



Out-of-School Time Services

DEFINITION

Out-of-School Time programs engage school-age children and youth in social, educational, and recreational activities appropriate to their needs, interests, and abilities; promote the development of positive relationships with adults and peers; and provide a physically and emotionally safe environment for young people to spend their out-of-school time hours.

Services may be provided in a number of different settings and at different times, including before school, after school, mid-day, on weekends, and during school vacations, including summer vacations. It is also important to note that organizations may describe the services they provide using a variety of different terms, from "after school," to "school age care," to "youth development," to "out-of-school time," to "expanded or extended learning."

As noted in the Glossary, children and youth from the ages of five to eighteen are considered to be of "school age," and this Service Standard is designed to accommodate programs serving a variety of age groups within that range. For example, while one program might serve only children in elementary school, another might be specifically designed for high school youth. In some cases standards include specific guidance (e.g., Interpretations or NAs) to clarify how the standard might apply to children and youth of a particular age range. When standards reference "older youth," this includes middle- and high-school students (i.e. youth age 13 and up).

Research Note: *Positive youth development emphasizes the importance of helping young people develop the social, emotional, cognitive, and physical assets that can help them transition to responsible adulthood. Accordingly, community- and school-based programs for children and youth are often designed to provide the supports and opportunities that may help young people have positive developmental experiences and improve the long-term chances that they will be personally, emotionally, and socially stable; involved in their communities; and economically secure. Although some young people have more unmet needs than others, all children and youth may benefit from access to the supports and opportunities that promote resilience and healthy development.*

Note: *Please see the [OST Reference List](#) for a list of resources that informed the development of these standards.*

Note: *Out-of-School Time Services (OST) replaces Youth Development Services (YD). These standards were revised in May 2018 to reflect current*

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



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best practice. They have been adapted from COA's Standards for Child and Youth Development Programs to address the diverse array of programs dedicated to meeting the developmental needs of children and youth in a positive, out-of-school time setting. Organizations interested in learning about Dual Private Organization Accreditation and Child and Youth Development Program Accreditation should contact COA's Client Relations Department if they are not currently pursuing (re)accreditation, or their Accreditation Coordinator if they are currently in process.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- Provide an overview of the different programs being accredited under this section. The overview should describe:
 - a. eligibility criteria;
 - b. any unique or special services provided to specific populations; and
 - c. major funding streams.
- If elements of the service are provided by contract with outside programs or through participation in a formal, coordinated service delivery system, provide a list that identifies the providers and the service components for which they are responsible. Do not include services provided by referral.
- Provide any other information you would like the peer review team to know about these programs.
- A demographic profile of persons and families served by the programs being reviewed under this service section with percentages representing the following:
 - a. racial and ethnic characteristics;
 - b. gender/gender identity;
 - c. age;
 - d. major religious groups; and
 - e. major language groups.
- A list that includes:
 - a. the average number of participants per session (e.g., morning session, afternoon session, etc.), for each program, in the last month; and
 - b. the total number of participants per session for each program, in the last month.
- A list of any programs that were opened, merged with other programs or services, or closed.
- A list or description of program outcomes and outputs being measured.

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On-Site Evidence

No On-Site Evidence

On-Site Activities

No On-Site Activities

Purpose

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OST 1: Program Design

The program is guided by a logic model or equivalent framework that establishes a clear connection between:

- a. the needs the program will address;
- b. required inputs (i.e. financial, human, infrastructural, and community resources);
- c. planned activities (i.e. the services, supports, and programming to be provided);
- d. resulting outputs (i.e. the direct results of activities provided, such as the number of children participating, and the number of families engaged); and
- e. desired goals and outcomes that are aligned with the organization's mission (i.e. that describe how program participants and the community are expected to benefit from the program in both the short and long term).

Interpretation: *The organization should consider both the best available evidence of effectiveness, and the ages and developmental needs of the program's target population, when developing the logic model or equivalent framework. The process of developing such a framework can help staff think systematically about how the program can make a measureable difference for program participants and the community, and the completed framework can be a useful tool to support long-term planning.*

Research Note: *Literature emphasizes that the structure and design of a program should be clearly and intentionally guided by, and aligned with, the program's goals.*

Rating Indicators

- 1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.
- 2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,
 - Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
 - Written service philosophy needs improvement or clarification; or
 - Procedures need strengthening; or
 - With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
 - Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff

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members are being addressed through performance evaluations (HR 6.02) and training (TS 2.03); or

- In a few rare instances required consent was not obtained; or
- Monitoring procedures need minor clarification; or
- With few exceptions the policy on prohibited interventions is understood by staff, or the written policy needs minor clarification.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- The written service philosophy needs significant improvement; or
- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Documentation is inconsistent or in some instances is missing and no corrective action has not been initiated; or
- Required consent is often not obtained; or
- A few personnel who are employing non-traditional or unconventional interventions have not completed training, as required; or
- There are gaps in monitoring of interventions, as required; or
- Policy on prohibited interventions does not include at least one of the required elements; or
- Service philosophy is not clearly related to expressed mission or programs of the organization; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- There is no written service philosophy; or
- There are no written policy or procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- Logic model (or equivalent framework)

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On-Site Evidence

- Mission statement

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program Administrator
 - b. Site Director
 - c. Program Personnel

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OST 2: Access and Enrollment

The organization recruits and enrolls eligible children and youth.

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (HR 6.02) and training (TS 2.03); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
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Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- Recruitment plan and/or description of outreach and recruitment efforts
- Policy and/or procedures regarding attendance (OST 2.02)
- Procedures for registration and orientation (OST 2.03, 2.04)
- Sample registration form
- Policy and procedures for enrolling children and youth with special needs, including for collaboration with families and other providers (OST 2.06)
- Procedures for file content and maintenance (OST 2.07)
- Policies and procedures for accessing files (OST 2.08)

On-Site Evidence

- Informational materials made available to the community
- Hours of operation
- Registration/orientation materials, including program handbook
- Waiting list, if applicable
- Fee schedule, if applicable

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program Administrator
 - b. Site Director
 - c. Program Personnel
 - d. Children, youth, and families
- Review files of children and youth

OST 2.01

The organization develops and implements a recruitment plan that includes:

- a. conducting ongoing outreach to inform the public, including the families of prospective program participants, about the program's goals, activities, and benefits; and
- b. addressing potential barriers that might prevent children and youth from participating.

Interpretation: *Potential barriers may include, but are not limited to, factors related to transportation, fees, limited or inconvenient hours, and language spoken. Given that the nature and quality of the activities offered also impacts attendance, it is also critical that the organization provide*

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high-quality activities relevant to the priorities and interests of children and youth and their families, as addressed throughout this Service Standard.

Note: See OST 8 for more information regarding the community partnerships that can help the organization both recruit participants and address potential barriers to service.

OST 2.02

Hours of operation and expectations regarding attendance are based on consideration of community needs, program goals, and the best available evidence of effectiveness.

Interpretation: Information regarding community needs may be obtained through available data or through assessments, surveys, or focus groups conducted by the organization itself. While organizations should make an effort to offer programming when children and families need it, COA does recognize that some organizations may face logistical obstacles that they cannot overcome (e.g., if the organization only has access to space during certain hours, and must choose between accommodating those hourly constraints and not operating at all).

Research Note: While some communities or populations may be in need of informal drop-in programs, it is also important to remember that: (1) children and youth must actually attend programs in order to benefit from them; and (2) level of attendance may impact the type and degree of benefit derived.

OST 2.03

During registration or orientation, children and youth and their families are:

- a. informed about program goals and activities;
- b. provided with a handbook that details program policies and procedures;
- c. offered a tour of the facility; and
- d. introduced to staff and program participants.

Research Note: Research has shown that offering a formal orientation period promotes the development of friendships and ties to the program, which, studies have shown, are critical to sustained involvement with the program over time. Additionally, involving enrolled youth in orientation helps recruit and retain older youth and helps older youth feel as though they are important members of the community.

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Note: Children, youth, and families should also be informed about program rules and responsibilities, as addressed in CR 1.01.

OST 2.04

Registration practices:

- a. ensure equitable treatment;
- b. support timely enrollment; and
- c. provide for placement on a waiting list, if desired.

Interpretation: Regarding element (a), the organization should ideally consider the demographics of the program population in light of the demographics of the community/school, and strive to encourage diversity and inclusiveness. If the organization runs a program that is designed to serve a specific population (e.g., girls, low-income children, children of particular racial or ethnic backgrounds, or LGBTQ youth), it should ensure that entry into the program is determined by appropriate criteria rather than by favoritism or discrimination.

Children and youth who cannot be served, or cannot be served promptly, should be provided with information about other appropriate programs, if available in the community and desired by the child or youth and family.

(FP) OST 2.05

The organization collects relevant information from children and youth and their families, including:

- a. identifying information, including name and date of birth;
- b. address;
- c. emergency contact information, including written parental authorization for emergency care;
- d. relevant health information (e.g., records of up-to-date screenings and immunizations);
- e. whether children and youth have any special needs to be accommodated, including needs related to health or mental health;
- f. consent forms or permission slips, as needed, including any consent/authorization forms related to health or other special needs, if applicable;
- g. authorizations for pick-up, if applicable; and
- h. relevant school day data, if applicable.

Interpretation: Information should be updated at least annually. Regarding

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element (d), if a child or youth becomes injured the organization may wish to require written authorization from a doctor before allowing the child or youth to resume participation in sports or fitness activities.

Note: See OST 2.06 for additional expectations regarding the information to be gathered when children and youth have special needs.

OST 2.06

The organization enrolls children and youth with special needs, and collaborates with their families and other involved providers to learn about:

- a. their strengths and needs; and
- b. strategies for meeting their needs and helping them fully participate in the program.

Related: ASE 2

Interpretation: Strategies can include efforts currently undertaken to address needs (i.e. at home or in school), as well as ideas for additional accommodations to meet a child or youth's specific needs. While some organizations may obtain a copy of a child or youth's 504 Plan or Individual Education Program, other organizations may work with the family and school to establish other channels for obtaining information about children's needs.

Research Note: Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires organizations to make "reasonable accommodations" to their policies, procedures, and practices to include persons with disabilities, but families of children with disabilities are frequently discriminated against when they try to access out-of-school time programs. Consequently, literature on inclusion emphasizes the importance of: (1) providing individualized support and modifications that allow children to participate in a meaningful way; (2) establishing an inclusive environment where the contributions of each individual are respected and valued; and (3) training staff to ensure they are prepared to accommodate and include all children. It is also important to note that the goal of the ADA is not to put a strain on programs, but rather to prevent discrimination against individuals with disabilities through "reasonable accommodations" that provide opportunities for participation. Accordingly, organizations are expected to accommodate all children and youth unless: (1) an individual poses a safety threat to him/herself or others, (2) the accommodations needed would result in a fundamental alteration to the program, or (3) the accommodations needed would put an undue financial burden on the organization. It is also important to note that accommodations should be based on the individual needs of

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children and youth, and not on stereotypes about diagnoses or assumptions about needs.

Note: See OST 9.06 and 18.08 for additional expectations regarding accommodating children and youth with special needs. Please also note that the importance of meeting the needs of children and youth with varying needs and abilities is emphasized throughout this section of standards as a whole. For example, see OST 4 for more information regarding supportive relationships, OST 5 and 6 for more information regarding behavior support, OST 9 for more information regarding programming and activities, and OST 16 for more information regarding program environment and materials.

OST 2.07

The organization maintains files for all children and youth that:

- a. contain relevant information;
- b. are specific, factual, and legible;
- c. are kept up to date;
- d. are signed and dated by authorized personnel, where appropriate;
- e. comply with any applicable legal requirements; and
- f. are maintained and disposed of in a manner that protects privacy and confidentiality.

Interpretation: Relevant information includes the information specified in OST 2.05 and 2.06, as well as information that would not have been available at the time of registration, such as accident report forms, attendance records, evidence of ongoing communication with parents or other family members, and payment receipts.

Files and signatures can be paper, electronic, or a combination of paper and electronic.

Note: In addition to supporting program operations, files are an important risk management tool. Well-maintained files can help shield an organization from allegations of misconduct and negligence, while poorly-maintained files and improper documentation are a known liability. See RPM for more information regarding risk prevention and management.

(FP) OST 2.08

Access to confidential files meets legal requirements, and is limited to:

- a. children and youth and/or, as appropriate, their parents or legal guardians or designated legal representatives;

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- b. personnel authorized to access specific information on a "need-to-know" basis;
- c. auditors, contractors, and licensing or accrediting personnel, consistent with the organization's confidentiality policy; and
- d. others who are permitted access, as applicable.

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OST 3: Program Climate

Program and organizational leaders demonstrate a commitment to establishing a positive climate that allows all children and youth to feel socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually safe and supported.

Related: BSM 1, ASE 1

Interpretation: *Leaders can demonstrate that they are committed to establishing a positive climate by: (1) proactively establishing and communicating values that underlie a positive climate and are sensitive to the cultures of program participants; (2) identifying and implementing practices that support those values and foster the development of a positive climate; (3) seeking the input of children, youth, and families regarding the climate that exists at the program; and (4) implementing improvement/corrective action plans to address any problems or negative elements.*

Research Note: *Literature emphasizes that a positive climate will support learning and development, and is shaped by a number of different factors. The National School Climate Center (NSCC) envisions a positive school climate as being comprised of the following essential elements: (1) respect for diversity; (2) rules and norms that are clearly communicated and consistently enforced; (3) a sense of safety, including physical, social, and emotional safety; (4) supportive and caring relationships with adults; (5) supportive relationships with peers; (6) encouragement for the development of social and emotional learning; (7) supportive teaching practices; (8) a sense of connection with the school; and (9) an adequate physical environment, including both facilities and resources. NSCC also highlights the importance of a school's administration and staff, noting that leaders should articulate a clear vision and ensure staff are appropriately developed and supported, and that staff should work together in a positive and effective manner.*

Note: *Please note that practices that support the development of a positive program climate are included throughout OST. For example, see OST 4 regarding the importance of building supportive relationships between children and youth and adults; OST 5 regarding the importance of establishing a respectful and inclusive culture that encourages positive behaviors and interactions; OST 6 regarding the importance of employing positive approaches to guiding behavior; OST 7 regarding the importance of involving and meeting the needs of program participants' families; OST 9 regarding the importance of ensuring children and youth are engaged in activities that support learning and positive development; and OST 16, 17, and 18 regarding the program environment.*

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Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (HR 6.02) and training (TS 2.03); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
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Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

Purpose

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Out-of-School Time Services

- A description of the program climate, including leaders' efforts to establish a positive climate

On-Site Evidence

- Program climate assessment tools
- Documentation that leaders have sought stakeholder input regarding the program climate
- Improvement/corrective action plans, if applicable

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program Administrator
 - b. Site Director
 - c. Program Personnel
 - d. Children, youth, and families
- Observe program space, interactions, and activities

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Out-of-School Time Services

OST 4: Building Supportive Relationships Between Program Participants and Adults

Personnel develop positive, caring, and supportive relationships with children and youth.

Note: Please note that the strategies personnel employ in guiding behavior, and facilitating program activities, will also impact relationship development. See OST 5, 6, and 9 for more information. Treating children and youth in a culturally responsive manner and accommodating their communication needs, as addressed in CR 1, will also support the development of positive relationships.

Rating Indicators

- 1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.
- 2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,
 - Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
 - Procedures need strengthening; or
 - With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
 - For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
 - Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (HR 6.02) and training (TS 2.03); or
 - Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.
- 3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,
 - Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
 - Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
 - Timeframes are often missed; or
 - A number of client records are missing important information or
 - Client participation is inconsistent; or
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4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
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Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- A description of how personnel support, and develop positive relationships with, children and youth
- Policies and/or procedures defining appropriate boundaries and unacceptable personnel conduct (OST 4.05)

On-Site Evidence

No On-Site Evidence

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program Administrator
 - b. Site Director
 - c. Program Personnel
 - d. Children, youth, and families
- Observe personnel interactions with children and youth

OST 4.01

Personnel actively engage with children and youth in a warm, friendly, and respectful manner that helps them feel welcome, comfortable, and supported.

Interpretation: *Personnel may demonstrate implementation of this standard in a number of ways. For example, personnel should know and call children and youth by name; acknowledge children and youth when they arrive and depart; project a tone of welcome and cheer in their voices and gestures; use kind and supportive language; show interest in what children and youth say and do; and spend most of program time interacting with children and youth (including both during activities and when snacks*

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are served). Personnel should also take care not to intrude on, interrupt, dismiss, belittle, or distance themselves from children and youth, and should make an effort to spend only minimal time during program hours on tasks that do not involve children and youth.

Research Note: Youth report that they are more engaged and get more out of program activities when they feel emotionally supported by staff.

OST 4.02

Personnel encourage the development of trust by:

- a. treating all children and youth without favoritism or discrimination; and
- b. being consistent and dependable, following through on what they say they will do.

Related: CR 1.05

Interpretation: Given that there may be a tendency to employ discipline strategies differently when children are minorities or have disabilities, personnel should make a special effort to ensure that they treat children without favoritism or discrimination when upholding rules and guiding behavior, as addressed in OST 5 and 6. Organizations should ideally also review their discipline-related data on a regular basis, within the context of their PQI efforts, to determine whether children are indeed being treated without discrimination or if improvement/corrective action may be needed.

Note: See OST 5 and 6 for additional information regarding the importance of fairness and consistency related to rules and behavior guidance.

OST 4.03

In an effort to truly get to know children and youth, personnel take the time to:

- a. give children and youth individualized attention;
- b. check in with children and youth to see how they are doing;
- c. ask open-ended questions that encourage children and youth to share information about their lives, cultures, feelings, perspectives, needs, and interests; and
- d. pay close attention to what children and youth say and do, making a special effort to learn about their individual interests, abilities, temperaments, learning styles, and needs, including any special needs they may have.

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Interpretation: *Please note that the special needs referenced in element (d) of the standard include, but are not limited to, needs related to disabilities or a history of trauma.*

Research Note: *Literature emphasizes that personnel should make a concerted effort to get to know youth so that they are equipped to be responsive to their needs during the course of program involvement, including when challenges arise.*

OST 4.04

Personnel support children and youth by:

- a. responding to them with interest, acceptance, and appreciation; and
- b. responding appropriately to their individual needs, interests, and abilities.

Interpretation: *Personnel should recognize that all children and youth have different strengths and skills; support and cultivate children's and youths' special interests and talents; demonstrate interest in children's and youths' cultures and experiences; and respond to the range of children's and youths' feelings, temperaments, and abilities, making sure that they receive any specialized attention or support they may need. For example, personnel should encourage children and youth to pursue their interests; respect the different ways children and youth express their feelings; try to assess a child's or youth's feelings before attempting to solve a problem; comfort children and youth who appear hurt, upset, or disappointed; find ways to nurture and include shy or introverted children who find it difficult to speak up; accept a child's or youth's desire to be alone; and modify both their actions and program activities in ways designed to help children and youth engage regardless of their age, ability, or temperament.*

Note: *Please note that more detailed expectations regarding ways to address the needs, interests, and abilities of children and youth are included throughout this section of standards. See OST 5, 6, 9, and 16 for more information regarding the importance of responding appropriately to children's needs in the context of both behavior support and program activities. See CR 1.05 and 1.06 for more information about meeting communication needs.*

OST 4.05

Personnel maintain clear and appropriate boundaries with children and youth.

