

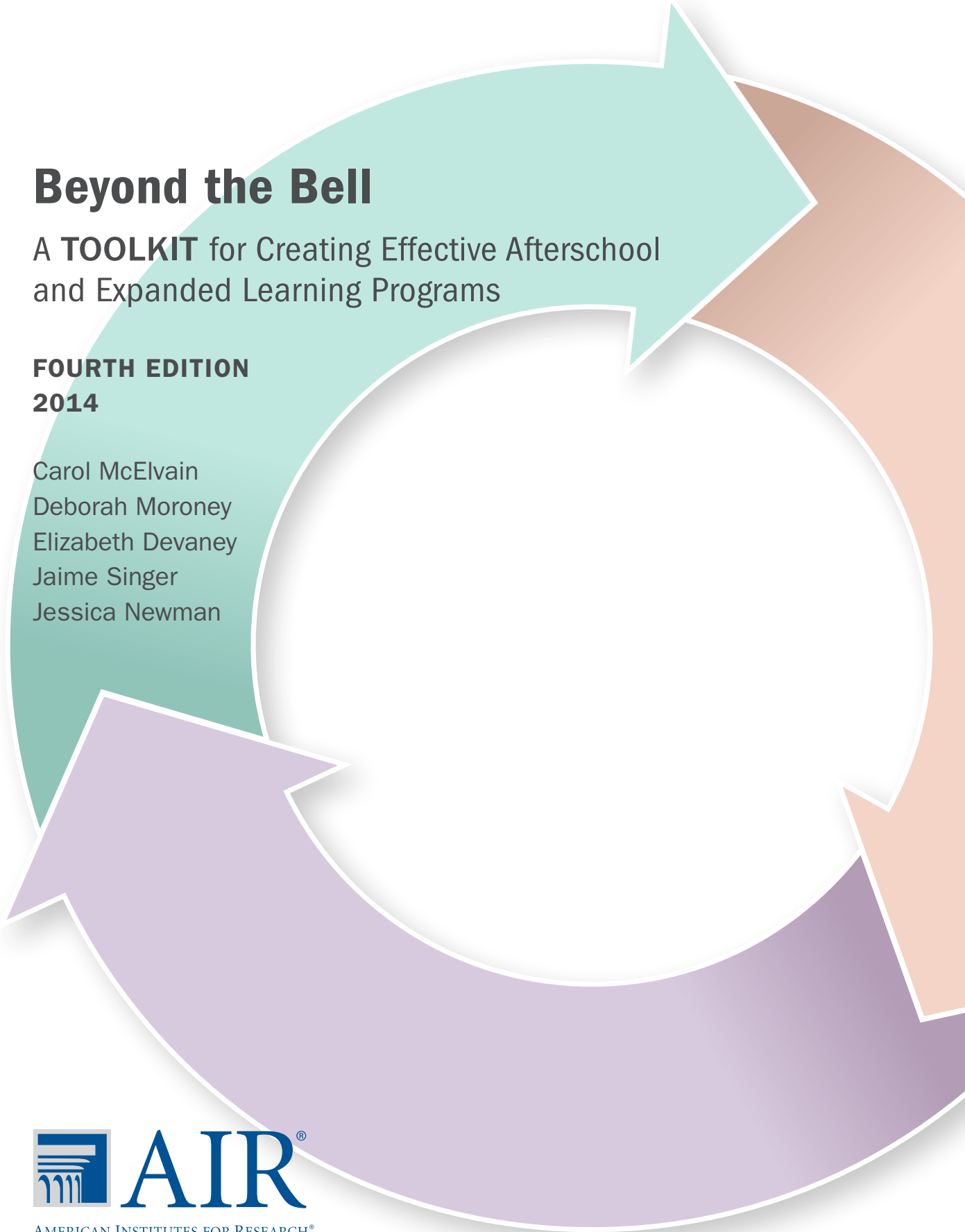
Beyond THE Bell

FOURTH EDITION

A TOOLKIT
for **Creating Effective**
Afterschool and
Expanded Learning
Programs



AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH®



Beyond the Bell

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and Expanded Learning Programs

FOURTH EDITION
2014

Carol McElvain
Deborah Moroney
Elizabeth Devaney
Jaime Singer
Jessica Newman



AIR[®]

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Contents

A Note From the Authors	vii
How to Use This Toolkit	1
Chapter 1: Management	7
Organizational Structures	8
Board of Directors	9
Advisory Boards	9
Policies and Procedures	11
Recruitment	13
Ratios	13
Background Checks and Youth Safety	14
Enrollment	15
Confidentiality	15
Attendance	16
Behavior Guidelines and Discipline	17
Schedule	18
Documentation	19
Resource Management	20
Funding Sources	20
Grants	21
Donations and Fundraising	22
Participant Fees	23
Other Revenue Streams	28
Budgeting	28
Staffing	29
Hiring and Retention	29
Hiring Practices	30
Retention Strategies	32
Professional Development	33
Reflection and Progression	36
Wages, Incentives, and Appreciation	37
Communication	38
Strategies for Effective Communication	39
Communication Goals	41
Sharing Data	42
Communication Audiences	43
Messaging	44
Working With the Media	45
Evaluating Communication	45
Conclusion	46

Chapter 2: Program Design 49

Youth Development Approach	50
Youth Development	50
Identifying Assets and Needs	53
Developing a Vision and Identifying Goals	55
Vision.	56
Goals and Action Steps	57
Outcomes and Impact	57
Theories of Change and Logic Models.	59
Theory of Change	59
Logic Models	59
Building Evaluation Into Your Program to Promote Continuous Improvement	61
Crafting a Program Plan	62
Designing a Program That Intentionally Reflects Your Program Goals	63
Conclusion	65

Chapter 3: Partnerships and Collaboration. 69

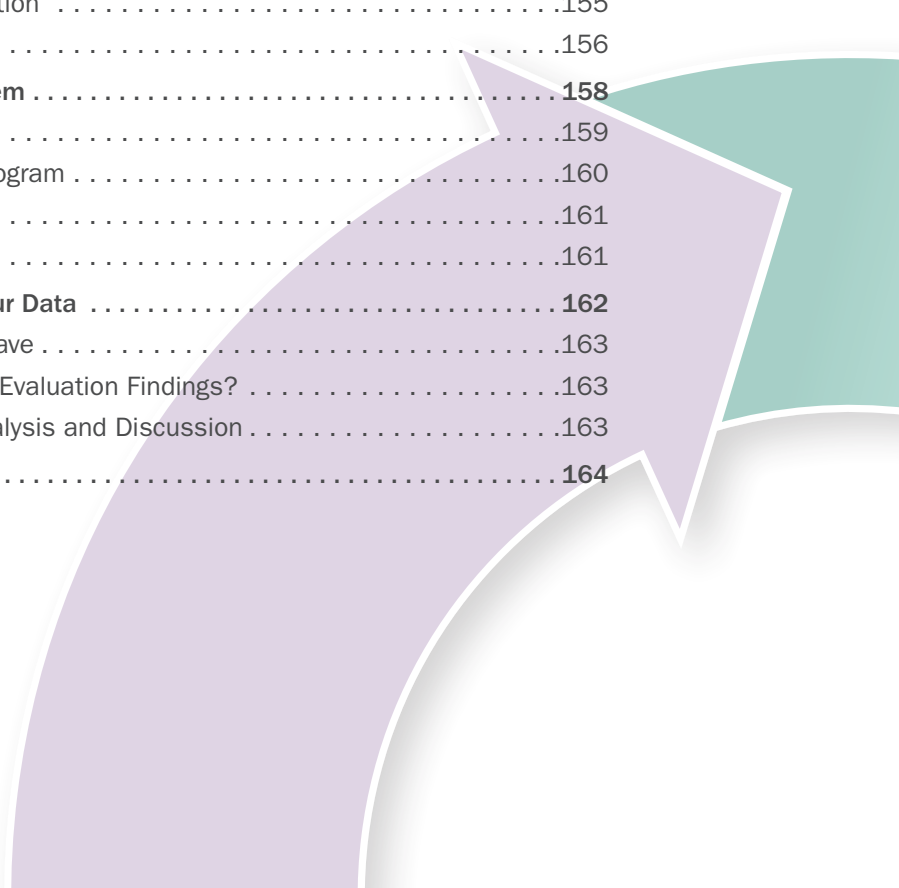
Importance of Partnerships.	69
Establishing Partnerships	70
School	71
Creating Partnerships Between School and Afterschool Staff Members	74
Aligning the Curriculum and Activities	77
Data Sharing.	82
Allocating Space and Resources.	83
Partnering With a School as an Outside Provider	84
Family	86
Determining Different Levels of Family Involvement	86
Family Advisory Boards	88
Communicating Effectively With Families	90
Creating a Welcoming Environment.	92
Why Some Families Do Not Participate and How You Can Respond	92
Community.	95
Selecting Appropriate Partners	96
Expanding Your Partnership Group	98
Forming Effective Partnerships	100
Conclusion	101

Chapter 4: Program Delivery 105

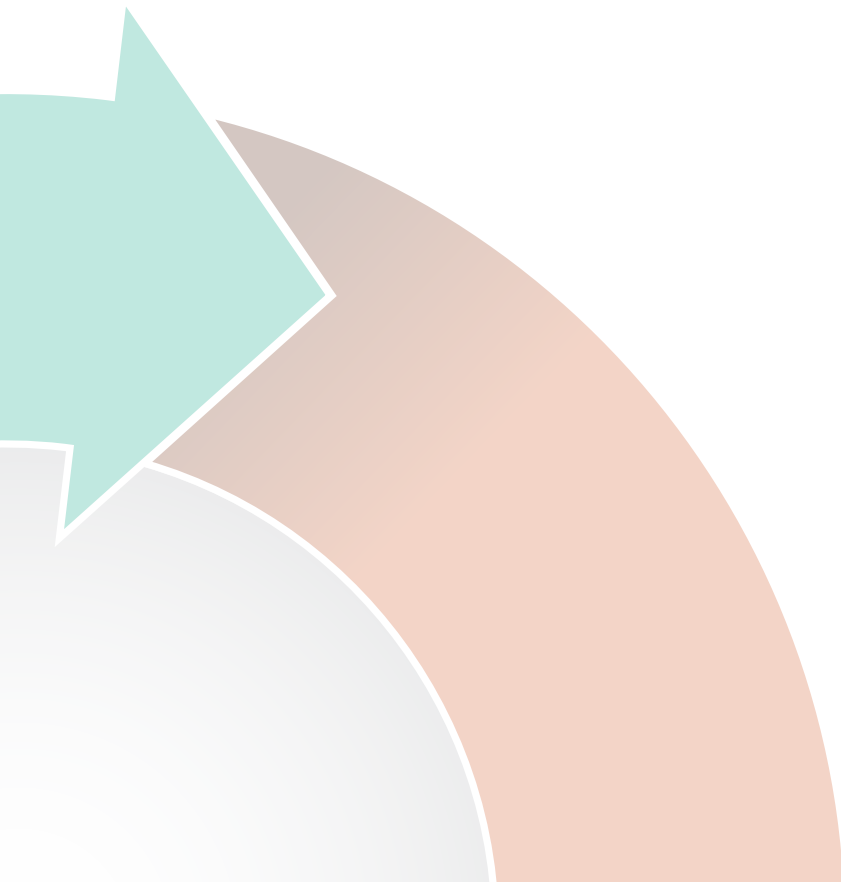
Integrating Youth Development Practices Into Activities.	105
Creating a Warm and Welcoming Environment	106
Building Supportive Relationships and Opportunities to Belong.	109
Promoting Positive Behavior Management	114
Offering Youth Choice	117
Opportunities for Authentic Decision-Making	118
Youth Leadership	118
Making Time for Reflection.	119
Skill Building.	121
Youth Development Strategies by Developmental Stage	122
Creating a Program Schedule	126
Developing Activities	128
Intentional Program Activities Based on Assets, Interests, and Outcomes . . .	128
Balancing Activity Content and Type	129
Activity Types and Content	131
Conclusion	145

Chapter 5: Evaluation 149

Defining Evaluation	149
Determining the Purpose of Your Evaluation.	151
Developing Evaluation Questions.	152
Developing Indicators to Measure Program Goals	153
Deciding Who Will Perform the Evaluation	154
Conducting an Internal Evaluation	155
Using an External Evaluator	156
Developing a Data Collection System	158
Participation Tracking.	159
Data on the Quality of Your Program	160
School Data	161
Survey Data	161
Exploring and Making Sense of Your Data	162
Determining What Data You Have	163
Who Should Review Data and Evaluation Findings?	163
Creating a Culture of Data Analysis and Discussion	163
Conclusion	164



Chapter 6: Program Improvement	.167
Using Evaluation Findings for Program Planning and Improvement.	167
Who to Involve in Reflecting and Using Data to Improve	168
Developing a Quality Improvement Process	169
The Quality Improvement Cycle.	169
Cultivating a Culture of Continuous Improvement.	170
Conclusion	172
References	.175
Tools	.177



A Note From the Authors

Are you new to the field of afterschool and expanded learning? Or maybe you want to make big or small changes to your existing program. Perhaps you need standardized forms for all of your program sites to use. Or maybe you are starting to think about program evaluation and you just don't know where to start. If any of this rings true, read on. *Beyond the Bell®: A Toolkit for Creating Effective Afterschool and Expanded Learning Programs* is for you! This guide is meant to be used by program leaders from both community-based and school-based programs as a resource to help you through all the challenges of starting up and running a program. It works well both for those starting a brand-new program and those looking to improve an existing program. We start this *Toolkit* at the foundation: management practices that are critical to building high-quality programs. This latest version of the *Beyond the Bell Toolkit* is updated to reflect changes in research and in the field from practitioners like you. We hope it will be a resource you can return to again and again as your program grows and changes to reflect youth participants, your community, and your own leadership.

Background

The field of afterschool and expanded learning has changed immensely since the first edition of the *Beyond the Bell Toolkit* in 2000. Today, the focus of afterschool and expanded learning is to provide enriching programming that supports academic, social, emotional, artistic, and physical growth—a place to learn science by collecting and studying bugs, to learn math by measuring ingredients in a cooking class, to practice English language arts skills by writing and acting in a play, to build teamwork skills on a soccer team, to paint, to learn fencing, and on and on. And we know that for these programs to make a real difference in young people's lives, and not merely be a safe alternative to being home alone, they must be high quality. We said it then, but can shout it from the rooftops now: **high-quality** afterschool and expanded learning programs provide an important educational and developmental setting for young people. Effective programs provide opportunities for young people to learn, develop, explore, and have fun. And as the national focus turns toward “expanded learning time and opportunities,” we know that well-structured and intentional programs can address the ever-growing achievement and opportunity gap for young people who live in poverty. Research has shown us again and again that afterschool and expanded learning programs can support school improvement efforts by providing additional opportunities for growth, development of positive relationships, and exploration of youth interests that can lead to stronger educational outcomes. And programs are at their best when schools, families, community partners, and young people work together to create and support them.

Afterschool and expanded learning programs offer unequalled opportunities for young people, schools, and communities, but can create challenges for those charged with operating them. Although more than a decade has passed since the first edition of this *Toolkit*, program leaders still face programmatic, governance, budgetary, and “political” questions that have no easy answers and require continued attention. Though the *Beyond the Bell Toolkit* does not provide all the answers, it does provide guidance to help program leaders leverage their abilities, assets, and insights to make the best decisions possible. The *Toolkit* is a resource that programs can use to support learning and success and fulfill the promise of high-quality afterschool and expanded learning programs.

The Fourth Edition

As the work of afterschool and expanded learning programs has grown and matured, so too has *Beyond the Bell*. Since the first printing of the *Beyond the Bell Toolkit* in 2000, users have shared with us many wonderful stories of how they have used and adapted the materials. Surveys of purchasers as well as many spontaneous comments at workshops and training sessions indicate that the *Beyond the Bell Toolkit* has been extremely helpful in operating afterschool and expanded learning programs around the country.

As with the previous editions, this fourth edition reflects the field as it has developed over time. The biggest change, we are happy to report, is in how the field has embraced quality standards and continuous improvement processes in a variety of ways—from self-assessments to coaching models—to help build a stronger awareness of (1) what a high-quality afterschool and expanded learning program is, and (2) how to move purposefully toward a higher level of quality.

With that said, we have revised the *Toolkit* with an eye toward helping program leadership adopt a model of continuous improvement, which we discuss in more detail in the next section. Some other new and exciting topics covered in this edition of the *Beyond the Bell Toolkit* are:

- Conducting a market analysis and identifying assets and needs
- Partnering with the school, families, and the community
- The Common Core State Standards and what they mean for afterschool and expanded learning
- Youth development principles and practices
- Updated communication strategies using social media
- Additional program types: creative arts, health and wellness, and personal and social skills
- Using your evaluation for continuous improvement

We have always thought of the *Beyond the Bell Toolkit* as a resource primarily for managers of afterschool and expanded learning programs—at both the program and site levels. However, we know how important it is to involve stakeholders at every level, and with that in mind, we continue to develop tools and materials that help build a stronger staff and stakeholders. We know it is important for programs to build on the assets (i.e., strengths) of youth, their families, and community members. The *Toolkit* discusses key decision points, offers criteria for decision making, suggests effective strategies, and provides a set of tools to assist in making decisions and in the continuous quality improvement process. The tools help with data gathering, provide formats for analyzing information, help to structure dialogue about important issues, and assist with information sharing.

We want the tools in the *Beyond the Bell Toolkit* to be useful and practical. With that in mind, we are pleased to offer all of the tools in Microsoft Word format on the companion flash drive. They can be manipulated, edited, or simply used as is.

This version of the *Beyond the Bell Toolkit* also has a thoroughly revised companion website, located at <http://beyondthebell.org>. Your password to the website can be found inside the front cover of the *Toolkit*. When you log in for the first time you will be prompted to change your password. As with previous editions, all tools are housed on the website, giving you easy access to them even without the flash drive. The new website can also help keep you connected with your peers, provide up-to-date information and resources, and give you an opportunity to receive new tools as they are developed.

We are grateful for the work of all the committed program leaders and staff members of afterschool and expanded learning programs around the country and in the U.S. territories. We have tried to capture the good work you are doing for youth, their families, and their communities, and we appreciate your dedication to the task.

Sincerely,

Carol McElvain, Deborah Moroney, Elizabeth Devaney, Jaime Singer, and Jessica Newman



- How to Use This Toolkit

How to Use This Toolkit

Before we dive in, it is important for us to explain how the *Toolkit* is structured. All of the information in the *Toolkit* was built around the idea of continuous quality improvement. So, what does that mean for you and your program? When we talk about continuous quality improvement, we are referring to a cycle that has three main components: Program Development, Program Implementation, and Program Evaluation.

Continuous Quality Improvement Cycle



The idea behind the cycle is for staff members to **develop** programs using sound processes, **implement** those programs by employing quality practices, **evaluate** the implementation of the program, and use the data from the evaluation activities to continually evolve (or develop!) the program. So, the bad news is that a high-quality program is never done developing; the good news is that for creative program staff members this is a natural process of reflection and development. The tools and strategies provided in the *Beyond the Bell Toolkit* are intended to help you work through this cycle.

The driving force behind the continuous improvement is data—formal data from an evaluation or your attendance tracking system, as well as more informal, anecdotal data. For example, you may notice program attendance is low when the weather is nice, either through observation or closely monitoring the numbers in your attendance database. Either way, you have two potential sources of data that help you identify the problem. You can then develop some immediate strategies to boost attendance based on what the data are telling you, perhaps by offering some outdoor activities, for example. Throughout the *Toolkit* we hope to show you that data analysis is your friend and should not be left to the evaluators. You can use data to make your job easier, to tell your story, and to ultimately improve your program to better support opportunities for young people to develop and learn.

Remember: Highly effective programs do not happen by accident. They are the result of careful planning and a strong vision. Yet all too often, decisions are made quickly and without adequate information. This *Toolkit* helps afterschool and expanded learning program leaders plan and make good decisions with their stakeholders and partners about how to organize themselves and work toward their vision.

Knowing Where to Start

The *Toolkit* is divided into six stand-alone chapters:

- Chapter 1: Management
- Chapter 2: Program Design
- Chapter 3: Partnerships and Collaboration
- Chapter 4: Program Delivery
- Chapter 5: Evaluation
- Chapter 6: Program Improvement

If you are starting a brand-new program or are thinking in a new way about your program, we recommend that you start at the beginning with Chapter 1, Management. Program management is the foundation of a high-quality program, and this chapter will provide you with a lot of ideas for involving your stakeholders while getting started. Another approach is to start with any chapter you think will help you where you are now in your program—for example, if you have a program that has been in operation for a while, but you haven't done much to partner with others, start with Chapter 3, Partnerships and Collaboration, to get some ideas. Finally, there may be certain tools you are looking for, and this may guide you to start with one chapter over another. You do not have to use the *Toolkit* from beginning to end; use what you need to support your continuous improvement process.

Using the Features of This Toolkit

This guide is full of useful information, resources, and tools. To help you navigate the *Toolkit*, each component is flagged by a special color or font, or a symbol. Each tool, for example, is bolded in blue text throughout the narrative. The tools are ordered in the position they appear, although there may be instances where we refer back or ahead to other tools. Here is a list of the unique symbols you will come across as you read:



The cycle graphic identifies where you are within the continuous improvement cycle. The graphic is located at the beginning of each chapter and at the bottom of each page.



The pencil points out practical tips and reminders.



The arrow refers you to related content in other chapters.



Voices From the Field are true stories that describe what programs in the field are doing.



The Points to Remember at the end of each chapter summarize the chapter's main ideas.

Modifying the Tools to Meet Your Needs

All of the tools in this guide are meant to serve as templates. You can use them as is, or adapt them to reflect your unique program and community. Because all of the tools are in Word format you can modify them to suit your program. Feel free to add your logo to the tools, add, or delete pieces, and make whatever changes meet your needs. All of the tools can also be found online at <http://beyondthebell.org>. Please acknowledge the source of the tools if you share them with a friend!

Sharing Information With Staff Members and Other Stakeholders

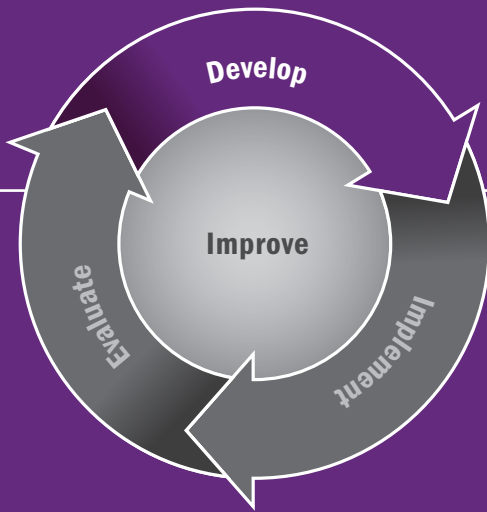
We want to make sure you don't have to reinvent the wheel or do everything alone, and we strongly encourage sharing information. From the very beginning, we recommend at least forming a planning committee, if not a full advisory board, to help you think through important decisions for the program. And as your program grows and matures, there will be sections you'll want to share with different staff members who have been hired to help you run the program.

An Emphasis on Positive Youth Development

We often hear the question, *"The Toolkit focuses a lot on youth development principles and practices, but my program is focused just on academics. Should I still be thinking about all of this information?"* In a word, **yes**. As we mentioned previously, we now have evidence that all programs, regardless of content, should incorporate positive youth development. Even if you are working in an academically focused expanded learning program, incorporating the information found in Chapter 4, Program Delivery, will help your program retain participants, offer academically enriching activities that are fun, and allow young people to explore their interests and succeed in school and in life.

Additional Support for Beyond the Bell

Although we have designed the *Toolkit* to be an easy-to-use, stand-alone resource, we also offer training on how to best use the information and the tools. You can find out more about our standard trainings and how to contact us on our website (<http://beyondthebell.org>).



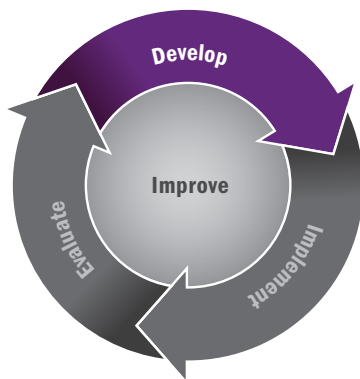
● CHAPTER

1

Management

Management

Congratulations! You are starting a new afterschool and expanded learning program (or improving an existing one). It's an exciting time, as you begin to think about how to manage a high-quality program where young people will learn and have fun. This chapter will help you get off on the right foot. Although it may feel overwhelming right now, taking the time to think about your management structures and operating procedures is an essential part of creating an effective program. Right now you are in the program development portion of the continuous improvement cycle described in the introduction. As you move through the sections of the guide, you will continually revisit this chapter after implementing new ideas and evaluating their success.



There are many ways to structure the management of afterschool and expanded learning programs. In some cases the executive director of the organization is also the program leader. In other cases, there is a clear delineation between the organizational leadership (the executive director and leadership team) and the program management (program leader and site coordinators). The management practices we recommend are relevant in both contexts, but the players who conceptualize and implement them may

differ. If you work in program management in an existing organization, you should make sure to take steps to align your program management practices with the organization's existing structures. If you are starting a program from scratch, use your local resources (other local programs and schools and advisory board members) to help you create management practices that provide a sound foundation for a high-quality program. We are recommending most of these practices specifically for afterschool and expanded learning program management—not for more general nonprofit start-up initiatives.

