After School Programs

Basic Standards
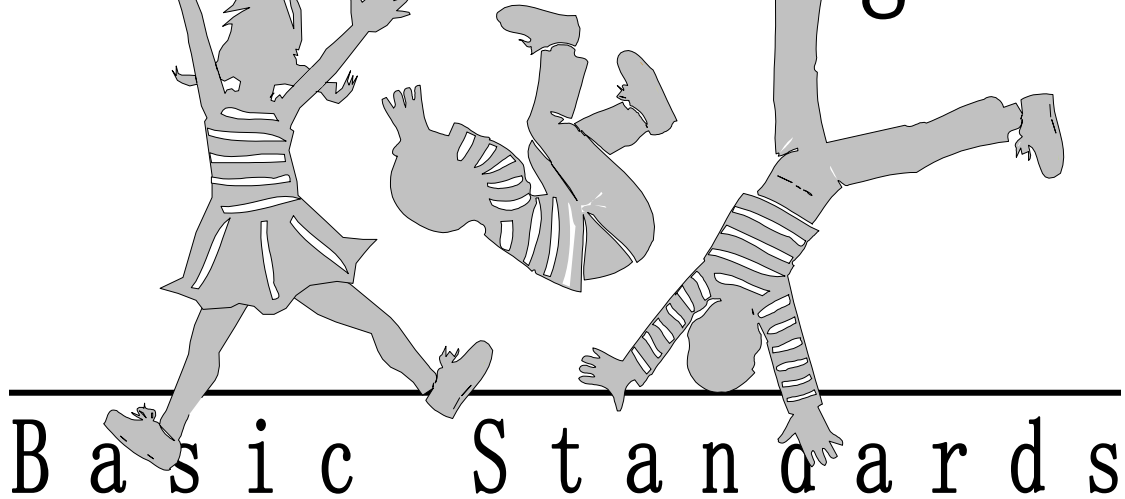
Afterschool Coalition of Indianapolis
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PROVISO: It is not the intention of this document to serve as a program guide for after school programs but rather as a "standard" to measure weather basic ingredients for quality are present. Further, the current after school program "landscape" of Indianapolis has required that some recommended standards (NSACA, NOIST) be broadened to allow for inclusion and not exclusion. The goal is to review the recommendations in the future and to narrow (increase) the degree of quality across the board once organizations have adjusted to this measurement.

Ultimately, it is the intention of this effort to raise the excellence of services being provided to all youth participating in after school programs.

After School Program

INTRODUCTION

After school programs encompasses a wide range of offerings for young people that take place before school, after school, on weekends, and during the summer and other school breaks. Usually, these programs include a variety of enrichment activities that keep young people safe, provide opportunities for positive and consistent relationships with adults and peers, offer time for physical recreation and unstructured play, promote development of skills and exploration of interests, enhance positive character traits and life skills ,and help strengthen academic skills.

The Need For After School Programs

Today, there is a growing need for quality after school programs for youth. Youth spend only 20% of their waking hours in school. On average, public schools meet for six hours per day, 180 to 190 days per year. This leaves 175 to 185 days and many hours each day free for young people to be bored, lonely, get into trouble, or participate in meaningful and fun activities.

What young people do with the hours that they are not in school has an impact on their development and well-being. In the past few decades, changes in the social and economic make-up of our country have led to important changes for families. Because children's primary caregivers are increasingly working full-time outside the home, a large percentage of youth are in need of a safe place to spend their non-school hours while their parents are at work. In fact, recently the following was discovered about today's youth:

- Less than 15% live in a household with a working father and a "stay-at-home" mother (U.S. Census Bureau, 1996).
- Eight million are in need of care during after school time (Miller, 1999).
- As little as 25% of the demand for after school will be met in the inner cities (U.S. GAO/HEHS, 1998).
- Without adult supervision they are at significantly greater risk of truancy from school, stress, receiving poor grades, risk-taking behavior, and substance abuse. (Pettit 1997).
- Between the hours of 3:00 P.M. and 6:00 P.M. crime involving them triples and/or during this same time they are most likely to be victims of a violent crime (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1996).

