



Ohio's Core Knowledge & Competencies

For afterschool professionals who work with children ages 5-12

Ohio's Afterschool Initiative
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It's the start of the school year and Stephanie Meyers, a working mother of three boys, wonders "Where are my children going to go after school this year?"

Stephanie and her husband, Mike, work across town from their home and children's schools and don't return from work until 6 p.m. Their children's school days end at 3 p.m., and Stephanie is planning to make sure that they're not home alone after school.

Stephanie and Mike have many factors to consider when deciding on afterschool arrangements for their children:

- 1 What is cost of the program?
- 2 What are the hours of operation?
- 3 How will transportation work?
- 4 What is the quality of the program?
- 5 Who will their children be spending time with (a relative, a neighbor, a family child care provider, or staff in a local school-age program)?

Where can their boys spend the hours between school and when their parents return home from work? Will it be a place where they can have fun, quality experiences that support their in-school learning, spark their curiosity about the world around them, and give them opportunities to practice the social skills they need to be successful in school, work and life?

Where can they spend time with adults who have professional knowledge and skill in working with children and who will take a personal interest in the unique personalities, strengths and needs of each child?

In short, who can Stephanie and Mike trust with their children?

Stephanie and Mike's story, in one variation or another, is replayed countless times every year as families try to meet the needs of their school-age children in those critical hours between school and when parents return home from work. The 2006 Census estimated that 1 million of Ohio's children ages 6 to 15 lived in families with working parents. Although many families arrange their work schedules to be home when their children are not in school, studies of child care arrangements indicate that at least a third of children are in the care of someone other than a parent or relative on a regular basis during non-school hours. The assurance that the child care provider or program staff is trustworthy, knowledgeable and highly skilled is an incredibly valuable component of afterschool care for parents.

Highly qualified afterschool professionals can be found in a wide variety of program types. **The key to identifying knowledgeable and skilled caregivers and staff lies not in where they work but in what they know and are able to demonstrate in every area of professional practice.**

This document, Ohio's Core Knowledge & Competencies for Afterschool Professionals (AS CKC), clearly defines the areas of professional practice in which staff and caregivers of school-age children, ages 5 through 12, should strive to gain knowledge and skills. It is a parallel document to Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge and Competencies, which addresses areas of professional practice for those working with children from birth to age 8.



Part 1: The Foundation

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Introduction



Core knowledge and competencies are what afterschool professionals need to understand and be able to do to assure that children have the best possible relationships, environments and experiences in which to grow and learn.

Increasing the quality of afterschool programs by focusing on the knowledge and skills of staff has several positive impacts:

- Children benefit socially, academically and personally when afterschool programs are committed to hiring and retaining a qualified staff;
- Working parents gain assurance when they trust the professionalism of their care providers, allowing them to focus on work without worrying or having to deal with problems in their children's care; and
- The field of afterschool care gains status and respect as a profession when it can identify a defined body of knowledge and competencies for its workforce.

By identifying the range of specific knowledge and skills that afterschool professionals need for children to thrive, a foundation is laid for:

- Afterschool professionals to identify their strengths and plan their professional growth;
- Higher education programs to prepare students for careers in the afterschool profession;
- Program administrators to make staff decisions, such as hiring, staff placement and professional development;
- Professional development providers to design and offer a full range of learning opportunities for afterschool professionals seeking to increase their knowledge and skills; and
- Policymakers and funders as they design a comprehensive system of care and education that includes a highly qualified workforce as a critical component.

Assumptions

Several assumptions about Ohio's current afterschool community are acknowledged in this document:

- 1 Many different types of programs serve families of children during afterschool hours. Each has its own history, arising to meet particular needs in a particular context. These differences in origin have resulted in a landscape of afterschool care options with varying philosophies, missions and goals. Nevertheless, part of providing high quality programming is ensuring that daily decisions and actions that directly impact children's well-being are based on a core body of professional knowledge and competencies.
- 2 The individuals working in afterschool programs possess competencies at different levels among the core knowledge areas, depending on their backgrounds, positions, educations and life experiences.
- 3 The growing demand for afterschool programs has meant growth and expansion in multiple sectors, including faith-based, school-based, family child care, community-based, prevention-focused, camps, and activity-based programs. Each of these sectors has different funding, regulation, training requirements and professional associations.



A Note About Wording

For the purposes of this document, the developers have carefully chosen the following terms to use. Our intent is that afterschool professionals recognize themselves within the following definitions.

- **“Afterschool professionals”** refers to individuals whose primary work responsibility includes the care, education, developmental growth and well-being of school-age children, ages 5 through 12.
- **“Afterschool program”** describes supervised, structured and regular activities that take place before the school day, after school and during the summer. This programming can be provided by school districts, faith-based organizations, community-based groups, government-operated entities such as parks and recreation departments, non profit and proprietary child care centers. Other common terms are: school-age care (SAC), school-age child care (SACC), latchkey and out-of-school time (OST) programs. Afterschool care may also be provided by family child care providers who operate a child care business within their homes.
- **“Children”** describes the program participants. The specific population referenced for this document is children ages 5 through 12. Although the term “youth” is also descriptive of this population, and is widely used in the field, particularly in reference to older children, for ease of reading, we use “child” and “children” to refer to the population served by the professionals for whom this resource is intended.
- **“Family” and “family members”** refer to the adult(s) who have legal guardianship of the child. Although we recognize that primary caregivers are often parents, it is our intention to be inclusive of all families.

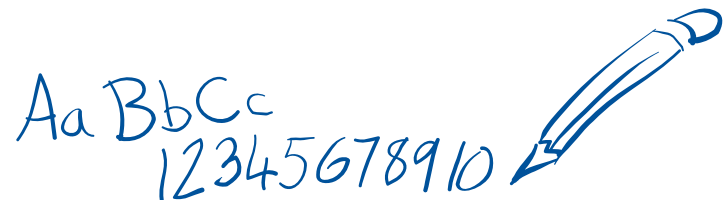
 **Words with an asterisk (*) are defined in the glossary on page 57.**

Guiding Principles

The process of creating *Ohio’s Core Knowledge and Competencies for Afterschool Professionals* involved the wisdom, creativity and passion of a committed group of the state’s afterschool professionals and stakeholders. Ohio’s Afterschool Initiative, a program of the Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association and funded by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, invited professionals from across the state to join one of five writing teams. The resulting teams represented many roles and settings in which afterschool professionals work (please see page 7 for a list of all the writing team members). The writing teams were strongly committed to a set of guiding principles.

The writing teams were charged to create a CKC document that would –

- Identify the key concepts that apply to anyone working with children ages 5-12 in a variety of afterschool settings;
- Represent knowledge and observable skills needed for all levels of professionals, from beginners just entering the field to those at an expert level;
- Be based on what is currently known from research and expert wisdom about children and the practices that best support them in their development and learning;
- Look forward to the professional workforce we desire;
- Recognize that children with special needs are included in the population of children that afterschool professionals serve;
- Reflect the knowledge and skills in every area of professional practice needed to effectively support and respond to children’s behavior;
- Be culturally sensitive and respectful;
- Be reader-friendly and useful in a variety of ways; and
- Honor both formal and experiential professional learning.



Dispositions

Every profession has a set of attitudes, beliefs and perspectives that distinguish its members as a group. Together they are called “professional dispositions.” The afterschool profession also has dispositions that are highly valued among its members.

Although dispositions are an important part of professional practice, they are different than professional knowledge and competencies. Dispositions describe how a person perceives all aspects of his or her work rather than what is known and done. Dispositions are more often absorbed by newcomers and nurtured by seasoned veterans within the professional community than formally taught. Because dispositions apply to all members of the afterschool profession and are evident in every aspect of their work, we’ve chosen to list them separately.



A person who is well-suited to the afterschool profession is one who:

Delights in and is curious about children and how they grow and learn.

Shows warmth, caring and respect for each child as an individual.

Appreciates and supports the unique and vital role of a child’s family, school and community.

Is eager to learn new knowledge and skills that will support development and learning in children.

Models the attitudes and behaviors that he or she values in children.

Recognizes and values the diversity found among children and their families and in the world around them.

Is willing to ask for help and to learn from others.

Reflects on the personal beliefs and values that influence his or her own attitudes and practices.

Accepts responsibility for his or her actions and learns from mistakes.

Communicates clearly, respectfully and effectively with children and adults.

Responds to challenges and changes with flexibility, perseverance and cooperation.

Expresses her or his own emotions and opinions in healthy and constructive ways.

Values and nurtures imagination, creativity and learning through exploration, both in children and in herself or himself.

Demonstrates responsible professional and personal habits in working and interacting with others.

Is able to empathize, cooperate and negotiate with others.

Definitions

The following six broad content areas identify key categories of specialized knowledge that shape afterschool professional practice. Here we give general definitions of each. They should be seen as equally important areas of professional knowledge and competency that are interrelated and dynamic.

1. Child Growth and Development

Afterschool professionals base their practice on an understanding of all of the ways that children change over time, including expected patterns of development as well as the many ways that individual children can differ.

2. Family, School and Community Relations

Afterschool professionals understand the importance of knowing the family, culture, school and community context in which each child lives. They also appreciate that developing strong, positive connections to families, schools and community resources benefits children.

3. Health, Safety and Nutrition

Afterschool professionals realize the importance of children's physical and emotional well-being as a basic and necessary foundation for their growth, development and learning, and they understand the many ways of fostering it.

4. Child Observation and Assessment

Afterschool professionals are able to continually improve each child's experiences because they understand that each follows a unique path of growth and development. Therefore, they gather and apply information about each child's progress as part of their regular practice.

5. Professional Development

Afterschool professionals see themselves as members of a larger professional community and accept the responsibilities that go along with being a positive contributor to the profession.

6. Learning Experiences and Environments

Afterschool professionals appreciate their roles as designers and builders of the world in which each child lives. They also understand the interplay between children's experiences, environments and relationships and their well-being, development and learning.

Sections

Each of the six content areas has three sections:

1. Rationale

This section states the reasons why each content area is crucial in the afterschool professional's day-to-day practice. The statements identify the effect of professional competency on children and families and are based on current research and standards of practice. A list of the research references used in creating each area's Rationale section is provided in Part 3.

2. Knowledge Base

This section defines the concepts and facts that a professional must learn to become competent in each area of practice. This knowledge provides the cognitive foundation for the skills and behaviors defined in the competencies section.

3. Competencies

This section gives specific, observable behaviors and skills that describe the range of practice of a capable afterschool professional.

In Part 3, a list of additional resources is provided for each content area.

Levels

To represent the development of professional practice over time, competencies are given for three levels of professional development. All afterschool professionals would be expected to possess Level 1 competencies. Through informal and formal professional development experiences, the professional would master competencies in Level 2 and, eventually, Level 3.

As with children's development, an afterschool professional's development will probably not be even across all areas of practice. In other words, an individual is very likely to have a "development profile" that involves competencies at more than one level.

Uses of the Core

AUDIENCE	USE
Afterschool Professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform individuals considering the afterschool profession about the knowledge and skills involved in the work • Assess one's own level of knowledge and skills in each of the six content areas • Create a plan that allows the professional to acquire knowledge and skills in each content area
Program Directors and Administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify areas of competence required for staff job descriptions • Develop staff training and education plans and policies • Establish a salary scale based on levels of competency
Elementary/Middle School Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciate the degree of knowledge and skill required for afterschool professional competency • Recognize overlapping or complimentary knowledge and skills to better partner with afterschool professionals for the benefit of children and their families • Coordinate sharing of facilities, materials, and child and family information in support of the afterschool professional's objectives
Trainers and Training Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan, organize, and offer training and education that encompasses the breadth and depth of knowledge and skills needed by afterschool professionals at all levels • Promote other educational opportunities that support the core knowledge framework
Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop course and program curricula to sufficiently prepare afterschool professionals • Use framework to facilitate articulation between institutions
Federal, State and Local Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop policy, initiatives and funding decisions that will enhance professionalism in the field of afterschool programming
Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use framework to make investment decisions • Support public and private investments, incentives and initiatives that encourage and facilitate professional competency • Appreciate the degree of knowledge and skill required for professional competency
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the expectations for those who work in afterschool settings • Recognize well-qualified staff when choosing a program
Professional Development Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the core framework in developing and promoting a career-development system that allows afterschool professionals to gain access to competency-based training and education, so that their compensation will be commensurate with their achievements

The Writing Teams

Thanks to all of the dedicated individuals who contributed to the development of this document. Your expertise and passion for children and the afterschool professionals who care for them are reflected throughout.