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Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



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Interpretation: *The exact nature of "appropriate boundaries" may vary by age and can be hard to define, but the organization should establish policies and/or procedures that outline the type of conduct that would be deemed unacceptable. While personnel should strive to develop strong and supportive relationships with children and youth, as addressed throughout this core concept standard, they should also understand, and make clear to children and youth, that their role is to be a coach, instructor, and role model rather than a peer or friend. For example, personnel should be aware that some details of their personal lives may not be appropriate to disclose to children and youth, and should be careful not to share too much. Personnel should also consider whose needs are being served in their interactions with program participants, and make sure that the relationship and interactions serve the needs of children and youth, rather than their own needs.*

It is also important to note that the organization's policies and/or procedures should include guidelines regarding any contact that might occur outside program time, whether via in-person contact, telephone, or electronic communications and postings (including social media postings). Personnel behavior in these contexts should be consistent with personnel behavior at the program, and should not threaten or blur the boundaries established there.

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

OST 5: Promoting Positive Behaviors and Healthy Peer Relationships

Personnel partner with children and youth to build a nurturing, inclusive community that supports positive behavior and encourages respectful, cooperative interactions.

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (HR 6.02) and training (TS 2.03); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- A description of how the organization welcomes all children and youth and promotes positive behavior and healthy peer relationships, including strategies for promoting social and emotional development
- Program schedule/routine
- Program rules and behavioral expectations

On-Site Evidence

No On-Site Evidence

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program Administrator
 - b. Site Director
 - c. Program Personnel
 - d. Children, youth, and families
- Observe program space and activities
- Observe interactions of children and youth with peers and personnel

OST 5.01

Program space, materials, and activities are designed to be welcoming to and supportive of all children and youth regardless of their background, race, ethnicity, culture, language, religion, socioeconomic status, gender identity and expression, sexual identity, sexual orientation, disability, or ability.

Related: CR 1.05

Interpretation: *Diversity should be incorporated and embraced throughout all aspects of the program, from the pictures displayed, to the books read, to the games and music played, to the holidays celebrated, to the food served.*

OST 5.02

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

The organization supports positive behavior by establishing a consistent routine that:

- a. is clearly communicated to children, youth, and families;
- b. supports achievement of program goals;
- c. encourages active participation and engagement;
- d. provides stability and predictability;
- e. includes time for children and youth to settle in and adjust upon arrival;
- f. facilitates smooth transitions and minimizes the need for waiting or rushing;
- g. allows children and youth to meet their physical needs (e.g., for water, food, or the restroom) in a relaxed way; and
- h. complements and extends the school-day routine, to the extent possible and appropriate.

Interpretation: *The daily schedule should be posted, and participants should be prepared in advance when changes or exceptions will occur.*

Interpretation: *Implementation of element (h) may be minimal if the program is not affiliated with a school.*

OST 5.03

Children and youth are involved in developing rules and behavioral expectations that:

- a. establish clear expectations for interactions and behavior;
- b. are designed to encourage the development of a safe, caring, respectful, and inclusive environment that supports self-expression and learning;
- c. are appropriate to the ages and developmental levels of program participants, as well as to the goals of the program;
- d. are clearly communicated to all program participants; and
- e. are consistently upheld and implemented.

Interpretation: *Rules and behavioral expectations should ideally be written in positive language. For example, as opposed to stating "Don't run in the hall," or "Don't be mean," positive phrasing would specify "Walk in the hall" and "Be kind to others." Time should be set aside to discuss rules in order to ensure that children and youth understand expectations and limits.*

OST 5.04

In an effort to facilitate the development of peer relationships and foster a

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

sense of community, children and youth are provided with opportunities to:

- a. socialize with their peers; and
- b. participate in structured community-building activities such as introductions, icebreakers, or community circles.

Interpretation: *Opportunities for socialization may be provided both within and between program activities.*

Research Note: *Some research suggests that providing opportunities for friends to get together may foster program participation. For example, teenagers put great emphasis on the importance of their peers, and are more willing to engage in programs when they are able to spend time with their friends. Accordingly, some organizations serving older youth set aside designated space where teens can socialize with one another apart from younger program participants.*

Note: *Helping children and youth develop the self-regulatory and social skills addressed in OST 5.05 through 5.07 will help to ensure that the peer interactions addressed in this standard are pro-social and supportive.*

OST 5.05

In an effort to help children and youth learn to self-regulate their emotions and behavior, personnel:

- a. model healthy strategies for expressing and managing emotions;
- b. help children and youth learn how to recognize and understand emotions and their causes and effects, including how emotions can influence thoughts and behaviors;
- c. help children and youth learn strategies for expressing and managing their emotions in an appropriate and constructive manner;
- d. provide opportunities for children and youth to practice handling their emotions in healthy and responsible ways; and
- e. offer coaching and guidance to help children and youth appropriately express and manage their emotions, as needed.

Interpretation: *Opportunities to practice handling and expressing emotions will likely occur within the context of program activities, as addressed in OST 9, as well as within the context of managing interpersonal conflicts and behavior-related challenges, as addressed in OST 6.*

OST 5.06

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

Personnel support children and youth in developing empathy, openness, and respect for others by:

- a. explaining that all people are unique individuals;
- b. helping children and youth learn about diversity and difference, including diversity of perspectives, cultures, temperaments, needs, and abilities;
- c. modeling inclusiveness and respect for difference;
- d. teaching children and youth to be kind and stand up for others; and
- e. facilitating opportunities for children and youth to listen to and learn about the experiences, feelings, and perspectives of others.

Interpretation: *Personnel can facilitate opportunities for program participants to listen to and learn from one another by engaging children and youth in explicit discussions, as well as by encouraging children and youth to interact with their peers, including those who may be perceived as "different" (e.g., children and youth with special needs, children and youth with different personalities or temperaments, or children and youth who speak a different language). In addition to learning about the experiences, feelings, and perspectives of peers and personnel, the organization can also facilitate opportunities for children and youth to learn about the experiences of others by providing resources that illustrate different perspectives and cultures, or inviting guests with different backgrounds or experiences to visit.*

Note: *Ground rules that support safe expression, as addressed in OST 5.03, can help to promote the development of an environment where children and youth can safely share with, and learn from, their peers.*

OST 5.07

Personnel use modeling, instruction, practice, and coaching to help children and youth develop interpersonal skills and knowledge that facilitate appropriate interactions and collaboration, including:

- a. treating others with fairness and respect;
- b. understanding social norms and cues;
- c. demonstrating an awareness of different perspectives and cultures;
- d. listening actively and deeply, without interrupting;
- e. effectively conveying their points of view; and
- f. resolving conflicts and disagreements.

Note: *Learning to regulate emotions and behavior and empathize with others, as addressed in OST 5.05 and 5.06, underlies and supports the*

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

development of the interpersonal skills needed to get along and collaborate effectively with others.

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

OST 6: Positive Approaches to Guiding Behavior

Personnel use positive techniques to guide and manage behavior.

Research Note: *Literature highlights the importance of: (1) creating a safe, supportive, and stable environment that emphasizes positive behavioral supports and consistent implementation of rules; (2) focusing on the causes of disruptive behavior rather than focusing only on the behavior itself; (3) viewing incidents as learning opportunities that can help improve how children act and relate to others; (4) avoiding exclusionary or overly punitive disciplinary practices; (5) balancing accountability for actions with an understanding of the factors and underlying causes that may have contributed to those actions; and (6) facilitating access to needed services.*

Note: *Practices that support and encourage positive interactions and behavior, as addressed in OST 5, underlie and support appropriate behavior management. See COA's standards for Behavior Support and Management (BSM) for additional organization-wide expectations regarding behavior support and management.*

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (HR 6.02) and training (TS 2.03); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- A description of how personnel use positive techniques to guide and manage behavior
- Policies and procedures for guiding and managing behavior (OST 6.01, 6.02, 6.03, 6.04, 6.05, 6.06)
- Policies for prohibited interventions (OST 6.07)

On-Site Evidence

No On-Site Evidence

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program Administrator
 - b. Site Director
 - c. Program Personnel
 - d. Children, youth, and families
- Observe program interactions and activities
- Review files of children and youth

OST 6.01

Personnel observe children and youth and their behaviors, and support and encourage positive choices and behavior by:

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

- a. maintaining high expectations for children and youth;
- b. recognizing and reinforcing positive behavior; and
- c. providing individualized guidance and support to encourage engagement and help prevent problems, as needed.

Note: See OST 4 and 9 for more information regarding the importance of using a variety of strategies to ensure that all children and youth are appropriately and sufficiently engaged in the program.

OST 6.02

When concerning behaviors or conflicts arise, personnel determine:

- a. when children and youth can be left alone or quickly redirected;
- b. when children and youth can be encouraged to resolve situations on their own; and
- c. when it is necessary to intervene.

Interpretation: *When children and youth experience conflicts personnel should typically encourage them to try to resolve the situation on their own, and step in only as needed. However, personnel should also take care to ensure that the situation is resolved effectively. It is also important to note that children and youth should never be encouraged to find a mutually-agreeable solution on their own if there is a power imbalance between them, as addressed in OST 6.06.*

OST 6.03

When it is necessary to intervene in a situation, personnel:

- a. remain calm and patient;
- b. refrain from publicly criticizing children and youth, to the extent possible;
- c. acknowledge the feelings of children and youth;
- d. help children and youth cool down, as needed;
- e. speak with children and youth to learn their perspectives regarding what caused the situation; and
- f. consider whether there are any underlying causes or circumstances that may have triggered or contributed to the situation.

OST 6.04

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

In an effort to prevent future incidents and maintain a positive program climate, responses to concerning behavior include:

- a. viewing incidents as learning opportunities that can help improve how children and youth behave and relate to others;
- b. helping children and youth reflect upon why the incident occurred, the impact of their actions, what they can do differently next time, and what support is needed to make that change;
- c. helping children and youth take responsibility for their actions in ways that are respectful, appropriate to age and developmental level, and related to the behavior in question;
- d. helping children and youth repair their relationships with their peers and the program community; and
- e. considering and addressing the needs and circumstances of all involved, including balancing accountability for actions with an understanding of the factors and underlying causes that may have contributed to those actions.

Interpretation: *While some organizations will have pre-determined consequences for specific behaviors, it may be more appropriate to individualize consequences based on the specific needs and circumstances of children and youth, and to involve children and youth in determining consequences designed to help youth take responsibility for their actions and repair any harm that occurred. For example, a youth who has vandalized the restroom might meet with the custodian to learn about the extent and costs of the damage done, and to assist with needed repairs. Regardless of whether consequences are pre-determined or tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of children and youth, organizations should avoid the use of exclusionary or overly-punitive consequences (e.g., suspension), as addressed in both OST 6.07 and the Research Note to OST 6.*

OST 6.05

In an effort to meet the needs of children and youth with a history of trauma, personnel:

- a. are able to recognize when a child or youth may have experienced trauma;
- b. understand the impact of trauma, including the impact trauma can have on child learning and behavior; and
- c. balance accountability for actions with an understanding of the way past trauma may have contributed to those actions.

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

Research Note: *Children who have experienced trauma may exhibit problem behaviors related to that trauma, and can then become re-traumatized through punishment for those behaviors, thereby perpetuating the cycle of trauma and behavioral problems. Accordingly, literature on trauma-informed care points to the importance of developing policies and procedures that reflect an understanding of the impact trauma can have on child learning and behavior, and address disruptive behaviors in ways that help break the cycle of trauma and behavioral problems. This literature highlights the importance of: (1) training personnel to recognize and understand the impact of trauma, as referenced in OST 6.05; (2) creating a safe, supportive, and stable environment that emphasizes positive behavioral supports and consistent implementation of rules, as addressed in OST 3, 4, 5, and 6; (3) focusing on the causes of disruptive behavior rather than focusing only on the behavior itself, as addressed in OST 6.03 and 6.04; (4) avoiding exclusionary or overly punitive disciplinary practices, as addressed in OST 6.07; (5) balancing accountability for actions with an understanding of the way past trauma may have contributed to those actions, as addressed in OST 6.04 and 6.05; (6) viewing incidents as learning opportunities that can help to improve how children act and relate to others, as addressed in OST 6.04; (7) building partnerships with organizations that provide trauma-specific treatment interventions, as referenced in OST 8.05; and (8) facilitating access to needed services, as addressed in OST 7.04.*

Note: *Organizations can also support children and youth with a history of trauma by: (1) building partnerships with organizations that provide trauma-specific treatment interventions, as referenced in OST 8.05, and (2) facilitating access to needed services, as addressed in OST 7.04.*

(FP) OST 6.06

Personnel are able to recognize when a child or youth may be experiencing bullying, and:

- a. intervene immediately and appropriately with the involved children and youth;
- b. document the incident(s);
- c. follow up individually with the involved children and youth to make sure the bullying does not continue and address both the causes and any negative effects of the bullying; and
- d. collaborate with families, other program personnel, and other relevant partners to monitor the situation and address any issues and effects.

Interpretation: *Please note that involved children and youth include both*

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

the bully and the victim of the bullying, as well as any bystanders. Organizations should also have and follow clear procedures regarding when a situation should be reported to school-day personnel or other applicable authorities.

Research Note: *Bullying is an extreme form of peer conflict that is deliberate and repeated, involves a power imbalance, and typically peaks in early adolescence. Bullying can be physically and psychologically harmful, and may take different forms - from physical assaults, to rumor spreading and social exclusion, to mean-spirited teasing, jokes, or name calling (e.g., racist or sexist jokes, or mocking someone's abilities). It is also important to remember that bullying can occur both in-person and electronically (e.g., via social media).*

Note: *In addition to intervening when bullying occurs, as addressed in this standard, organizations can also take steps to prevent bullying from happening by encouraging pro-social behavior and fostering a sense of community among children and youth, as referenced in OST 5. Given the increased incidence of cyberbullying, it is also important to teach children and youth how to navigate the internet safely and responsibly, as addressed in OST 9.18.*

(FP) OST 6.07

Policy prohibits:

- a. corporal punishment;
- b. aversive stimuli;
- c. withholding nutrition or hydration;
- d. inflicting physical or psychological pain;
- e. demeaning, shaming, or degrading language or activities;
- f. overly punitive restrictions;
- g. forced physical exercise to eliminate behaviors;
- h. punitive work assignments;
- i. punishment by peers; and
- j. group punishment or discipline for individual behavior.

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

OST 7: Family Connections

Personnel build relationships with family members that increase the ability of both the organization and family to support children and youth.

Research Note: *Literature highlights the importance of developing strong relationships and partnerships with families, and emphasizes the important role that family plays in youth development.*

Note: *Treating families in a respectful and culturally responsive manner and accommodating their communication needs, as addressed in CR 1, will help to facilitate family engagement.*

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (HR 6.02) and training (TS 2.03); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- A description of ways families are engaged
- Policies and/or procedures for family contact and engagement (OST 7.02, 7.03, 7.04)
- Table of contents of handbook for families

On-Site Evidence

- Information made available for families (re: program activities and events, along with ways to support the learning and development of their children), for past quarter
- Handbook for families
- Documentation of collaboration with families (e.g., call logs, homework logs, notations in files of children and youth, etc.)

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program Administrator
 - b. Site Director
 - c. Program Personnel
 - d. Children, youth, and families
- Review files of children and youth
- Observe interactions between personnel and families

OST 7.01

Family members are helped to feel welcome and comfortable.

Interpretation: *Personnel should: (1) make an effort to greet family*

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

members by name; (2) use friendly voices, expressions, and gestures; (3) show interest in family members' lives; and (4) be relaxed rather than abrupt. Personnel should also recognize that some cultures like direct communication, while others prefer indirect.

OST 7.02

Personnel engage in two-way communication with families at regular intervals to:

- a. discuss the program's goals, activities, and events;
- b. learn and share information regarding the needs and progress of children and youth;
- c. offer guidance regarding ways families can support the learning and development of their children;
- d. respond to family needs; and
- e. facilitate connections between families and school-day staff, when appropriate.

Interpretation: *Organizations should develop policies or procedures regarding expectations for both individual and group contact that specify both how, and how frequently, contact is to occur. Contact should ideally occur both in writing (e.g., via newsletter, e-mail, and/or text) and in-person (e.g., via meetings or conferences, as well as during informal interactions with family members).*

Interpretation: *Guidance regarding the ways families can support the learning and development of their children will typically be tailored to the program's goals, as addressed in OST 1. For example, a program striving to promote academic achievement would typically provide guidance regarding ways to support academic success, and a program striving to promote healthy eating and exercise might educate families on healthy food choices and ways to encourage physical activity at home.*

Note: *As addressed in CR 1.06, personnel should strive to accommodate the communication needs of family members by communicating, in writing and orally, in the languages of the populations served. The organization should also support family involvement by developing a family handbook, and offering orientation sessions for the families of new program participants, as noted in OST 2.03.*

OST 7.03

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

Family members are:

- a. provided with opportunities to become appropriately engaged with the program; and
- b. encouraged to provide input and feedback about the program.

Related: GOV 2, PQI 2.02, GOV 4

Interpretation: *Opportunities for engagement may vary based upon both the nature and goals of the program and the ages of program participants. For example, while organizations serving younger children may encourage family members to volunteer in the classroom, chaperone field trips, or share their skills and cultural traditions, it may be more appropriate for organizations serving older youth to involve family members by inviting them to milestone events and seeking their collaboration on an ongoing basis.*

Note: *While it is important to provide opportunities for families to engage with the program, personnel should also recognize that families who are unable or unwilling to participate in activities or events at the program can still support the learning and development of their children in other ways. This points to the importance of offering families guidance regarding the variety of ways families can support the learning and development of their children, as referenced in OST 7.02.*

OST 7.04

Families are provided with information about resources and services needed to address issues that pose barriers to children's learning and development.

Interpretation: *Needed resources and services may include, but are not limited to: child care subsidies; food pantries or programs; medical or dental services; mental health services, including any services needed to promote recovery from trauma; housing or employment assistance; adult education classes; parent education classes; and financial management assistance. COA recognizes that some organizations may implement this standard by connecting families with another resource, such as a school counselor, who is responsible for connecting children and families with needed supports.*

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

OST 8: Community Relationships and Partnerships

Connections with other community organizations, institutions, and members increase the ability of the organization and community to support and engage children and youth.

