New Jersey's Quality Standards for Afterschool

A project of NJSACC: NJ's Network for Afterschool Communities

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NJ Quality Standards for Afterschool

Introduction

What are the NJ Quality Standards for Afterschool?

The NJ Quality Standards for Afterschool – together with the Assessment Tool – is a resource that afterschool programs can use for self-evaluation. It should be part of a process of continuous quality improvement.

About the NJ Quality Standards for Afterschool (First Edition):

- The NJ Quality Standards for Afterschool is organized into seven categories: Administration, Human Relationships, Safety and Environmental Health, Indoor and Outdoor Environment, Programming and Activities, Special Needs/The Whole Child, and Healthy Behavior: Nutrition and Physical Activity.

- The **Standards** for each category are numbered and in bold. The **Standard Elements** are listed under the bold heading with letters (a, b, c, etc.). The standard elements will help you understand how to interpret the standard and what the important things to look for are.

- Sometimes a topic could fit into multiple categories. In these cases, the topic appears in detail in one category, and the other categories include cross-references to help you find what you're looking for.

> **We use the term "afterschool program,"** but these standards are appropriate for before-school programs, summer programs, and other ELOs.
>
> ELO stands for "Extended Learning Opportunity" and refers to the wide range of programs that seek to expand the opportunities that youth have to learn outside the regular school day.
>
> This is a resource for use by ELOs regardless of funding source, tax-exempt status, or other defining characteristics.

- The NJ Quality Standards is a companion to the NJ Licensing Regulations for Child Care, as developed by the Office of Licensing at DCF. The regulations outline the minimum a program should do, while the Quality Standards go beyond this. Although public schools are exempt from licensing, they should follow the licensing regulations to ensure quality. We have included footnotes for licensing regulations that relate to topics covered in the standards.

Other Documents Included in the NJ Quality Standards for Afterschool Packet:

- An Assessment Tool – a tool for assessing your program in all seven standards categories

- A Glossary for terms in the Quality Standards that could have more than one understanding (note: Glossary terms are in blue throughout this packet)

- Tips for "Using a Team Approach to Assess Your Program"

- Sample surveys and discussion guides in the Appendix to "Using a Team Approach to Assessment Your Program"

- Tips for "Writing an Action Plan Based on Your Assessment"

- A Resources document to help you raise the level of quality in your program

How to Use the Assessment Tool:

> **Note: We use the term "youth" throughout this packet** to include all K-12 program youth from young children through teenagers.

- The Assessment Tool allows you to rate each standard element from 1 to 4. 1 means "Needs improvement," 2 means "Some progress made/Approaching standard," 3 means "Satisfactory/Meets standard," and 4 means, "Excellent/Exceeds standard." You also can select "NA" for "Don't know or Not applicable."

- There next column encourages you to provide examples or a rationale to support the rating that you gave.

- When you're using the Assessment Tool, rate each standard element separately. This is because the standard elements will help you understand how to interpret the standard and what the important things to look for are.

- See "Using a Team Approach" for tips on making the evaluation process collaborative. This could mean having a committee of program stakeholders (for example, staff, parents, youth) to lead the process. It also could mean holding discussion groups or doing surveys with stakeholders based on the standards before formally filling out the Assessment Tool.

How Did We Develop the NJ Quality Standards for Afterschool?

- NJSACC (The Statewide Network for NJ's Afterschool Communities) – with support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and the NJ Department of Education – convened a group of afterschool leaders to answer the question, "What does quality look like in an afterschool program?"

- Committee members represented public agencies and private organizations; large afterschool programs and small afterschool programs; programs from the north, central, and southern parts of the state; and programs in urban, suburban, and rural settings.

  Participants included representatives from the following agencies, organizations, and afterschool programs: The NJ Department of Education, The YMCA (State Alliance, Fanwood-Scotch Plains, and West Essex), The Salvation Army, Archway Programs – Just Kids, Haddonfield Child Care, Academic Works (Trenton), Office of Licensing at the NJ Department of Children and Families, Office of School Linked Services at the Department of Children and Families, Professional Impact NJ, Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN), Mt. Olive Child Care & Learning Center, NJ Principals and Supervisors Association, Rutgers Camden, DASH/Impact 21 (Rahway), Catholic Charities Diocese of Metuchen, and La Casa de Don Pedro.

- The committee met and communicated over the course of 18 months to discuss and define all the aspects of what makes a quality afterschool program. To do this, we relied heavily on the years of experience and the expertise of our committee members and NJSACC staff. We also took time to carefully review Quality Standards developed by other states as well as those from national organizations, including the National Afterschool Assocation's National AfterSchool Standards, the Council on Accreditation's After School Standards, and the NIOST Healthy Out-of-School Time Standards.

> **Note for Parents/Guardians:**
>
> This tool was developed for use by programs. However, parents and guardians may use the standards to learn more about what to look for in an afterschool program. Ask your child's program staff if they use the NJ Quality Standards and Assessment.

- The beliefs about afterschool quality that our committee members brought to the table are reflected in a few key reports, research studies, and platforms. See the "Sources and Further Reading" section at the end of this introduction.

- We posted a draft of the NJ Quality Standards on the NJSACC website over the summer of 2012 and opened it for feedback from all of our network members and partners across the state.

- This document, released in November, 2012, represents the First Edition of the Quality Standards. In 2013, a diverse group of afterschool programs throughout the state will use this resource and share their experiences with NJSACC. After we review and incorporate this feedback, we will release a Second Edition of the Quality Standards in Fall, 2013.

Sources and Further Reading:

40 Development Assets (for youth ages 3-18), Search Institute
www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=10022

Community Programs to Promote Youth Development. National Research Council. 2002.
www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=10022

Durlak JA, Weissberg RP, Pachan M. A Meta-Analysis of After-School Programs That Seek to Promote Personal and Social Skills in Children and Adolescents. American Journal of Community Psychology. June, 2010. (Often referred to as the "SAFE" study; contact NJSACC for a full copy)

National Afterschool Association (NAA) Platform
www.naaweb.org/default.asp?contentID=628

Vandell DL, Reisner ER, Brown BB, Pierce KM, Dadisman K, Pechman EM. The Study of Promising After-School Programs: Descriptive Report of the Promising Programs. 2004.
childcare.wceruw.org/pdf/pp/study_of_after_school_activities_descriptive_report_year1.pdf

NJ Quality Standards for Afterschool

Administration

The administration effectively manages the procedures, policies, staff, and other elements of the program framework that enable a high level of program quality.

1. The program has and uses a mission statement.
 a. The program has a written mission statement that sets forth the program's primary purposes.
 b. The mission statement guides administrative decisions about the program, including decisions about curriculum, staffing, and policy.
 c. All staff are aware of the mission statement.

2. The administration takes steps to facilitate continuous improvement in program quality
 a. The administration oversees the development of program goals and objectives.
 b. The administration conducts an internal monitoring or evaluation system to continuously improve program quality.
 c. The administration incorporates input and feedback from program stakeholders as central components of the quality improvement process.

3. The administration offers staff the best possible working conditions and pay
 a. The program offers staff paid preparatory time.
 b. The program facilitates opportunities for additional training that's related to a staff person's professional growth plan, including paying for outside training if appropriate.
 c. Staff have opportunities to discuss their own concerns regarding the program.
 d. Staff have opportunities within the program for self-direction, decision-making, and developing long-term program plans and vision.
 e. There are policies and procedures in place to give positive feedback and recognize the contributions of staff members.

4. The administration provides a high quality system of professional development
 a. The administration conducts an ongoing assessment of the program's professional development needs and evaluation of the professional development offerings.
 b. The administration develops an annual professional development plan with a timeline.
 c. The administration uses qualified, experienced trainers and/or evidence-based training materials for professional development.
 d. Professional development at the program includes mentoring and on-going, job-embedded learning in addition to formal training opportunities.

5. The administration manages volunteers effectively
   The program has plans for recruiting, orienting, training, supervising, and recognizing volunteers. The plan may be the same as what the program does for paid staff at times, but the program has a distinct plan when needed.
   Note: Standards related to staff conduct in the Human Relationships and Special Needs/The Whole Child categories should apply to volunteers.

6. The administration takes steps to support effective communication
   a. There are policies or procedures in place that support effective and frequent communication between program staff and families. For example, the program may have a practice of calling the homes of a few families each week for regular check-ins.
   b. There are policies or procedures in place that support positive communication between program staff and families. For example, the administration sets the expectation that staff communicate with parents for positive reasons and not just when there is a problem or the program needs information.
   c. There are policies or procedures in place that support effective communication between program staff and the host agency or other community stakeholders, if applicable.
   d. Program policies and procedures support effective communication among program staff. This includes effective communication between administrative staff and non-administrative staff. For example, administrative staff use one-on-one and face-to-face communications with non-administrative staff as well as group meetings and written communication.

7. The administration values input and feedback about the program and is responsive to it
   a. The program uses formal and informal methods to seek feedback and input from youth and families.
   b. There are procedures in place for the program to get input and feedback from the host agency or other community stakeholders, if applicable.
   c. The program is responsive to input and feedback from youth, families, the host agency, and other stakeholders.
   d. The program involves staff, families, and youth in decision-making and planning.

8. There are policies or procedures in place that involve families in the life of the program
   a. Information for families is available in the language(s) the families speak, to the extent possible, and at the literacy level of most parents or guardians. The program also takes into account the unique communication needs of parents or guardians with special needs.
   b. The program offers orientation sessions for new families.
   c. The program involves families in program events when possible, and there is a policy to welcome "drop-in" visits from family members to the program.

9. The program respects the rights of the youth, family members, and staff
   a. The program has an internal process that program applicants, participants, and stakeholders can use to express and resolve a grievance or complaint. The program communicates this process to the families of youth in the program and to program staff.
   b. The program has and adheres to a policy of nondiscrimination, which is reflected in all program activities and communications.
   c. The program does not release confidential information about youth without informed, signed authorization from the child or youth and the parent or legal guardian. When the law permits the release of confidential information without this authorization, the program at least informs youth and families of the release.

10. The administration maintains and updates program policies and records
    a. The administration maintains a parent handbook, an employee handbook, and a policies and procedures manual. This includes annually reviewing each of these documents and updating them as needed.
    b. The administration maintains youth and staff files and other important program records in an organized manner. The administration ensures individual records are checked at least two times a year and updated as needed.

11. The administration acts responsibly regarding program finances and financial sustainability
    a. The administration conducts [sound financial management](#) of the program, if applicable. If the program administration is not managing the program budget, then the administration maintains familiarity with the budget.
    b. The program has an established process for collecting funds from parents, if applicable.
    c. The administration maintains awareness of multiple possible funding streams to support the program.

12. The administration maintains sufficient staff:youth ratios and supervision of youth
    a. Ratios of staff to youth in the program should be between 1:10 and 1:15 when youth are age six and older. Ratios of staff to children should be between 1:8 and 1:12 when the program includes children who are age five. When possible, at least two staff members are with a group of youth that is in an isolated room.
    b. There is a plan to provide adequate staff coverage in case of emergencies. This includes emergencies that require one staff member to tend to the needs of a single child, as well as situations in which on-duty staff members become ill or suffer from other emergencies.
    c. There is a plan to use substitute staff to maintain ratios when regular staff are absent. This includes keeping an up-to-date list of adults qualified to serve as substitutes, as well as providing support for and evaluation of substitutes to maintain quality.
    d. The program plans for and provides different levels of supervision according to the type of activity as well as the ages and abilities of the youth.

13. The administration stays current on licensing and other relevant laws and regulations
    a. The administration ensures the program follows any relevant laws and regulations, including state licensing standards.
    b. The administration ensures that the program follows the rules in the state licensing standards over the recommendations in this standards document if the licensing rules are more stringent.
    c. The administration is aware of changes that may come to relevant laws and regulations and other current issues related to laws and regulations that could impact the program.

14. The administration researches and connects to potential community partners in order to facilitate staff, youth, and families taking advantage of community resources
   a. The program administration researches services and resources within the community to which staff may refer families when appropriate and necessary. Examples are free dental screenings, fire-prevention seminars, parenting classes, health clinics, food programs, library services, language classes, counseling services, and crisis intervention services. The program administration translates this information to staff and ensures that the information is current and high-quality.
   b. The program administration develops links with the community that staff may take advantage of when planning activities. Examples are activities that help children get to know the larger community, such trips to a library or visits from leaders and mentors in the community, as well as community service projects.

Cross-References		
Subject	**Category**	**Standard Number**
Professional development in specific areas	Special Needs/The Whole Child	3
	Health Behavior: Physical Activity and Nutrition, Physical Activity	4
	Health Behavior: Physical Activity and Nutrition, Nutrition	5
	Programming and Activities	12
Linking the afterschool program to the school day	Programming and Activities	11, 12
Nature and components of high-quality communication with families	Special Needs/The Whole Child category	4
	Programming and Activities	8
	Human Relationships	12, 13

Licensing	
Subject	**NJ Licensing Section**
Information programs must get from parents	10:122-3.6
Information programs must supply to parents	10:122-6.8
Discipline and the discipline policy	10:122-6.6
Supervision and tracking of youth and staff/child ratios	10:122-4.3
Staff orientation and development	10:122-4.7
Prevention of child abuse	10:122-4.8, 10:122-4.9

NJ Quality Standards for Afterschool

Human Relationships

Staff relationships with youth, families, and other staff are supportive, respectful, and constructive, and youth interactions with each other are generally positive as well.

1. Staff relate to all youth in positive ways
   a. Staff treat youth with respect and listen to what they say.
   b. Staff make youth feel welcome and comfortable.
   c. Staff respond to youth with acceptance and appreciation.
   d. Staff are visibly engaged with youth during activities.

2. Staff respond appropriately to individual needs of youth
   a. Staff know that each youth has special interests and talents.
   b. Staff recognize the range of youths' abilities.
   c. Staff respect youths' cultural style and primary language.
   d. Staff recognize the range of youths' feelings and temperaments and respond appropriately.

3. Staff encourage youth to make choices and to become more responsible
   a. Staff offer assistance without taking control and in a way that supports a youth's initiative.
   b. Staff encourage youth to take leadership roles.
   c. Staff give youth many chances to choose what they will do, how they will do it, and with whom.
   d. Staff help youth make informed and responsible choices.

4. Staff interact with youth to help them learn
   a. Staff ask questions that encourage youth to think for themselves.
   b. Staff share skills and resources to help youth gain information and solve problems.
   c. Staff vary the approaches they use to help youth learn.
   d. Staff help youth use language skills through frequent conversations.

5. Staff treat youth as program collaborators and foster in youth a sense of program ownership
   a. Staff involve youth in creating rules and consequences for the program as a whole and for individual games.
   b. Staff involve youth in creating activity plans.
   c. Staff encourage input and feedback from youth regarding the program.

6. Staff use positive and effective techniques to guide the behavior of youth
   a. Staff model positive behavior when with the youth.
   b. Staff use positive feedback in response to positive behaviors, such as when youth cooperate, share, or care for materials.
   c. Staff set appropriate limits for youth.
   d. Staff make sure youth understand the behavior expectations, rules, and consequences.
   e. Staff enforce rules fairly and consistently.
   f. When youth break rules, staff use immediate, short-term, developmentally appropriate consequences that are directly related to the broken rule. *See the resources section for more guidance about using consequences.*
   g. Staff do not use any harsh discipline methods.
   h. Staff seek to help youth replace problematic behavior with new behavior skills. For example, this may include teaching and modeling conflict resolution skills. (Note: The understanding of "problematic behavior" should be up to the individual program.)
   i. Staff encourage youth to resolve their own conflicts. If needed, staff step in to discuss the issues and work out a solution together with the youth.

7. Staff strive to eliminate negative or unsafe peer interactions
   a. Staff are observant of youth interactions.
   b. Staff intervene immediately to stop negative or unsafe peer interactions.
   c. Staff follow up to check on the emotional state of all the youth involved and to identify the source of the problem.
   d. Staff seek to educate youth in how to respond to negative or unsafe peer interactions and how to report it to an adult.

8. Staff display sensitivity to the culture and background of the youth
   Staff display sensitivity to youths' ethnicity, language, religion, and family make-up.

9. The program structure supports strong staff-youth relationships
   The program and schedule are structured so that staff and youth have the opportunity to develop close, sustained relationships with each other. For example, youth are able to work with the same staff over extended periods of time.

10. Youth generally interact with one another in positive ways
   a. Youth appear relaxed and involved with each other.
   b. Youth show respect for each other.
   c. Youth usually cooperate and work well together.
   d. When problems occur, youth often try to discuss their differences and work out a solution.

11. Staff interact with each other in positive ways
   a. Staff communicate with each other while the program is in session to ensure that the program operates smoothly.
   b. Staff are cooperative with and respectful of each other.
   c. Staff see themselves as professionals and treat each other as professionals.
   d. Staff have opportunities for self-direction within the program.

12. Staff interact with families in positive ways
   a. Staff make families feel welcome and comfortable and treat them with respect.
   b. Staff encourage and seek feedback and input from families.

13. Staff communicate with families about key matters concerning the individual child or youth
   a. Staff communicate with families on matters concerning the well-being of the child or youth. Staff work together with families to make arrivals and departures between home and the program go smoothly.
   b. Staff provide information about community resources or other resources that address the needs of youth and their families.
   c. Staff provide opportunities for families to share strategies that have been successful with the child or youth in the past. For example, families may share strategies that relate to behavior, learning, or health maintenance.
   d. Staff provide opportunities for families to inform them of major changes in the youth's life.