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Resources

We would like to acknowledge the following organizations for providing their core knowledge and competencies documents as valuable resources for our work:

- Colorado – www.smartstartcolorado.org
- Delaware – www.deasa.org
- Kansas and Missouri – www.openinitiative.org
- Mott Foundation – www.afterschoolprofessional.info
- Oregon – www.oregonask.org

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Photographs

Photos courtesy of afterschool programs in Whitehall City Schools and Worthington Kindercare.

Quotes

Quotations provided by parents of children enrolled in the afterschool programs of Delaware City Schools and the YWCA of Central Ohio.



Part 2: Content Areas



Child Growth & Development

WHAT PARENTS
ARE SAYING

..... "My daughter has improved at reading and math because of your program.
Thank you so much."



Rationale

Research indicates that a child's growth and development is optimized when afterschool professionals know and apply the fundamental principles of human development. Understanding the significant theories, general concepts, and processes of human growth and development enables the afterschool professional to develop healthy relationships with each child that will support his or her development and learning. It also enables the professional to design activities and environments that positively affect the current and future life of the child. By integrating current knowledge about development and learning into their daily practice, afterschool professionals provide beneficial interactions and experiences for children in an emotionally and physically safe, healthy environment. The afterschool professional recognizes that an understanding of developmental patterns, individual differences, and influences of family* and culture* are critical to implementing developmentally appropriate* practices. By demonstrating respect for children as unique human beings, each child's individual potential may be nurtured and enhanced.

Knowledge Base

For children to thrive in afterschool programs, the professionals who work with children and their families must strive to know and understand:

- The principles of child growth and development, including:
 - the interdependence of developmental domains* (social, emotional, cognitive, language, sensory, creative, physical and adaptive);
 - developmental sequences, stages;
 - individual differences in temperament*;
 - the varying rates of development in individual children; and
 - the occurrence of developmental delays, disabilities and other types of special needs*.
- That development results from interaction between the child and his or her relationships and experiences, which include family, language, culture and environment.
- The developmental process of establishing independence, its characteristics at various ages, and its impact on relationships, learning and other areas of development.
- The cumulative and delayed effects of all experiences and their potential for both positive and negative effects on child growth, development, learning and behavior.
- How self-regulation* affects all areas of development, learning and behavior.
- That caring, consistent relationships with adults and peers provide external supports that serve as the basis for developing self-regulation.
- How effective language and communication between children and adults is vital for healthy relationships and learning.
- How children's pro-social behavior* is supported by adults who model positive behavior and view challenging behavior* as a learning opportunity.
- Appropriate strategies for responding to the differing developmental needs of children, including those with developmental delays.
- How play* provides the opportunity for children to grow and develop, incorporating different modes of learning and different ways of representing knowledge and demonstrating skills.
- The impact of the brain's still-developing frontal cortex on school-age children's ability to plan and organize, make reasoned decisions and inhibit emotions and actions.
- That the afterschool profession has a constantly evolving knowledge base of research and theory that guides appropriate practice.

Competencies – Developmental Processes

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the afterschool professional:

LEVEL 1

- 1.1 Recognizes and respects individual differences in children’s growth, development and learning and adjusts practices and expectations for individual children accordingly.
- 1.2 Identifies basic sequences and stages of child development.
- 1.3 Understands children’s developmental levels in relation to age-appropriate norms and uses this information to meet the general needs of children.
- 1.4 Recognizes and accepts that family, peers, community, and culture influence the development of children. The afterschool professional adjusts practice and interaction patterns for individual children and families accordingly.
- 1.5 Understands that challenging behavior has emotional, physical, environmental* and developmental causes. The afterschool professional uses this information to modify environment, activities and expectations to improve behavioral outcomes.
- 1.6 Understands that children learn best through their natural medium of play* and uses this medium to enhance development, behavior and learning outcomes for all children.
- 1.7 Recognizes the need for consistent and appropriate responses to behavior.

LEVEL 2

- 2.1 Applies direct observation and knowledge of children’s development as a framework to provide appropriate experiences for children.
- 2.2 Identifies children’s differing developmental needs and implements responsive, individualized strategies.
- 2.3 Recognizes when a referral for evaluation of a child’s development, learning or behavior is warranted, based on ongoing observation* and assessment*, and follows through on all phases of the process.
- 2.4 Articulates current theory, research and policy on child growth and development as evidenced by the ability to relate personal practices and beliefs to professional standards*.

LEVEL 3

- 3.1 Implements and/or promotes intentional strategies to meet the changing needs, interests and abilities of individual children and groups of children.
- 3.2 Seeks out new theory and research on child growth and development, integrates it into professional practice and the development of a personal philosophy of care and education, and shares it with others.
- 3.3 Analyzes and evaluates practice on an ongoing basis and implements or promotes changes to enhance children’s growth and development.
- 3.4 Facilitates and advocates for teaching and caregiving practices that are based on an understanding of child growth and development theory and research.
- 3.5 Increases early detection of developmental delays, disabilities and disorders in young children by promoting the use of best practices in the identification and referral process by afterschool professionals.

Competencies – Nurturing Relationships

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the afterschool professional:

LEVEL 1

- 1.1 Engages in safe, responsive relationships with each child to provide a sense of security and promote optimal development.
- 1.2 Respects the importance of families in their children's lives by valuing their opinions and nurturing their involvement in the program.
- 1.3 Observes and understands the importance of relationship as evidenced by the ability to respond and assist both child and family members in a supportive and nurturing manner through daily interactions.
- 1.4 Models positive, pro-social* behavior in all settings including child, family and professional interactions.
- 1.5 Talks with children frequently to develop relationships and promote children's understanding of their world, particularly those with language challenges.
- 1.6 Communicates respectfully and responsibly with children, families and colleagues.
- 1.7 Provides guidance in consistent, non-threatening and positive ways that reinforces children's feelings of confidence and competence.
- 1.8 Applies problem-solving skills in the context of children's interactions and activities.
- 1.9 Recognizes and models appropriate expressions of feelings.
- 1.10 Acknowledges children's accomplishments.
- 1.11 Helps children adapt to change in positive ways.

LEVEL 2

- 2.1 Establishes and models positive relationships with children and adults that respect individuality in learning style, ability and cultural background.
- 2.2 Engages children in applying problem-solving skills in the context of their interactions and play.
- 2.3 Encourages rich communication with children in ways that facilitate the development of language proficiency and creative thought in all children, especially those with language challenges.
- 2.4 Provides information to families, in a variety of ways, about the general principles of child growth and development relative to their needs. Ensures that this information meets the cultural, language and literacy levels required for full understanding.
- 2.5 Anticipates the primary developmental landmarks characteristic of children age 5 through 12 and ensures that the curriculum and environment are supportive.
- 2.6 Establishes positive relationships with families in which information or concerns about a child's well-being and development can be comfortably shared.
- 2.7 Provides support and guidance to children in developing the ability to regulate their own behavior and emotions in socially acceptable ways.

LEVEL 3

- 3.1 Articulates the dynamic relationship among all aspects of development and learning as it applies to program planning, teaching roles and strategies.
- 3.2 Facilitates collaboration with families, and other professionals as needed, in planning learning experiences for children's individual needs.
- 3.3 Encourages families to effectively advocate for their own children, both within the program and in the public sector.
- 3.4 Seeks out new theory and research on the development and impacts of nurturing, supportive relationships with school-age children. Integrates new knowledge into current practice and shares it with others.
- 3.5 Educates parents and professional colleagues about the developmental stages and characteristics of middle childhood. Provides strategies to support healthy developmental progress.

Competencies – Appropriate Environments

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the afterschool professional:

LEVEL 1

- 1.1 Recognizes the importance of consistency in environments, expectations and responses to children.
- 1.2 Recognizes and respects the importance of exploration and play in children's growth and development.
- 1.3 Provides a variety of activities and experiences that foster progress in all developmental domains.
- 1.4 Recognizes and supports appropriate and culturally sensitive* environments for children.
- 1.5 Understands that providing spaces to encourage individual expression are important in the child's growth and development.
- 1.6 Maintains an environment where children feel safe, understood, respected and secure.

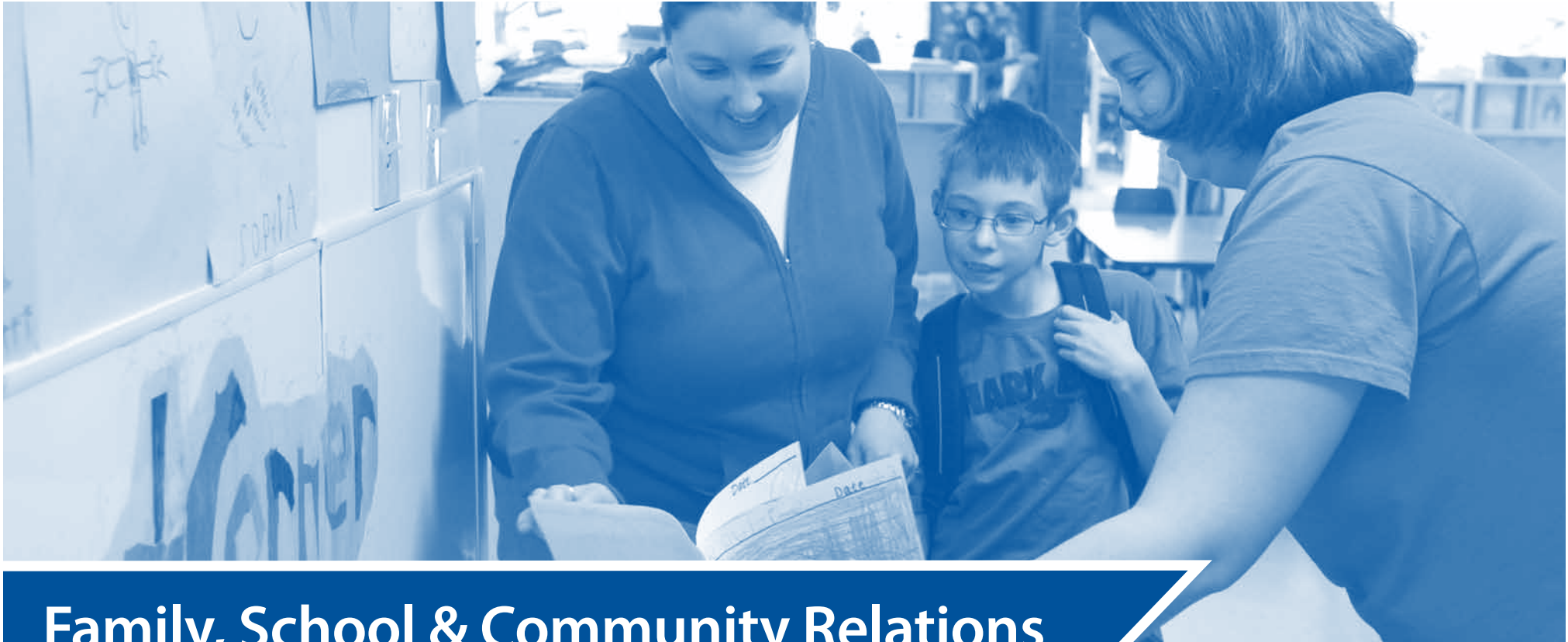
LEVEL 2

- 2.1 Exhibits best practice by providing consistency in environments, expectations and responses to children.
- 2.2 Incorporates children's individual, unique and special needs* into planning for environments and experiences.
- 2.3 Enhances and adapts environments and experiences based on the needs of individual children, including special, developmental, health, behavioral and emotional needs, as well as learning challenges.
- 2.4 Provides a responsive environment where children initiate and extend their learning through self-guided play or exploration.
- 2.5 Creates environments with appropriate supports that teach and empower children to communicate, negotiate and solve problems.
- 2.6 Creates environments and experiences that affirm and respect diversity* by making sure materials, activities and graphics represent all cultures and languages familiar to children and families in the program.
- 2.7 Involves children in setting rules and expectations; planning activities and environments; and making program changes, as appropriate.