Research Note: *Literature emphasizes the importance of developing strong relationships and partnerships with other community organizations and institutions. Some experts highlight the particular promise of community schools, which join schools with other community partners in an effort to create stronger families and communities and improve student learning. These schools engage families and other community stakeholders as equal partners in implementing comprehensive efforts to meet needs in the areas of education, youth development, family support, and community development, using the school as a base where all services are provided.*

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (HR 6.02) and training (TS 2.03); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- A description of community relationships/partnerships and their benefits (to the organization, program participants, and the community)

On-Site Evidence

- List of community organizations, institutions, and resources, including both current and potential partners
- Documentation of collaboration efforts, including collaboration with school personnel if applicable (e.g., meeting minutes, correspondence, agreements, contracts, etc.)
- Documentation of activities that connect children and youth with the community

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program Administrator
 - b. Site Director
 - c. Program Personnel
 - d. Children, youth, and families
 - e. Program host, if applicable and possible
- Observe program activities (re: opportunities that connect children and youth with the community)
- Observe interactions between personnel and program host, where applicable and possible

OST 8.01

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



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The organization develops and maintains a list of community organizations and institutions to identify the potential for collaboration and partnerships.

Interpretation: *Relevant community organizations and institutions may include, but are not limited to: schools, libraries, parks, community centers, recreation and athletic services and facilities, cultural institutions (e.g., museums or theatres), community colleges and universities, local businesses, faith-based institutions, and other out-of-school time programs.*

Organizations should typically consider program goals and areas of focus when identifying the potential for collaboration and partnerships. For example, an organization providing language arts programming might partner with the local library, and an organization providing STEM programming might partner with a local science museum.

Note: *See OST 8.02 for more information regarding the ways partnerships can benefit an organization.*

OST 8.02

The organization establishes partnerships that enable it to sustain and enhance programming by facilitating access to resources that include:

- a. needed space, transportation, equipment, supplies, and funding, including sources of subsidy that can help make the program affordable;
- b. experts with specialized content knowledge relevant to programming and activities;
- c. opportunities for staff training and professional development;
- d. opportunities to recruit potential personnel and volunteers; and
- e. opportunities to recruit prospective program participants.

Research Note: *Some literature highlights the particular importance of partnering with organizations and institutions that can provide the material and human resources needed to strengthen programming in specialized areas such as the arts or STEM learning.*

Note: *See OST 8.03 for additional expectations regarding partnerships with school-day personnel.*

OST 8.03

The organization partners with school-day personnel to:

- a. ensure that programming and activities complement, extend, and expand school day learning;

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



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- b. learn about the strengths, needs, and progress of children and youth;
and
- c. communicate information about children and youth's performance and progress at the program.

Interpretation: *While implementation of this standard may be especially critical when the organization partners with a school to offer academic programming and/or homework help, building relationships with school-day personnel can be beneficial for all types of programs. However, COA does recognize that it may be challenging for some organizations to establish partnerships with school-day personnel, especially if the organization serves students who attend different schools. When this is the case, it may make sense for the organization to consider whether it might be able to build a relationship with appropriate staff at the district level.*

Research Note: *Research suggests that youth and families fare better when there is a coordinated, cooperative approach across systems, and some literature suggests that collaborating with different types and levels of school day staff can help to promote the strength and sustainability of the partnership. For example, while a principal might set the overall tone for the partnership and enable an organization to share the school's resources, teachers might offer valuable information about the school-day curriculum and the progress of children and youth. Relationships with other personnel, from guidance counselors and secretaries to coaches and custodians, can yield their own opportunities and benefits. Multi-level partnerships can also protect against disruptions that might occur as a result of turnover.*

NA *The organization does not run a program designed to collaborate with a school.*

Note: *See OST 2.06 and 9.06 for additional expectations regarding the collaboration that should occur to support children and youth with special needs.*

OST 8.04

Children and youth are provided with opportunities to get to know and become involved with their communities.

Interpretation: *In addition to providing opportunities designed to benefit children and youth, organizations should ideally also facilitate activities that enable children and youth to contribute to the community, such as through community service or service learning projects. Personnel should also remain aware of, and encourage children and youth to attend, outside opportunities and events related to programming and areas of interest.*

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



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Note: *Implementation of this standard will likely overlap with some aspects of OST 8.02, regarding utilization of community resources. For example, recruiting and matching children with volunteer mentors will simultaneously foster children's connection to the community.*

OST 8.05

In an effort to ensure that the needs of children and youth are met, the organization:

- a. establishes working relationships with organizations and agencies prepared to address factors that pose barriers to children's engagement and learning; and
- b. collaborates with other community organizations, institutions, and members to identify and address gaps in services needed by children and families.

Interpretation: *Organizations and agencies prepared to address factors that pose barriers to children's engagement and learning include both those that provide family support services and those that serve children and youth with special needs.*

Purpose

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Out-of-School Time Services

OST 9: Programming and Activities

Program activities and instruction are designed to help children and youth explore interests, build skills, and experience success.

Research Note: *Literature emphasizes the importance of structuring activities to help children and youth develop a sense of self-efficacy and a "growth mindset" whereby hard work and practice, rather than innate ability, are viewed as key to improvement and success. Organizations can strive to cultivate a growth mindset by providing opportunities, support, and feedback that are designed to help youth: (1) take on new challenges, (2) persist through difficulties, (3) understand that learning is a process and mistakes are a natural part of learning, and (4) experience improvement and success, as addressed in OST 9.05, 9.07, 9.15, and 9.16.*

Note: *Different types of activities will be offered depending on the goals of the program and the ages and interests of program participants, but the expectations addressed in this core concept will typically apply regardless of the type of programming provided. See OST 10 through 15 for more information regarding expectations for specific types of activities. When programming does not fall within a category addressed in those core concepts, it will be covered only by the generally-applicable standards included in this core concept.*

Rating Indicators

- 1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.
- 2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,
 - Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
 - Procedures need strengthening; or
 - With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
 - For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
 - Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (HR 6.02) and training (TS 2.03); or
 - Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.
- 3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be

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compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards;

e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- A description of programming and activities, including:
 - a. type and nature of programming/activities;
 - b. opportunities provided to children and youth during programming/activities;
 - c. role of personnel, including strategies for engaging, instructing, and supporting children and youth;
 - d. how children and youth are involved in providing input about programming/activities
- Policy and procedures for serving children and youth with special needs (OST 9.06)
- Policies and/or procedures regarding the use of technology (OST 9.18)
- Policies and/or procedures for determining when an activity/practice should be suspended or discontinued (OST 9.19)

On-Site Evidence

- Curricula (for previous quarter)
- Programming/activity plans (for previous quarter)
- Daily schedules for past month
- Attendance records (showing totals for each day and weekly)

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Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



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averages)

- Logic model (or equivalent framework)
- Training curricula and/or information on internet safety provided to children, youth, and personnel, if applicable
- Improvement/corrective action plans, if applicable (OST 9.19)

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program Administrator
 - b. Site Director
 - c. Program Personnel
 - d. Children, youth, and families
- Observe program activities
- Review files of children and youth (OST 9.06, 9.20)

OST 9.01

Children and youth are engaged in activities that are:

- a. designed to build specific skills and foster the development of positive interests;
- b. based on a curriculum that matches program goals; and
- c. guided by plans that address both the substance and logistics of activities (including learning goals, preparation, timing and transitions, materials, outcomes to look for, and strategies for accommodating the needs of children and youth with differing skills and abilities).

Interpretation: *Please note that the skills to be developed will typically relate to both activity content (e.g., arts, health, literacy) and the interdisciplinary skills that are relevant across content areas, such as skills related to critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. Out-of-school time programs offer an excellent opportunity to help children and youth develop these "21st century skills" that are so crucial to meeting the demands and challenges of today's world. Accordingly, organizations should look for ways to incorporate the acquisition of these skills regardless of content area, as emphasized throughout the practice standards included in this section. It is also important to note that helping children and youth learn to regulate their emotions and behavior, empathize with others, and strengthen their interpersonal skills, as addressed in OST 5, will underlie and support their ability to develop these skills.*

Interpretation: *While organizations are expected to use a curriculum that*

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guides the provision of activities and programming, they have the flexibility to define and determine the type and nature of the curricula they use. Organizations are also not required to utilize commercially-developed curricula; however, if staff are responsible for developing the curricula they should have the expertise and paid time they need to do so, as addressed in OST 21.09.

Note: *As noted in OST 1, program goals should be articulated in a logic model or equivalent framework that establishes a clear connection between the organization's mission, community needs, required inputs/resources, planned services and supports, expected outputs, and desired goals/outcomes. Accordingly, activities should be chosen and designed to promote the achievement of the specified goals. It is also important to ensure that personnel have sufficient time to plan activities, as addressed in OST 21.09.*

OST 9.02

Personnel provide formal or informal instruction that:

- a. helps children and youth understand the goals to be accomplished;
- b. includes models for children and youth to emulate; and
- c. clearly conveys information and directions related to the activity, including the time available for different tasks and any specific steps to be followed, as applicable.

Interpretation: *Children and youth may need models related to both content topics and social-emotional skills, but it is also important to note that models should not have a limiting effect on experimentation and creativity. Accordingly, the type of modeling provided may vary based upon the nature of the activities offered. For example, if youth are engaged in building a robot they might benefit from seeing: (1) the specific technology-related skills needed to build different components of the robot; (2) examples of both robot components and a completed robot; and (3) the self-regulatory skills that enable one to persist through challenging work. In contrast, personnel moderating a different type of activity might model different ways to use specific tools and how to cope with frustrations, but might not provide an example of a finished product so as not to constrain imagination and originality.*

In addition to conveying directions orally, it will often make sense for personnel to also write down instructions so that children and youth can

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Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



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remember what to do.

Interpretation: *When youth are the drivers of a project these elements may be implemented through a collaborative process that involves personnel and youth working together as partners.*

Note: *As noted in OST 9.05, in some cases personnel may need to modify instruction to accommodate diverse needs and abilities. See OST 9.05 for more information.*

OST 9.03

Programming is designed to meet the developmental needs of the children and youth the program is designed to serve.

Interpretation: *Please note that this standard is intended to address the developmental needs of the general population the program is designed to serve (e.g., kindergarteners, middle schoolers, high schoolers), as opposed to the specific needs of individual children and youth. While the practices addressed in this core concept are important for children and youth of all ages, it is also important that organizations consider the ages/developmental needs of children and youth when implementing these practices. For example, it will be especially important for organizations serving older youth to provide opportunities for youth to: (1) have extended interactions with peers, as addressed in OST 5.04 and 9.11; (2) make increasingly meaningful choices, as addressed in OST 9.10 and 9.17; (3) develop leadership skills, as addressed in OST 9.10; (4) engage in increasingly complex forms of critical thinking and problem solving, as addressed in OST 9.08; (5) provide input regarding program design and implementation, as addressed in OST 9.17; and (6) gain exposure to the new ideas, people, and places that can help them explore their own identities and possibilities for the future, as addressed in OST 9.04 and 9.15. Older youth will also often be better served by programs offering an in-depth focus on a specific area of interest, rather than programs that provide a variety of different activity options (such as those more common for younger children).*

Note: *As noted in OST 21.02, personnel should be trained on child and youth development, including what matters most at different ages and stages of development. The organization should also consider the developmental needs of children and youth when devising the program's logic model or equivalent framework, as addressed in OST 1.*

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Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



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Note: See OST 2.06, 9.06, and 18.08, as well as the other standards included throughout this core concept, for more information regarding accommodating the specific needs of individual children and youth.

OST 9.04

The organization provides activities that:

- a. engage children and youth in active learning experiences that facilitate learning by doing;
- b. reflect and support the interests, experiences, and cultures of children and youth;
- c. offer exposure to new ideas, people, and places;
- d. encourage creativity and innovation; and
- e. build upon one another to facilitate a step-by-step approach to learning, when possible.

Interpretation: Regarding element (e) of the standard, COA recognizes that it can be challenging to provide activities that build on each other in a sequential manner if daily attendance is not required. Accordingly, organizations that permit sporadic attendance should provide stand-alone activities, but ensure that the activities are thematically connected so that children and youth are exposed to related concepts over time. Activities could also include optional follow-up items for children and youth who want to pursue related projects on their own.

Note: Obtaining input from children and youth, as addressed in OST 9.17, can help the organization to ensure that activities reflect their interests, experiences, and cultures. Personnel can also use processing and reflective periods to point out how aspects of activities relate to things that are meaningful to youth, as well as to help youth understand how what they are learning relates to previous learning at the program, as addressed in OST 9.15.

OST 9.05

Balancing respect for children and youth's autonomy with the need to provide adequate support, personnel:

- a. utilize questioning techniques designed to encourage independent thinking and dialogue;
- b. check in with children and youth to assess understanding, needs, and progress and monitor the level of difficulty presented;
- c. provide balanced and realistic feedback designed to promote improvement;

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Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



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- d. offer encouragement, assistance, and coaching to support and extend children and youth's participation and learning, as needed and without taking control;
- e. vary the approaches used to engage and support children and youth based on their differing personalities, temperaments, learning styles, and abilities; and
- f. modify instruction and activities to accommodate children and youth with differing needs and abilities, when necessary.

Interpretation: *The type of support provided may vary based on the specific needs and circumstances of children and youth. For example, personnel might ask open-ended questions designed to prompt deeper thinking; show children and youth how and where to find answers to their questions; demonstrate how complex skills can be broken into smaller steps; and offer suggestions when children and youth face problems they cannot solve by themselves. Personnel may also use a variety of strategies to accommodate diverse needs and abilities, such as substituting equipment if children have difficulty with motor skills. Personnel should always be sure to listen carefully to children and youth and take time to think about their questions and comments.*

OST 9.06

When children and youth have special needs, the organization:

- a. makes reasonable, respectful accommodations to help them fully participate in the program;
- b. encourages collaboration among personnel, families, and other involved providers to promote consistency in meeting needs; and
- c. ensures they are grouped with peers of the same age range, even if their documented developmental level is different from their chronological age.

Related: ASE 2

Interpretation: *As noted in OST 2.06, organizations must make reasonable accommodations to their policies, procedures, and practices to support the participation of children and youth with disabilities. Accordingly, when children and youth have special needs the organization should: (1) partner with parents and other involved providers to gain an understanding of needs and potential strategies for accommodation, as referenced in OST 2.06; (2) develop plans for accommodating needs; (3) implement identified accommodations; and (4) adjust plans and accommodations, as needed. Given that children and youth may have special needs related to physical,*

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behavioral, medical, emotional, or cognitive conditions, appropriate accommodations will vary based on the individual needs presented. For example, it might be necessary to modify the physical environment, train personnel to meet medical or behavioral needs, or partner with specialists who can provide guidance or assist children with certain activities.

Note: See OST 18 for more information about responding to special health needs. Please also note that the importance of meeting diverse needs is emphasized throughout this section of standards as a whole.

Note: See the Research Note to OST 2.06.

OST 9.07

Activities allow sufficient time for practice and skill building, and personnel:

- a. have high expectations regarding what children and youth can accomplish;
- b. emphasize that learning is a process;
- c. encourage children and youth to try new skills and activities and persist through difficulties;
- d. reframe "failure" as an opportunity for learning and improvement; and
- e. emphasize that success is the result of hard work rather than innate ability.

Interpretation: *Sufficient time should be allocated for both guided and individual practice.*

Note: *While it is important that personnel have high expectations for children and youth, it is also important that they be prepared to provide the support and encouragement that children and youth may need in order to meet those expectations, as addressed in OST 9.05.*

OST 9.08

Activities provide opportunities for children and youth to:

- a. think deeply about different topics;
- b. synthesize and analyze information;
- c. discover patterns and relationships; and
- d. solve problems.

Purpose

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OST 9.09

Activities provide opportunities for children and youth to:

- a. communicate their thoughts and ideas; and
- b. contribute to dialogue and discussion.

Interpretation: *While it is important that children and youth learn to share their ideas and contribute to discussions, it is also important for personnel to: (1) recognize that some children (i.e. introverted children) may find it harder than others to speak up, and (2) develop strategies to help these children communicate their ideas. For example, if facilitating a group discussion personnel might give children time to process and compose their thoughts before asking them to share, rather than posing a question and then calling on the children who immediately raise their hands to respond. Personnel might also provide opportunities for children to share their thoughts and ideas in writing rather than orally.*

OST 9.10

Children and youth have opportunities to:

- a. make meaningful choices and decisions; and
- b. assume an appropriate level of responsibility and leadership.

Interpretation: *What constitutes a "meaningful choice" and "an appropriate level of responsibility and leadership" will vary based on the ages and developmental levels of children and youth. For example, younger children will typically have opportunities to choose among different activities, including selecting what they will do, how they will do it, and with whom. In contrast, older youth are likely to participate in more focused programming and make choices and decisions within the context of one particular activity or project (e.g., deciding the focus of a project, deciding topics within a subject area, deciding group roles, or deciding how to present results). Similarly, while younger children may be responsible for fulfilling daily jobs (e.g., passing out materials, cleaning up activities, or serving food), older youth may assume more significant responsibilities, such as organizing or leading activities.*

Organizations should also consider the needs of individual children and youth when providing opportunities for children and youth to make meaningful choices and assume an appropriate degree of responsibility and leadership. For example, a child with a disability might be able to engage in a particular task for 15 minutes, but then need a 5 minute break. Similarly,

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Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



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a quiet or introverted child might be hesitant to take on a leadership role just for the sake of being a leader, but might be motivated to do so in order to accomplish a goal he or she is truly passionate about.

Note: *Providing assistance only as needed and without taking control, as addressed in OST 9.05, is one way of encouraging children and youth to become more responsible.*

OST 9.11

Children and youth have opportunities to work together to achieve shared goals, and personnel facilitate successful collaboration by:

- a. helping children and youth develop skills that support cooperative work;
- b. considering age, developmental level, and skill level when creating groups;
- c. establishing expectations for group norms and participation;
- d. utilizing collaborative learning structures designed to help all children and youth engage, participate, and learn, regardless of their temperaments, needs, or abilities;
- e. monitoring group activity, and providing feedback and assistance as needed; and
- f. encouraging group members to reflect on group functioning.

Interpretation: *Skills needed to facilitate cooperative work include the interpersonal skills addressed in OST 5.07, including treating others with equity and respect; understanding social norms and cues; listening actively and deeply, without interrupting; effectively conveying one's point of view; and resolving conflicts and disagreements. Helping youth to develop empathy and self-regulatory skills, as addressed in OST 5.05 and 5.06, will also support their ability to collaborate successfully with others.*

Note: *See OST 9.05 for additional expectations regarding feedback and assistance, and OST 9.15 for additional expectations regarding opportunities for processing and reflection.*

OST 9.12

Children and youth have opportunities to participate in activities or projects that:

- a. involve multiple steps and take place over time;
- b. include an in-depth focus on a particular topic or issue;
- c. enable children and youth to take an active role in developing and implementing plans and evaluating progress towards goals; and

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Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

- d. culminate in a presentation or celebration that highlights the accomplishments of children and youth.

