



Harvard Family Research Project  
Harvard Graduate School of Education

## After School Program Quality Assessment Categories of Standards

Harvard Family Research Project conducted a scan of after school program quality standards and assessment tools.<sup>1</sup> The scan was based on several data sources:

1. A Web search of existing quality assessment tools
2. Ongoing tracking by the Council of Chief State School Officers
3. A Web-based poll administered to after school staff, administrators, collaborative agencies, and funders
4. HFRP's own expertise in understanding and evaluating quality after school programs
5. Input from experts in the area of after school program quality

Below are the higher order categories of standards that emerged from the 43 after school quality assessment tools reviewed. Although the standards have been clustered thematically, the language used by their developer has been preserved.

### **Programming, Activities, and Opportunities**

(50 citations)

<b>Standard Category</b>	<b>Tools Using this Category<sup>2</sup></b>
Developmental Program Offerings	St. Louis
Effective Programming	NIOST, DC 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC
Cultural and Artistic Enrichment	Illinois
Program and Activities	Michigan
Program and Need	VT 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC
Program Areas	Baltimore, CYITC
Program Development and Curriculum	PlusTime NH
Program Implementation	Philadelphia
Programming	NCEA, Chicago
Programming and Activities	PASA, NYSAN/TASC
Skill Development	P/PV
Skills	LA
Skill-Building	CNYD
Overall Program Schedule and Offerings	MARS
Challenging and Engaging Learning Experiences	CA CCS
Academic Enrichment Opportunities	Illinois
Enriched Learning Opportunities	NAESP
Balance of Academics and Enrichment	NCCAP
Cognitive Growth Opportunities	PPRS

<sup>1</sup> The scope of this project is to examine program quality tools. Therefore, we excluded tools and documents that solely addressed staff and/or youth competencies, as well as those focused on regulation and licensure.

<sup>2</sup> See *Key to Tools Cited* at end of this document for explanation of abbreviations.

Opportunities	PAAT
Learning Facilitation	MARS
Teaching and Learning	CA
Staff-Directed Instructional Strategies	PSA
Engagement	High/Scope
Academics	QAS
Social-Emotional and Life-Skills Building	Illinois
Variety	Packard
Public Speaking Programs	SC 4-H
Activities	NSACA, Baltimore, CYITC, Youthnet SA, Memphis, Philadelphia, SACERS, YMCA
Activities/Curriculum	Boston
Activity Characteristics	P/PV
Activity Content and Structure	PSA
Attractive and Meaningful Activities	Colorado Trust
Engaging Activities	FCNY
Opportunities and Enrichment Activities	Illinois
Frequency and Nature of Activities and Offerings for Youth	APT
Program Design and Activities	ACA
Educational Activities and Events	SC 4-H
Recreation	QAS

### Human Relationships

(33 citations)

Standard Category	Tools Using this Category
Human Relationships	NSACA, NYSAN/TASC, SCASA, Baltimore, CYITC, LABYB, Chicago, Youthnet SA, PASA, Philadelphia, YMCA
Positive Human Relationships	NIOST
Human Relationships and Staffing	Michigan
Supportive Environment and Communication	MARS
Supportive Relationships	Packard, CNYD, CA CCS
Interactions	SACERS
Supportive, Caring Climate (Positive Adult Relationships)	Colorado Trust
Social Climate	QAS
Caring and Trusting Relationships	FCNY
Opportunities to Develop Positive Relationships	Illinois
Building Caring Relationships/Behavior Guidance	Boston
Opportunities for Interaction	High/Scope
Staff-Child Relationships	Memphis
Supportive Relationships with Adults	PPRS
Adult-Youth Relations	P/PV
Staff-Youth Relations	St. Louis
Staff-Directed Relationships	PSA
Participant and Staff Interactions	NCCAP
Supportive Relationships with Peers	PPRS

Peer Support	P/PV
Youth-Directed Relationships	PSA

### Positive Youth Development

(31 citations)

