's own practice and sets goals to increase skills and abilities in child/youth development.
8. Participates in appropriate professional development opportunities.
9. Applies knowledge of best/promising practices.
10. Participates actively in professional associations and builds professional relationships.
11. Assesses the impact of personal perspectives, limitations, and biases on the effectiveness of work.

TIER III

12. Uses professional resources to improve competence and practice.
13. Continues to improve skills and abilities and sets goals to advance knowledge based on self reflection and performance evaluation.
14. Develops and carries out a personal professional development plan.
15. Applies and works toward career goals.

TIER IV

16. Mentors and fosters the professional growth of others.
17. Strives to continuously deepen understanding of social issues affecting children and youth.
18. Integrates knowledge of historical, philosophical, psychological, and social foundations of child/youth development into planning and decision-making.
19. Articulates a professional value system and implements ongoing professional self-reflection.
20. Builds upon personal strengths and identifies areas where growth can and needs to occur.
21. Participates actively in career development and works toward credentials, degrees, and/or program accreditation.
22. Participates actively in a leadership role in professional associations and builds professional relationships.

Professional Development and Leadership

Key Element: Leadership and Advocacy

TIER I

1. Identifies the need for leadership skills in the child/youth development field.
2. Identifies problem solving and conflict resolution as critical to teamwork.
3. Identifies leadership styles and behaviors in self and others (e.g., integrity, ethics, positive energy, vision and mission, setting priorities, etc.).
4. Exhibits awareness that certain behaviors and types of communication among unfamiliar cultures can lead to misinterpretation and misunderstanding.

TIER II

5. Supports the advancement of the child/youth development field.
6. Explains the importance of providing children, youth, and peers with leadership opportunities.
7. Uses effective problem solving skills.
8. Identifies community needs that affect children and youth.
9. Describes the rights of children youth and families in relevant settings and systems.

TIER III

10. Demonstrates various leadership styles and behaviors.
11. Demonstrates knowledge of advocacy issues.
12. Promotes best/promising practices in youth development to families, administrators, colleagues, and community members.
13. Advocates for the rights of children, youth, and families in relevant setting/s and systems.
14. Supports children, youth, and colleagues in leadership roles.
15. Initiates problem solving and conflict resolution with the program and staff.
16. Participates in activities or projects sponsored by professional associations and other boards, task forces, or committees.

TIER IV

17. Describes general legislative processes, including legal and advocacy issues, which impact children, youth, and their families. Communicates this information to others.
18. Explains how government policies affect family and child/youth development.
19. Creates opportunities for children, youth, and colleagues to serve in leadership roles.
20. Demonstrates knowledge of the dynamics of team building and has the ability to initiate problem solving and conflict resolution strategies for the setting and staff.
21. Serves on professional association boards and/or other boards, task forces, or committees.
22. Demonstrates a commitment to developing the highest education and quality-of-life potential of individuals with exceptional learning needs.
23. Shares knowledge of the rights and responsibilities of children, youth, parents/families, caregivers/educators, and other professionals as related to exceptional learning needs.

Tier 5 Competencies:

1. Core Knowledge Area: Safety and Wellness

Key Element: Knowledge of Regulations

1. Analyzes and corrects deficiencies found in supervision, health, and safety assessments.
2. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories, research, promising/best practices, and policies related to health and safety.

Key Element: Environmental Safety

1. Participates in community groups to develop and implement strategies for improving environmental safety.
2. Proposes opportunities to fund environmental safety improvements.
3. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories, research, promising/best practices, and policies relevant to environmental safety.

Key Element: Wellness

1. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories, research, best/promising practices, and policies relevant to health and wellness.
2. Collaborates with community groups to identify wellness issues or concerns.
3. Advocates for policies and procedures that affect the wellness of the broader community.
4. Collaborates with appropriate community groups and agencies to create awareness about healthy living topics.

2. Core Knowledge Area: Child and Youth Growth and Development

1. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories, research, and policy related to child and youth growth and development.
2. Communicates major theories, research, and issues relevant to child and youth growth and development to families in a way that is meaningful.
3. Researches and applies multiple approaches to child and youth developmental outcomes. Ensures that the program's policies and practices reflect an inclusive philosophy.