This chapter provides key information and strategies for managing your program, including the following topics:

- Organizational structures
- Policies and procedures
- Resource management
- Staffing
- Communication

Organizational Structures

Before you can begin establishing policies and procedures, it is important to determine the management structure or system you will use to run your program (Weiss & Little, 2008). If you are starting a new program, now is the time to start thinking about this. If your program is already established, take some time to revisit your management structure to determine whether it is effective. There are two levels of program management—central management that oversees all programs and facilities, and local management that oversees on-site, day-to-day operations. A successful program needs both hands-on, site-based management and regular oversight and accountability of all partners.

There is no one “right” management structure. In fact, you can select from a range of successful management designs, from a centralized decision-making structure (with one individual as the primary decision maker, usually overseen by a board of directors) to a group decision-making structure (with an advisory group or board representing different stakeholder groups sharing decision-making power).



Tips for Managing Multiple Sites

Although most of the material in the *Beyond the Bell Toolkit* is applicable whether you manage a single site or multiple programs, there are some special considerations for program leaders of multiple sites, and it is important to ensure that you have a system for managing the activities that happen at them. Here are some strategies to ensure that all of the partners and participants across your afterschool and expanded learning sites are consistent and effective:

- Develop shared forms (e.g., activity plans, calendars) that all of your site leaders use
- Issue common program guidelines and procedures
- Meet and plan events/activities together
- Provide opportunities for shared professional development experiences both on site and off site
- Host joint events or exchange events
- If possible, have a common advisory or governing board with committees from each site

As you think about your management structure, you’ll need to think about two kinds of boards that are involved in the governance of your program—the board of directors and the advisory board—and how they might interact. Your program may have one or both of these types of boards depending on whether you are an independent 501(c)3 organization, an affiliate of a larger organization, part of a school district, or part of a larger organization. We touch on each type of board in the pages that follow.

Board of Directors

If you are an independent nonprofit organization, you have likely already established a board of directors. Although it is not within the scope of this guide to discuss the board of directors in detail, it is important to note that this group will play a key role in decision-making and typically will oversee the executive director in a program that uses a centralized decision-making management structure. The board of directors is responsible for fiscal oversight of a program and is ultimately responsible for its success or failure. Some boards are hands-on and get very involved in program decisions, while others focus more on fundraising and budget management and primarily leave program decisions up to the staff. They can be composed of individuals with different expertise or resources depending on the needs of your program. For more information on board development, see the National Council of Nonprofits (<http://www.councilofnonprofits.org>), Foundation Center (<http://foundationcenter.org>), or Board Source (<https://boardsource.org/eweb>). You can also access local resources for board development in your community.

Advisory Boards

In contrast to a board of directors, an advisory board's primary role is not governance, but guidance, advice, support, and partnership. Advisory boards bring together multiple perspectives with a shared mission for the afterschool and expanded learning program. The advisory board provides valuable guidance about program direction and operation and can be a vehicle to support your collaborative relationships. Offering collaborators a seat on your program's advisory board signals your eagerness to involve them fully in the program's work, and it gives your collaborators the chance to stay up to date about the full scope of the program's operations—not just the specific area in which you are working together. Finally, involvement in the advisory board encourages buy-in from your partners, which helps foster a sense of shared purpose. In some programs, the advisory board may act simply as a sounding board—a place to seek advice. In others, the board may play a role in decision-making. Its exact role may depend on the stipulations established by your partnership or funding source, but you also may decide the advisory board's role based on the input and commitment it shows in the early stages. Here is a list of potential advisory board roles and duties:

- Make programming suggestions
- Help create job descriptions and hiring procedures
- Aid in drawing up program operational policies
- Address community needs and requests
- Offer advice in funding allocations
- Participate in fundraising
- Monitor the effectiveness of the program
- Help with marketing
- Help develop business plans
- Help establish partnerships

There are a variety of ways to approach advisory boards so that they are useful and not a burden on staff time, particularly for senior management. Some programs have a mixed advisory board made up of all representatives from all of their key stakeholders—families, program providers, teachers and school staff members, community partners, city government representatives, and funders. There are pros and cons to this approach. The benefit is that you can get lots of input from lots of different people all at once. The drawback is that they may have conflicting interests and therefore provide you with guidance that is contradictory.

Another approach is to develop several small advisory groups—one for families, one for partners and program providers, and one for funders and other key investors (including schools if you are a school-based program). This can be a good approach if you have conflicting viewpoints to manage, want more intimate feedback, or need to ensure that your entire group of stakeholders feels heard (often the case in newer programs). Use **Tool 1: Defining Advisory Board Purpose** and **Tool 2: Partnership Planning Worksheet** to guide the development of your board.

Whether you have one large board or multiple small ones, advisory boards usually include the following types of members:

- School administrators
- Teachers
- Family members
- Community members
- Business leaders
- Local political figures
- Youth

Regardless of the membership of your group, consider these tips for creating a productive, supportive advisory board.

- Recruit members for your advisory board while you are still planning your program, and get their input on how to start out. They likely will have good suggestions. Having them on board from the beginning helps give them a feeling of ownership of the program. See **Tool 3: Invitation for Advisory Board Member**.
- Make sure to include individuals who helped conceptualize the program or were active in advocating for the program. These early adopters are likely to be great advocates for the program.
- Make an effort to include a diverse array of opinions and types of people so that you get a representative sample of members' views.
- Think about your members and plan meetings according to their needs. For example, have meetings at a consistent time so that individuals can work around their other commitments and plan ahead. For groups that involve families, consider holding your

meetings in the evenings and providing food and child care. If your advisory group is primarily made up of partners and does not include families, consider having your meetings during business hours when the partners might be more likely to attend. Offer food. Provide translation if necessary for non-English speakers.

- If you have youth on your board, be sure to treat them as full members of the board. For example, hold meetings at times they are able to attend (i.e., not during the school day), give them specific and meaningful roles and jobs, and allow them a full vote.
- Decide on the size of the group. More than 15 to 18 members may become unwieldy.
- Create an agenda and a list of meeting goals for each meeting ahead of time in order to focus the group and increase efficiency. Use **Tool 4: Template for Advisory Board Agenda** to help you create an agenda for meetings.
- Discuss current or upcoming activities, program needs, policies, evaluation results and changes to the program, concerns, and suggestions.
- Invite program staff members to attend and share positive stories about what is happening as well as answer specific questions and share needs.
- Create subcommittees for specific needs, such as planning special events, fundraising, and hiring staff members and volunteers.
- Have enough materials for all participants.
- After each meeting, send all members a copy of the minutes and a summary of any next steps or action items that were determined.
- Keep detailed records of the advisory board activities and membership.

Policies and Procedures

After you determine a management structure, you will need to think about the policies and procedures your organization needs to establish in order to function. Policies are the rules under which your program operates. They may relate to aspects of the health and safety of participants that are regulated by licensing requirements or other funder specifications, and they may also include things related to your program philosophy (e.g., who is allowed to enroll in your program). Program leaders should speak with law enforcement personnel, attorneys, and school district officials (if applicable) to help determine the areas in which policies and procedures are needed.

Operating procedures are policies put into action—how you go about implementing the policies. Establishing a procedure means that program management believes a situation or issue is important enough that staff members should have specific guidelines for dealing with it. Having too many rules can hinder a program's operation, so it is important for you to establish a balance between creating procedures that provide a framework for sound practice and giving local leaders, staff members, and participants the flexibility to

create relevant guidelines that they can own. The right balance will depend on the individual characteristics of each program and will vary from issue to issue within the program. Use **Tool 5: Procedure Checklist** to help you determine which policies may need an associated operating procedure and use **Tool 6: Sample Policies and Procedures Table of Contents** to guide the development of your policies-and-procedures manual or handbook.

Having policies and procedures is critical in ensuring that you have standards for program management and operations. Luckily, you likely won't have to start from scratch to create them. In addition to the tools referenced here, we recommend you see whether your state has adopted afterschool and expanded learning quality standards that you can use as a guide in crafting or revising your policies and procedures. Also, you should ask other local afterschool and expanded learning programs to share parts of their policy and procedure handbook with you. Programs work hard to put these guidelines together and are often happy to share their good work. Just make sure to modify the policy or procedure to fit your context and program.

An example may help clarify the difference between policies and procedures and when they are needed. If your program is based in a school, you may be bound by the policies of the school district or the union contracts associated with the school district. Therefore, you may be required to open your program to all youth, regardless of need, gender, or ethnicity—this is a policy. To ensure you are following through on the policy, you may choose to establish a related procedure for disseminating materials (such as program brochures) to all youth (e.g., giving the materials to all youth during an assembly or putting them in all young people's backpacks on the same day) in order to ensure equity.

Transparency is critical in making sure everyone knows and abides by your program's policies and operating procedures. After you have established your policies and procedures, how are you going to let your participants, families, staff members, and governing body know about them? Here are some suggestions:

- Create a policies-and-procedures handbook for staff members and for families, and give a copy to all staff members, volunteers, and family members.
- Share a copy of the policies and operating procedures with all staff members at a staff meeting. You may choose to highlight one policy at each meeting or go over several at once.
- Present the procedures during a family orientation night.
- Post the procedures on a central bulletin board.

Keep in mind that new staff members need training on operating procedures. It's also important to keep existing staff members up to date on any changes. You can do this through annual staff in-service trainings and in booster sessions throughout the year. Also, be sure to ask select staff members to serve as periodic reviewers and trainers for the procedures to ensure they are relevant and incorporate the staff's voice.

In the sections that follow, we detail several common areas where programs establish policies and procedures, and provide suggestions and guidance for how to establish your own procedures to accompany your policies.

Recruitment

Programs vary in terms of their recruitment policies, procedures, and time periods. It is important to be clear about your policy for who is eligible to participate, and to advertise when the recruitment period is happening. Clear procedures and information are critical in ensuring that you reach your intended audience. Recruitment procedures may include:

- Distributing paper flyers or advertising online (see **Tool 7: Tips for Developing Outreach and Marketing Materials**)
- Having a table at a school or community event
- Speaking about the program at a public forum or meeting
- Sharing recruitment materials with school-day teachers and counselors
- Hosting a recruitment fair—perhaps during lunch or a school-wide assembly

Eventually, program staff may work with returning participants to devise and implement recruitment strategies in a peer-to-peer format.

Ratios

As you think about your recruitment policies and procedures, it is important to take into account the ratio of youth to adult staff members. There are many factors that matter when determining your ratio, including:

- **Licensing procedures:** Find out if your state has licensing guidelines for child care and/or youth programs. State- and county-funded youth programs may be required to adhere to a certain ratio. You can typically get these from your state's Department of Human Services website. Licensing regulations provide a baseline, but you may choose to operate under a lower youth-to-adult ratio based on your specific program needs.
- **The age of the participants:** In most cases, younger youth will need to have a lower ratio than older youth.
- **The type of activity:** For example, an arts activity such as pottery involves a great deal of staff instruction and one-on-one coaching time for a participant to build skills. In contrast, a soccer or basketball program actually requires a large number of participants to play a successful game and may not require as many adults.
- **The program location:** A program held outdoors or in a large, public space may require a lower ratio to facilitate proper supervision. It may be okay to have a higher ratio of youth to staff members in a smaller classroom or program space.

Whatever your ratio, make sure to have a back-up plan if staff members are sick; even afterschool and expanded learning programs need substitutes. The site-level leadership should not be responsible for facilitating program activities on a regular basis, but can be called upon to substitute for an absent staff member. High-quality and prepared staff members are critical to good afterschool and expanded learning programs, but don't be

afraid to invite volunteers, interns, and family aides to help out at program activities alongside prepared staff. Volunteers can be a great help in supporting participants' success individually or in small groups.

Background Checks and Youth Safety

It is our job as afterschool and expanded learning program leaders to ensure the safety of our participants. We recommend making sure that all full- and part-time staff members go through a formal background check. There are usually local businesses that can do this for you for a small fee (or in some cases for free if you are receiving public funding for your program). In addition to a routine background check for full- and part-time staff members, we also strongly recommend that volunteers and aides who work with youth get a background check as well. Sometimes you can accept a completed background check on an individual, but make sure it is valid by calling the company that completed the check. (An example might be a school staff member who had a background check completed upon hire.) Finally, make sure that all vendors who work with youth or are in the program space with youth complete your background check or that they have their own background check procedures in place. Again, check to make sure the vendors' background checks are through an approved entity and are current. Keep the official certification of background check completion in each staff member's file.

Securing background checks is a critical step in ensuring that young people are safe in your program. However, there are also other procedures we urge you to consider in promoting youth safety:

- Ensure that the program space is secure and largely closed to the public, and that visitors must sign in and out, wear a name tag, and be accompanied by a staff member at all times.
- Make sure that family members know the program phone number(s) and that there is one staff member assigned to be in the program space with the phone when program volunteers and subcontract staff members are working with young people in the program.
- Make sure to assign staff members to zones in outdoor activity areas to ensure that everyone is aware of people leaving or entering the space.
- Always do spot checks with groups of youth, making sure everyone is accounted for at specific time intervals. This is an especially good tactic in outdoor activities, in large program spaces with multiple rooms, and on field trips.

Personal safety in afterschool and expanded learning is essential. Make sure to have policies and procedures in place to ensure the safety of youth and staff members in your program.  In **Chapter 4**, we discuss how to create a warm and welcoming environment that builds upon a foundation of personal safety.

Enrollment

A key part of your recruitment process is creating a clear and easy way for youth to enroll in your program. All new participants should complete a program enrollment form either in print or online that asks, at a minimum, for their name, address, and family member contact information, and provides opportunities for family members to sign various permission forms. You can use **Tool 8: Sample Participant Enrollment Form** to give you an idea of where to start. If possible, program staff members should meet with families upon initial enrollment in the program.

Not all participants will remain in the program after they enroll, but being communicative about the norms and expectations of the program will promote retention. When you take an enrollment form from a participant or their family member, make sure to give them an information sheet about the program so they know what to expect, including when the program starts, attendance policies, and other logistical details. See **Tool 9: Participant Enrollment Confirmation to Family** for samples. Some programs offer rolling enrollment during the entire program period, which might be necessary in the first year of operation. Eventually, however, consider using a contained enrollment period to avoid disrupting the afterschool and expanded learning community after it has begun.

Tips for Enrollment Procedures

Remember to have the enrollment materials available in the languages commonly spoken in the surrounding community and to offer assistance to families in completing the form when needed.



Confidentiality

During enrollment, you will be collecting a variety of information about your participants and families. As they participate in your program, you will gain additional access to confidential information (e.g., school records if you are partnering with a school, participation information, perhaps personal family information). There are a variety of reasons that staff members may be asked to share participant information, and it is important to establish procedures to help staff members appropriately respond to these requests.

One way to do this is to include permission for certain low-risk information sharing in the consent language on your enrollment form. For example, you can ask family members to sign a consent form stating that the program may:

- Meet with teachers or family members about the participant's experience in the program
- Give participants a program satisfaction survey at the end of the semester or session
- Use photos of their child in a local news story, in a school newsletter, or on the program's website or brochure

Other, higher risk information-sharing requests will require a specific informed consent form signed by a family member. Some examples of these requests include:

- Sharing information with a counselor or therapist, or when planning for an individualized education program (IEP)
- Sharing academic progress or academic records for an evaluation or research study
- Sharing information on a family's economic well-being or access to health care
- Asking young people to participate in surveys or focus groups about more than just program satisfaction
- If the request is related to a formal research study or an external evaluation, the research team must provide consent forms unique to the study that have been approved by the relevant Institutional Review Board (the Institutional Review Board, or IRB, is a committee that reviews research and protects the rights of study participants). Because of confidentiality issues, a consent form completed by the participant's family or legal guardian is essential for release of information.

Use **Tool 10: Consent to Share Information** for confidential matters. It is also ideal to get “assent” or agreement from participants before sharing their information, whether informally or via a separate assent form. You can use **Tool 11: Participant Assent Form** to get started. Bear in mind, however, that an assent form is not a stand-alone document, and needs to be accompanied by a permission or consent form signed by an appropriate family member. Sometimes there are specific protections in place for youth who are wards of the state (i.e., in foster care or in a residential facility). Please check with your state guidelines and/or with the Guardian Ad Litem's office on sharing information and photos if you have youth participants who are wards of the state in your program.

Attendance

Attendance policies can vary from one program to the next, and often young people are involved in multiple programs with different attendance policies. Some may have required attendance, with penalties for absence, while others may have drop-in policies that allow for irregular attendance. The research is clear that participants benefit most with sustained attendance. Program participants with higher levels of attendance have demonstrated a number of improvements, including positive peer relationships, decreased problem behaviors, and increased social skills, when compared with participants who attend less frequently (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006; Riggs, 2006).

 In **Chapter 5**, we talk about how you can use the attendance data you collect to examine whether you are meeting your program goals. For now, it is important to understand how having an attendance policy (and collecting good attendance data) can help your program. For example, requiring attendance can make staffing, programming, and transportation decisions easier because you will know how many youth are likely to be present at any given moment. However, drop-in attendance can be valuable for attracting

hard-to-reach populations, which may be an explicit goal of your program. Because attendance issues can be complicated, and can vary from program to program, it is a good idea to establish clear attendance policies to ensure that staff members, school administrators, participants, and their families all have a clear understanding of the program's expectations. An example of an attendance policy is as follows:

1. Every time a participant is absent, a staff member will contact a family member, unless the program has been notified by the family or school-day teacher.
2. After three unexplained absences, a staff member will request a meeting with the family to find out why the participant has not been attending and to reinforce the benefits of attending.
3. If there is a waiting list for the program, program leaders may consider counseling the participant to officially drop out of the program if he or she is not attending.

The program team should expect to build in exceptions to the attendance policy to account for other positive experiences in which participants may become involved—a participant may join a sports team for a season or be in the school play—or to provide flexibility for hard-to-reach youth—a young person with a difficult home life may really enjoy program activities but have a hard time committing to regular attendance.

Afterschool and expanded learning programs are a critical part of helping young people succeed in school and in life. For that reason, it is important that programs do not become just a reward for good behavior or doing well in school. Have an up-front conversation with families and school leaders urging them not to use attendance in the program as a consequence or reward for behavior in school but rather as an opportunity for all young people to grow and develop.

Attendance policies may vary from site to site depending on the school, other afterschool or extracurricular options, transportation, and other variables. Regardless of the policy, it should be written; agreed upon among the afterschool and expanded learning program team members; and shared with the participants, their families, and the school.

Behavior Guidelines and Discipline

Program rules should be universal, specific, understandable, based on the strengths of young people, and positively phrased, if possible. Ideally, program staff members should work with young people to develop a set of behavior guidelines. This promotes ownership and helps young people feel more responsible for their actions. Refer to **Tool 12: Making Rules as a Team** for rule-making activity ideas.

Beye Elementary School in Oak Park, Illinois, for example, has adopted the following strengths-based behavior guidelines:

- Be responsible
- Be respectful
- Be safe
- Be a peacemaker
- Be a problem solver

Program rules should be aligned with the school rules but also reflective of an afterschool and expanded learning program. For example, many schools have a quiet-in-the-classroom policy or a stay-in-your-seat rule. Afterschool and expanded learning programs are characterized by activity and experiential learning, which often require movement and noise. Program leaders should share program rules with school-day staff members to explain why *some* of the rules may not apply to the program. Program staff members should have open conversations with young people about why some behaviors may be okay in afterschool and expanded learning activities but not during the school day. These conversations are especially important with elementary-age youth who may be confused by the differences.



See **Chapter 4** for more information on behavior guidelines and discipline policies.

Once established, you should distribute the discipline policy and behavior guidelines to program partners, school staff members, and the families of participants to receive feedback. Remember that discipline can be culturally influenced, and it is important that families understand how your program will handle rules and discipline. Also, make sure to read your policy aloud to the participants and post it publicly. Document all disciplinary incidents using a standard form, and make sure to share documentation with the participants and their families. As a general philosophy, discipline policies that actively support a young person's positive growth and development are ideal.

Schedule

Everyone benefits from having a set schedule. School-day staff members will know what to expect in their building, program staff members will know what program activities are happening when, and young people will know where to go and for what activity. Ideally, your schedule should remain constant throughout the entire school year. At a minimum, the schedule should stay the same during the program session so that everyone involved can rely on it. The program staff should document the monthly/weekly/daily schedules and make the schedules available to families at the time of enrollment. Use **Tool 13: Program Schedule** for ideas about creating a schedule. Schedules should be posted around the

program space and online, if possible, for young people, their families, and staff members to view and to communicate major events such as a family night.

Tips for Scheduling



Schedules are a great way to get everyone excited about upcoming activities. Remember to get help from program staff members, participants, and school-day staff members in creating the schedule to make sure everyone has a say in what is happening. Use holidays and other local events to make themed weeks or months or to hold special events.

Documentation

As your program really gets under way, you will have more and more youth participating in more and more activities, and it will soon become important for you to track and document what is happening in your program. Documentation is important for a variety of reasons: It helps the program staff understand how the program is doing in the continuous program quality improvement cycle; it helps promote trust between the school site, the program staff, and families; it helps the program's central office understand how well the program is doing and where additional supports are needed; and it provides a written record if problems or questions arise at any point. There are many different types of documentation you may use, including:

- Forms such as attendance sheets, sign-out sheets for family members (when picking up participants), bus lists if your program provides busing home, and enrollment forms. These are all ways you can protect your participants and your program and track who is and isn't in your program.
- Curriculum materials such as activity plans, written program goals, and activity lists. These can all help document the learning taking place in your program.
- Assessment. Youth assessments can be used to document what individual youth are learning, and program assessments can be used to measure how a program is doing in delivering a high-quality experience for youth.
- Portfolios. A youth portfolio is a collaborative process that can be a great way for program staff members and youth to document their experience in the program. The primary purpose of a portfolio is to allow a young person to showcase his or her program experiences and successes, and to enable program staff members to monitor and support youth by understanding their work, their interests, and their lives outside of the program. Young people should be the primary drivers of constructing their portfolios, and the process should help to develop bonds between youth and staff. You can use **Tool 14: Portfolio Guide** to get started.

Resource Management

Although you may be reading this guide because you have just received a grant to start or continue an afterschool and expanded learning program, you should be thinking about how you are going to sustain and supplement that funding source from the very start. In addition, you will need to establish strong budgeting practices to manage your program budget in a transparent and ethical way. The sections below will help you start thinking about these two important issues.

Funding Sources

Identifying and securing resources is a primary task for many program leaders and advisory board members, and this can often be a source of stress, particularly if your primary funding source is short-term or does not provide enough funding for your entire program cost. Although you and your board are ultimately responsible for fund development, it is worthwhile to work with your community to explore its ability and willingness to contribute to the cost of your program and/or to help you secure new funding.

One way to explore this interest is to conduct an analysis of the afterschool and expanded learning market in your area. An afterschool and expanded learning market analysis is really the same as a market analysis for any product, but in this case the “product” is the program and the “market” is the interest in that program. You can use a market analysis to gauge interest in supporting the program from entities like the school district, community-based organizations, and the city. The market analysis focuses on whether or not to have an afterschool and expanded learning program, whereas focusing on assets and needs  (as discussed in **Chapter 2**) will help you determine what to offer in the program. Use **Tool 15: Market Analysis** for a step-by-step guide for assessing your afterschool and expanded learning market. If you have already received a grant, this analysis will be more focused on identifying partners and gauging where you may need to target your outreach to build support. If you do not yet have funding or are considering implementing a program, the market analysis is an opportunity to explore the level of openness in the community to having a new program.

The market analysis activity can help you answer the following questions:

- Who does and does not support the idea of this program?
- Is there a need for an afterschool and expanded learning program with our mission?
- What resources are out there?
- Are there local partners who can provide in-kind services/resources?
- Is there another program with which we could partner in order to share or apply for resources?
- Can other resources in our community (e.g., school district, other community organizations, state or federal agency funding) be used for our program?

Diversifying your funding helps ensure the sustainability of programs. There are many ways to achieve diversified funding: examples include private and public grants, fee-for-service funding, and partnerships. Thus, it is important to develop a long-term resource plan. Below we provide some guidance on the various types of revenue available for afterschool and expanded learning programs, including grants, program fees, donations, and other creative funding streams. This is by no means a comprehensive guide to funding, but gives you a start as you begin to explore ongoing funding for your program.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD | Funding and Sustainability



The Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) program in Temple Independent School District serves youth of all ages in Temple, Texas. The program has developed a method of continued funding that ensures program sustainability and longevity. Faculty and staff members are a vocal power in the community and have shared the importance of and need for an afterschool and expanded learning program in their community with the district superintendent and other stakeholders. The Texas ACE program often highlights its intentional programming efforts by providing data-driven information to the community and the school district's administration, making clear the impact the program is having on program participants. Recently, the city of Temple proposed a school tax to provide multiple improvements to the city's schools. The program director worked with the city government to ensure that funding for afterschool and expanded learning programs was bundled with funding for school improvements in the proposed tax code. The community approved the tax, ensuring that funding for the Temple ACE program would continue after the current grant cycle ends.

To learn more, visit <http://www.tisd.org>.

Grants

The most common type of funding supporting afterschool and expanded learning programs is grants. These come from both local and national sources and can be public or private. The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program, through which the U.S. Department of Education awards grants to state education agencies through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/index.html>), is one of the largest grant programs in the country supporting afterschool and expanded learning programs. Local youth bureaus, departments of human services, and city governments are other public funding sources that provide grants for afterschool and expanded learning programs. Private funders include local corporations, community foundations, family foundations, United Ways, and sometimes national and regional foundations. Grants are important funding sources that can provide up-front money to get programs started. Some grants may provide ongoing operating funds, while others may only be intended to support specific program activities or one-time costs.