After school Programs Benefit Youth

As well as providing safe places and adult supervision during non-school hours, after school programs can offer young people opportunities to explore their interests, play, participate in sports and recreation, develop social skills, do homework, strengthen academic skills, and/or participate in meaningful service projects and other activities that help them build positive character traits and a sense of civic responsibility.

After school programs can offer young people all of the resources suggested by the Presidents' Summit:
1. Quality programs help young people develop meaningful relationships with adults and with peers.
2. They offer safe places where youth can explore their interests, enjoy time with friends, and participate in both structured and spontaneous activities.
3. After school program staff can watch out for health and safety issues affecting young people and offer referrals to families. Staff can refer families to organizations that can help them learn more about nutrition, wellness, effective parenting techniques, behavior disorders, stress, substance abuse, and child abuse.
4. Youth can develop hobbies, hone their academic and social skills, and explore their interests with the help of an effective after school program.
5. Young people in after school programs can participate in service-learning projects, help each other, and learn to be contributing members of a community.

Research has demonstrated that quality after school programs positively impact young people's lives in the following ways:

- Young people who are under adult supervision, in programs or at home, have better social skills and higher self-esteem than their peers who are unsupervised after school (Witt, 1997).
- Youth who attend high-quality after school programs have been found to have better peer relationships, emotional adjustment, grades, and conduct in school (Vandell, 1996).
- Teachers and principals report that students become more cooperative, learn to better handle conflicts, develop an interest in recreational reading, and receive better grades due to participation in quality after school programs (Riley 1994).
- Young people who spend one to four hours per week in extracurricular activities are 49% less likely to use drugs and 37% less likely to become teen parents than students who do not participate in extracurricular activities (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1996).
- Youth who attend after school programs spend more time in learning opportunities and academic and enrichment activities, and spend less time watching television than their peers (Posner and Vandell, 1994).

What Kids Need Today: Developmental Assets

All one has to do is pick up a newspaper, watch the news, or listen to the radio to catch a glimpse of the threats which youth face today. Violence, gangs, academic failure, poverty, alcohol, drugs...the list is long and frightening. There is little doubt that our most promising asset is at risk, and that the task for those interested in making a difference is challenging.

The battle appears most intense with the children/youth who are facing difficulties in one or more of the following areas: home, school, or community. For this population, even the "at-risk" designation has eroded the protection that they need by placing them in the category of victims and dismissing their human potential to be productive members of society. Not all is lost, however, many children and youth are overcoming their adversities with the help of dedicated parents and/or caring adults. Community Based Organizations are responding by providing youth and their families with opportunities to develop their academic, social, and emotional skills.

In support, there is a growing interest among researchers in moving beyond the identification of risks to an examination of protective factors; those traits, conditions, situations, and characteristics that appear to alter--or even reverse--predictions of negative behaviors. As attention moves away from deficiency models, a phrase has developed that defines the healthy child as one who *"works well, plays well, and expects well"*. More specifically, Peter Benson of the Search Institute has identified developmental assets that are crucial in the positive development of all children (see list to right).

In fact, after years of surveys, the Search Institute has concluded that the more assets children have, the less likely they are to engage in high-risk behaviors or succumb to negative environments. These results were true regardless of the youth's race, age, sex, and/or economic level.

Forty - Developmental Assets

- Strong Family Support
- Positive Family Communication
- Other Adult Relationships
- A Caring Neighborhood
- A Caring School Climate
- Parent Involvement In School
- A Community That Values Youth
- Youth Viewed As Resources
- Involvement In Service To Others
- Feeling Of Safety
- Clear Family Boundaries
- Clear School Boundaries
- Clear Neighborhood Boundaries
- Positive Adult Role Models
- Positive Peer Influence
- High Expectations From Others
- Creative Activities
- Involvement In Youth Programs
- Participation In Religious Comm.
- Spends Time At Home
- Achievement Motivated
- Strong School Engagement
- Homework
- Bonding To School
- Reading For Pleasure
- Is Caring
- Promotes Equality & Social Justice
- Has Integrity
- Is Honest
- Accepts Responsibility
- Practices Restraint
- Actively Plan and Makes Decisions
- Has Adequate Friendship Skills
- Cultural Competencies
- Possesses Resistance Skills
- Peaceful Conflict Resolution
- Personal Power
- Positive Self-esteem
- Sense Of Purpose
- Positive View Of Personal Future

STANDARD Summary

The following Standards for After School Programs were developed to assist in the design and implementation of high quality after school and youth development programs. The Standards are grounded in a youth development framework that encourages a comprehensive asset-based approach to program planning and implementation.