LEVEL 3

- 3.1 Establishes and/or advocates for systems, procedures and practices that support individualized environments and experiences for children.
- 3.2 Establishes and/or advocates for environments with appropriate supports to teach and empower children to communicate, negotiate and solve problems.
- 3.3 Designs and/or promotes afterschool environments in which affirmation and respect for individual and family diversity are embedded throughout.
- 3.4 Seeks out new theory and research on the developmentally and individually appropriate environments, integrates new knowledge into current practice, and shares it with others.

Notes



Family, School & Community Relations

WHAT PARENTS ARE SAYING

..... “Thank you for all your support and kindness during our family’s difficult time
in the past year.”



Rationale

Families* are diverse in structure and nature. They include people who are related by birth, by marriage, by legal ties, or simply by affection and concern. Children's lives are embedded in their families, school and communities; therefore afterschool professionals must value children and families in the context of their culture*, home, school and community*. Research indicates that successful afterschool programming depends on partnerships with families, schools, and communities that are built upon ongoing, interactive communication and a commitment to confidentiality*. Children thrive when afterschool professionals utilize knowledge and understanding of family, school, and community characteristics. Children's successful development is supported when afterschool professionals are aware of community and school resources and services; know how to make collaborative school, family and community connections; and build meaningful, reciprocal, respectful relationships that empower* families.

Knowledge Base

For children to thrive in afterschool programs, professionals who provide services to children and their families must strive to know and understand:

- That families are children's primary educators and must be supported in that role.
- The benefits of collaborative connections between schools, families, programs and communities.
- The significant contribution that families make to children's learning and development.
- The necessity of developing an effective partnership with each family.
- Strategies to initiate and maintain family involvement.
- A variety of communication skills to engage and promote reciprocal interaction.
- Problem-solving skills and conflict resolution strategies to assist families.
- The impact of diverse family support systems on children, families and communities.
- The unique impact of culture and community on the family system.*
- Community resources and services and how to use them.
- How to collaborate with other professional and community partners on behalf of children and families.
- The importance of advocacy* for children, families and programs.

Competencies – Valuing Families

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the afterschool professional:

LEVEL 1

- 1.1 Acknowledges families as their children's first and most influential caregivers and teachers.
- 1.2 Recognizes the individual needs of all children and families regardless of socioeconomic status, culture, religion, developmental needs and family structure.
- 1.3 Recognizes families' contributions in identifying their children's varied strengths, and actively uses this information to construct appropriate programs for individual children.
- 1.4 Acknowledges diversity among family structures and child-rearing practices.
- 1.5 Recognizes the influence that family members have on children's behaviors.
- 1.6 Recognizes outside influences and stress factors that affect family structures and functioning.

LEVEL 2

- 2.1 Reflects an understanding of children's home and neighborhood contexts when planning learning activities and environments.
- 2.2 Makes adaptations to meet needs of all children and families regardless of socioeconomic status, culture, religion, developmental needs and family structure.
- 2.3 Acknowledges the values of families in a non-judgmental way.
- 2.4 Identifies families' strengths and utilizes them to develop a positive relationship with the child.
- 2.5 Shows sensitivity to children and families experiencing challenging life circumstances (e.g., divorce, job layoffs, illness or death).

LEVEL 3

- 3.1 Promotes the value of families' knowledge about their own children and designs and/or advocates for program procedures and practices that reflect that value.
- 3.2 Empowers* families to be equal partners in the decision-making process by listening to family opinions, valuing information provided, and attempting to reconcile any differences in opinions between professionals and family members.
- 3.3 Establishes and/or promotes opportunities for families and children to be actively involved in program and policy development and evaluation.

Competencies – Positive Family Relationships

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the afterschool professional:

LEVEL 1

- 1.1 Establishes positive relationships with all families through face-to-face communication (e.g., registration, drop-off/pick up, parent conferences).
- 1.2 Ensures families are aware of program goals and daily activities.
- 1.3 Maintains and follows rules of confidentiality*.
- 1.4 Assesses and values the primary language of the child and family.
- 1.5 Communicates with families in a sensitive and appropriate manner, taking into consideration factors that affect communication, such as cultural and language differences and literacy level.
- 1.6 Demonstrates awareness of problem-solving and conflict resolution strategies to use with families.
- 1.7 Responds to families' questions and concerns in a timely manner.
- 1.8 Frequently shares positive observations and comments about each child with his or her family.

LEVEL 2

- 2.1 Provides a family communication system where families can find information on matters such as program fees and policies, educational materials, daily activities and schedules. The afterschool professional makes this information accessible to all family members regardless of technology access, reading and language differences.
- 2.2 Encourages feedback from parents and incorporates it into practice.
- 2.3 Works to communicate in the primary language of the parents, using various resources, such as interpreters, as appropriate.
- 2.4 Maintains a collaborative relationship with families using a variety of communication tools and levels.
- 2.5 Implements effective problem-solving and conflict resolution strategies as needed.
- 2.6 Communicates with families about the progress of the child, as well as educates and partners with families in addressing developmental, academic, attendance, and behavioral issues experienced by the child.

LEVEL 3

- 3.1 Develops, implements and/or promotes relationship-based practices such as parent mentors,* parents as parent coaches and parents as board members that foster respectful, reciprocal interactions with families.
- 3.2 Implements and/or encourages effective practices and processes to anticipate potential conflicts involving families and program staff and to satisfactorily resolve conflicts.
- 3.3 Models and/or encourages skillful use of appropriate, recognized family assessment* and intervention resources, based on individual family needs.
- 3.4 Examines the effectiveness of family involvement activities and family advisory groups, suggesting or implementing changes as needed.
- 3.5 Engages families as partners in advocating* for community investment in programs for children.

Competencies – Connecting Families

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the afterschool professional:

LEVEL 1

- 1.1 Acknowledges the value of family, school and community partnerships within a child's learning environment.
- 1.2 Identifies the school and community resources and services available to support children and families.
- 1.3 Is aware of the benefits of a positive connection between families, schools and communities.
- 1.4 Encourages families to participate in program, school and community activities.

LEVEL 2

- 2.1 Recognizes the value of families networking with each other and provides support to make such networks possible and accessible to all families.
- 2.2 Connects children and families to school and community resources and services.
- 2.3 Is sensitive to cultural diversity among families when planning activities for children and families, and invites families to share skills, talents and cultural backgrounds in the program.

LEVEL 3

- 3.1 Establishes and maintains effective partnerships between families, programs, schools and communities.
- 3.2 Encourages and/or implements activities to help families network with each other and provides support to make such networks possible and accessible to all families.
- 3.3 Facilitates communication and collaboration between families, school personnel and afterschool staff to maximize children's learning opportunities.
- 3.4 Collaborates with families and communities to identify and research possible solutions for unmet needs.
- 3.5 Assumes a leadership role in working with service providers and families by providing information on best practices, educational research and other pertinent topics in forms most easily accessible to and valued by that individual.

Competencies – Community Collaborations

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the afterschool professional:

LEVEL 1

- 1.1 Recognizes the value of community involvement.
- 1.2 Values and uses community resources that support and assist families.
- 1.3 Recognizes the community as a resource for services, activities and volunteers.*
- 1.4 Is aware of community resources that support families and enhance programming.

LEVEL 2

- 2.1 Collaborates with community service providers working with children and families.
- 2.2 Uses community resources in learning experiences and uses community sites such as fire stations, parks and libraries as field trip opportunities, and/or brings resources to children, as appropriate.
- 2.3 Provides the links for families to obtain community resources specific to their needs.
- 2.4 Builds effective relationships with families, community partners and volunteers.

LEVEL 3

- 3.1 Participates in outreach activities that support community improvement and promotes the public awareness of the importance of building positive assets in children.
- 3.2 Collaborates with community partners to create and/or sustain programs that address community and family needs.
- 3.3 Educates the community about quality afterschool programming by providing reading materials, program tours, public service announcements and general advocacy whenever possible.
- 3.4 Promotes and facilitates the involvement of community partners in advisory roles within afterschool programs.
- 3.5 Develops and maintains a professional network of afterschool providers, community partners, funders, educators and other colleagues.

Competencies – Connecting Schools

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the afterschool professional:

LEVEL 1

- 1.1 Recognizes the benefits of connections between afterschool programs and schools.
- 1.2 Contributes to an effective communication system among schools, programs and families.
- 1.3 Maintains confidentiality in communications among schools, programs and families.
- 1.4 Is aware of Ohio's academic content standards.*
- 1.5 Is aware of any Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)* in place and contributes to its implementation.

LEVEL 2

- 2.1 Works toward a seamless connection between the afterschool program and the school program.
- 2.2 Establishes an effective communication system among schools, programs and families, taking into consideration legal limitations.
- 2.3 Aligns learning experiences and activities to academic content standards.
- 2.4 Participates on teams for the development of IEPs when invited.

LEVEL 3

- 3.1 Advocates* for mutually respectful, collaborative and effective partnerships between school personnel and afterschool program staff.
- 3.2 Evaluates the effectiveness of afterschool curricula in supporting desired academic outcomes.
- 3.3 Contributes support and knowledge in efforts to adjust program and learning environments to align with IEPs.
- 3.4 Shares knowledge and expertise regarding the development and implementation of IEPs with staff, families, and colleagues.
- 3.5 Advocates for inclusion of afterschool staff on IEP teams.
- 3.6 Advocates in schools and the community for a coordinated system of care and education in which all types of out-of-school-time programs are considered equal partners with schools in meeting the needs of children, families and communities.

Competencies – Family Systems, Culture & Community

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the afterschool professional:

LEVEL 1

- 1.1 Recognizes the segments of a child's community including home, afterschool program, school and neighborhood.
- 1.2 Recognizes the ever-changing nature of families (i.e., socioeconomic status, culture, religion and family structure).
- 1.3 Recognizes his or her own cultural experience and its impact on engagement with families and communities.
- 1.4 Incorporates elements of the children's cultures into the afterschool environment and curriculum.

LEVEL 2

- 2.1 Supports community activities by being a visible partner in all appropriate activities or initiatives in the surrounding geographic location.
- 2.2 Works to be inclusive of all families regardless of socioeconomic status, culture, religion, developmental needs and family structure.
- 2.3 Modifies curriculum to be culturally sensitive and uses this information across all practices with children and families.
- 2.4 Utilizes families and community members as cultural resources in the learning environment, inviting them into the afterschool program to share cultural practices.

LEVEL 3

- 3.1 Critically examines and removes any barriers or biases that might hinder development of mutually respectful relationships.
- 3.2 Advocates for systems, policies and resources that will ensure sufficient, effective services for all children and families.
- 3.3 Seeks out new theory, research and best practices on the impact of family, culture and community on children's development and learning, integrates new knowledge into current practice and shares it with others.



Health, Safety & Nutrition

WHAT PARENTS
ARE SAYING

..... "I felt that my child was safe and well taken care of, which gave me peace of mind at work."