Although grants are an extremely important funding source, they do come with some challenges. Often they have restrictions on what the funds can be used for, and they may require use of specific curriculum, tools, and other materials. When considering what grants to apply for, you may want to consider these questions to determine if a particular grant is an appropriate funding source:

- What effect will the grant have on the program's mission (e.g., a new emphasis on violence prevention)?
- What effect will the grant have on the participant population (e.g., focusing on participants with reading difficulties)?
- What is the duration of the grant?
- Can the grant be renewed?
- What bureaucratic requirements accompany the grant (e.g., evaluation, participation in meetings), and does our program have the capacity to meet those requirements?

Writing a grant is not an easy task, nor one to rush through. Taking the time to research the funder and carefully explore each opportunity will pay off. See **Tool 16: Grant-Writing Tips** for a list of suggestions on how to obtain grants. The table starting on page 24 provides information about various federal funding sources for afterschool and expanded learning programs.

Donations and Fundraising

Another funding source to consider is individual donations. Although many programs are successful in raising funds this way, before taking this on, it is important to think carefully about whether your organization has the capacity to support an individual giving campaign. Most organizations that successfully generate significant funds from donations have a staff member, such as a development director, whose specific role is to manage donors. It is important for donors to feel they are important and making a difference for your organization, so someone needs to build relationships with these people, plan events, write annual appeal letters and thank you notes, and solicit new donors. Many organizations plan an annual fundraiser, such as a gala or a sale. These are extremely time-consuming, so it is important to determine whether you have the capacity to support this strategy and if the payoff is worth the investment of time. Things to consider about fundraising and cultivating individual donors:

- Do we have the staff capacity to support an individual giving strategy?
- How can we make use of our website or other technology to solicit donations?
- Do we have people on our advisory board or board of directors with connections to potential donors?
- Do we have the ability to host an annual event? How saturated is our community with similar events? What would make ours stand out?
- Do we have a good database to track donors and our communication with them?

Participant Fees

Many afterschool and expanded learning programs supplement their grant funding and donations with participant fees. Some are even able to support the entirety of their general program costs through fees, and only solicit grants for special projects. Participant fees may be the same for everyone, or can be based on a sliding scale that accounts for a family's income level. Many state child care agencies offer guidance on setting up a sliding-scale fee schedule.

As you develop your program's resource plan, remember that complete reliance on fee-based revenue may prohibit some young people from participating in the program. Keep your intended target audience in mind to determine if a fee-based structure is in keeping with your program's mission. Finally, some grant funding for afterschool and expanded learning actually prohibits collecting additional fees for service. Be sure to review your grant requirements thoroughly before moving to a fee-based structure. What is right for your program depends on a thorough examination of your program, your current and potential funding, and your community (i.e., a market analysis).

When determining what, if any, fees to charge participants, you may want to consider the following questions:

- Are families able to pay?
- What third-party reimbursements (e.g., vouchers from social service agencies) are available for eligible participants?
- What effect will fees have on the number and type of participants?
- What are the technical requirements of using a sliding-scale fee schedule?
- How much of our program expenses do we want to have covered by the fees?

Although collecting fees from families is often promoted as a way to secure stable revenue and build a sense of ownership of the program among families, many programs are philosophically opposed to collecting fees. Take time to consider your position on fees, how important the revenue stream is, and whether you have the staff capacity to issue bills to families, collect fees, and track down families that have not paid. Craft your policy based on what is right for your program. One veteran program director described the program's policy this way: "Our program has a sliding fee scale. If a family does not pay, we let it slide." The program knew it was undermining a stable funding source by not enforcing the payment plan, but felt it was important to provide a safe place for young people regardless of ability to pay fees.

Table 1. Federal Funding Sources

Federal Program	Academic Enrichment	Arts/Music/Culture	Community Service	Food/Snacks	Health/Mental Health	Job/Life Skills	Recreation/Sports	Special Needs	Prevention	Technology	Adult Education	Community Devel.	Early Care/Educ.	Job Training	Parenting Education	Volunteers/Mentors	Evaluation	Facilities	Management Systems	Planning/Coordination	Staff Training	Technical Assistance	Transportation
21st Century Community Learning Centers																							
Abstinence Education Program																							
After-School Centers for Exploration and New Discovery (ASCEND)																							
America Honda Foundation																							
AmeriCorps																							
Arts in Education																							
Carol M. White Physical Education Program																							
Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)																							
Children, Youth and Families At Risk (CYFAR) State Strengthening (STST) Projects																							
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG): Entitlement Grants																							
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG): States' Program																							
Community Outreach Partnership Center Program (COPC)																							
Community Programs to Improve Minority Health																							
Community Services Block Grant Discretionary Awards																							

Federal Program	Academic Enrichment	Arts/Music/Culture	Community Service	Food/Snacks	Health/Mental Health	Job/Life Skills	Recreation/Sports	Special Needs	Prevention	Technology	Adult Education	Community Devel.	Early Care/Educ.	Job Training	Parenting Education	Volunteers/Mentors	Evaluation	Facilities	Management Systems	Planning/Coordination	Staff Training	Technical Assistance	Transportation
Compassion Capital Fund Communities Empowering Youth Program									●														
Cooperative Extension Service: 4-H Youth Development Program	●		●		●	●	●		●	●							●					●	
Corporation for National and Community Service: Training and Technical Assistance																	●				●	●	
Drug-Free Communities Support Program									●														
Education for Homeless Children and Youth	●									●											●		
Education Technology State Grants																					●		
Even Start: Formula Grants to States	●										●		●	●	●	●				●	●	●	●
Even Start: Migrant Education	●										●		●		●		●			●	●	●	●
Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP): State Grants and Partnership Grants	●					●				●						●					●		
Gang-Free Schools and Communities: Community-Based Gang Intervention	●				●	●	●		●	●						●							
Grants to Reduce Alcohol Abuse																							
Healthy Tomorrows Partnership for Children Program					●																		
Indian Child and Family Education	●										●				●								
Indian Child Welfare Act Title II Grants	●					●	●						●									●	

Federal Program	Academic Enrichment	Arts/Music/Culture	Community Service	Food/Snacks	Health/Mental Health	Job/Life Skills	Recreation/Sports	Special Needs	Prevention	Technology	Adult Education	Community Devel.	Early Care/Educ.	Job Training	Parenting Education	Volunteers/Mentors	Evaluation	Facilities	Management Systems	Planning/Coordination	Staff Training	Technical Assistance	Transportation
Innovative Technology Experiences for Students and Teachers (ITEST)										●													
Intel Schools of Distinction	●																						
Job Corps						●																	
Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention: Formula Grants	●					●											●						
Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP)	●					●	●	●	●	●													
Learn and Serve America: School and Community-Based Programs	●		●			●		●	●	●						●					●	●	
Learning in the Arts for Children and Youth		●																					
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Youth	●					●								●									
National Institute of Environmental Health Services (NIEHS)																							
National School Lunch Program: Afternoon Snacks				●																			
Native American Employment and Training Program: Youth Program	●					●																	
Parent Information and Resource Centers (PIRCs)	●					●					●				●								
Promoting Safe and Stable Families					●																		
Reading First	●																						
Rural Community Development Initiative																					●	●	
Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities	●					●	●		●						●	●	●	●				●	

Federal Program	Academic Enrichment	Arts/Music/Culture	Community Service	Food/Snacks	Health/Mental Health	Job/Life Skills	Recreation/Sports	Special Needs	Prevention	Technology	Adult Education	Community Devel.	Early Care/Educ.	Job Training	Parenting Education	Volunteers/Mentors	Evaluation	Facilities	Management Systems	Planning/Coordination	Staff Training	Technical Assistance	Transportation
Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative	●				●	●			●														
School Breakfast Program				●																			
School Dropout Prevention Programs	●					●										●	●				●	●	
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Projects of Regional and National Significance (PRNS)									●												●	●	
Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant									●														
Summer Food Service Program				●																			
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)						●					●			●									●
Title I Supplemental Educational Services	●																						
Title V Delinquency Prevention Program					●	●			●								●			●			
Toyota Philanthropy Grant	●	●	●		●																●		
Trio (Talent Search, Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math-Science)	●	●				●				●	●					●							
Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Youth Activities	●		●			●																	
YouthBuild	●		●			●					●	●						●				●	

Information based on interactive search data at the time of printing from The Finance Project: http://www.financeproject.org/fedfund_search.cfm. Keep in mind that federal funding is fluid and programs may or may not be available due to budget issues, program consolidation, or legislation.

Other Revenue Streams

If your program has been operating for even a short period of time, you can look for other resources in your community that may be used to serve your program. It is important to think creatively, and look for unexpected funding sources. For example, if you can show that your program has had a positive effect on learning within your school district, you may be able to ask the district to allocate part of its Title I funding to the program (Title I funds are used for school improvement initiatives). Also, you may be able to create partnerships with community organizations whose missions are aligned with your program's (e.g., the Y, YWCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, faith-based groups, the United Way) to provide services, donate space, or share costs. Some programs have received funding or support from major employers in the area to help promote a stable workforce and provide a benefit to families in the community.

As you do your research and explore funding options with your board, consider the following questions:

- What government agencies or private foundations provide funds for organizations that pursue specific goals or activities (e.g., prevention; youth development; a focus on arts, sports, or STEM [science, technology, engineering, and mathematics] subjects) that we may want to offer in our program?
- Can we share resources with any other local programs (e.g., a church that uses its van only during the evenings or on weekends)?
- Can we get evaluation or data analysis support from a local graduate student rather than paying out of pocket for an expensive evaluation firm?
- Are there opportunities to get AmeriCorps members to serve as program staff? (Visit <http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/ameri-corps> for more information about AmeriCorps.)
- Are any local businesses willing to make in-kind donations (e.g., old computers, scrap paper, or food)?
- Would any local organizations like to rent space in our building (e.g., volunteer fire fighters needing personnel training, small businesses in need of conference space)? Can we share our staff with another organization in our building (e.g., receptionist, human resources director, or accountant)?

Budgeting

Regardless of how your program is funded, you still need to manage the budget effectively. Ideally, you should have a staff member with financial expertise or experience managing your budget, although not every program can afford a separate individual for this purpose. You may be able to identify someone to serve on your board of directors or advisory board who has this expertise and can support a less experienced staff member. Many accounting

firms are also willing to provide advice and guidance for free or a reduced fee for nonprofit organizations. Finally, if your program is part of a larger organization, you may be able to pass this function along to another staff member within the larger organization.

Regardless of how you support the role, someone should be overseeing the budget by tracking revenue and expenses and planning both detailed budgets for the future and overview budgets for at least two years. A typical program budget includes the following line items: staff and personnel salaries, benefits for full-time staff members, equipment and supplies, transportation, professional development, evaluation costs, and overhead costs (e.g., space and management). You can use **Tool 17: Budget Worksheet** and **Tool 18: Calculation of In-Kind Contributions** to help manage your budget and determine the value of in-kind services that your partners can provide to the program, respectively. Planning your revenue and expenses for two to three years will help you identify where you may have shortfalls, how many staff members you can afford to hire, the types of programming you can run, and the materials you can purchase.

Staffing

In many ways, the most important component of an afterschool and expanded learning program's operation is its staff. You can create perfect policies and procedures, have a strong management system, and develop great programming, and your program still won't be successful without a great staff. For that reason, it is critical to recruit, hire, and retain staff members who are passionate about working with young people, are creative and thoughtful, and are committed to their work. It is also necessary for program leaders to support ongoing professional development for the staff and to provide opportunities for reflection and promotion. This section covers staff hiring and retention, professional development, reflection, and progression.

Hiring and Retention

There are many ways to configure staffing in an afterschool and expanded learning program. Although we have seen high-quality programs with a wide range of staffing models, we recommend a mixed staffing model that brings together highly qualified program staff members, vendors (e.g., outside providers who have expertise in content areas like art, science, and sports), strong youth workers, and a program leader. Having staff members with diverse expertise promotes a learning community among the adults, reflects the assets in the community, and results in a richer program overall. Individual programs may choose to supplement these core staff members with volunteers and interns. Below are some things to keep in mind when hiring new staff members and working to keep the ones you have.

Hiring Practices

Each program looks for different qualifications for its staff members. Some programs weigh an academic degree and the amount of experience with young people most heavily in hiring decisions. Others look for personal characteristics (such as passion and commitment), and provide any additional training that an applicant needs. The balance among education, experience, and personality will depend on your program's offerings, circumstances, and preferences. Potential staff member candidates include:

- Youth work professionals
- Community residents
- Content area experts (e.g., teaching artists, scientists, chefs)
- Former participants (program alumni)
- District paraprofessionals (e.g., reading assistants, computer aides, teaching assistants)
- Family members
- School district substitutes
- Senior citizens
- Staff members of community agencies
- Teachers (either current or retired)
- College students

After deciding on hiring criteria, you should create a job description that lists the qualifications for the position, the duties and benefits of the position, and the expectations of the program. Writing a good job description will help your program attract the type of candidates you hope to hire. Use **Tool 19: Job Description for Program Staff** and **Tool 20: Job Description for Program Leader** to help define your program's staffing.

To the extent possible, staff members and providers should be recruited from the community where the program is located. There are multiple benefits to staffing a program with local residents, including knowledge of the community and relevant resources, connections and trust with families of participants, and capacity building within the community. If yours is a school-based program, it may be tempting to simply hire from within the existing school staff because these staff members are already in the building and have been vetted by the district. This can be a viable strategy and may provide you with several great candidates. But it is smart to recruit widely to ensure that you find individuals who are committed to working with young people in an afterschool and expanded learning program. Looking beyond the school walls will ensure you are building a staff made up of people with varied expertise and perspectives. Here are some helpful steps for recruiting program staff:

1. Post the job widely in local media (e.g., newspapers, online job sites), in colleges of education, in the school or local site where the program will take place, on your website and Facebook page, in local public spaces, and in other places where young people spend time.

2. Allow all applicants to complete the **Tool 21: Candidate Expertise Questionnaire**. This will help program leaders narrow the pool of staff candidates and determine if potential candidates are a good fit. Use the questionnaire for paid staff members as well as volunteers. The program leader should keep all of the completed questionnaires on file, even after a position is filled, to refer to if positions open up in the future.
3. From the pool of candidates selected on the basis of their completed staff interest forms, the program leader should conduct in-person interviews with a team of at least two other people. Ideally, the interview team should include program leaders and lead partners who will collaborate with new staff members. If possible, other staff members can participate in the interview or submit interview questions that will help make sure new hires are a good fit for the program. Make sure to use the same set of interview questions for each candidate. **Tool 22: Sample Interview Questions** provides questions you can use during the interview process.
4. If time and your program structure permits, it can be helpful to ask your top candidates to spend some time with youth—either conducting a short activity or, in middle or high school programs, being interviewed by youth in the program. Seeing how a candidate interacts with youth may help make a final decision between two similar individuals.

When the program leader and interview team come to an agreement on a candidate, they should conduct a reference and background check and ensure a fair offer is promptly made to the preferred candidate.

Tips for Hiring Full-Time School-Day Teachers



If your program does decide to hire full-time school-day teachers, consider the following:

- **Think about being flexible about scheduling.** Often teachers are tired by 3:00 and feel overwhelmed by the thought of teaching for another one or two hours after school. Some programs deal with this by having teachers job-share positions either weekly or by session.
- **Ask the teacher what he or she is passionate about.** Rather than having teachers teach their school subject after school, ask them what else they enjoy. Maybe you have a math teacher that also plays the violin or an English teacher who is a yoga instructor on the side. Find out their passions and invite them to run an activity doing that. They may be more willing to sign on if they feel they are getting a chance to teach young people something they really enjoy.
- **Use teachers strategically.** You might want to hire subject matter experts (on a limited basis) as tutoring guides to other staff members or to ensure that staff members are helping children in a pedagogically sound way.



Working With External Partners

In order to develop a well-rounded program, it may be beneficial to partner with community providers to offer some of your programs, particularly if partners have expertise or facilities from which your participants can benefit (e.g., a local arts organization, an environmental program, or a specialized sports provider such as a tennis instructor). These partners will need to be treated differently from other staff. All partnerships should operate under specific agreements, usually in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Agreement (MOA). Work with these partners to establish clear wages, a weekly schedule with a set number of expected hours, clear policies about when they need to arrive and their role on site (e.g., are they expected to arrive before snack time to monitor a group of youth during snack time?), and the professional development they are allowed or required to attend. Many programs may also choose to conduct regular meetings of all partners or have partners join the program's advisory board. All of these practices are described in greater detail in **Chapter 3**.

Retention Strategies

Staff retention (including retention of volunteer staff members) is crucial in afterschool and expanded learning programs. Research shows that consistency and continuity are important for both retaining youth participants and improving youth outcomes (Kauh, 2011). As with any other relationship, having a positive and ongoing connection with a program staff member is better for participants than having staff members come in and out of their lives. There are a variety of ways program leaders can promote staff retention, including:

- Providing staff members with detailed position descriptions so they know exactly what they are being asked to do (remember **Tool 19: Job Description for Program Staff?**)
- Creating and adhering to consistent policies and procedures (discussed earlier in this chapter)
- Providing equitable compensation
- Planning collaboratively with staff members
- Working as a team to develop and implement programming  (more on this in **Chapter 4**)

There are other ways that program leaders can support staff retention, such as providing ongoing professional development and providing opportunities for staff members to reflect on their work and to progress in their career. These are discussed in greater detail in the following sections.

Professional Development

Program staff members are often asked to play a variety of roles—teacher, mentor, activity or game organizer, disciplinarian, counselor, and coach; as well as file clerk, data entry person, receptionist, and so on—and there is no academic degree or certificate program to prepare someone for all of those roles. In addition, staff members often enter the afterschool and expanded learning field from a variety of different places. You may have teaching artists who are experts in their content area but haven’t spent a lot of time working with youth, or youth workers who don’t have much content expertise. You might have teachers with formal education backgrounds, social workers, and recent college graduates, all of whom have different perspectives and expertise. Because of this mix of staff members and backgrounds, it is important to provide staff members with at least monthly professional development opportunities (see **Tool 23: Professional Development Plan**) and require that they actively participate.

Professional development is an umbrella name for the variety of learning opportunities staff members can engage in as a part of their job. Some types of professional development are as follows:

- **Staff Orientation.** Each staff member should participate in a staff orientation that presents information on program development, collaboration, and practices. This often takes place at the beginning of the program year and includes topics such as a code of conduct, mandated reporter training, policies and procedures, and behavior management.
- **Periodic Booster Sessions.** Booster sessions are designed to reinforce the information presented to program staff members in the staff orientation and to go into more detail on relevant topics. The program leader should include topics identified by staff members in weekly planning meetings where staff members can learn from each other.
- **Topical Training Sessions.** This includes learning opportunities that specifically cover a topic of interest, such as positive behavior management, or that are related to a content area, such as integrating literacy into enrichment programs. Topical training sessions should be determined by the program leader with staff input. Topics can range widely from the “basics” for newer staff members to “innovations” for more experienced staff members. These sessions can be facilitated on site or off site, and the facilitator may be a provider, a staff member, or an expert from outside the program.
- **External Professional Development.** External professional development opportunities can take a variety of forms, such as taking a class at a local college or attending a local or national conference or workshop. Although these professional development opportunities often require more resources, they are important in allowing staff members to learn outside of the local community. External professional development ultimately benefits both the participants and the program with new ideas and perspectives.

Professional development is an important part of supporting staff retention (and in the end, providing a high-quality program). Choosing the right topics is important. Survey staff members using **Tool 24: Staff Training Survey** at least once per year to find out what they want to learn from their professional development experience. Here are some training topics you may want to consider:

- Child and adolescent development
- Positive youth development
- Intentionality in activity planning
- Including youth in program planning
- Positive behavior management strategies
- Conflict resolution
- Creating a warm and welcoming program environment
- Health and wellness strategies
- Working with youth with special needs
- Social media as an activity tool
- Group work activities
- Data collection (e.g., training on your program's attendance system)
- Program evaluation 101
- Using data to improve programming
- Incorporating youth voice and choice into programming
- Incorporating reflection into programming

You may also want to consider the following questions as you plan your professional development:

- What training is required by an organizational authority (e.g., school district, licensing agency)?
- What staff skills would contribute to a safer and more supportive environment?
- What staff skills would contribute to a more effective program?
- What training has been requested by staff members?
- What training has been suggested by other stakeholders?
- What in-house expertise is possessed by staff members that could be shared with other staff members?
- What external training is available, accessible, and known to be effective?



It is a good idea to train your staff in data-driven decision-making. Using data to make decisions about program content, the type of services to offer youth, and how to best support your program participants can strengthen your program offerings and ensure you are addressing participants' interests and meeting their needs. Bringing the staff together to learn how to do this can range from looking at your demographic and participation data during a staff meeting to hiring an expert in data-driven decision-making to come in and lead an ongoing training series. What you choose will depend on available resources and time, but this is an important training topic to build into your professional development offerings. This is discussed in additional detail in **Chapter 5** and **Chapter 6**.

When thinking about how to develop a strong menu of professional development offerings in the face of limited resources and staff time, it is important to think creatively and build upon what already exists. Here are some strategies to keep in mind:

- Contact community colleges and local funders to find scholarships for staff members who want to take relevant classes. There may be untapped money available that the college or funder is having trouble advertising.
- Supplement financial reimbursement for classes with other incentives, such as greater autonomy in a job, increased chances for promotion, in-kind donations (e.g., offering donated computers for home use), and public recognition. Note: For in-kind donations, make sure the program has permission from donors to use donations in this manner.
- Rigorously focus limited resources on the highest priority development opportunities—those that appear essential to meeting the program's goals.
- Take advantage of online training. This will reduce travel costs and may be more convenient for staff members with multiple jobs.
- Ask staff members to share (for modest reimbursement) their particular skills with other staff members at in-house training sessions.
- Be flexible when scheduling staff development time. Some staff members have other jobs or commitments, which may make it difficult to find a time for training that fits everyone's schedules. Some programs work around this problem by holding training on the weekends or closing occasionally to provide training for staff members.
- Ensure that staff members are learning on the job by deliberately trying new strategies and working on developmental challenges.
- Partner with other programs or schools to share expenses for common trainings. This will increase the size of the class but may allow for double the opportunities.

- Join with other programs and/or schools to lobby providers of training (e.g., school districts, nonprofit organizations, universities) for more, different, or better quality training. Supply often follows demand even in the public sphere—if the demand is organized and vocal. This may also reduce the cost of training per person.
- Have staff members evaluate each training opportunity and keep a record of these evaluations. This strategy will help other staff members know which ones to attend and which ones to avoid in the future.

To optimize these opportunities, have staff members share what they learned during professional development opportunities with the group.



Tips for Professional Development

A great strategy for offering a variety of interesting professional development opportunities with limited resources is to have staff members or program providers with content area expertise deliver some of the professional development. Team leaders should refer to **Tool 21: Candidate Expertise Questionnaire** to identify staff members who may have experience with certain topics or may be great professional development facilitators.

Reflection and Progression

As is true in any profession, program staff members should have the opportunity to reflect on their own practices and to feel that there are opportunities to move forward in their career. Reflective practices can happen informally in staff meetings, as a part of periodic one-to-one conversations with program leadership, and in more formal ways through a practice self-reflection tool or program observation that is part of a formal quality improvement process like the one described in  **Chapter 6**. Regardless of how it happens, the important part of the reflective practice is that staff members have the opportunity to identify their strengths and opportunities for improvement rather than being told how to improve. Use **Tool 25: Developing as an Afterschool and Expanded Learning Professional** and **Tool 26: Self-Assessment of Effective Qualities** to allow staff members to reflect on their strengths and identify areas of growth that will help them in their career and improve the overall success of the program.

As staff members are offered the opportunity to reflect on and share their practice, they will have the information they need to set professional goals. The program leader can support program staff members in achieving their professional or career goals by directing them toward relevant professional development opportunities and by helping them see where they want to be in one year or five years. Afterschool and expanded learning programs are typically small and often do not offer a lot of opportunities for promotion. Remember, however, that career progression not only means a promotion—it also can mean learning a new skill, or becoming an expert at something, or being a leader or a

trainer. The important thing is for all program staff members, including the program leader, to have a sense that they have a meaningful future in the program and are part of a team whose goal is to support participants' growth and development.

Wages, Incentives, and Appreciation

Retaining staff members requires an investment in personnel that demonstrates they are valued by the program. Clearly, wage or salary rates are an important part of that. Any new afterschool and expanded learning program will need to put some thought into how to create a fair and realistic wage structure. Things to keep in mind when planning a wage structure:

- Make sure your wages for similar staff positions are consistent. Staff members will talk to each other, and staff members with similar qualifications should be paid comparable wages.
- You will likely have a combination of hourly personnel (e.g., those who are working part time) and salaried employees (e.g., the program director). Be sure to have clear written policies about each type of position, including rules for working overtime, who will or will not receive benefits, and how often employees can expect reviews and potential increases to their hourly or annual rates.
- Think about levels of expertise and qualifications for different wage levels—for example, you may have to pay teaching artists with particular content expertise a higher hourly wage than those staff members with less experience who you hire to hand out snacks, enter attendance, and focus on program logistics.
- If you hire school or district teachers, be aware of potential union rules on salary rates for staff doing additional work. If you are a community organization, you may be able to hire teaching staff through your own organization's structure.

Unfortunately, even with very good planning, many programs cannot pay staff members what they feel the staff members deserve. Although it is important to try to offer enough money to attract and retain a qualified staff, other forms of investment can show the staff members they are appreciated.



Tips for Investing in Staff

- Set high expectations for staff members, and treat them as professionals.
- Provide training for staff members to increase their marketable skills.
- Provide consistent opportunities to prepare for the day's schedule and reflect on how the day went.
- Increase the autonomy and/or responsibility of staff members as they gain experience.
- Publicly recognize staff members with newsletter articles, "employee of the month" awards, and banquets.
- Celebrate birthdays, holidays, the end of a program session, and other important dates.
- Provide creature comforts for use at the program site (e.g., coffeemakers, cell phones, carts for moving supplies of "traveling" instructors, email accounts).
- Spend time asking for input, offering praise for a job well done, and simply listening.