Cross-References		
Subject	**Category**	**Standard Number**
Communication with families about special needs, both generally and on an individual basis	Special Needs/The Whole Child	2, 4
Communication with families about program activities	Programming and Activities	8
Communication with school day staff	Programming and Activities	11
Mechanisms for communication and response to input from program stakeholders	Administration	6, 7
Administration approach to staff regarding quality of workplace environment and professional development systems	Administration	3, 4
Volunteers	Administration	5
Respecting the legal rights of program participants and staff	Administration	9
Relationships between the program and community agencies and members	Administration	14
Parents in the life of the program	Administration	8

Licensing	
Subject	**NJ Licensing Section**
Discipline and the discipline policy	10:122-6.6
Parent/community participation and information programs must supply to parents, including the right to "drop-in" visit the center	10:122-3.6, 10:122-6.8

NJ Quality Standards for Afterschool

Safety and Environmental Health

There are safeguards in place to protect youth from getting a major injury or illness while at the program and to provide for their basic comforts.

1. Staff are aware of the individual health needs of the youth
Staff are aware of youths' dietary restrictions, allergies, medications, and other individual health needs, and they keep this information confidential. Staff may carry a list of youth with food allergies during snack or meal time as an added precaution.

2. Staff are alert to potential hazards in the environment
Staff recognize potentially dangerous conditions as they appear and take immediate precautions to protect youth from any serious hazards they see in the indoor and outdoor environment.

3. The program conducts regular inspections using check-lists to ensure that the indoor and outdoor environment is clean and free of hazards that can cause injury or illness to the youth
   a. The program conducts daily, periodic, and bi-annual inspections and uses an appropriate check-list for each. *See the resources section for sample check-lists.* (Note: NJ Licensing includes basic requirements in the areas of cleanliness and environmental hazards. In some cases, the NJ Afterschool Quality Standards sample check-lists go beyond licensing requirements.)
   b. The program addresses any problems with hazards or cleanliness quickly by either making immediate corrections or ensuring youth are not exposed to the hazard. If the hazard requires longer term remediation, the program follows up as necessary.

4. The program takes security precautions that go beyond NJ Licensing
   a. The program conducts annual state and federal background checks (or confirms that background checks already have been conducted) on enrichment providers, presenters, and volunteers who will be alone with youth at any time, in addition to regular staff. A staff person is present at all times when non-staff without background checks are with youth. Non-staff sign in and out when visiting the program. The program makes families aware of these policies.
   b. All of the doors to the program's spaces are locked to the outdoors and monitored from inside.
   c. The program's outdoor space is secured to protect youth from various hazards, including cars, strangers, and animals.
   d. There are policies or procedures in place to ensure youth move safely from one space to another.
   e. Parents or guardians periodically update signed forms allowing non-parents/guardians to pick up youth.
   f. The program has a policy on release of youth to walk home. If programs allow youth to walk home, it is based on an assessment of the safety of the walking route for that particular location and time and the developmental level of the youth.
   g. Staff periodically assess security at the program, identify potential problems, and address potential problems quickly.

5. The program is prepared for emergencies
   a. The program has a "go kit," which contains essential information and items to take quickly in case of an emergency evacuation. The kit should be portable and reachable in case of evacuation. *See the resources section for "go kit" check-list and recommendations.*
   b. The program has emergency information on file about both youth and staff. This includes emergency contact information and information about necessary medications or extreme allergic reactions. Staff check that emergency information is updated at least two times a year. This file should be portable and reachable in case of evacuation. The program follows a policy to keep emergency information about staff and youth confidential.
   c. The program has an "emergency preparedness plan," developed in consultation with the host agency, law enforcement, fire department, health professionals, and the county Office of Emergency Management. This includes a plan for emergencies that occurs during the arrival or departure portions of the program.
   d. Staff are trained in the emergency plan, and trainings are redone periodically. The emergency plan has designated lead people, and these leaders review the plan periodically.
   e. The program communicates the emergency plan to parents.
   f.   Staff and youth practice the emergency plan and conduct emergency drills.

6. Transportation in vehicles is safe
   a. The program requires use of age-appropriate safety restraints.
   b. The program maintains documentation of vehicle inspection and drivers' driving records.
   c. If the program uses buses to transport youth, the administration considers the number and ages of youth to decide whether to provide a bus monitor. This person's role would include tracking youth and monitoring behavior and safety. For any transportation arrangement with a driver who is not program staff, the program provides a bus monitor.

7. Staff take special precautions during activities requiring an increased attention to safety
   a. Staff and youth use appropriate safety gear during these activities, and there is proper instruction about how to use it.
   b. If these activities involve the use of any special materials or equipment, staff and youth have proper instruction about their use.
   c. There is increased supervision during these activities.
   d. The program conducts a risk assessment of these activities to determine what precautions are necessary.

8. The program provides for the basic comforts of the youth
   a. The indoor temperature is within a safe and comfortable range.
   b. The indoor environment is well-ventilated.
   c. When outdoors, youth have access to shade.
   d. Youth always have access to drinking water, including when outside.
   e. Youth always have access to restrooms, including when outside.
   f.   There is a supply of extra coats, gloves, and boots for winter, to the extent possible.

Cross-References		
Subject	**Category**	**Standard Number**
Supervision of youth	Administration	12
Obtaining information from parents about the special health conditions or other special needs of youth	Special Needs/The Whole Child	4

Licensing	
Subject	**NJ Licensing Section**
Indoor maintenance and sanitation requirements	10:122-5.2(a)
Outdoor maintenance and sanitation requirements, including requirements regarding playground equipment	10:122-5.2(b)
Equipment, materials, and furniture safety	10:122-5.2(p)
Environmental sanitation requirements, including smoking prohibition	10:122-7.7(a)
Personal hygiene requirements, including hand-washing	10:122-7.8(a)
Obtaining information from parents about the special health conditions or other special needs of youth	10:122-7.3(b)
Emergency procedure requirements and first aid requirements	10:122-5.2 (l), 10:122-5.2(o)
Supervision and tracking of youth and staff/child ratios	10:122-4.3
Release of children	10:122-6.5(a), 10:122-6.8(a)3
Transportation	10:122-9

NJ Quality Standards for Afterschool

Indoor and Outdoor Environment

The program's indoor and outdoor environment are set up to facilitate youth development, play, and learning, as well as program success more generally.

Indoor Environment:

1. The indoor space is welcoming and <u>youth-centered</u>
    a. The space is clean and organized.
    b. The space is well-lit.
    c. Equipment is appropriate for the size of the youth in the program.
    d. The space reflects the interests of the youth.
        (Note: This may not be possible, depending on the degree of control the program has over this.)
    e. The space displays the work of the youth.
        (Note: This may not be possible, depending on the degree of control the program has over this.)
    f. Youth can safely access materials, such as books and games, independently.

2. There is adequate indoor space for activities
    a. Space is large enough to accommodate all youth and activities.
    b. There are appropriate spaces for the different kinds of activities offered, and single multi-purpose rooms are divided into defined spaces. For example, there is a large space for sports or dance, quiet and well-lit space for homework, and relaxing <u>soft space.</u>

3. There is adequate space for storage
    a. Storage space is lockable.
    b. There is space for program materials and equipment.
    c. There is space for staff to store personal items.
    d. There is space for youth to leave jackets and backpacks.

4. There is a written contingency plan
    The administration has a written contingency plan accommodating as many of these standards as possible, in the case that the program is temporarily displaced.

Outdoor Environment:

1. Youth spend enough program time outdoors
    Youth have at least 30 minutes outdoors for every 3 hour block of time.
    (Note: Exceptions may be necessary due to the weather, the special health needs of an individual youth, or circumstances that make the program unable to provide safe outdoor space. Programs should find other ways to access the outdoors in these situations. For example, the program may provide safe group transport to, and supervision at, a local public park.)

2. There is a variety of outdoor spaces, equipment, materials
   a. There is access to a variety of outdoor spaces. For example, there is access to open space to run and protected space for quiet play and socializing.
   b. There is access to a variety of outdoor equipment and materials.
   c. Small and large equipment and/or materials for outdoor play are age appropriate and developmentally appropriate.

3. Storage for outdoor equipment and materials is convenient for children and youth
   a. Youth can access equipment and material easily.
   b. Storage for outside equipment and materials is close to the outdoor play area or readily accessible.

4. Staff are actively engaged with children playing outdoors
   a. There are both staff-directed and youth-directed outdoor activities.
   b. Staff encourage youth engagement outdoors using a variety of strategies, including peer support and non-verbal communication such as with objects, actions, and pictures.
   c. Staff maintain adequate supervision of youth while outdoors.

5. The program enhances an appreciation for nature and the outdoors
   a. There are opportunities to discover nature.
   b. The program links outdoor play to experiential learning. For example, programs may incorporate gardening, nature journaling, and outdoor STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) activities.
   c. Staff sometimes move traditional indoor activities outside, weather-permitting. Examples are snack, arts and crafts, and reading/stories.
   d. The program brings the outdoors indoors, especially when outdoor play is impossible. Examples are bringing in a bird's nest or shells, tending to a plant, and even opening windows.

Cross-References		
Subject	**Category**	**Standard Number**
Safety and health in the indoor and outdoor environment	Safety and Environmental Health	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
Physical space accessibility for people with special needs	Special Needs/The Whole Child	7

Licensing	
Subject	**NJ Licensing Section**
Playground equipment requirements	10:122-5.2 (b) 7

NJ Quality Standards for Afterschool

Programming and Activities

Programming and activities support youth development and learning, and they are fun, engaging, and tailored to the youth in the program.

1. Activities are intentional and are aligned with the program's mission
   a. Staff choose activities based on careful consideration of the purpose.
   b. Staff consider the program's mission when choosing activities.

2. Activities are tailored to the individual youth in the program
   a. Activities are geared towards developing each individual youth's interests, talents, and skills.
   b. Activities are suited to the individual learning styles of youth in the program.
   c. Activities represent the languages and cultures of youth in the program.
   d. Activities are age appropriate and developmentally appropriate.

3. Youth learning through program activities is experiential and related to real-world challenges
   Most activities are hands-on, interactive, project-based, inquiry-based, and/or encourage youth exploration of their world.

4. Activities support the development of youths' personal, social, and emotional skills
   a. The program includes a strong focus on developing youths' personal, social, and emotional skills. These include self-awareness skills, self-management skills, social awareness skills, relationship skills, decision-making skills, and other learning skills.
   b. The program is explicit about the specific personal, social, and emotional skills it seeks to develop and what program activities support these goals.
   c. Activities for teaching personal, social, and emotional skills revolve around giving youth opportunities to practice these skills.
   d. For complex personal, social, and emotional skills, the program breaks these down into developmental steps and provides activities that help youth master the steps one-by-one over time.
See the glossary and the resources section for more information about personal, social, and emotional skills.

5. The program offers a variety of activities
   a. Youth can choose which activity to participate in from among a variety of activities offered.
   b. There is a balance among types of activities offered. Examples of types of activities include, but are not limited to, the following: literacy, the arts, STEM (Science Technology, Engineering, and Math), cooking, community service/service learning, sports and games, health-promotion, quiet activity, socializing, and multi-cultural/global learning.
   c. There are both youth-directed and staff-directed activities.
   d. Youth have opportunities to play/work individually as well as collaboratively in a small or large group.

6. Programming includes, but is not limited by, homework and tutoring activities
   a. There is balance between time youth spend doing homework and time spent doing other activities.
   b. The program is accommodating to youths' different learning styles while completing homework. For example, students are allowed to do homework in a variety of spaces and positions.
   c. The program has a policy on how it approaches homework and shares this policy with parents.

7. The program's use of technology and electronics is intentional and supports quality programming
   a. Activities encourage active versus passive involvement with technology and electronics.
   b. Activities and staff encourage youth to make safe, healthy, and carefully-considered choices in their use of technology and electronics.

8. The daily routine is structured and stable, while flexible enough to meet the changing or individual needs of youth
   a. Most days follow the same basic structure, and a daily schedule is posted.
   b. There are procedures in place for communicating about upcoming activities to families. Examples are monthly calendars or newsletters.
   c. The program allows adjustments to the regular schedule when appropriate.

9. Movement between activities is youth-centered
   a. Youth can move between activities on their own without waiting for the whole group to move, to the extent possible.
   b. When the group has to move as a whole, the program manages the movement so it is orderly and quick and youth waiting is limited.

10. Materials are adequate for programming
   a. Materials are in good condition. They are stored in an organized manner to keep them that way and encourage youth to take good care of them.
   b. There are enough materials for the number of youth and the activities offered.
   c. The materials are age appropriate and developmentally appropriate.

11. The afterschool program is linked to the school day
   a. Staff use formal procedures and/or information methods for communicating with the schools the youth attend. For example, the program administration may seek to develop a collaborative relationship with the school principal(s) or attend building team or instructional meetings at the school(s). These collaborations may vary depending on whether the program is sited at a school and whether it serves youth from one school or multiple schools.
   b. Program staff are aware of the content and skills the youth are learning during the school day.
   c. Activities complement the school day rather than repeat what youth do in the classroom.
   d. Program links to the school day are informed by the needs of the individual youth.
   e. The program takes steps to make the schools aware of the importance of the afterschool program and what it offers.

12. Professional development around programming and activities is appropriate and high quality
   a. Program staff receive training to ensure that they are qualified to oversee program activities.
   b. Staff training around programming and activities is suited to the needs of the particular program.
   c. Wherever possible, the program links professional development opportunities for program staff and for school staff.
   d. Professional development in this area follows the guidelines for appropriate and high quality professional development outlined in the Administration section, standard #4. For example, professional development around programming and activities includes mentoring and on-going, job-embedded learning in addition to formal training opportunities.

Cross-References		
Subject	**Category**	**Standard Number**
Physical activities, including the relationships between screen use and physical activity	Healthy Behavior: Physical Activity	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Outdoor Activities	Outdoor Environment	5
Special precautions during activities requiring increased attention to safety	Safety and Environmental Health	7

NJ Quality Standards for Afterschool

Special Needs/The Whole Child

The program environment is welcoming, supportive, and respectful of youth with any special or unique needs and their families.

1. The program views a "special need" as any special situation or unique need of a child

> The program implements the concepts outlined below for any special situation or unique need that a child or youth has, not just those that are formally classified or for which the program has record of a classification.

2. The program advertises itself as welcoming to youth with special needs

    a. The program advertises its policy to enroll youth with special needs in writing where families and staff can see it.

    b. Program materials include information that clearly demonstrates that the program is welcoming of youth with special needs. For example, materials may explain that there's a section of the IEP that can include afterschool and encourage families to look into their options. Or, if applicable, materials may say that the program has special education teachers on site.

3. Professional development around special needs is appropriate and high quality

    a. The program trains staff on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the New Jersey Disability Law.

    b. The program provides staff with training on ways to individualize activities or routines for youth with special needs that are applicable to a wide variety of situations.

    c. Staff training builds awareness of developmental milestones and signs that may indicate a child has a unique need and requires a different approach.

    d. Staff training builds awareness of the importance of inclusion and the practices that support inclusion.

    e. When necessary and appropriate, the program conducts specific training for staff on how to accommodate the specific special needs of youth in the program.

    f. Professional development in this area follows the guidelines for appropriate and high quality professional development outlined in the Administration section, standard #4. For example, professional development around special needs is ongoing, reinforced, and integrated into the day to day operations of the program.

4. The program takes steps to ensure communication with families about youth with special needs is respectful and as effective as possible

    a. There are opportunities for parents or guardians to provide information about a youth's special need or situation in a safe and confidential environment.

    b. Staff do not ask about special needs prior to accepting a youth into the program and at no point violate a family's privacy or pressure a family to give information not offered to the program already.

    c. Staff make sure families are aware of what the program can provide for youth with special needs.

    d. Staff or materials make clear to families that the program doesn't have information about youth that the family has not explicitly given, for example, information that the family has given to the school.

    e. The program has the philosophy that strong, trusting relationships with families is the foundation for information-sharing about a youth's special need or situation.

    f. There are strategies in place for effective communication with the family about a youth's special need or situation when necessary and appropriate. Communication should include discussion of the youth's interests and skills, as well as opportunities for the family to share with staff effective strategies for helping the child or youth succeed.

5. The program's response to youth with a special need or situation is well-planned and appropriate

    a. The program has a procedure to follow when staff recognize that a youth needs special attention.

    b. The program supports the goals set by a youth's Child Study Team, if applicable.

    c. The program makes reasonable accommodations in order to be able to include youth with special needs and facilitate their success in the program.
(Note that the language of "reasonable accommodations" is from the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). "Reasonable" means that the program is not required to dramatically change its structure, and what is "reasonable" varies according to the specific situation.) Accommodations may include modifications to the environment, activities, materials, or methods of interacting. Examples of modifications to the environment are placing picture cards on activity centers so youth can identify activities without reading and designating a "safe" area for a specific child or youth to go to alone when needed. An example of a modification to an activity is having a peer buddy system to give extra support, for example if a child in a wheelchair is pushed around the bases in a baseball game. A material modification might be having soft balls with bells in them that a youth who is blind could use for catch. Examples of modifications to methods of interaction are using more non-verbal communication such as with objects, actions, and pictures and making rules very simple. *See the resources section for more examples of accommodations.*

    d. Program administrators and staff consider the unique circumstances of each youth and each situation when coming up with responses.

    e. Activity planning includes consideration of the multiple ways a youth with special needs might approach the activity and what accommodations might help in each scenario. The plans should be flexible enough to make immediate accommodations or changes as needed.

    f. Responses or modifications allow for maximum possible participation, inclusion, and independence for youth with special needs.

    g. Staff behavior accurately reflects the program's policies regarding youth with special needs.