Standard Category	Tools Using this Category
Opportunities for Contribution	FCNY
No Staff Over-Control (Autonomy Opportunities)	PPRS
Opportunities for Decision-Making and Leadership	P/PV
Opportunities for Youth Responsibility, Autonomy, and Leadership	APT
Opportunities for Teens	SC 4-H
Participation in Planning	LABYB
Youth as Partners and Resources	Colorado Trust
Youth Centered Policies and Practices	High/Scope
What Youth Do	Youthnet Teen
Youth Participation/Engagement	NYSAN/TASC, P/PV, CA CCS, PSA
Youth	PlusTime NH
Meaningful Youth Involvement	CNYD
Student Engagement	PPRS
Active Engagement of Participants in Learning	NCCAP
Consistent Participant Attendance	NCCAP
Attendance	CA CCS
Exposure	Packard
Youth Development	QAS, CA CCS, Boston
Cultural Competence	Boston, Packard
High Expectations	FCNY
High Expectations for All Students and Staff	High/Scope
Mastery Orientation	PPRS
Supports	PAAT
Needs and Interests of Individual Youth	APT
Recognition of Program Participants	SC 4-H

### Family, School, and Community Involvement

(27 citations)

Standard Category	Tools Using this Category
Strong Partnerships with Young People, Families, Schools, and Communities	NIOST
Strong Partnerships and Sustainability	DC 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC
Parent–Family–Community Partnerships	NYSAN/TASC
Active Family–Community–School Partnerships	NCCAP
Community and Family Involvement	NCEA
Connecting with Families	APT
Community Collaboration	Illinois
Neighborhood and Community Connections	CA CCS
Community Contacts	RAND
Community Development	CYITC

Community Involvement	Memphis, CNYD
Community Involvement and Support	NAESP
Connections to Communities and Families	PlusTime NH, QAS
Families and Schools	Boston
Family Involvement	Illinois
Parent Involvement	Memphis
Workers as Community Resources	Boston
Linkages Between Day and After-School	NYSAN/TASC, DC 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC
School and After School	NAESP
Partnering with Schools	APT
Academic Alignment	CA CCS
Involvement	CA
Connection	LABYB
Collaboration	LABYB

### Staffing

(25 citations)

Standard Category	Tools Using this Category
Staffing	QAS
Staff Management Practices	RAND
Dynamic, Qualified, and Caring Staff	NCCAP
Staff	PlusTime NH, Memphis, St. Louis
Staff to Promote Quality	APT
What Staff Do	Youthnet Teen
Staff-Staff Relations	MARS
Professionalism	Boston
Staff Retention	Packard
Staff Development	SACERS, CA CCS
Staffing and Training	NCEA
Staffing and Professional Development	NAESP, CA, PASA, NYSAN/TASC, DC 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC
Ongoing Staff Training and Development	Illinois
Staff Training	Packard
Training	Memphis
Commitment to Professional Development and Professionalism	SC 4-H
Volunteers	SC 4-H
Human Resources	ACA

### Physical Space and Environment

(29 citations)

Standard Category	Tools Using this Category
Appropriate Environments	NIOST, DC 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC
Environments	PSA, Chicago, Boston
Environment/Climate	NYSAN/TASC, YMCA
Environmental Factors	FCNY
Welcoming and Inclusive Environment	APT

Supportive Environment	High/Scope
Physical Facility-Space, Safety, and Sanitation	St. Louis
Indoor Environment	NSACA, Baltimore, CYITC, Youthnet SA, Philadelphia
Space	Memphis
Space and Furnishings	SACERS
Appropriateness of Space	P/PV
Outdoor Environment	NSACA, Baltimore, CYITC, Youthnet SA, Philadelphia
Physical Environment	MARS, SCASA
Indoor and Outdoor Environment	Michigan
Facility and Program Space	QAS
Site and Food Service	ACA

### **Program Administration and Management**

(27 citations)

<b>Standard Category</b>	<b>Tools Using this Category</b>
Administration	NSACA, Michigan, Baltimore, Chicago, CYITC, Youthnet SA, PASA, Philadelphia, St. Louis
Effective Administration	YMCA
Administration/Organization	NYSAN/TASC
Administration and Infrastructure	PlusTime NH
Program Management Practices	RAND
Consistent and Defined Program Management	Illinois
Management	VT 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC
Management and Administration	NCEA, SCASA
Program Management and Governance	DC 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC
Governance and Administration	CA
Program Management	Boston
Operational Management	ACA
Effective Staff and Administration	NIOST
Program Management, Support, and Internal Communications	SC 4-H
Policies and Procedures	NAESP
Leadership	QAS
Leadership, Mentorship, and Management	CA CCS
Programming and Advisory Committees	SC 4-H

### **Safety, Health, and Nutrition**

(26 citations)