Core Knowledge Areas and Core Competencies for Directors and Administrators of Afterschool Programs

3. Core Knowledge Area: Family, School and Community Relationships

Key Element: Relationships with Families

1. Articulates, compares, and applies theories of family development and dynamics within multicultural communities.
2. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories, research and best/promising practices related to family systems. Utilizes this information in planning family engagement activities and events.
3. Reviews the effectiveness of family involvement activities and input structures and recommends changes as needed.
4. Uses best/promising practices to develop structures for family and child/youth input in making program/policy decisions.
5. Develops guidelines to assess and ensure that programming reflects the value that all cultures are welcomed and respected.
6. Ensures regular staff training and oversees development of program policies, procedures, liabilities, and risk management regarding family and community involvement.

Key Element: Partnerships with Community

1. Develops and implements strategies to involve community stakeholders in program development.
2. Works to expand community partnerships as well as mentoring and apprenticeship opportunities to expand resources for children, youth, families, and the program.
3. Develops and maintains a volunteer management system, as needed, using best/promising practices.
4. Participates in community asset mapping and needs assessments, and networks with other children and youth development professionals.
5. Represents the child and youth development field in collaborative community endeavors.
6. Develops mentoring and apprenticeship opportunities for children and youth to explore career interests if appropriate to program mission and audience.

Key Element: Partnerships with Schools

1. Engages school personnel in reciprocal relationships in which each party understands and respects the positive impact each type of program and learning environment can have on child and youth outcomes and school achievement.

4 Core Knowledge Area: Learning Environment and Curriculum

Key Element: Creating the Learning Environment and General Curriculum

1. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories and research related to the design of curriculum and learning environments.
2. Communicates major theories, research, and issues relevant to family and youth development with others as appropriate.
3. Teaches others how to design curriculum.
4. Collaborates with other agencies to research and communicate information about the integrated curriculum areas.

Key Element: Promoting Physical, Social and Cognitive Development

1. Advocates for policies and practices that promote the physical, cognitive, and social development of youth.
2. Evaluates the quality and effectiveness of curricula, activities, and opportunities that support physical, cognitive, and social development.
3. Collaborates with other agencies to research and communicate information on social, physical, and cognitive development of youth.

Key Element: Promoting Communication Skills

1. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories and research related to emerging trends in communication.
2. Collaborates with other agencies to research and share information on communication development.
3. Advocates for policies and practices that promote the communication development of children and youth.
4. Regularly selects open-ended questions across all content areas.
5. Collaborates with language specialists to modify and adapt curricular activities and experiences to meet the language and literacy needs of each child/youth.

Key Element: Promoting Creative Expression

1. Communicates the theoretical concepts underlying the ways in which children and youth use the arts to express themselves.
2. Demonstrates leadership in establishing partnerships with community organizations that stimulate creative and aesthetic experiences for children and youth.
3. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories and research related to promoting creative experiences.
4. Collaborates with other agencies to research and communicate information on creative development.
5. Teaches others about the importance of integrating creative activities into all curricular areas.

Core Knowledge Areas and Core Competencies for Directors and Administrators of Afterschool Programs

5. Core Knowledge Area: Interactions with Children and Youth

Key Element: Providing Individual Guidance

1. Creates and ensures an environment with clear written and practiced group agreements and conflict resolution processes.
2. Involves stakeholders, including community, families, schools, children, and youth in developing written policies for effective child/youth guidance.
3. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories and research related to individual guidance.
4. Develops individual guidance plans, using relevant professionals for support as needed.

Key Element: Enhancing Group Experiences

1. Applies theories of child/youth growth and development to group management techniques.
2. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories and research related to group experiences to improve the program.
3. Designs and develops cooperative group activities based on current research and the curriculum.

