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Quality Standards and Indicators¹
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I. Management and Administration

The program displays effective leadership, sound fiscal management, and coherent policies and procedures that support quality and sustainability

- The program has a clearly defined mission, goals, and measurable outcomes that are supported by stakeholders and used to drive program design, implementation, and improvement
- The program has clear and well-defined channels of communication between staff members, between staff and participants, and between staff and families
- Staff-to-participant ratios and group size enable staff to meet the needs of participants
- The organization has sound fiscal management and a plan to support sustainability, follows Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, and has appropriate expenditures that focus on the well-being of children

II. Staffing, Volunteers, and Professional Development

The program employs and supports the professional growth of highly effective staff and volunteers that are equipped to create an environment that supports healthy development

- The program works to recruit the highest quality staff and volunteers according to an adopted core competency framework and develops strategies to decrease staff turnover
- Program staff and volunteers are provided with relevant training and ongoing professional development that supports growth and builds on strategies for effective program practice
- Staff and volunteers are trained to address cultural and individual differences in working with participants and their families
- Program managers assess job performance and satisfaction among staff and volunteers and create individual professional development plans on an ongoing basis
- The organization offers a clear salary structure, fair compensation, and benefits
- Staff and volunteers build positive relationships and create engaging learning environments for all participants
- Staff and volunteers have annual criminal background checks and copies are kept on file

¹ These standards and indicators are pulled from “Expand Learning: Building a Framework for Out-of-School Time”, a 2013 report from Council for Children’s Rights and The Larry King Center.



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III. Healthy and Safe Environment

The space/facilities and program environment protect and promote the physical, mental, and social/emotional health of all participants

- Participants are supervised during all program activities and appropriate emergency procedures and supplies are in place
- The program's indoor and outdoor facilities are welcoming, safe, clean and accessible to children and their families
- Staff and volunteers are trained in responding to health needs, illness or injury, evacuation and emergency, and in recognizing and reporting potential child maltreatment
- Program materials, space, and equipment are developmentally appropriate and fit the needs of participants, staff and the curriculum
- Staff creates a physical and psychologically safe environment that respects diversity and allows participants to express themselves without fear or harm
- The program provides participants with the opportunity to learn about and practice healthy eating and physical activity
- The program promotes character development and healthy choices
- Policies, procedures, and services create an environment that values and embraces diversity and equity regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, income level, national origin, physical ability, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity and expression

IV. Supportive Relationships

The program creates high expectations for participants, builds a positive and inclusive social environment, and builds connections among staff, participants, and families

- Program staff reinforces and models positive behavior and uses positive techniques to address negative behavior by participants
- Participants interact with one another in positive ways and feel they belong
- Staff relationships with participants are positive, supportive, nurturing, and consistent in responding to the individual needs of participants
- Staff encourages and fosters respect, independence, and responsibility in all participants
- Staff encourages participants to manage feelings and resolve conflicts appropriately
- Staff and volunteers interact with families in positive ways and provide opportunities for meaningful engagement of participants' families



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V. Learning Experiences

Programming and activities are developmentally appropriate and intentionally designed to build skills that support the physical, cognitive, social and emotional development of all participants

- Program design and activities incorporate active, meaningful, and engaging learning that promotes mastery, encourages collaboration, and expands participants' horizons
- The program maintains high expectations for all participants and provides individualized instruction to meet the needs of all participants
- Program links goals and curricula with development of 21st-century skills (such as life and career skills, critical thinking and communication, and media and technology skills), and aligns activities to school standards and curriculum
- The program provides opportunities for participants to interact with and learn from peers and role models of diverse backgrounds
- Program activities are enhanced with appropriate materials, supplies, and technology where needed

VI. Child and Youth Involvement

The program provides and supports intentional opportunities for children and youth to play a meaningful role in the program and make authentic choices about activities

- The program develops leadership among and provides leadership opportunities to all participants under the guidance of program staff
- The program provides a wide variety of activities that promote participant choice
- The program involves participants in planning, program development, and implementation, and creates opportunities for participant-led activities
- The program supports participants to navigate the learning space independently
- Participants have opportunities to set goals and make plans



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VII. Family and Community Partnerships

The program intentionally builds and leverages collaborative, integrated partnerships among internal and external stakeholders to achieve program goals

- Program policies and activities are responsive to the needs and aspirations of the community
- The program is linked to the broader community through family engagement, peer networking and knowledge-sharing, dedication to best practices, and incorporation of school and community resources
- Staff is trained to connect participants and their families to appropriate social services when needed
- Ensure that program staff maintains two-way communication with all partners as appropriate including families, school staff, and community partners, around program mission, core values, program implementation, and participant outcomes
- The program actively cultivates partnerships with community organizations (neighborhoods, businesses, faith partners, cultural organizations, etc.) to provide real-world learning opportunities for participants

VIII. Continuous Improvement

The program utilizes a variety of information, mechanisms, and procedures to create a learning culture, promote high standards of operation, accountability and quality, and improve outcomes for participants

- The program has in place internal and external evaluation tools that are used to ensure effectiveness and share success with stakeholders
- The program establishes measurable goals and objectives that are connected with the mission of the organization, aligned with program activities, and reflect research on effective out-of-school time programming
- The program gives participants, families, staff, and other stakeholders opportunities to assess the program through an annual survey
- The program regularly uses participant data, feedback from children and families, and program outcome data to guide program administration, design, planning, implementation, and evaluation
- The program works to expand access by regularly identifying and addressing potential barriers to participation including transportation, neighborhood safety, language barriers and cost