



New Jersey Quality Standards for Afterschool Section II: The Standards



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.

Note: 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, STEAM (Science Technology, Engineering, Art 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.



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- 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/guardians.

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 maintain them 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 team building or instructional team meetings at the school(s). These collaborations may vary



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depending on whether the program site(s) is 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 and activities are informed by the needs of the individual youth.
- e. The program takes steps to communicate with school(s) 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. 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.

<u>Cross-References</u>		
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