6. The program makes use of outside resources and professionals when necessary and appropriate

    a. When necessary and appropriate, the program conducts a dialog with relevant professionals outside the program regarding youth with special needs in the program. This may include the Child Study Team and other school-day staff. The program ensures it has the permission of the parent or guardian when discussing an individual child or youth.

    b. When necessary and appropriate, the program seeks outside resources to aid in the process of identifying ways to accommodate youth with special needs in the program and implementing those accommodations.

7. **To the extent possible, the program's physical space is accessible and welcoming to people with special needs, even if there are no youth enrolled in the program who currently have this need**
   a. All newly constructed facilities are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). For older spaces, programs do what they can to create pathways with room for wheelchairs, crutches, and walkers, even if there are no youth enrolled who currently use these.
   b. Newly constructed or altered playgrounds are complaint with the ADA. Programs consider what would be fun and challenging for youth with special needs when constructing or altering outdoor space.

Program administrators consider this category when reviewing all other standards categories, so the points here are integrated when the program addresses the quality of the indoor and outdoor environment, human relationships, safety and environmental health, programming and activities, nutrition and physical activity, and administration.

Cross-References		
Subject	**Category**	**Standard Number**
Individual and emergency health information that staff should be aware of	Safety and Environmental Health	1, 5
Interacting and communicating with families more generally	Relationships	12, 13
	Administration	6, 7, 8, 9

Licensing	
Subject	**NJ Licensing Section**
Obtaining information from parents about the special health conditions or other special needs of youth	10:122-7.3(b)

NJ Quality Standards for Afterschool

Health Behavior: Nutrition and Physical Activity

The program supports healthy youth behavior and choices in the areas of nutrition and physical activity.

Nutrition:

1. The program considers nutritional value when selecting food to serve to youth
   a. The program serves food and beverages in amounts and types that promote lifelong health and prevent chronic disease, based on currently accepted standards of childhood nutrition.
   b. The program considers the nutritional value of the food options when choosing food vendors.
   See the resource section for current nutrition standards according to the USDA.

2. The program considers multi-cultural values when selecting food to serve to youth
   a. The program is sensitive to the culture of program youth when choosing food to serve.
   b. The program introduces participants to food from around the world.

3. If the program offers nutrition education to the youth, it is of high quality
   a. The nutrition curriculum is evidence-based or based on the best available research.
   b. The nutrition curriculum is hands-on and activity-based.

4. The program environment supports healthy eating
   a. The vending machines include nutritional options (for example, fruit cups) or a system for promoting healthy choices (for example, displaying wrappers with nutritional information or using a color-coded system to highlight healthy options).
   b. If the program makes use of food company sponsors or advertisements to defray program funding costs, the nutritional value of the food the company sells is a consideration.
   c. Program facility and storage space is adequate to support healthy food options.
   d. Staff model healthy eating in front of youth.

5. Professional development around nutrition issues is appropriate and high quality
   a. Staff are trained in general nutrition issues as well as trained to conduct nutrition programming for the youth.
   b. Professional development around nutrition issues follows the guidelines for appropriate and high quality professional development outlined in the Administration section, standard #4, and goes beyond giving reading material to staff.
   c. All staff working with food or with youth around food are taught about nutrition issues.

6. The program follows a principle of balance when approaching food issues
   The program balances nutritional offerings, financial need, and youth preferences when deciding what foods to serve youth and to offer or model in the program environment.

7. School-based programs act as partners to host schools with nutrition guidelines

> School-based programs respect the nutrition guidelines of the host school. For example, if the host school does not allow a particular food at the school for nutrition reasons, the afterschool program respects this and communicates it to families.

Physical Activity:

1. The program provides enough time for physical activity

> The program provides for at least 30 minutes of physical activity during the afterschool session.

2. The program offers a variety of types of physical activity day to day and within each day

   a. Physical activity offerings include both <u>youth-directed</u> and <u>staff-directed</u> play and activities.
   b. Offerings include competitive as well as non-competitive activities.
   c. Offerings include high-intensity as well as moderate intensity physical activities.
   d. Offerings take into account what the individual youth in the program find interesting or fun.
   e. The program offers a variety of different equipment for youth to use for physical activities.

3. The program limits the use of <u>screens</u> for youth activities

   a. Screen use is limited other than use of computers or mobile technology for homework or specific enrichment activities.
   b. If the program uses video games that include physical activity, the use is intentional and carefully monitored to ensure the game really does promote physical activity.

4. Professional development around physical activity programming is appropriate and high quality

   a. Staff learn about different types of physical activities.
   b. Staff learn to lead activities, facilitate a game, and coach youth.
   c. Professional development around physical activity follows the guidelines for appropriate and high quality professional development outlined in the Administration section, standard #4.

5. The program environment supports a physically active lifestyle for youth

   a. Staff encourage and work to help youth to enjoy and participate in a variety of physical activities.
   b. Program infrastructure and equipment support physical activity options.

Cross-References		
Subject	**Category**	**Standard Number**
Access to drinking water	Safety and Environmental Health	8
Technology use for enrichment	Programming and Activities	7
Obtaining information from parents about the special health conditions or other special needs of youth	Special Needs/The Whole Child	4
Basic components of high-quality professional development that apply to all program areas	Administration	8

Administration

The administration effectively manages the procedures, policies, staff, and other elements of the program framework that enable a high level of program quality.

Please check here:	Rating Key:
I am a….	1 = Needs improvement
__ Youth	2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
__ Parent/Guardian/Family member	3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard
__ Program staff member	4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard
__ School staff member	NA = Don't know or Not applicable
__ Program partner	

Standards/Elements	1	2	3	4	NA	Examples/Rationale
1) The program has and uses a mission statement						
a. The program has a written mission statement that sets forth the program's primary purposes.						
b. The mission statement guides administrative decisions about the program, including decisions about curriculum, staffing, and policy.						
c. All staff are aware of the mission statement.						
2) The administration takes steps to facilitate continuous improvement in program quality						
a. The administration oversees the development of program goals and objectives.						
b. The administration conducts an internal monitoring or evaluation system to continuously improve program quality.						

Rating Key: 1 = Needs Improvement | 2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard | 4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard | NA = Don't know or Not applicable

9-1

Standards/Elements	Rating					Examples/Rationale
	1	2	3	4	NA	
c. The administration incorporates input and feedback from program stakeholders as central components of the quality improvement process.						
3) The administration offers staff the best possible working conditions and pay						
a. The program offers staff paid preparatory time.						
b. The program facilitates opportunities for additional training that's related to a staff person's professional growth plan, including paying for outside training if appropriate.						
c. Staff have opportunities to discuss their own concerns regarding the program.						
d. Staff have opportunities within the program for self-direction, decision-making, and developing long-term program plans and vision.						
e. There are policies and procedures in place to give positive feedback and recognize the contributions of staff members.						
4) The administration provides a high quality system of professional development						
a. The administration conducts an ongoing assessment of the program's professional development needs and evaluation of the professional development offerings.						
b. The administration develops an annual professional development plan with a timeline.						
c. The administration uses qualified, experienced trainers and/or evidence-based training materials for professional development.						

Rating Key: 1 = Needs Improvement | 2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard | 4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard | NA = Don't know or Not applicable

Standards/Elements	Rating					Examples/Rationale
	1	2	3	4	NA	
d. Professional development at the program includes mentoring and on-going, job-embedded learning in addition to formal training opportunities.						
5) The administration manages volunteers effectively						
The program has plans for recruiting, orienting, training, supervising, and recognizing volunteers. The plan may be the same as what the program does for paid staff at times, but the program has a distinct plan when needed. Note: Standards related to staff conduct in the Human Relationships and Special Needs/The Whole Child categories should apply to volunteers.						
6) The administration takes steps to support effective communication						
a. There are policies or procedures in place that support effective and frequent communication between program staff and families. For example, the program may have a practice of calling the homes of a few families each week for regular check-ins.						
b. There are policies or procedures in place that support positive communication between program staff and families. For example, the administration sets the expectation that staff communicate with parents for positive reasons and not just when there is a problem or the program needs information.						

Rating Key: 1 = Needs Improvement | 2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard | 4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard | NA = Don't know or Not applicable

9-3

Standards/Elements	Rating					Examples/Rationale
	1	2	3	4	NA	
c. There are policies or procedures in place that support effective communication between program staff and the host agency or other community stakeholders, if applicable.						
d. Program policies and procedures support effective communication among program staff. This includes effective communication between administrative staff and non-administrative staff. For example, administrative staff use one-on-one and face-to-face communications with non-administrative staff as well as group meetings and written communication.						
7) The administration values input and feedback about the program and is responsive to it						
a. The program uses formal and informal methods to seek feedback and input from youth and families.						
b. There are procedures in place for the program to get input and feedback from the host agency or other community stakeholders, if applicable.						
c. The program is responsive to input and feedback from youth, families, the host agency, and other stakeholders.						
d. The program involves staff, families, and youth in decision-making and planning.						

Rating Key: 1 = Needs Improvement | 2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard | 4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard | NA = Don't know or Not applicable

9-4

Human Relationships

Staff relationships with youth, families, and other staff are supportive, respectful, and constructive, and youth interactions with each other are generally positive as well.

Please check here:

I am a….
__ Youth
__ Parent/Guardian/Family member
__ Program staff member
__ School staff member
__ Program partner

Rating Key:
1 = Needs improvement
2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard
4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard
NA = Don't know or Not applicable

Standards/Elements	1	2	3	4	NA	Examples/Rationale
1) Staff relate to all youth in positive ways						
a. Staff treat youth with respect and listen to what they say.						
b. Staff make youth feel welcome and comfortable.						
c. Staff respond to youth with acceptance and appreciation.						
d. Staff are visibly engaged with youth during activities.						
2) Staff respond appropriately to individual needs of youth						
a. Staff know that each youth has special interests and talents.						
b. Staff recognize the range of youths' abilities.						

Rating Key: 1 = Needs Improvement | 2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard | 4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard | NA = Don't know or Not applicable

9-5

Standards/Elements	Rating					Examples/Rationale
	1	2	3	4	NA	
c. Staff respect youths' cultural style and primary language.						
d. Staff recognize the range of youths' feelings and temperaments and respond appropriately.						
3) Staff encourage youth to make choices and to become more responsible						
a. Staff offer assistance without taking control and in a way that supports a youth's initiative.						
b. Staff encourage youth to take leadership roles.						
c. Staff give youth many chances to choose what they will do, how they will do it, and with whom.						
d. Staff help youth make informed and responsible choices.						
4) Staff interact with youth to help them learn						
a. Staff ask questions that encourage youth to think for themselves.						
b. Staff share skills and resources to help youth gain information and solve problems.						
c. Staff vary the approaches they use to help youth learn.						
d. Staff help youth use language skills through frequent conversations.						

Rating Key: 1 = Needs Improvement | 2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard | 4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard | NA = Don't know or Not applicable

Standards/Elements	Rating					Examples/Rationale
	1	2	3	4	NA	
5) Staff treat youth as program collaborators and foster in youth a sense of program ownership						
a. Staff involve youth in creating rules and consequences for the program as a whole and for individual games.						
b. Staff involve youth in creating activity plans.						
c. Staff encourage input and feedback from youth regarding the program.						
6) Staff use positive and effective techniques to guide the behavior of youth						
a. Staff model positive behavior when with the youth.						
b. Staff use positive feedback in response to positive behaviors, such as when youth cooperate, share, or care for materials.						
c. Staff set appropriate limits for youth.						
d. Staff make sure youth understand the behavior expectations, rules, and consequences.						
e. Staff enforce rules fairly and consistently.						
f. When youth break rules, staff use immediate, short-term, developmentally appropriate consequences that are directly related to the broken rule.						
g. Staff do not use any harsh discipline methods.						

Rating Key: 1 = Needs Improvement | 2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard | 4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard | NA = Don't know or Not applicable

Standards/Elements	Rating					Examples/Rationale
	1	2	3	4	NA	
h. Staff seek to help youth replace problematic behavior with new behavior skills. For example, this may include teaching and modeling conflict resolution skills. (Note: The understanding of "problematic behavior" should be up to the individual program.)						
i. Staff encourage youth to resolve their own conflicts. If needed, staff step in to discuss the issues and work out a solution together with the youth.						
7) Staff strive to eliminate negative or unsafe peer interactions						
a. Staff are observant of youth interactions.						
b. Staff intervene immediately to stop negative or unsafe peer interactions.						
c. Staff follow up to check on the emotional state of all the youth involved and to identify the source of the problem.						
d. Staff seek to educate youth in how to respond to negative or unsafe peer interactions and how to report it to an adult.						

Rating Key: 1 = Needs Improvement | 2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard | 4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard | NA = Don't know or Not applicable

9-8

Safety and Environmental Health

There are safeguards in place to protect youth from getting a major injury or illness while at the program and to provide for their basic comforts.

Please check here:

I am a….
__ Youth
__ Parent/Guardian/Family member
__ Program staff member
__ School staff member
__ Program partner

Rating Key:
1 = Needs improvement
2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard
4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard
NA = Don't know or Not applicable

Standards/Elements	1	2	3	4	NA	Examples/Rationale
1) Staff are aware of the individual health needs of the youth						
Staff are aware of youths' dietary restrictions, allergies, medications, and other individual health needs, and they keep this information confidential. Staff may carry a list of youth with food allergies during snack or meal time as an added precaution.						
2) Staff are alert to potential hazards in the environment						
Staff recognize potentially dangerous conditions as they appear and take immediate precautions to protect youth from any serious hazards they see in the indoor and outdoor environment.						

Rating Key: 1 = Needs Improvement | 2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard | 4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard | NA = Don't know or Not applicable

9-9

Standards/Elements	Rating					Examples/Rationale
	1	2	3	4	NA	
3) The program conducts regular inspections using check-lists to ensure that the indoor and outdoor environment is clean and free of hazards that can cause injury or illness to the youth						
a. The program conducts daily, periodic, and bi-annual inspections and uses an appropriate check-list for each. See the resources section for sample check-lists. (Note: NJ Licensing includes basic requirements in the areas of cleanliness and environmental hazards. In some cases, the NJ Afterschool Quality Standards sample check-lists go beyond licensing requirements.)						
b. The program addresses any problems with hazards or cleanliness quickly by either making immediate corrections or ensuring youth are not exposed to the hazard. If the hazard requires longer term remediation, the program follows up as necessary.						
4) The program takes security precautions that go beyond NJ Licensing						
a. The program conducts annual state and federal background checks (or confirms that background checks already have been conducted) on enrichment providers, presenters, and volunteers who will be alone with youth at any time, in addition to regular staff. A staff person is present at all times when non-staff without background checks are with youth. Non-staff sign in and out when visiting the program. The program makes families aware of these policies.						

Rating Key: 1 = Needs Improvement | 2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard | 4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard | NA = Don't know or Not applicable

9-10

Standards/Elements	Rating					Examples/Rationale
	1	2	3	4	NA	
b. All of the doors to the program's spaces are locked to the outdoors and monitored from inside.						
c. The program's outdoor space is secured to protect youth from various hazards, including cars, strangers, and animals.						
d. There are policies or procedures in place to ensure youth move safely from one space to another.						
e. Parents or guardians periodically update signed forms allowing non-parents/guardians to pick up youth.						
f. The program has a policy on release of youth to walk home. If programs allow youth to walk home, it is based on an assessment of the safety of the walking route for that particular location and time and the developmental level of the youth.						
g. Staff periodically assess security at the program, identify potential problems, and address potential problems quickly.						
5) The program is prepared for emergencies						
a. The program has a "go kit," which contains essential information and items to take quickly in case of an emergency evacuation. The kit should be portable and reachable in case of evacuation. See the resources section for "go kit" check-list and recommendations.						

Rating Key: 1 = Needs Improvement | 2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard | 4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard | NA = Don't know or Not applicable

9-11

Standards/Elements	Rating					Examples/Rationale
	1	2	3	4	NA	
b. The program has emergency information on file about both youth and staff. This includes emergency contact information and information about necessary medications or extreme allergic reactions. Staff check that emergency information is updated at least two times a year. This file should be portable and reachable in case of evacuation. The program follows a policy to keep emergency information about staff and youth confidential.						
c. The program has an "emergency preparedness plan," developed in consultation with the host agency, law enforcement, fire department, health professionals, and the county Office of Emergency Management. This includes a plan for emergencies that occurs during the arrival or departure portions of the program.						
d. Staff are trained in the emergency plan, and trainings are redone periodically. The emergency plan has designated lead people, and these leaders review the plan periodically.						
e. The program communicates the emergency plan to parents.						
f. Staff and youth practice the emergency plan and conduct emergency drills.						
6) Transportation in vehicles is safe						
a. The program requires use of age-appropriate safety restraints.						

Rating Key: 1 = Needs Improvement | 2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard | 4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard | NA = Don't know or Not applicable

9-12

Standards/Elements	Rating					Examples/Rationale
	1	2	3	4	NA	
b. The program maintains documentation of vehicle inspection and drivers' driving records.						
c. If the program uses buses to transport youth, the administration considers the number and ages of youth to decide whether to provide a bus monitor. This person's role would include tracking youth and monitoring behavior and safety. For any transportation arrangement with a driver who is not program staff, the program provides a bus monitor.						
7) Staff take special precautions during activities requiring an increased attention to safety						
a. Staff and youth use appropriate safety gear during these activities, and there is proper instruction about how to use it.						
b. If these activities involve the use of any special materials or equipment, staff and youth have proper instruction about their use.						
c. There is increased supervision during these activities.						
d. The program conducts a risk assessment of these activities to determine what precautions are necessary.						