Programs can decrease the gap between a modest pay increase and what an employee might hope for by offering intangible benefits. People will be more likely to stay in a job that doesn't pay them as much as they want if they feel what they do is worthwhile, if they can see a visible impact, and if they feel appreciated by their organization and the people they help. Be sure to share positive evaluation results and praise or anecdotes so that staff members can see the impact the program is having on young people. To gauge how your staff members are feeling about their job, use **Tool 27: Staff Satisfaction Survey**. Make sure you acknowledge the survey results with your staff members and make an effort together to implement improvements or suggestions.

Communication

A strong internal communication system is a critical factor in retaining staff members and partners as well as building effective programming to meet your program's goals. Effective communication about program activities and schedules, policies and procedures, and any concerns can help keep your program on track. Simple miscommunications can do more to hamper staff morale and affect turnover than almost anything else.

Here are some simple ways that you can keep staff members and partners in the communication loop:

- Create a bulletin board and post weekly schedules. Mark your calendar to change the information on the last day of your programming week, so that the new week starts with current activities. Keep photos of staff members and partners on the board, so new volunteers, staff members, participants, school staff members, or families can start to connect faces with names.

- Create a weekly newsletter. Following a simple format will help keep this from being a big job. Make sure you thank staff members each week and highlight a success story of the week. You can create one version for your internal staff members and partners, and another for the families of your participants. If you are an external partner working with a school, make sure you provide a copy to all of the school-day staff members.
- Enlist interested staff members and participants to create (and lead the creation of) the bulletin board and newsletter. This will promote excitement and ownership of the material, and ultimately improve overall communication.
- Keep a small file with the “preferred mode of communication” for all of your staff members and internal stakeholders. Is it email? Text? In person? Keep this information handy for communicating with others. Also, make sure everyone knows the best and easiest ways to communicate with you.
- Hold regular staff meetings—these can be weekly, every other week, or monthly. This is a time for staff members to air concerns, program leaders to share information and problem-solve, and the entire staff to build a sense of team camaraderie.
- Make sure your messages are consistent. Most likely, even if you do not talk to all of your staff members or partners, they are talking to each other, and it is important for them to hear the same message.

Strategies for Effective Communication

As with all components of your program operations, you should design your strategy for effective communication as part of an intentional plan  (discussed in greater detail in **Chapter 2**) by:

- Establishing goals for communication.
- Identifying any groups that are involved in or might be affected by the program (e.g., constituents or stakeholders).
- Surveying or talking to each group to determine the most effective ways to communicate with them.
- Formatting messages—and requests for feedback—according to the characteristics of the targeted group. Keeping a record of these characteristics.
- Making a special effort to involve traditionally less involved groups.
- Designating a contact person for communication with each group (if appropriate).
- Developing marketing materials about your program to share with schools, families, and community partners. These can and should take multiple forms: a one-page handout, a page on your website, or a brochure. Use **Tool 7: Tips for Developing Outreach and Marketing Materials** as a resource.
- Going online. This includes things like having a website for your program, and sharing updates through a program blog or through social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter (or both).

Today, information sharing is the norm, and we have the ability to do this in real time. Not only do youth, families, and members of the community get a lot of information on the Internet, but they have come to expect it. Going online can serve a variety of purposes for afterschool and expanded learning programs—you can use it for storytelling, fundraising, and organizing, for example. There are many different ways to go online, and there is no one-size-fits-all strategy. You may choose to develop a website for your program or create social media accounts on popular sites like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, or Google—the list goes on and on, and it is ever-changing! You might decide to open an account for creating and sending regular e-newsletters (e.g., MailChimp, Constant Contact) or you might decide to use software for fundraising and outreach (e.g., Blackbaud’s Raiser’s Edge). Use **Tool 28: Developing a Communication Strategy** to help you design a communication strategy for your program.



Tips for Sharing Information Over the Internet

Here are a few tips for sharing information over the Internet:

- Keep your information up to date! People will come to your site looking for information and they will expect it to be accurate. Mistakes not only create confusion but they might discourage people from coming back to learn more.
- Be sure to take your population into account. Some people, particularly in lower income communities, still aren’t able to access the Internet as readily as others. Smartphones and home computers, although less expensive than ever before, are still more prominent in affluent communities.
- Pace yourself. Post enough information to keep people informed, but avoid over-posting, especially on social media sites. Focus on quality and not on quantity.
- If you have the resources, designate specific staff members to be responsible for website content and posting on social media sites. Make sure that they understand and use online resources like this regularly so that they can make your web and social media presence appealing and effective for a variety of audiences, including young people.
- Create a social media section in your staff handbook so that everyone knows the “Do’s and Don’ts” for online time. Empower your staff members to be brand ambassadors so they can get the word out about your program, but encourage them to do it in a way that is responsible and in line with the program’s mission and vision.
- Sign up for alerts that let you know when someone else has mentioned your program. Google Alerts are a great way to stay on top of this, and they are delivered to your email address on a schedule you create.
- Have fun! Social media and other online resources are a great way to build community and create connections that open doors to new opportunities.

Table 2. Strategies for Publicizing Your Program

In Person	Electronic	Marketing Materials	Media
Printed newsletter (handed out during the program or mailed directly)	E-newsletter	Grocery bag inserts	Newspaper articles
Brochures	Program website or blog	Magnets	Editorials and op-ed pieces
Bulletin boards	Social media sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter)	Billboards	Public service announcements (PSAs)
Interviews	Online video sites (e.g., YouTube, Vimeo)	Gear for participants (T-shirts, wristbands, backpacks)	Video programs
Notes sent home with participants			TV news
			Local cable channel

Communication Goals

Communication goals are a good way to ensure you are on track in your communications with staff members, families, youth, and the community. The best way to decide on communication goals for your program is to hold a brainstorming session with your advisory group, staff members, and participants.  Remember to tie your goals to the program's overall vision and goals. You can use **Tool 36: Visioning Worksheet and Meeting Agenda** which we will cover in greater detail in **Chapter 2**. Look at the opportunities and challenges you identified for your program as you think about what you want to accomplish through your communication. Are you trying to raise money? Increase attendance? Recruit volunteers? Just as lessons work better when a teacher consciously teaches to a set of objectives, so too will communication be more effective when it is focused on established goals.

Several examples of how communication goals can help programs are provided below.

Table 3. Communication Goals and Impact

Communication Goals	Impact on Program
Obtain funding in order to sustain the program	■ Makes potential funders aware of the program. ■ Increases the number of participants.
Increase family involvement	■ Keeps family members informed about program activities. ■ Creates a sense of familiarity between family members and program staff members. ■ Describes learning achievements of the participants to demonstrate the value of the program.
Improve staff morale	■ Happier staff members are more likely to stay in the program. ■ Staff members deliver better programming when they are satisfied with their work and have a clear understanding of their role and expectations for their performance.

After you have set your goals for communication, begin planning for ways to achieve these goals. Be creative in your thinking. For example, if your communication strategy calls for a family newsletter, check with local print shops to see if they will donate the cost of printing. Or, find out if your school or program location will allow you to use its copier. If your communication strategy calls for having an online presence, make sure you have a web-savvy person who will update and post information regularly to your program's website and social media accounts. You also might want to consider ways that program participants can help. This type of advance planning can save scarce resources and may, in turn, allow you to extend your communication efforts.

You should continually assess the effectiveness of your communication strategy against established goals. Also, be sure to identify someone within the program who is ultimately responsible for all communication. Overall, an effective communication strategy requires a commitment to productive two-way interaction, and systematic planning and review.



VOICES FROM THE FIELD | Communicating With Partners

Newport Community School (NCS) in Newport, Rhode Island, offers programming for young people in middle and high school, but is truly a community endeavor. The program's many partnerships with local community-based organizations, teachers, retired executives, and other community stakeholders and volunteers help to create a network of program providers, mentors, and supports for youth. NCS has a strong, established, school-based team at both its host middle school and high school, thus optimizing the organization's recruitment and retention strategies aimed at secondary school youth. NCS views ongoing communication with youth, parents, principals, teachers, program providers, and community stakeholders as a critical part of the organization's partnerships and overall operations. To that end, NCS follows a well-established communication plan intended to communicate its mission, its vision, and its work with its vested partners to a broad audience. NCS's communication plan addresses two primary audiences: internal (youth, teachers, support staff members, and administration) and external (families, business partners, civic groups, community-based organizations, program providers, and community stakeholders). The plan is defined by three goals, and has proven to be effective. This strategy ensures that the program's communication is not only effective, but focused—and therefore more likely to have an impact on the program's stakeholders.

To learn more, visit <http://www.newportcommunityschool.org>.

Sharing Data

Throughout this *Toolkit*, various data collection tools are provided to help determine opportunities, needs, and interests to inform your programming decisions, and to measure your progress toward reaching your vision. However, collecting information without a concrete plan for how you are going to use it wastes time and effort. It is

also critical to be transparent with the findings of data collection activities to help you communicate what is happening in your program. For example, you can take a family or youth satisfaction survey, look at the results with your advisory board, and then decide what you are going to do about it (for example, change the type of programming you offer, or modify your hours). Then, communicate those decisions and their impacts to those affected by your decisions—either through your newsletter, a flyer, your website, or whatever you have determined is your most effective means of communication. That way, those you have asked for input will know that their voices have been heard.

Also, if you decide *not* to make changes (because of costs, logistics, or other reasons), be sure to communicate those reasons. For example, you can write: “Expanding our program hours is not in our budget right now, but we are making this a top priority for next year’s plan and are seeking a local community grant to work toward making additional hours available.” Even though visible changes may not be happening, letting people know the “why” behind decisions creates stronger trust in your program.

Communication Audiences

It can be argued that the whole community has a stake in the success of your program. However, for the purpose of effective communication, it is important to segment your audience (i.e., divide the audience into smaller groups based on pertinent characteristics) so that you can target your communications and increase the likelihood that the audience will respond to the message. Here is a list of potential audiences you may want to reach with your communication:

- Youth participants
- Youth non-participants
- Family members
- Local community members
- School administrators
- School faculty
- Program volunteers
- Partner agencies
- Funders
- School board members
- Government officials
- Area colleges and universities
- Local businesses
- Faith communities
- Retired citizens
- Media

Do not feel that you need to create a targeted communication approach for every potential audience from day 1. Instead, consider the primary mission and goals of your program and base your early communication strategy on these. To determine which audiences to target first, ask yourself the following questions:

- Which audiences most directly influence and support or are most directly influenced by the program's mission and current goals?
- Which groups may influence other, more “unapproachable” audiences?
- Which audiences are best reached through communication modes we already possess?

Use **Tool 29: Community Communication Survey** to discover the communication needs of your audiences. **Tool 30: Communication Log** can be used in conjunction with it to record communication activities in chronological order.

Messaging

A big part of communication is appropriate messaging. As you plan your communication strategies based on your key communication goals and target audiences, you also need to think about the message you are trying to get across. To do this, you'll need to:

- Establish a concrete objective for each communication.
- Understand the audience and delivery method so that you can create content and a format that is appropriate. Use **Tool 31: Communication Format Guidelines** to guide your communication.
- Put yourself in the audience member's place.
- Think about the specific point you want to make and create your message with that specific point in mind.

Each message you create should be designed to communicate ideas that are clear, concise, persuasive, and memorable. Consider the following tips:

- Offer no more than three main ideas in each communication.
- Avoid empty words or jargon.
- Use language that creates a mental image that will stick with the reader.
- Make written communication “skimmable.” Use a reader-friendly font; leave plenty of open “white” space; and include headings, bullet points, quotations, graphics, and photographs with captions (if applicable).
- When speaking, use simple language. Be aware of the tone of your voice, and enunciate your words clearly.

Working With the Media

The media plays a big role in the way we receive information, and building relationships with the local media in your area is a great (and cost-effective!) way to get the word out about your program. Building relationships with the media that are proactive, ongoing, open, and respectful may take some effort, but can really pay off. Whenever you reach out and however you reach out, make sure that you frame your important points every time—even if you think you've said it 100 times before—because you have an opportunity to reach people who haven't heard from you yet.

There are a number of ways you can work with the media to get the word out. One idea is to use a news release (you can use **Tool 32: Sample News Release** as a guide) about a noteworthy event. Distribute the news release to local television, radio, newspaper, and online news sources. Follow up with phone calls a day or two after you send it out. You can also offer to work with the newspaper by submitting a letter to the editor, an op-ed, or a special article or column. You can also send letters to your local television station, radio, or newspaper asking them to cover an event or issue that is relevant to your program. Another good idea is to have materials ready to go that you can give to members of the media on short notice. These are things like fact sheets, informational handouts, and other promotional materials that provide information in a clear and compelling way for a variety of audiences. **Tool 7: Tips for Developing Outreach and Marketing Materials** can be a great resource as you start working on this.

Evaluating Communication

Answering questions like, “Is our message reaching our intended audience?” or “Are our communication resources being well used?” can be a challenge. In fact, it can be more difficult to assess the effectiveness of your program's communication efforts than it is to evaluate other program operations. However, this challenge should not stop you from measuring the success of your communication to the extent possible. Otherwise, you will never know whether you are communicating effectively or if the resources you are using for communication could be better spent elsewhere.

The first step in assessing the effectiveness of your communication is to review your program's goals and objectives.  Goals and objectives are discussed in more detail in **Chapter 2**. Are your communication efforts helping you achieve these goals? To make your answer to this question more meaningful, it is important to establish specific, measurable *benchmarks*, or indicators, for each goal or objective. For example, a program goal might be to increase the number of senior citizen volunteers or mentors by 50 percent. The communication strategy might include posting flyers at local senior centers to raise awareness of the program and to describe the benefits of volunteering. You would measure the effectiveness of this approach by the number of senior volunteers who responded to the flyer.

Another easy way to assess the effectiveness of your communication is simply to ask your audience what they thought of the message. You can gather feedback through a formal survey, but a simple telephone call or casual conversation (“What did you think about the newsletter we sent you last week?”) also can be effective. For a more formal survey approach, use **Tool 33: Communication Survey** to measure the effectiveness of your communication.

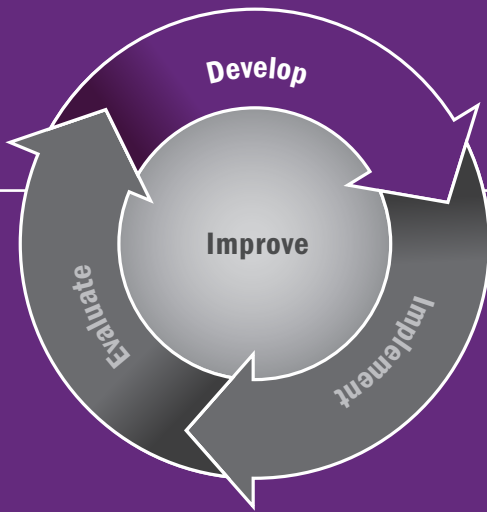
Conclusion

In this chapter we have covered a range of topics related to the effective management of your program, including establishing a strong management structure; developing policies and procedures to ensure effective programming; hiring, retaining, and supporting staff members; and communicating effectively. Each of these practices is essential. As you go through the remaining chapters in this book, you will likely revisit this chapter. Effective management is not a one-time endeavor. Over time, your program will change and grow, and you will need to continually refine your policies, staffing practices, and communication strategies to reflect that growth.



Points to Remember

- Develop a strong and clear management structure that fits your program's needs and goals.
 - Be clear about your policies and procedures. All staff members, families, youth, and community partners need to understand and be a part of implementing a consistent set of expectations.
 - Your staff is your biggest asset. Take the time to hire well and implement retention strategies that will ensure you have a stable, high-quality staff for years to come.
 - Communicate clearly and effectively with all stakeholders on a regular basis. Communication is essential to effective program operation.
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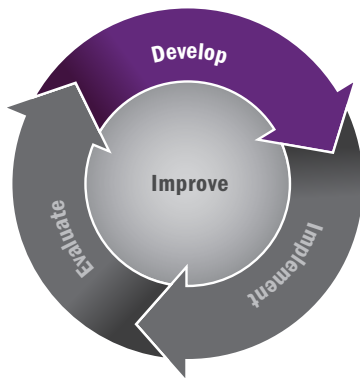


● CHAPTER 2

Program Design

Program Design

Now that you have some key administrative structures in place—your management structure, policies and procedures, staffing, and communication—you are ready to do some deep thinking about the actual design of the program. Designing the program involves developing a set of overarching goals and action steps and a plan for your program that are based on assets and needs. At this point, you are still in the program development phase of the continuous improvement cycle, where you develop a program that will be implemented during the next phase. This chapter will take you through the steps necessary to design your program, including the following topics:



- Youth development approach
- Identifying assets and needs
- Developing a vision and identifying goals
- Outcomes and impact
- Theories of change and logic models
- Building evaluation into your program to promote continuous improvement
- Crafting a program plan

This chapter contains a lot of steps and includes our recommendations based both on research and what we have seen in exemplary programs across the country. The chapter concludes with a description of how to craft a program plan. All of the design pieces we describe in this chapter will ultimately contribute to your program plan. You may want to reference the program planning tool before you read on to see how the pieces work together to form a plan. You can use **Tool 41: Program Plan Template**, which we will cover in greater detail later in this chapter.

Some of the steps may seem daunting at first and you may be tempted to skip some of them and jump right into programming. Although it would be easy to slap together a program, we strongly recommend that you take the time now to intentionally plan out your program so that you have the greatest chance of achieving your goals. All of the steps described here don't have to happen at once—read through the chapter to become familiar with the recommended tasks, but know that your program will develop over time and that you can revisit many of these activities later in the development process.

 Indeed, in **Chapter 4**, we talk more about the process of developing and implementing your program activities. The important thing is taking the time to plan and build a realistic timeline for carrying out these activities.

Youth Development Approach

The guiding principles of youth development—universal, asset-based, collaborative, and relevant—are important in establishing the foundation of your program and are essential topics for staff development. Incorporating strong youth development principles is essential to a high-quality program (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004; Smith et al., 2010; Walker et al., 2005). Throughout this *Toolkit*, we talk about the importance of youth development and provide guidance for how to incorporate a youth development approach into your program design and delivery. Youth development is sometimes called “positive youth development” to indicate a strengths-based approach and a positive developmental trajectory. In this *Toolkit* we use the term youth development to mean the same thing, embracing the many theories and practices that make up the youth development approach.

Youth Development

What exactly do we mean by youth development? It is no surprise that the term gets thrown around a lot and used in a lot of different ways. In this section, we discuss this theory and how it can and should drive programming.  In **Chapter 4**, we discuss how to enact this theory as you implement your program.

Youth development is a theory, a natural process of human development, and an intended outcome (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004). Youth development programs can create positive academic and life trajectories for young people (Durlak, Mahoney, Bohnert, & Parente, 2010; Vandell, Reisner, & Pierce, 2007). Many fields of practice have embraced youth development as a theory that is anchored in the principle that “every young person has the potential for successful, healthy development and that all youth possess the capacity for positive development” (Lerner et al., 2005, p. 20).

There are many youth development frameworks. You can choose to align to an established framework or simply focus on the common elements of youth development that come from the literature. The common elements are:

- Universal: Programs are available to all youth.
- Asset-based: Programs are geared toward building upon strengths (in the community, within youth, in the school), as opposed to preventing risk.
- Collaborative: Programs are anchored in collaborations in the community and with families and the school.
- Relevant: Programs celebrate and reflect the local community, cultures, and participants. (Anderson-Butcher, Stetler, & Midle, 2006; Hamilton, Hamilton, & Pittman, 2004)

If you want to use an existing framework to communicate youth development to your stakeholders, some broadly accepted youth development frameworks are represented in Table 4. There are other locally adapted and evolving frameworks that may also be useful to consider for your program. Make sure to ask around and see what other local programs use and whether your state has adopted a framework as a part of its quality standards.

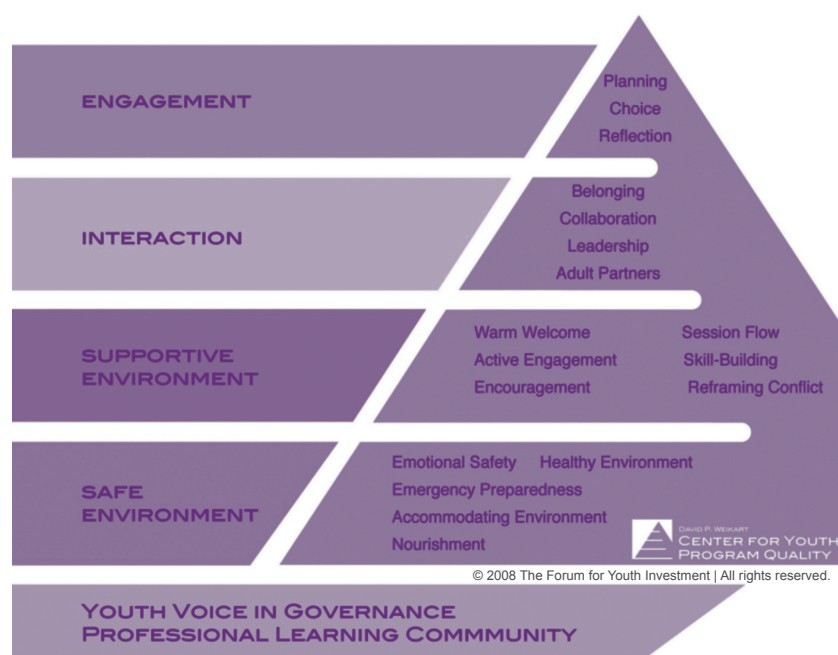
Table 4. Youth Development Framework Summary

Framework	Organization	Key Components
Developmental Assets	Search Institute	The Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets are divided into External and Internal Assets, and fall into eight categories: ■ External Assets: ◆ Support ◆ Empowerment ◆ Boundaries and Expectations ◆ Constructive Use of Time ■ Internal Assets: ◆ Commitment to Learning ◆ Positive Values ◆ Social Competencies ◆ Positive Identity The qualities contained in these categories contribute to positive youth development when present in youth.
The 5 C's of Positive Youth Development	Richard Lerner, the National 4-H Council, and other researchers	The 5 C's of Positive Youth Development are ■ Competence ■ Confidence ■ Connection ■ Character ■ Caring/Compassion This framework presents the 5 C's as the underlying constructs that, when present, lead to positive youth development and the sixth C, Contribution.
Community Action Framework for Youth Development	Michelle Gambone and James Connell	The Community Action Framework for Youth Development incorporates youth development principles in consideration of the community context. It considers community supports and strategies as part of its framework for developing and measuring intermediate and long-term youth outcomes.
Administration for Children and Families Youth Demonstration Development Project Conceptual Framework	Administration for Children and Families, Mathematica Policy Research	This conceptual framework focuses on two primary areas for positive youth development among at-risk youth: resiliency, or the ability to withstand hardship and adversity; and human capital development, or developing the skills necessary to succeed in educational and career settings.

High-quality youth development programs are physically and emotionally safe, allowing relationships among youth and between youth and staff members to thrive. In such environments, youth have the space and freedom to fully *engage* in programming and ultimately focus on developing and improving their personal, social, and academic skills. Youth engagement can happen through strategic opportunities for choice, reflection, and leadership.

The following figure, created by the Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality at the Forum for Youth Investment, is an example of a recognized approach to youth development that supports quality in afterschool and expanded learning settings. The pyramid shows how elements of quality programs build on each other to lead to youth engagement. More information on this quality framework can be found at <http://www.cypq.org>.

Figure 1. David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality Approach to Youth Development



Reprinted with permission from Smith, C., & Akiva, T. (2008). Quality accountability: Improving fidelity of broad developmentally focused interventions. In H. Yoshikawa & B. Shinn (Eds.), *Transforming social settings: Towards positive youth development*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

We use the term “intentional” a lot throughout this *Toolkit*. By this we mean purposeful and with forethought, whether in the context of program development or implementation. Intentionality in program development refers to purposeful decisions about allocating resources, hiring staff members, and deciding on programming to meet your vision and reach your goals. Intentionality in program implementation refers to purposefully designing activities that recognize context, the unique contributions of young people, and participants’ current developmental stage.  **Chapter 4** expands upon these strategies and provides suggestions for incorporating youth development principles into program practices and activities.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD | Youth Development



Fulfill the Dream, implemented nationally, supports youth of all ages. In addition to training program staff members to implement the Fulfill the Dream curriculum, the Fulfill the Dream team provides training related to culturally relevant social and emotional learning pedagogy. A core belief of this program is that young people deserve to be engaged with high-quality, culturally relevant, and research-based programming that doesn't treat them like a problem to be fixed but as agents of change capable of solving serious 21st century issues. The program engages nationally known break-dancers to help with movement activities and games, collaborates with renowned graffiti writers to create visual metaphors, and partners with award-winning rappers to create music that brings social and emotional learning and youth development principles to life for youth. Fulfill The Dream workshops provide youth with the skills necessary to run their own community change project, through which they build personal leadership, relationship, and citizenship skills. Program alumni have published an annual book that allows youth to make submissions (called *Youth Voice Nation*), have created their own global radio station (GLO Radio), and are now working on a global publication that will allow youth to share stories of their community change projects as well as share their best artwork with the world. All of this was sparked by the idea that youth could become change agents if engaged with cutting-edge, research-based ideas in culturally relevant ways.

Visit <http://www.thegoodlifeorganization.com> to learn more.