6. Core Knowledge Area: Youth Engagement

1. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories and research related to promoting youth empowerment, youth leadership, and youth voice.
2. Develops policies and procedures that ensure appropriate emotional and physical boundaries between staff and participants.
3. Evaluates program activities to support leadership opportunities for children and youth.
4. Creates organizational policies and protocols that support meaningful participant engagement through youth advisory boards and advocates for youth-adult partnerships.
5. Creates organizational policies and protocols that demonstrate the value and need of youth voice, youth leadership, and youth empowerment.
6. Shares power with youth and interrupts adultism within internal and external organizational systems, groups, coalitions, committees, etc.

Tier 5 Competencies:

7. Core Knowledge Area: Cultural Competency and Responsiveness

1. Continually seeks new knowledge and approaches related to inclusion, culture, and equity.
2. Advocates for ongoing training and deepened analysis of systems related to social equity for all staff and program participants.
3. Partners with children, youth, and families to support them as advocates, decision makers, and leaders.
4. Involves oneself in collaborative action and advocacy strategies that transform local and national systems towards social equity.
5. Continuously analyzes organizational culture, policies, and procedures, and implements changes that foster more equitable and culturally relevant and responsive practices.

8. Core Knowledge Area: Program Planning and Development

Key Element: Program Planning and Evaluation

1. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories, research, and policies relevant to program planning and evaluation.
2. Develops, implements, evaluates, and revises program policies.
3. Manages the program in a way that minimizes risk.
4. Appraises and anticipates risk management issues and develops strategies to address them.
5. Ensures that the program activities value and reflect the diversity of the community.
6. Develops and implements public relations strategies to promote the program in the community and works effectively with stakeholders.
7. Promotes and builds relationships between school day and out-of-school programs.

Key Element: Personnel Management

1. Develops staff recognition and recruitment, selection, and retention programs.
2. Designs and implements staff job descriptions, evaluation forms, and personnel policies and procedures.
3. Ensures child/youth involvement in the process of evaluating staff and volunteers.
4. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories, research, and policies relevant to personnel management.

Key Element: Financial Management

1. Ensures that the budget reflects the program's goals and philosophy.
2. Develops and implements a fiscal business plan.
3. Develops a marketing plan.
4. Seeks and obtains additional funding opportunities.
5. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories, research, policies, and practices related to financial management.

Core Knowledge Areas and Core Competencies for Directors and Administrators of Afterschool Programs

9. Core Knowledge Area: Child/Youth Observation and Assessment

1. Selects appropriate assessment methods and tools for child/youth outcomes.
2. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories, research, and policies relevant to assessment.
3. Communicates major research and issues relevant to observation and assessment to staff and families.

10. Core Knowledge Area: Professional Development and Leadership

Key Element: Displaying Professionalism in Practice

1. Advances program practice by working collaboratively with other staff to understand and support the adoption of research and best/promising practices for children, youth, families, and staff.
2. Advocates for the implementation of current research and policies relevant to child, youth, and family development.

Key Element: Ongoing Professional Growth

1. Evaluates the change process and develops practices to support professional growth.
2. Evaluates knowledge of best/promising practices to shape practices and policies that positively influence the profession.
3. Explores models of professional development and evaluates/assesses opportunities to promote others' professional growth.
4. Designs staff development opportunities with colleagues.
5. Participates at local, state, regional, and national conferences and events to disseminate knowledge and establish external professional relationships.

Key Element: Leadership and Advocacy

1. Serves as a spokesperson to the community and media about child/youth development and best/promising practices in the field.
2. Develops and carries out advocacy plan.
3. Advocates for accessible, affordable, safe, and quality programs for children and youth.
4. Advocates for child/youth-adult partnerships.
5. Provides leadership to professional associations and/or other boards, task forces, or committees.

Adulthood: Adulthood is a predisposition or preference for adult perspectives, ideas, actions, language, and culture. Adulthood commonly excludes children and youth and places adults at the center of decision making on issues affecting children and youth.

Afterschool: Before school, after school, school vacations/holidays and summer

Afterschool program: The provision of a safe learning environment for children and youth during out-of-school time. Includes before and after school programs, full day summer care, and holiday care

Afterschool practitioners: Individuals who work in any organized program for children and youth during a time when they are not in school.