Rating Key: 1 = Needs Improvement | 2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard | 4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard | NA = Don't know or Not applicable

9-13

Indoor and Outdoor Environment

The program's indoor and outdoor environment are set up to facilitate youth development, play, and learning, as well as program success more generally.

Please check here:
I am a….
__ Youth
__ Parent/Guardian/Family member
__ Program staff member
__ School staff member
__ Program partner

Rating Key:
1 = Needs improvement
2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard
4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard
NA = Don't know or Not applicable

Indoor Environment

Standards/Elements	Rating					Examples/Rationale
	1	2	3	4	NA	
1) The indoor space is welcoming and youth-centered						
a. The space is clean and organized.						
b. The space is well-lit.						
c. Equipment is appropriate for the size of the youth in the program.						
d. The space reflects the interests of the youth. (Note: This may not be possible, depending on the degree of control the program has over this.)						
e. The space displays the work of the youth. (Note: This may not be possible, depending on the degree of control the program has over this.)						

Rating Key: 1 = Needs Improvement | 2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard | 4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard | NA = Don't know or Not applicable

9-14

Standards/Elements	1	2	3	4	NA	Examples/Rationale
f. Youth can safely access materials, such as books and games, independently.						
2) There is adequate indoor space for activities						
a. Space is large enough to accommodate all youth and activities.						
b. There are appropriate spaces for the different kinds of activities offered, and single multi-purpose rooms are divided into defined spaces. For example, there is a large space for sports or dance, quiet and well-lit space for homework, and relaxing soft space.						
3) There is adequate space for storage						
a. Storage space is lockable.						
b. There is space for program materials and equipment.						
c. There is space for staff to store personal items.						
d. There is space for youth to leave jackets and backpacks.						
4) There is a written contingency plan						
The administration has a written contingency plan accommodating as many of these standards as possible, in the case that the program is temporarily displaced.						

Rating Key: 1 = Needs Improvement | 2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard | 4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard | NA = Don't know or Not applicable

9-15

Outdoor Environment

Standards/Elements	Rating					Examples/Rationale
	1	2	3	4	NA	
1) Youth spend enough program time outdoors						
Youth have at least 30 minutes outdoors for every 3 hour block of time. (Note: Exceptions may be necessary due to the weather, the special health needs of an individual youth, or circumstances that make the program unable to provide safe outdoor space. Programs should find other ways to access the outdoors in these situations. For example, the program may provide safe group transport to, and supervision at, a local public park.)						
2) There is a variety of outdoor spaces, equipment, materials						
a. There is access to a variety of outdoor spaces. For example, there is access to open space to run and protected space for quiet play and socializing.						
b. There is access to a variety of outdoor equipment and materials.						
c. Small and large equipment and/or materials for outdoor play are age appropriate and developmentally appropriate.						
3. Storage for outdoor equipment and materials is convenient for children and youth						
a. Youth can access equipment and material easily.						
b. Storage for outside equipment and materials is close to the outdoor play area or readily accessible.						

Rating Key: 1 = Needs Improvement | 2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard | 4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard | NA = Don't know or Not applicable

Standards/Elements	Rating					Examples/Rationale
	1	2	3	4	NA	
4. Staff are actively engaged with children playing outdoors						
a. The program offers opportunities for both staff-directed and youth-directed outdoor activities.						
b. Staff encourage youth engagement outdoors using a variety of strategies, including peer support and non-verbal communication such as with objects, actions, and pictures.						
c. Staff maintain adequate supervision of youth while outdoors.						
5. The program enhances an appreciation for nature and the outdoors						
a. The program provides opportunities to discover nature.						
b. The program links outdoor play to experiential learning. For example, programs may incorporate gardening, nature journaling, and outdoor STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) activities.						
c. Staff take the opportunity to do traditional indoor activities outside, weather-permitting. Examples are snack, arts and crafts, and reading/stories.						
d. The program brings the outdoors indoors, especially when outdoor play is impossible. Examples are bringing in a bird's nest or shells, tending to a plant, and even opening windows.						

Rating Key: 1 = Needs Improvement | 2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard | 4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard | NA = Don't know or Not applicable

9-17

Programming and Activities

Programming and activities support youth development and learning, and they are fun, engaging, and tailored to the youth in the program.

Please check here:

I am a….
__ Youth
__ Parent/Guardian/Family member
__ Program staff member
__ School staff member
__ Program partner

Rating Key:
1 = Needs improvement
2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard
4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard
NA = Don't know or Not applicable

Standards/Elements	1	2	3	4	NA	Examples/Rationale
1) Activities are intentional and are aligned with the program's mission						
a. Staff choose activities based on careful consideration of the purpose.						
b. Staff consider the program's mission when choosing activities.						
2) Activities are tailored to the individual youth in the program						
a. Activities are geared towards developing each individual youth's interests, talents, and skills.						
b. Activities are suited to the individual learning styles of youth in the program.						
c. Activities represent the languages and cultures of youth in the program.						
d. Activities are age appropriate and developmentally appropriate.						

Rating Key: 1 = Needs Improvement | 2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard | 4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard | NA = Don't know or Not applicable

9-18

Standards/Elements	Rating					Examples/Rationale
	1	2	3	4	NA	
3) Youth learning through program activities is experiential and related to real-world challenges						
Most activities are hands-on, interactive, project-based, inquiry-based, and/or encourage youth exploration of their world.						
4) Activities support the development of youths' personal, social, and emotional skills						
a. The program includes a strong focus on developing youths' personal, social, and emotional skills. These include self-awareness skills, self-management skills, social awareness skills, relationship skills, decision-making skills, and other learning skills.						
b. The program is explicit about the specific personal, social, and emotional skills it seeks to develop and what program activities support these goals.						
c. Activities for teaching personal, social, and emotional skills revolve around giving youth opportunities to practice these skills.						
d. For complex personal, social, and emotional skills, the program breaks these down into developmental steps and provides activities that help youth master the steps one-by-one over time.						
5) The program offers a variety of activities						
a. Youth can choose which activity to participate in from among a variety of activities offered.						

Rating Key: 1 = Needs Improvement | 2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard | 4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard | NA = Don't know or Not applicable

Standards/Elements	Rating					Examples/Rationale
	1	2	3	4	NA	
b. There is a balance among types of activities offered. Examples of types of activities include, but are not limited to, the following: literacy, the arts, STEM (Science Technology, Engineering, and Math), cooking, community service/service learning, sports and games, health-promotion, quiet activity, socializing, and multi-cultural/global learning.						
c. There are both youth-directed and staff-directed activities.						
d. Youth have opportunities to play/work individually as well as collaboratively in a small or large group.						
6) Programming includes, but is not limited by, homework and tutoring activities						
a. There is balance between time youth spend doing homework and time spent doing other activities.						
b. The program is accommodating to youths' different learning styles while completing homework. For example, students are allowed to do homework in a variety of spaces and positions.						
c. The program has a policy on how it approaches homework and shares this policy with parents.						
7) The program's use of technology and electronics is intentional and supports quality programming						
a. Activities encourage active versus passive involvement with technology and electronics.						

Rating Key: 1 = Needs Improvement | 2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard | 4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard | NA = Don't know or Not applicable

9-20

Standards/Elements	Rating					Examples/Rationale
	1	2	3	4	NA	
b. Activities and staff encourage youth to make safe, healthy, and carefully-considered choices in their use of technology and electronics.						

Rating Key: 1 = Needs Improvement | 2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard | 4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard | NA = Don't know or Not applicable

9-21

Special Needs

The program environment is welcoming, supportive, and respectful of youth with any special or unique needs and their families.

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Please check here:

I am a….
__ Youth
__ Parent/Guardian/Family member
__ Program staff member
__ School staff member
__ Program partner

</td>
<td>

Rating Key:
1 = Needs improvement
2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard
4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard
NA = Don't know or Not applicable

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Standards/Elements	1	2	3	4	NA	Examples/Rationale
1) The program views a "special need" as any special situation or unique need of a child						
The program implements the concepts outlined below for any special situation or unique need that a child or youth has, not just those that are formally classified or for which the program has record of a classification.						
2) The program advertises itself as welcoming to youth with special needs						
a. The program advertises its policy to enroll youth with special needs in writing where families and staff can see it.						
b. Program materials include information that clearly demonstrates that the program is welcoming of youth with special needs. For example, materials may explain that there's a section of the IEP that can include afterschool and encourage families to look into their options. Or, if applicable, materials may say that the program has special education teachers on site.						

Rating Key: 1 = Needs Improvement | 2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard | 4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard | NA = Don't know or Not applicable

9-22

Standards/Elements	Rating					Examples/Rationale
	1	2	3	4	NA	
3) Professional development around special needs is appropriate and high quality						
a. The program trains staff on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the New Jersey Disability Law.						
b. The program provides staff with training on ways to individualize activities or routines for youth with special needs that are applicable to a wide variety of situations.						
c. Staff training builds awareness of developmental milestones and signs that may indicate a child has a unique need and requires a different approach.						
d. Staff training builds awareness of the importance of inclusion and the practices that support inclusion.						
e. When necessary and appropriate, the program conducts specific training for staff on how to accommodate the specific special needs of youth in the program.						
f. Professional development in this area follows the guidelines for appropriate and high quality professional development outlined in the Administration section, standard #4. For example, professional development around special needs is ongoing, reinforced, and integrated into the day to day operations of the program.						

Rating Key: 1 = Needs Improvement | 2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard | 4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard | NA = Don't know or Not applicable

9-23

Standards/Elements	Rating					Examples/Rationale
	1	2	3	4	NA	
4) The program takes steps to ensure communication with families about youth with special needs is respectful and as effective as possible						
a. There are opportunities for parents or guardians to provide information about a youth's special need or situation in a safe and confidential environment.						
b. Staff do not ask about special needs prior to accepting a youth into the program and at no point violate a family's privacy or pressure a family to give information not offered to the program already.						
c. Staff make sure families are aware of what the program can provide for youth with special needs.						
d. Staff or materials make clear to families that the program doesn't have information about youth that the family has not explicitly given, for example, information that the family has given to the school.						
e. The program has the philosophy that strong, trusting relationships with families is the foundation for information-sharing about a youth's special need or situation.						
f. There are strategies in place for effective communication with the family about a youth's special need or situation when necessary and appropriate. Communication should include discussion of the youth's interests and skills, as well as opportunities for the family to share with staff effective strategies for helping the child or youth succeed.						

Rating Key: 1 = Needs Improvement | 2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard | 4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard | NA = Don't know or Not applicable

9-24

Standards/Elements	Rating					Examples/Rationale
	1	2	3	4	NA	
5) The program's response to youth with a special need or situation is well-planned and appropriate						
a. The program has a procedure to follow when staff recognize that a youth needs special attention.						
b. The program supports the goals set by a youth's Child Study Team, if applicable.						
c. The program makes reasonable accommodations in order to be able to include youth with special needs and facilitate their success in the program. (Note that the language of "reasonable accommodations" is from the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). "Reasonable" means that the program is not required to dramatically change its structure, and what is "reasonable" varies according to the specific situation.) Accommodations may include modifications to the environment, activities, materials, or methods of interacting.						
d. Program administrators and staff consider the unique circumstances of each youth and each situation when coming up with responses.						
e. Activity planning includes consideration of the multiple ways a youth with special needs might approach the activity and what accommodations might help in each scenario. The plans should be flexible enough to make immediate accommodations or changes as needed.						

Rating Key: 1 = Needs Improvement | 2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard | 4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard | NA = Don't know or Not applicable

9-25

Standards/Elements	Rating					Examples/Rationale
	1	2	3	4	NA	
f. Responses or modifications allow for maximum possible participation, inclusion, and independence for youth with special needs.						
g. Staff behavior accurately reflects the program's policies regarding youth with special needs.						

Rating Key: 1 = Needs Improvement | 2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard | 4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard | NA = Don't know or Not applicable

9-26

Health Behavior: Nutrition and Physical Activity

The program supports healthy youth behavior and choices in the areas of nutrition and physical activity.

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Please check here:
I am a….
__ Youth
__ Parent/Guardian/Family member
__ Program staff member
__ School staff member
__ Program partner

</td>
<td>

Rating Key:
1 = Needs improvement
2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard
4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard
NA = Don't know or Not applicable

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</table>

Nutrition

Standards/Elements	Rating					Examples/Rationale
	1	2	3	4	NA	
1) The program considers nutritional value when selecting food to serve to youth						
a. The program serves food and beverages in amounts and types that promote lifelong health and prevent chronic disease, based on currently accepted standards of childhood nutrition.						
b. The program considers the nutritional value of the food options when choosing food vendors.						
2) The program considers multi-cultural values when selecting food to serve to youth						
a. The program is sensitive to the culture of program youth when choosing food to serve.						
b. The program introduces participants to food from around the world.						

Rating Key: 1 = Needs Improvement | 2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard | 4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard | NA = Don't know or Not applicable

9-27

Standards/Elements	Rating					Examples/Rationale
	1	2	3	4	NA	
3) If the program offers nutrition education to the youth, it is of high quality						
a. The nutrition curriculum is evidence-based or based on the best available research.						
b. The nutrition curriculum is hands-on and activity-based.						
4) The program environment supports healthy eating						
a. The vending machines include nutritional options (for example, fruit cups) or a system for promoting healthy choices (for example, displaying wrappers with nutritional information or using a color-coded system to highlight healthy options).						
b. If the program makes use of food company sponsors or advertisements to defray program funding costs, the nutritional value of the food the company sells is a consideration.						
c. Program facility and storage space is adequate to support healthy food options.						
d. Staff model healthy eating in front of youth.						
5) Professional development around nutrition issues is appropriate and high quality						
a. Staff are trained in general nutrition issues as well as trained to conduct nutrition programming for the youth.						
b. Professional development around nutrition issues follows the guidelines for appropriate and high quality professional development outlined in the Administration section, standard #4, and goes beyond giving reading material to staff.						

Rating Key: 1 = Needs Improvement | 2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard | 4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard | NA = Don't know or Not applicable

Standards/Elements	Rating					Examples/Rationale
	1	2	3	4	NA	
c. All staff working with food or with youth around food are taught about nutrition issues.						
6) The program follows a principle of balance when approaching food issues						
The program balances nutritional offerings, financial need, and youth preferences when deciding what foods to serve youth and to offer or model in the program environment.						
7) School-based programs act as partners to host schools with nutrition guidelines						
School-based programs respect the nutrition guidelines of the host school. For example, if the host school does not allow a particular food at the school for nutrition reasons, the afterschool program respects this and communicates it to families.						

Physical Activity

Standards/Elements	Rating					Examples/Rationale
	1	2	3	4	NA	
1) The program provides enough time for physical activity						
The program provides for at least 30 minutes of physical activity during the afterschool session.						

Rating Key: 1 = Needs Improvement | 2 = Some progress made/Approaching standard
3 = Satisfactory/Meets standard | 4 = Excellent/Exceeds standard | NA = Don't know or Not applicable

9-29

Writing an Action Plan based on your Assessment

A. Intro:

Have you finished your assessment, and now you want to take action to improve your program? Now is the time to think about writing an action plan!

An action plan is a plan for how to improve your program. It takes far-off goals and hard changes and breaks them down into steps you can keep track of and complete. An action plan usually includes goals, steps, assignments, and deadlines.

You'll want to improve your program every year and respond to changes in your program every year. But it may take more than a year to make major changes or achieve big goals. You can give yourself more time for these major changes and goals. Your action plan may take one, two or even three years to complete.

B. Using A Team Approach

If you take into account more people's ideas, you should end up with a stronger action plan.

Some things to think about:

- It's common to use a team for writing action plans. It may be best if team members think about the questions and issues on their own and then bring their ideas to the table. This should help you:
  - get a wider variety of ideas to work with
  - reduce "group think"
  - end up with a stronger action plan

- You may do this work with the same team that did your assessment. Or you may set up a different team to write and carry out your action plan.

- You may choose to get more input from program youth, families, staff, or partners about questions that come up through the action plan process.

C. Sample Action Plan Chart:

Your program may have a format that you use for action plans. Or you may have a format in mind based on your needs. If you're not sure what format you want to use, you may find this sample chart helpful:

Goal:

Standard(s) this goal relates to:

Current situation/rating:

Target date of reaching goal:

Steps to take	Who is responsible?	Due date

Sample filled-out chart:

Goal: Make our program's space more welcoming and youth-centered.

Standard(s) this goal relates to: Indoor/Outdoor Environment, Standard #1

Current situation/rating: Indoor/Outdoor Environment, Standard #1, Elements b (lighting) and e (youth work on display) rated 2 because our light is too harsh/all fluorescent and we don't have enough youth work on display due to shared space at the school

Target date of reaching goal: 3 months from now

Steps to take	Who is responsible?	Due date
Review NJSACC's "Imagine: Afterschool Space That Works" document	Program director	First month
Determine budget for improvements	Program director	First month
Purchase non-fluorescent lights – floor lamps, task lamps, lanterns, etc.	Program director/admin staff	First month
Identify ways to display youth work that are transportable (ie. can be put up and taken down each day)	Program Director	Second month
Discussions with youth about what they would like to see in the space	Program director and front line staff	Second month
Determine and carry out follow-up tasks based on youth discussions	Program director/others TBD	Third month

D. Choosing Your Goals:

When choosing goals and standards/elements to focus on, think about these four questions:

- What's our <u>rating</u> on this standard/element?
- How <u>important</u> is this standard/element or goal?
- How <u>reachable</u> is this goal?

We suggest these steps to help you choose:

- Pick out any standards/elements your program rated 1 or 2 on

- Then, highlight the ones you or others in the program think are most important. You may want to get more input from others to get a better sense of what they care most about.