Identifying Assets and Needs

The first step in designing (or redesigning) a program is to inventory your local assets and potentially to identify local needs. “Asset” is used to describe an individual or entity’s strengths and resources. An individual’s internal asset may be motivation, for example, while an external entity’s (community, school, program) asset may be something like a community garden. The term has been popularized by the youth development movement as a way to shift the focus away from need and risk in individuals and communities.

There are a variety of strategies for identifying assets and needs in a community—two we discuss here are asset mapping and needs assessments. Be sure to include everyone who has a role to play in the program: families, youth, volunteers, staff members, school-day staff members and administrators, and community organizations. Input from each of these groups can provide valuable insight and buy-in from your stakeholders. If you have not included these people in the past, you can always go back and do so. There is no statute of limitations on collaboration!

Asset mapping is a fun and interactive way to begin creating a vision and orienting your program team to the local context from a strengths-based rather than a deficit-based perspective. You can create an asset map with your advisory board, with young people, and/or with families.

Asset mapping has a variety of benefits. These include:

- Starting a conversation among people who may not know each other.
- Identifying common strengths among members of your community.
- Finding existing resources in the community, school, or neighborhood. These may be your future funders, partners, or advisory board members.
- Focusing on the positive rather than the negative.

We recommend starting this process with an internal (staff members only) asset map and reaching out to those external to your program (e.g., young people, families, local school staff members, community members, advisory board members, and program partners) soon after. Remember, it is important to have a shared internal vision before you engage others from the community. Use **Tool 34: Asset Mapping** to get started.

Another common method for learning the needs of your stakeholders is to conduct a formal needs assessment. A needs assessment is a process for determining the “gaps” between what currently exists and what your stakeholder groups want to exist. As with asset mapping, needs assessments are most effective when they incorporate multiple points of view. These assessments can be conducted by survey, interview, focus group, public forum, a review of secondary data, or a combination of methods. In general, the needs assessment will incorporate questions about what people already have access to, what they would like access to, and recommendations for how to provide access to those services. Use **Tool 35: Conducting a Needs Assessment** to begin thinking about your needs assessment.

A needs assessment has a variety of benefits, including:

- Understanding the unique needs of your community or setting
- Being able to precisely target the scope of services and offerings based on identified needs
- If done in a participatory fashion, getting to know others in your community and opening conversations among stakeholders

Sometimes resource constraints may influence your programming, but they shouldn't be the primary factor in activity selection. If youth interest surveys or focus groups, teacher feedback, and other youth needs all suggest that an activity is needed but the resources are not currently available, you may want to look for other ways to offer the activity.



Tips for Starting a Program When Resources Are Scarce

- Work with young people, your advisory board, and other stakeholders to problem-solve about ways to get needed resources. You shouldn't work on this alone.
- Use your asset map to identify free/readily available resources.
- Partner with another organization to offer the program or a specific activity within the program.  See **Chapter 3** for more information on identifying potential partners.
- Scale back the program but still offer it. You may choose to limit the number of participants or days per week the program is offered.
- Suggest the program to another organization that can offer it.
- Draw up a concrete plan to offer the program in the near future.

Do not allow an afterschool and expanded learning initiative to be on hold indefinitely simply because resources are not immediately available. Be creative and consider every option when trying to find help, but also be mindful of where you turn for help. All individuals and organizations you work with should have a sound record, skilled leadership, and established merit.

Developing a Vision and Identifying Goals

While you have likely done some work in this area, particularly if you were involved in writing a proposal to receive grant funds, it is always good to revisit your vision, goals, and theory of change for achieving intended outcomes before you actually put plans and resources into place. Often, the people who *write* funding proposals are not the people who are *running the program*. You can alleviate potential problems caused by this situation by making sure you have processes in place that promote the development of a collaborative vision with all of your program team, including the staff members in your development team.

If you have not yet begun the process of identifying your vision and goals, now is a good time to start. Once you have key management staff members in place, it is good to have the staff members and key stakeholders commit (or recommit) to the vision and goals of the program, because knowing your focus will help you allocate your resources, hire staff members, and decide on program activities.

In the next several sections we will help you make sense of the many terms and processes you can use to define and communicate about your program. Although you may hear these terms used interchangeably or differently in other fields, we have attempted to provide the most common and clear uses of the terms and associated activities.

Vision

A vision is the “big picture,” values-based idea you and your stakeholders identify for your program or system of programs. It is an ideal picture of what the program will accomplish, so it should be aspirational. Your vision serves as the primary driver of all decisions relating to the program, so it needs to be defined before anything else, and it should be agreed upon by all. Once a vision is decided upon, you will not want to change it for a few years—the vision should be constant. A vision statement is something you can get behind, and stay behind. For example, the Nature Conservancy’s vision is “to leave a sustainable world for future generations.” They are probably not changing that anytime soon. An example of an afterschool and expanded learning program vision statement is:

*Our vision is to provide equal access to the arts
for all young people and families in our community.*

Use **Tool 36: Visioning Worksheet and Meeting Agenda** to begin developing your vision. You should use the information you collected through your asset mapping and/or needs assessment to inform your visioning process. If funding permits, it can be helpful to have an external person facilitate the visioning process. You will refer back to this vision as you begin to develop your goals, action steps, and theory of change—all described in greater detail below.

Important note: A vision statement is **not** a mission statement. Your mission statement is also important, but is often tied to your organization and may either already exist (if you are part of a larger organization) or be something you create later in support of your vision and in partnership with your board of directors and other key partners (if you are a newly created independent organization). At this point, focus on crafting a vision for your program that aligns with your values and identifies your program’s aspirations.



VOICES FROM THE FIELD | A Coordinated Approach to Programming

The Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) Service System in Multnomah County, Oregon, serves families and youth of all ages. SUN has a collaborative approach and shared vision for programming that has led to buy-in from the ground up. The program has Comprehensive Oversight Councils that are responsible for vision, policy, practice, and program instruction at all levels of the system. This includes multiple levels of involvement, from the mayor, county chair, and superintendent down to the hands-on staff. These agreements are codified, and provide protection and guidance for how all parties work together. In this system, for example, the county is the managing partner, and it supports staff positions at all three levels of the decision-making process. The SUN sponsors meet with the heads of the city, county, and district a few times per year. The SUN Coordinating Council consists of directors of community organizations who come together to agree on policy recommendations to present to local government leaders. The District Council meetings are then used to lay out the day-to-day details. This multi-jurisdictional approach to a shared vision allows SUN programs to support youth throughout Multnomah County.

To learn more, visit <https://web.multco.us/sun>.

Goals and Action Steps

Program goals are broad but understandable descriptions of how a program will achieve its vision. Goals often start with “To” statements. For example, two goals for the above vision (*to provide equal access to the arts for all young people and families in our community*) may be:

To provide a variety of arts classes after school

To provide free tickets to cultural events for young people and their families

Once you have established your goals, you need to develop a set of objectives to support those goals. The difference between a goal and an objective can be confusing, and we recommend calling objectives “action steps” to avoid confusion. Action steps are the tangible activities to achieve your goal. For example:

Partner with local arts organizations to facilitate on-site arts classes.

Tool 37: Goal Setting Worksheet will help you develop a set of overarching short- and long-term goals for your program and the action steps (objectives) to meet them.

Outcomes and Impact

You can’t go five steps in the afterschool and expanded learning field without someone asking you about outcomes and impact. We are in a heightened state of accountability and have an increasing understanding of what it takes to support young people in their development and learning. Outcomes are important, especially in evaluating the impact of your program and in the intentional planning of activities. It is important to note that outcomes are not the same as program goals. As stated earlier, program goals are broad statements that describe how a program will achieve its vision. In contrast, an outcome is a change in young people’s skills, beliefs, attitudes, or knowledge.  We discuss impact more fully in **Chapter 5**.

Here is an example of how a vision, goal, action step, and outcome statement fit together:

Vision	To provide equal access to the arts for all young people and families in our community
Goal	To provide a variety of arts classes after school
Action Step	Partner with local arts organizations to facilitate on-site arts classes
Outcome	Increased awareness of local arts traditions among participants

Outcomes aren't just statements of what you want to change for youth in your program. They need to have certain characteristics to make them useful in measuring and communicating those changes. They need to be based on your vision and program goals, and should be **SMART** (*Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Specific*):

- **Specific** – It is easy to create broad outcome statements that don't clearly mean anything. Instead, outcomes should be clear and identify specifically what you will achieve with your program.
- **Measurable** – Outcomes are not useful to you if you can't measure them. Make sure there is some concrete or tangible way to identify whether the outcome has been achieved.
- **Achievable** – Nothing is more frustrating for staff members, funders, and program leaders than creating lofty outcome goals that are impossible to accomplish. Your outcomes should be things you think your program can accomplish either in the short or long term. They need not be easy and basic—you should stretch yourself a bit—but they do not need to be so big that they are unattainable.
- **Relevant** – Outcomes should be relevant to your program. Don't plan to have an impact on things that your program doesn't target. Choose outcomes that are specifically related to the program activities you are planning.
- **Time-Specific** – Outcomes should be tied to a specific time frame to encourage staff members and partners to work toward them.

You want your outcomes to be SMART so that you can effectively understand and communicate how young people are experiencing your program and how they are faring as a result. For example, it is easy to say that you want to “make future citizens,” but how would you measure that? We recommend that you try to use the SMART criteria to set goals. This doesn't mean that you cannot dream big and make shared goals with youth that are more creative and complex, or that you cannot articulate outcomes in partnership with an evaluator that are more ambitious or longer term. Using SMART goals is a strategy that can help you and your program partners gauge youth outcomes in a way that is feasible and contextually driven. We also recognize that there are a lot of other strategies for setting goals, and we encourage you to use what is best for your program. Use **Tool 38: Developing SMART Outcomes** to develop a set of outcomes that are SMART.

We all know that our outcomes are influenced by many factors. A few examples are young people's internal assets, local context, and community—all of which are critical to development and learning. We cannot always control these factors in young people's development. We can however influence how many and what types of programs youth attend, and the quality of those programs. Together, internal assets, community context, program participation, and program quality influence outcomes in afterschool and expanded learning settings (Durlak, Mahoney, Bohnert, & Parente, 2010).

Theories of Change and Logic Models

Theories of change and logic models are both used to graphically depict how an organization intends to accomplish its vision, goals, and action steps, and ultimately its intended outcomes. A theory of change tends to be more theoretical or strategic, while a logic model is usually action oriented and explanatory, showing the tactics a program will use to achieve certain outcomes.

Theory of Change

A theory of change describes how a program or initiative gets from the vision to the intended set of outcomes. It is a picture of what you ultimately hope to accomplish with your program. Theories of change are depicted visually, and are ideally based upon research or evidence, or at the very least some sound common sense. They say, “We have a vision of X. We think that if we do Y (our planned activities), eventually Z (our outcome goals) will happen and we can achieve X.”

A theory of change allows the stakeholders in a program to show how they intend to make a change. This sets the stage for intentionality in program design and delivery. Use **Tool 39: Developing a Theory of Change** in conjunction with **Tool 36 (Visioning Worksheet and Meeting Agenda)** and **Tool 37 (Goal Setting Worksheet)** to develop your theory of change.

Logic Models

We have heard from many people that logic models are anything but logical! This section will hopefully demystify the logic model and show you what a great tool it can be for turning your program goals into a solid plan to achieve your desired outcomes. Logic models do not have to be overly complicated. A logic model shows the steps that need to take place to make your program goals happen. It is your picture of how things will change and how you will achieve your intended outcomes. You can start by using five main components:

1. Goals
2. Objectives/Action Steps
3. Inputs
4. Activities
5. Outcomes

In the table below, we explain what each category is and provide an example.

Table 5. Components of a Logic Model

Goals	Objectives/ Action Steps	Inputs	Activities	Outcomes
What is it?				
Remember these from the last section? Take them from Tool 37 and fill them in here!	Take these from your goal-setting process. Fill in the steps you noted in Tool 37 . You will likely think of more as you put them in action!	This is what you need to carry out the action steps, including staff members, supplies, and space. Don't forget to put your theory of change here; it is your most important input.	These are the actual activities staff members will do with young people. Many people start here and miss a lot of important pre-work.	This is where your SMART outcomes from Tool 38 should go. Some people like to break these up into long- and short-term outcomes; this will be dependent on your program's intention in promoting outcomes.
Example				
<i>To provide a variety of arts classes after school</i>	<i>Partner with local arts organizations to facilitate on-site arts classes.</i>	<i>Local arts partners, staff members, art supplies, messy space, and performance space.</i>	<i>Self portraits</i> <i>Dance</i> <i>African drumming</i> <i>Final showcase</i>	Increased awareness of local arts traditions among participants

One other commonly used category in logic models, not noted above, is outputs. Outputs are the results of an activity that are not the intended outcomes but are often helpful pieces of information on your way to determining outcomes. In some cases, the outputs help you evaluate the outcome. For example, program attendance and retention are often viewed as an output. That is, we know that young people who attend more often and over a longer time are more likely to reap the benefits of programming (Harvard Family Research Project, 2004, 2007), so attendance is an output that leads to outcomes such as improved achievement and acquisition of new skills. If you want to include outputs in your logic model, they fit between activities and outcomes.

It is important to note that there are many types and styles of logic models, and we can't even begin to describe them all here. A great resource is the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide (Kellogg, 2004), which provides basic building blocks for a logic model, as well as three major approaches to logic models, and myriad examples of ways to adapt them to fit your program. This is a great guide if you have the time and motivation to explore logic models in depth. For the purpose of program planning, we

suggest using the grid above, starting with your goals and working from left to right, making sure all the columns align with each other. In our experience, you may want to have more than one logic model. In fact, you should have one logic model for every major or overarching goal in your program. If you have more than one goal, it can really get too complicated if you try to create a single logic model for your whole program in one table. As with all of these planning processes, be sure to create your logic model with your stakeholders, share it, get feedback, and most importantly, make sure it aligns with your vision statement and/or theory of change. Use **Tool 40: Logic Model Planning Tool** to help you with your planning. This visual representation of your vision and plan should be posted to remind you of what you are setting out to accomplish.

There is no need to be intimidated by the idea of a logic model. Developing a logic model helps set the stage for the sustainability of your program because you will be able to tell potential partners or funders what your program hopes to achieve and how you expect to get there. You may need to revise your plan along the way, but at least you will have a framework for talking about it as you get started.

Building Evaluation Into Your Program to Promote Continuous Improvement

All of the activities above, and particularly the theory of change and the logic model, create a basis for thinking about how you will evaluate your program. The steps you have taken to develop your logic model and theory of change can help guide you in determining what sources of data you can use to show that your program is working and achieving its goals. This careful planning makes the job of collecting the proper data far easier. Looking forward and gathering your data as you go along is much more effective than going back and trying to find evidence for what you did. You can use your data in powerful ways to make a continued case for support of your program and to help build your long-term success.

Evaluation as a whole is addressed in **Chapter 5**, but from a program organization perspective, it is essential to think about your evaluation efforts as you organize your program so you can begin creating your success and sustaining your efforts in the long term.



More importantly, however, you can use those data to help you determine if you need to make any adjustments in your programming along the way. If you are keeping track of daily attendance, for example, and you note that attendance has dropped off for a given activity or for an individual participant in the program, acting on that information quickly can help keep your program improving. Decreased program attendance may signal that you need to look at how a specific activity is structured, or the kind of preparation the activity leader is doing. Looking into why a young person's attendance in the program has dropped off may reveal structural issues (e.g., the program isn't open late enough to close the gap between a family member's work schedule and school) or personal issues (e.g., unchecked bullying in the program or health or family issues), some of which can be addressed by directing resources differently. Simple data points can yield powerful lessons.



VOICES FROM THE FIELD | Embedding Evaluation Into Programming

With 22 centers, 5 camps, and more than 100 partner sites across Chicagoland, the YMCA of Metro Chicago provides programming to more than 60,000 youth from birth to age 18 every year. The Y recently strengthened its commitment to youth with a new mission to integrate programs, elevate quality, and increase impact on the lives of youth and families in the areas of academic readiness, character development, healthy living, and violence prevention. To fulfill this commitment, the Y has created the Office of Learning and Evaluation. Through continuous assessment, Learning and Evaluation team members work across the Association with program staff members to develop and share a portfolio of measurable, sustainable, quality programming. They also collect data that demonstrate the Y's impact on the people and communities served, share these data internally to promote a culture of transparency and continuous improvement, and report outcomes to stakeholders. By embedding evaluation into all programming, the Y fosters a multi-pronged, multidisciplinary perspective in its work to inform practice in the field—from engaging youth as active participants in their learning, to equipping families with comprehensive supports, to bringing community advocates together under the goal of improving outcomes for Chicago's youth.

Visit <http://www.ymcachicago.org> to learn more.

Crafting a Program Plan

Once you have a vision, theory of change, logic model, and set of goals and intended outcomes, you can begin to craft a program plan that reflects those important decisions. This isn't the time to work out the nitty-gritty details of your program structure (e.g., days per week, hours) or content (e.g., homework help, recreation, academic enrichment).



We will talk about these more in **Chapter 4** when it is time to develop your program structure. Rather, now is the time to think about your overarching program plan and how it can help you achieve your goals. You need to think about questions like:

- Who will we serve (grades, ages, targeted populations vs. general enrollment)?
- Will we be full year, including summer, or just school year?
- Are we going to be school-based or stand alone?
- Is this an academic program or a mixture of academics and enrichment?
- What types of staff members do we want to hire (e.g., certified teachers, youth development experts, community providers with particular expertise)?

Ideally, you can use the findings from the tools described previously to answer your questions. For example, if you conducted a market analysis and discovered that there are few program options for older youth that are year-round, you may opt to start offering year-round programs for high school youth. Likewise, if your asset mapping activity uncovered local arts partners who have programming but limited space or recruitment

capacity, you may want to consider partnering with them to offer arts programming for older youth. Finally, from your asset mapping and needs assessment, you may have learned the types of programming in which young people are interested. You can use this information to drive your planning. Drafting a program plan can be a useful activity that results in language that you can use in other documents (e.g., grant proposals, marketing materials). **Tool 41: Program Plan Template** contains an outline for a program plan that you can use to pull all the information you have gathered from the activities contained in  **Chapter 1** and **Chapter 2**.

Designing a Program That Intentionally Reflects Your Program Goals

Intentionality can mean a couple of things—being intentional in program planning and being intentional in implementation of that program.  We talk about the latter in **Chapter 4**. Here we are referring to the purposeful decisions about allocating resources, hiring staff members, and deciding on programming to meet your vision and reach your goals. For example, if your program vision is, “Every young person who wants to attend college can do so,” you would use this vision to help you make decisions about the programming you offer. You might offer field trips that allow young people to visit local colleges, or you might host workshops for family members on filling out college applications. When considering staffing, you might include work-study students from a local community college so your participants can see positive role models and build relationships that break down some barriers to college attendance. Decisions of these sorts are guided by intentionally considering your vision—as opposed to basing decisions on simple logistics, such as, “How are we going to fill two hours of programming?”

Another way to be intentional is to discuss your program’s goals, features, and outcomes with your advisory group and staff. As you craft your overarching program plan, you should engage your key stakeholders in a conversation about what you want to offer your participants, why you want to offer it, and how this will help them develop. The following questions might guide a planning session with your staff and advisory board:

- What is the overall purpose of our program?
- Does the purpose align with our program’s vision and goals?
- What skills will youth develop in our program?
- How do we want to recruit youth for our program?
- What outcomes do we want to achieve? How can we shape our program plan to help achieve these outcomes?
- How can our staffing structure help us to achieve our goals?

Use **Tool 73: Intentional Activities** to help maintain a focus on intentionality.  We will spend more time on intentionality in **Chapter 4**. The important thing to remember about program development is that it is cyclical. It changes as young people, communities, and schools change. As we mentioned in the previous section, you will use your evaluation findings to drive ongoing program development efforts.

A Note on Summer Programming

One key decision you will have to make is whether or not to offer a summer program. Summer programs provide unique opportunities that differ from school-year programs, including:

- The ability to provide continuity for youth who participate in your program all year
- More time for programming each day, and a wider variety of possible activities
- More time spent outdoors
- Availability of college and high school youth to work in your program
- More opportunity for partnerships
- Potential exposure to new experiences

Summer programs can prevent summer learning loss and expand learning opportunities. Summer programs can also provide a safe, fun, and engaging place for young people who are not in school to spend time when their parents are working or otherwise engaged. Most importantly, summer programs offer more time for young people to build relationships, explore their interests, and be successful academically without the pressure of school year tests and grades. Although there are a lot of benefits, developing and implementing a summer program does require additional planning, and can place a strain on funding and staffing and eat into reflection and planning time for the school year. For these reasons, think carefully about your capacity before committing to implementing a summer program.

Suggestions for Effective Summer Programs

- Consider a theme to overlay all of your activities, such as science (dinosaurs, space, airplanes, rockets, chemistry), literacy (in which youth read about areas around the world) or art history (museums, time

periods). For older youth, themes that engage them in important issues like “protecting the environment” or “preserving our community” can be particularly effective.

- Use quality instruction, and support staff members with training and planning time.
- Begin planning for the summer program at least six months in advance.
- Be sure to recruit an adequate number of well-trained staff members. A good ratio is 10:1. Take advantage of available college and high school students, but be sure there is an experienced, well-trained senior staff member for each activity as well.
- Offer a wide variety of activities, including enrichment activities (such as service learning, arts, music) and plenty of time to be outside and active. (**See Tool 42: Summer Program Schedule** for a sample programming schedule.)
- Within your activities, be sure to mix up the groupings (individual, partner, and group).
- Get the school, families, and community involved by offering wrap-around services, internships, and field trips.
- Have high expectations for everyone involved.
- Allow youth to have choices and a voice.

These tips just scratch the surface. The National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) is dedicated to helping summer programs develop strong, independent offerings that aren't just an add-on to school year programs, but have goals and structures of their own. If you plan to offer a summer program, visit the NSLA website (<http://www.summerlearning.org>) for more information and to order their guide on planning summer programs.

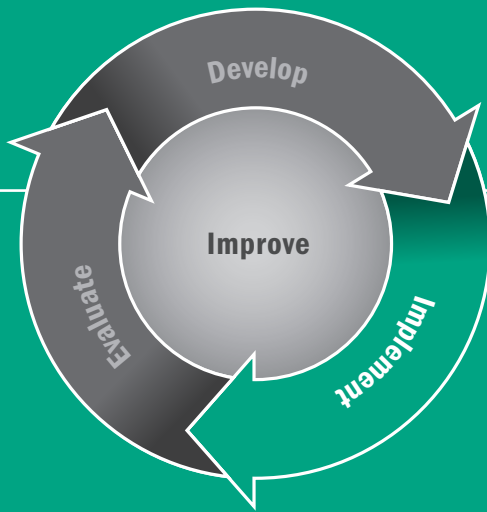
Conclusion

An essential aspect of an effective afterschool and expanded learning program is designing programming that will help you achieve your vision. It is essential to have guiding principles for your staff to follow when working with youth and delivering programming. Focusing on the principles of intentionality and youth development can help establish a solid program, no matter what the focus or vision is. Remember to spend quality time promoting and fostering planning and professional development for your staff members so they can deliver high-quality programming.

Points to Remember



- Develop a vision and goals with your stakeholder groups to build buy-in and decide how you will know you are reaching your vision.
- A logic model is a key visual representation of your strategy.
- A theory of change is a visual representation of your overall vision.
- Be intentional when you are planning programming to ensure that you are reaching your goals.
- Become familiar with youth development principles to foster positive development in youth and staff.



● CHAPTER 3

Partnerships and Collaboration

Partnerships and Collaboration

Your program does not operate in isolation but is connected to others through space, staffing, and activities. Partnerships are critical when thinking about programming and ensuring you are meeting the needs of young people, the school, families, and the community. Studies that looked at the core features of the best programs showed that strong partnerships with mutual, aligned goals were a key defining element (Birmingham, Pechman, Russell, & Mielke, 2005). This chapter begins to bridge the space between program development



and program implementation in the continuous improvement cycle. You will plan your partnerships and then begin establishing them to effectively deliver your program. In this chapter, we cover such topics as:

- Importance of partnerships
- School
- Family
- Community

Importance of Partnerships

Partnerships are vitally important to a successful afterschool and expanded learning program. Young people show the greatest gains when they participate regularly in programs that have strong connections to schools and families (Little, Wilmer, & Weiss, 2008). Strong partnerships do not happen overnight, but require intentional time and energy to develop and nurture. However, it is important to note that the payoff for maintaining successful partnerships is huge, with results ranging from improved program quality to more efficient use of resources and even improved sustainability over the long term (Griffin & Martinez, 2013; Little, 2009).

Although there may be a few struggles along the way, shared authority should be the goal for your partnerships. In a true collaboration, the distinction between “us” and “them” should blur. Sharing leadership should be seen as an expansion of perspectives rather than a ceding of power. It will take the active commitment of all partners to focus on the mission of the collaborative effort rather than on their own independent goals.

In addition, collaborative leadership suggests an acknowledgment that all staff members and volunteers feel empowered to act as leaders within their own roles. Leadership involves being assertive, motivational, and trustworthy; taking responsibility for one’s actions; building the capacity of others; and developing relationships with others.

Consider some of the following tips to help you in facilitating collaborative leadership:

- **Establish an efficient leadership structure with clarified roles and responsibilities.** Go back to **Tool 2: Partnership Planning Worksheet** to think through the details of your partnership and clarify who is doing what. You can also revisit **Tool 18: Calculation of In-Kind Contributions** to determine the value of in-kind services that your partners can provide to the program.
- **Establish a system that recognizes collaborative leadership.** Never underestimate the power of incentives.
- **Maintain open communication.** Everyone involved needs to be kept informed. Everyone needs opportunities to communicate so they can share information and reduce potential misunderstandings.
- **Foster commitment to the mission.** Facilitate an environment in which the beliefs that are shared by everyone are regularly focused on, so that even during heated discussions, collaborators will remember that they share common ground.
- **Share public acknowledgment.** Each partner needs to recognize in public the contributions of all collaborators. Partners need to agree to sink or swim together, at least until the end of their relationship.