Rationale

Healthy and safe relationships, experiences and environments for children lay a necessary foundation for development and growth in all areas. Children are more able to fully develop socially, emotionally, cognitively and physically when their health and nutritional needs are met and when they are safe from physical and emotional harm. When afterschool professionals know, understand and apply recommended practices in health*, safety* and nutrition*, children can thrive. Afterschool professionals, working in partnership with families,* schools and communities*, have a key opportunity and responsibility to provide relationships, environments and experiences for all children that guide them on a pathway toward lifelong health and well-being.

Knowledge Base

For children to thrive in afterschool programs, professionals who provide services to children and their families must strive to know and understand:

- That sound practices in health, safety and nutrition have a lifelong impact.
- How to integrate good health, safety and nutrition practices throughout the curriculum*.
- That research in the areas of health, safety and nutrition generates theory that informs best practice*.
- When and how to access reliable and current health, safety and nutrition information and resources.
- That afterschool professionals, families and communities are partners in assuring optimal health, safety and nutrition for children.
- Benefits and methods of communicating, teaching and modeling sound health, safety and nutrition practices to children, parents and families.
- National, state and local health, safety and nutrition guidelines and regulations for program policies and procedures.
- The limitations of their own knowledge regarding health, safety and nutrition and when and how to initiate appropriate referrals.



Knowledge Base, continued

For children to thrive in afterschool programs, professionals who provide services to children and their families must strive to know and understand:

HEALTH

- Children's need for a healthy environment and how it impacts their growth and development from age 5 through 12, including children with special needs*.
- The importance of applying a policy and procedure that includes a broad definition of health, including the child and family's physical, mental, social, emotional and sexual health.
- That each child has unique health-care needs.
- That families, as the primary caregivers, play a central role in child health and developmental services.
- That all program activities should be designed to motivate and support children to improve health, prevent disease and avoid risky behaviors*.
- The role of the afterschool professional in preventing the spread of disease, promoting wellness and caring for the ill child.
- The importance and impact of physical activity on lifelong health.

SAFETY

- Children's need for a physically and emotionally safe environment and its impact on their development and learning, including children with special needs.
- That safety risks change with children's age.
- The importance of active and age-appropriate supervision of children.
- That children can and should play an active role in keeping themselves and others safe.
- Routine care and maintenance of materials and equipment.
- Fundamentals of first aid and CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation).
- Potential threats to children associated with natural or human initiated disasters or emergencies.
- Basic emergency procedures and safety practices and regulations.

NUTRITION

- Children's need for good nutrition and hydration* and how it impacts their growth and development, including children with special needs.
- That food plays many roles for children: social, emotional, cultural and physical.
- How to provide pleasant, relaxed and developmentally appropriate* meal and snack experiences.
- Appropriate portion sizes for all ages, as well as children's hunger and fullness cues.
- Which foods may present hazards for a child according to his or her needs and abilities (e.g. choking hazards, allergies, and feeding constraints due to health conditions) and correct procedures for handling food-related emergencies.
- Safe and sanitary food handling practices.

Competencies – Health

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the afterschool professional:

LEVEL 1

- 1.1 Knows and follows all applicable regulations.
- 1.2 Recognizes the symptoms of common childhood illness.
- 1.3 Maintains clean and sanitized* materials and environments.
- 1.4 Encourages and models good health practices, including effective hand-washing, oral hygiene and personal hygiene; and ensures that hygiene-promoting supplies (e.g., tissues, hand soap) are always available.
- 1.5 Encourages and models appropriate physical activity.
- 1.6 Applies effective sanitation procedures during toileting, cleaning toys, and washing dishes and other materials.
- 1.7 Practices safe and sanitary food handling procedures when purchasing, storing, preparing and serving meals and snacks.
- 1.8 Practices standard precautions in handling blood, bodily fluids and potentially infectious material to ensure safety of adults and children.
- 1.9 Explains the reasons for health-related rules to children.
- 1.10 Assesses each child's general health daily and discusses concerns with an appropriate supervisor.



LEVEL 2

- 2.1 Implements policies and procedures for care of ill children.
- 2.2 Implements policies and procedures for care of emotionally and/or behaviorally challenged children.
- 2.3 Seeks out additional information and support for all unusual cases or situations where appropriate practices are unclear.
- 2.4 Accesses community health resources and professionals for information, consultation, emergencies, diagnoses and treatments.
- 2.5 Assures appropriate implementation of formal plans developed to meet the physical, medical, emotional or behavioral needs of children with identified disabilities.
- 2.6 Responds effectively to inappropriate sexual behaviors.
- 2.7 Maintains accurate and current health records on each child.
- 2.8 Ensures an appropriate level of confidentiality of health information and ensures that relevant health information is communicated to others on a need-to-know basis for the well-being of the child.
- 2.9 Is knowledgeable about common allergies and asthma and promotes practices that reduce environmental allergens and asthma triggers when a child's needs warrant them.



LEVEL 3

- 3.1 Seeks out new theory, research and best health practices with school-age children, integrates new knowledge into current practice and shares it with others.
- 3.2 Develops, enforces, and/or promotes policy and procedures for the care of all children, including those with acute illnesses, chronic illnesses, and special health and emotional needs.
- 3.3 Designs and/or promotes curriculum activities emphasizing healthy bodies, healthy lifestyles and healthy environments.
- 3.4 Adapts health information as needed for various cultural and religious differences.
- 3.5 Collaborates with health-care professionals in the community to ensure that the health needs of children are met.
- 3.6 Advocates* for systems, policies and resources to support adequate health information and resources for families within the community.
- 3.7 Designs and/or promotes medication administration procedures, policies and regulations that meet the needs and concerns of families, children and programs.
- 3.8 Develops a policy to address inappropriate sexual behavior.



- 1.11 Recognizes signs of abuse and neglect and objectively* documents and responds appropriately.
- 1.12 Maintains confidentiality of all health-related information about individual children.
- 1.13 Holds current and valid training in communicable* disease prevention, child abuse recognition, CPR and first aid.
- 1.14 Recognizes the signs and symptoms of communicable disease and responds according to the Ohio Department of Health's Communicable Disease chart (see page 62, *Ohio documents & resources*).
- 1.15 Follows current medication administration policies and procedures according to local, state or national regulations, and documents appropriately.
- 1.16 Provides appropriate care for ill or injured children.
- 1.17 Provides support and supplies for menstruating girls.
- 1.18 Is aware of typical sexual development and age-appropriate sexual behavior.
- 1.19 Follows program procedures for documentation of health-related issues or incidents.
- 1.20 Recognizes limitations of personal knowledge regarding physical and mental health and knows when to seek professional guidance.
- 2.10 Is knowledgeable about indicators of mental health concerns in children, such as stress or depression; monitors children for uncharacteristic changes in behavior and responds appropriately.
- 2.11 Is aware of current and emerging trends of risky behavior among school-age children reported by reliable sources, and recognizes warning indicators that a child may be participating.
- 2.12 Continuously and appropriately monitors the effectiveness and safety of medication administration, and documents.
- 3.9 Participates in the development and implementation of formal plans for children with special health care needs and/or provides information on an as-needed basis.
- 3.10 Educates parents and professional colleagues about the incidence of risky behaviors in school-age children, including characteristics of risky behavior, prevention and effective strategies for responding.

Competencies – Safety

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the afterschool professional:

LEVEL 1

- 1.1 Responds to accidents and injuries according to appropriate first-aid training while assuring the comfort and care of other children.
- 1.2 Complies with appropriate local, state and national regulations and guidelines for ratios and group sizes.
- 1.3 Regularly practices and appropriately documents emergency and safety procedures such as fire, disaster, lockdown and tornado drills.
- 1.4 Chooses and uses safe and appropriate learning materials and media, and encourages their safe use by children.
- 1.5 Recognizes and models appropriate interpersonal communication and relationships to create and promote emotional safety.
- 1.6 Recognizes types and stages of bullying*.
- 1.7 Recognizes and protects the emotional and physical safety of all children.
- 1.8 Recognizes and protects against hazards in the environment; daily inspects the environment, indoors and out, for safety hazards.
- 1.9 Explains reasons for safety precautions to children.
- 1.10 Supervises all activities, indoors and outdoors, to anticipate and prevent dangerous situations and accidents.
- 1.11 Encourages and models safety precautions.

LEVEL 2

- 2.1 Fosters social development and skills among children that will prevent bullying from developing; responds appropriately if it does occur.
- 2.2 Maintains and promotes safety in the learning environment for all children regardless of developmental level or disability.
- 2.3 Observes and adjusts supervision to meet different ages, abilities, interests, environments and activities.
- 2.4 Educates parents about general child safety using materials appropriate for individual learning styles, cultures and reading levels.
- 2.5 Implements an effective attendance policy.
- 2.6 Engages children in appropriate emergency preparedness* activities and ensures the safety of children with special needs and those who may not fully understand the appropriate procedures.
- 2.7 Maintains and ensures routine maintenance of the physical environment and ensures timely repairs or removal of unsafe equipment or furnishings.

LEVEL 3

- 3.1 Seeks out new theory, research and best practices in aspects of safety in afterschool environments, integrates new knowledge into current practice, and shares it with others.
- 3.2 Develops and/or promotes, in collaboration with community partners, emergency preparedness procedures.
- 3.3 Advocates for and/or educates others about prevention of and response to bullying behavior.
- 3.4 Supports and advocates for safe, developmentally and culturally appropriate materials and media in afterschool programs.
- 3.5 Develops and/or promotes effective program procedures, practices and staff training concerning environmental hazards and safety, including documentation and reporting.
- 3.6 Establishes and/or promotes systems and procedures enabling continuous evaluation of safety practices and implementation plans to reduce and prevent safety risks.



Competencies – Nutrition

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the afterschool professional:

LEVEL 1

- 1.1 Understands and follows diet modifications for children with identified health or cultural issues pertaining to food or feeding, including allergies and food sensitivities.
- 1.2 Creates an environment that is pleasant, relaxed and safe for meals and snacks; uses meal and snack times to engage in conversation with children and facilitate social skills.
- 1.3 Provides meals and snacks that are safe, nutritious and developmentally and age appropriate.
- 1.4 Models and explains healthy eating behaviors.
- 1.5 Uses meal and snack times to encourage children to practice responsibility.
- 1.6 Practices safe and sanitary food handling procedures when purchasing, storing, preparing and serving meals and snacks.
- 1.7 Ensures that each child has access to a healthy meal or snack.
- 1.8 Monitors children's eating behavior patterns and seeks help if significant change is noted.
- 1.9 Provides opportunities for and encourages frequent hydration.
- 1.10 Encourages children to recognize and respond to hunger and fullness cues.
- 1.11 Recognizes health hazards in meals and snacks (i.e. choking and allergies) and takes steps to prevent dangerous situations.



LEVEL 2

- 2.1 Consults with families about children's health or cultural issues that may require modification to diet, and assures appropriate implementation of medical and physical care plans.
- 2.2 Provides learning experiences that teach children about good nutrition.
- 2.3 Provides opportunities to introduce new tastes, textures and cultural food experiences to children.
- 2.4 Utilizes nutrition information from registered or licensed health care professionals within the community and reviews the information for appropriateness for families with varied cultural and religious guidelines concerning food.
- 2.5 Involves children in the planning and preparation of meals and snacks, using the opportunity to talk about things such as healthy food choices and reading food labels.
- 2.6 Recognizes the symptoms of eating disorders and responds appropriately.

LEVEL 3

- 3.1 Seeks out new theory, research and best practices in children's nutrition, integrates new knowledge into current practice, and shares it with others.
- 3.2 Develops and/or promotes family and parent nutrition education in partnership with a registered or licensed health-care professional.
- 3.3 Evaluates nutrition education information for appropriateness for families with varied cultural and religious food or feeding guidelines.
- 3.4 Provides and/or promotes opportunities for staff and parents to learn about food-related topics, such as children's nutritional needs, eating disorders, allergies and food sensitivities and creating successful mealtimes.
- 3.5 Establishes, implements and/or promotes policies and procedures that foster appropriate nutrition practices in afterschool programs. These policies also clarify an appropriate response to concerns about a child's eating behavior patterns.
- 3.6 Assesses nutrition policies, procedures and practices for program improvement.
- 3.7 Advocates and collaborates within the community to promote healthy nutrition practices and awareness of cultural and religious diversity involving food.
- 3.8 Ensures or advocates for sufficient resources to provide for the nutritional needs of developing children.