- Then, choose the ones you think you're most likely to be able to improve your rating on within your time frame.

Some tips:

- You may choose a goal for your Action Plan that relates to more than one standard. You may find that low ratings on a few standards stem from the same problem.

- Think about choosing some goals that you can reach in a short time period so you and others have a sense of progress and success. Keep spirits high!

- You may choose to focus most on one or a few categories in one year and focus on other categories the next year.

E. Choosing the Steps to Take:

Now it's time to choose the steps to reach your goals.

Keep these tips in mind:

- For each part of your program that you want to improve, ask:

    o What's the reason we're having this problem?

    o Is there more than one part to the problem?

    o What might fix the problem?

    o What steps can program staff or others take to help us reach the goal?

- Try your best to set realistic target deadlines. Ask these questions that relate to timeline and resources:

    o Can we do this in-house or do we need outside help to meet this goal?

    o Do we need extra financial resources?

- Check out the resource section of this booklet.

- Contact NJSACC for help.

F. Using Your Program's Strengths:

Which standards/elements did your program rate well on? You should look at these too. This can help you:

- Celebrate your program's strengths! And recognize the people behind those strengths.

- Define what makes your program special. For your action plan, you can get ideas about how to solve problems using your program's strengths.

  For example, maybe your staff have great relationships with the youth but your programming needs to improve. You could involve the staff in coming up with new programming that reflects the interests and needs of the youth they know.

- Maintain program strengths. You may have to pay special attention to a part of your program that's already strong in order to keep it that way.

  For example, you may have grant money running out or a strong staff person leaving. You can include in your action plan a goal to find the funds to replace the grant money or steps to maintain quality through the staff change.

G. Action Plan Follow-up:

It's a good idea to look at your action plan about every three months to check on your progress and make needed changes.

You may choose to:

- Check off goals that you've reached. Celebrate your success!   And recognize the people who got you there.
- Revise steps, assignments, or deadlines based on how the plan is going so far.
- Revise goals if you see a major problem with your plan.

Just checking in with your action plan once in a while should help keep you on track and see your program improve!

Using a Team Approach to Assess Your Program

A. Intro:

This guide will help you use a team approach to assess your program.

Why is a team approach helpful?

- It should give you a better picture of how your program is really doing.
- It should help people who give input feel welcome and a part of the program.

If your program has more than one site, you can take on this process site by site or as a whole.

This process may seem daunting, but this guide should help you take it on step by step and have success!

The ideas in this guide are suggestions. You should feel free to adjust the process to make it work for your program.

B. Putting together an Assessment Team:

Your first step is to recruit Assessment Team members. Think about having reps from these groups:

- program administrative staff

- non-administrative staff

- parents/guardians

- program youth, if they are in middle school or high school

- board members, if this applies to your program

- school principals/staff or other partners, if this applies to your program

People should see the reps as real representatives of their group. The input of the reps should reflect the ideas of the people they represent and not just their own ideas.

When putting together your Assessment Team, you'll have to think about a few questions:

- Will there be a max number of team members or reps from each group?

- Will everyone who wants to serve on the team be allowed? Can anyone be turned away?

- Who will choose or appoint the team members?

Once your Assessment Team is set, it's a good idea to hold an intro meeting. Make sure all team members are clear on how to use the Assessment Tool and what the role of the Assessment Team is.

(See part D in this guide for more about the role of the Assessment Team.)

Feel free to add team members as you go through the rest of the process.

C. Getting Input from Others:

You will have the best sense of what people think about your program if you devote time and care to finding out.

This includes youth, families, staff, and partners.

The more people from each group you reach, the better your sense will be of how that group as a whole feels -- and the more they will feel a part of the program.

Appendix Parts A, B, and C provide sample surveys and discussion guides.

This collection of tools offers three levels of engagement with the NJ Quality Standards and the assessment process:

1. The very basic survey and discussion guide in Appendix Parts A and B ask questions that relate to the standards, but they do not present the actual standards.

   o Use these to get a sense of people's thoughts about relationships, safety and health, activities, and physical space at the program.
   o The basic discussion guide may be good to use with youth or parents/guardians.
   o The basic survey may be good for parents/guardians who have limited time. It also may be good for youth at a high enough reading level who are shy about sharing thoughts in a group.

2. Appendix Part C has a tool that can be either a survey or a discussion guide. It uses the actual standards but leaves out most of the explanation or elements in each.

   o These may be good for parents/guardians who are at a high reading level or are very engaged in the program. They also may be good for older youth who are at a high reading level or for staff who struggle with the full Assessment Tool.
   o When holding a discussion using the bolded standards, you may want to:
     ▪ Have the full NJ Quality Standards (and glossary) on hand in case people want more details about one of the standards.
     ▪ Offer the full Assessment Tool to people who want to fill it out on their own after the discussion.

3. The Assessment Tool uses the whole of the standards, including the full explanation or all the elements in each.

   o Give out the full Assessment Tool for people to fill out on their own.
   o This may be a good option for program staff or board members. It also may be good for parents/guardians who are at a very high reading level and are very engaged in the program. And it may be good for staff from the school(s) or other partners you work with, if this applies.
   o You may want to gather people to discuss or use the full Assessment Tool as a group. If you do this, you may want to tackle one or two categories at a time.

You'll have to decide what method you think is best for getting input from each group of people.

Also consider reaching out one-on-one to some people. For example, you could reach out to:

- youth who are shy about sharing thoughts in a group but not able to fully express their thoughts in writing.

- youth with special needs or their family members to make sure you get their input.

- parents/guardians, staff, or others you know had a problem with something in the program.

- the principal at the school where your program is, if this applies.

A few ideas about logistics:

- Remind parents/guardians that you welcome "drop-in" visits to observe the program.

- Remind people who don't spend a lot of time at the program that they should observe different parts of the program and different days or times to get a fuller picture. Help people such as school staff or other partners set up multiple visits.

- Consider running group walk-throughs of the program before giving out surveys or starting a discussion.

- If you hold discussions with parents, set up a few times so people with different schedules can take part.

D. Making Sense of the Findings

If a lot of people have given input, then making sense of the findings is the main role of the team. The end goal is a single set of ratings on the Assessment Tool that best captures all the input.

Think about taking these steps:

- Review discussion or survey results and choose an overall rating for the standards on the Assessment Tool. For example, did people's input suggest a rating of 1, 4, or something in between for each standard?

- Review the results of any Assessment Tools that people filled out. You could average the ratings for each standard, or you could give more weight to the input of one group of people for a particular standard. An example is the input of staff on professional development opportunities.

- Find points where people didn't agree. Are there any points where people who gave input had very different ideas from each other about how the program is doing?

- Discuss the points where people didn't agree. Why do you think people didn't agree? Does one group have more knowledge of the topic than the other? Were people maybe reading the standard in different ways or looking at different parts of it? Why might different people have very different experiences with parts of the program? After you discuss these questions, make your best judgment as a team about the rating that seems best.

- Come up with a single set of ratings on the Assessment Tool. It should be the Assessment Team's best attempt to capture the findings from all the input. This is the set of ratings that the program should use when starting its action plan.

Check out the Action Plan guide in this booklet for tips on writing an action plan based on your assessment!

Appendix Part A.

Basic Survey:

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Please check here:                      │
│ I am a...                               │
│ __youth                                 │
│ __parent/guardian/family member        │
│ __program staff member                  │
│ __school staff member                   │
│ __program partner                       │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Relationships

How do you feel about the relationships between staff and youth?
1   2   3   4   5
very bad   very good

Staff and families?
1   2   3   4   5
very bad   very good

Among youth?
1   2   3   4   5
very bad   very good

Among staff?
1   2   3   4   5
very bad   very good

What are examples of ways the relationships at the program are good?

What problems are there at the program with relationships?

What's the most important thing to you about the relationships at the program?

Safety and Health

How safe and healthy do you feel at the program/do you feel your child is at the program?

1	2	3	4	5
very bad				very good

What are examples of ways the program makes you feel safe and healthy/makes you feel your child is safe and healthy?

What problems are there at the program with safety or health?

What's the most important thing to you about safety and health at the program?

Activities

How do you feel about the activities at the program?

1	2	3	4	5
very bad				very good

What are examples of activities at the program that you like?

What do you like about those activities?

What problems are there at the program with the activities?

What's the most important thing to you about the activities at the program?

Physical Space

How do you feel about the physical space at the program?
1   2   3   4   5
very bad   very good

What are examples of things you like about the physical space at the program?

What problems are there at the program with physical space?

What's the most important thing to you about physical space at the program?

General

Are there other things <u>you like</u> about the program that you want to talk about?

Are there other <u>problems</u> with the program that you want to talk about?

Any other comments?

Conclusion

What do you think are the most important things for the program to improve?

Appendix Part B.

Basic Discussion Guide:

> **Please check here:**
> **Discussion is with…**
>
> __youth
> __parents/guardians/family members
> __program staff
> __school staff
> __program partner

Relationships

1a. How do you feel about the relationships between staff and youth? Staff and families?   Among youth? Among staff?
1b. What makes you feel that way?

2. What are examples of ways the relationships at the program are good?

3. What problems are there at the program with relationships?

4. What's the most important thing to you about the relationships at the program?

Safety and Health

1a. How safe and healthy do you feel at the program/do you feel your child is at the program?
1b. What makes you feel that way?

2. What are examples of ways the program makes you feel safe and healthy/makes you feel your child is safe and healthy?

3. What problems are there at the the program with safety or health?

4. What's the most important thing to you about safety and health at the program?

Activities

1a. How do you feel about the activities at the program?
1b. What makes you feel that way?

2. What are examples of activities at the program that you like?

3. What do you like about those activities?

4. What problems are there at the program with the activities?

5. What's the most important thing to you about the activities at the program?

Physical Space

1a. How do you feel about the physical space at the program?
1b. What makes you feel that way?

2. What are examples of things you like about the physical space at the program?

3. What problems are there at the program with physical space?

4. What's the most important thing to you about physical space at the program?

General

1. Are there other things <u>you like</u> about the program that you want to talk about?

2. Are there other <u>problems</u> with the program that you want to talk about?

3. Any other comments?

Conclusion

What do you think are the most important things for the program to improve?

Appendix Part C.
Survey or Discussion Guide Based on the NJ Quality Standards:

Please check here: I am a...

___youth   ___parent/guardian/family member   ___program staff member

___school staff member   ___program partner

Survey Instructions:
Read the basic standards in each category. Then answer the questions below.

Contact program staff with any questions.

Human Relationships:

1. Staff relate to all youth in positive ways

2. Staff respond appropriately to the individual needs of youth

3. Staff encourage youth to make choices and to become more responsible

4. Staff interactions with youth help youth learn

5. Staff treat youth as program collaborators and foster in youth a sense of program ownership

6. Staff use positive and effective techniques to guide the behavior of youth

7. Staff strive to eliminate negative or unsafe peer interactions

8. Staff display sensitivity to the culture and background of the youth. Staff display sensitivity to youths' ethnicity, language, religion, and family make-up.

9. The program and schedule are structured so that staff and youth have the opportunity to develop close, sustained relationships with each other

9. Youth generally interact with one another in positive ways

10. Staff interact with each other in positive ways

11. Staff interact with families in positive ways

12. Staff communicate with families about the individual child or youth when needed or helpful

Human Relationships Questions:

Which of these standards do you think the program does well on?

Do you have any examples?

Which of these standards do you think the program has problems with?

Do you have any examples?

Which of these standards do you think are the most important for the program to improve on?

Other comments?

Safety and Environmental Health

1. Staff are aware of the individual health needs of the children/youth

2. Staff are alert to potential hazards in the environment

3. The program conducts regular inspections using check-lists to ensure the indoor and outdoor environment is clean and free of hazards that can cause injury or illness to the youth

4. The program takes the necessary security precautions

5. The program is prepared for emergencies

6. Transportation in vehicles is safe

7. Staff take special precautions during activities requiring an increased attention to safety

8. The program provides for the basic comforts of the youth

Safety and Environmental Health Questions:

Which of these standards do you think the program does well on?

Do you have any examples?

Which of these standards do you think the program has problems with?

Do you have any examples?

Which of these standards do you think are the most important for the program to improve on?

Other comments?

Indoor and Outdoor Environment

Indoor

1. The indoor space is welcoming and youth-centered

2. There is adequate indoor space for activities

3. There is adequate space for storage

4. The administration has a written contingency plan, accommodating as many of these standards as possible, in the case that the program is temporarily displaced

Outdoor

1. Youth have at least 30 minutes outdoors for every 3 hour block of time, with necessary exceptions

2. There is a variety of outdoor spaces, equipment, and materials

3. Storage for outdoor equipment and materials is convenient for children and youth

4. Staff are actively engaged with children playing outdoors

5. The program enhances an appreciation for nature and the outdoors

Indoor/Outdoor Environment Questions:

Which of these standards do you think the program does well on?

Do you have any examples?

Which of these standards do you think the program has problems with?

Do you have any examples?

Which of these standards do you think are the most important for the program to improve on?

Other comments?

Programming and Activities

1. Activities are intentional (chosen by carefully considering the purpose) and connected to program mission

2. Activities are tailored to the individual youth in the program

3. Youth learning through program activities is experiential and related to real-world challenges -- Most activities are hands-on, interactive, project-based, and/or encourage youth exploration of their world.

4. Activities support the development of youths' personal, social, and emotional skills -- Examples are communication skills, conflict resolution skills, leadership skills, self-control, goal-setting, and perseverance.

5. The program offers a variety of activities

6. Programming includes, but is not limited by, homework and tutoring activities

7. The program's use of technology and electronics is intentional and supports quality programming

8. The daily routine is structured and stable, while flexible enough to meet the changing or individual needs of youth.

9. Movement between activities is youth-centered -- youth don't spend a lot of time waiting for others before they can move between activities

10. Materials used for programming are adequate

11. Activities during the afterschool program are linked to what's happening during the school day

12. Professional development (staff training) around programming and activities is appropriate and high quality

Programming/Activities Questions:

Which of these standards do you think the program does well on?

Do you have any examples?

Which of these standards do you think the program has problems with?

Do you have any examples?

Which of these standards do you think are the most important for the program to improve on?

Other comments?

Special Needs/The Whole Child

1. The program views a "special need" as any special situation or unique need that a child presents

2. The program advertises itself as welcoming to youth with special needs

3. Professional development (staff training) around special needs is high quality

4. The program takes steps to ensure communication with families about special needs is respectful and as effective as possible

5. The program's response to youth with a special need or situation is well-planned and appropriate

6. The program makes use of outside resources and professionals when necessary and appropriate

7. To the extent possible, the program's physical space is accessible and welcoming to people with special needs, even if there are no youth enrolled in the program who currently have this need.

Special Needs/The Whole Child Questions:

Which of these standards do you think the program does well on?

Do you have any examples?

Which of these standards do you think the program has problems with?

Do you have any examples?

Which of these standards do you think are the most important for the program to improve on?

Other comments?

Nutrition and Physical Activity

Nutrition

1. The program considers nutritional value when selecting food to serve to youth

2. The program considers multi-cultural values when selecting food to serve to youth -- ex. The program is sensitive to the culture of program youth when choosing food to serve.

3. If the program offers nutrition education to the youth, it is high quality

4. The program environment supports healthy eating

5. Professional development (staff training) around nutrition issues is appropriate and high quality

6. The program follows a principle of balance when approaching food issues -- The program balances nutritional offerings, financial need, and youth preferences when deciding what foods to serve youth and to offer or model in the program environment.

7. School-based programs respect the nutrition guidelines of the host school -- For example, if the host school does not allow a particular food at the school for nutrition reasons, the afterschool program respects this and communicates it to families.

Physical Activity

1. The program provides for at least 30 minutes of physical activity during the afterschool session

2. The program offers a variety of types of physical activity day to day and within each day

3. The program limits the use of screens for youth activities (Examples of "screens" are computers, televisions, smart phones, and tablets)

4. Professional development (staff training) around physical activity programming is high quality

5. The program environment (ex. the physical space and the staff) supports a physically active lifestyle for youth

Nutrition/Physical Activity Questions:

Which of these standards do you think the program does well on?

Do you have any examples?

Which of these standards do you think the program has problems with?

Do you have any examples?

Which of these standards do you think are the most important for the program to improve on?

Other comments?

Administration

1. The program has and uses a mission statement

2. The administration takes steps to make it more likely that the program is always improving

3. The administration offers staff the best possible working conditions and pay

4. The administration provides a high quality system of professional development (staff training)

5. The administration manages volunteers effectively

6. The administration takes steps to support effective communication -- ex. between staff and families, among staff, between staff and the school

7. The administration values input and feedback about the program and is responsive to it

8. There are policies or procedures in place that involve families in the life of the program

9. The program respects the rights of the youth, family members, and staff

10. The administration maintains and updates program policies and records

11. The administration acts responsibly regarding program finances and financial sustainability

12. The administration maintains sufficient staff:youth ratios and supervision of youth

13. The administration stays current on licensing and other relevant laws and regulations

14. The administration researches and connects to potential community partners in order to make it more likely that staff, youth, and families take advantage of community resources

Administration Questions:

Which of these standards do you think the program does well on?

Do you have any examples?

Which of these standards do you think the program has problems with?

Do you have any examples?

Which of these standards do you think are the most important for the program to improve on?

Other comments?

General

Are there other things <u>you like</u> about the program that you want to talk about?

Are there other <u>problems</u> with the program that you want to talk about?

Conclusion

What do you think are the most important things for the program to improve?

Table of Contents:

Introduction:

The purpose of this resources section is to help you reach a high level of quality on the standards and elements in the NJ Quality Standards for Afterschool. If there's a part of your program you're focusing on improving or a topic you want more information on, these resources will give you a good start.