Establishing Partnerships

As you form partnerships with other organizations or individuals, make sure you are all on the same page. Here are some things to think about during discussions with your potential partners:

- Develop and outline the vision of the program together, if applicable.
- Describe the proposed program or area of partnership.
- Highlight the need for the program or area of partnership.
- Outline the mutual benefits of the partnership.
- Invite the partner to suggest other programs or areas of partnership.
- Discuss the expectations for the program or area of partnership.
- Draft a memorandum of understanding outlining the respective responsibilities of each partner. See **Tool 43: Sample Memorandum of Understanding**.
- Be prepared, polite, and concise.

It is clear that partnerships are important for a successful program. This chapter focuses on three main areas of partnerships: school, family, and community. The next section focuses on the partnership between your program and the school or schools the young people attend during the day.

School

Partnerships between schools and afterschool and expanded learning programs are a two-way street and can benefit both the school and the program. Partnering with a program can help schools to:

- Provide a wider range of services and activities, particularly enrichment and arts activities, that are not available during the school day
- Offer youth an alternative learning environment within their school building
- Reinforce concepts taught in school
- Improve school culture and community image through exhibitions and performances
- Gain access to mentors and afterschool and expanded learning staff members to support in-school learning (Little, 2009)

At the same time, partnering with schools helps afterschool and expanded learning programs to:

- Gain access to and recruit groups of youth most in need of support services
- Access teaching staff members
- Foster better alignment of programming to support a shared vision for learning
- Maximize resource use such as facilities, staff members, data, and curriculum (Little, 2009)

Perhaps most importantly, partnerships between programs and schools benefit the young people involved because they can:

- Provide continuity of services across the day and year
- Facilitate access to a range of learning opportunities
- Facilitate the sharing of information about specific youth to best support individual learning (Little, 2009)

Partnering with a school involves a range of activities that need to be discussed and agreed on: sharing space (if the program is located in the school), aligning with the school-day curriculum, and communicating with school-day staff members about the progress of youth. This section will focus on these areas, with particular attention paid to the potential differences between programs that operate in a school and programs that operate in a non-school location, such as a community center.

Afterschool and expanded learning programs that achieve strong connections with the school day report that such connections compound the positive results of afterschool and expanded learning activities. Research supports this positive connection as well; in addition to sustained participation in a program run by qualified staff members, strong partnerships between the program and the school have been linked to positive youth

outcomes (Little, Wilmer, & Weiss, 2008). These programs make what is learned during the traditional school day vibrant and relevant to the lives of youth. No matter where your program is located—whether in the school building or at a community site—you can find ways to build these strong connections with the school day.

There are five principles that support successful partnerships between schools and afterschool and expanded learning programs:

1. A shared vision for learning and success, with explicit focus on supporting academics
2. Blended staffing models that enable crossover between school-day and expanded learning staff members
3. Partnerships at multiple levels within the school and district
4. Regular and reciprocal collection and sharing of information about youth progress
5. Intentional and explicit contrast between school and afterschool and expanded learning environments (Little, 2009)

A culture of connection depends on building trust, understanding, mutual respect, and common purpose between school and program staff members. It cannot be forced through persuasion, logic, or policies. As you ponder the decision points in this section, ask yourself, “Does this discussion [or action or policy] build trust, understanding, respect, and a sense of common purpose among everyone involved in this initiative?” Keeping this question in mind will help you promote a culture of connection that policies alone could never create.

A Note on Extended Learning Time

Although we refer to *afterschool and expanded learning programs* throughout this *Toolkit*, there is also a movement known as extended learning time that focuses on increasing the learning time for young people in schools. According to Redd et al. (2012), there are three extended learning time models: extended school day, extended school year, and expanded learning opportunities (ELO).

The extended school day model focuses on lengthening the actual school day and incorporating additional instructional time. In practice, this may mean lengthening class time, adding an additional class period to the end of the day, or adding supplemental programs (e.g., tutoring) in a core academic area. The extended school year model focuses on increasing the number of days that schools are required to be open in a given school year. The average school year in the United States is 180 days; however, this number varies from state to state.

The National Center on Time & Learning (<http://www.timeandlearning.org>) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to expanding learning time to improve student achievement through research, policy, and technical assistance; it promotes the two models described above. More information and the latest research on time and learning can be found on its website.

A third model, one that encompasses the type of programs discussed throughout this *Toolkit*, including before-school and afterschool programs, youth development programs, and service learning programs, is the ELO model. The ELO model focuses on offering additional supports to youth and their families both inside and outside the regular school day. ELO programs may intentionally connect in-school and out-of-school learning but are not simply adding more learning time that looks and feels like school. ELO programs are specifically designed to offer instruction to youth that differs from that of the school day, are characterized by a strong foundation in youth development theory, typically involve a partnership between schools and communities, and can take place both inside and outside the classroom. These opportunities can take place within an extended school day or an extended school year, but don't have to, and are defined by their format and content, not when and where they are offered.

Creating Partnerships Between School and Afterschool Staff Members

The key to developing partnerships is having shared information and experiences, open communication, and a clear understanding between afterschool and school staff members. There are two types of staff members at the school who may be involved in partnerships: the school administration (e.g., principal) and the staff (e.g., teachers, custodians, food service workers, guidance counselors, support staff members). Although both types of staff are important, the relationship between the principal and the program or site-level leadership needs special attention. In some afterschool and expanded learning programs, the site-level leader is a district employee and reports to the principal for direction and supervision. In others, the site-level leader is employed by an outside agency and is independent from the principal and the school itself. This separation can be intensified in programs that are held in a community center or other non-school location. In some community-based programs, principals may never have visited the program and may not know what it does or that it exists at all.

In order to develop a positive relationship, you should present your program as a resource for youth in the school. Principals are often very aware of the limited time teachers have with young people in the classroom and welcome additional supports for their students. As a first step, schedule a meeting with the principal at the beginning of the school year to establish mutual goals and discuss preferred communication methods (e.g., in-person meetings, email, phone). During this meeting, establish clear roles with regard to the program. You can use **Tool 44: Template for Introductory Communication With Principals and School Staff** when you first reach out. **Tool 45: Shared Responsibility Worksheet for the Program Leader and Principal** provides a great place to start the conversation. In addition, **Tool 46: Draft Agenda for Meeting With the Principal** provides guidance on structuring your meeting agenda.

Staff members of programs have to realize that good principals have strong attachments to their staff and school. Principals also realize that district personnel, families, and community members will hold them responsible for what occurs in the building (for programs that operate on site). Even for programs that operate off site, the principal may feel responsible for the care and instruction of young people, especially if they are bused or driven to the program location directly from the school. These factors may result in a reluctance to turn over control (of youth or the building) to someone else after the school day has ended. Once again, showing trust and having a shared purpose are essential.

Another set of issues is raised in community-based programs that serve youth from multiple schools. Working with several building principals who likely have different visions of how the program should support the school day can be a tremendous challenge. This interaction requires focused and intentional work at relationship building and the development of a common vision for the program.

When working with school principals, plan to do some of the following tasks:

- Keep your communications positive and helpful. A key moment that many principals have noted is when they realize that the afterschool or expanded learning program can help the school reach its goals, rather than be one more responsibility.
- If you haven't done so already, read and be familiar with the school's improvement plan (it is usually found online or in the school's main office)—what are ways your program can help achieve the school's goals? Which school goals are in line with your program's goals?
- Set a regular time to meet and discuss how things are going (preferably in one-on-one sessions, though group meetings may be helpful as well). Sometimes this requires a walk-and-talk meeting. Remember: Principals are busy. Try to be flexible in your approach to communicating with them.
- Encourage principals to be active members of the advisory group.
- Request that program leaders be invited to meetings of school planning teams (e.g., school improvement planning committee).
- Establish clear lines of supervision.
- Agree on the respective responsibilities of the school principal and program leadership.
- Remember that there are fewer demands on principals during the summer months. This may be the time to work out overall planning or timing issues.

In addition to connecting with the principal, you should try to connect with other school staff members, including teachers. No one likes to feel “out of the loop” or be the last to find out a key piece of information about a program or young person. Because people gather information in various ways, it's important to communicate your message in various formats. Sharing successes, as well as challenges, will allow program staff members and school-day teachers to celebrate together as well as troubleshoot ways to support individual participants.

Good ways to share information with teachers and staff members include the following:

- Send a memo to the school staff. Use **Tool 47: Template for Communicating With School Staff** as a sample.
- Host an informational breakfast for the school staff at the school or program location. Serve treats, juice, and coffee; discuss things such as program information, anecdotal success stories, and any evidence of positive outcomes from the program. Make sure you document the stories you hear.
- Attend school staff meetings. Try to be a regular part of the agenda. Use **Tool 48: School Staff Meeting Topics** to build awareness of the program's goals.

- If appropriate and approved by the principal, attend (or have key program staff attend) school professional development days.
- If practical, have program staff members eat lunch in the teacher lunchroom.
- Have a column in the daily/weekly/monthly school bulletin about what is happening in the program.
- Have a program bulletin board on the wall outside the school office. Update it regularly with pictures, program schedules, and other relevant information.
- Share information about upcoming events on the school's website and seek permission to link your program's website to and from the school's.
- Select, appoint, or hire a liaison (preferably a school faculty member) to interact with school staff members on behalf of the program.
- Work with the school principal to establish regular meeting times between program and school staff members.
- Use available technology (e.g., email, text, voicemail) to allow program staff members to remain in regular communication with school staff members.
- If you are operating in a school building, take the time to seek out custodians and kitchen staff members. Let them know what the program is doing. Ask them whether they are experiencing additional work as a result of the program.

The key here is sharing information and informing the school staff about what the program is doing. Keep requests for help to a minimum.

Pay attention not only to what you communicate but also to how you communicate it. Consider the impact of daily conversation on building a supportive culture. All staff members should ask themselves the following questions: “Do our discussions demonstrate respect for others as professionals?” “Do we deal with problems openly (if possible) and constructively rather than allowing them to become the subject of rumors and bitterness?” Small, everyday interactions can be positive experiences that foster unity between the program and the school.



Blended staff models (discussed in **Chapter 1**) are a good way to foster partnership between the afterschool and expanded learning program and school-day staff members. Even if only some staff members cross over between the two, they can help to communicate with other school-day staff members and also provide context for the program and its goals.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD | Aligning With the School Day



Not Your Ordinary School (NYOS) serves youth of all ages in Austin, Texas, and is committed to aligning its program curriculum with the school day. NYOS staff members participate in frequent and ongoing meetings with the principal and assistant principal of the school; collect benchmark data in the beginning, middle, and end of the year; and use those data to determine three specific skills to focus on for all young people. The program is able to focus on specific improvements for youth outcomes because it has a concise vision of what is important to the program and school administration. NYOS reviews the data and related goals frequently to maintain focus. NYOS emphasizes a blended learning environment and provides opportunities for independent learning, Smartboard activities, computer time, and guided learning. Young people have multiple ways to reach their focused academic goals through opportunities geared toward a variety of learning styles, offered in a fun and engaging way.

For more information, visit <http://www.nyos.org>.

Aligning the Curriculum and Activities

High-quality afterschool and expanded learning programs create connections with the curriculum and instruction offered by the regular school day but do not duplicate what goes on during the school day. Instead, they offer highly interactive, engaging activities that emphasize skills acquisition, problem solving, exposure to new experiences, and significant relationships with caring adults. Afterschool activities are typically smaller and more informal than school-day classes, with an emphasis on active participation. Youth can generate their own ideas for activities, which can be completed in shorter (or longer) time blocks than in the traditional school day. Afterschool activities enhance and enrich the lessons offered during the traditional day.

Ensuring strong alignment between schools and afterschool and expanded learning programs requires creative thinking and collaboration. The most important factor in achieving linkages is not a formal structure of activities and policies. Rather, it is the underlying feelings, perceptions, and behaviors of program and school staff members. As we mentioned previously, it is the “culture of connection” rather than the “policies of connection” that determines whether a link between the classroom and the program is truly established.

One reason to intentionally align the afterschool and expanded learning program to the regular school day is to promote learning and school success for youth who participate in the program. Alignment can be made through homework help, tutoring, enrichment events, and recreational activities. But focusing on alignment with the school day does not imply replication of the school day. Many programs strive to offer a different learning environment

for youth who are not experiencing success in a traditional school setting. Thus, program staff members should not perceive that working with the school means losing what distinguishes it from the school. School and program staff members can work together to bring about a broader understanding of opportunities for learning.

The following questions should help you identify how well your programming is aligned with the school day:

- Are programs selected and designed based on needs revealed by the school's student assessments?
- Are programs selected and designed around curriculum guidelines?
- Are programs aligned with standards adopted by the district or state?
- Are programs selected, designed, and operated based (at least in part) on school-day teacher feedback? Use **Tool 49: Identifying Program-School Alignment Opportunities** to ask school-day teachers about subjects or topic areas in which their students need additional assistance.
- Do school-day teachers regularly share the specific needs of their students—skills that should be learned more completely—with program staff members?
- Do programs include activities (e.g., field trips, youth performances, lab experiments, and use of community space or resources) that build on school-day lessons by using the less restrictive environment and time constraints available after school? Use **Tool 50: School Day Alignment Progression** to identify various types of linkages between afterschool and expanded learning programs and the school day and how well your program is currently linking to the school day.

When school-day teachers and program staff members realize that they share the same goal of giving young people the competence, confidence, and character to be successful, the different ways to accomplish this goal will not seem divisive. Try these strategies to promote alignment:

- Ask the school principal and the teachers to provide information about the curriculum and state or local standards for the program staff to use in planning activities.
- Develop ways for program staff members and school-day teachers to communicate any changes they notice in a young person's achievement, behavior, or attendance.
- Have young people create a newspaper that includes stories about school and program events.
- Encourage program staff members and school-day teachers to work together to assess progress at the end of each marking period.
- Invite school-day teachers to present a series of in-service sessions for program staff members on successful literacy and mathematics strategies.

- Plan field trips based on lessons being taught during the school day. Use **Tool 51: Template for Field Trip Planning and Communication With School Staff Members** to connect field trips with classroom learning. Be sure to use **Tool 52: Field Trip Permission Form** to request permission from family members for their children to attend a field trip.
- Work with school-day teachers to provide activities for young people to do during tutoring or homework time in the program. Teachers can send a list of homework for the day to tutors or homework center instructors; program staff members can provide feedback on individual progress with homework.
- Include the afterschool and expanded learning program in individualized education programs. Special education teachers can work closely with program staff members to plan activities and discuss progress.
- Provide program enrollment forms that homeroom teachers can distribute to all youth.
- Ask teachers to “recruit” and recommend young people for the program. Teachers may want to focus especially on youth in danger of being retained.
- Before and during the standardized testing period, have program staff members show support by holding meetings to inform families about the tests and plan activities to reduce youth anxiety.
- Find out if school-day teachers would be willing to allow program staff members to attend parent-teacher conferences.
- Have your staff members sit in on school-day classes and then create art, music, and drama activities that extend classroom learning.

A Note on Common Core State Standards

The Common Core State Standards were developed through a collaboration of the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers to build on individual states' work on standards. The Common Core State Standards are for grades K–12 in English language arts and mathematics, and they clearly articulate what is expected of youth at each grade level. At the time of printing, 45 states, the District of Columbia, four territories, and the Department of Defense Education Activity have adopted the Common Core State Standards. You can learn more by visiting <http://www.corestandards.org>.

Check to see if your state has adopted Common Core. You should be able to find your state's implementation plan on your state education agency's website. Through the strategies you are learning in this *Toolkit* for aligning your program with the regular school day, you will implicitly be connecting to the Common Core. However, a more explicit connection can be made through intentional planning. Use **Tool 53: Aligning With Learning Standards** as you develop your activities.

Ways for your program to intentionally connect to and support the Common Core State Standards:

- Identify similarities and differences between the Common Core and afterschool and expanded learning standards in your state (if applicable), and align the two sets.
- Help educate family members about the Common Core and how to apply learning in the subject areas with their children at home.
- Provide orientation and planning time for staff members to integrate learning standards into activities and projects.
- Organize and coordinate staff members to provide support to participants in staff members' areas of strength.
- Send staff members to professional development sessions on the Common Core. (Look for district-based or state-led professional development.)
- Establish a professional learning community by offering joint professional development for program and school-day staff members.
- Have program staff members attend school-day planning sessions with teachers.
- Communicate with the school administration, emphasizing the additional space, time, and flexibility that afterschool and expanded learning programs offer when implementing the Common Core.

Common Core State Standards *Habits of Mind*

In addition to the content standards for mathematics and English language arts, each set of standards is accompanied by a set of *Habits of Mind*, or skills and dispositions young people will need to succeed and be prepared for graduation and what comes after it. These Habits of Mind are referred to as the *Capacities of a Literate Individual* and *Standards of Mathematical Practice* for the English language arts and mathematics standards, respectively. We outline each below.

English Language Arts Capacities

As young people advance through the grades and master the standards in reading, writing, listening, and language, they should be able to exhibit with increasing fullness and regularity these capacities of the literate individual:

1. They demonstrate independence (e.g., form judgments and opinions, make predictions about what will happen next).
2. They build strong content knowledge (e.g., read non-fiction, read more challenging material).

3. They respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline (e.g., compare texts, learn to write well).
4. They comprehend as well as critique (e.g., explain what author is thinking).
5. They value evidence (e.g., support oral and written arguments by using evidence).
6. They use technology and digital media strategically and capably (e.g., investigate, research, use citations).
7. They come to understand other perspectives and cultures (e.g., expand vocabulary, expand perspective).

Mathematical Practices

For young people to succeed, they must increasingly develop varied expertise at all levels. Through activities, projects, and games, afterschool and expanded learning programs can help participants:

1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them (e.g., define the problem, plan solutions, monitor progress, and change course if necessary).
2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively (e.g., create a coherent representation of the problem).

3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others (e.g., can justify their conclusions and respond to the arguments of others).
4. Model with mathematics (e.g., apply math content and skills in the real world).
5. Use appropriate tools strategically (e.g., know tools and be able to choose appropriate ones to use).
6. Attend to precision (e.g., communicate clearly and precisely).
7. Look for and make use of structure (e.g., discern patterns and structure).
8. Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning (e.g., prove they know why and how the math works).

From the Common Core State Standards: Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematical Practice, <http://www.corestandards.org> (parenthetical examples added by *Beyond the Bell*). Copyright 2012. National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers. All rights reserved by author.

Data Sharing

As mentioned previously, one of the five principles of effective partnerships between schools and afterschool and expanded learning programs is sharing information about youth progress (Little, 2009). It is important for the program to have access to school-level data (e.g., grades, report cards, behavior, school-day attendance) for several reasons:

- It provides the opportunity for program staff members to understand a young person's school experience.
- It provides the program staff information on all of the participants, allowing the staff to plan programs that expand learning.
- It provides a platform for program staff members and teachers to discuss successes and opportunities for improvement for individual participants.
- It provides valuable data for program evaluation  (see **Chapter 5** for more information on evaluation).
- It adds another caring adult to the parent-teacher conversation about young people's school experience.

Tool 54: Tips for Data-Sharing Agreements With School Partners provides an example of a data-sharing agreement between the school and the program. Use this to facilitate talks with the principal or other appropriate staff members at the school (e.g., guidance counselors).



As discussed in **Chapter 2**, afterschool and expanded learning programs should be designed around the needs of young people. One aspect of this is to assess academic needs. Program staff members should also have access to school data to show participant growth and skill development over time. Access to classroom expectations via teacher websites or such programs as *Blackboard* or *PowerSchool* can help give your program a better understanding of classroom expectations, activities, and performance.

Keeping youth data organized is easier with a participant file—ideally both electronically and in hard copy to accommodate a variety of different types of information. Information in each participant's file may include the young person's contact information, school information (grade level, teacher's name, grades, and test scores), allergy or health issues, and behavior supports. **Tool 14: Portfolio Guide** can help you think through the types of information to share with school-day teachers. Information collected from the teachers can be used to develop and implement relevant program activities that meet the needs and interests of young people in the program.

Allocating Space and Resources

Often the program must share space and resources with other entities. Creating a collaborative environment is critical to the success of an afterschool and expanded learning program, whether it is in a school, community center, library, cultural institution, or park. From the get-go, program staff members should be transparent about the space and resource needs of the program and be flexible to accommodate the pre-existing programs. For example, a program may have to alternate days for its dance program if the gym is being used by a sports team in the winter. It's these kinds of collaboration and compromises that set the groundwork for successful resource sharing. Collaboration is often facilitated through relationships built in the processes and structures described in previous chapters, such as asset mapping and the advisory board.

Sharing space for the ultimate benefit of the young people is the goal. Along the way, a good afterschool and expanded learning program can be a resource for the teachers, community members, and staff members. Try some of the following:

- Clearly define—in writing—the space that will be used and the days and times of use.
- Use “our” language to express the idea of sharing. (For example, say “Our youth went to the art museum.”)
- Let teachers know what activities will take place in their classrooms.
- Work out a schedule with physical education staff members for use of the gym and fields. If sports teams tie up all of the gyms, find an alternative space at local community agencies. Remember, with a little furniture moving, cafeterias can make great gyms.
- Invest in some storage cabinets on wheels. Bring supplies to the activities.
- Speak to the maintenance staff early. Develop a mutually agreeable schedule for cleaning the space used by the program.
- Decide what will happen if something is damaged.
- Purchase extra supplies and replenish them frequently.
- Check in regularly with teachers about how things are going.
- Express your appreciation to school staff members who share their space or assist the program. Say thank you often and in many ways.



Tips for Showing Appreciation for Program Partners

- Leave a written note.
- Have young people create a giant “thank you” card.
- Leave a vase of flowers two or three times a year.
- In a newsletter, acknowledge partners who share space.
- Have an appreciation breakfast for partners who share their space or who go out of their way to help.
- Pass out notepads that say “I share my space with the afterschool and expanded learning program.”
- Ask local restaurants to donate gift certificates, and then present the certificates to those who have helped your program succeed.

Partnering With a School as an Outside Provider

As an organization providing services in the school building, you may at times feel like an outsider. In addition to all the turf issues involved with management of responsibilities and space, outside programs often have difficulty gaining teacher acceptance in the schools where they operate. Sometimes they are seen as interlopers or additional hassles for teachers. The keys to resolving these difficulties are getting the school staff to buy in to the program and demonstrating your respect for the staff’s work. Here are some potential ways to integrate an outside program into the school:

- Treat school-day staff members as the experts they are. They will know quite a bit about your participants, including their backgrounds and needs. Ask them to provide their expertise, and then show them that you are taking actions based on their input.
- Be especially considerate of space and control issues, as described in previous sections. Until the school accepts you as a fully integrated part of the school services, act as a courteous guest. (After they accept you, act as a courteous friend.)
- Offer to help the school-day staff members any way you can. Ask how your services will best help their students, and then show them how you are addressing those needs.

One of the most difficult challenges about being based outside the school is keeping school staff members informed about what your program does and how it is helping the young people. Try some of the following strategies to let school staff members know about your program:

- Keep the school staff—especially the principal—up to date on the activities you are doing and on the outcomes for young people. You may want to distribute a

newsletter, post materials on school bulletin boards, or send emails. Try to use the school's established means of communication if possible.

- Schedule meetings with new teachers as part of their orientation process. Let them know about your program and how it can help them.
- Have the principal and other school staff members visit your program. Make it easy for them to drop in anytime to observe.
- Go to school board meetings, curriculum days, school staff meetings, and other functions where you will be able to meet and share information with school staff members. Remember that most of your time should be spent listening or providing information about how your program can help the school. Only rarely should you ask for help.
- Have young people create a program newsletter that is distributed to the school staff. Youth can write about what happens in the program as well as other topics of interest.
- Maintain a website that is linked to and from the main school site. Keep the site updated with your program activities, youth anecdotes, and other information of interest to the school staff.

If you are not sharing the school's space and do not have a presence in the school's operations, you will need to be more intentional about creating strong bonds with the school to provide the most benefit to the young people. In addition to the general suggestions listed earlier, here are some specific suggestions for ensuring that your externally based afterschool and expanded learning program is supporting the school day:

- Hire school staff members as assistants in your program. These assistants do not need to be classroom teachers. For example, librarians, office staff members, technology staff members, and others often have the advantages of knowing most of the young people in the program and may also be happy to work extra hours after school.
- Devise clear guidelines and policies for picking young people up from the school and transporting them to the program. Make sure that school staff members are aware of these guidelines and policies. Follow these guidelines carefully. The school and families will feel better about your program if they know that you have solid and effective safety policies in place.
- Talk with school staff members and listen to their suggestions for how your program could best support their work. If you use any of their ideas, be sure to let them know. This interchange is also a good way of letting them know about your program.
- Provide a means of communicating with teachers about the needs of individual youth, including homework logs and individualized education programs. Talk with school-day teachers about what means of communication works best for them.



For more ideas, see the tools in **Chapter 4**.

- Capitalize on the advantages of being an externally based program by finding out what sorts of activities the teachers would like their students to experience but have not been able to provide; you may have the freedom and flexibility to offer experiences and instruction that youth cannot get through school-based programs.