<b>Standard Category</b>	<b>Tools Using this Category</b>
Safety/Health/Nutrition	NSACA, Michigan, Baltimore, CYITC, Youthnet SA, Philadelphia, Boston
Safe and Appropriate Program Environment	Illinois
Safety	LABYB, Memphis, CNYD
Safety and Nutrition	PlusTime NH
Safety and Trusting Environment	Colorado Trust

Health	Memphis
Health and Safety	SCASA, SACERS, QAS, YMCA
Health, Safety, and the Environment	PASA
Healthy Lifestyle Promotion	Illinois
Orderly, Safe, and Healthy Environment	NCCAP
Nutrition	LABYB, Memphis
Safe Environment	High/Scope
Safety and Security	NAESP
Health and Wellness	ACA
Physical and Emotional Safety	CA CCS

### **Program Planning and Structure**

(17 citations)

<b>Standard Category</b>	<b>Tools Using this Category</b>
Program Planning	Philadelphia
Program Planning and Improvement	QAS
Program Structure	SCASA, SACERS
Appropriate Structure	PPRS
Staff Planning Practices	APT
Vision	CA CCS
Community-Based Programs	NAESP
Single-Purpose Programs	Michigan
Pick-Up Times	MARS
Transition Times	MARS
Arrival Time	MARS
Snack Time	MARS
Presentation	P/PV
Transportation	ACA, Illinois, NAESP

### **Assessment, Evaluation, and Accountability**

(12 citations)

<b>Standard Category</b>	<b>Tools Using this Category</b>
Assessment and Accountability	CA
Measuring Outcomes/Evaluation	NYSAN/TASC, DC 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC
Measuring and Managing Outcomes	CA CCS
Evaluation	VT 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC, SCASA
Evaluation and Assessment	Packard
Continuous Quality Improvement	LABYB
Research and Evaluation	NCEA
Outcomes	LABYB
Program Monitoring and Evaluation	Illinois
Standards	CA

## Organizational Capacity

(9 citations)

<b>Standard Category</b>	<b>Tools Using this Category</b>
Agency Capacity	LABYB
What Agency Does	Youthnet Teen
Building Leadership and Advocacy	Boston
Policy and Advocacy	NCEA
Organization	PAAT
Organization Structure	FCNY
Policies	Memphis
Collaboration and Networking	SC 4-H
Participation in Regional, State, and National Programs	SC 4-H

## Supervision and Behavior Management

(6 citations)

<b>Standard Category</b>	<b>Tools Using this Category</b>
Supervision	MARS, Memphis
Behavior and Group Management	MARS
Behavioral Management	P/PV
No Program Chaos	PPRS
Youth Behavior	MARS

## Sustainability

(6 citations)

<b>Standard Category</b>	<b>Tools Using this Category</b>
Program Sustainability/Growth	NYSAN/TASC
Program Continuity	FCNY
Sustainability	Illinois, LABYB, CA CCS
Marketing and Promotion	SC 4-H

## Equal Access

(5 citations)

<b>Standard Category</b>	<b>Tools Using this Category</b>
Diversity, Access, Inclusion, and Equity	CA CCS
Equity in Participation	LABYB
Access	High/Scope
Opportunity and Equal Educational Access	CA
Special Needs Supplementary Items	SACERS

## Fiscal Management

(4 citations)

Standard Category	Tools Using this Category
Budget	VT 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC
Financing	NCEA
Funding	CA
Financial and Material Resources	NAESP