Think about contacting NJSACC for guidance on any of these topics or any other topic you want help with. Our staff and consultants have expertise that goes beyond what's included in this resource guide.

DISCLAIMER: Some products or curricula listed in the resources section cost money. We want you to research the best resources, options, and products to use for your program. NJSACC is not endorsing any particular product or curriculum for purchase. We get no benefit or money from any outside sources if an afterschool program purchases one of the products or curricula listed as a resource.

Funding Tips and Sources:

- Afterschool Alliance guidance:
  www.afterschoolalliance.org/funding.cfm

  - o Fundraising materials developed specifically for afterschool programs

  - o Sections include: tools and tips on finding sources and writing proposals; funding database; expert advice; sponsorship tips; connecting business with afterschool; in-kind donations and partnerships

- The Foundation Center:
  foundationcenter.org

  - o The leading source of information on philanthropy, fundraising, and grant programs
  - o Limited access is available for free and more extensive access available with membership
  - o Free access to funding information at "Cooperating Collections," including several NJ libraries; find Cooperating Collections here: grantspace.org/Find-Us

- Subscribe to the Afterschool FLASH, NJSACC's email news flash, to learn more about grant opportunities: www.njsacc.org/wordpress

- Several sections in this guide have tips about funding specific program areas. See the "At-Risk Afterschool Meal Program" section and the "Programming and Activities Toolkit" sections on the arts, global learning, health promotion, and STEM.

- Center for Collaborative Solutions: Afterschool Solutions www.ccscenter.org/afterschool/Resources%20and%20Links Resources for afterschool administrators, including articles on sustainable funding

<u>Financial Management Resources:</u>

Good resources for non-profit organizations:

- The Council of Nonprofits
  www.councilofnonprofits.org/resources/financial-management
  Extensive guidance and resources to help non-profits improve their financial management

- The Independent Sector
  www.independentsector.org/governance_ethics_resource_center
  This resource for non-profits includes sections on "strong financial oversight" and "responsible fundraising"

If your program is a non-profit organization, be sure to work with your Board of Directors on any financial management issues you identify.

<u>Resources for Professional Development around Special Needs:</u>

Resources provided by SPAN, the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network:

- Trainings database: www.spannj.org/training
  Find numerous trainings for professionals and parents on various subjects relating to children with special needs.

- The New Jersey Inclusive Child Care Project: www.spannj.org/njiccp

The Project's primary focus is to support professionals to include children with special needs and disabilities in child care, preschool, and afterschool/before school programs. Services include telephone technical assistance, on-site support services, and staff trainings. Trainings cover the following topics: inclusion awareness, responding to challenging behavior, recognizing "red flags" and responding to them, observing and recording behavior, and developing a plan to address behavior. Trainings can be designed to meet the needs of a program.

Sample Accommodations for Youth with Special Needs:

Environment

- place picture cards on activity centers and post a visual schedule that uses pictures so youth with difficulty reading can identify activities
- place a stool next to the sink and toys on low open shelves so youth who can't reach as high as others in the program can still reach them
- make all areas of the environment accessible to youth with special equipment (for example, wheelchairs/adapted chairs)
- use brightly colored mats and materials to help youth who have difficulty focusing and respond to this
- design activity centers to visually reflect what youth with difficulty participating in activities find engaging
- use a designated "safe" area for a specific youth with this need to go to alone when necessary
- divide the youth into groups to help with separating incompatible youth

Activities

- use a peer buddy system to give extra support in an activity (for example, a youth in a wheelchair is pushed around the bases in a baseball game)
- plan short walks or quiet small group activities to help youth with behavior problems who respond to this
- teach social skills based on the needs of the youth in the program
- provide activities that reflect what youth with difficulty participating in activities find engaging

Materials

- provide a separate box of supplies and games to choose from that are specifically designed for youth with a particular special need
- purchase supplies that youth who are blind could use, such as hand held games with sounds instead of lights or soft balls to catch with bells in them
- provide toys that build on the unique skills of a youth with special needs

Methods of interacting

- use non-verbal communication tools such as objects, actions, and pictures for youth who respond best to this
- encourage child-led communication for youth with difficulty communicating
- provide individual supervision of toilet use or hand washing for youth with this need
- pick up a youth directly from a classroom instead of having her/him come to the program room on own
- create simpler rules and provide clearer, one-step directions for youth with behavior problems who respond to this
- work with the youth's Child Study Team from school

Staffing

- provide a nurse during the program to stay with a child at risk for seizures
- provide one-on-one aides during the program for youth with this need

Resources for Playground Accessibility:

If you are re-creating your outdoor space or want to alter it to make it more accessible to youth with special needs, check out these resources:

- A Summary of Access Guidelines for Play Areas:
  http://www.access-board.gov/play/guide/intro.htm

- National Center on Accessibility: info and FAQs on play areas:
  http://www.indiana.edu/~nca/playgrounds/play-areas.shtml

- Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation: useful links regarding playground accessibility:
  http://www.christopherreeve.org/atf/cf/%7B3d83418f-b967-4c18-8ada-adc2e5355071%7D/Playground%20Accessibility%207-08.PDF

Sample Check-Lists for Health and Safety Inspections:

Daily:
__broken glass or other sharp objects removed
__electrical cords are secured
__hazardous or toxic substances locked away and out of reach to youth
__tripping hazards in stairway such as toys on the stairs removed
__tripping hazards such as loose rugs and toys on the floor removed
__floor and ground are not slippery from water or ice
__kitchen and bathroom cleaned and sanitized
__soap, toilet paper, and paper or cloth towels are stocked
__full indoor garbage receptacles emptied to the outdoor garbage
__toilets, sinks, and other plumbing maintained in good operating condition
__railings of balconies, landings, porches, or steps maintained in safe condition
__program vehicles are in safe operating condition and stocked with required safety equipment

[Periodic](#):
__indoor and outdoor garbage receptacles are maintained in sanitary condition
__indoor space is free of rodent or insect infestation
__ventilation outlets clean and free from obstructions
__protective covers or shields on fluorescent tubes and incandescent light bulbs
__mirrors, dispensers, and other bathroom equipment fastened securely
__protective guards over heating devices and fans maintained in safe condition

Bi-annual:
Equipment, structures, and materials maintained in safe condition:
__carpeting and other surfaces free of heavy soiling
__playground equipment maintained in safe condition
__unstable furniture fixed
__loose stairs, torn carpeting or other tripping hazards from poorly maintained stairwell fixed
__moisture from water leaks or seepage removed and area cleaned
__windows safe and in good condition
__walls free of excessive peeling or chipped paint
__effective water drainage system for outdoor play area
__building structure maintained to prevent excessive water, drafts or heat loss, and infestation
__other equipment, structures, and materials maintained in safe condition

Go Kit Guidance:

Recommendations:

- Go kits are portable and should contain a stockpile of essential emergency supplies
- Go kits often come in the form of backpacks or buckets that can be easily carried out of a program in case of an emergency
- The contents of the go kits should reflect the safety team's consideration of the school's circumstances and resources
- Supplies that have expiration dates (such as batteries, food, water, and prescription medications) should be replenished over time
- Program should delegate responsibility for making sure go kits are properly stocked and replenished, and program should include this information in the emergency preparedness plan
- Program may be able to arrange to have on hand more "routine" medications like insulin or epinephrine that could be kept in a first aid kit
- Youth and adults should have extra supplies of clothes, including rain clothes, and prescription medication at the program site, though these may not go into the go kits
- Program should have an extra supply of canned food and water at the site, as well as blankets, though these may not go into the go kits

Sample Check-List:

__a clipboard containing (1) lists of all youth and adults, including those with special needs and descriptions of needs (i.e., medical issues, prescription medicines, dietary needs) and marked confidential, (2) copy of emergency preparedness plan, (3) directory with key emergency telephone numbers and numbers of local drug stores, (4) a parent-student reunification plan, and (5) utility shut-down procedures
__a whistle
__a hat or brightly colored vest for visibility and leadership identification
__a battery-operated flashlight, batteries, and battery charger
__walkie talkies or other emergency communication device
__a battery operated radio
__a first-aid kit with instructions and medical gloves
__breathing masks
__garbage bags
__toilet paper and towelettes
__plastic sheeting
__paper and writing implements
__a multi-purpose tool/knife/pliers
__work gloves
__duct tape
__lighter and waterproof matches and container
__can opener
__student activities
__bullhorn

Additional Go Kit Resources:

- Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools, Technical Assistance Center, Go Kit info:
  rems.ed.gov/docs/EmergencySupplies_n_GoKit101705.doc

- Emergency preparedness resources for afterschool programs:
  www.readysetgokitsblog.com

Indoor Space Guide:

See NJSACC's comprehensive guide to setting up high-quality indoor space:
"Imagine: Afterschool Space that Works"
www.njsacc.org/pdfs/imagine.pdf

Nutritious Meals and Snacks Resources:

- USDA guidelines about healthy choices in each of the food groups:
  www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups

- Sample menus for afterschool:

  o CANFit's Healthy Snack Guide:
    www.lchc.org/research/documents/CANFITAfterSchoolHealthySnackGuide2009.pdf

  o FRAC's Model Supper and Snack Menus:
    frac.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2009/05/lunch_or_meal_sample_menu.pdf

- Using Local Foods

  o Guide to using local foods in afterschool:
    frac.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/produceguide.pdf

  o NJ sources of local fruits and vegetables:
    www.njfarmtoschool.org/foodservice/local-procurement-and-contracts

At-Risk Afterschool Meal Program Info:

The At-Risk Afterschool Meal Program offers federal funding to reimburse afterschool programs serving a snack and/or supper to children in low-income areas. This program is part of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). This program is administered at the federal level by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and at the state level by the NJ Department of Agriculture (NJDA) Division of Food and Nutrition.

Participating in the At-Risk Afterschool Meal Program can help you:
- Fight hunger in your community
- Give youth the energy to participate positively in your program
- Create a healthy afterschool environment
- Increase your enrollment
- Save more money to invest in programming

Eligibility:

In order to be eligible for the At-Risk Meal Program, your afterschool program must meet the following conditions:

- Be located within a school attendance boundary where at least 50% or more of the students receive free or reduced priced lunch.
- Be operated by a school, non-profit, or local government agency. For-profit centers may also be eligible.
- Provide regularly scheduled activities in a structured and supervised environment and include education or enrichment activities.
- Serve children 18 years or younger at the beginning of the school year (21 years or younger for special needs youth).
- Accept all children within capacity
- Provide meals and/or snacks to all children, free of charge.

For a full description of eligibility requirements, please consult the At-Risk Afterschool Meal Program Handbook.

Meal Service:

Meals and snacks served at eligible afterschool programs may receive reimbursement through the At-Risk Meal Program if the following conditions are met:

- Meals and snacks are served during the regular school year. This includes afterschool, holidays, weekends, and vacations. Programs operating during summer months may benefit from the Summer Food Service Program
- There is a gap of at least 2 hours If both a snack and a meal are provided
- State or local health/sanitation, fire/safety standards, certificate of occupancy, and attendance zone verification letters provided (licensed child care centers may provide a copy of the license and a health/sanitation letter)

Meals may be served hot or cold and must include all 5 of the components below. Snacks must include 2 of these components, excluding milk:

- 1 serving of milk
- 2 servings of fruits and/or vegetables
- 1 serving of grains
- 1 serving of protein

For the 2012-2013 school year, eligible snacks will be reimbursed $0.78 per child per day and meals will be reimbursed $2.86 per child per day. Reimbursement rates are adjusted annually.

Record Keeping:

Afterschool programs participating in the At-Risk Meal Program must keep accurate records in order to receive reimbursements. This include

For More Information:

- Check out NJSACC's web guide:
  www.njsacc.org/providers/atRiskMealsProgram.php

- Contact the NJSACC Program Coordinator for Afterschool Meals (908-789-0259 or vista@njsacc.org) for guidance

- Contact your regional Child Nutrition Specialist at NJDA (609-984-1250) to determine area eligibility and receive application materials

Positive Youth Behavior Toolkit:

Using Consequences:

One of the most basic techniques to guide youth behavior is making sure that youth know there are <u>consequences</u> for breaking rules.

There are two types of consequences:

- **Natural Consequences:** These happen as a direct result of the action. They are an opportunity for a learning experience for the youth.

   Examples:
   A child breaks the rule, "Keep the balls on the playground." The child throws the ball onto the road and the ball is run over by a car. Now there is no ball to play with. Sometimes the natural consequences are enough of a learning experience.

   A child breaks the rule, "Use kind words," and loses a friend for the day.   In this case, the provider should use the natural consequence to reinforce the lesson: "John won't play Legos with you now because he doesn't like that you called him stupid. How do you think he feels?"

- **Logical Consequences**: These are directly related to what the broken rule is about.

   Example: A child breaks the rule, "Treat program materials with respect," by throwing clay at the wall. Remind the child of the rule and what he/she is allowed to do with the clay. Before continuing play, have the child clean up the mess made by throwing the clay on the wall. Tell the student again ways in which he/she may use the clay properly: "You may pound, mold, and cut the clay on the table with your fingers or the tools here." If he/she throws the clay again, a logical consequence would be to tell the child he/she may not use the clay for the rest of the day.

Logical consequences should be:
- o immediate and short-term.
- o [developmentally appropriate](#).
- o fair and consistent.
- o equal to the severity of the rule-breaking. Losing the ability to play board games for the week is not equal to forgetting to put the game away once.

Pre-established logical consequences for breaking specific program rules should be:
- o developed with youth input.
- o something that youth know about and understand before-hand.

<u>Talking Youth Through Anger and Conflicts:</u>

Two [evidence-based](#) programs/curricula for reducing youth aggression and improving youth behavior offer basic guidelines for talking youth through anger and conflicts:

- • "First Aid For Anger" from PeaceBuilders: www.peacebuilders.com/media/pdfs/free-resources/FirstAidForAnger.pdf

- • Guidelines from I Can Problem Solve (ICPS):

    Think of four basic ways to talk to youth in conflict and other problem situations, and work to move up the rungs of the ladder:

    - o Rung 1 - Power: Adults make demands or give punishments (ex. "give it back now" and "go to time out")
    - o Rung 2 - Suggestions: Adults give the child suggestions about what to do (ex. "try sharing" or "try telling her you're sorry")
    - o Rung 3 - Explanations: Adults give the youth a reason to do or not do something and may explain feelings (ex. "if you hit, you might hurt someone/lose a friend" or "he feels angry when you do that")
    - o Rung 4 - Problem Solving: Adults engage youth in the process of thinking through the problem

    Each rung is more positive than the one below it. Rungs 2 and 3 are more positive than Rung 1, but the adult is still doing the thinking for the youth. The youth doesn't learn as much and may tune out.

Sample steps and language for Rung 4 - Problem Solving:

1. Define the problem: "What happened? What's the matter?"
2. Ask about feelings: "How do you feel? How does he feel?"
3. Ask about consequences: "What happened when you did that?"
4. Elicit feelings about consequences: "How did you feel when that happened?"
5. Encourage the youth to think of alternative solutions: "Can you think of a different way to solve this problem so that won't happen?"
6. Encourage evaluation of the solution: "Is that a good idea or not a good idea?"
7. Encourage the youth to think of potential obstacles: "Could anything stop you from doing that?"
8. Encourage thinking about steps: "What is the next thing you could say or do?"
9. Guide thought about time or timing: "How long might that take?" or "When might be a good time to do that?"
10. Praise the youth's act of thinking: "You're thinking through this very well."

See the I Can Problem Solve curriculum for more details and guidance and over a hundred activities:
www.thinkingpreteen.com/icps.htm
www.researchpress.com/books/590/icps-i-can-problem-solve

Creating an Environment for Positive Behavior:

One of the most important ways to guide youth behavior is to create a positive program environment.

- Some simple, evidence-based techniques for creating an environment that leads to improvements in youth behavior:

  - Provide meaningful roles/jobs/responsibilities to all youth in the program
  - Use "praise notes": These are publicly-posted notes that youth write to other youth, praising their behavior (could be written by adults too)
  - Send positive notes about youth home to their parents, and encourage parents to send positive notes about the youth back to the program
  - Use non-verbal cues to show youth when it's time for transitions: Use visual (ex. a hand signal), auditory (ex. music or a change in how your voice sounds), and motion (ex. a dance or special body movement) to help youth make smooth transitions between activities or spaces

- What are the key traits of programs that have a positive effect on youth behavior?

  If you're struggling with youth behavior in your program, use this research-based list as guidance for your program culture:

  - Traits of program culture:

    o there is youth-youth and youth-staff bonding and relationships offer emotional and practical support
    o there is a feeling of membership
    o there is a feeling that the individual youth matter
    o youth are listened to, have responsibilities, make contributions, and are seen as a resource, not a problem
    o there is appropriate structure (ex. consistent rules, consistent structure but with flexibility, age-appropriate monitoring)
    o there are positive norms of behavior/standards for behavior
    o there are connections between family, school, and community

  - Program activities:

    o give youth responsibility
    o boost feelings of community membership
    o are meaningful and challenging
    o involve contribution/service
    o focus on improvement rather than a youth's level compared to others
    o include personal/social/emotional skill building (see the "Teaching Personal, Social, and Emotional Skills in Afterschool" section in this resource guide for more on this topic)
    o include exploration, practice, reflection, and expression
    o include recognition

  Research shows that these traits of youth development program culture and activities have a positive effect on youth behavior. They are also basic traits of high-quality afterschool programs, and they are central to the NJ Quality Standards.