Interpretation: *The length of projects may vary, especially based on the ages and developmental levels of participating children and youth. Older youth will typically be able to engage in projects that are longer and more complex. Regarding element (c), projects should ideally provide opportunities for children and youth to set goals, develop plans to achieve those goals, implement planned strategies, and revise goals and plans when complications or challenges arise. In some cases children and youth (including children and youth with disabilities or other special needs) may need individualized support in order to take on these roles, as addressed in OST 9.05 and 9.06. Children and youth should ideally also play a role in deciding the focus of projects, though this may vary based on their ages and developmental levels, as well as the nature and design of the program.*

NA *The organization does not require regular attendance and thus cannot engage children and youth in ongoing activities or projects.*

Note: See OST 12.07 for additional expectations regarding service-learning projects.

OST 9.13

Children and youth have opportunities to participate in projects or activities that are designed to encourage civic engagement and foster a generosity of spirit.

Interpretation: *Implementation of this standard will often overlap with OST 8.04, regarding opportunities for children and youth to become involved with their communities (e.g., through community service or service learning projects). However, organizations can also foster civic engagement and generosity of spirit in other ways. For example, an organization might expand students' understanding of civic engagement and citizenship through social studies, and might foster a generosity of spirit by supporting children and youth in reflecting upon how they treat others, as addressed in OST 5.*

OST 9.14

The organization maximizes opportunities to integrate content across topics and activity types.

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



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Interpretation: *Some organizations may run programs that are explicitly designed to integrate content across topics and activity types. For example, programs utilizing a STEAM approach will integrate the arts into science, technology, engineering, and math, and STREAM programs will integrate reading into science, technology, engineering, arts, and math. Other organizations might implement this standard by, for example, establishing overarching themes that encompass the variety of activities provided, developing essential questions that are relevant across activity types, or conducting curriculum mapping to identify areas where there are opportunities to connect and integrate activity content.*

OST 9.15

Personnel support children and youth in processing and reflecting on their learning and progress by:

- a. providing intentional opportunities for them to express and evaluate their thoughts and feelings about their learning and experiences at the program;
- b. encouraging them to assess their own strengths and progress and set goals for improvement;
- c. helping them make connections between their learning and experiences at the program and outside knowledge, interests, experiences, and goals; and
- d. providing input and perspective to help them interpret and reevaluate their experiences, as needed.

Interpretation: *Processing and reflection should ideally occur on both an individual and group level. Regarding element (c), personnel should strive to help children and youth explore and understand how their experiences at the program relate to previous learning at the program, what they are learning in school, outside experiences and interests, and what they aspire to do in the future.*

Research Note: *Some literature asserts that mediating young people's thinking about their experiences is one of the most important ways that adults can support learning and development, noting that adults can help children and youth interpret and make meaning of their experiences in ways that expand their sense of themselves and their options in the world. Organizations serving older youth can play an especially important role in helping youth to find their own voices, develop their identities, and explore their paths for the future.*

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

OST 9.16

Individual and group progress and accomplishments are recognized and celebrated both:

- a. on an ongoing basis, throughout the course of children and youth's involvement with the program; and
- b. through opportunities to present and showcase the completed work and achievements of children and youth.

Interpretation: *Recognition of progress and accomplishments should highlight improvement and emphasize the importance of persistence, as addressed in the Research Note to OST 9.*

Note: *Ongoing recognition of accomplishments and progress may occur in the context of the feedback and processing addressed in OST 9.05 and 9.15.*

OST 9.17

In order to ensure that programming reflects the needs and interests of program participants, children and youth are encouraged to share their thoughts and ideas regarding program activities, and are involved in developing and evaluating activities and initiatives.

Related: GOV 2, PQI 2.02, GOV 4

Interpretation: *The extent and nature of children and youths' involvement will likely vary based on their ages and developmental levels. For example, while an organization serving younger children may informally assess their needs and interests, older children and youth may complete surveys and/or sit on planning committees. Older youth may also be able to play a larger role in determining the focus of projects and activities, as referenced in OST 9.10 and 9.12.*

Organizations should also consider the needs of individual children and youth when seeking input and involvement. For example, quiet or introverted children may be hesitant to share their thoughts without having time to prepare them, or may be more comfortable sharing their ideas privately or in writing. Similarly, children with disabilities or other special needs may require particular accommodations in order to effectively share their ideas and participate in planning or evaluating activities.

Research Note: *Younger children tend to participate in programs more*

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than older youth, and some research suggests that this may be, in part, because older youth are not interested in the activities offered. Research showed that the more input participants felt they had on programming decisions, the more engaged they felt in the program. Involving youth in a meaningful way demonstrates that youth are valued members of the community, which is critical to their continued involvement with the program and the achievement of positive outcomes.

OST 9.18

The organization develops and implements policies and/or procedures regarding the use of technology that:

- a. address both program and personal devices;
- b. balance concerns regarding the importance of limiting "screen time" with any program goals that are dependent upon the use of technology;
- c. ensure safety measures are in place when internet access is offered, including safety training and controls that block access to inappropriate content; and
- d. take into account any policies or procedures regarding technology usage that are in place at the program's host, if applicable.

Interpretation: *While some organizations will adopt policies and procedures that encourage the use of technology in an effort to advance specific program goals (e.g., a STEM program that aims to help youth develop skills in computer programming), organizations should also take care to ensure that they still create an environment that encourages in-person social interactions and physical activity. As noted in OST 18.04, screen time that is not academic or educational in nature should typically be limited to 30 minutes per day. Expectations around the use of technological devices should also be clearly communicated to both children and families during orientation, as per OST 2.03 and CR 1.01.*

Note: *See OST 12 for more information regarding STEM programming and activities.*

(FP) OST 9.19

In order to protect the health, safety, and wellness of children and youth:

- a. an activity/practice that is deemed unacceptable according to prevailing professional standards is immediately discontinued; and
- b. an activity/practice that produces adverse effects is suspended pending investigation and resolution of the issue.

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Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

Related: RPM 2.02, RPM 2.03

Interpretation: *In the context of this standard "adverse effects" include both: (1) one-time issues of great severity, and (2) more minor issues that arise repeatedly. In some cases investigation may reveal that adverse effects can be remedied through improvement/corrective action, but in other cases it may be determined that the activity/practice in question is so fundamentally flawed that it should be discontinued.*

(FP) OST 9.20

When children and youth have opportunities to go on field trips or participate in high-risk activities, the organization obtains written, signed permission slips from their parents or legal guardians.

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

OST 10: Programming and Activities: Arts Education and Enrichment

Children and youth participate in visual or performing arts activities designed to help them build new skills and increase their understanding and appreciation of the arts.

NA Arts programming is not a core element of the programs run by the organization.

Note: Please note that the more general expectations included in OST 9 also apply to the activities addressed in this core concept. For example, activities should accommodate children and youth with differing needs and abilities, as addressed in OST 9.05; engage children and youth in active learning experiences, as addressed in OST 9.04; reflect the cultures and interests of children and youth, as addressed in OST 9.04; include opportunities for meaningful choices and decisions, as addressed in OST 9.10; and allow sufficient time for practice and improvement, as addressed in OST 9.07. See OST 9 for additional expectations regarding programming and activities.

Rating Indicators

- 1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.
- 2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,
 - Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
 - Procedures need strengthening; or
 - With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
 - For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
 - Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (HR 6.02) and training (TS 2.03); or
 - Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.
- 3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information Â or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or Â
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

No Self-Study Evidence

On-Site Evidence

- Curricula (for previous quarter)
- Programming/activity plans (for previous quarter)
- Daily schedules for past month
- Attendance records (showing totals for each day and weekly averages)
- Logic model (or equivalent framework)
- Qualifications of personnel (or others) providing activities (e.g., in personnel records)
- Staff training materials
- Documentation that staff training has been provided (e.g., in training files or personnel records)

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program Administrator
 - b. Site Director
 - c. Program Personnel
 - d. Children, youth, and families

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

- Observe program activities

OST 10.01

Programming is focused on at least one of the following major arts disciplines:

- visual arts;
- dance;
- music; and/or
- theatre.

Interpretation: *While some programs may facilitate exposure to a variety of different art forms, others may be designed to encourage deeper engagement with one particular discipline.*

Note: *As referenced in OST 8, it is often wise to partner with local organizations and providers to improve programming and access specialized resources. Examples of relevant arts organizations include, but are not limited to: museums, theatres and theatre troupes, arts education organizations, school arts and music educators, and local businesses such as dance studios or music halls.*

OST 10.02

Children and youth are:

- helped to develop an understanding of concepts and history relevant to the arts discipline of focus; and
- engaged in projects that enable them to develop and hone skills relevant to the artistic process.

Interpretation: *The nature of projects, and the skills to be developed, will vary based on program type and goals. For example, children may be engaged in learning to read and play music, or learning the steps in a dance.*

OST 10.03

Children and youth are encouraged to:

- be creative;
- express themselves through their art; and
- communicate the ideas and feelings that underlie their work.

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

Note: *In order for children and youth to feel comfortable expressing themselves personnel must strive to create a safe and supportive program environment, as addressed in OST 5.*

OST 10.04

In an effort to help children and youth develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of the arts, the organization:

- a. arranges for children and youth to view performances or exhibits related to the program's area of focus; and
- b. provides opportunities for children and youth to reflect on the experience and discuss their impressions.

Interpretation: *As stated in the standard, the organization should ideally facilitate arts experiences that relate to the program's area of focus. For example children might visit a museum, attend a musical or cultural performance, or meet with a local artist. Organizations that are unable to facilitate visits to other venues can still provide opportunities for children to experience and think critically about art, for example, by discussing a recorded concert or paintings in a book.*

OST 10.05

Children and youth have opportunities to learn about careers and options for higher education related to the arts.

Note: *When programming is specifically designed to help youth prepare for college and career the organization should also complete OST 14.*

OST 10.06

Arts education and enrichment activities are provided by trained and qualified personnel, or in partnership with experts or educators from a collaborating arts organization.

Note: *See OST 20 and 21 for more information regarding personnel qualifications and training.*

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

OST 11: Programming and Activities: Health and Wellness

Activities designed to promote health and wellness enable children and youth to:

- a. make healthy food choices;
- b. develop their fitness and athletic abilities;
- c. improve mental and emotional wellness; and/or
- d. avoid adverse health outcomes (e.g., substance use, teen pregnancy).

NA *Health and wellness programming is not a core element of the programs run by the organization.*

Note: *Please note that the more general expectations included in OST 9 also apply to the activities addressed in this core concept. For example, activities should accommodate children and youth with differing needs and abilities, as addressed in OST 9.05; allow sufficient time for practice and improvement, as addressed in OST 9.07; and include recognition of progress and accomplishments, as addressed in OST 9.16. See OST 9 for additional expectations regarding programming and activities.*

Note: *See OST 18 for health-related expectations that apply to all organizations seeking accreditation. Please note that when opportunities for physical activity are limited to unstructured free play, organizations will be covered by OST 18.03 instead of the standards addressing physical fitness in this core concept.*

Rating Indicators

- 1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.
- 2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,
 - Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
 - Procedures need strengthening; or
 - With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
 - For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
 - Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (HR 6.02) and training (TS 2.03); or

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.
- 3)** Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,
 - Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
 - Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
 - Timeframes are often missed; or
 - A number of client records are missing important information or
 - Client participation is inconsistent; or
 - One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.
- 4)** Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,
 - No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
 - Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
 - Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- Procedures for maintaining protective sports equipment (OST 11.05)

On-Site Evidence

- Curricula (for previous quarter)
- Programming/activity plans (for previous quarter)
- Daily schedules for past month
- Attendance records (showing totals for each day and weekly averages)
- Logic model (or equivalent framework)
- Qualifications of personnel (or others) providing activities (e.g., in personnel records)
- Staff training materials
- Documentation that staff training has been provided (e.g., in training files or personnel records)

On-Site Activities

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

- Interview:
 - a. Program Administrator
 - b. Site Director
 - c. Program Personnel
 - d. Children, youth, and families
- Observe program activities
- Observe protective sports equipment, if applicable

OST 11.01

Children and youth are helped to understand the importance and benefits of a healthy lifestyle, and are provided with information and support designed to promote well-being, and encourage positive choices, outside program time.

Interpretation: *While all organizations should help children and youth understand the importance and benefits of a healthy lifestyle, their exact focus may vary based on program goals. For example, while one program may focus primarily on food or exercise, another may focus more on stress reduction or body image, and another may focus on preventing negative behaviors such as substance use or unprotected sex. When a program is designed to promote wellness by supporting social and emotional learning and development, implementation of this standard will overlap with OST 5.05 through 5.07.*

OST 11.02

Organizations that run programs designed to engage children and youth in activities related to food or cooking:

- a. offer programming that is centered around nutritious foods;
- b. help children and youth understand the nutritional content of the food;
and
- c. ensure that activities do not advance the agenda or priorities of a particular food industry.

Interpretation: *Children and youth may engage with food in different ways, based on the nature of the activity offered. For example, while one program might engage children and youth in purchasing and preparing healthy foods, another might provide the opportunity to grow and harvest a particular crop. Regardless of the type of activity provided, children and youth should have opportunities to see and taste nutritious foods.*

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

NA *The organization does not provide activities related to food or cooking.*

OST 11.03

Organizations that run programs designed to engage children and youth in sports or fitness activities:

- a. offer structured activities designed to support the development of muscles, flexibility, balance, or other physical skills; and
- b. ensure children and youth are engaged in physical activity for a significant proportion of the activity session.

Interpretation: *The types of activities provided may vary. Examples include fitness activities such as aerobics, martial arts, weight lifting, or yoga, as well as practice and/or games for competitive or non-competitive sports.*

Research Note: *Some literature suggests that exercise or fitness programs should engage participants in physical activity for seventy to ninety percent of the program session, noting that the time dedicated to directions, set-up, or resting should be limited.*

NA *The organization does not provide sports or fitness activities.*

OST 11.04

Sports and fitness activities are designed to:

- a. recognize effort and maximize play or activity time for all children and youth, regardless of ability; and
- b. promote positive sportsmanship.

Research Note: *Studies of youth who participated on sports teams found that youths' perception of their ability is more important than their actual ability. As such, feedback should be focused on individual performance and progress towards achieving personal goals rather than on "winning" or being the best.*

NA *The organization does not provide sports or fitness activities.*

(FP) OST 11.05

Appropriate protective sports equipment is used that:

- a. meets minimum safety requirements;
- b. accomodates heavy usage;

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

- c. is appropriate to the ages and capabilities of participants; and
- d. is maintained in a safe, hygienic manner.

Interpretation: *Protective sports equipment includes helmets, shin guards, pads, floor mats, etc. Staff should follow disinfecting procedures for shared equipment that may pose a health risk to children and youth.*

NA *The organization does not offer activities that require protective sports equipment.*

OST 11.06

Personnel are qualified to facilitate and oversee activities, and receive training that addresses:

- a. best practices related to the program's area of focus; and
- b. how to coach children and youth in a positive way, when overseeing sports or fitness activities.

Note: *See OST 20 and 21 for more information regarding personnel qualifications and training.*

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

OST 12: Programming and Activities: Academic Enrichment and Skill Development

Children and youth participate in academic activities designed to encourage interest and success in school.

Research Note: *Research suggests programs striving to improve academic outcomes must include an academic component in order to achieve their goals. However, literature also notes that it is still important to combine academic programming with a variety of other fun and enriching activities in order to engage children and youth and encourage the achievement of positive outcomes. Out-of-school time programs may also try to provide exciting and new interactive, hands-on, or experiential ways for youth to apply what they have learned in school. Helping children and youth strengthen their social-emotional skills and abilities, as addressed in OST 5, can also support their ability to succeed at school.*

NA *Academic programming is not a core element of the programs run by the organization.*

Note: *Please note that the more general expectations included in OST 9 also apply to the activities addressed in this core concept. For example, activities should accommodate children and youth with differing needs and abilities, as addressed in OST 9.05; engage children and youth in active learning experiences, as addressed in OST 9.04; reflect the cultures and interests of children and youth, as addressed in OST 9.04; include opportunities for meaningful choices and decisions, as addressed in OST 9.10; and allow sufficient time for practice and improvement, as addressed in OST 9.07. See OST 9 for additional expectations regarding programming and activities.*

Note: *Organizations that provide homework help and/or tutoring should demonstrate implementation of OST 13. Organizations that provide programming and activities designed to help prepare children and youth for college and career should demonstrate implementation of OST 14.*

Rating Indicators

- 1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.
- 2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,
 - Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted,

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

- however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (HR 6.02) and training (TS 2.03); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

No Self-Study Evidence

On-Site Evidence

- Curricula (for previous quarter)
- Programming/activity plans (for previous quarter)
- Daily schedules for past month
- Attendance records (showing totals for each day and weekly averages)

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

- Logic model (or equivalent framework)
- Qualifications of personnel (or others) providing activities (e.g., in personnel records)
- Staff training materials
- Documentation that staff training has been provided (e.g., in training files or personnel records)
- Documentation of collaboration with school personnel, if applicable

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program Administrator
 - b. Site Director
 - c. Program Personnel
 - d. Children, youth, and families
- Observe program activities

OST 12.01

Academic activities include a focus on at least one of the following areas:

- a. literacy and language arts;
- b. social studies, including civic/global literacy;
- c. math;
- d. science;
- e. engineering;
- f. technology; and/or
- g. media and information.

Interpretation: *Organizations may have different goals and provide different types of programming, and it is important to note that they are by no means limited to providing "traditional" instruction in these areas. Some organizations may provide instruction designed to help students improve basic skills in particular subjects, but others may provide enrichment activities focused on building specific skills or increasing exposure to certain fields. For example, an organization might engage students in social studies through projects designed to increase civic engagement, or an organization might engage students in math through activities designed to encourage financial literacy. Some organizations will offer activities that cut across different academic areas, or that integrate the arts into academic areas (e.g., STEAM or STREAM activities), and others may use academic content areas primarily as a vehicle for developing the interdisciplinary skills that are relevant across both academic and other content areas, such as skills related to critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. As*

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

noted in OST 9.01, out-of-school time programs offer an excellent opportunity to help children and youth develop these "21st century skills."

OST 12.02

The organization supports academic engagement and learning by:

- a. designing activities that complement, extend, and expand school-day learning;
- b. enabling children and youth to learn through active engagement with relevant academic concepts and materials;
- c. incorporating real-world applications that make learning meaningful and help children and youth see how academic content relates to their lives and the world;
- d. drawing connections between program areas of focus and other academic content areas; and
- e. helping children and youth understand how their experiences and learning at the program connect to content covered at school.

Note: *Collaborating with school day personnel, as addressed in OST 8.03, can help the organization to: (1) ensure that activities complement, extend, and expand school day learning, and (2) ensure that program participants' needs are met.*

OST 12.03

When programming is designed to promote interest and build skills in reading and language arts, activities enable program participants to:

- a. access a variety of text sources and types;
- b. make choices regarding what they wish to read;
- c. engage in independent reading;
- d. take part in read alouds;
- e. participate in discussions that encourage analysis and reflection; and
- f. engage in writing exercises that include opportunities to formulate and develop ideas.