Linking afterschool and expanded learning programs with the traditional school day is not an easy task, nor one that can be forced through policies. A policy may change behavior, but it does not change beliefs. Because such linkages require a paradigm shift for most teachers, acceptance likely will be a gradual process of accumulating positive experiences as teachers work with program staff members toward the shared goal of helping young people be the best they can be. With a commitment to building trust through formal tactics and everyday interaction and respect, all programs can achieve the goal of alignment with the traditional school day.

Family

One of the most important assets in your program is the family members. Research shows that family involvement in afterschool and expanded learning programs increases young people's achievement and success. Young people have more positive attitudes and behavior, higher graduation rates, greater enrollment in post-secondary education, and lower participation in risky behaviors when parents are involved in their school and afterschool and expanded learning programs (Perkins, Christner, Hoy, Webster, & Mock, 2004).

Having said that, we know that family involvement and engagement can be challenging. Ongoing communication between the program and families is critical for getting and keeping families involved. Afterschool staff members should be prepared to establish active lines of communication with family members. This section focuses on clearly articulating what is desired from family involvement, how to communicate effectively with families, and how to create a welcoming environment.

Determining Different Levels of Family Involvement

Family involvement in afterschool and expanded learning programs can come in many different forms, such as making suggestions for activities, volunteering during the program, or attending an adult education course coordinated by the program. The Build the Out-of-School Time Network (BOSTnet, n.d.) suggests three levels of family involvement in programs:

- **Participation.** The typical roles of any family members: signing up their child for the program and special activities, communicating with the staff to give insight on their child's personal situation and behavior, picking up the child from the program, and attending family night.

- **Engagement.** Being directly involved in the program itself through things like volunteering, becoming a tutor, or taking adult education classes.
- **Leadership.** Taking responsibility for the direction of the program by serving on a family advisory committee or board of directors for the program, becoming a staff member, or leading a workshop for youth or adults.

Note: The Build the Out-of-School Time Network uses the term *involvement*, rather than *participation*, for the first of the three levels. We have substituted *participation* for consistency with the rest of this section.

Program staff members should use **Tool 55: Family Engagement and Interest Survey** to determine the family's level of interest in offering its time, participating in adult classes, donating resources, assisting with fundraising, or sitting on the advisory board.

Family members are more likely to participate in programming if it is designed to meet their specific needs and interests, as well as support their child. For example, program staff members should follow up with family members who express interest in adult classes to find out preferred topics (e.g., parenting, managing finances, continuing education, and computer literacy, to name a few). These classes should also be offered at times that work for the majority of adult participants.

The 10 Truths of Family Involvement

- All families have hopes and goals for their children, but they differ in how they support their children's efforts to achieve those goals.
- Home and school are both important influences on young people; each needs to work with the other for the young people's benefit.
- The family is the central contributor to a young person's education, and the program must recognize the potential of the family.
- Families are busy—sometimes too busy to be involved in the program in traditional ways. Family engagement requires broadening the definition of involvement.
- Family involvement is a process. It requires ongoing energy and effort.
- Family involvement requires a vision, a policy, and a framework to build a consensus of understanding.
- The cornerstone of family involvement is families' interaction with their own children. Programs need to find ways to bring families together and recognize the difficulty some family members may experience in connecting with their children, particularly older youth.
- Most barriers to involvement are found within school or program practices, not within families.
- Any family member can be hard to reach, and each should be dealt with on an individual basis rather than defined based on gender, ethnicity, family situation, education, or income.
- Successful family involvement nurtures relationships and partnerships between home and school, family and education, parent/guardian and child, and school and community.

Family Advisory Boards

Family members can partner with your program by taking on a leadership role, such as serving on the program's advisory group or the family advisory board, if applicable. Involvement in planning allows family members to offer resources and develop strategies for sustainability. Active family involvement can provide valuable information that can assist in program development and implementation. Afterschool staff members should be prepared to formally solicit feedback and suggestions on program activities, participant interests, areas of concern, and resources that families can offer to the program.

Creating a family advisory group can have solid benefits for your program in terms of buy-in and support. Keep in mind that not every program will need a family advisory group in addition to its regular advisory board. For example, in some situations existing groups at the school, such as the parent-teacher organization, fill this role. If so, you can tap into these pre-existing groups to garner support for the program. However, if family voice is not sought currently, creating a subcommittee of your advisory group or a stand-alone family advisory group might make sense. Here are some considerations when using a family advisory group:

- Recruit members for your advisory group while you are still planning your program, and get their input on how to start out. Having them on board from the beginning helps them to feel ownership of the program.
- Make an effort to include a diverse array of opinions and situations so that you are getting a representative sampling of the views of the young people's families.
- Have consistent meetings, probably on a monthly basis. Meetings should generally be on the same night of the week and at the same time so that families can work it into their schedule.
- Decide on the size of the group. More than 15 to 18 members may become unwieldy, but fewer than 7 or 8 may not be representative of the families as a whole.
- Create an agenda and a list of meeting goals for each meeting ahead of time in order to focus the group and increase efficiency. You can use **Tool 4: Template for Advisory Board Agenda** to help you create an agenda for meetings. Topics of discussion can include current or upcoming activities, program needs, policies, and specific situations (but be careful to respect youth and family privacy concerns).
- Create subcommittees for specific needs, such as planning special events, fundraising, and hiring staff members and volunteers.
- Provide copies of all needed materials to all participants.
- Send all members a copy of the minutes and a summary of any next steps or action items after each meeting.
- Be sure to follow up on items expressed as concerns. You may not be able to address all issues, but a clear recognition that you are doing what you can and actively trying to work on them can build long-term trust.

Here are some ideas for how families can be involved in each of these three levels and how the program can encourage more involvement:

Table 6. Levels of Family Involvement

Level	Examples of Involvement	Suggestions for Encouraging This Level of Involvement
Participation	■ Signing children up for the program ■ Picking children up and dropping them off on time ■ Reading at home with their child, or having their child read to them ■ Attending an end-of-program showcase	■ Have a family reception at the time of registration. Offer food and a chance to meet with staff members. ■ Call family members at least twice during the program session to confirm registration and encourage positive attendance practices. ■ Create a “read at home with your family” program, in which young people take books home and read with their family on a daily or weekly basis. ■ Host an end-of-program showcase where youth can present what they have learned or display work. Have food and activities for family members.
Engagement	■ Volunteering as a tutor ■ Providing snacks ■ Chaperoning a field trip ■ Attending a parent-teacher meeting ■ Taking part in the family telephone tree ■ Donating money to the program ■ Taking an adult education class	■ Survey family members about their interests, their goals for their children, activities they would like to see in the program, and so on. Use the results to make changes to your program. Share the results with families. ■ Provide additional family services, such as parenting classes, classes for English language learners, and GED courses. If possible, offer child care during these times.
Leadership	■ Joining the family advisory group ■ Working as a staff member to lead a particular activity or session ■ Organizing a meeting ■ Teaching an adult education course	■ Ask family members to recruit other families to help with the program by creating flyers, making phone calls, or even visiting their neighbors’ homes. ■ Create a family leadership or advisory group. Encourage this group to make suggestions and help guide the direction of your program. ■ Survey family members on what types of interests or hobbies they have. Design ways to allow family members to teach these skills to young people through workshops, field trips, and classes. Then contact the families, offer your suggestions, and encourage them to teach a class. ■ Use Tool 56: Volunteer Form to encourage family members and other stakeholders to volunteer with your program.

Communicating Effectively With Families

Ongoing communication between the program and families is probably the most important factor in getting families involved and keeping them involved. This section focuses specifically on targeting communication toward families.

Here are some strategies for communicating with families:

- Keep family members informed of program activities and their child's progress through newsletters, notes home, phone conversations, or face-to-face meetings. If possible, try to speak with each family at least once per month and contact them for positive reasons, not just to report problems. Tell them when their child is doing a good job or has developed a new skill or interest.
- If appropriate and possible (particularly in instances where communication is challenging or an interpreter is needed), set up appointments to visit a family at home. This is a good option for programs with licensed clinical social workers (LCSWs) or other trained family engagement specialists on staff.
- Handwrite notes to family members about their child's progress or upcoming events.
- Give family members opportunities to supplement the program with activities at home, such as reading with their child, having their child read to them, or working on a science or art project.
- Communicate with family members but also provide ways for families to communicate with you and with each other. If you have a family newsletter, include a "letters to the editor" section or have family members write articles.
- If you have a family night, give family members a forum to share their experiences and ideas.
- Use family surveys such as **Tool 55: Family Engagement and Interest Survey** to gauge family members' interests and needs.
- Have a staff member devoted to coordinating family communication and involvement, if possible.
- Host an annual *Lights On Afterschool* open house for your program. (For details, see the Afterschool Alliance website at <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org>.)
- Find out where family members in your community spend time, and go there. Talk to people and be approachable. Be present at community and school sporting events, art displays, and other places you can talk to family members.
- Bring in focus groups of family members to determine what they would like the program to provide. If possible, have a young person lead the focus group with a set of prepared questions. Provide translation services if necessary. Use **Tool 88: Tips for Running Good Focus Groups** from  **Chapter 6** to guide your discussion.
- Set up a family advisory group with whom you can discuss upcoming activities and the needs of the program.

- Have a presence at school activities such as curriculum nights and parent-teacher conferences.
- Show your support for young people outside of the program by going to school plays, music events, basketball games, or other events.
- Talk to local faith leaders to gain their support and understanding of your program. See if you can get a notice in the bulletin or have an announcement made.
- Create a website that your families can use to keep up with the activities and events of your program and the community. If possible, incorporate interactive components such as message boards. Designing, creating, and maintaining the website may be a good project for older youth or families as well.
- Add a link to your website (or request your own page) on the school's website. Family members often use the school's website as a key communication method, and can learn more about your program easily if they are new to the school or looking for afterschool services.

In order to prepare for communication with family members, you and your staff need to keep information about families organized and easily accessible. Each participant's file should have a section pertaining to the family. Information in this section includes legal guardian, number of siblings, and results of the **Family Engagement and Interest Survey (Tool 55)**, as well as emergency contact information, family member availability, and other key information that can be applied to the development of the program.

Program staff members should refer to **Tool 57: Template for Introductory Communication With Families** to help establish communication about your program with family members.

Tips for Engaging Family Members of Older Youth



Family engagement for elementary school programs and high school programs may look very different. Remember that at the high school level, young people may not want their families involved, and families may be struggling to connect with their children. In addition, programs serving older youth are less likely to have opportunities for pick-up and drop-off communication as youth become more independent in getting themselves home.

If you are serving high school youth, you may have to be a little bit more creative about engaging families. You can still reach out to them via phone, but you may need to send surveys, invitations to events, and information through mail or email rather than sending them home in a young person's backpack. Ask youth in your program to help you determine the best way to involve their families, including planning an end-of-session event. Ask youth to conduct focus groups or develop a family survey. Have youth develop flyers or create a program newsletter to go home to families. If youth own the communication, they may be more likely to support it and want to get their families involved.

Creating a Welcoming Environment

In addition to communicating effectively with families, the program must create a welcoming environment. Families should feel comfortable talking to the program and site-level leadership and staff, observing their children, and participating at whatever level they are able.

Here are some strategies for creating a welcoming environment:

- Post welcome signs in all of the languages spoken by your young people's families.
- Have a designated space (such as a "family center") for family members.
- Create an environment that reflects the diversity of the families in your program.
- Maintain a welcome board in your family center and include visitor or volunteer information, photographs of recent events, and other information of interest to families.
- Encourage families to visit and to observe or participate in activities with their children.
- Offer field trips and ask family members to chaperone. Go to the swimming pool, the park, the zoo, a skating rink, the local hospital, or anywhere that families will be able to interact with children and feel engaged in the program.
- Create an open atmosphere where families always feel welcome to come and observe the program or their child.
- Provide incentives for families to come to family night: free child care, games that families can play together, door prizes such as video store or movie certificates, and good food.
- Provide age-appropriate resources for older or younger siblings in your family center so the siblings will be occupied and families will not feel rushed when picking up their child.
- Make it easy for family members to volunteer in the program by providing child care, offering a flexible time schedule, and setting clear expectations.

Use the tried-and-true methods of involving family members: feed them and put their kids on stage. For example, have an awards show and reception during which young people are recognized for their accomplishments: most books read, greatest team player, top attendance. Encourage families to talk with staff members and with each other during the reception.

Why Some Families Do Not Participate and How You Can Respond

There are many reasons families may be reluctant to participate in your program. Understanding these reasons will help you figure out how to address them and get your families more involved. Here are some of the more common reasons for not getting involved and some suggestions for how to deal with them.

Table 7. Strategies for Promoting Family Participation

Barriers to Participation	Strategies to Encourage Participation
Family members have a history of bad experiences with schools, leading to misgivings about educational organizations of any type.	Visit family members at home, where they may feel more comfortable and in control. At your location, provide a space that is designated for families so that they don't feel like they are intruding.
Family members distrust institutions in general and believe that authority figures are not on their side.	Provide constant communication to families about your activities and their children's successes. Have a meeting with them early on to set out your goals for their child's development and to make sure that your goals match up with theirs.
Family members have discomfort in speaking to teachers and staff members, either due to past experiences or a general lack of confidence.	Ease families into the process of conversing with teachers and staff members by intentionally creating opportunities for nonthreatening conversations. Some possible examples are small talk at family night or at school sporting events.
Family members may have a traditional pattern of deferring to educators, leading them to simply accept whatever your staff tells them instead of providing feedback that you can use to improve your program.	Provide opportunities for family members to supply input and make their opinions known. During meetings with families, ask open-ended questions and listen to the answers. Make it clear that a family member's input is valued in the program, and make changes based on their suggestions.
Family members have a limited ability to speak and understand English.	Make resources available in multiple languages, if possible. Hire a translator or staff members to speak with family members who have limited English proficiency. Particularly with families who are learning English, are new to the country, or have come from challenging situations or violence in their home countries, these strategies are invaluable in ensuring effective communication and participation.
Family structures vary (e.g., single parents, foster parents, multiple generations as caretakers, or the young person lives with relatives, friends, or in a group home).	Know the family situation of each young person and take it into account when planning activities. If you have many single-parent families, make sure that you provide alternatives for any father- or mother-specific activities. Consider the impact of assignments that require young people to work with their families (e.g., a family history), and make sure that you are providing the proper resources for youth whose family structure may not fit the assignment.
Family members work multiple jobs and have limited availability to attend programming or evening activities.	Offer alternatives to in-person involvement. Send surveys home that they can complete at their convenience and return. Find out when they are available and call them at that time, even if it isn't during your regular staff time. Survey family members to find out when they have time available and build engagement around that availability.

Another way to encourage family involvement is by providing resources for family members:

- Research local community resources and share them with family members. Let them know about services that might interest them, as well as cultural opportunities at museums and libraries. Become your families' hub of information for all of the resources that your community has to offer.
- Provide parenting classes taught by staff members or other family members. Teach and promote parenting skills, and create support groups and resources for parents to help each other.
- Offer adult education courses for family members of participants. Courses can cover any area in which families would be interested—for example, English language, computer skills, literature, auto repair, history, or parenting. Use **Tool 55: Family Engagement and Interest Survey** to determine what types of classes or experiences would interest families.

One of the best ways to build connections with families is to identify their interests and needs and try to address those needs through your program. By helping families, you may encourage greater participation in your program. For example, one program determined that local families spent a large amount of time in the Laundromat and that having a Laundromat on site would be a great asset to the community, because the majority lived in apartment buildings without access to their own machines. That program (and the school) sought donations to install several washers and dryers in an unused room at the program site. Then they filled the room with books, games, beverages, and snacks so that family members could take care of a key responsibility and simultaneously build a stronger connection with the school, teachers, the program, and their children.

Family involvement and support can be the key to a successful afterschool and expanded learning program, because young people are more likely to be engaged when their family members are supportive and encourage their child's involvement. Remember to be intentional about inviting and encouraging family members to offer their services.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD | Engaging Families



Communities In Schools of Chicago (CISC) serves young people in Chicago Public Schools by connecting them with programs and services that address their social, emotional, and health needs. Staff members at CISC agree that there isn't one strategy or a particular formula for engaging families, but that engagement depends on the context of the situation. To engage families, CISC has adopted six practices that make a difference in their work:

- **Be visible.** They work to actively connect with families, help them understand the benefits of their children's participation, and make themselves consistently available.
- **Collaborate.** They work with the school and other stakeholder groups to learn more about and schedule school functions that families may attend (e.g., Local School Council meetings, Parent Nights, Family Fun Days).
- **Know the culture.** They learn the language and the different cultural backgrounds and traditions of their participating families to demonstrate their investment and improve programming.
- **Remain neutral.** They always stay objective and respect boundaries when interacting with families. When necessary and possible, they connect families to appropriate resources.
- **Ask questions.** They use family surveys to better understand what programs to provide and what families' priorities are, both for their children and for themselves.
- **Follow up.** They communicate regularly with family members, either by scheduling regular phone calls, sending emails, or talking in person before or after program activities. They make a point to share positive updates along with any concerns, including what their children are learning and where they are excelling.

To learn more about Communities In Schools of Chicago, visit <http://www.chicagocis.org>.

Community

Just as it is important for the program to intentionally partner with the school and with families, it is also important for the program to partner with other organizations and individuals in the community to provide services and support for the program. Involving community partners in all aspects of programming offers a more enriching experience for young people because it connects them to community resources they may not otherwise be able to access, and allows the program to expand its offerings to include skills and expertise the program may not have in house. Partnerships may be with a community member, an organization that can provide programming, a group, or a cultural resource like a museum.

Community partners may provide:

- Activities for young people (e.g., the Y or a community center might have a pool, and you could bus participants there for swim classes once a week; a local theater company might have an education department and be willing to come into your building to offer acting classes; or a local hospital might offer a workshop on the importance of healthy eating and exercise)
- Supplies for the program (e.g., T-shirts for youth, art supplies, or raffle items for a family night)
- Additional staff members for mentoring or tutoring
- Money (e.g., general donations to the program or donations toward specific activities like art or cooking)

The goal of partnering with individuals and organizations in the community is to gain input, bring in missing expertise, and make connections with the community for the ultimate outcome of strengthening the community and the program. If you don't make the effort to intentionally reach out to the community, many members of the community and local organizations may remain unaware of the program, leaving a mutually beneficial relationship untapped.

Selecting Appropriate Partners

Effective partnerships are ones in which there is a shared value proposition. Therefore, community collaborations should encourage each partner to contribute what resources they have to the broader collective. Working together, several organizations and individuals, including your program, can create a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

In the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation's *Collaboration Handbook: Creating, Sustaining, and Enjoying the Journey* (Winer & Ray, 1994), the authors propose that on entering into a collaborative relationship, potential partners should identify their self-interests. As a leader concerned with the good of your program, you have the right and the responsibility to seek relationships that will directly benefit the program. Thus, one of your first steps is thinking strategically to connect your vision for the program to potential partnerships. That way, you will have a better idea of potential partners and how to structure those relationships.

At the most basic level, you will need to ask the following questions: "Can I work with this group?" "Can the rest of my staff (or volunteers) work with this group?" "Can this group work with us?" "What benefit will the program get from this partnership?" and "What benefit will this group get from the partnership?" If the answers are no or none, chances are your program does not have the time or resources available to make a true partnership work. Your efforts would probably be better focused on a more promising relationship. Use **Tool 58: Identifying Potential Partnerships** for tips on how to identify potential partners and begin building strong partnerships.



As discussed in **Chapter 2**, you must address many issues when developing activities for your program, including the wishes of families and community members, the interests of the staff, funding requirements, resource limitations, and more. To help guide programming decisions, you and your staff or advisory group should:

- Consider the needs and preferences of everyone involved
- Align afterschool and expanded learning activities with the school day
- Determine available assets
- Balance academic enrichment, recreation, and service activities

All of these things must be taken into account when developing partnerships for your program. Since the activities in an afterschool and expanded learning program should reflect the philosophy, vision, mission, and goals approved by the program's governing board, it is important to ensure that partners are aligned with those. Thus, a program with a vision of "offering a safe, nurturing alternative to gang participation" might reach out to different partners than a program with the mission of "improving academic achievement for the lowest performing youth."

External Vendors

The convenience and potential effectiveness of externally developed program curricula have prompted many programs to purchase curriculum packages from commercial vendors. For programs that have the resources, these packages may offer an advantage over creating a new afterschool and expanded learning curriculum. Be sure to consider all of the pros and cons when deciding whether to purchase a commercially developed program that has proven successful at other sites.

Table 8. Pros and Cons of Purchasing an Externally Developed Curriculum

Pros	Cons
■ Proven potential effectiveness ■ Established curriculum ■ Existing materials (which can save time, money, and other resources) ■ Available technical assistance ■ Potential network of support with other users ■ Potential for simple, efficient evaluation (if evaluation procedures are part of the purchased package)	■ Probably more expensive than models based on staff design or publicly available program ideas ■ Less flexibility for instructors ■ Possible difficulty gaining agreement within the staff regarding the purchase and implementation of a program ■ Potential area of controversy among community members ■ Potential problem of getting approval for the purchase

Use **Tool 59: Rating Worksheet for Potential Vendor Services** to help you think through key issues of vendor selection.

Beyond curriculum providers, there are many types of outside service providers you may consider to enrich your program. Some examples are content area experts (e.g., arts or STEM), transportation providers, food and beverage distributors, staff development experts, technical assistance providers, and group facilitators. If an external vendor will be interacting with participants and their families, make sure they go through all of the same safety checks (e.g., background and or reference checks), orientations, and trainings as other staff members. After you choose a vendor, but before you sign a contract, be sure to clarify—in writing—the following things:

- Contract length (if applicable)
- Exact type and amount of materials and/or services provided
- Cost and payment schedule (for example, can the vendor lease or contract its services to coincide with a program budget that does not account for a price increase over a two- to three-year period?)
- Issues related to intellectual property rights
- Contact information for immediate technical assistance
- Stipulations for contract termination, product return, and refunds

These points cover only a few of the issues to consider when signing an agreement with a vendor. Be sure to consult with your district or program attorney before signing any contract. It is helpful to have template contracts created for you by an attorney for a one-time fee. You can then be assured that the contract terms meet the needs of your program.

Expanding Your Partnership Group

When looking to the community for potential partners, think first about the relationships you already have. Are there any donors or “sponsors” that could become more involved in the program and become true partners? It takes time to develop these kinds of relationships and build a reputation for effectiveness. As convinced as you are of the worthiness of your program, it may take time to prove to other organizations or groups that the program has the vision, philosophy, potential effectiveness, and sustainability that will make them feel comfortable enough to commit their own resources and reputation. Give yourself plenty of time to establish true partnerships. It may not happen during your first year, and that is okay. Use **Tool 60: Involving Current and Potential Stakeholders** to keep track of information about organizations you may already be in contact with. Here is a list of potential partners:

- K–12 schools
- Libraries
- Senior citizen centers

- Civic groups
- Local businesses
- Arts and sciences community (e.g., museums, zoos, music ensembles, theaters, parks)
- Local recreation centers
- Law enforcement agencies
- Colleges or universities
- AmeriCorps programs
- Professional membership groups
- Social service or health agencies
- Humane societies
- Faith-based organizations
- Youth-serving agencies
- Volunteer organizations
- Other nonprofits (e.g., Junior Achievement, local literacy organizations)

As a first step, work with your staff and advisory board to start exploring existing connections in the community. **Tool 61: Community Connections** can help guide this process. The outcome of this exercise should be not only to better understand the connections the program currently has in the community, but also to understand what the community expects from the program. For instance, there may be businesses in the community that are finding graduates underprepared for the workforce. This information should be taken into consideration when planning activities for the young people and their families.

Thinking creatively is also a useful strategy for finding partners. Try searching for lists of nonprofit organizations and public agencies with goals that align with your program's vision and goals. Call the local chamber of commerce to get a list of businesses in the community. Think about the variety of ways your program could connect with a local college or university. Think about where your staff and board members have existing relationships they could tap. Get your advisory board involved. Write down all potential partners using **Tool 58: Identifying Potential Partnerships** and **Tool 61: Community Connections**.

You should also think strategically about how partnerships can help you accomplish your program goals and meet your needs. Be specific. For example, if you know that the program is in need of computer literacy offerings, you can target organizations that provide such programs. Creating a prioritized inventory of program needs can be an important step in finding an organization with which to build a mutually advantageous relationship. The various tools in this section of the guide should help you identify the specific needs of the program and, in turn, find appropriate partners.

In identifying potential individuals or organizations with whom to partner, keep in mind these questions:

- Is the overall vision of this organization closely aligned with our vision and goals?
- What are our expectations for a relationship with this partner?
- What resources, services, or materials will this partner bring to the relationship?
- What does our program bring to the relationship?

You should have a fairly concrete idea of your answers before beginning discussions with a potential partner. These answers will help lay the groundwork for the relationship. At the same time, it helps to be open to areas of collaboration that you may not initially envision. Your potential partner may think of collaborative ventures that didn't occur to you at first.

Forming Effective Partnerships

Once you have identified a potential partner, set up a meeting with them to share information. Think about the best person to make the initial outreach to a potential partner. For example, if a member of your advisory board is connected to the individual or organization, have that person set up the initial phone call or introduce you via email. Come to the meeting prepared with information about your program (e.g., vision, program goals) and a specific “ask” for the potential partner. The worst any group can say is no, so go ahead and ask!

But asking is not as easy as it first appears. You must be clear about what you are asking for. Your chances of receiving a positive answer to your request increase if the request falls within the capacities and interests of the person or organization. To put it simply, ask people to do things they can and want to do. Be sure to check first on any legal or organizational stipulations your program might face in how or with whom it establishes a partnership.