Child Observation & Assessment

WHAT PARENTS
ARE SAYING

..... "I strongly believe the afterschool program is helping to develop my child's social skills. He is more confident."



Rationale

Observation* and assessment* is integral to a variety of decisions that affect each child and his or her family. When afterschool professionals know and use methods of observation and assessment that are unbiased toward culture* or language, adaptive to individual children's abilities, and sensitive to children's needs, the resulting information is reliable*, valid* and useful. Regular, systematic observation and the use of multiple ways of collecting information aid afterschool professionals in learning more about children's unique qualities, developing appropriate goals and plans, making referrals as appropriate, and implementing and evaluating effective curriculum*. Afterschool professionals must know when and how to communicate and collaborate with parents, school personnel and other professionals in all aspects of assessment so that children's relationships, development and learning are fully supported.

Knowledge Base

For children to thrive in afterschool programs, professionals who provide services to children and their families must strive to know and understand:

- Child growth and development, including sequences of typical development.
- How a child's home language, culture, strengths, needs, preferences, genetics and physical and social environment influence his or her performance.
- The goals, benefits and appropriate uses of selected assessment instruments and methods.
- How the relationship between the adult assessor and the child being assessed influences the child's performance during assessment.
- The importance of maintaining confidentiality* of child and family records and assessment information.
- The importance of sharing existing information and resources among school personnel, program staff, child-serving professionals (e.g, speech therapist, tutor, psychologist) and family.
- The importance of parental consent and when to obtain it.
- The availability of community services* and how to access community resources*.
- When and how to make referrals to other community service providers.
- Multiple assessment and observation instruments and methods used to determine children's strengths and challenges.
- The importance of objective, culturally sensitive, non-biased documentation.
- The repetitive nature of the process of observation and assessment, planning for curriculum and instruction or intervention, and evaluation of progress.

Competencies – Foundations & Principles

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the afterschool professional:

LEVEL 1

- 1.1 Is aware of ethical* principles that guide observation and assessment processes.
- 1.2 Recognizes the reasons for conducting observation and assessment.
- 1.3 Recognizes and accepts the range of children's development and skills.
- 1.4 Recognizes environmental* factors that place children at risk for developmental concerns.
- 1.5 Identifies and complies with the need for confidentiality.
- 1.6 Recognizes that observation and assessment are guided by established professional standards*.
- 1.7 Recognizes there are multiple ways to gather information about a child.
- 1.8 Identifies the differences between informal* and formal* assessment.
- 1.9 Contributes to systematic documentation of each phase of the assessment process for each child.

LEVEL 2

- 2.1 Applies ethical principles that guide observation and assessment processes.
- 2.2 Selects the appropriate formal and/or informal observation or assessment technique for the situation.
- 2.3 Modifies observation and assessment practices to accommodate* the range of children's development, skills and learning needs.
- 2.4 Recognizes how and when to access appropriate community resources and identifies a course of action when appropriate resources and supports cannot easily be obtained.
- 2.5 Implements observation and assessment practices that adhere to established standards including those related to confidentiality.
- 2.6 Maintains an effective system of documentation for all phases of the assessment process for each child.

LEVEL 3

- 3.1 Integrates the ethical code and policies into practice, and explains to others how the ethical code can be used in relation to observation and assessment practices.
- 3.2 Articulates the characteristics, strengths, limitations and appropriate uses of formal and informal observation and assessment instruments.
- 3.3 Evaluates assessment results considering the environmental factors and individual differences that will influence a child's performance.
- 3.4 Evaluates the effectiveness of an assessment documentation system and makes or recommends improvements as necessary.
- 3.5 Advocates for ethical and valid use of assessment data in decision-making at the individual, program, system and policy levels.
- 3.6 Seeks out new theory, research and best practices in observation and assessment in afterschool programs, integrates new knowledge into current practice, and shares it with others.

Competencies – Gathering & Documenting

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the afterschool professional:

LEVEL 1

- 1.1 Recognizes appropriate methods of documenting developmental progress.
- 1.2 Assists in collecting information about developmental progress from multiple sources and using a variety of means.
- 1.3 Conducts informal observations to improve the many facets of the program (i.e., environment, transitions, schedule and planning).
- 1.4 Recognizes the ways to develop a relationship with a child before observation and assessment procedures are implemented.
- 1.5 Maintains confidentiality of observation and assessment information.

LEVEL 2

- 2.1 Organizes information about developmental and educational progress collected from multiple, age-appropriate sources, and uses this information to construct more responsive programs.
- 2.2 Implements appropriate formal and informal methods of documenting developmental progress of individual children.
- 2.3 Incorporates observation and assessment strategies of children within typical program activities.
- 2.4 Integrates contributions from families and other professionals into formal and informal observation and assessment procedures.

LEVEL 3

- 3.1 Plans or promotes diverse observation and assessment strategies that are culturally and linguistically sensitive* and that meet a child's needs.
- 3.2 Evaluates the use of a variety of observation and assessment strategies, both formal and informal, to collect information. The afterschool professional adjusts or substitutes when assessments are not appropriate.
- 3.3 Applies knowledge of assessment selection, implementation and documentation to afterschool programs and communicates that knowledge to others.

Competencies – Summarizing & Interpreting

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the afterschool professional:

LEVEL 1

- 1.1 Recognizes the importance of observation and assessment data in curriculum planning for individual children and groups of children.
- 1.2 Recognizes the importance of analyzing and interpreting assessment data in a non-biased way.
- 1.3 Uses the results of informal observation to adapt environment, transition, schedule and planning to best meet children's needs.
- 1.4 Recognizes the importance of keeping the results of observations and assessments confidential from non-family members.

LEVEL 2

- 2.1 Interprets and analyzes assessment data to identify children's strengths and needs. The afterschool professional uses this information to develop appropriate programs for individual children.
- 2.2 Incorporates results of formal and informal observations and assessments to make decisions that benefit children's growth, development and learning.
- 2.3 Implements observation and assessment results to plan for individual children and groups of children.
- 2.4 Aligns results of observation and assessment with the curriculum, academic content standards*, and other available assessment data.
- 2.5 Seeks additional supporting documentation when information from multiple sources is conflicting in nature.
- 2.6 When appropriate, refers children to other community resources for further evaluation and remains an active team member and information source.

LEVEL 3

- 3.1 Applies knowledge of the multiple factors that may influence observation and assessment results to their use in afterschool programs.
- 3.2 Promotes and/or models collaborative, constructive relationships among the afterschool staff, family and other involved specialists regarding assessment results.
- 3.3 Establishes and/or facilitates a network of relationships with child and family service providers who can provide consultation and/or referral services as needed.
- 3.4 Models and/or promotes the use of observation and assessment results to inform decisions regarding environments, curriculum, policies and program practices.

Competencies – Sharing & Reporting

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the afterschool professional:

LEVEL 1

- 1.1 Shares informal observation outcomes and resulting improvements with appropriate staff and administrators.
- 1.2 Recognizes the importance of confidentiality in reporting child observation and assessment results in all forms.
- 1.3 Uses a non-biased, strength-based* approach in documenting observation results.
- 1.4 Identifies appropriate reporting methods for child observation and assessment results.

LEVEL 2

- 2.1 Communicates systematic assessment results with appropriate staff and administrators.
- 2.2 Explains the purpose and benefits of ongoing observation and assessment to staff and families. The afterschool professional is sensitive to the differences in opinion and emotions that such assessment may produce in family members.
- 2.3 Uses strength-based language to communicate results in written and oral formats.
- 2.4 Communicates results to families in an appropriate, objective*, understandable and supportive manner.
- 2.5 Assists families in communicating results to other involved professionals.

LEVEL 3

- 3.1 Models and/or supports the development of reports that are shared with families, appropriate staff, administrators and other involved professionals or agencies, and the use of communication avenues that ensure full understanding by all individuals.
- 3.2 Facilitates the sharing and reporting of observation and assessment results used to determine the next steps for an individual child in collaboration with families and other professionals or agencies that may be involved.



Professional Development

WHAT PARENTS
ARE SAYING

..... "The help my child receives with homework directly contributes to his success in school!"



Rationale

Research shows that afterschool professionals play a critical role in the well-being and development of every child in their program. The interactions and environments* that afterschool professionals provide can support learning and success in school and life. When afterschool professionals are equipped with specialized education and training, and continue to learn and develop as professionals, they are better able to provide experiences and environments that support every aspect of children's growth and learning. Each afterschool professional is a member of a larger community* of professional practice. The profession as a whole is elevated when each professional adopts the responsibilities of the profession regarding ethical* behavior and advocacy* for afterschool children and families*, and communicates effectively the importance of high quality programming.

Knowledge Base

For children to thrive in afterschool programs, professionals who provide services to children and their families must strive to know and understand:

- The diversity of afterschool programs and their theoretical and historical foundations.
- That professional preparation and training is the foundation for knowing how to create experiences and interactions that help children reach their potential.
- The importance of effectively communicating research, theory and professional guidelines as the basis for practice.
- The impact on a child over time of a consistent, reliable relationship with a knowledgeable and trustworthy afterschool professional.
- How to make decisions about program planning based on the most current recommended practices, professional standards* and research available.
- The value of continually seeking to increase one's own knowledge and skill by reflecting on, analyzing and evaluating one's own professional practices.
- How to find and take advantage of opportunities to develop personally and professionally.
- The ethical responsibilities and practices of the afterschool professional community and their impact on children, families, coworkers, and the community.
- That ethical behavior includes maintaining adult/child boundaries at all levels, and is defined by the sensitivity, culture*, age and stage of development of each child.
- How to advocate for effective services and legislation for children and families and develop collaborative partnerships within the community.
- The value of each individual's role in contributing to the building of the larger afterschool community through accessing professional resources*, networking and involvement in professional organizations (a list of organizations is available on page 62).

Competencies – Professionalism in Practice

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the afterschool professional:

LEVEL 1

- 1.1 Communicates effectively using appropriate oral and written language skills.
- 1.2 Expresses a positive attitude toward each child, family and co-worker.
- 1.3 Demonstrates professional work habits including confidentiality*, respect for all people, dependability, time management, independence and teamwork.
- 1.4 Presents oneself as a professional in physical appearance, personal hygiene*, choice of clothing and use of language.
- 1.5 Recognizes and respects individual differences among children, families, colleagues and in the community.
- 1.6 Identifies and respects the different cultures within the community and recognizes the impact of culture on children's identity.
- 1.7 Shows respect and positive regard for variation in cultures including family strengths, expectations, values and child-rearing practices.
- 1.8 Shows respect and positive regard for various types of afterschool programs, including those that differ in mission or philosophy.
- 1.9 Manages the demands of personal and professional commitments and seeks support or assistance as needed.

LEVEL 2

- 2.1 Routinely creates effective written communication such as curriculum plans, parent communication and anecdotal or observation notes.
- 2.2 Interacts in a professional manner that reflects respect for oneself and others.
- 2.3 Adopts and maintains professional behavior and attitudes.
- 2.4 Understands that communication includes speaking, signing, listening, reading, writing and use of adaptive devices. Also understands that communication can be conveyed by body language and personal appearance (i.e., clothing choice, body art, grooming).
- 2.5 Provides materials and experiences within settings to support an understanding of individual differences, including cultures and populations within the community.
- 2.6 Seeks out knowledge of the cultures and populations within the community and integrates it into his or her professional practice.
- 2.7 Includes family values and strengths in setting goals for individual children and the program, and negotiates solutions acceptable to all when family values conflict directly with the values and practices of the program.