Interpretation: *In addition to building literacy skills, organizations should strive to foster a life-long love of reading and writing by helping children and youth explore and discover what they like to read and write. Special strategies may need to be employed if English is a second language for any of the children, youth, and families served.*

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

NA *The organization does not provide activities related to literacy and language arts.*

OST 12.04

When programming is designed to help children and youth develop and deepen interests, skills, and understanding related to science, technology, engineering, or math, program participants have opportunities to:

- a. ask questions and define problems;
- b. plan and carry out investigations;
- c. analyze and interpret data;
- d. develop and use models;
- e. construct explanations and design solutions;
- f. engage in argument from evidence;
- g. use mathematical and computational thinking; and/or
- h. obtain, evaluate, and communicate information.

Interpretation: *Different organizations may focus on, and enable children and youth to perform these practices within, different STEM domains. Domains include: (1) physical science; (2) life science; (3) earth and space science; and (4) engineering, technology, and/or other applications of math and science. Concepts relevant across these domains include: (1) patterns, (2) cause and effect, (3) scale, proportion, and quantity, (4) systems and system models, (5) energy and matter, (6) structure and function, and (7) stability and change.*

Research Note: *It is widely recognized that the United States must bolster its workforce's skills in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Accordingly, literature emphasizes the importance of engaging children and youth in high-quality STEM learning opportunities, and points to the role that out-of-school time programs can play in exciting children and youth about these fields. Given that girls tend to be under-represented in STEM fields and may doubt or downplay their abilities in these areas, literature also highlights the importance of proactively cultivating the interest of, and supporting equal participation by, children and youth of both genders.*

NA *The organization does not provide activities related to STEM disciplines.*

OST 12.05

When programming is designed to focus on social studies, children and youth participate in activities that:

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

- a. are centered around the study of cultures and societies, civics, economics, and/or geography;
- b. enable children and youth to consider and explore multiple perspectives related to the topics in question;
- c. highlight connections between the past, present, and future; and
- d. encourage a commitment to citizenship and social responsibility.

Interpretation: *Different organizations may have different areas of focus. For example, while one organization might emphasize global awareness and focus on the cultures and geographies of other nations, another might engage children and youth in learning more about their local community, history, or culture. No matter the area of focus, social studies should ideally encourage children and youth to become excited about the world and learn lessons that can be used to make the world a better place.*

NA *The organization does not provide activities related to social studies.*

OST 12.06

Children and youth have opportunities to learn about and explore community institutions, careers, and options for higher education related to the academic areas of focus.

Interpretation: *When organizations serve older youth who are closer to embarking on a career path it will be especially important for youth to gain an understanding of professions that relate to the academic area of focus, as well as to obtain a better sense of the steps necessary to prepare for the career.*

Note: *See OST 14 for more information regarding preparation for college and career.*

OST 12.07

When children and youth are engaged in service learning, projects are designed to:

- a. infuse community service with academic content and learning;
- b. respond to a real need in the community;
- c. enable children and youth to play an active role in identifying a need, developing and implementing a plan of action, evaluating progress towards goals, and modifying plans and goals, as needed;
- d. encourage group work and collaborative learning; and

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

- e. culminate in a presentation or celebration that highlights accomplishments and the contribution to the community.

NA *The organization does not offer opportunities for service learning.*

Note: *Organizations should also ensure that opportunities for reflection, as addressed in OST 9.15, are incorporated both throughout the duration of the project and upon completion.*

OST 12.08

Children and youth are helped to navigate transitions between grades and schools, when applicable.

Interpretation: *Personnel might assist children and youth by helping them understand the structure and expectations of different grades and schools; arranging or accompanying them on visits to new schools or classrooms; or providing assistance with school applications. In addition to the explicit help addressed in this standard, organizations can also help youth during transitions between grades and schools simply by serving as a stable, familiar place that youth can count on as they cope with changes in other parts of their lives.*

Research Note: *Some literature notes that it may be especially important to help older youth navigate the transition from middle school to high school. Transition services will ideally: (1) provide information about new schools and the support students may need to succeed; (2) encourage parent involvement; (3) facilitate communication with middle and high school staff; and (4) offer summer programming that promotes readiness for the next school year.*

Note: *See OST 14 for more information regarding assistance specifically designed to help youth prepare for, and navigate the transition to, college and career.*

OST 12.09

Personnel who provide academic activities are qualified to do so, and receive the training and ongoing support they need to understand:

- a. best practices in programming for the relevant academic areas and grade levels;
- b. state and local academic standards; and
- c. strategies for engaging children and youth, including for promoting

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

engagement and participation when children and youth may be reluctant or struggling.

Interpretation: *In many organizations striving to improve academic performance, academic activities are provided by, or in conjunction with, certified teachers who have both content and grade-level experience. While COA does not require organizations to hire teachers, they should have a strategy in place to ensure that staff are prepared to engage children and youth in high-quality activities. For example, an organization might establish an ongoing relationship with, or arrange for its staff to be trained by, an experienced teacher or curriculum developer.*

It also is important to note that the content and focus of training will likely vary based on both the academic content addressed and the qualifications and background of personnel. For example, given that many OST personnel may not have the background needed to be sufficiently familiar with the STEM domains and practices addressed in OST 12.04, it is important that they receive the training and ongoing support needed to help children and youth deepen their understanding and skills in these areas. In contrast, many personnel may be more comfortable facilitating literacy and language arts activities, but may still need training and support in order to understand the difference between reluctant and struggling readers, and utilize engagement strategies in accordance with students' needs.

Research Note: *Literature emphasizes the importance of preparing staff to provide academic activities. Strategies for training staff vary, but some literature highlights the potential benefits of partnering with external providers to ensure that staff are properly trained. Research also highlights the importance of providing coaching or training on an ongoing basis in order to help staff maintain and strengthen their skills, and deliver quality programming, over time.*

Note: *See OST 20 and 21 for more information regarding personnel qualifications and training.*

OST 12.10

Organizations seeking to improve academic performance ensure that children and youth spend sufficient time on academics to support achievement of this goal.

Interpretation: *The amount of time that should be devoted to academic content will likely vary based upon program duration. For example, while a program that operates during the school year might offer programming in a*

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

given subject two or three times per week, some experts recommend that shorter-term summer programs provide academic content at least three hours per day, five days per week, for five to six weeks.

Research Note: *It is important that children and youth attend programs in order to benefit from them, as referenced in OST 2.02, but it is equally important that they spend a sufficient time on academics while in attendance in order to improve academic performance. Accordingly, literature emphasizes that programs striving to improve academic outcomes should: (1) encourage regular attendance, (2) dedicate a sufficient amount of time to academics, (3) create schedules that protect instructional time, and (4) ensure teachers understand how much time they are supposed to devote to academics.*

NA *The organization does not run programs that explicitly seek to improve academic performance.*

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

OST 13: Programming and Activities: Homework Help and/or Tutoring

Children and youth receive support that enables them to complete their homework and succeed in school.

NA *Homework help and/or tutoring is not a core element of the programs run by the organization.*

Note: *Organizations that provide only homework help will complete OST 13.01 through 13.03. Organizations that provide only tutoring will complete OST 13.03 and 13.04.*

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (HR 6.02) and training (TS 2.03); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards;

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- A description of the system for facilitating communication among teachers, parents, and program personnel

On-Site Evidence

- Daily schedules for past month
- Documentation of collaboration among teachers, parents, and program personnel, if applicable
- Attendance records (showing totals for each day and weekly averages)
- Logic model (or equivalent framework)
- Qualifications of personnel (or others) providing activities (e.g., in personnel records)

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program Administrator
 - b. Site Director
 - c. Program Personnel
 - d. Children, youth, and families
- Observe program activities
- Review files of children and youth

OST 13.01

Personnel collaborate with school day staff to develop a system for facilitating communication among teachers, parents, and program personnel regarding:

- a. homework assignments given;
- b. materials needed to complete assignments;

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

- c. the amount of time expected to be spent on homework; and
- d. the ongoing progress and needs of children and youth.

Interpretation: *Many organizations and schools have children and youth maintain Homework Planners to record their daily assignments. These planners can also be used as tools to help children and youth prioritize their assignments, manage their time, and assess their progress, as addressed in OST 13.03.*

COA recognizes that it may be challenging for organizations to establish systems for communicating with school-day staff regarding homework, especially when organizations serve students who attend different schools. However, organizations are expected to demonstrate that they have at least made an effort to develop systems for facilitating communication with school staff.

NA *The organization does not offer homework help.*

Note: *See OST 8 for more expectations regarding collaboration and partnerships.*

OST 13.02

Personnel play an active role during homework time by:

- a. checking in with children and youth to make sure they understand their assignments;
- b. modeling a positive attitude towards homework;
- c. encouraging children and youth to do their best;
- d. assisting children and youth who need help; and
- e. monitoring homework quality and completion.

Interpretation: *When extensive one-on-one assistance is necessary a child may be in need of tutoring, as addressed in OST 13.04.*

NA *The organization does not offer homework help.*

Note: *Please note that the more general expectations included in other OST core concepts can also help to promote success in this area. For example, organizations should also: (1) establish a consistent schedule for homework time, as referenced in OST 5.02; (2) provide needed supplies, as referenced in OST 16.04; (3) create an optimal space for completing homework, as referenced in OST 16.01 (i.e. a space that is dedicated to homework completion and includes areas for both quiet study and group collaboration); and (4) consider how group sizes and ratios, as addressed in*

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

OST 19.01 and 19.02, may impact the homework environment.

OST 13.03

Children and youth are helped to develop organizational and study skills that support school success, including skills related to:

- a. organizing materials;
- b. managing time, including setting goals and making plans for accomplishing work;
- c. accessing needed information and resources;
- d. reviewing materials and taking notes, including skimming, active reading, and summarizing;
- e. preparing for and taking tests; and
- f. evaluating their own work and progress.

Interpretation: *Homework can provide an opportunity to learn and practice the organizational and study skills referenced in the standard.*

OST 13.04

Children and youth in need of extra help are connected with tutors who provide special assistance and instruction in specific subject areas.

Interpretation: *Tutors may be paid or volunteer, but should be knowledgeable about and trained in both the subject area in question and strategies for helping students. Organizations may identify children in need of extra help through collaboration with school day staff, or through their own observations and monitoring.*

NA *The organization does not offer tutoring.*

Note: *See OST 20 and 21 for more information regarding personnel qualifications and training.*

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

OST 14: Programming and Activities: College and Career Readiness

Youth receive support and assistance that prepare them to enter and succeed in college and the workforce.

NA *College and career preparation is not a core element of the programs run by the organization.*

Note: *Please note that the more general expectations included in OST 9 also apply to the activities addressed in this core concept. See OST 9 for more information. Please also note that providing youth with the academic support covered in OST 12 and 13 can also play an important role in preparing youth for college and the workforce.*

Rating Indicators

- 1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.
- 2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,
 - Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
 - Procedures need strengthening; or
 - With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
 - For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
 - Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (HR 6.02) and training (TS 2.03); or
 - Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.
- 3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,
 - Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
 - Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
 - Timeframes are often missed; or
 - A number of client records are missing important information or
 - Client participation is inconsistent; or

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

No Self-Study Evidence

On-Site Evidence

- Curricula (for previous quarter)
- Programming/activity plans (for previous quarter)
- Daily schedules for past month
- Attendance records (showing totals for each day and weekly averages)
- Logic model (or equivalent framework)
- Qualifications of personnel (or others) providing activities (e.g., in personnel records)

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program Administrator
 - b. Site Director
 - c. Program Personnel
 - d. Youth and families
- Observe program activities
- Review files of youth

OST 14.01

The organization motivates youth for success by:

- a. helping them examine and discover their individual strengths, interests, values, and aspirations;

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

- b. explaining the potential impact that higher education and career readiness can have on life outcomes;
- c. providing opportunities to learn about different options and paths related to higher education and employment; and
- d. helping them understand the steps involved in pursuing a particular path, including how instruction and activities at school or the program can contribute to progress toward goals.

Interpretation: *Different organizations may provide different opportunities to learn about options related to higher education and employment. For example, while one organization might invite guest speakers and take youth on field trips to visit workplaces or college campuses, another organization might arrange mentorships, internships, or apprenticeships for youth. Organizations may also differ in the breadth of their focus. For example, while one might strive to expose youth to a wide range of careers across fields, another might be more specifically focused on STEM disciplines.*

Note: *Organizations that use mentors to help youth learn more about different life options should also complete OST 15.*

OST 14.02

Youth are helped to:

- a. gain a better understanding of college and workplace norms, cultures, and expectations; and
- b. develop the interpersonal skills needed to successfully communicate and collaborate with others at school and work.

Interpretation: *Youth should be helped to develop the interpersonal skills they need to demonstrate global awareness; understand social norms and cues; treat others with fairness and respect; listen actively and deeply, without interrupting; effectively convey their points of view; and resolve conflicts and disagreements. Learning to regulate emotions and empathize with others supports the development of the interpersonal skills needed to get along and collaborate effectively with others, as noted in OST 5.07.*

Note: *The interpersonal skills referenced in element (b) of the standard will likely be developed through practices such as those covered in OST 5.*

OST 14.03

The organization helps youth develop and practice the soft skills that can

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

help them to succeed in college and the workforce, including skills related to:

- a. managing time;
- b. setting goals and making plans;
- c. accessing needed information and resources;
- d. solving problems;
- e. thinking critically;
- f. making decisions; and
- g. evaluating their own work and progress.

OST 14.04

Youth interested in higher education are helped to:

- a. identify institutions that meet their needs and interests;
- b. take steps that may increase their chances for admission; and
- c. complete the application process.

Interpretation: *Youth may need assistance with many aspects of the application process, from meeting deadlines, to taking the SATs, to gathering recommendations, to obtaining financial aid or scholarships.*

Note: *When youth develop and strengthen the soft skills addressed in OST 14.03 they will also be better equipped to navigate the college application process.*

OST 14.05

Youth have opportunities to participate in activities that allow them to develop and practice technical skills in particular fields.

Interpretation: *Opportunities to develop and practice technical skills may be provided either on-site (e.g., through project-based activities such as those addressed in OST 9) or off-site (e.g., through arrangements such as internships, apprenticeships, or job-shadowing opportunities).*

NA *The organization does not offer opportunities to develop and practice technical skills in particular fields.*

OST 14.06

Youth receive the assistance and social support they need to navigate the

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

transition to college or the workforce.

Interpretation: *While practices addressed throughout both this core concept and OST as a whole are intended to prepare youth for success in college and career (e.g., by promoting social-emotional development, academic advancement, and knowledge of college and career opportunities), this standard is intended to address the support provided during the transitional period when youth actually enter college or the workforce. Some organizations may even provide ongoing support in an effort to help youth persevere through obstacles and accomplish their goals.*

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

OST 15: Programming and Activities: Mentoring

Organizations provide the screening, training, monitoring, and support needed to facilitate successful mentoring relationships.

NA *The organization does not offer mentoring as part of its OST program.*

Note: *While most of the organizations implementing this core concept will likely run on-site mentoring programs, it can also apply to organizations that allow mentors and mentees to meet off-site. Please also note that if the organization does not offer a formal mentoring initiative as covered in this core concept, children and youth can still be introduced to new role models through practices addressed in other OST standards. For example, the organization might facilitate meetings with adults working as artists or in STEM careers, as addressed in OST 10, 12, or 14.*

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (HR 6.02) and training (TS 2.03); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- A description of the mentoring initiative
- Procedures for screening (OST 15.02, 15.03)
- Procedures for orientation and training (OST 15.04, 15.05)
- Table of contents of orientation and training curricula (for mentors)
- Procedures for matching (OST 15.06)
- Sample consent forms
- Procedures for monitoring and supporting matches (OST 15.08, 15.09, 15.11)
- Procedures for closing matches (OST 15.12)

On-Site Evidence

- Daily schedules for past month
- Orientation and training curricula (for mentors)
- Materials provided to children, youth, and families explaining the mentoring initiative
- Qualifications of personnel who manage the mentoring initiative
- Logic model (or equivalent framework)

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program Administrator
 - b. Site Director
 - c. Program Personnel
 - d. Mentors
 - e. Children, youth, and families
- Observe program activities
- Review files of children and youth

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

- Review files of mentors

OST 15.01

The mentoring initiative is designed to:

- help children and youth build strong, supportive relationships with positive role models; and
- promote the growth, development, and empowerment of children and youth.

Research Note: *Although some mentors adopt authoritative roles and attempt to reform individuals with whom they are matched, research examining mentoring relationships suggests it may be more effective to develop supportive, respectful, and trust-based friendships with mentees.*

(FP) OST 15.02

The mentor screening process is completed before a prospective mentor serves children and youth in any capacity, and includes:

- a written application;
- a face-to-face interview; and
- reference checks, including both personal and professional references, when possible.

Interpretation: *An organization's procedures should clearly detail what qualities and qualifications it is seeking in its mentors and what characteristics would disqualify a prospective mentor.*

Note: *As addressed in OST 20.06, the organization should also conduct fingerprint-based state and federal criminal history record checks, child abuse and neglect registry checks, and sex offender registry checks. If mentors have opportunities to transport mentees the organization should also review their driving records, as referenced in ASE 6.03.*

OST 15.03

In order to determine a prospective mentor's suitability, the mentor screening process includes an assessment of:

- whether the prospective mentor's personal qualities will facilitate the development of a trust-based relationship centered on the mentee; and
- whether the prospective mentor has the time and availability needed to

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

establish and maintain a strong mentoring relationship.

Interpretation: *The organization should establish clear expectations regarding: (1) how frequently mentors and mentees should meet; and (2) the minimum length of time mentors need to commit to the organization. Although expectations can vary based on program type, many organizations ask mentors to agree in writing to meet with mentees at least one hour per week, or for several hours once or twice a month, for at least a year (i.e. school or calendar year, depending on program type and schedule).*

Research Note: *Literature emphasizes that it may be difficult to develop a relationship if a pair does not meet regularly, and some research suggests that mentoring relationships may be more effective if they last at least a year.*

OST 15.04

Mentors receive orientation and training that address:

- a. the philosophy of both the program and its mentoring component;
- b. the responsibilities of the mentor to the organization and the mentee;
- c. the responsibilities of the organization to the mentor;
- d. relationship development, including the importance of building trust;
- e. establishing appropriate boundaries and setting limits;
- f. child and youth development, including any special strengths and needs of the population served;
- g. diversity and cultural awareness; and
- h. realistic expectations for the relationship.

Interpretation: *The organization should provide at least two hours of in-person, pre-match training.*

Research Note: *Because the tone of a relationship can be set quickly, literature emphasizes the importance of ensuring that some training is provided prior to the first match meeting.*

OST 15.05

Children and youth, and their families, are helped to understand:

- a. the purpose of the mentoring relationship;
- b. the role of a mentor; and
- c. rules and expectations for participation.

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



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Note: Please note that this information may be conveyed within the context of the initial orientation addressed in OST 2.03.