Summary of Standards

Goals
- A written statement of purpose for the program exist

Policies
- Written policies and procedures for staff and children are clear

Health and Safety
- Current documentation showing fulfillment of regulatory requirements and/or meet basic after school standards

Staff
- All staff are qualified to work with children; plans for continuing staff development exist
- Staff relate to youth in positive ways by treating them with respect, listening to what they say and responding with acceptance.
- Staff encourage youth to make choices and to develop personal responsibility.
- Staff use positive techniques to guide behavior of youth.
- At least one person with a current first aid certificate, including CPR, is present at all times.
- All paid and volunteer staff are screened for criminal records and child protective services findings
- Ratios: 1st to 5th grade (1:12)   6th to 8th grade (1:15)   9th to 12th (1:20).

Facility
- Must satisfy safety and health regulations

Environment
- Adequate space and materials are available

Partnerships
- Establish partnerships with groups including parents, volunteers, schools, community-based organizations, youth-serving agencies, business leaders and community colleges.

Sustainability
- Have a written strategy for long-term success

Evaluation *Objective measures of program success:*
- Provide measures of program progress and effectiveness and engages in efforts to promote satisfaction and continuous improvement in quality and range of services provided
- The program has procedures for tracking enrollment and participation of all youth.
- Program meets and/or exceeds the recommend after school standards.

Elements of Quality After school Programs

Regardless of when a program meets and what focus it has, there are certain ingredients that are generally evident in programs that are deemed successful by parents, staff, young people, and others who have a stake in the program. Research and field-testing done by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST) and the National School-Age Care Alliance (NSACA) have resulted in the "NSACA Standards for Quality School-Age Care,", Using these standards as a guide, the following Standards for After School Programs were developed to assist in the design and implementation of high quality after school and youth development programs. The Standards are grounded in a youth development framework and serve to assist funders in identifying good programs, evaluators in comparing like programs, and parents in selecting quality programs.

BASIC STANDARDS/ASSESSMENT

	N/A	YES	NO	NOTES
GENERAL				
1. Activities reflect the mission of the provider and promote the development of all the youth in the program.				
2. Staff-child ratios and group sizes permit the staff to meet the needs of youth. • Staff-youth ratios are in keeping with: 1st to 5th grade: 1:12, 6th to 8th grade 1:15, 9th to 12th grade 1:20. • Small group sizes do not exceed thirty youth. • There is a written plan to provide coverage when regular staff is absent.				
3. Criminal background check is done on all employees/volunteers that have contact with youth.				
4. Program is open 2.5 hours a day, 2 days a week, during non-school hours.				
RELATIONSHIPS				
5. Staff relate to youth in positive ways. • Youth are treated with respect and listen to what they say. • Staff is engaged with youth. • Respect, honesty, fairness, and responsibility are communicated through the relationship.				
6. Staff responds appropriately to individual needs of youth. • Youth's wide range of abilities/interests is considered. • Staff can relate to a youth's cultural style & primary language. • Staff respond to the range of youth's feelings and temperaments.				
7. Staff encourages youth to become more responsible. • Staff assists youth without taking control (encourage leadership). • Staff give youth many chances to choose what they will do. • Staff encourage youth to become problem solvers.				
8. Staff use positive techniques to guide the behavior of youth. • Staff acknowledge youth when they demonstrate proper behavior. • Staff set appropriate limits without use of harsh discipline methods. • A written policy exists to prohibit harsh treatment of youth. • Staff encourage youth to resolve their own conflicts.				
9. Youth generally interact with one another in positive ways. • Youth appear relaxed and involved with each other. • Youth usually cooperate and work well together				
10. Youth are supervised at all times. • Youth's arrivals & departures are supervised. • Staff has a system for knowing where the youth are at all times. • Staff plan for different ratios according to the activities planned				
11. Advocate support for youth is provided • Individual youth are assigned a staff to track progress • Staff maintains an "open-door" policy to discuss concerns				
12. Staff supports families' involvement in the program. • Family members are informed and encouraged to visit anytime. • Staff offer orientations for new families. • Staff encourage families to give input and get involved.				