LEVEL 3

- 3.1 Prepares and presents information about high quality afterschool programming in a formal written format to the wider community, adjusting the message to the interests and perspective of the target audience.
- 3.2 Explains and models communication with children that is respectful, positive, supportive and age-appropriate for families and other professionals.
- 3.3 Guides afterschool staff in developing and maintaining professional work habits.
- 3.4 Actively models and promotes a professional image for the afterschool field in a variety of settings.
- 3.5 Develops and incorporates materials, instruction and experiences to others on understanding of individual differences, cultures and populations.
- 3.6 Guides or mentors* others on how to integrate knowledge of cultures within the community into their professional practices.
- 3.7 Articulates and guides others in developing a positive regard and respect for all children and families.
- 3.8 Articulates and guides others in developing a positive regard for all programs, including those that differ in mission or philosophy.

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Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the afterschool professional:

LEVEL 1 CONT'D. _____

- 1.10 Recognizes and maintains appropriate boundaries and lack of bias with children in conversation, physical contact and treatment.
- 1.11 Understands that technology (i.e., computers, cameras, cell phones, television and cable, internet, electronic games), when used appropriately, has a positive impact on program quality.
- 1.12 Understands that technology, when used inappropriately, can distract from the interaction and the responsibility of supervision.

LEVEL 2 CONT'D. _____

- 2.8 Recognizes the impact and value of various types of afterschool programs, including those that differ in mission or philosophy.
- 2.9 Recognizes the impact of stress and develops strategies to renew oneself and maintain professional performance.
- 2.10 Recognizes when adults and children cross relational boundaries and guides them to establish boundaries that are appropriate, seeking additional training and/or professional consultation if necessary.
- 2.11 Recognizes the impact of technology use (i.e., computers, cameras, cell phones, television and cable, internet, electronic games) within the program environment and aligns its use with program goals.

LEVEL 3 CONT'D. _____

- 3.9 Provides guidance to others who exhibit signs of stress and assists with the location of resources and additional support, as appropriate.
- 3.10 Develops and/or promotes training and policy on maintaining appropriate professional adult/child boundaries and ensures their implementation.
- 3.11 Routinely reflects on teaching practices and the behaviors of children. The afterschool professional uses the additional information to improve both personal practice and general support in the wider community.

Competencies – Continuous & Reflective Professional Development

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the afterschool professional:

LEVEL 1

- 1.1 Is aware of state and national standards that promote quality afterschool care and education.
- 1.2 Uses professional resources and seeks information if the appropriate resource cannot be easily located.
- 1.3 Participates in opportunities for professional growth and development at the local, state and national level and through a variety of means (i.e. conferences, reading material, professional organizations).
- 1.4 Recognizes afterschool as a diverse field with a wide range of content, mission, programs and philosophies.
- 1.5 Seeks out knowledge to improve practice through a variety of means (i.e., conferences, reading material, professional organizations).
- 1.6 Questions her or his own practices, seeks input from supervisors and colleagues, and integrates feedback into professional development planning.
- 1.7 Pursues ongoing, intentional learning through professional development planning.
- 1.8 Meets minimum regulatory requirements for professional safety training including first aid, CPR, communicable disease identification, and child abuse recognition.

LEVEL 2

- 2.1 Applies quality standards and participates in evaluation of program related to quality standards.
- 2.2 Uses local, state and national professional resources to evaluate and improve practices.
- 2.3 Is actively involved in professional organizations.
- 2.4 Identifies the link between strengths of the programs and benefits to an individual child or family; understands that the needs of an individual child or family may be better met by a particular type of afterschool program.
- 2.5 Explores current trends and research-based practices in afterschool through a variety of means (i.e. conferences, reading material, professional organizations).
- 2.6 Demonstrates knowledge of adult learning as a means to improve interaction with families and colleagues.
- 2.7 Develops personal goals based on reflections of current practice articulated into a professional development plan.
- 2.8 Works toward a credential, degree and/or program accreditation and seeks out and uses supports to encourage professional progress.

LEVEL 3

- 3.1 Engages in or promotes the development and implementation of quality standards* for the afterschool field at the local, state and national level.
- 3.2 Develops, presents or promotes professional resources* to improve practices for a variety of audiences, including colleagues, community members and families.
- 3.3 Serves in a leadership capacity in professional organizations or groups through direct service, advocacy and other professional activities that will further the development of appropriate practices across afterschool settings.
- 3.4 Advocates for families' selection of an appropriate afterschool program based on the quality of available programs and the needs of the individual child or family.
- 3.5 Evaluates and applies current research and trends presented in professional resources, and seeks out and utilizes both monetary and professional support to encourage progress in individual professional growth and to ensure a quality program.
- 3.6 Serves as a catalyst for change by enlisting others to support new teachers and colleagues in roles of mentors* and coaches.
- 3.7 Facilitates professional development opportunities for others based on reflective approaches and adult learning styles.

Competencies – Leadership & Advocacy

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the afterschool professional:

LEVEL 1

- 1.1 Follows all legal and regulatory requirements.
- 1.2 Recognizes the family’s right to make decisions about its child’s care and education.
- 1.3 Engages in and values mentoring* opportunities with both colleagues and families.
- 1.4 Contributes to staff discussions and decision-making based on current knowledge of child development.
- 1.5 Identifies afterschool as a profession and is fully aware of and can articulate this value to the general community.
- 1.6 Recognizes oneself as a decision-maker within the afterschool setting.
- 1.7 Understands and recognizes the value of advocacy and uses informal conversations with others to speak on behalf of the afterschool profession.
- 1.8 Understands that local, state and national legislation and public policy* affect children and families.

LEVEL 2

- 2.1 Participates in planning and evaluating the program using formal tools.
- 2.2 Develops relationships with families to empower them to make decisions about their children’s well-being, and provides support and additional resources when a family is unable or unwilling to make appropriate decisions concerning its child.
- 2.3 Serves as a mentor* and resource for less experienced staff by providing guidance, resources and support, as appropriate.
- 2.4 Acquires and shares additional knowledge and competencies through participation in staff development.
- 2.5 Discusses the significance and value of afterschool programs with families and others in the community.
- 2.6 Participates in leadership activities with staff, family and colleagues.
- 2.7 Stays informed of advocacy efforts on behalf of children, families and professionals in afterschool programs, and participates in local opportunities to advocate.
- 2.8 Stays informed about current legislation and policy decisions that will affect children, families and professionals in afterschool programs.

LEVEL 3

- 3.1 Analyzes and evaluates practice on an ongoing basis and implements changes that will strengthen quality and effectiveness of practice.
- 3.2 Empowers parents to advocate on behalf of their child and provides support and additional resources when the family is unwilling or unable to fully advocate for its child’s well-being.
- 3.3 Serves as a mentor to others in the field by providing guidance, resources, support and encouragement of continued professional education as appropriate.
- 3.4 Assumes an afterschool leadership role in the community and/or in state and national professional organizations.
- 3.5 Collaborates with colleagues and others to improve programs and practices for children and their families and communities.
- 3.6 Participates in efforts to develop leadership skills in other afterschool professionals.
- 3.7 Participates in formal or large-scale advocacy efforts on behalf of children, families and professionals in afterschool programs at the local, state and national levels.
- 3.8 Uses experiences and knowledge to inform and influence public policy that affects children, families and afterschool programs.
- 3.9 Advocates for policies and practices that strengthen adult-child relationships by supporting consistency in staffing and retention of highly qualified employees.

Competencies – Ethical Standards & Professional Guidelines

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the afterschool professional:

LEVEL 1

- 1.1 Shows awareness of, has read, and practices the ethical responsibilities in the code of ethical conduct* promoted by the professional association most closely related to his or her professional role.
- 1.2 Can explain the reason for the code of ethics or recognizes the core values* that underlie the code of ethics.
- 1.3 Can identify the difference between a code of ethics and personal values.
- 1.4 Recognizes and acts on the ethical responsibility to value children and childhood.
- 1.5 Discusses the importance of collaboration and respect among all adults who work in various afterschool settings, including confidentiality.
- 1.6 Describes the responsibility of the profession to provide high quality afterschool programs for the community.
- 1.7 Avoids participating in any practices that are disrespectful, exploitative or potentially harmful to children and follows proper procedures to stop others' attempts to do so.

LEVEL 2

- 2.1 Practices and promotes the ethical responsibilities delineated in the applicable code of ethical conduct.
- 2.2 Recognizes potentially unethical practices, seeks to apply the ethical code as a tool, and identifies appropriate actions to take when the code of ethics has been transgressed or violated.
- 2.3 Identifies ethical dilemmas* and solves the problem and/or seeks additional assistance as appropriate.
- 2.4 Promotes and informs others of the need to support emotional, social, physical and intellectual development for every child.
- 2.5 Describes the roles and responsibilities of supervisors, staff, families and volunteers, including respectful communication, and implements these best practices as needed.
- 2.6 Promotes policies and practices that provide for the well-being of all children and their families.
- 2.7 Guides and supports others to ensure that children are protected from practices that are disrespectful, exploitative or potentially harmful.

LEVEL 3

- 3.1 Consistently models and informs others of standards* and principles set forth in the code of ethics.
- 3.2 Integrates the ethical code into practice and policies, and explains to others how the ethical code can be used to solve everyday ethical dilemmas.
- 3.3 Analyzes ethical dilemmas and works with others to determine appropriate courses of action.
- 3.4 Accesses community resources* and professional services that respect personal dignity and the diversity* of children and families.
- 3.5 Creates opportunities for respectful dialogue with multiple perspectives, cultural diversity, and differences in understanding of child development and best practices*.
- 3.6 Informs others about research and current knowledge related to the impact of high quality programs for all children and families.
- 3.7 Ensures that policies and procedures are in place and are followed to protect children from practices that are disrespectful, exploitative or potentially harmful.



Learning Environments & Experiences

WHAT PARENTS ARE SAYING

..... "Thank you for creating a safe and caring learning environment for
my child."



Rationale

Afterschool professionals provide critical supports for children and families by fostering positive growth through social interactions, stimulating physical environments, and enriching intellectual opportunities. Learning experiences and environments are a critical component in achieving the overarching goal of cultivating lifelong learners who become contributing members of society. Children benefit from high quality experiences and environments in immeasurable ways, including improved self-esteem and personal control, better life skills, enhanced communication between peers and within families, a genuine sense of purpose, a deeper understanding of diversity, and advancement in developmental outcomes and academic achievement. By facilitating active child-centered learning experiences in a safe and nurturing atmosphere, afterschool professionals can begin to bridge the gap between early childhood education, the traditional school setting and, eventually, workforce development.

Knowledge Base

For children to thrive in afterschool programs, professionals who provide services to children and their families must strive to know and understand:

GENERAL

- The principles of developmentally appropriate practice.*
- The many ways that children learn and the many strategies for supporting that learning.
- The differences between a structured school day and the components of a successful afterschool program, and how they can support one another.
- The child's individual needs, abilities and interests outside the structure of the school day.
- How supporting and meeting children's needs in enjoyable and engaging ways can positively affect school success.
- That continuous reflection on the effectiveness of the environment* and experiences is needed in order to adapt to children's changing needs.

INTERACTIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

- The critical role in facilitating and guiding interpersonal relationships (peer to peer, adult to child, and adult to adult).
- The importance of respecting, valuing, accepting, and treating every child and family with dignity.
- The importance of creating an anti-biased*, warm and caring emotional climate.
- The importance of bringing each child's culture* and language into the shared culture of the group.
- The benefits and methods of modeling and encouraging behaviors that contribute to a supportive, inclusive sense of community.*

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS

- The relationship between the physical environment and children's behavior and learning.
- How to plan and prepare a learning environment that nurtures children's initiative, encourages active exploration, and supports engagement and interactions.
- How to choose materials, furnishings and equipment and arrange physical spaces based on children's developmental and individual needs, abilities and interests.
- How to maintain a safe and positive environment through careful supervision.
- How to adjust the environment to promote physical and emotional safety and to nurture positive relationships.