OST 15.06

The organization considers the characteristics of mentors and mentees when making matches.

Interpretation: *Characteristics that may be relevant to consider when making matches include language spoken, interests, age, gender identity and expression, background, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual identity, sexual orientation, special needs, personality and temperament, strengths, and/or the expressed preferences of the mentor, mentee, and the mentee's parent or guardian. Logistical issues, such as availability to meet at the same time, should also be considered.*

(FP) OST 15.07

Mentors, mentees, and mentees' parents or legal guardians provide written, informed consent to:

- a. the proposed match; and
- b. the rules and requirements of the mentoring initiative.

OST 15.08

In an effort to facilitate the development of a successful mentoring relationship, the organization:

- a. arranges, and ensures personnel are available during, the initial match meeting; and
- b. ensures that mentoring meetings are frequent enough, and continue long enough, to meet the objectives of the relationship.

Interpretation: *Given that most organizations implementing this core concept will run an on-site mentoring program, personnel will of course be present during the initial match meeting. However, even organizations operating off-site mentoring programs should ensure that personnel are present for the initial match meeting. Some organizations may also involve the parents or guardians of children and youth in the initial match meeting.*

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



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As referenced in OST 15.03, it is often recommended that mentors and mentees meet at least four hours per month, for at least a year.

Note: See the Research Note to OST 15.03.

(FP) OST 15.09

Personnel monitor the appropriateness and effectiveness of the match by checking in with mentors, mentees, and mentees' parents or legal guardians:

- a. bi-weekly, during the first month of mentoring; and
- b. once a month, thereafter.

Interpretation: *Personnel should use these check-ins to learn about the activities that occurred during match meetings, the quality of the mentoring relationship, and the impact of the mentoring relationship on both the mentee and mentor, as well as to make sure that the mentoring relationship does not present any safety issues. More frequent monitoring may be necessary if a match is considered to be in jeopardy of premature closing. Organizations that have trouble obtaining input from parents or legal guardians may seek input from other involved adults, such as teachers or other school-day personnel.*

OST 15.10

The organization maintains a record of the date, duration, and activities completed at each mentoring meeting.

OST 15.11

Personnel:

- a. regularly assess matches to determine if they should be continued or closed; and
- b. provide ongoing support and assistance to facilitate relationship development, as needed.

Interpretation: *Mentors should be provided with ongoing support and assistance designed to help them address challenges that may arise in the mentoring relationship. For example, in addition to regular feedback from personnel, mentors might benefit from access to resources such as specialized publications, experienced mentors, or additional training*

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



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opportunities.

Note: Organizations should also be sure to recognize the value of the mentor's efforts, as addressed in OST 21.10.

OST 15.12

When it is necessary to close a match, personnel:

- a. ensure that the relationship ends in a planned, constructive manner;
- b. meet with mentors to discuss the reasons for, and their feelings about, the closure of the match;
- c. meet with mentees and their families to discuss the reasons for, and their feelings about, the closure of the match;
- d. review rules regarding post-closure contact with all parties, including mentors, mentees, and the families of mentees; and
- e. offer the possibility of re-matching, as appropriate.

Interpretation: *It may be necessary to close a match for a variety of reasons including, for example, if the mentor or mentee relocates, if the match is determined to be unsuitable or inappropriate, or if the match is designed to end at a specific time, such as when the school year ends.*

Please note that the organization's closure procedures should also address situations where one party (i.e. the mentor, mentee, or family of the mentee) is unwilling or unable to engage in the closure process. While COA recognizes that it may be hard for some organizations to engage family members, it will be especially important to involve the mentee's family if the match is determined to be unsuitable or inappropriate, as opposed to when a match is designed to end at a specific time (e.g., at the end of the school year).

OST 15.13

Personnel who manage the mentoring initiative have the competencies needed to:

- a. recruit mentors;
- b. screen, select, train, support, and supervise mentors;
- c. match children and youth with mentors; and
- d. collaborate effectively with mentees and their parents or legal guardians.

Interpretation: *Competency can be demonstrated through a combination of*

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



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education, training, and experience.

Note: See OST 20 and 21 for more information regarding personnel qualifications and training.

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

OST 16: Indoor Environment and Materials

The indoor environment and materials meet the needs of children and youth and support program goals.

Note: *Additional standards that address the importance of providing a clean, healthy, and safe service environment are included in OST 18 and ASE.*

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (HR 6.02) and training (TS 2.03); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- A description of the indoor environment

On-Site Evidence

No On-Site Evidence

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program Administrator
 - b. Site Director
 - c. Program Personnel
 - d. Children, youth, and families
- Observe facility and materials (indoor)

OST 16.01

There is enough room in the indoor space for program activities, and the space is arranged to:

- a. accommodate the activities offered;
- b. minimize crowding and disruptions, including when multiple activities go on at the same time;
- c. promote socialization and interactivity among participants; and
- d. accommodate children and youth who wish to rest or be alone.

Interpretation: *The amount of space needed will vary depending on the type of activities offered. For example, there should be approximately 35 to 45 square feet per child/youth for small group enrichment activities such as woodworking, arts and crafts, or science experiments; approximately 25 to 35 square feet per child/youth for quiet activities such as homework, reading, or club meetings; and approximately 75 to 100 square feet per child/youth when indoor space is used for active play (e.g., dance, aerobics, or basketball). Space should also be arranged to accommodate the*

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



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activities offered with minimal disruption. For example, activities that require water for clean-up should ideally take place near the sink; active play should not disrupt quiet activities (e.g., children and youth doing homework should not be distracted by loud music); and pathways should allow children and youth to move from one place to another without disturbing ongoing activities.

OST 16.02

Furniture is:

- a. in good condition;
- b. appropriate to the ages and sizes of children and youth; and
- c. sufficient to accommodate the number of children and youth.

OST 16.03

Visual displays:

- a. support the goals of the program;
- b. feature work created by program participants (e.g., artwork); and
- c. incorporate items of interest to program participants, including items selected or arranged by children and youth.

Interpretation: *COA recognizes that it may be difficult for organizations to implement this standard if they share another organization or agency's space.*

Note: *As noted in OST 5.01, program space, including visual displays, should also be sensitive to and supportive of all children and youth regardless of their background, race, ethnicity, culture, language, religion, socioeconomic status, gender identity and expression, sexual identity, sexual orientation, disability, or ability.*

OST 16.04

Supplies and equipment are:

- a. suited to the activities offered and the goals of the program;
- b. designed to support and encourage creativity;
- c. in good condition;
- d. sufficient for the number of children and youth in the program; and
- e. appropriate to the ages and developmental levels of program

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

participants, including for children and youth with differing levels of skill and ability.

Interpretation: *When children are required to share materials or equipment (e.g., a computer or microscope) there should be a procedure or system in place to minimize wait time and facilitate orderly access for all. Personnel should also be prepared to substitute equipment as needed (e.g., if children or youth have poor motor skills, personnel might provide thick pencils in lieu of traditional ones).*

Note: *As noted in OST 5.01, program materials should also be sensitive to and supportive of all children and youth, regardless of their background, race, ethnicity, culture, language, religion, socioeconomic status, gender identity and expression, sexual identity, sexual orientation, disability, or ability.*

Note: *See OST 11.05 for more information on appropriate protective sports equipment.*

OST 16.05

There is adequate and convenient storage space for equipment, materials, and personal possessions of children, youth, and personnel.

Interpretation: *Materials used frequently and works-in-progress should be readily accessible to children and youth, enabling them to get items out, and put them away, with ease. Bulk materials and things not currently in use can be stored in other places. Personnel should rarely have to carry heavy equipment or large amounts of materials long distances, and when it is necessary to do so the organization should ideally have portable equipment on wheels.*

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

OST 17: Outdoor Environment and Materials

The outdoor environment and materials meet the needs of children and youth and support program goals.

Note: *Organizations that do not have their own outdoor space may demonstrate that they access other outdoor spaces (e.g., neighborhood parks or school playgrounds) to implement these standards. However, they should also be prepared to demonstrate that the spaces they use meet the health- and safety-related requirements specified in OST 18 and ASE. If there is no access to an outdoor space, or if the activities offered do not require outdoor space, the organization should request an NA.*

Note: *Additional standards that address the importance of providing a clean, healthy, and safe service environment are included in OST 18 and ASE.*

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (HR 6.02) and training (TS 2.03); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- A description of the outdoor environment

On-Site Evidence

No On-Site Evidence

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program Administrator
 - b. Site Director
 - c. Program Personnel
 - d. Children, youth, and families
- Observe facility and materials (outdoor)

OST 17.01

The outdoor space is large enough to accommodate the number of children and youth served, and suitable for the type of activities offered.

Interpretation: *The characteristics of the outdoor space may vary based on the nature of the program and the type of activities offered. For example, an organization offering basketball should have access to a basketball court, an organization offering tennis should have access to a tennis court, and an organization offering walking or running groups should have access to sufficient space for children to engage in walking or running.*

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

Organizations that serve younger children and offer a variety of activity options should ideally provide access to an open area where children can run, jump, and play; a large field area for structured sports activities such as kickball; a hard surface for basketball, rollerblading, and bike riding; and a protected area for quiet play and socializing. If the outdoor space is small, the time children and youth spend outdoors should ideally be staggered so that they are not crowded during outdoor activities.

OST 17.02

Supplies and equipment for outdoor activities are:

- a. suited to the activities offered and the goals of the program;
- b. in good condition;
- c. sufficient for the number of children and youth in the program; and
- d. appropriate to the ages and developmental levels of program participants, including for children and youth with differing levels of skill and ability.

Interpretation: *When children are required to share supplies and equipment there should be a procedure or system in place to minimize wait time and facilitate orderly access for all. Personnel should also be prepared to substitute equipment as needed (e.g., if children or youth have poor motor skills, personnel might provide a large beach ball instead of a volleyball for outdoor games).*

Note: *See OST 11.05 for more information on appropriate protective sports equipment.*

OST 17.03

There is adequate and convenient storage space for outdoor supplies and equipment.

Interpretation: *Children and youth should ideally be able to access outdoor supplies and equipment on their own, and with ease. Accordingly, outdoor supplies and equipment should be stored close to the activity space or moved near the activity space during program time. Personnel should rarely have to carry heavy equipment or large quantities of supplies long distances, and when it is necessary to do so the organization should ideally have portable equipment on wheels.*

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

OST 17.04

Permanent playground equipment is suitable for the ages, sizes, and abilities of children and youth.

Interpretation: *Playground equipment should ideally offer various levels of challenge to accommodate children and youth of different ages, abilities, and skill levels.*

NA *The organization does not use permanent playground equipment.*

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

OST 18: Health and Safety

The organization protects and promotes the health and safety of children and youth.

Note: *Additional practices key to ensuring safety are addressed in other standards. For example, OST 19 addresses the importance of providing adequate supervision, and OST 20.06 highlights the importance of conducting appropriate background checks. ASE and BSM include additional standards that promote health and safety.*

Note: *See OST 11 for additional expectations when programming is specifically designed to promote health and wellness.*

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (HR 6.02) and training (TS 2.03); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- A description of how the organization strives to promote the health of children and youth
- Menus (for previous month)
- Daily schedules (for previous month)
- Policy and/or procedures regarding screen time (OST 18.04)
- Procedures for ensuring personnel are prepared to meet the health/mental health needs of individual children and youth (OST 18.08)
- Procedures for cleaning and sanitation, including expectations for hand washing (OST 18.09, 18.11)
- Procedures for reporting, responding to, and recording health problems and injuries (OST 18.10)
- Procedures for notifying families that their children may have been exposed to an infectious disease (OST 18.10)
- Procedures (or description) of emergency response training for children and youth (OST 18.10)

On-Site Evidence

- Information provided to families (regarding health promotion and the types of food/drink that may be brought to the program)
- Attendance guidelines that address when sick children and youth should not come to the program
- Staff training materials addressing health- and safety-related topics
- Documentation that staff training on health- and safety-related topics has been provided (e.g., in training files or personnel records)
- CPR and first aid certifications
- Accident, injury, and illness reports

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

- Personnel records

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program Administrator
 - b. Site Director
 - c. Program Personnel
 - d. Children, youth, and families
- Review files of children and youth
- Observe facility (indoor and outdoor)
- Observe snack and/or meal time
- Observe program interactions and activities

(FP) OST 18.01

The organization promotes healthy eating and good nutrition by serving:

- a. unsweetened beverages such as water or plain milk; and
- b. a variety of healthful and minimally-processed foods that do not contain artificial ingredients, unhealthy fats, added sugars, or high levels of sodium (e.g., fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, beans, and lean meats).

Interpretation: *Personnel should make an effort to ensure that even celebrations for birthdays, holidays, and other special events feature or include healthy options. Further, in addition to providing the types of food and drink referenced in the standard, the organization should also strive to ensure that children and youth do not have access to vending machines that offer unhealthy selections. Personnel should ideally also consider the preferences and input of children and youth when deciding what foods to offer, to the extent possible and appropriate.*

Research Note: *Childhood obesity is a serious problem in the United States, and research suggests that the diets of many children and youth are poor or need improvement. Literature points to the steps programs can take to combat these trends, and encourages programs to serve nutritious foods and promote healthy eating habits. Funding for healthy snacks and meals may be available through the United States Department of Agriculture's Child and Adult Care Food Program, National School Lunch Program, or Summer Feeding Program.*

Note: *In some cases children and youth may have special dietary needs that require accommodation under the ADA or IDEA. See OST 2.06, 9.06,*

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

and 18.08 for more information regarding accommodating special needs.

(FP) OST 18.02

Personnel:

- a. make clean and safe drinking water readily available at all times, including when children and youth are outdoors or on field trips;
- b. provide snacks and meals at appropriate times;
- c. provide children and youth with enough time to eat;
- d. offer amounts of food that are appropriate for the ages and sizes of children and youth; and
- e. support children's and youth's need to self-regulate the amount they eat.

Interpretation: *Water from sinks and fountains should be tested for quality, and filtered water should be available at sites where the water quality is poor. Children and youth should also be encouraged to drink more water in hot weather.*

Note: *In some cases children and youth may have special dietary needs that require accommodation under the ADA or IDEA (e.g., regarding the frequency of snacks). See OST 2.06, 9.06, and 18.08 for more information regarding accommodating special needs.*

(FP) OST 18.03

The organization supports and encourages the physical fitness of children and youth by:

- a. designing the activity schedule so that children and youth do not sit for more than one hour at a time, and incorporating short physical activity breaks into sedentary activities and transition times; and
- b. providing opportunities for children and youth to engage in physical activity for at least 30 to 60 minutes per day.

Interpretation: *Children and youth should ideally have opportunities to engage in moderate to vigorous exercise, as well as age-appropriate bone and muscle strengthening activities. If a program operates for a relatively brief period of time each day (e.g., for an hour or two), it may not be possible to engage children and youth in a full 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity, but at least 20 percent of program time should be set aside for physical activity (i.e. 12 minutes of a one-hour program).*

The type of physical activity provided may vary depending on the nature of the program and the ages, abilities, and interests of participating children

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

and youth. For example, while an organization serving younger children might offer unstructured free play on the playground, an organization serving older children might facilitate a variety of structured activities, from dance classes, to competitive intramural sports, to walking groups. When an organization offers opportunities for physical activity beyond unstructured free play, the organization should also complete OST 11.

Research Note: As noted in the Research Note to OST 18.01, childhood obesity is a serious problem in the United States. Regular participation in physical activity can help to counteract this epidemic, and experts in the United States recommend that youth participate in at least 60 minutes of developmentally appropriate moderate to vigorous physical activity per day, as well as bone and muscle strengthening activities. Although out-of-school time programs may not be able to facilitate the full 60 minutes of activity time, they should strive to engage children in at least 30 minutes of exercise per day. Further, if program participants are not engaged in physical activity at other points in their day (e.g., in gym class, or at home), the organization should strive to provide the full 60 minutes of activity time. Literature also highlights the importance of offering a wide range of physical activity options, noting that in addition to meeting different fitness needs, providing a variety of physical activities will increase the likelihood that children and youth will find activities they enjoy and will pursue throughout their lives.

Note: When programming is not designed to include opportunities for fitness, the organization should still design the activity schedule so children and youth do not sit for more than one hour at a time and incorporate physical activity into sedentary activities and transition times, and should be prepared to explain why the program's design does not include structured time for physical activity and fitness.

OST 18.04

The organization creates an environment that supports and encourages healthy eating and physical activity by ensuring:

- a. personnel model healthy eating and physical activity while on the job;
- b. posters, displays, and other program materials convey positive messages about healthy eating and physical activity;
- c. food and physical activity are not offered or withheld as a reward or punishment;
- d. screen time is limited; and
- e. there is adequate access to the facilities needed to support healthy eating and physical activity (e.g., kitchen, storage, and recreational facilities).

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

Interpretation: *Regarding element (d), children and youth should not be permitted to watch television or movies except on special occasions, and screen time that is not academic or educational should typically be limited to 30 minutes per day. When children or youth are exercising along with a video or DVD that provides physical activity instruction (e.g., an aerobics DVD), the time does not count towards the daily screen time limits.*

Note: *See OST 9.18 for more information regarding screen time and the use of technology.*

OST 18.05

Children and youth are helped to understand the importance of developing healthy habits that support both physical and mental wellness.

Interpretation: *Children and youth should ideally be helped to understand the importance of: (1) obtaining adequate sleep, nutrition, and exercise; (2) devising healthy strategies for coping with stress; and (3) developing reasonable expectations for themselves. It may also be helpful to explain how habits and routines in these areas may work together to impact both physical and mental well-being. For example, moderate exercise may help to improve mood and reduce stress, and adequate sleep may improve one's ability to manage emotions. It may be especially relevant for organizations to provide information regarding topics that tie into their programs' areas of focus. For example, an organization that emphasizes academic readiness might make a concerted effort to help children and youth understand how eating healthfully, and obtaining sufficient sleep, can support readiness to learn.*

Note: *While the health-related aspects of this core concept are largely focused on practices pertaining to physical health, COA does recognize the interconnectedness of physical and mental well-being, as well as the importance of focusing on the overall wellness of children and youth. Accordingly, it is important to note that other practices that contribute to overall wellness are included within other core concept standards. For example, OST 5 addresses the importance of social and emotional learning, including helping children and youth understand and manage their emotions; OST 4 and 5 address the importance of developing caring relationships with adults and peers; and OST 4 and 9 address the importance of providing the opportunities and support that can help children and youth build skills and develop a positive self-concept.*

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

OST 18.06

In an effort to support children and youth in developing and maintaining healthy habits, the organization provides families with information regarding:

- a. the importance of a healthy lifestyle, including ways to encourage healthy habits at home; and
- b. the types of food that may be brought to the program.