Using Games to Improve Youth Behavior:

- The Good Behavior Game

    - This is an [evidence-based](#) tool for improving youth behavior

    - It can be played during other program activities

    - Youth work in teams and get rewards for positive team behavior

    - You can implement this game in your program using free resources:

        - about the Good Behavior Game:
          www.sbbh.pitt.edu/files/other/Good%20Behavior%20Game%20JP
          %20Newsletter%20final%20revision-1.pdf
        - other resources:
          www.sbbh.pitt.edu/Good-Behavior-Game/37/Default.aspx
        - free manual:
          www.evidencebasedprograms.org/static/pdfs/GBG%20Manual.pdf

- Research shows that all kinds of games improve youth behavior when they involve:

    - turn-taking

    - helpfulness

    - rule-following

    - emotional self-control

You can plan games that are fun and improve youth behavior at the same time!

Teaching Personal, Social, and Emotional Skills in Afterschool:
A closer look at a research milestone:

A major study recently came out looking at the teaching of "personal and social skills" in afterschool. This section looks at what the study means for program staff who want to apply this research in practice.

Key points about the study:

- It shed more light on how to improve afterschool program quality.
- It showed that afterschool programs can impact many youth development outcomes.
- It was a large-scale review of 75 reports on 68 different afterschool programs, and it used rigorous research methods.

Study:
Durlak JA, Weissberg RP, Pachan M. A Meta-Analysis of After-School Programs That Seek to Promote Personal and Social Skills in Children and Adolescents. American Journal of Community Psychology. June, 2010.
(Contact NJSACC for a full copy of the study.)

What did the authors mean by "personal and social skills?"

The authors of the study base their understanding of "personal and social skills" heavily on the work of CASEL, the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (casel.org). CASEL is a leader in the field of "social and emotional learning." A review of the authors' articles and of CASEL materials suggests the authors were focusing on afterschool programs that teach these types of skills:

- self-awareness skills: identifying and cultivating one's strengths and positive qualities, recognizing one's emotions
- self-management skills: self-control, goal-setting, perseverance, emotional regulation (coping effectively with stress, anxiety, distress, anger, and other difficult emotions)
- social awareness skills: understanding social and conflict dynamics, understanding the viewpoints and perceptions of others, recognizing others' emotions, appreciating the value of others and of differences
- relationship skills: cooperation, communication skills, leadership skills, conflict resolution skills, refusal skills (an ability to resist inappropriate peer pressure), social responsibility (acting in a way that takes into account the well-being and expectations of others)
- decision-making skills: skills that help youth through the process of making decisions, including considering options, considering consequences, weighing options, and choosing a course of action. In the context of a challenge or problem, these can be called problem-solving skills.

What are "SAFE" teaching methods?

The authors recommend that programs use "SAFE" methods to teach personal and social skills. This means teaching and learning that is "<u>s</u>equenced, <u>a</u>ctive, <u>f</u>ocused, and <u>e</u>xplicit." The authors explain what they mean by each:

<u>S</u>equenced -- complex skills are broken down into developmental steps and mastered step by step over time; the authors say that this usually happens through lesson plans or program manuals, particularly if programs use or adapt established curricula
<u>A</u>ctive -- youth "learn by doing" and practice new skills
<u>F</u>ocused -- there is program time that is primarily devoted to learning these skills
<u>E</u>xplicit -- the program is clear about which specific skills it's addressing with which activity

According to this study, the afterschool programs that used these methods to teach personal and social skills had many positive impacts on youth, and the ones that did not use these methods did not have any of these positive impacts.

What did the research show?

According to this rigorous scientific review, afterschool programs teaching personal and social skills using SAFE methods had a positive impact on youth development in all of these areas:

- how youth feel about themselves
    - self-confidence
    - self-efficacy, or the feeling that they have mastered specific skills
- how youth interact with others
    - ability to express their feelings
    - cooperation
    - leadership
    - ability to respond well to peer pressure (refusal skills)
    - conflict resolution skills
    - reduced aggression and "acting out"
- how youth feel about school
    - liking school
    - feeling the school environment or teachers are supportive
- how youth do in school
    - achievement test scores
    - grades
    - attendance
- youth choices about substance use
    - reduced drinking, drug-use, and smoking

How do I apply this to my program?

- Look for how your programming and activities connect to the "personal and social skills" listed above and for ways to make this connection stronger.

- CASEL provides access to numerous free activities designed to foster social and emotional learning:
  casel.org/in-schools/selecting-programs/sample-sel-activities

- Look for evidence-based programs/curricula that teach personal, social, and emotional skills and are suited to afterschool.

- In some cases, evidence-based school-based programs are adapted into activity packs specifically for teaching these personal, social, and emotional skills in afterschool.

  Examples:

  o All Stars "Character Education" program (gr 4-5; $40 plus $4/youth; outcomes: feelings about school, substance use)
  www.allstarsprevention.com/programs/All_Stars_Order_Form.pdf

  o Lions Quest Skills for Adolescence for Out-of-School Time (gr 6-8; $90; outcomes: school achievement, behavior problems, substance use, conflict resolution skills)
  www.lions-quest.org/pdfs/skillsadol_ost_flyer.pdf

  o Too Good For Violence/Too Good For Drugs (TGFV/TGFD) Afterschool Activities Kit (K-5; $425; outcomes: skills to resist drugs and violence, behavior problems, social skills)
  www.mendezfoundation.org/toogood-drugs-violence-asa-2.html

- Some evidence-based programs/curricula are used in both school settings and afterschool settings.

  Examples:

  - Aban Aya Youth Project (gr 5-8 African American boys; $150-$375 depending on kit; outcomes: school attendance, behavior problems, violence, substance use, sexual activity)
    www.socio.com/passt24.php

  - I Can Problem Solve (ICPS) (K-6; $42; outcomes: feelings about school, problem-solving skills, social skills, aggression)
    www.thinkingpreteen.com

  - Peace Works (K-12; about $100-$200 depending on kit; outcomes: aggression, behavior problems)
    peaceeducation.org/catalog.pdf

  - Positive Action (K-12; $360-$500 depending on kit; outcomes: school achievement, school attendance, behavior problems, violence, substance use, sexual health)
    www.positiveaction.net

- See the "health promotion" section for more evidence-based programs/curricula that teach personal, social, and emotional skills.

  Free sample lessons:
  www.lifeskillstraining.com/uploads/media/MS%20sampler.pdf
  www.positiveaction.net/programs/index.asp?ID1=1&ID2=22&ID3=290
  www.mendezfoundation.org/toogood-drugs-violence-asa-2.html

Programming and Activities Toolkit:

Service-Learning:

Service learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. This definition is from the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse (www.servicelearning.org/what-service-learning).

There are many ways to do service-learning in afterschool:

- It can be short-term or long-term.
- It can be undertaken by an individual youth or the whole group.
- It can be great for youth in elementary school all the way through high school.

Overview:

- Resources for community-based organizations:
  www.servicelearning.org/topic/demographics-setting/community-based-organizations

- Service Learning in Community-Based Organizations: A Practical Guide to Starting and Maintaining High-Quality Programs
  www.servicelearning.org/filemanager/download/8543_CBO_Toolkit_2009.pdf

6 Key Elements of High-Quality Service-Learning:

- Investigation
- Planning
- Action
- Reflection
- Demonstration/celebration
- Sustainability

For more on service-learning quality components and standards:
www.servicelearning.org/topic/quality-components-standards

Find Service-Learning Activities:

www.servicelearning.org/slice

www.servicelearning.org/topic/area-service

www.gotoservicelearning.org/search-plans

www.waterplanetchallenge.org/wpc/index.cfm/service-learning/action-guides

www.hrea.org/pubs/AIUSA-HREA-ServiceLearning.pdf

Activities to Develop Future Service-Learning Projects:

- Exploring Your Community's Strengths and Hopes: A Step-by-Step Guide for Youth-Led Community Listening Projects
  www.inspiredtoserve.org/sites/default/files/CommunityListening-InspiredToServe.pdf
  "The community listening project involves interfaith teams of youth and adults interviewing community leaders (key informants) about their sense of the community's strengths, the opportunities for partnership, and their hopes for the future. It is designed to provide a foundation for building relationships in the community and for planning future service-learning projects."

- Map Your Community
  www.servicelearning.org/sites/default/files/download/slice/Map%20Your%20Community.pdf
  "You will identify your community's assets and needs and define a project to work on to meet a need."

Service-Learning Reflection Activities:
Connecting Thinking and Action: Ideas for Service-Learning Reflection
www.servicelearning.org/filemanager/download/132/Reflection%20Guide%20Internet1.pdf

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math):

More and more, STEM is an important part of the afterschool world. You don't have to be an expert to bring great STEM programming to your youth!

Check out these high-quality, free resources and lesson plans:

- SEDL National Center for Quality Afterschool: Afterschool Training Toolkit
  www.sedl.org/afterschool/toolkits
  Look for sections on math, science, and technology for guidance and sample high-quality lessons (lessons available for all ages within K-12)

- New Jersey 21st Century Community Learning Centers Afterschool Science Project (CASP)
  www.state.nj.us/education/21cclc/casp

  - Free resource developed by the NJ Department of Education, Liberty Science Center, and NJSACC
  - 21 lessons designed for afterschool youth in grades 4-8
  - Organized into two units: Properties of Water and The World of Water Aquatic Ecosystems
  - Student journals modeled after a scientist's field journal, providing space to record observations, questions, predictions, diagrams, etc.
  - 16 "Science at Home" activities for youth to do with their families and 13 "Family Science Night" activity ideas
  - Facilitators' Guide to Incorporating Science in Afterschool: provides information about the CASP curriculum and guidance for using it

- Evidence-based chemistry curriculum that's free and adaptable to afterschool:
  www.gwu.edu/~scale-up/documents/CTA.pdf
  - Developed by the Michigan Department of Education for 8-10th grade
  - Uses principles of experiential learning, interdisciplinary learning, and learning that's useful outside of school
  - The Institute of Education Sciences "What Works Clearinghouse" (ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc) identified a rigorous research study showing this curriculum leading to increased general science achievement among middle school youth

- A Guide to STEM Funding for Afterschool
  www.afterschoolalliance.org/STEM-Funding-Brief-10182012.pdf

See the "Nature Programming" section for more!

Nature Programming:

Nature-related activities provide a great opportunity for interdisciplinary learning. The activities in the resources below incorporate science, math, art, literacy, physical activity, nutrition, and community service.

Original NJSACC resources:

- Celebrate Afterschool! Outdoors in the Garden State: Activities and Resource Guide
  www.njsacc.org/pdfs/activities-color.pdf

    o Dozens of activity ideas organized around the topics of animals, trees and leaves, outside play adventures, gardening, weather exploration, nature art, and being green
    o Ideas for field trips and for community/family events

- Schoolyard Ecology: Creating a Butterfly Garden for NJ Schools and Afterschool Programs
  www.njsacc.org/celebrateafterschool/butterflyGarden.pdf

    o A comprehensive guide to a project-based learning activity: creating a garden that will attract and help sustain your local butterfly population
    o Lesson plans and ideas

Other resources to check out:

Find Activities:

- National Wildlife Federation: dozens of free lesson plans for K-12:
  www.nwf.org/Get-Outside/Be-Out-There/Educators/Lesson-Plans.aspx

- Kids Gardening: free lesson, activity, and project ideas around gardening with kids:
  www.kidsgardening.org

- Children and Nature Network:

  Find field trip ideas, resources, and activities

  Some links:

  - o www.childrenandnature.org/naturestory
    Outdoor activity ideas and suggestions for related reading material (gr K-7)

  - o www.childrenandnature.org/pdfs/NSN_ToolKit.pdf
    Ideas for nature-related service learning

  - o www.childrenandnature.org/downloads/GG2011/NaturePlay_byMaryHardcastle.pdf
    Ideas for creating nature-based play spaces

- Schoolyard Ecology Explorations (SEE) Curriculum Guide
  www.monarchlab.org/store/p-58-schoolyard-ecology-explorations-see-curriculum-guide.aspx
  "The lessons in this science inquiry-based curriculum are designed to increase the student's connection to nature through observation and experimentation. Many of the lessons can be implemented on any school grounds, including urban schoolyards where access to nature may be limited. Furthermore, many lessons can be adapted to suit grades K-12 because of their experimental nature." ($18)

- NJ Audubon's Bridges to the Natural World
  www.njaudubon.org/SectionEducation/BridgestotheNaturalWorld.aspx

  - o A natural history guide for educators (K-6; $40)
  - o Free sample lessons available

- University of California Botanical Garden curricula:
  botanicalgarden.berkeley.edu/education/k12.shtml

    o "Math in the Garden" ($30; developed with input from afterschool programs)
    o "Botany on your plate" ($22; K-4; activities are based in experiential, interdisciplinary learning and highly adaptable to afterschool)
    o Free sample activities:
      botanicalgarden.berkeley.edu/education/images/k12/boyp/BOYP%20Sample.pdf

- Project Learning Tree:
  www.plt.org/get-project-learning-tree-teacher-training
  Free activity kits and sample activities, activity kits for purchase, and professional development around environmental education

Professional Development:

- DEP Enrichment and Training Opportunities
  www.state.nj.us/dep/seeds/sect5.htm
  Includes Project Learning Tree, Project WILD and Aquatic WILD, and Project WET trainings with matching curricula

Nature Activity Family Tool-Kits:

These are free guides with nature activity ideas and tips for families. You can adapt them for your program or share them with program families:

- A Parent's Guide to Nature Play
  www.greenheartsinc.org/uploads/A_Parents__Guide_to_Nature_Play.pdf

- Inspiring Children's Spirit of Stewardship
  worldforumfoundation.org/wf/wp/initiatives/nature-action-collaborative-for-children/environmental-action-kit/materials/families/

The Arts:

The arts can include a wide variety of visual arts, as well as music, dance, theater, and writing. If you want to take your arts programming to the next level, check out these resources for ideas:

Resources and Ideas:

- Contact local museums to see what programming they might provide.

- Contact your local arts council to see if they have any programming or grant opportunities you could take advantage of. You can do an internet search for "arts council" and your city or county.

- Contact Premiere Stages at Kean University to see what programming you could take advantage of. Part of this organization's mission is to provide arts education around playwriting and performance.
www.kean.edu/premierestages

- Contact the NJ Council on the Arts to find out about grant opportunities.

- Young Audiences: Arts for Learning: professional development workshops
www.yanj-yaep.org/program-type/professional-development

  - Trainings for your staff on developing high-quality arts programming
  - Generally offered as 1-day workshops for $725 or 2-day for $790

Activities and Curricula:

- SEDL National Center for Quality Afterschool: Afterschool Training Toolkit
  www.sedl.org/afterschool/toolkits
  Look for section on the arts for guidance and sample high-quality lessons
  (free lessons available for all ages within K-12)

- Creative Minds: An afterschool arts curriculum:
  davisart.com/Portal/K-12-Curriculum/Creative-Minds%E2%80%94Out-of-School/Educator%E2%80%99s-Edition-132634.aspx
  "*Creative Minds* Out of School is an exciting, new arts education program designed by the Massachusetts Afterschool Partnership (MAP) in partnership with the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC), the state's art and culture agency, and Davis Publications, the nation's leading publisher of arts education materials. The goal of the *Creative Minds* curriculum is to engage children grades K-5 in high-quality art exploration and art-making in afterschool and out-of-school time settings."
  ($50 for the Educator's Edition)

- Center for Educational Pathways: interdisciplinary, project-based arts programs:

  o The Comic Book Project:
    comicbookproject.org
    Youth develop their own comic books: "The Comic Book Project engages children in a creative process leading to literacy reinforcement, social awareness, and character development, then publishes and distributes their work for other children in the community to use as learning and motivational tools." ("Classroom Kit" for 25 youth: $199)

  o Youth Music Exchange:
    www.youthmusicexchange.org
    "The Youth Music Exchange transforms schools, after-school programs, and community-based organizations into record labels owned and managed by youths. The children write and record the music, develop marketing strategies, design the artwork, and sustain their company by bringing a youth-generated product to the community."
    ("Start-up package" for 25 youth: $425)

- Young Audiences: Arts for Learning: workshops for youth
  www.yanj-yaep.org/program-type/workshops-residencies

  o Includes music, dance, theater, writing, and a variety of visual arts
  o For youth K-12
  o Workshops are generally 1 day and run around $400-$600

Global Learning:

The end goal of global learning is to develop "globally competent" youth.
Globally competent youth are those who:

- investigate their world, including their immediate environment and beyond
- recognize their own and others' perspectives
- communicate and collaborate with diverse audiences
- and translate their ideas and findings into appropriate actions to improve conditions.

This definition is from the Asia Society (www.asiasociety.org).

Useful Resources:

- General resources for global learning in afterschool:
  asiasociety.org/education/afterschool/term

- Comprehensive guide/toolkit for including global learning in afterschool:
  sites.asiasociety.org/expandedlearning/userguide

- Guide to funding global learning in afterschool:
  asiasociety.org/files/fundingbriefs-afterschool.pdf

Activities:

- Afterschool global learning activity types and ideas:
  asiasociety.org/education/afterschool/connecting-global-content-curriculum-and-approaches

- Global Youth Media and Arts Program: Immigration and Identity Collaborator's Guide
  asiasociety.org/files/worldsavvymap.pdf
  "The guide contains both comprehensive lesson plans as well as a wide variety of art and media-based resources designed to spark interest and new ideas for educators and youth" around the issues of immigration and identity.

- Center for Afterschool and Expanded Learning at Foundations Inc: "Global GrafittiWall" kit for afterschool
  www.foundationsinc.org/online-store/products/364
  Fast and easy games, puzzles, activities, and projects related to global learning (gr 4-9; $35)

Health Promotion Programming: Exercise and Nutrition

The afterschool world has become a leader in the field of youth health -- especially youth nutrition and physical activity habits. The resources below offer many programming ideas to help boost your impact and youth engagement in this area.