Best/promising practices: Evidence based curriculum, programs or approaches.

Cognitive/ cognition: Refers to both the knowledge possessed and the youth's ability to think, reason, learn, and understand. Younger school-age children usually think in concrete ways. Older school-age children (adolescents) begin to use more complex ways of thinking.

Common Core Standards: National standards of what students are expected to learn in school.

Cultural Competency: Cultural competency requires holding and practicing a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that enable effective interactions with youth within a cross-cultural framework.

Culture: Culture encompasses the evolving identities, beliefs, and practices derived from the intersection of one's national origin, religion, language, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, age, gender identity, race/ethnicity, and physical/developmental ability.

Culturally Responsive Programming: Programs with staff who are sensitive to participants' backgrounds; materials which reflect diverse cultures, languages and experiences; and ties to young people's family and community resources. In addition, these programs recognize and respect diverse customs and traditions and do not tolerate bias or discrimination.

Curriculum: Curriculum in an afterschool or youth development program refers to program content and how it is delivered. Although a program may select a particular focus, high quality programs incorporate all curricular areas into program plans. Program curriculum should also include a positive youth development approach that allows youth to develop a positive attitude toward learning and a successful approach to living.

Diversity: The various backgrounds and races that comprise a community, nation or other groupings. In many cases the term diversity does not just acknowledge the existence of diversity backgrounds, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation and so on, but implies an appreciation of these differences.

Ethics: The responsibility to intentionally choose what is right, moral and just in practice and in principle.

Family: All persons whom are responsible for and involved with the child/youth and who the child/youth identifies as having significant impact in their lives.

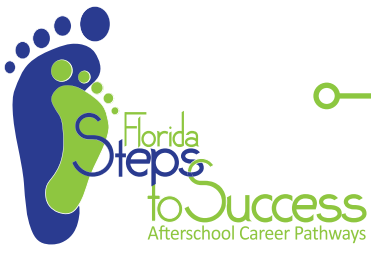
Individualized Education Plan (IEP): A written document that is developed for each public school child/youth who is eligible for special education. The IEP is created through a team effort and reviewed at least once a year. The IEP guides the supports offered to the child/youth.

Mainstream approaches: Approaches that reflect the values, norms, and behaviors of the predominant group in power.

Mandated Reporter: Professionals who are legally required to report child abuse or neglect.

Mental health: A state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.

- Oppression:** The exercise of authority or power in an unjust manner, the results of which benefit one group over another and is maintained by social practices and beliefs.
- Privilege:** Rights, benefits, or access to systems/institutions granted as entitlement to a person based on their membership of a group (i.e. race, sexual orientation, gender, age, etc.).
- Professional Development:** Opportunities that enhance a practitioner’s knowledge and skills and impacts attitudes/beliefs; this may include workshops, conference, coaching, team building, etc.
- Program Community:** Meaningful communication involving student learning and other school activities, including ensuring that parents play an integral role in assisting their child’s learning; that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child’s education at school; and that parents are full partners in their child’s education and are included, as appropriate, in decision making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child
- Special Needs:** The needs of students who are identified and receive special education services in public schools in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004.
- Strengths-based, family centered approach:** A framework that places family as its focal point, instead of the child, focusing on family strengths and families’ ability to problem solve. It incorporates collaboration between schools families and service providers, emphasizing partnerships and community building.
- Youth Development:** the natural process of a young person growing and maturing. Youth development also encompasses the philosophy of with working with young people in a manner that is strengths-based.
- Youth Empowerment:** Youth empowerment is both a goal and a practice through which young people gain the knowledge and skills that support their ability to create change in their lives and the world in which they live.
- Youth Leadership:** Youth leadership is a broad concept related to the knowledge, attitudes, skills, behaviors, and aspirations utilized by one or more children/youth in influencing, motivating, informing, and inspiring desired actions and reactions by others.
- Youth Voice:** The goal of the concept of youth voice is that ideas, opinions, experiences, attitudes, knowledge, and actions of young people are actively sought out and vocalized by placing young people in forums and in decision making roles to offer their insights, ideas, and experiences.
- Wellness:** A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.





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