### Key to Cited Tools

<b>ACA</b>	American Camping Association, <i>Accreditation Standards for Camp Programs and Services</i>
<b>APT</b>	National Institute for Out-of-School Time and Massachusetts Department of Education, <i>Assessing Afterschool Program Practices Tool Program Questionnaire</i>
<b>Baltimore</b>	Baltimore's Safe and Sound Campaign, <i>Standards for Baltimore After-School Opportunities in Youth Places</i>
<b>Boston</b>	Achieve Boston, <i>Achieve Boston's Competency Framework</i>
<b>CA</b>	California Department of Education, <i>Desired Results for Children and Families Programmatic Standards</i>
<b>CA CCS</b>	Center for Collaborative Solutions and Community for Youth Development, <i>Exemplary Practices in Afterschool Program Development</i>
<b>Chicago</b>	Chicago Youth and MOST, <i>Chicago Youth Program Standards</i>
<b>CNYD</b>	Community Network for Youth Development, <i>Youth Development Framework for Practice (Also Boys and Girls Club Program Assessment)</i>
<b>Colorado Trust</b>	The Colorado Trust, <i>Toolkit for Evaluating Positive Youth Development (Program Quality)</i>
<b>CYITC</b>	DC Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation, <i>DC Standards for Out-of-School Time</i>
<b>DC 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC</b>	District of Columbia 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers, <i>Program Quality Self Assessment for Continuous Improvement Planning</i>
<b>FCNY</b>	Fund for the City of New York, <i>Networks for Youth Development Assessment Manual</i>
<b>High/Scope</b>	High/Scope Educational Research Foundations, <i>Youth Program Quality Assessment</i>
<b>Illinois</b>	The Illinois After-School Initiative (Illinois Center for Violence Prevention), <i>Task Force Standards</i>
<b>LABYB</b>	Los Angeles Unified School District Beyond the Bell, <i>Quality Review for the Beyond the Bell Partnerships</i>
<b>MARS</b>	Massachusetts Afterschool Research Study, <i>Assessment of Afterschool Program Practices Tool</i>
<b>Memphis</b>	Memphis City Schools, <i>Standards for Quality School Age Care—Memphis</i>
<b>Michigan</b>	Michigan State Board of Education, <i>Model Standards for Out-of-School Time Programs in Michigan</i>
<b>NAESP</b>	National Association of Elementary School Principals, <i>After School Programs and the K-8 Principal, Standards for Quality School Age Care</i>
<b>NCCAP</b>	North Carolina Center for Afterschool Programs, <i>Established Standards of Excellence Self-Assessment Tool: K-12</i>
<b>NCEA</b>	National Community Education Association, <i>Continuous Improvement Process Quality Rubric for Afterschool Programs</i>
<b>NIOST</b>	National Institute on Out-of-School Time, <i>Assessing School-Age Quality</i>
<b>NSACA</b>	National School-Age Care Association, <i>Standards for Quality School-Age Care</i>

<b>NYEC</b>	National Youth Employment Coalition, <i>Community-Based and Alternative Education Program Self-Assessment</i>
<b>NYSAN/TASC</b>	New York After-School Network and the After-School Corporation, <i>Program Quality Self-Assessment Tool</i>
<b>P/PV</b>	Public/Private Ventures, <i>Beacons Activity Observation Tools</i>
<b>PAAT</b>	University of Wisconsin-Madison, Program and Activity Assessment Tool
<b>Packard</b>	Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health, <i>Programs for Preteens: Benchmarks of Success</i>
<b>PASA</b>	Providence After School Alliance, <i>Quality Standards</i>
<b>Philadelphia</b>	Roberta Newman and Diane Barber, <i>Core Standards for Philadelphia's Youth</i>
<b>PlusTime NH</b>	PlusTime New Hampshire, <i>PlusTime NH Quality Instrument</i>
<b>PPRS</b>	Wisconsin Center for After-School Research, <i>Promising Practices Rating System</i>
<b>PSA</b>	Policy Studies Associates, Inc., <i>Out of School Time (OST) Observation Instrument</i>
<b>QAS</b>	Foundations Inc., <i>Quality Assurance System</i>
<b>RAND</b>	Beckett, M., Hawken, A., and Jackowitz, A. <i>Accountability for After-School Care</i> . Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001.
<b>SACERS</b>	Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, <i>School-Age Care Environmental Rating Scale</i>
<b>SC 4-H</b>	4-H Youth Development Programs, <i>South Carolina County 4-H Program Standards and Quality Indicators</i>
<b>SCASA</b>	South Carolina After School Alliance, <i>Standards of Excellence in After School</i>
<b>St. Louis</b>	St. Louis 4 Kids and St. Louis Metropolitan Agenda for Children and Youth, <i>Quality Standards for Non-School-Hour Programs for the St. Louis Metropolitan Area</i>
<b>VT 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC</b>	Vermont 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers, <i>Vermont 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Standards Site Improvement Process</i>
<b>YMCA</b>	YMCA, <i>YMCA Guide to Quality Childcare</i>
<b>Youthnet SA</b>	Youthnet of Kansas City School-Age, <i>Standards for Kansas City Youth</i>
<b>Youthnet Teen</b>	Youthnet of Kansas City Teen, <i>Standards for Kansas City Youth</i>

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#### **About Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP)**

Founded in 1983 by Dr. Heather Weiss, HFRP conducts research about programs and policies that serve children and families throughout the United States. By publishing and disseminating its research widely, HFRP plays a vital role in examining and encouraging programs and policies that enable families and communities to help children reach their potential.