

Iowa Afterschool Alliance Quality Standards

Revised November 2018



Standard Category	Indicator of Quality	What It Looks Like
Positive Human Relationships	The program promotes and maintains a positive environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> All staff, youth, and volunteers engage with one another and in activities <input type="checkbox"/> Respect is given and received among all program stakeholders <input type="checkbox"/> Interactions between and among staff and youth are positive <input type="checkbox"/> Successes are regularly celebrated <input type="checkbox"/> Good behavior is considered the norm, not something to be celebrated
	The program utilizes positive conflict resolution techniques.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Communication is prioritized first before disciplinary action taken <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict resolution is based on brain science and takes into consideration youth development <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict is seen as an opportunity to learn and understand emotions and the situation leading to conflict <input type="checkbox"/> Corrective actions are identified that fulfill the needs of both perpetrator and victim
	Individualized conversations and interactions occur between adults and youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Staff take time to understand each youth and their life circumstances <input type="checkbox"/> Staff prioritize positive youth interactions unique to each individual youth served <input type="checkbox"/> Staff are able to individualize their attention to each youth while maintaining group control
	Youth needs are identified and provided for by a diverse team of stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Community and school partners work as a team to meet the diverse needs of youth <input type="checkbox"/> Parents are engaged in programming as advisors, participants, and partners
	Ratios are appropriate to the needs and purposes of the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The program maintains staff ratios that are appropriate to the age and unique needs of all youth <input type="checkbox"/> Lower adult to youth ratios are used with younger youth or youth with high support needs <input type="checkbox"/> Lower ratios are used based on the need of the activity, such as maintaining safety on a field trip or a complex activity requiring more adult support
	A safe, supportive environment is prioritized and maintained.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Inclusion and diversity are encouraged and are practiced, not just given lip service <input type="checkbox"/> Program adults and partners are approachable and are prepared to field youth questions and concerns as they arise <input type="checkbox"/> Program leaders model safe and supportive environments through their supervisory practices and procedures

Standard Category

Indicator of Quality

What It Looks Like

Appropriate Indoor and Outdoor Environments

Program space is suitable for the program offered.

- The space is clean, hazard-free, safe, and provides enough room for all components of the activities offered
- Distractions are minimized as much as possible to ensure youth are able to fully engage in the activity
- Alternative spaces are sought that best align with a program activity, such as a location within the community or a school computer lab

Program space is adequately supervised during program hours.

- Youth check-in and check-out procedures are in place and consistently followed
- Program spaces are monitored for entry by parents, partners, staff, and community members

Adequate developmentally appropriate materials are accessible to youth.

- Activity materials are prepared and ready for use when needed
- Books are out and available for youth and reflect the breadth of reading levels in the program
- A diversity of resources are used over the program day to support program goals

All program space is accommodating of children with special needs.

- Space is accessible to wheelchairs and other mobility supports
- Youth with mobility support needs are able to fully participate in programming
- Youth with sensory sensitivity have spaces where they are able to go with minimal distractions if necessary

Effective Programming

Choice, creativity, independence, and responsibility are practiced.

- Program has a process for collecting input from youth and parents regarding programming and/or clubs
- Activities provide opportunities for youth to explore concepts on their own and within groups
- Activities promote critical thinking
- Staff serve as facilitators of activities

Opportunities for growth and development, learning and reflection, and exploring interests exist.

- Activities have clear learning goals
- Activities consistently provide opportunities for youth to reflect on their learning

Intentional planning and consistent execution of program activities occurs while allowing for flexibility as needed.

- Staff are given time to develop high quality lesson plans at least once a week
- Program has a monthly and weekly calendar
- Program has a Plan B in case original plans are not able to be executed

Nutritional snacks and meals are offered.

- At minimum, USDA guidelines are followed for snacks and meals

Youth contributions and accomplishments are recognized and showcased.

- Program hosts youth performances or showcases at least once per year
- When possible, youth accomplishments are communicated both internally and externally
- Program has goals for youth and youth are recognized for achieving goals

Standard Category

Indicator of Quality

What It Looks Like

Strong Partnerships

Frequent and positive family communications occur.

- Drop off and pick up times are used to converse with families
- Program has a regular newsletter that shares positive information about the program
- Program maintains a social media presence to share good news and stories

Opportunities for family involvement/engagement exist.

- Specific programming is offered to engage family, such as family nights
- Services are geared towards family members' needs, such as connections to community resources and GED classes

Community resource lists are available to families in need.

- Flyers are easily accessible to families
- A resource board may be used to post information

Families serve as advocates for the program.

- Program encourages families to speak up on behalf of the program at school board meetings and other community events
- Program collects stories from families and shares them out regularly

Youth are actively involved in the community.

- Service learning and community service projects get youth out into the community
- Field trips are offered

Program information is effectively communicated to multiple stakeholders in support of youth development and of the program and to foster collaboration.

- Program coordinates an advisory group that brings together community stakeholders
- Program leaders regularly attend school board and other community meetings to share information on the program

Effective Administration

Plans are created, executed, and reviewed for all aspects of program planning, budgeting, and sustainability by a diverse group of stakeholders.

- Program maintains checks and balances to ensure all program components are meeting stated goals
- Program engages a diversity of stakeholders in an advisory capacity

Program offerings, policies, and procedures are based on research and/or evidence-based practices and are effectively communicated with a variety of stakeholders.

- Program leaders keep up-to-date on current research in the field
- Program leaders and staff participate in internal and external professional development throughout the year
- Program has a process to update policies and procedures regularly
- Program communicates updates to policies and procedures with stakeholders

The program is committed to continuous quality improvement.

- Program leaders keep up-to-date on current research in the field
- Program leaders and staff participate in internal and external professional development throughout the year
- Program leaders engage all stakeholders in program improvement throughout the year to ensure widespread adoption of best practices
- Program acknowledges accomplishments and shares them widely with stakeholders

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What It Looks Like

Adults are adequately oriented to the program before working/volunteering and are also offered ongoing professional development.

- Program has an established orientation and consistently provides orientation prior to service
- Program provides opportunities for staff to participate in internal and external professional development related to their role and responsibilities throughout the year

Appropriate documentation is obtained and kept to ensure health and safety as well as minimize any potential liability.

- Youth records are retained to ensure confidentiality and privacy
- Youth records are readily accessible in the case of an emergency
- Youth records are obtained as early as possible once the youth joins the program
- Youth records are regularly updated

Program evaluation is conducted on regular basis with a variety of stakeholders. Changes made are reflective of the feedback given and are communicated with all stakeholders.

- Program has an evaluation framework that is regularly updated based on current practice and intended outcomes
- All staff and stakeholders are aware of evaluation practices and procedures, purpose, and eventual use of the data
- Data is used for continuous improvement and outcome measurement

Program stakeholders are advocates on behalf of the program and youth at large.

- Program leaders educate policymakers on the program's purpose and results
- All program stakeholders advocate for youth and the program in the community, giving voice to those that are not often heard
- Program leaders engage in community dialogues around issues relevant to the program and youth served by the program



Contact the IAA at mrich@sppg.com or 515-237-0328.
Find out more on our website at www.iowaafterschoolalliance.org.