Physical Activity and Nutrition:

- Get Active/Be Healthy Afterschool ToolKit
  afterschoolalliance.org/documents/QuakerGetActiveToolKit.pdf
  Free activity ideas and additional resources

- CANFit (Communities, Adolescents, Nutrition, Fitness)
  canfit.org/downloads

    o Focus on low-income youth and youth of color; strong afterschool focus
    o Numerous free guides for incorporating physical activity and nutrition into your afterschool programming and environment

- USDA's Team Nutrition free resources:

    o The Power of Choice: Helping Youth Make Healthy Eating and Fitness Decisions:
      teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/power_of_choice.html

        ▪ Activity guide for afterschool programs serving youth age 11-13
        ▪ Activities focus on helping youth to think about their eating and physical activity choices

    o Empowering Youth with Nutrition and Physical Activity:
      (For afterschool programs serving youth age 11-18)

        ▪ teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/EmpYouth_ch6.pdf
          activity guide/lesson plans
        ▪ teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/EmpYouth_ch4.pdf
          tips and brief activities
        ▪ teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/EmpYouth_ch5.pdf
          guide for a youth-led project around nutrition/physical activity issues in the community

- CATCH (Coordinated Approach to Child Health)
  catchinfo.org/catch-after-school-info

  - An evidence-based program/curriculum
  - K-8; $275 Activity Box K-5 and $300 Activity box gr 5-8; $95 lesson plan manual K-5 and $80 lesson plan manual gr 5-8

Physical Activity:

- "Hurry Up and Wait" Activity Guide:

  - An NJSACC original resource
  - Quick activities to do during group transitions or on the bus
  - $10 for the guide includes activity materials

- SPARK (Sports, Play, and Active Recreation for Kids)
  www.sparkpe.org/after-school

  - An evidence-based program/curriculum
  - K-12; contact for pricing information

- CANFit's P.H.A.T Package (Promoting Healthy Activities Together)
  www.canfit.org/phat
  - "Multi-media package to encourage community-based organizations to use hip-hop to keep youth active and to educate them about the importance of healthy eating and physical activity"
  - Designed for youth ages 10-14
  - $100 or $55 for "organizations that work directly with low-income ethnic youth"

- Go Far Club
  www.gofarclub.org

  - Do-sponsored by the National Afterschool Association (NAA)
  - 8-10 week program/curriculum that afterschool programs can use
  - End-goal is to safely complete a 5k run or walk-run
  - Teaches character education, goal-setting, and healthy eating
  - $275 plus training and gear

Nutrition:

- USDA's Serving Up MyPlate: A Yummy Curriculum:
  www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/servingupmyplate.htm#guides
  Free lesson plans around the USDA MyPlate nutrition guidelines (gr 1-6)

See the "Cooking Programming" and "Nature Programming" sections for more resources related to nutrition and physical activity.

Health Promotion Programming: Beyond Exercise and Nutrition

Afterschool programs can have a major impact on youth health beyond the areas of exercise and nutrition. For example, programs can have an effect on youth in the areas of mental health, violence and injury prevention, substance abuse, and sexual health.

A few notes about this section:

- In the area of health promotion, there is a lot of high-quality research on program and curriculum outcomes. For this reason, this section focuses on evidence-based curricula/programs by health topic. Many programs/curricula are developed for a school setting but are highly adaptable to an afterschool setting.

- Funders often are interested in evidence-based programming. Consider applying for a grant to cover the cost of one of these programs/curricula. Also, many of these companies offer help with the grant application.

- Also see the section in this resources guide on "Teaching Personal, Social, and Emotional Skills in Afterschool" for more programs/curricula with research-supported outcomes in violence, substance use, or sexual health.
   Programs/curricula listed below generally include personal/social/emotional learning and relate to that section as well.

Violence and bullying prevention:

- Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (gr 3-12; focus is on culture and not curriculum; about $190 to start)
www.violencepreventionworks.org/public/olweus_bullying_prevention_program.page

- PeaceBuilders (K-12; focus is on culture and not curriculum; contact for more info)
  www.peacebuilders.com

- Peacemakers Program (gr 4-8; $169 leader's guide)
  www.solution-tree.com/products/peacemakers-a-violence-prevention-program-leader-s-guide.html

- Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways (RiPP) (gr 6-8; $400 for 6-8 grade kit plus a training DVD or $100 for one grade; contact for more info)
  www.Preventionopportunities.Com/programs.html

Injury prevention:

- Think First for Kids (gr 1-3; $249 curriculum package or $85 for each grade level)
  www.thinkfirst.org/About/Kids.asp

Smoking and substance abuse prevention:

- Life Skills Training (LST) (gr 3-12; $175-$265 for 2-grade kits; focus: smoking, substance use, violence; support for applying in afterschool settings)
  www.lifeskillstraining.com

- Project Northland/Class Action (gr 6-12; $259 for each grade 6-8 and community component and $595 for HS kit; focus: alcohol/substance use)
  catalog.ncyi.org/products/substance_abuse/1125409720
  Grades 6-8 programs use comic books, problem-solving projects, and a look at community influence. HS program divides youth into legal teams to prepare and present hypothetical civil cases in which someone has been harmed because of underage drinking. Community component has activities for parent involvement and community campaigns.

- Protecting You/Protecting Me (gr 1-5; about $140/grade level curriculum; focus: alcohol)
  www.madd.org/underage-drinking/pypm

Pregnancy/STI prevention (all are for gr 9-12)**:**

- Becoming a Responsible Teen (BART)
  ($145 basic set; focus on African American youth)
  www.etr.org/tppi/products/bart.html

- Reducing the Risk ($247 basic set)
  www.etr.org/tppi/products/reducingTheRisk.html

- Cuidate! (Take Care of Yourself) ($265 implementation kit; focus on Latino youth)
  www.selectmedia.org/programs/cuidate.html

Cooking Programming:

Cooking activities provide a great opportunity for interdisciplinary learning. The activities in the resources below incorporate science, math, nutrition, multicultural learning, social justice and change, collaborative problem-solving, and financial management.

All of these activities are great for an afterschool environment with a basic kitchen. Some of these activities work even if you don't have access to a kitchen.

Check them out:

- Cooking Matters (part of Share Our Strength/No Kid Hungry)
  Free activity kits (English and Spanish):
  cookingmatters.org/what-we-do/educational-outreach/

- Cooking with Kids

    o Curricula for purchase: cookingwithkids.net/store/curriculum
      ($55 for gr K-1, 2-3, or 4-6; English and Spanish)

    o Free sample lesson for gr 2-3:
      cookingwithkids.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/2-3-FriedRice.pdf

    o Free fruit/veggie "tasting" lesson plans (K-6; English and Spanish):
      cookingwithkids.net/store/free-lessons

- Kids Cooking Activities

    - Free lessons and resources:
      www.kids-cooking-activities.com/kids-cooking-lessons.html

    - Themed cooking activity and recipe books ($6-8 each):
      www.kids-cooking-activities.com/kids-cooking-camp.html

- Family Cook Productions
  www.familycookproductions.com/

    - K-12 curricula for purchase; staff training required; contact for more info

    - Jr/Teen Battle Chef program/curriculum includes a group cooking competition and was shown by one study to improve the diet choices of youth who took part

    - Free sample lesson for K-6:
      www.familycookproductions.com/LWC%20sample-%20Lesson%202.pdf

- What's Cooking with Kids

  Two afterschool cooking curricula for purchase; contact for more info:

  whatscookingwithkids.com/consulting/staff-development/

National Afterschool Association (NAA) Resources:

There are many useful resources on the NAA website: www.naaweb.org

Here are a few:

- NAA Platform: a statement of beliefs about afterschool and quality
  www.naaweb.org/default.asp?contentID=628
  Sections include the afterschool context, needs of youth and families, workforce, quality, relationships, and funding

- NAA Code of Ethics
  www.naaweb.org/default.asp?contentID=604
  "Sets standards of conduct for the afterschool professional and outlines personal and professional excellence"

- Leadership Lessons
  www.naaweb.org/default.asp?contentID=605
  "AfterSchool Leadership Lessons are designed to be quick, easy, practical professional development for individual program leaders. Many of them might be useful as staff meeting discussion topics. The lessons are a series of practical, job-embedded studies that are relevant for school-based, community-based, full-time, or part-time, new or experienced program leaders."

Hotlines/Warmlines:

- Child abuse/neglect hotline:
  1-877-NJ ABUSE (652-2873)
  Many other NJ Department of Children and Families hotlines:
  www.nj.gov/dcf/families/hotlines

- For TA related to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and compliance:
  800-514-0301
  www.ada.gov/taprog.htm

- For information about childcare subsidies, as well as county-based trainings and other resources:
  NJ Association of Childcare Resource and Referral Agencies (NJACCRRA)
  Find your county contact here: www.njaccrra.org/parentsAgencyListings.shtml

- To find various social services for families in your community:
  Dial 2-1-1 or check out www.nj211.org

<u>Other Useful Resources/Links:</u>

- NJSACC publications:
  www.njsacc.org/providers/publications.php

- The Verizon Foundation's Thinkfinity website:
  www.thinkfinity.org/welcome

  Look for "Thinkfinity Resources" on the right, select "State Standards," select NJ and a grade and subject area, and find free activities and lessons that are cross-referenced by the Common Core State Standards.

- To test the "readability" of your program materials and make sure they're good for lower-literacy parents/guardians or staff:
  www.online-utility.org/english/readability_test_and_improve.jsp

- The Quality Imperative: A State Guide to Achieving the Promise of Extended Learning Opportunities
  www.ccsso.org/Resources/Publications/The_Quality_Imperative_A_State_Guide
  _to_Achieving_the_Promise_of_Extended_Learning_Opportunities_.html

  Background on the state's role in supporting high quality afterschool

NJ Quality Standards for Afterschool

Glossary

active versus passive involvement with technology and electronics – In an "active involvement" setting, youth are producing examples of technology rather than just acting as consumers of technology. Examples are creating a website, producing a news program, or finding new uses for existing items. Examples of "passive involvement" include using the internet to research a report or using a web-based learning program.

activities requiring an increased attention to safety – These are activities that are safe enough to offer during an afterschool program but may be hazardous if not conducted properly. Examples may include woodworking, art or science projects with toxic materials, skate boarding, or swimming.

adequate supervision – This is supervision that is adequate to meet the standards in the rest of this document, especially in the Safety and Environmental Health and Human Relationships categories.

administrative staff – This refers to program staff that are responsible for fiscal management, human resources, facilities management, organizational development, evaluation, and program implementation.

buses – This refers to buses with a capacity for at least 10 passengers. See NJ Licensing 10:122-9.2 for more information about the definition of Type I and Type II School Buses.

community stakeholders – These are program stakeholders that are not program staff, parents, or youth. For example, "community stakeholders" includes staff from the schools that serve the afterschool program and other people who live or work in the community where the program is located.

Child Study Team – The Child Study Team consists of a school psychologist, a learning disabilities teacher/consultant, and a school social worker. They are the employees of the school district who are responsible for conducting evaluations to determine eligibility for special education and related services for students with disabilities. This definition is from SPAN, the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (www.spannj.org).

consequences -- (as in "behavioral consequences") Consequences are the result of youth breaking a program rule. See the resources section for more guidance on this topic.

critical thinking – This refers to processing new knowledge through analysis, synthesis, interpretation, evaluation, illustration, and comparison. It is through this type of processing that youth are able to further develop their skills, worldviews and values. This definition is from the National Afterschool Association Platform (www.naaweb.org).

decision-making skills -- These are skills that help youth through the process of making decisions, including considering options, considering consequences, weighing options, and choosing a course of action. If the decision is in the context of a challenge or problem, these can be called problem-solving skills. If the challenge or problem is related to a social situation or conflict, these can be called social problem-solving skills or conflict-resolution skills.

developmentally appropriate – When determining if a rule, expectation, practice, or activity is developmentally appropriate, staff should consider the physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development level of the youth.

emergency preparedness plan – This is a written plan of action for coordinating the response of program staff in the event of a disaster within the afterschool program or the surrounding community.

emotional regulation – This is the process of coping effectively with stress, anxiety, distress, anger, and other difficult emotions.

evidence-based – An evidence-based curriculum or practice has been tested using rigorous research methods and found to be effective at achieving the desired outcomes. If it's not possible or practical to use an evidence-based curriculum or practice, providers should use the best available research to guide practice. Providers should combine use of research and evidence-based curricula or practice together with professional experience and attention to the values of the people served.

global learning – The end goal of global learning is to develop globally competent youth. Globally competent youth are those who investigate their world, including their immediate environment and beyond; recognize their own and others' perspectives; communicate and collaborate with diverse audiences; and translate their ideas and findings into appropriate actions to improve conditions. This definition is from the Asia Society (www.asiasociety.org).

harsh discipline methods – These include the following: corporal punishment; aversive stimuli; withholding nutrition or hydration; inflicting physical or psychological pain; demeaning, shaming, or degrading language or activities; unnecessarily punitive restrictions; forced physical exercise to eliminate behaviors; punitive work assignments/assignments exclusively for punishment; punishment by peers; and group punishment or discipline for individual behavior. This definition is from the Council on Accreditation (www.coaafterschool.org).

host agency – This is the agency where the program is sited, for example the school or the church where the program is located. If the program has its own building, it may not have a host agency.

IEP – This stands for "Individualized Education Program," and it is mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that all public school youth with documented special education needs have one. An IEP is different for every youth who has one and is basically a plan for how to make sure that individual youth is able to succeed in school.

inquiry – This is the process of learning through asking questions, especially increasingly deeper questions.

intentional – This refers to activities that are based on careful consideration of the purpose.

job-embedded learning – This refers to staff learning that occurs while staff are performing their jobs or learning that is deeply connected with the day-to-day work of the staff. This is opposed to learning that occurs during a separate session or that is detached from the day-to-day work of the staff.

learning skills – These are skills that will help youth to learn in varied contexts and throughout their lives. Examples are critical thinking and inquiry, as well as other personal, social, and emotional skills.

peer support – This is the emotional or practical help that youth give to each other.

periodic(ally) – This refers to something that happens at regular or generally predictable intervals of time. Choosing the appropriate amount of time for the interval is up to the individual program.

personal, social, and emotional skills – These are skills that help youth positively interact with others and be successful reaching various goals throughout their lives.

professional development – This refers to the process of gaining skills and knowledge that help a person make progress in her/his career. It is broader than the term "staff training," which is more limited in its scope.

project-based – Prroject-based learning generally revolves around answering a question, solving a problem, or meeting a challenge. It reflects the types of learning and work people do in the everyday world outside the classroom. Common characteristics of project-based learning include real-world relevance, complex and long-term tasks, opportunities for youth to look at the task from multiple perspectives, tasks that cross disciplines, multiple possible outcomes, collaboration, opportunities for youth to reflect and incorporate their own values and beliefs, and a polished final product. This definition is based on the perspective of the Buck Institute for Education and its website devoted to project-based learning: pbl-online.org.

refusal skills – These are skills that help youth resist inappropriate peer pressure.

relationship skills – These are skills related to interacting with other people. They include cooperation, communication skills, leadership skills, conflict resolution skills, refusal skills, and social responsibility.

risk assessment – This is the process of deciding the amount and type of risk associated with something potentially dangerous.

screens – These are electronic devices with a screen. This includes computers, televisions, smart phones, and tablets.

self-awareness skills – These are skills related to understanding one's self. They include the ability to identify and cultivate one's strengths and positive qualities and the ability to recognize one's emotions.

self-direction – This is the ability to determine one's own goals and to pursue the steps to achieve those goals.

self-management skills – These are skills related to managing one's emotions and actions. They include self-control, goal-setting, perseverance, and emotional regulation.

service learning – Service learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. (www.servicelearning.org/what-service-learning)

social awareness skills – These are skills related to understanding other people. They include understanding social and conflict dynamics, understanding the viewpoints and perceptions of others, recognizing others' emotions, and appreciating the value of others and of differences.

social responsibility – This is the ability to act in a way that takes into account the well-being and expectations of others.

soft space – This is space that is physically soft and comfortable for youth. Examples include couches, rugs, and pillows. See the resources section for more guidance on indoor space.

sound financial management – This refers to the policies, procedures, and tools that nonprofits use to plan and effectively allocate resources. It includes accounting, budgeting, and appropriate oversight by the Board of Directors. See the resources section for more guidance on this topic.

staff – This refers to anyone who works at the program on a paid basis. When the standards refer to administrative staff in particular, you'll see the term "administration." There is a separate standard about volunteers, and this one explains that standards relating to staff conduct in the Special Needs/The Whole Child and Human Relationships categories should apply to volunteers as well. Some programs refer to staff as "educators" to emphasize the educational role they play; this document does not use that term in order to avoid confusion, but it supports the belief that afterschool staff act as educators to the youth.

staff-directed – Staff-directed activities are those that a staff person, as opposed to the youth, develops and leads.

stakeholders – Stakeholders include anyone who has a stake in the afterschool program. This includes program youth, parents, and staff, as well as community stakeholders, such as staff from the schools that serve the afterschool program and other people who live or work in the community where the program is located.

technology – There are many definitions of this term, but this document takes it to be the design and use of tools and machines to solve real-world problems, as well as those tools and machines themselves. It is far broader than the term "electronics" and can include an activity such as hydroponic gardening (gardening with just water and no soil) or finding new uses for existing items.

youth-centered – An environment that is youth-centered is based on the needs and interests of the youth served.

youth-directed – Youth-directed activities are those that the youth, as opposed to a staff member, develop and lead.