Learn New Skills

Learning Environment Standards

After you've established a safe environment and have practices in place to build trusting relationships, the youth you serve will be better equipped to benefit from the intentional activities you offer. Utilizing best practices in supporting learning environments will help youth and adults learn together and better ensure that youth are reaping the intended benefits of all that you offer.

Cognitive/ Academic

Standard 1. *Youth are actively engaged in learning activities that promote critical/creative thinking skills and build on individual interests/strengths.*

Score as follows:
1 = This practice is not in place
3 = We are working to implement this practice
5 = This practice is in place

Indicators of Quality	How It Looks In Practice	1, 3, or 5	How are you implementing or working to implement this practice?
1) Program offers a balance of intentionally designed academic and enrichment activities that are age and skill level appropriate.	• Program offers activities in a variety of areas, including core academics, arts, science, technology, engineering, math (STEM), recreation, global learning, culture, and health, etc. • The Utah Core Standards and evidence-based practices are utilized as resources in program planning. ○ https://www.uen.org/core/ • Program activities are developed in response to and build upon participant interests, needs and strengths. • Activities and materials reflect the language, art, music, stories, and games from the participants' cultural traditions.		
2) Program offers enrichment activities that allow youth to explore new ideas, build skills and demonstrate their knowledge in a variety of learning environments.	• Program offers a variety of interest-based enrichment activities in art, music, dance, film, technology, etc • Participants are engaged in youth centered, project-based, and experiential learning activities every day and over time. • Program provides opportunities for youth to demonstrate their knowledge and showcase their work (performances, projects, etc.).		

Standard 2. *Academic support/interventions are aligned with school day curricula and address student learning needs.*

Score as follows: 1 = This practice is not in place; 3 = We are working to implement this practice; 5 = This practice is in place			
Indicators of Quality	**How It Looks In Practice**	**1, 3, or 5**	**How are you implementing or working to implement this practice?**
1) Program offers needs-based academic support, including tutoring and/or homework help.	• Academic support, including tutoring and homework help, is provided on a regular schedule. • Staff has access to resources and support to provide needs-based academic assistance.		
2) Program establishes communication with school day administration and staff regarding academic and behavioral progress of participants.	• Mechanisms for regular communication are established to address needs and share resources to best support participant learning and success (e.g. meetings, phone calls, notes, home visits, emails, etc.) • Program staff, school staff, and/or parents/guardians communicate regularly to share the academic and behavioral strengths, progress and needs of participants.		

Healthy Behaviors/ Lifestyles

Standard 1. *Program offers a variety of life skill activities and needs-based support that promote personal growth and responsible behaviors toward self and others*			
Score as follows: 1 = This practice is not in place; 3 = We are working to implement this practice; 5 = This practice is in place			
Indicators of Quality	**How It Looks In Practice**	**1, 3, or 5**	**How are you implementing or working to implement this practice?**
1) Program provides opportunities for youth to develop the skills needed to make positive choices and promote self-responsibility	• Activities include opportunities to develop intrapersonal traits (self-discipline, integrity, honesty, self-awareness and self-efficacy). • Program activities are designed to teach essential life skills (decision-making, problem solving, negotiation, communication, etc.).		
2) Program provides opportunities for youth to develop the skills needed to interact appropriately with others.	• Activities include opportunities for youth to develop skills needed to work with others in a team setting (compromise, setting goals, dividing up tasks, etc.). • Activities include opportunities to develop interpersonal traits (empathy, encouragement, acceptance, communication).		

Indicators of Quality	How It Looks In Practice	1, 3, or 5	How are you implementing or working to implement this practice?
3) Program offers evidence-based prevention/intervention education to build skills and knowledge that promote social success of youth.	• Curriculum and activities address a variety of age appropriate topics that reflect the needs of the youth served (e.g. healthy relationships, substance abuse, cyber safety, anti-bullying, gang prevention, suicide prevention, pregnancy prevention, anger management, etc.).		
4) Program addresses the needs of youth requiring individualized attention and support.	• A plan is in place to provide individualized support for youth exhibiting concerning behaviors (e.g., referral process, Student Services Committee, Individualized Education Plan, Special Education Plan, Youth Advocates, Mentors, etc.).		