Interpretation: *Information may be provided in a variety of ways, from communications at family events to materials sent to the home. Healthy habits to encourage include those related to eating healthfully, engaging in physical activity, obtaining adequate sleep, and supporting mental wellness. As noted in OST 18.05, it may be especially relevant for organizations to provide families with information regarding topics that tie into their programs' areas of focus. For example, an organization that emphasizes academic readiness might make a concerted effort to help families understand how eating healthfully, and obtaining sufficient sleep, can support readiness to learn.*

When determining the types of food that may be brought to the program, it may be appropriate to consider factors related to both nutritional content and food allergies.

Note: See OST 7 for more information regarding family connections and partnerships.

OST 18.07

Children and youth have frequent, regular opportunities to participate in outdoor activities, weather permitting.

Interpretation: *Children and youth should ideally have a chance to be outdoors for at least 30 minutes out of every three-hour block of time at the program.*

Note: *When programming is not designed to include outdoor activities, the organization should request an NA.*

(FP) OST 18.08

When children and youth have particular health or mental health needs, the organization:

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

- a. maintains information regarding needs in children and youths' health records;
- b. specifies the role it will play in meeting those needs; and
- c. ensures that personnel are informed about children and youths' needs and prepared to carry out any related responsibilities.

Interpretation: *Relevant health and mental health needs include, but are not limited to, needs related to: dietary restrictions, allergies, asthma, physical limitations, medication needs, and a history of trauma.*

Note: *As noted in OST 2.05, relevant information regarding health and mental health needs should be collected from children and youth and their families during registration and enrollment. When additional needs are identified during the course of program involvement, files should be updated accordingly.*

Note: *See OST 2.06 and 9.06 for additional expectations around assessing the needs of, and accommodating, children and youth with special needs.*

(FP) OST 18.09

There are adequate supplies and facilities for hand washing and personnel, children, and youth are encouraged to wash hands frequently, especially before preparing food or after using the bathroom.

Interpretation: *In addition to ensuring that soap dispensers are filled regularly, the organization should also ensure that there are sanitary methods for drying hands, such as disposable paper towels or electric dryers that turn on and off automatically. Signs or pictures should also be posted to show proper hand washing techniques and remind children of the importance of hand washing.*

COA recognizes that in some situations, such as field trips or outdoor activities, hand washing supplies and facilities (e.g., running water, soap) may not be available. When that is the case, hand sanitizer may be an appropriate alternative.

(FP) OST 18.10

To protect children and youth from accidents, injuries, and illnesses, the organization ensures:

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

- a. personnel have access to a telephone, emergency numbers, and first aid supplies both on- and off-site;
- b. children and youth are trained in a developmentally- and age-appropriate manner on how to respond in case of emergency;
- c. families are provided with attendance guidelines that address when sick children and youth should not come to the program;
- d. procedures address when families should be notified that their children may have been exposed to an infectious disease;
- e. health problems and injuries are promptly documented, and proper health precautions are followed when supervising children and youth who are ill or injured;
- f. parents or legal guardians are notified when health or safety issues arise; and
- g. an automated external defibrillator (AED) is maintained in a well-marked, accessible location proximate to the areas where sports/fitness areas are held, as appropriate.

Related: ASE 6.02, ASE 7.01, ASE 7.02, ASE 7.03, ASE 7.04, ASE 8.01

Interpretation: *Please note that element (g) applies only when an organization provides sports/fitness activities as covered in OST 11. Further, while COA strongly recommends that all organizations providing sports/fitness activities maintain an AED in order to ensure proper emergency response to sudden cardiac arrest, an organization that does not maintain an AED can still demonstrate satisfactory implementation of the standard overall as long as the organization does not operate in a state that requires access to an AED. It is also important to note that: (1) personnel should be trained on how to use an AED, as per ASE 7.04; and (2) any AED in operation should be maintained according to the manufacturer's specification and regularly inspected, as per ASE 4.*

Research Note: *The National Alliance for Youth Sports states that youth sports programs should ensure that an AED is proximate to all playing areas, and the National Association for Sport and Physical Education recommends that AEDs be present and accessible in all schools and at all school-sanctioned athletic events and activities. Given that the device can only save lives if people know where it is and how to use it, both organizations also point to the importance of providing training on AED use.*

(FP) OST 18.11

The organization provides an optimal learning environment that is:

- a. clean;

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

- b. well-lit, with natural light where possible;
- c. maintained at a safe, comfortable temperature and noise level;
- d. odor-free; and
- e. adequately ventilated.

Related: ASE 4

Interpretation: *Systems for heating, cooling, and lighting should be functional, and the organization should take additional steps to facilitate a comfortable environment, as needed. For example, floor or table lamps might be used in addition to or instead of overhead lighting, and rugs or ceiling tiles might be used to help absorb noise.*

(FP) OST 18.12

There are no observable safety hazards in the indoor space, and materials used for indoor play are safe.

Related: ASE 4

Interpretation: *Safety hazards include, but are not limited to: uncovered electrical outlets; walls, floors, furnishings, or materials in disrepair; unsecured floor coverings or furniture; harmful water temperatures; exits that are obstructed, unmarked, or poorly lit; unmarked glass doors; a lack of emergency lighting; walk-in freezers or refrigerators that do not open from the inside; unsecured windows in need of window guards; mirrors that are not shatter-proof (e.g., in hand-washing areas); hazardous materials (e.g., disinfectants) that are not properly labeled and stored securely away from children; dangerous clutter and spills; glass and other unsafe litter; stairs without railings; and unsafe use of electrical appliances such as space heaters.*

In addition, equipment, toys, and materials should meet safety requirements set forth by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), and the organization should be aware of any recalls that affect its products. The CPSC provides web-based access to a list of product recalls.

(FP) OST 18.13

There are no observable safety hazards in the outdoor space, and equipment for active play is safe.

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

Related: ASE 4

Interpretation: *The organization should ensure that: the outdoor space is protected from traffic by fences or other means; entrance and exit areas are sheltered from traffic; sidewalks are free of ice, snow, and slippery mud; the space is free of glass and other litter; large equipment is bolted down; equipment is in good repair (e.g., free of rust, splinters, and loose nails or screws); swings are placed out of the way of passing children and youth; and all playground equipment is on a resilient surface (e.g., fine loose sand, wood chips, wood mulch about nine inches deep, or rubber mats).*

Note: *See the Interpretation to OST 18.12 regarding compliance with CPSC requirements.*

(FP) OST 18.14

The organization ensures that there is at least one person certified in basic first aid and age-appropriate CPR on duty and available at all times the program is in operation, including on field trips away from the program site.

Related: TS 2.09

Interpretation: *When some children will attend a field trip while others will remain on site, more than one person will need to be certified in order to meet the expectations of the standard. Please also note that first aid and CPR certifications must be kept up-to-date according to the guidelines established by the certification body. Certification courses with an online component are acceptable as long as they include a hands-on, in-person skills evaluation by an instructor. Although not required by COA, organizations may also wish to have staff practice their skills between certifications (e.g., by engaging in hands-on practice with a manikin), especially if certifications are good for more than one year.*

If an organization operates in a state that requires more personnel to be certified, COA expects the organization to meet the higher standard. COA also: (1) encourages organizations to consider adult-child ratios, the type of activities offered, and the distance between activities when determining the number of persons who will be certified; and (2) recommends that organizations strive to have all OST personnel certified.

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

OST 19: Supervision

The organization ensures the safety of children and youth by providing sufficient and appropriate supervision at all times.

Interpretation: *These standards also apply when children and youth are away from the program site, for example, when they are on a field trip.*

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted, however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations (HR 6.02) and training (TS 2.03); or
- Active client participation occurs to a considerable extent.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- A number of client records are missing important information or
- Client participation is inconsistent; or
- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or A
- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- A description of how the organization ensures adequate and appropriate supervision at all times, and in all activities
- Program ratio
- Procedures or plan for providing adequate supervision, including for coverage during breaks, absences, emergencies, etc. (OST 19.02, 19.03, 19.05)
- Staff coverage schedule (for previous quarter)
- Procedures for ensuring safety during arrivals and dismissals (OST 19.04)

On-Site Evidence

- Policies and/or procedures governing one-on-one interactions between personnel and children/youth (OST 19.06)

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program Administrator
 - b. Site Director
 - c. Program Personnel
 - d. Children, youth, and families
- Observe supervision at different times of day and during different activities
- Observe arrivals and dismissals
- Review files of children and youth

(FP) OST 19.01

The ratio of personnel to children and youth is based on the ages and abilities of children and youth, and is:

- a. between 1:10 and 1:15 when all children and youth are age six and older; and
- b. between 1:8 and 1:12 when the program includes children under age six.

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

Interpretation: *This standard is intended to address the ratio of personnel to children and youth in a program as a whole, rather than for a particular room or group of children and youth. In other words, a program with 60 participants age six and over would need at least four staff members to meet the specified ratio. However, the organization would not need to ensure that there was at least one adult present in every group of 15 children and youth. For example, while one adult might be supervising a group of 19 youth doing line dancing, another adult might be helping a group of 11 youth with their homework. However, group ratios should not typically exceed 1:25, for any type of activity.*

To be included in the program ratio, staff must be present with, and directly supervising, children and youth. It is also important to note that the ratio must be maintained at all times - if certain staff will periodically leave the organization (e.g., to pick up more children), they should not be counted in the ratio. Non-teaching staff, such as front desk staff, custodians, food service personnel, and bus drivers, should also not be counted in the ratio. Volunteers should not be included in this ratio unless they meet personnel qualifications and have a regular, ongoing role at the program.

It may be appropriate for there to be more personnel, and higher ratios of personnel to children and youth, when personnel work with children and youth with special needs, or with groups that consist entirely of kindergarteners. Please note that when children under age six are mixed in with older children and youth, the more stringent ratio applies (as per element (b) of the standard).

Research Note: *The NAA Standards for Quality School-Age Care, published by the National AfterSchool Association, state that ratios should be between 1:10 and 1:15 for groups of children age six and older, and between 1:8 and 1:12 for groups that include children under age six.*

(FP) OST 19.02

Personnel plan for and provide different levels of supervision according to:

- a. the type, complexity, and level of risk or difficulty of activities; and
- b. the ages, abilities, developmental levels, and needs of children and youth.

Interpretation: *Personnel should closely supervise any activities that are potentially risky. Accordingly, ratios of personnel to children and youth should typically be higher, and group sizes smaller, when projects involve*

Purpose

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Out-of-School Time Services

potentially dangerous activities or equipment (e.g., cooking, carpentry, leatherworking, swimming, gymnastics, biking, sledding, or skating). In some cases it may be necessary for personnel who supervise potentially risky activities to receive specialized training, as determined by industry safety standards. Extra adults should also be present on field trips that are difficult to supervise (e.g., trips to amusement parks, beaches, ski areas, or campgrounds). It is also wise for ratios to be higher, and group sizes smaller, when children and youth are learning a new or difficult skill.

While groups sizes may be larger for activities such as sports, art, reading, or board games, groups should not typically exceed 30 children/youth, except for activities such as outdoor play, performances, or assemblies (as long as adequate supervision is provided).

(FP) OST 19.03

The organization implements a supervision system that:

- a. enables personnel to know where children and youth are, and what they are doing, at all times;
- b. allows personnel to see and/or hear all the children and youth they are supervising;
- c. includes special provisions for monitoring children and youth who have permission to be out of sight;
- d. protects younger children when they move from place to place or use the restroom;
- e. enables children and youth to access help at all times; and
- f. makes communication possible between different areas within the program site.

Interpretation: *Regarding element (b), personnel should position themselves in a way that allows them to watch as many children and youth as possible, and should move around so they can see and/or hear all the children and youth they are supervising. Organizations can also ensure facilities are arranged to support supervision by using low barriers between designated spaces to promote visibility, and installing convex mirrors to supplement line-of-sight supervision.*

COA recognizes that systems for supervision, and the level of supervision provided, may vary based on the developmental stages and needs of the children and youth served. For example, organizations serving younger children might monitor which children are in the restroom, and how long

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they have been there, by having children put a clothespin by their name and set an egg timer when they leave the room. Conversely, the level of supervision should also respect older youths' need for independence. Accordingly, an organization serving older youth might develop a policy allowing more independence that is worked out with youth, their families, and personnel.

(FP) OST 19.04

The organization ensures safety during arrivals and dismissals by:

- a. working with parents or other appropriate family members to obtain instructions for arrival and dismissal;
- b. establishing a system for monitoring when children and youth arrive, when they leave, and with whom they leave;
- c. developing a system to keep unauthorized people from taking children and youth;
- d. establishing protocols for families or schools to contact the organization if children and youth will be arriving late, leaving early, or absent; and
- e. developing procedures that address how to respond if a child or youth is not picked up in a timely manner at dismissal.

Interpretation: *Personnel should know when children and youth are supposed to arrive and how children and youth are allowed to depart (including who is allowed to pick up each child or youth), as well as what should be done if an unauthorized person attempts to pick up a child or youth. When questions arise, personnel should contact the school or a responsible adult listed on the emergency form. Organizations should ideally keep written records showing who picked up children and youth.*

NA *The organization only serves older youth who can come and go independently.*

(FP) OST 19.05

There is a plan to provide adequate staff coverage:

- a. when personnel are absent (i.e. due to illness, personal reasons, or professional development);
- b. when personnel leave the room to take a break or retrieve supplies; and
- c. when emergencies or special circumstances arise during program time.

Interpretation: *Emergencies or special circumstances include situations where a child becomes ill, requires separation from the group, needs*

Purpose

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special supervision or care, or has an emergency, as well as situations where a staff member becomes ill or has an emergency. If one staff member is sufficient to meet the required ratios specified in OST 19.01, a second adult should be on hand to assist in case an emergency or special circumstance arises. The organization can support implementation of this standard by keeping an up-to-date list of adults who are qualified to serve as substitutes.

(FP) OST 19.06

One-on-one interactions between personnel and children and youth are in public areas visible by at least one other adult.

Interpretation: *It is acceptable for a staff member to be alone with a child or youth during brief periods of transition (e.g., while escorting a child from the cafeteria to the computer lab), as long as their whereabouts are communicated to other personnel.*

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

OST 20: Personnel Qualifications

Personnel are qualified to work with children and youth and operate the program.

Interpretation: *COA recognizes that the job titles used by some organizations may vary from the titles listed below. Accordingly, the responsibilities assumed by personnel will determine the qualifications required. COA also understands that in some organizations, one person may assume the responsibilities of more than one position. When this happens, the person should meet the qualifications required for the highest level of responsibility.*

In some cases personnel who do not meet the exact minimum qualifications options listed may still be qualified by another equivalent combination of education and experience. For example, a person with an Associate's degree and 10 years of experience may be qualified to serve as a Program Administrator even if he or she does not have a Bachelor's degree.

If already-employed staff do not meet the education, experience, and professional preparation requirements included in the standards, the organization should take steps to provide the support and training opportunities needed to ensure they are capable of performing their responsibilities. This includes internal and external training and educational opportunities to support professional development, as addressed in OST 21 and TS 1 and 2, and direct supervision and guidance from an appropriately qualified staff person, as addressed in OST 21 and TS 3.

Research Note: *Literature emphasizes that a skilled, stable, educated, well-trained, and motivated workforce is key to providing the quality programming that can promote positive outcomes for children and youth.*

When hiring staff, in addition to considering credentials such as education and experience, it may also be important to assess a candidate's interpersonal abilities and attitudes. For example, an ability to connect with youth, openness to learning new skills, and a commitment to the organization's mission may also be important to promoting positive outcomes.

Rating Indicators

1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

Practice standards.

2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

- With some exceptions, staff (direct service providers, supervisors, and program managers) possess the required qualifications, including: education, experience, training, skills, temperament, etc., but the integrity of the service is not compromised.
 - Supervisors provide additional support and oversight, as needed, to staff without the listed qualifications.
 - Most staff who do not meet educational requirements are seeking to obtain them.
- With some exceptions staff have received required training, including applicable specialized training.
 - Training curricula are not fully developed or lack depth.
 - A few personnel have not yet received required training.
 - Training documentation is consistently maintained and kept up-to-date with some exceptions.
- A substantial number of supervisors meet the requirements of the standard, and the organization provides training and/or consultation to improve competencies.
 - Supervisors provide structure and support in relation to service outcomes, organizational culture and staff retention.
- With a few exceptions caseload sizes are consistently maintained as required by the standards.
- Workloads are such that staff can effectively accomplish their assigned tasks and provide quality services, and are adjusted as necessary in accord with established workload procedures.
 - Procedures need strengthening.
 - With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used.
- With a few exceptions specialized staff are retained as required and possess the required qualifications.
- Specialized services are obtained as required by the standards.

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.
- A significant number of staff, e.g., direct service providers, supervisors, and program managers, do not possess the required qualifications, including: education, experience, training, skills, temperament, etc.; and as a result the integrity of the service may be compromised.

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Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

- Job descriptions typically do not reflect the requirements of the standards, and/or hiring practices do not document efforts to hire staff with required qualifications when vacancies occur.
- Supervisors do not typically provide additional support and oversight to staff without the listed qualifications.
- A significant number of staff have not received required training, including applicable specialized training.
 - Training documentation is poorly maintained.
- A significant number of supervisors do not meet the requirements of the standard, and the organization makes little effort to provide training and/or consultation to improve competencies.
- There are numerous instances where caseload sizes exceed the standards' requirements.
- Workloads are excessive and the integrity of the service may be compromised.
 - Procedures need significant strengthening; or
 - Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Specialized staff are typically not retained as required and/or many do not possess the required qualifications; or
- Specialized services are infrequently obtained as required by the standards.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

For example:

- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

- List of program personnel that includes:
 - a. name;
 - b. job title;
 - c. degree held and/or other credentials;
 - d. professional preparation;
 - e. FTE;
 - f. length of employment at the program;
 - g. time in current position

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Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

- Policy and procedures for background checks (OST 20.06)

On-Site Evidence

- Job descriptions
- Personnel resumes
- Personnel records
- Volunteer files/records
- Legislation/regulations pertaining to background checks

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program Administrator
 - b. Site Director
 - c. Program Personnel

OST 20.01

The Program Administrator is qualified by:

- a. a bachelor's degree in a related field, one year of related experience, and six credits of professional preparation; or
- b. a bachelor's degree in an unrelated field, two years of related experience, and twelve credits of professional preparation.

Interpretation: *In terms of education, related fields include education, child development, developmental psychology, youth studies, family social sciences, and recreation.*

In terms of professional preparation, credits represent approximately 15 hours of participation in a post-secondary course, and can be earned through college classes, technical vocational classes, or community-based trainings or workshops. Credits of professional preparation may be in areas including administration (e.g., human resources, fiscal management, organizational development, strategic planning, marketing, and community development), child and youth development (i.e. development during middle childhood and adolescence), and other areas related to out-of-school time programming (e.g., health and safety, developmentally-appropriate practices, group or individual guidance, community service and service learning, working with families, community outreach, and activity planning).

Note: *The Program Administrator is responsible for the overall direction of the program, including: (1) developing goals and policies; (2) program*

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Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

planning and evaluation; (3) program administration, including fiscal management; and (4) organizational development, including management of human resources.