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Competencies – Interactions & Relationships

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the afterschool professional:

LEVEL 1

- 1.1 Assumes primary responsibility for assigned children while remaining aware of momentary needs or emergencies that may arise outside of their individual assignments.
- 1.2 Treats all children with fairness, respect and understanding, including during situations in which children are behaving inappropriately.
- 1.3 Engages in many one-on-one, face-to-face, reciprocal interactions* with children in a calm, pleasant manner to foster positive connections and model healthy interactions.
- 1.4 Recognizes and positively responds to a child's social and emotional needs in a developmentally appropriate* fashion.
- 1.5 Shows individual attention to each child within the group, using the approach most appropriate for that child, and listens to children attentively to gain understanding and respond to their needs.
- 1.6 Discovers, encourages and supports children's efforts, ideas, accomplishments and interests.
- 1.7 Bases expectations for behavior on age, developmental level and abilities of children.
- 1.8 Demonstrates awareness that challenging behaviors* can have a variety of causes.
- 1.9 Prevents challenging behavior by providing consistent and predictable routines and responds to challenging behavior with positive guidance techniques.*



LEVEL 2

- 2.1 Ensures that all children are adequately supervised at all times and moderates and facilitates difficult interactions among children as needed.
- 2.2 Engages children using encouraging, nurturing words and actions.
- 2.3 Accepts each child without judgment, individually accommodating for his or her temperament, personality, strengths, interests, abilities and development.
- 2.4 Engages in responsive interactions with children, following their lead, and scaffolding* interactions where needed.
- 2.5 Builds social skills by involving children in creating rules for behavior, setting appropriate consequences and establishing a process to resolve conflicts.
- 2.6 Adapts interactions to respond to each child's unique personality, temperament*, mood, ability and culture.
- 2.7 Assists children in identifying and expressing their feelings, opinions and intentions in culturally and socially acceptable ways, allowing for each child's unique needs and strengths.
- 2.8 Facilitates dialogue among children that fosters an understanding of and appreciation for diverse perspectives, experiences, values and preferences; and that enables children to develop a sense of community in which all are included.



LEVEL 3

- 3.1 Seeks out new theory and research on relationships, supportive interactions and the creation of a community that fosters social and emotional development, integrates new knowledge into current practice and shares it with others.
- 3.2 Develops and/or promotes written policies for effective behavioral guidance and emotionally supportive interactions for both typically developing children and those with special needs*.
- 3.3 Articulates, models and/or promotes realistic behavioral expectations, taking into consideration children's attention spans, interests, social abilities and physical needs when planning group experiences.
- 3.4 Recognizes indicators that environmental* factors may be negatively influencing a child's social and emotional well-being, and models or describes an appropriate response.
- 3.5 Relates behavioral guidance practices and program policies to the knowledge of children's personalities, levels of development and different learning needs, and to research practices in the field.
- 3.6 While maintaining professional ethics,* models or enables cooperation and collaboration with other adults in the child's life to gain information on effective strategies to support the child.



Learning Environments & Experiences

- 1.10 When inappropriate or challenging behavior does occur, responds consistently without favoritism or bias, according to established consequences and program policies.
 - 1.11 Recognizes that his or her relationships with co-workers, families and others affect children.
 - 1.12 Engages in and models positive reciprocal interactions with parents and other professionals.
 - 1.13 Honors ethical* boundaries in relationships with children.
 - 1.14 Conveys respect for diversity among children and families as evidenced by integration of children's beliefs, needs and differences into interactions, the curriculum and the environment.
 - 1.15 Recognizes evidence of children's intolerance for those who are different (e.g., in race, culture, ability, language, economic circumstances) and seeks guidance in appropriate strategies for addressing it.
- 2.9 Provides consistent structure, activities and environments that promote and model appropriate behaviors and social skills.
 - 2.10 Seeks to identify causes of challenging behaviors and uses a guidance approach to promote positive behaviors, problem solving and self-control.
 - 2.11 Uses a variety of effective approaches to respond to inappropriate or challenging behavior, based on research and recommended practice. The afterschool professional is able to choose and implement an approach quickly and effectively.
 - 2.12 Engages families in positive interactions that allow a comfortable exchange of information and strategies to support children. These strategies should lay a foundation for open communication and effective problem solving if or when difficult situations arise.
 - 2.13 Plans and provides opportunities for children to communicate effectively, form relationships and interact with each other respectfully.
 - 2.14 Applies current theory and research on relationships and interactions.
 - 2.15 Implements teaching strategies that actively promote anti-bias* attitudes and behaviors among school-age children.
 - 2.16 Encourages and supports peer collaboration in learning, project planning and implementation, and creative expression.
- 3.7 Shares with colleagues and families an understanding of interactions, activities and environments that encourage appropriate behaviors and teach social skills.
 - 3.8 Seeks out and applies current information on supportive relationships, behavioral guidance and intervention strategies to use with children at risk for poor social-emotional outcomes.
 - 3.9 Advocates for and educates others about the importance and impact of anti-bias curricula, teaching strategies, and community programs and resources for children ages 5-12 and their families.

Competencies – Physical Environments

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the afterschool professional:

LEVEL 1

- 1.1 Recognizes that a child's behavior can be affected by their physical surroundings and accommodates* accordingly.
- 1.2 Provides adequate space for activities that support the needs and interests of children.
- 1.3 Ensures that equipment and materials are clean, safe and free from hazards.
- 1.4 Recognizes that the physical aspects of the room (e.g., temperature, noise level, crowdedness, lighting) have an impact on children and their behavior.
- 1.5 Uses equipment and furnishings that are appropriate for the physical needs and abilities of all children.
- 1.6 Understands and follows rules and regulations specific to children's environments, both indoors and outdoors, including those addressing accessibility for children with physical disabilities.
- 1.7 Selects and makes accessible materials for children's play, exploration and learning that cover the range of developmental ages and abilities represented in the program.
- 1.8 Recognizes that sufficient individual space is needed to hold childrens' to keep their individual belongings.
- 1.9 Provides an organized and sufficiently stocked play and learning environment that encourages independence, choice, creativity and responsibility for self and others.



LEVEL 2

- 2.1 Articulates how changes in the environment may affect the behavior of children and makes adaptations to the environment when necessary.
- 2.2 Provides a balance of spaces for activities that are child-directed and teacher-directed, individual and group, and indoor and outdoor.
- 2.3 Provides appropriate, separate spaces for a range of activity levels, from quiet relaxation to active physical exercise.
- 2.4 Ensures that physical aspects of the room, such as temperature, noise level and lighting, are comfortable for children.
- 2.5 Makes a space for privacy that is easily supervised and accessible for individuals and small groups.
- 2.6 Arranges the room into separate interest areas to enable individual or small groups of children to enjoy in a variety of separate activities without interruption or conflict with others.
- 2.7 Plans opportunities for children to provide input about the physical environment.
- 2.8 Uses and displays real world materials relevant to children's experiences and interests that demonstrate acceptance of race, gender, culture, language and special needs.



LEVEL 3

- 3.1 Continuously observes and evaluates how the space is affecting the behavior of children and manages the environment accordingly.
- 3.2 Articulates and applies current theory and research on the environment to support individual and interpersonal growth.
- 3.3 Evaluates the learning environment, teaching strategies and materials to maximize the learning potential for individual children.
- 3.4 Models a continuing process of observation* and assessment* to guide modification to the environment, teaching strategies and expectations.
- 3.5 Incorporates research and best practices regarding the impact on children of physical components of the environment, such as lighting, colors, textures and surfaces, natural elements and noise level, into the design of both indoor and outdoor environments.
- 3.6 Advocates* for full accessibility for children and adults with physical disabilities in all afterschool programs.
- 3.7 Ensures and/or advocates for adequate resources to provide children of all abilities and interests with rich learning environments that support each of the academic content areas, including creative arts, physical education and technology.

Learning Environments & Experiences

- 1.10 Makes a safe, outdoor space accessible daily.
- 1.11 Identifies educational materials and products that are effective and age-appropriate in supporting learning in each academic content area.
- 2.9 Recognizes that the outdoors can be an extension of the classroom, not only for physical play but for exploratory, multi-dimensional and intellectual stimulation.
- 2.10 Ensures that all spaces within the programming area are easily accessible to children enrolled in the program who have physical limitations, or makes accommodations* as necessary.
- 2.11 Evaluates the effectiveness of educational materials and products for supporting learning in each academic content area and provides a variety of effective materials for the age range of children present.

Competencies – Learning Experiences

Knowledge in this area of professional practice is demonstrated when the afterschool professional:

LEVEL 1

- 1.1 Develops and implements a daily schedule and routines, as appropriate.
- 1.2 Recognizes that afterschool programs provide many informal learning opportunities beyond the typical structured school day.
- 1.3 Recognizes that learning should be child-centered* and occurs in a variety of ways (e.g. physical, auditory, experiential*, interpersonal and artistic).
- 1.4 Exhibits an awareness of the program’s mission and philosophy and plans and implements activities accordingly.
- 1.5 Recognizes the developmental domains* (physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional and social) and academic content areas,* and how they can be incorporated into learning experiences.
- 1.6 Supports and encourages differing degrees of participation dependent on comfort levels and/or special learning needs of children.
- 1.7 Frequently engages children in meaningful conversation to support and extend learning.
- 1.8 Supports children’s creative expressions in a variety of media (e.g., music, drama, art).
- 1.9 Communicates with parents about children’s activities and accomplishments using sensitivity and respect.



LEVEL 2

- 2.1 Evaluates the daily schedule or routine and provides the opportunity for children to have input.
- 2.2 Plans and implements curriculum and instructional practices based on knowledge of individual children’s needs, interests, abilities, knowledge of academic expectations, and progress in the child’s school environment.
- 2.3 Incorporates developmental domains and academic content areas in an integrated curriculum* that includes appropriate materials, activities and strategies.
- 2.4 Engages children in meaningful interactions by using open-ended questions, higher-level thinking and reasoning appropriate for individual learning needs.
- 2.5 Uses a variety of grouping strategies with emphasis on natural groupings and interactions.
- 2.6 Encourages parent and community input in program planning, participation and involvement.
- 2.7 Demonstrates inclusive practices that foster a greater awareness of diversity (i.e. cultures, customs, genders, languages and abilities).
- 2.8 Provides ample resources and materials and time for children to engage in a wide variety of creative experiences.



LEVEL 3

- 3.1 Designs and/or promotes learning opportunities that extend beyond the school curriculum using additional resources, materials and experiences.
- 3.2 Implements and/or promotes strategies to support children’s role in planning curriculum based on the interests, skill levels and potential of each child.
- 3.3 Seeks out new theory and research on learning, teaching strategies and curriculum design that support children in all areas of development; integrates new knowledge into current practice; and shares it with others.
- 3.4 Incorporates and/or encourages meaningful and engaging long-term projects in the curriculum that engage children in solving real-world problems, and that connect them to their neighborhood, community and world.
- 3.5 Models and/or shares expertise in evaluating the learning environment, teaching strategies and materials to maximize the learning potential for individual children.
- 3.6 Uses and/or promotes a continuing process of appropriate child assessment to guide differentiated instruction* and modification of the curriculum and environment.



