

After School Program Standards

ORGANIZATIONAL STANDARDS

1. The Program Provides an Orderly, Safe, and Healthy Environment

Required

- Program environment is free of safety hazards, accessible, and clean
- Written and approved safety policies are shared with staff, parents, and participants
- Fire drills and safety drills are conducted
- Safe transportation is provided to and from the program and program-sponsored field trips
- Program collects accurate registration information for all participants
- Emergency information is accurate and readily available
- Program schedule has been clearly communicated to staff, parents, and participants
- Clear procedures are in place for arrival, dismissal, and transportation
- Mechanism exists to capture participants' arrival, departure, and on-site location
- Program provides one nutritious snack and/or meal per day
- Mechanism exists to record and inform staff regarding special physical and mental health needs of participants
- Behavior system guides participant behavior and offers consistent rewards and consequences for behavior
- Program utilizes appropriate staff/participant ratio
- Participants and staff are made aware of expectations for program behavior and behavior is monitored
- Mechanism exists to guide positive interactions among participants

Recommended

- Indoor space meets the needs of participants
- Outdoor play area meets the needs of participants, and equipment allows them to be independent and creative

2. The Program Utilizes Qualified and Diverse Staff and Volunteers

Required

- All staff and volunteers are subject to appropriate background checks and educational qualifications verification
- Staff and volunteers are oriented to their jobs before working with participants
- Staff and volunteer training needs are assessed and relevant trainings are offered
- Staff members
 - relate to participants, their families, and other staff members in positive ways
 - respond appropriately to the individual needs of participants
 - encourage participants to make choices and develop personal responsibility

Recommended

- Staff and volunteers are representative of the diversity of the community being served
- Employee handbook describes program policies and procedures
- Program holds regular staff meetings
- Appropriate salary structure is in place
- Opportunities exist for staff to engage in career planning and advancement
- Staff engage in team-building exercises to foster mutual respect and positive relationships
- Community members, including former participants, are invited to serve as volunteers or staff

3. The Program Ensures Consistent Participant Attendance

Required

- Mechanism exists to record and monitor attendance
- Attendance policy and goals have been clearly communicated to staff, parents, and participants

4. The Program Engages in Effective Program Administration

Required

- Program has policies that protect and enhance the health and safety of all participants
- Program administration provides sound management of the program
- Mechanism exists to provide sound financial management of the program

Recommended

- Program builds links to the community
- Program offers suitable activities that are consistent with the program's philosophy

- All staff are professionally qualified to work with children and youth
- Program policies and procedures are responsive to the needs of participants, families, and the community

PROGRAMMATIC STANDARDS

1. The Program Builds Active Family and Community Partnerships

Required

- Program has a working system for regular communication with families,
- Program climate is comfortable and inviting to parents
- Program has a plan for parent involvement

Recommended

- Parent/community advisory committee exists and meets regularly
- Program has a working system for regular communication with schools, businesses, and community-based programs
- Informal and formal feedback are collected from all stakeholders
- Community collaborations enhance program activities and sustainability
- Program offers educational experiences for families
- Staff are provided sensitivity training as needed to enhance positive relationships with parents and the community

2. The Program Encourages Greater Personal Responsibility in Participants

Required

- Participants generally interact with one another in positive ways

Recommended

- Participants have opportunities to
 - make choices among many activities
 - take part in program development activities
 - showcase their work

3. The Program Supports Improved Academic Achievement

Required

- Time is allotted for homework assistance to support school-day activities
- Program creates and measures outcomes as required by Trident United Way

Recommended

- Program provides tutoring services
- Program staff collaborate with school-day personnel
- Materials and resources include academically-related books, computer hardware and software, and intellectually stimulating activities (e.g., board games, puzzles)

4. The Program Offers Diverse Opportunities for Learning and Development

Required

- Program specifically addresses one or more areas of high-risk behavior
- Participants have opportunities to develop confidence in their abilities, essential life skills, and a sense of belonging with peers
- Program creates and measures outcomes as required by Trident United Way

Recommended

- Activities are provided to develop participant skills in the arts, technology, and health and safety
- Participants have opportunities to engage in activities that allow them to demonstrate creativity and self-expression (e.g., fine arts, performing arts, creative writing)
- Books, materials, and other resources teach and stimulate interest in the arts, personal health, and safety
- Participants have opportunities to engage in
 - independent learning
 - interactive, group-based activities
 - learning activities off the program site
 - peer mentoring, service learning, community-based projects, and (as appropriate) internships