Standard 2. *Practices are in place to ensure that youth have opportunities to practice, participate in, and learn about healthy eating and physical activity.* *https://naaweb.org/resources/naa-hepa-standards*

Score as follows:
1 = This practice is not in place
3 = We are working to implement this practice
5 = This practice is in place

Indicators of Quality	How It Looks In Practice	1, 3, or 5	How are you implementing or working to implement this practice?
1) Program offers developmentally appropriate, inclusive physical activities, games, and sports that provide youth with the knowledge and skills necessary to enjoy being physically active throughout their lives.	• Program staff are trained in using curriculum or activities. • Activities are connected to or integrated into existing programming, such as tutoring, homework, STEM, creative arts, and other enrichment activities		
2) Staff plan and provide time for physical activities.	• Youth have opportunities for physical activity every day. • Provide moderate to vigorous activities for at least half of physical activity time. • Outdoor physical activities are offered daily		
3) A variety of physical activities aimed at engaging children and youth in fun aerobic and cardio-respiratory and age-appropriate fitness activities.	• Youth have opportunities for swimming, jogging, dancing, jump rope, push-ups, etc. • Activities are adaptable, accessible, and inclusive of children and youth with all abilities.		

Indicators of Quality	How It Looks In Practice	1, 3, or 5	How are you implementing or working to implement this practice?

4) Digital devices are used for homework, research, or digital learning that is active rather than passive.	• Television and movies are reserved for special occasions unless intentionally incorporated into activities.
	• Daily total screen time is limited to:
	  ○ 40 minutes for 1-2 hr programs
	  ○ 60 minutes for 3 hr+ programs		

5) All staff members participate in ongoing professional development on healthy eating and physical activity.	• Staff participate in training on healthy eating, nutrition, and physical activity at least once per year. • Staff are regularly coached on the role that healthy eating, physical activity, and social supports play in supporting healthy youth behaviors		
6) Staff are aware of and encouraged to utilize the National Afterschool Association's HEPA Standards	• https://naaweb.org/resources/naa-hepa-standards • Program annually reviews the NAA HEPA Standards Self-Assessment Tool		

Leadership/ Community Involvement

Standard 1. *Program provides a variety of opportunities that enhance personal growth and development*			
Score as follows: **1 = This practice is not in place** **3 = We are working to implement this practice** **5 = This practice is in place**			
Indicators of Quality	**How It Looks In Practice**	**1, 3, or 5**	**How are you implementing or working to implement this practice?**
1) Program involves youth in planning, implementation and evaluation.	• Program provides structured opportunities for youth input and involvement such as youth councils, surveys, focus groups, participation in the quality tool self-assessment process, etc. • Regular opportunities are provided for youth to give input on program design and activities. • Activities reflect youth input.		
2) Program provides varied opportunities for the development of personal responsibility, self-direction and leadership skills.	• Youth are actively engaged in leadership experiences such as:, leaders-in-training, peer mentoring, study buddies, peer leadership team, youth council, club/activity leaders, program assignments, etc.		

3) Program provides opportunities to build 21st century skills that prepare youth to be responsible citizens, effective communicators, and life-long learners.	• Activities address a variety of 21st century skills, which may include digital and financial literacy, cross-cultural skills, innovative thinking, world knowledge, etc. • Youth have regular opportunities to work with peers of different cultures and backgrounds, to learn about world news and events, and to use technology and media. • Youth participate in service-learning projects that benefit their community and build community attachment.		
4) Program incorporates interest-based and age-appropriate career exploration and college readiness experiences.	• Youth are exposed to a variety of career paths and the experiences and skills needed to attain them. • Youth are involved in career readiness opportunities (e.g., guest speakers, career field trips, job shadowing, internships, apprenticeships, etc.) • Program coordinates with post-secondary institutions, businesses and community specialists to provide college readiness opportunities (financial aid specialists, community professionals, college recruiters, college student volunteers, etc.)		