13. Staff works well together to meet the needs of youth. • Staff communicate with each other while the program is in session. • Staff are cooperative with each other. • Staff provide role models of positive adult relationships.				

	N/A	YES	NO	NOTES
INDOOR SPACE				
14. The program's indoor space meets the needs of the program. • There is enough room for all program activities. • The space is arranged well for activities planned. • There is adequate and convenient storage space. • The indoor space meets or exceeds local health and safety codes. • Written guidelines are in place regarding use and maintenance. • There are no observable health hazards. • The heat, ventilation, noise level, and light are comfortable.				
OUTDOOR SPACE				
15. The outdoor play area meets the needs of the program. • The equipment allows for independent and creative play. • The space is suitable for a wide variety of activities. • The space meets or exceeds local health and safety codes. • There is a procedure for regularly checking the safety of space. • There are no observable health hazards.				
SAFETY, HEALTH & NUTRITION				
16. The safety and security of youth are protected. • A system is in place to keep unauthorized people from taking youth. • Written notification is sent home when serious illness and/or death of an employee occurs.				
17. Program policies and procedures are in place to protect youth. • Staff receives training on how to handle a general emergency. • Fire/emergency drills are scheduled. • An emergency management plan exists (bomb threat, terrorism, tornado, etc…) • No smoking is allowed in the program by adults or youth. • A policy exists to separate youth who become ill from group. • A policy exists to protect youth from overexposure to heat or cold.				
18. The program serves snacks that meet the needs of youth. • The program serves prepared & individually wrapped snacks in keeping with Health Department regulations • Drinking water is readily available at all times. • The amount and type of food offered is appropriate for the youth.				
19. Staff is certified in 1st Aid, CPR, Universal Precautions, and AED. • At least one staff member on site at all times. • A clear emergency medical plan is in place and followed. • If in or around water, enough water safety trained adults (life guards) are present.				

	N/A	YES	NO	NOTES
ACTIVITIES				
20. The daily schedule is flexible, and it offers enough security, independence, and stimulation to meet the needs of all youth. • The routine provides stability without being rigid. • Individual youth move smoothly from one activity to another.				
21. Staff and youth work together to plan and implement suitable activities, which are consistent with the program's philosophy. • Staff ask youth to share their ideas for planning. • A calendar of future events is posted/available for parents, teachers, staff and participants. • Staff keep on file their records of activity planning.				
22. Youth can choose from a wide variety of activities. • There are regular opportunities for active, physical play. • There are regular opportunities for creative arts and dramatic play. • There are regular opportunities for quiet activities and socializing.				
23. The program builds links to the community. • Staff provides information about community resources. • The program draws from resources to improve program offerings. • The program offers service-learning opportunities, especially for older youth.				
24. There are sufficient materials to support program activities. • There are enough materials for the number of youth in the program. • Materials are developmentally appropriate. • Materials promote the program's mission.				
25. The program focuses on the "development" of the youth. • Cognitive, workforce, artistic, and/or civic development.				
26. The program focuses on providing assets. • At least 25 of the 40 developmental assets (Search Institute) are identifiable within the program.				
27. Program includes the 7 recommended ingredients: • *Academic Assistance*: homework help, science projects, literacy tutoring, and computer math. • *Enrichment Activities*: cooking, field trips, drama club, arts projects • *Prevention Units*: anger management, alcohol/tobacco/drugs, violence and peer mediation • *Service Learning*: civic and community engagement • *Recreation and Socialization*: basketball, board games, play • *Health & Nutritious:* snack, health education • *Family Involvement*: family fun nights, resource referrals, parent-staff conferences, parenting classes, newsletter				
28. The Program includes character development messages • Respect, caring, honesty, and responsibility.				
29. A Transportation plan is in place. • It includes a safe and secure plan for transporting youth home. • More than one option is available (including parent pick-up) • A field-trip plan exists (including ratios, worst case scenarios etc.)				