Learning Environments & Experiences

- 1.10 Recognizes the ways in which the design of experiences and activities can limit the full engagement of children with special needs, and seeks guidance in making changes that enable greater participation.
- 2.9 Supports and encourages creative expression in which the child is the primary decision-maker and evaluator throughout the process.
- 2.10 Encourages active involvement in activities, or offers an appropriate alternative to each child's individual needs and interests.
- 2.11 Recognizes that the adult role is to facilitate, rather than to direct, activities.
- 2.12 Creates a positive environment where children feel safe and where mistakes are accepted as a part of the learning process.
- 2.13 Encourages the development of life skills that will positively affect the child and prepare her or him to be a contributing member of society.
- 2.14 Articulates the links between curriculum, program mission and philosophy, and research and recommended practices.
- 2.15 Ensures that all experiences and activities are designed to allow for full participation of children in the program with special needs.
- 2.16 Integrates various language strategies for second-language learners through tools such as visual, written, verbal and graphic organizers*.
- 3.7 Seeks information about and supports a variety of strategies for supporting second-language learners in afterschool programs, including facilitating partnerships with individuals and organizations within the family's cultural and linguistic community.
- 3.8 Models and/or promotes effective communication to a variety of audiences on the links between various learning areas, activities and skills that afterschool professionals foster.
- 3.9 Articulates to families and colleagues the importance of a child-centered* approach and develops and/or provides strategies to assist their understanding.
- 3.10 Articulates the major theories of children's development and learning and applies these theories to diverse settings.
- 3.11 Advocates for and educates others about full inclusion* of children with special needs into all aspects of afterschool programming.



Part 3: Resources

Although many of these words may have other definitions, the definition given in this document best fits in the context of afterschool programming.

Academic content areas – Areas of knowledge traditionally taught in formal education settings, including but not limited to mathematics, science, language arts and social studies.

Accommodation – A change (e.g. in environment or activity) that enables a child to achieve behavioral, developmental or learning goals.

Advocacy – Active support of an idea or cause; especially the act of pleading or arguing for something, speaking out on issues of concern. This can be as formal as meeting with a legislator; as intensive as engaging in efforts to bring a change in laws or policies; or as simple as telling a neighbor about the impact of a law or the importance of quality.

Anti-bias – An approach to education intended to create awareness and eliminate prejudice against others on the basis of personal characteristics (including but not limited to race, culture, gender or ability or disability).

Assessment – The process of gathering information through the use of multiple tools and resources to make decisions.

Best practice(s) – Professional practices recommended as the most effective in achieving agreed-upon goals, based on research and consensus of experts.

Bullying – Physical or psychological intimidation that occurs repeatedly over time and creates an ongoing pattern of harassment and abuse.

Challenging behavior – Actions or responses that: indicate the child is not exercising self-regulation or is stressed, afraid or insecure; interfere with children's learning, development and success; are harmful to the child, other children or adults; or put a child at risk for later social problems or school failure.

Child-centered – Planned around the ideas, interests and needs of the children in the program.

Code of ethics – Defines the core values of the field and provides guidance for what professionals should do when they encounter conflicting obligations or responsibilities in their work, both personally and professionally. It defines appropriate boundaries relating to families, children, colleagues and community relationships. Specific ethical issues may focus on areas such as confidentiality or use of technology.

Communicable – A condition that can be spread or transmitted from one individual to another.

Community – A social group whose members share something in common such as physical location, culture, language or purpose.

Community resources/services – Assets, resources and programs available to children and families within a particular community, especially those that can help a family cope with a difficult situation or meet a specific need.

Confidentiality – Ensuring that information is accessible only to those authorized to have access. This includes any information, whether oral, written or computerized, that directly applies to an individual requesting or receiving services from an agency. These include handwritten notes, tapes, films and disks, as well as oral communication based on such information.

Core values – Critical attitudes and beliefs that shape one's philosophy and guide one's behavior, especially when dealing with work-related ethical issues.

Culturally/linguistically sensitive – Showing respect for children and their families regarding cultures, spoken languages and ethnic groups.

Culture – All of the socially transmitted behavior patterns, values, beliefs and knowledge that are typical of a population or community of people at a given time.

Curriculum – The structure, organization, balance and presentation of expected or recommended study topics. A curriculum contains three primary elements:

Substance – communicates what should be taught;

Purpose – communicates why a topic should be taught;

Practice – communicates how a topic should be taught (and learned).

Developmental domains – Areas or categories of skills and concepts that children develop or learn over time. Domains typically include the following areas of development: social, emotional, cognitive, language and literacy, physical (large motor, fine motor, perceptual/sensory), and creative.

Developmentally appropriate – Designed on the basis of knowledge of: how children develop and learn; the strengths, needs and interests of individual children; and the social and cultural contexts in which children live.

Differentiated instruction – The professional proactively plans varied approaches to the content, method and assessment of instruction based on the individual characteristics of each child (e.g., ability, interest, level of skill).

Diversity – With respect to serving children and families, diversity refers to all of the ways in which children and families can differ from one another, particularly in those characteristics that have strong ties to an individual's self-identity.

Emergency preparedness – All activities designed or undertaken to minimize the effects of a hazard upon people, to deal with the immediate emergency conditions that would be caused by the hazard, and to repair or restore vital utilities or facilities destroyed or damaged by the hazard.

Empowering – An approach that invites families to assert an active role in the care and education of their children.

Environment – All of the physical surroundings and social and cultural conditions that physically and/or emotionally affect children and their ability to learn, grow, develop and feel comfortable.

Ethics – The moral issues that arise because of the special knowledge and position of the professional, and how the use of this knowledge and power should be governed when providing a service to the public.

Ethical dilemma – A moral conflict that involves determining appropriate conduct when an individual faces conflicting professional values and responsibilities.

Experiential education – A philosophy and methodology in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection to increase knowledge, develop skills and clarify values. Experiential educators work in a number of different arenas, including the afterschool field.

Family – A social unit of two or more people who share goals and values, have long-term commitments, and often but not always live in the same household. A family may include children and adults living in the home, adults who are responsible for the long-term care and well-being of the child, a child's legal guardian, and/or parents who may not live in the same household as the child.

Family systems theory – A framework that emphasizes the notion that everything that happens to any family member affects all other family members.

Formal (observation/assessment) – Following accepted rules and standards for use of forms, structure and arrangement of outcomes.

Graphic organizers – A graphic display that depicts the relationships between facts, terms, and or ideas within a learning task.

Health – A state of wellness; complete physical, mental, social and emotional well-being. The quality of one element effects the state of the others.

Hydration – The taking in of water.

Hygiene – Sanitary practices; cleanliness.

IEP – Individualized Education Plan; Federal law mandates that school districts provide every student with a free appropriate public education, which includes an IEP for children with identified disabilities. An IEP is a plan that is designed to meet the unique educational needs of one child with an identified disability, as defined by federal regulations. Through a formal, prescribed process, an IEP is developed that describes how the student learns, how the student best demonstrates that learning, and what teachers and service providers will do to help the student learn more effectively. IEPs must include functional goals as well as academic goals. By federal law, an IEP team must include: parents; at least one regular education teacher; at least one special education teacher; a representative of the local educational agency; an individual who can interpret assessment data; other individuals with special expertise regarding the child (if requested by parent or agency); and, whenever appropriate, the child.

Inclusion – An educational practice whereby programs enroll both typically developing children and children with identified disabilities; accommodations are made so that children with disabilities are able to fully participate in all activities, routines and meaningful aspects of the day alongside their typically developing peers.

Informal (observation/assessment) – Assessment that does not use standardized or required forms or procedures or is not officially recognized or approved as a regular means of gathering information.

Integrated curriculum – An approach to teaching that attempts to break down barriers between academic subjects and make learning more meaningful; often this occurs by organizing learning around themes or projects that incorporate subject area knowledge and skills in the process of solving a complex problem, investigating a complex topic or carrying out a complex activity.

Leadership – Ability to understand, achieve and maintain institutional quality, as well as to build, manage and sustain organizational culture.

Mentor – A knowledgeable and experienced individual who provides guidance to beginning and inexperienced professionals to support the development of skills and reflective practice. Various strategies of the mentor may include observation and feedback, demonstration of skills, conferencing and providing resources.

Nutrition – Knowledge of food and how it is used by the body.

Objective – Not influenced by emotions or personal biases; based on observable data rather than opinion.

Observation – Gathering information through one or more of the five senses to determine a child's individual needs and learning style.

Play – A range of voluntary, intrinsically motivated, self-directed activities that are normally associated with pleasure and enjoyment.

Positive guidance techniques – Any method used by an adult to encourage positive behavior rather than to punish negative behavior. Examples include modeling appropriate behavior, redirection of a child's action, and aiding the child in developing positive problem solving skills.

Professional resources – Education, information, materials, support services and advocacy for afterschool stakeholders, including providers, teachers, administrators, trainers, and those working with families.

Pro-social behavior – Behavior that is beneficial to all members of a community and consistent with community laws and behavioral standards.

Public policy – A system of laws, regulatory measures, courses of action and funding priorities concerning a given topic, created and enacted by a governmental entity or its representatives.

Reciprocal interaction – An interaction with a child in which both adult and child are actively contributing, listening and responding to one another.

Reliability – Consistency of test scores over time and between testers; the extent to which it is possible to generalize from one test result conducted by one person to test results conducted at different times or by different observers.

Risky behaviors – Behaviors that put an individual's health or safety at risk; regarding children, typically includes but is not limited to: alcohol, tobacco and drug use, sexual behaviors and self-injury.

Safety – Security and freedom from danger.

Sanitize – Clean or sterilize.

Scaffolding – A teaching strategy in which instruction begins at a level where the child can succeed with support from the teacher. Support is gradually removed over time, shifting responsibility to the learner.

Self-regulation – A child's ability to gain control of bodily functions, manage powerful emotions, and maintain focus and attention.

Special needs – Children with special needs are those who have disabilities, developmental delays or chronic health, emotional or behavioral needs that have been identified through a formal assessment process.

Standards – Agreed upon expectations for children, programs and professionals. Varying terms are used to describe standards:

Academic content standards – Expectations about what children should know and be able to do within a particular discipline such as math, science, language or the arts, at particular grade levels;

Program standards – Expectations for the characteristics and quality of schools, child care centers or other education settings for children; and

Professional standards – Expectations identified by professional organizations for those working within that professional field.

Strength-based – The ability to recognize and build on existing abilities and competencies in children to refrain from a negative focus.

Temperament – An inborn and consistent, unique quality that determines how a person will respond to his or her environment. Included in temperament are adaptability, quality of mood, attention span and persistence. Temperament is an indicator for staff of how parents and children will react to change and new situations.

Valid – Extent to which a test measures what its authors claim it measures; appropriateness of the inferences that can be made on test results.

Volunteers – Individuals who participate in carrying out the activities and goals of the program or organization but are not paid employees.

Research in child development and afterschool practices provides the foundation upon which the CKC is built. Research findings presented in the following references were useful in the development of the document.

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ONLINE RESOURCES

Professional membership organizations:

- Ohio Afterschool Network – www.ohioafterschoolnetwork.org
- National AfterSchool Association – www.naaweb.org
- Ohio AfterSchool Association – www.ohioafterschool.org
- Ohio Association of Child Care Providers – www.oaccp.org
- Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children – (state affiliate of the National AIEYC) www.oaeyc.org

Ohio documents & resources:

- Ohio Educator Standards – <http://esb.ode.state.oh.us>
- Ohio Academic Content Standards – <http://education.ohio.gov>
- Ohio Early Childhood Core Knowledge and Competencies – www.occr.org/core_knowledge/CoreKnowledge.pdf
- Ohio Department of Health Communicable Disease Chart (Form #08087) – <http://www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/inter.asp>

Web sites with multiple publications, reports & resources:

- Center for Summer Learning – www.summerlearning.org
- Afterschool.org – www.afterschool.org
- School Age Notes – www.schoolagenotes.com
- National Institute on Out-of-School Time – www.niost.org
- National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care. <http://nrc.uchsc.edu/>
- 4-H Afterschool – www.4-hafterschool.org
- National Youth Development Information Center – <http://www.nydic.org>
- Teaching Tolerance – www.tolerance.org
- Search Institute – www.search-institute.org
- CYFERnet (Children, Youth and Families Education & Research Network) – www.cyfernet.org



WHAT PARENTS
ARE SAYING

“Your program has been a great part of my children’s success. The teachers are able to access them after school hours to patch the gap between home and school. The statement, ‘I don’t have any homework’ isn’t questionable now!”

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Career resources for early childhood
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