OST 20.02

The Site Director is qualified by:

- a. a bachelor's degree in a related field, six months of related experience, and six credits of professional preparation;
- b. a bachelor's degree in a related field, one year of related experience, and nine credits of professional preparation;
- c. an associate's degree or two years of college in a related field, 18 months of related experience, and six credits of professional preparation;
or
- d. a recognized state or national school-age care or youth worker credential such as CYC Certification, 18 months of related experience, and six credits of professional preparation.

Interpretation: *In terms of education, related fields include education, child development, developmental psychology, youth studies, family social sciences, and recreation.*

In terms of professional preparation, credits represent approximately 15 hours of participation in a post-secondary course, and can be earned through college classes, technical vocational classes, or community-based trainings or workshops. Credits of professional preparation may be in child and youth development (i.e. development during middle childhood and adolescence) and other areas related to out-of-school time programming (e.g., health and safety, developmentally-appropriate practices, group or individual guidance, community service and service learning, working with families, community outreach, and activity planning).

Note: *The Site Director is responsible for the daily operations of the program, including: (1) supervising personnel; (2) overseeing all program activities; (3) communicating with families; and (4) building relationships with the community.*

OST 20.03

Senior Group Leaders are qualified by:

- a. a bachelor's degree in a related field and three months of related experience;
- b. a bachelor's degree in an unrelated field, three months of related

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- experience, and six credits of professional preparation;
- c. an associate's degree or two years of college in a related field, six months of related experience, and six credits of professional preparation;
- d. an associate's degree or two years of college in an unrelated field, one year of related experience, and six credits of professional preparation; or
- e. a recognized state or national school-age care or youth worker credential such as CYC Certification, six months of related experience, and six credits of professional preparation.

Interpretation: *In terms of education, related fields include education, child development, developmental psychology, youth studies, family social sciences, and recreation.*

In terms of professional preparation, credits represent approximately 15 hours of participation in a post-secondary course, and can be earned through college classes, technical vocational classes, or community-based trainings or workshops. Credits of professional preparation may be in child and youth development (i.e. development during middle childhood and adolescence) and other areas related to out-of-school time programming (e.g., health and safety, developmentally-appropriate practices, group or individual guidance, community service and service learning, working with families, community outreach, and activity planning).

Note: *Senior Group Leaders are responsible for supervision and guidance of children and youth in the program, including: (1) activity planning and implementation; (2) communicating with families; (3) supervising support staff; and (4) relating to the community.*

OST 20.04

Group Leaders are qualified by:

- a. a bachelor's degree in a related field;
- b. a bachelor's degree in an unrelated field, three months of related experience, and three credits of professional preparation;
- c. an associate's degree or two years of college in a related field, and six months of related experience;
- d. an associate's degree or two years of college in an unrelated field, nine months of related experience, and three credits of professional preparation;
- e. a recognized state or national school-age care or youth worker credential such as CYC Certification, and six months of related experience; or
- f. a high school diploma or GED, 18 months of related experience, and six

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credits of professional preparation.

Interpretation: *In terms of education, related fields include education, child development, developmental psychology, youth studies, family social sciences, and recreation.*

In terms of professional preparation, credits represent approximately 15 hours of participation in a post-secondary course, and can be earned through college classes, technical vocational classes, or community-based trainings or workshops. Credits of professional preparation may be in child and youth development (i.e. development during middle childhood and adolescence) and other areas related to out-of-school time programming (e.g., health and safety, developmentally-appropriate practices, group or individual guidance, community service and service learning, working with families, community outreach, and activity planning).

Note: *Group Leaders are responsible for supervision and guidance of children and youth in the program under the direction of a Senior Group Leader, including: (1) activity planning and implementation; (2) communicating with families; (3) supervising support staff; and (4) relating to the community.*

OST 20.05

Assistant Group Leaders are at least 16 years old.

Note: *Assistant Group Leaders are responsible for carrying out activities under the direct supervision of a Group Leader.*

(FP) OST 20.06

To ensure the safety of program participants, screening procedures for personnel, volunteers with an ongoing role, and contractors include:

- a. fingerprint-based state and federal criminal history record checks;
- b. child abuse and neglect registry checks; and
- c. sex offender registry checks.

Related: HR 3.03

Interpretation: *This standard applies to anyone who will provide direct services to, or be alone with, children and youth. The organization is not required to conduct background checks on licensed staff if it has verified*

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



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that background checks are conducted as part of the licensing process, but it may choose to do so. It is also important to note that this standard also applies when the organization contracts with an outside company to provide certain services (e.g., transportation services). Just as with licensed staff, the organization is not required to conduct background checks on the staff employed by contractors if it has verified that background checks are conducted by the contractor (e.g., if the school district that provides transportation already conducts background checks on bus drivers). In all other instances the organization should establish procedures for ensuring that contracted parties, including bus drivers, are subject to the requirements of the standard.

If some parties were working with the organization before the implementation of background checks, the organization is expected to conduct background checks on those parties prior to achieving accreditation. The organization should also conduct periodic re-investigations at intervals specified in its procedures, unless the organization will be automatically notified by the authority that conducted the initial check if a subsequent violation occurs.

The organization should also ensure that it complies with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations in conducting these checks. If an organization is not legally permitted to implement part of this standard (e.g., it can only conduct name-based checks, not fingerprint-based checks), it should be prepared to provide documentation (e.g., copy of a law or regulation) demonstrating that this is the case. The organization should also consult with legal counsel about any concerns regarding the appropriate use of background information. Background checks yield information, but the organization must decide how to use the information it obtains. Accordingly, the organization should define what offenses will disqualify an applicant, but should also take care to ensure that it does not illegally discriminate in its hiring practices.

Research Note: *Most organizations permanently disqualify anyone convicted of sex-related crimes, violent crimes, and crimes involving children. For other types of crimes, organizations might consider factors such as the age of the person at the time of the offense, how long ago the offense occurred, the person's attitude about the offense, and the person's lifestyle since the offense.*

Note: *Volunteers who will not have an ongoing role at the program and are thus not required to undergo background checks (e.g., an occasional parent volunteer) should not be left alone with children and youth, as addressed in*

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



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OST 21.11.

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Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

OST 21: Personnel Training and Support

Personnel receive the training and support they need to develop professionally and provide quality programming.

Rating Indicators

- 1) All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice standards.
- 2) Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,
 - With some exceptions, staff (direct service providers, supervisors, and program managers) possess the required qualifications, including: education, experience, training, skills, temperament, etc., but the integrity of the service is not compromised.
 - Supervisors provide additional support and oversight, as needed, to staff without the listed qualifications.
 - Most staff who do not meet educational requirements are seeking to obtain them.
 - With some exceptions staff have received required training, including applicable specialized training.
 - Training curricula are not fully developed or lack depth.
 - A few personnel have not yet received required training.
 - Training documentation is consistently maintained and kept up-to-date with some exceptions.
 - A substantial number of supervisors meet the requirements of the standard, and the organization provides training and/or consultation to improve competencies.
 - Supervisors provide structure and support in relation to service outcomes, organizational culture and staff retention.
 - With a few exceptions caseload sizes are consistently maintained as required by the standards.
 - Workloads are such that staff can effectively accomplish their assigned tasks and provide quality services, and are adjusted as necessary in accord with established workload procedures.
 - Procedures need strengthening.
 - With few exceptions procedures are understood by staff and are being used.
 - With a few exceptions specialized staff are retained as required and possess the required qualifications.
 - Specialized services are obtained as required by the standards.

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

3) Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards. Â Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- One of the Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.
- A significant number of staff, e.g., direct service providers, supervisors, and program managers, do not possess the required qualifications, including: education, experience, training, skills, temperament, etc.; and as a result the integrity of the service may be compromised.
 - Job descriptions typically do not reflect the requirements of the standards, and/or hiring practices do not document efforts to hire staff with required qualifications when vacancies occur.
 - Supervisors do not typically provide additional support and oversight to staff without the listed qualifications.
- A significant number of staff have not received required training, including applicable specialized training.
 - Training documentation is poorly maintained.
- A significant number of supervisors do not meet the requirements of the standard, and the organization makes little effort to provide training and/or consultation to improve competencies.
- There are numerous instances where caseload sizes exceed the standards' requirements.
- Workloads are excessive and the integrity of the service may be compromised.Â
 - Procedures need significant strengthening; or
 - Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Specialized staff are typically not retained as required and/or many do not possess the required qualifications; or
- Specialized services are infrequently obtained as required by the standards.

4) Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice standards; e.g.,

For example:

- Two or more Fundamental Practice Standards received a rating of 3 or 4.

Table of Evidence

Self-Study Evidence

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

- Table of contents for orientation curriculum
- Table of contents for training curriculum
- Procedures for conducting personnel observations (OST 21.03)
- Tool/rubric for personnel observations
- Outline of required training for different positions or job categories (i.e. number of hours required)
- A description of how the organization utilizes, orients/trains, supports, supervises, and recognizes volunteers
- Staffing chart that illustrates lines of supervision of volunteers

On-Site Evidence

- Orientation curriculum
- Training curriculum
- Annual training calendar or schedule
- Records of personnel observations (e.g., in personnel records)
- Documentation of participation in training and professional development activities (e.g., documentation from training files or personnel records)
- Criteria used for assigning and evaluating workloads
- Documentation of:
 - a. wages;
 - b. benefits;
 - c. paid time to plan/set up activities;
 - d. paid time to participate in training/professional development
 - e. opportunities for advancement
- Orientation/training materials for volunteers
- Volunteer files/records

On-Site Activities

- Interview:
 - a. Program Administrator and/or Director
 - b. Program Personnel
 - c. Volunteers
- Observe staff interactions

OST 21.01

Before working with children and youth, new personnel are given an orientation that includes an overview of:

- a. the program's goals, practices, and schedule;
- b. their job descriptions, including their responsibilities to children and youth, families, and the program;

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

- c. program policies and procedures, including policies and procedures related to health and safety, emergencies, and confidentiality;
- d. personnel policies and procedures, including expectations regarding work hours and schedules, breaks, and planning time; and
- e. the roles of different program personnel.

Related: TS 2.01

Interpretation: *Although the format of orientation may vary, it should include a review of the information described in the standard. Personnel should also receive a tour of the program space, be introduced to their co-workers and any other relevant staff (e.g., custodian), and have an opportunity to raise any questions they have.*

OST 21.02

Personnel who work with children and youth are trained in:

- a. child and youth development, including what matters most at different stages of development;
- b. building caring, supportive relationships with children and youth;
- c. techniques for instructing and engaging children and youth;
- d. effective group management;
- e. strategies for promoting social and emotional development;
- f. strategies for engaging children and youth with different temperaments, needs, and abilities;
- g. expectations for collaboration with community partners (e.g., with the program host or collaborating service providers);
- h. expectations for professional conduct; and
- i. topics relevant to program activities, including safety and injury prevention related to the activities offered.

Interpretation: *COA recognizes that training on some of the topics addressed in this standard may not be provided until after personnel have begun work. However, it is also important to note that personnel should never be expected to perform a task or provide a level of care that they are not yet prepared to handle. Accordingly, depending on the degree of responsibility personnel are expected to assume upon starting their jobs, it may be appropriate to provide pre-service training on some of the listed topics.*

Note: *Please note that additional expectations regarding the qualifications*

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.



Out-of-School Time Services

and competencies of staff providing specific types of activities are included in OST 10 through 15. See TS 2, BSM 3, and ASE 7 for additional organization-wide expectations regarding staff training.

OST 21.03

In an effort to support and develop personnel, supervisors or other coaches:

- a. conduct regular, scheduled observations of personnel using a formalized tool that reflects established program practices;
- b. ensure that personnel are oriented to the expectations of the tool, prior to observation;
- c. provide opportunities for personnel to conduct self-assessments using the tool; and
- d. partner with personnel following observation to discuss strengths and needs and establish short- and long-term goals for development and improvement.

Interpretation: *When supervisors or other coaches partner with personnel following observations to discuss strengths, needs, and goals, meetings should include opportunities for personnel to reflect on their own performance.*

This type of observation and coaching will often be provided within the context of the supervisory relationships addressed in TS 3. However, it can also be provided by outside consultants or trainers, as well as by other frontline staff at the organization. The amount of observation conducted should take into account the type of programming offered. For example, a program that offers academic instruction may need a higher amount of observation than a program that is solely enrichment-focused.

OST 21.04

Professional development includes at least:

- a. 15 hours of training per year for Assistant Group Leaders;
- b. 18 hours of training per year for Group Leaders;
- c. 21 hours of training per year for Senior Group Leaders;
- d. 24 hours of training per year for Site Directors; and
- e. 30 hours of training per year for Program Administrators.

Interpretation: *Training may be delivered using a variety of methods based on available resources and identified training needs. Examples of training delivery methods include, but are not limited to: in-service training, adult*

Purpose

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Out-of-School Time Services

education courses, higher education or college courses, distance learning, conference workshops, webinars, and self-paced electronic trainings.

When a program operates only during the summer months, COA recognizes that personnel may participate in fewer hours of professional development.

OST 21.05

Training and professional development activities are designed to:

- a. help personnel improve their skills;
- b. describe the practices and skills being addressed, and explain why they are important;
- c. model the practices and skills being targeted; and
- d. allow personnel to practice skills and receive feedback in a safe environment that does not punish mistakes.

Interpretation: *This standard is intended to address both program-wide trainings and the more individually-focused supports, resources, and opportunities designed to help personnel meet their individual goals for development and improvement.*

Note: *Personnel should also receive ongoing support designed to help them integrate new skills and knowledge into their daily routines. This type of ongoing support might be provided within the context of the coaching/supervisory relationships addressed in OST 21.03 and TS 3.*

OST 21.06

Personnel have opportunities to participate in collaborative learning activities that include:

- a. group meetings for joint problem-solving and mutual support;
- b. information sharing on topics such as child and youth development or parent-child relationships; and
- c. opportunities for personnel to plan together.

OST 21.07

Personnel demonstrate that they work well together by:

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- a. communicating with each other while the program is in session to ensure that the program flows smoothly;
- b. meeting outside of program time to plan activities and discuss issues or problems that arise;
- c. cooperating with each other;
- d. being respectful of each other; and
- e. modeling positive adult relationships.

Interpretation: *There are a number of ways for personnel to show that they work well together. For example, personnel should share work fairly and be flexible about their roles, pitching in to help one another as needed. Similarly, personnel can help to ensure that the program flows smoothly by checking in with one another, communicating about their needs in a way that promotes cooperation, responding supportively to non-verbal cues, saving complicated discussions for times when children, youth, and families are not present, and keeping conversations about personal matters brief. Personnel should also take care to ensure that respect is shown to all, even in tense situations. For example, when problems occur personnel should discuss their differences and try to devise fair solutions, being mindful of their tone and demeanor.*

Note: *As noted in OST 21.09, it is also important that personnel be compensated for the time they devote to planning.*

OST 21.08

Employee workloads support the achievement of positive outcomes for children and youth, are regularly reviewed, and are based on an assessment of the following:

- a. the qualifications, competencies, and experience of personnel, including the level of supervision needed; and
- b. the work and time required to accomplish assigned tasks and job responsibilities.

OST 21.09

In an effort to promote quality programming and compensate personnel for their time and energy, the organization provides:

- a. the best wages it can afford;
- b. benefits, including health insurance and paid leave, for personnel who work full-time;

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- c. paid time to plan, organize, and set up program activities and events; and
- d. paid time to participate in trainings and other professional development activities, including outside trainings and conferences when possible.

Interpretation: *Organizations may take different steps to ensure implementation of this standard. For example, an organization might pay all personnel above the minimum hourly wage, take education and experience into account when determining compensation, and offer opportunities for higher pay and/or advancement based on performance and/or length of service. Organizations might also strive to offer benefits that extend beyond health insurance and paid leaves of absence (e.g., dental insurance, life insurance, disability insurance, retirement benefits, subsidized child care), or provide non-monetary benefits such as flex time, when possible. Conducting additional fundraising efforts and supplementing paid staff with volunteers (including AmeriCorps/VISTA volunteers who receive stipends from other sources) can help organizations make progress toward ensuring they have the funds needed to compensate personnel appropriately.*

Interpretation: *Regarding element (c), the amount of paid time provided should balance the organization's financial considerations with the amount of time needed to plan quality programming and activities. More time should be provided if personnel are responsible for developing their own curricula. Regarding element (d), an organization might compensate personnel for the time they spend in training activities by arranging for substitutes and paid time off so that personnel can participate in trainings during the work day, or by paying personnel for the time they spend in training outside of program hours. Organizations can also support professional development by offering tuition reimbursement.*

Research Note: *The turnover rate in this field is high, and some research suggests that this is at least in part due to low wages. Accordingly, increases in wages and access to benefits might help to stabilize the workforce, advance the profession, and promote program quality. Studies have shown that youth who attend out-of-school time programs with little staff turnover report higher levels of adult support and more opportunities, which the research correlates to the achievement of positive outcomes for youth. Conversely, high levels of staff turnover can interfere with the development of relationships between youth and adults.*

Although many programs have limited resources and thus may feel ill-equipped to make improvements in this area, some literature suggests

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that there are still steps that can be taken to address the problem. For example, if a program establishes a formal pay structure, and communicates its compensation policies, staff may be less likely to think they are being treated unfairly. Additional reasons for turnover include: (1) competition in the job market; (2) personality clashes among staff; and (3) hiring young staff who have recently graduated from college who do not stay in the position very long.

OST 21.10

The organization:

- a. provides volunteers with the orientation, training, and support they need to fulfill their roles and responsibilities;
- b. maintains essential information about volunteers, including identifying information and emergency contact information; and
- c. recognizes volunteers for their service.

Interpretation: *As referenced in HR and TS, volunteers who have a regular, ongoing role at the program will be covered by the same standards as "personnel." Please see the Interpretations at the beginning of those sections for more information. All other volunteers, including casual volunteers, will be covered by this standard.*

Interpretation: *Regarding element (a), the organization should consider the nature of volunteers' responsibilities, along with their qualifications, when determining what level of orientation, training, and support will be adequate.*

NA *The organization does not use volunteers to provide OST services, or all OST volunteers meet the standards for personnel.*

Note: *See OST 15 for additional expectations regarding volunteer mentors.*

(FP) OST 21.11

The organization ensures that volunteers are adequately supervised by personnel at all times.

Interpretation: *As referenced in HR and TS, volunteers who have a regular, ongoing role at the program will be covered by the same standards as "personnel." Please see the Interpretations at the beginning of those sections for more information. All other volunteers, including casual volunteers, will be covered by this standard.*

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Interpretation: *The organization should consider the nature of volunteers' responsibilities, along with their qualifications, when determining what level of supervision will be adequate. Volunteers should not be left alone with children and youth unless they have undergone background checks as per OST 20.06.*

NA *The organization does not use volunteers to provide OST services, or all OST volunteers meet the standards for personnel.*

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