	N/A	YES	NO	NOTES
ADMINISTRATION/MANAGEMENT				
30. **Staff, families, and schools share information about the youth.** • Program policies require that staff and family communicate. • Staff, families, and schools work together as a team. • Staff and families share information about youth's development.				
31. **All staff are professionally qualified to work with youth.** • Staff meet the requirements for experience with school-age youth. • Staff have received preparation specific to school age youth. • Staff meet minimum age requirement of 17-19 (with limited responsibilities).				
32. **All staff (paid, volunteer, and substitute) are given a job orientation before working with youth.** • A written job description that outlines responsibilities is handed out. • Written personnel and program policies are reviewed.				
33. **The training needs of the staff are assessed annually.** • Staff receives training on how to relate with families and youth. • Program administrators receive training in program management. • Staff receives training in how to set up space and design activities.				
34. **Staff receive appropriate support to make their work positive.** • The program has a plan in place to offer the best possible wages. • Full-time staff receive benefits, including health insurance. • Staff is given opportunities to express concerns about the program.				
35. **The administration provides sound management of the program.** • The financial management of the program supports the goals. • The administration monitors recruitment and retention of staff. • The director involves staff and board in planning and evaluation				
36. **The program budget supports the program design.** • Budget allows for sufficient staff, supplies, transportation costs, etc. • Budget reflects efficient use of funds.				
37. **A plan for sustainability is in place.** • Current enrollment (recommend 35) supports program costs • Plan ensures programming for at least 3 years. • Plan includes a diversified funding stream (more than one source).				

ACTIVITIES & CURRICULUM

THE OVERALL GOALS (Based on research released at the Presidents' Summit on America's Future 1997)
- To provide a safe, caring, enriching, healthy, clean, structured environment for children during the non-school hours with a caring adult.
- To promote the 40 developmental assets and character development: responsibility, respect, trustworthiness, and caring; giving each youth a healthy start.
- To foster the development of marketable and protective skills that will allow youth to "move on" to a more productive life and resist involvement in self-destructive behaviors.
- To encourage positive connections between family, school, and community (including community service opportunities)

GENERAL ACTIVITIES GUIDES
- Daily schedule is flexible, offering security, independence, and stimulation to meet the needs of all youth.
- There are sufficient and appropriate materials to support program activities.
- Programs must offer at least 3 activities in the five areas of: academic assistance, enrichment activities, prevention units, service learning enrichment, and recreation/socialization.
- Youth generally interact with one another in positive ways including showing respect for each other.

PROGRAMMING

Academic Assistance: *homework help, science projects, literacy tutoring, and computer math.*
- Structured and developmentally appropriate
- Linked to school district curriculum through communication with teachers
- Academic Field trips

Enrichment Activities: *cooking, field trips, drama club, arts projects*
- Enrichment activities can include visual, performing or mural arts; skill development in technology (e.g., computers, etc.); life skills learning and activities; content-rich curriculum (e.g., environmental education, sign language classes); conflict resolution curriculum; strategic learning through activities such as spelling bees or chess tournaments; cooking and nutrition awareness; cultural or scientific trips.
- Culturally and developmentally appropriate
- Opportunities are built into programs for each child and youth to demonstrate progress in enrichment activities. Arts-based enrichment activities should include regular opportunities for performance or the creation of shows.
- Clubs (positive activities such as rallies and teen gatherings)

Prevention Units: *anger management, alcohol/tobacco/drugs, violence and peer mediation*
- Utilize research to choose appropriate curriculums

Service Learning:
- Service learning includes civic and community engagement by youth in the program in aid of the larger community in which they reside. Youth have opportunities to perform service to their communities, and to reflect on the work they did through writing and speaking.

Recreation and Socialization: *basketball, board games, and outdoor play*
- Physical Activity includes organized games, indoor & outdoor play, fitness and dance, outdoor play, active games, sports and athletic activities.
- Opportunities for quiet activities and socializing.
- Encourage cooperation in small and large group play
- Design activities to promote physical fitness
- Includes intramurals and free gym time
- Fitness information and actual fitness work out
- Health programs including information and practice.

Health & Nutrition: *snack, health education*
- Offer amounts sufficient for growing children each day
- At least 2 items from at least 2 different food groups

Strong Family Involvement: *family fun nights, resource referrals, parent-staff conferences, parenting classes, newsletter*
- Encourages family participation
- Include families in program planning
- There is a strong focus on communication with parents/guardians

=Basic PROGRAM BUDGET

Projections for Middle School Program with 50 youth, 5 days per week.

Program Revenue	Annual
Income	86,997
TOTAL	**86,997**

Program Expenses	Annual	
Professional Salaries	15,000	*$30,000 FT (50% of salary)*
Staff Wages	17,280	*4 onsite pt staff 8$hr./15 hrs/wk / 36 wks*
Benefits	5,674	*Based on 25% for FT & 12% pt*
Contract Fees	2,500	*For guest speakers & presentations*
Office Supplies	500	*General supplies*
Program Supplies	**5,400**	*$3.00 per student per wk*
Field Trips	800	*1-2 field trips and transportation ($400)*
Food & Beverages	**4,500**	*$2.50 per student per wk*
Telephone	315	*Cell phone expenses*
Building Rental*	***8,200***	*In kind (space, utilities, maintenance)*
Travel	400	*Mileage reimbursement for staff*
Transportation*	***11,000***	*In kind Bus ride home*
Training	2,000	*Staff training*
Insurance	1,000	*General liability*
Administration	12,428	*15% (supervision, accounting, evaluation, reporting)*
TOTAL	86,997	

		*W/O rental & Transportation Costs**
INCOME	86,997	$67,797
EXPENSE	86,997	$67,797
	-	

		*W/O rental & Transportation Costs**
Cost per child per week	$ 48	$38
Cost per child per year	$ 1,740	$1,356

Projections for Middle School Program with 50 youth, 3 days per week.

Program Revenue	Annual
Income	57,350
TOTAL	57,350

Program Expenses	Annual	
Professional Salaries	6,000	*$30,000 FT (20% of salary)*
Staff Wages	11,520	*4 onsite pt staff 8$hr./10 hrs/wk / 36 wks*
Benefits	2,822	*Based on 25% for FT & 12% pt*
Contract Fees	1,500	*For guest speakers & presentations*
Office Supplies	400	*General supplies*
Program Supplies	3,600	*$2.00 per student per wk*
Field Trips	800	*1-2 field trips and transportation ($400)*
Food & Beverages	3,600	*$2 per student per wk*
Telephone	315	*Cell phone expenses*
Building Rental*	*6,200*	*In kind (space, utilities, maintenance)*
Travel	400	*Mileage reimbursement for staff*
Transportation*	*9,000*	*In kind Bus ride home*
Training	2,000	*Staff training*
Insurance	1,000	*General liability*
Administration	8,193	*15% (supervision, accounting, evaluation, reporting)*
TOTAL	**57,350**	

		*W/O rental & Transportation Costs**
INCOME	57,350	$42,150
EXPENSE	57,350	$42,150
	-	

		*W/O rental & Transportation Costs**
Cost per child per week	$ 32	$23
Cost per child per year	$ 1,147	$843

Projections for Middle School Program with 50 youth, 2 days per week.

Program Revenue	Annual
Income	44,487
TOTAL	44,487

Program Expenses	Annual	
Professional Salaries	6,000	*$30,000 FT (20% of salary)*
Staff Wages	8,064	*4 onsite pt staff 8$hr./7 hrs/wk / 36 wks*
Benefits	2,408	*Based on 25% for FT & 12% pt*
Contract Fees	1,000	*For guest speakers & presentations*
Office Supplies	300	*General supplies*
Program Supplies	2,700	*$1.50 per student per wk*
Field Trips	800	*1-2 field trips and transportation ($400)*
Food & Beverages	2,700	*$1.50 per student per wk*
Telephone	160	*Cell phone expenses*
Building Rental*	*4,100*	*In kind (space, utilities, maintenance)*
Travel	400	*Mileage reimbursement for staff*
Transportation*	*6,500*	*In kind Bus ride home*
Training	2,000	*Staff training*
Insurance	1,000	*General liability*
Administration	6,355	*15% (supervision, accounting, evaluation, reporting)*
TOTAL	**44,487**	

		*W/O *
INCOME	44,487	$33,887
EXPENSE	44,487	$33,887
	-	
		*W/O *
Cost per child per week	$ 25	$19
Cost per child per year	$ 890	$678

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WEB SITES
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