Tips for Community Partnerships

- Approach community partners with a clear purpose. It is easier for partners to respond to requests when they know exactly what is being asked of them.
- Comprehensive afterschool and expanded learning programs that draw on resources within the community—in addition to aligning with the school day—can yield even more positive outcomes for youth and their families.
- Not all community members may want to be involved in the program. However, ensure that everyone in the community is aware of the program by getting the word out through press releases in local newspapers, stories and spotlights in the local news, and community events.

If the group is interested in working with the program after this initial discussion, you will need to work through the details of exactly how the partnership would work. Open communication is essential in this process. Go back to **Tool 2: Partnership Planning Worksheet** for guidelines to help you in establishing a relationship with your partner.

Even as you cast a wide net, keep in mind that your program will probably forge truly collaborative relationships with only a few partners. Although many organizations may help the program with sponsorship or cooperative relationships, deep collaboration requires a higher level of commitment and cultivation.

As discussed in **Chapter 2**, asset maps are a tool to help people come to a consensus about the strengths of a given community. The asset mapping activity naturally steers participants away from focusing on what is wrong in the school or community and starts a conversation about positive action. Leading staff members through an asset mapping activity will give you a better understanding of the strengths of the community and is also a great step toward identifying potential partners.



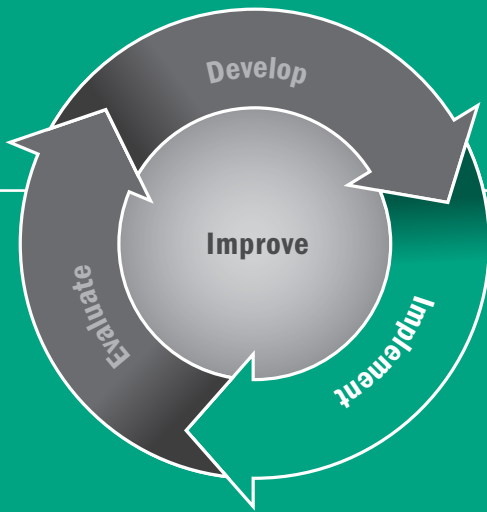
Conclusion

In this chapter, we've discussed the importance of developing and maintaining partnerships with the school or schools young people attend, their families, and the community. Although maintaining strong partnerships is not easy and will take intentional effort for you and your staff, we know that the young people involved reap positive outcomes from these connections.

Points to Remember

- Making intentional connections with schools, families, and the community takes planning and forethought.
- Partnerships should be a two-way street. Making sure that each organization or individual has something to offer and is getting something from your program in return is an important step in forging successful relationships.
- Communication and flexibility are crucial for maintaining strong partnerships.





● CHAPTER 4

Program Delivery

Program Delivery

The delivery of your program—that is, the types of activities you offer, the manner in which the activities are presented, and the staff members you hire and train to provide the activities—will be the most defining component of your overall program plan. Your activities will be the substance and essence of the public’s knowledge and understanding of your program because they are the most fundamental and visible elements. 🔄 In **Chapter 2**, you began thinking about the overall design of your program: your vision, theory of change, goals, youth development



approach, and programming structure. The purpose of this chapter is to focus on the implementation of those core elements. Congratulations! You have now moved into the program implementation phase of the continuous improvement cycle. Specifically, we will focus on program delivery practices such as:

- Integrating youth development practices into activities
- Creating a program schedule
- Developing activities

This chapter covers a lot of material and will provide you with many ideas for your program. Some you will incorporate right away. You may feel you aren’t ready for (or don’t want to) incorporate others. That is okay. This chapter is designed to give you a wide variety of tips, recommended practices, and activity ideas from which you can draw to create a program that highlights the resources in your community and the assets that your staff and participants bring to the program.

Integrating Youth Development Practices Into Activities

🔄 In **Chapter 2** you learned about youth development **principles**. Below, we expand on the key principles of youth development and offer a detailed discussion of how to foster youth development **practices** through activities in your program. Afterschool and expanded learning programs provide a great opportunity to foster positive youth development. In this section, we discuss core youth development practices: creating a warm and welcoming environment; showing mutual respect; building supportive relationships and opportunities to belong; promoting positive behavior; and providing opportunities for youth engagement through youth choice, voice, and leadership. Finally, we discuss the activity planning and implementation practice of SAFE (Sequenced, Active, Focused, and Explicit), which has been shown to be effective in promoting social and emotional skill building in some programs (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011).



As you learned in **Chapter 2**, *youth development* refers to various means of building on all young people's strengths, creating a space that is contextually respectful and relevant, and offering opportunities that allow young people to thrive.

One way to facilitate the use of youth development practices in your program is to conduct a staff training session. Use **Tool 62: Professional Development Session on Youth Development** with your staff. You can use this tool in conjunction with **Tool 63: Youth Development Checklist** for an overall view of how the entire afterschool and expanded learning program is incorporating youth development practices. (If you are not conducting a staff training session, the Youth Development Checklist can be used independently.) Use **Tool 64: Sample Youth Satisfaction Survey** to gauge the perceptions of youth in your program.

Creating a Warm and Welcoming Environment

Although it sounds basic, a warm and welcoming environment is a building block for programs, especially if youth are to succeed academically and personally. Research has demonstrated the connection between a positive climate (e.g., youth sense of belonging and feeling secure in a program) and improved academic performance, increased levels of motivation, a strong willingness to learn, and decreased behavior problems (Faircloth & Hamm, 2005; Kauh, 2011; Marzano & Marzano, 2003).

The environment of the program—the overall atmosphere you feel when you are there—is primarily influenced by two things: the policies and structure of the program and the interactions among people within the program.  **Chapter 1** talks about policies and procedures. Take some time to review that section and think about how you can create organizational supports that can promote and foster positive youth development. We talk further about interactions among people in the program later in this chapter.



Tips for Building a Positive Environment Within Your Program

- Greet every youth who comes in the door by name—every time.
- Increase the number of one-to-one interactions among youth and between youth and the staff. We'll learn more about building supportive relationships in the next section.
- Provide positive reinforcement for youth actions and ideas and offer specific positive feedback. For example, instead of always simply saying, "good job," add more specific words, such as "Thank you for listening," or "Great job cooperating with your classmates."
- Show your enthusiasm. If you are excited, young people in your program will be too!
- Vary your activities and instructional techniques.
- When youth are absent for one or multiple days, make sure to let them know they were missed and that you were concerned about them. Follow up if they indicate that a larger issue is going on (family illness or stress, for example).
- Keep youth engaged by providing variety, fostering feelings of progress, and offering challenges.

Respecting and Valuing Youth

It is important to create an environment where youth feel not only safe but also respected and valued. In this environment, cultural and linguistic, as well as physical and psychological, differences are respected and integrated into activities, and youth are respected for their individuality and assets. All activities should take into consideration the context of where youth live and attend school, along with their emotional, social, physical, and cognitive needs. Here are some ways to promote activities that reflect culture and youth context:

- Create activity and program names with which youth can identify. Even better, have youth name the program.
- Respect the languages and cultures of the families served.
- Ask community members, families, and youth what type of activities they want to see in the program. Be sure to include several of them in your program line-up.
- Find ways for youth to put a physical stamp on your program space—hang their artwork, post photographs of them engaged in activities, or have them paint a mural on a wall.

Although there are many ways to capture youth voice, creating a portfolio is a great way for young people to express themselves through another medium.  See **Chapter 1** for information and tools on creating portfolios.

Conflict Resolution

A warm and welcoming program has procedures and plans in place to help youth resolve conflicts. It is important to create conflict resolution strategies with youth input so that everyone is comfortable with how to proceed when conflicts arise. It is also important for programs to foster a zero-tolerance policy toward bullying and aggression so that young people feel safe. When all youth know the policies and rules governing behavior in a program, and have helped craft a set of guidelines for how to treat one another and how to handle problems when they occur, the climate of the program is more positive. Use **Tool 65: Decision Wheel** to help youth in the program practice the skills necessary to make informed decisions.

A Note on Bullying

According to stopbullying.gov (n.d.), bullying is ...unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose. There are many roles that kids can play. Kids can bully others, they can be bullied, or they may witness bullying. When kids are involved in bullying, they often play more than one role. It is important to understand the multiple roles kids play in order to effectively prevent and respond to bullying.

There are many things you can do in your program to foster a safe environment where bullying isn't tolerated. Creating a safe, caring, and welcoming environment where youth feel respected and valued will encourage them to show that same respect to others. Incorporating other positive youth development features—activities that foster positive relationships, team building, involving and engaging youth as equals, involving youth as active agents, having a strengths-based or asset-based approach—into your program will also help to ensure an environment where youth feel safe and are less likely to bully or be bullied.

Here are a few resources for bullying:

- Educators for Social Responsibility
<http://www.esrnational.org>
- Community Action Planning
<http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/in-the-community/index.html>
- Hazelden Foundation Olweus Bullying Prevention Program
<http://www.violencepreventionworks.org/public/index.page>
- National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention
<http://preventingbullying.promoteprevent.org/>

Building Supportive Relationships and Opportunities to Belong

Encouraging staff members to develop positive relationships with youth is one of the most important elements of an effective afterschool and expanded learning program. But relationships should extend beyond the ones that exist between the staff and youth—relationships among staff members, relationships between staff members and families, and relationships among youth in the program are also critical in creating an atmosphere that is warm and caring, where all stakeholders feel supported. Use **Tool 66: Activity Ideas for Creating a Warm and Welcoming Environment** to encourage relationship building throughout your program.

Building Relationships With Youth

Youth are more compelled to attend programs when they feel they belong. Work hard to create an environment that fosters a feeling of connectedness among youth. Also, create a sense of membership for youth by allowing them to take ownership of the program.

Connections are often made when your activities are done in a collaborative style so that youth feel that they are working *with* the adults rather than being instructed *by* them. For strong relationships to develop, adults in your program must be invested in each person's growth. Volunteers should come regularly to the program and take an interest in youth progress. Adult leaders should have a desire to see youth succeed and should respond to youth needs accordingly. These relationships also must be characterized by integrity. Youth should be able to trust their leaders to be true to their word.

Here are some tips to foster relationships with youth to show that you care:

- Know the names of all youth in your program.
- Say hello as youth enter your program or activity.
- Ask youth questions about school and family—show an interest in getting to know them.
- Ask youth open-ended questions and follow up with specific questions or responses. Show them that you are listening and that you care about what they think.
- Remember their birthdays and other special events.
- Encourage and support them. Share positive feedback and reinforcement.



Tips for Promoting Equality and Tolerance

Encourage staff members to consider how they deal with issues of equality and tolerance in their interactions with youth and, if necessary, think about how to improve. One way to do this is by reflecting on the following statements.

1. I help youth accept each other on the basis of individual worth, regardless of gender, racial or ethnic background, religion, socioeconomic status, linguistic background, or disability status.
2. I help youth clearly recognize the basic similarities among all members of the human race and the uniqueness of every individual.
3. I help youth value the multicultural and multilingual character of our society and reject stereotypes, caricatures, and derogatory references to any segment of our community.
4. I help youth recognize prejudice as a wall that blocks communication, interaction, mutual understanding, and respect.
5. I help youth understand the influences and pressures (historical, contemporary, environmental, social, political, and economic) that have been instrumental in generating group differences, progress, and antagonism.
6. I help youth analyze intergroup tension and conflict with honesty and the will to resolve them. I seek resolution on the basis of fairness and cooperation.
7. I help youth appreciate the contributions of all groups, including races, ethnicities, religions, social classes, nationalities, and people with disabilities.
8. I help motivate youth to uphold their responsibilities as good citizens by working and striving to achieve a democratic society with justice and equality.
9. I carefully evaluate all curricula and activity guides (books, websites, films, and other materials) to ensure fair and balanced treatments of all youth groups before using them.
10. I help youth learn the art of good human relations by providing a living model in my own treatment of people.

Strong Relationships Among Youth

In addition to improving relationships between the staff and youth, it is important to strengthen the relationships among youth in your program. These interactions can be the main reason many youth participate in afterschool and expanded learning programs in the first place, and the relationships fostered in the program can be the reason they keep coming back. Likewise, if they do not feel comfortable with their peers, youth may be less active participators or may leave the program altogether.

Although it may feel difficult, you can foster a strong sense of community among youth in your program through a variety of methods. Start by encouraging staff members to always show openness, fairness, and inclusiveness to all young people in the program. Find opportunities to bring youth together, perhaps through developing shared norms or behavior guidelines for the program. When everyone works together to create the

environment they want, it promotes connection. Create opportunities for youth to work together in small groups or through collaborative projects. Run team-building activities at the beginning and end of your program day. Perhaps most importantly, be clear that in your program, everyone is welcome and an important part of the community. Do not tolerate any teasing or exclusion.

To create a sense of belonging, encourage...

- Staff members to set up the environment to promote membership in the program or club
- Youth to name the program, club, or activities
- Mastery or personal improvement in youth—not comparison with others
- Staff members to show how happy they are that youth are there

You should avoid...

- Activities that have one person performing as everyone else watches. (Instead, have youth take turns performing or presenting to the group.)
- Competitions where winners get rewarded or youth are forced to compare themselves with others
- Creating teams by choosing teammates where some youth may be picked last or feel left out

VOICES FROM THE FIELD | Building and Strengthening Relationships

Young Chicago Authors (YCA) produces the Louder Than a Bomb (LTAB) poetry festival for middle and high school youth in Chicago every year (schools, community organizations, and cities around the world have adopted the festival's model). LTAB is the world's largest youth poetry festival, engaging 120 Chicago area high school and community teams in a month-long festival with more than 90 events. Young Chicago Authors produces LTAB each year. The festival, which offers youth a platform to share their stories with one another, is designed to transform the relationships young people have with adults and with each other and to create spaces for building relationships. The festival's organizers believe that it is important to "create an environment safe enough and engaging enough for young people to inquire about their own experiences, and find language and value in them." They believe that young people have stories, rooted in lived experience, validated by their own self-defined desires, agendas, and goals. The work of "great adult allies" is to authentically inquire about the lives of youth and listen attentively to their stories.

To learn more, visit <http://youngchicagoauthors.org>.



Strengthening Relationships Among Staff Members

In most cases, the adults in your program need the same things the young people do: to feel that they belong, are valued, and are connected to the people around them. Putting practices in place to strengthen the relationships among staff members in your program not only ensures that they get along with each other but also builds a support system that ultimately strengthens the daily operations of the program. Staff members are a vital resource—they each have their own experiences to share that others can learn from. When everyone is on the same page, the program operates more smoothly and consistently.

Here are some strategies for strengthening relationships among staff members:

- Monthly staff get-togethers. Keep it non-work related. Even if funds are low, set aside a time when everyone can sit and talk. If you have full-time staff members, invite them to bring their lunch and sit together. Have a get-together at one person's house. Set up a gathering at a local park.
- Create a forum for sharing ideas—this can be as simple as a bulletin board or an online group with a discussion board. (Google offers these services for free!)
- During staff meetings, open with an activity that allows staff members to get to know each other. Just like you would do with youth at the start of their program, invite your staff members to share something about their day, their personal lives, a hobby, or a favorite vacation spot. Use **Tool 67: Community-Building Activities for Staff Members** for inspiration and fun ideas.
- Remember: Program staff members include more than group or activity leaders. Your staff likely includes a range of people—particularly if you are based in a school—who make the program work, from the program leader to the nurse to the receptionist to the security staff to the custodial staff and the bus drivers. All adults that youth come into contact with have an opportunity to build relationships and model critical skills, so it is important for everyone to understand that responsibility and build their own relationship with youth in the program.

Relationships With Family, School, and Community

 As you learned in **Chapter 3**, the relationships between the program and schools, family members, and the community are critical assets for afterschool and expanded learning programs. Ongoing outreach, continued communication, and support on the part of the program are very important elements for developing and maintaining these relationships, and there are many ways that this can be accomplished.

Table 9. Suggestions for Connecting With Families, Schools, and the Community

Families	Schools	Community
■ Greet them during drop-off and pick-up. ■ Share updates frequently—remember to do equal parts good and bad. ■ Call them. Most families rarely receive communication from their children’s school and welcome it from afterschool and expanded learning programs. ■ Solicit their feedback and use that valuable information to inform programming. ■ Hold family events, especially ones where they can watch their young person perform or demonstrate what they have learned in the program. Make sure these vary in the time of day they are offered and the content so that families have a chance to attend.	■ Attend school-day staff meetings and share information about the program. ■ Meet regularly with school administration and staff. ■ Maintain a presence in the school. This could be through a bulletin board featuring the program’s schedule, upcoming events, and other news. ■ If your program is school-based, ask to have a seat on the school improvement committee. ■ Ensure the classroom stays clean and orderly if you are sharing it with a teacher. Buy some fresh flowers or another small token as a thank-you. ■ Invite the principal to tour your program.	■ Involve youth in community service or service learning activities. ■ Bring in community members to provide enrichment activities for your program. Go out to community locations with specialized facilities for programming or field trips. ■ Volunteer with local community agencies. ■ Host events to which families, school staff members, and community members are invited.

Promoting Positive Behavior Management

Probably the most common request for training we get and the most often cited challenge we hear is dealing with behavior management. Anytime you are working with large numbers of young people, the issue of how to create structure and keep things under control is going to come up. This section highlights strategies for promoting positive behaviors and responding to misbehavior if and when it occurs. First and foremost (and we know this can be a challenge!) it is important to reframe how you think about managing a large group of youth. Instead of thinking of behavior as something to manage and control, we encourage you to think about building a community that supports collective norm (rule and behavior) setting. All of the examples we present here are intended to be collectively activated by staff members and youth, and should be transparent to the program community. A program that fosters a positive climate of youth ownership and mutual respect and support often eliminates the need for behavior management strategies.

Supporting Positive Behavior in Programs

The best way to prevent problems is to create a fun and engaging program where all youth understand and contribute to program rules and behavior guidelines and where supportive relationships, inclusiveness, and community characterize the environment.  As we noted in **Chapter 2**, it is important to develop clear rules and guidelines at the beginning of the program, with input from youth. Agree to the rules, determine the consequences as a group, and follow through with these at all times. Go back to **Tool 12: Making Rules as a Team** in **Chapter 1** to use those ideas! It also helps to have youth and staff members discuss the importance of responsibility at the beginning of the year. Youth will benefit greatly if they learn the importance of identifying the cause of their own behavior and coming up with proactive plans to improve their behavior. You can also try working with young people to create a recipe for success (**Tool 68: Recipe for Success**), which will involve them in the process of setting behavior expectations and help gain their buy-in.

Lead a discussion with your group about positive decision-making. Role play instances where youth may not be responsible for the circumstances they find themselves in, but are responsible for their response (i.e., behavior) and how they act in those circumstances. Teaching responsibility is an effective way to foster positive behavior solutions. When youth are empowered to own their choices regarding their behavior and begin thinking about and practicing how to handle situations proactively, they will have the tools to take ownership of their actions. Refer back to **Tool 65: Decision Wheel** to think of ways to help youth take ownership of the choices they make.

Table 10. Strategies for Supporting Positive Behavior

Strategy	How-To
Fair, but Firm	Staff members clearly and firmly state what needs to be done and consistently enforce rules with all youth. Staff members treat youth with respect and explain consequences.
Shared Responsibility	The staff implements a policy allowing youth to communicate (written or verbal) frustration or issues (private or as a group) before an issue escalates (anger, frustration, or unreasonable conflict).
Shared Rules	Staff members work with youth to develop a set of behavior guidelines, rules, or norms. This promotes ownership and helps young people feel responsible for their actions.
Check-In	Staff members periodically ask youth how they are feeling throughout an activity or their time in the program (e.g., Do you all understand? Was that clear? Who is interested? Thumbs up or thumbs down?).
Specific Praise	Staff members consistently reinforce or support positive behavior by complimenting youth behavior (e.g., praise board, incentive strategies).
Squash It!	Staff members work with youth calmly to understand what caused an issue. Then they work with the individual or group to discuss, reflect on, and resolve the issue.
Quiet Time	When issues develop, staff members have youth work quietly and individually. Providing space for youth to regroup helps with short-term problem solving.
Just Breathe	Staff members lead youth through breathing exercises and other coping strategies to help the group or individuals self-regulate.
Switch Gears	Staff members quickly change the focus of attention by shifting gears and introducing an energizer activity (e.g., shake it out, relay race, ice breakers) and then continue with the regularly scheduled activity with more focus.
Fix-Up	Staff hold youth responsible for their actions but provide guided help to rectify the harm caused by their action. If the result of a young person's action is that physical property is damaged, the individual or group helps fix it or clean it up. If there is a personal consequence to an action (causing someone else harm), young people engage in some type of communication activity to resolve the situation (e.g., mediation, restorative circle, service learning project).
Prevent It	Staff members involve youth in setting norms and expectations and use various strategies to communicate expectations (rules, norms, schedule) broadly, clearly, and in multiple ways. Staff can also reduce idle time by having well-planned activities that promote active youth engagement and by always having a backup plan if activities take less time than expected.



Tips for Gaining Attention

What is the signal you use to gain attention? What is the expected response from youth? Maybe you have a system where you say, “Active” and the young people say, “Listening.” Or you raise your hand and youth raise their hand as they notice until everyone is quiet with a hand raised. Coming up with a system for getting attention can be fun, and developing it as a team allows everyone to feel committed to using that system.

Responding to Behavior Issues

Even with the most effective behavior supports and in the most positive environments, problems may occur. If this happens, it is important to assess the cause of the problem and whether the disruption is related to the activities, implementation methods, group work techniques, positive behavior support and procedures, or any other issues. Whatever the reason for the disruption, the situation should be addressed as soon as it happens. Problems should not linger too long or they may grow to the point that the behavior problems occur more frequently.

In any situation, it is important to remain calm and fair. Remember that when youth feel powerless and disrespected, they may be more likely to be confrontational. Minor problems can escalate quickly, and it is important that youth feel you are calm and ready to address a problem fairly.

Encourage youth to think about what happened, acknowledge their behavior, and then together develop a plan for improving or eliminating that behavior. Work with youth to clearly identify a rationale for why the behavior was problematic during program time and discuss what behaviors would help the young person more successfully negotiate the situation. If the conflict occurs among multiple youth in the program, encourage a similar dialogue process and make sure the solutions are acceptable to everyone involved. Use **Tool 69: Peer Consultation Process** to support youth if behavior issues arise.

Tips for Sharing Information With Family Members About Behavior



- Start the conversation with introductions and framing. Make sure to open with general positive comments related to the young person and his or her experience in the program. For example, you may comment on what a good friend the young person has been to a shy participant or mention that you have noticed his or her artistic interest blossom.
- State clearly the purpose of the meeting. Be clear and nonjudgmental. Describe the situation (the behavior) you want to focus on and talk about that. If appropriate, have the young person participate in the conversation, and encourage him or her to openly discuss the situation and potential solutions with you and the family. Bringing up multiple issues in one conversation confuses the situation and may diminish your chances of directly solving the problem.
- Give exact, factual information. This will make it easier to discuss the behavior on a practical level.
- Ask family members how they handle behavior situations at home, and ask them for general problem-solving advice.
- Always stay calm and remain positive. If it appears that family members need time to digest the information, or are not ready to hear you, try readdressing the situation at a later date, and allow families to bring trusted advocates if it makes them feel more comfortable.
- Remember, don't contact families only for bad things. Also let them know when their child is doing well. You can ask older youth to help you in emailing or writing to their families about their accomplishments.

Providing Opportunities for Youth Engagement

Youth engagement can mean a lot of different things. In *Beyond the Bell*, we are talking about opportunities for youth to have an active and meaningful role in the program, to take ownership of their experience, and to have authentic opportunities to engage in their own success. You can promote youth engagement through a variety of means—offering youth choice, giving them a voice in how programs operate, allowing them to participate in program decision-making, and providing time for reflection.

Offering Youth Choice

Effective afterschool and expanded learning programs allow youth to have a choice, both in helping to determine what types of activities are offered and in selecting what to participate in from a menu of options. When youth can help determine the program content and select what activities they want to participate in, they are more likely to be enthusiastic and retain the knowledge, skills, and information provided to them. In addition, offering multiple options will expose youth to new activities and provide opportunities for development. It is important to know what types of choices make sense for young people's developmental stage. For example, it is helpful to have guided choices

for younger participants. You might offer those in grades K–3 the opportunity to choose from one of three art activities using the same materials. In contrast, older youth might be allowed to choose not only activities within a program, but the actual content for programming and even program partners. It is helpful if program staff members help inform choices by teaching decision-making strategies (e.g., collecting information, weighing options, prioritizing). In order for choice to be successful, choices need to be realistic and based on available resources, they need to be age and stage appropriate, and they need to be authentic. Therefore, only offer choices you are prepared to follow through with and that you have the resources (or can work with youth to get the resources) to carry out.

Opportunities for Authentic Decision-Making

Allowing youth to make decisions about how an activity will proceed gives opportunities for youth ownership of the activity, but the decisions made by youth must be “real” decisions. Real decisions are those that affect youth experience and the outcome of the activity. The results of these decisions should be visible to youth and linked to the learning goals of the activity.

Ensure that the decisions you offer through activities are age appropriate. Younger youth may be able to feel some ownership of an activity by making choices from a limited set of options (e.g., choosing supplies for a project from a set of choices). Older youth, however, should make decisions that are broader in both scope and depth. For example, if your program is running a school store, you may give youth the options of whether to have a sale, when to hold it, how much to cut prices, and how to advertise. Through making these decisions, youth will have a stake in the outcome of the activity. They will see the consequences of their decisions in relation to the change in the profit margin, sales numbers, and number of customers.

Youth Leadership

Although authentic decision-making allows youth to collectively take ownership of an activity, providing opportunities for youth leadership gives an individual young person (or a group) responsibility for a particular piece of that activity. You can create opportunities for youth leadership in many ways. One way is to offer opportunities for youth to volunteer for specific roles that are built into the activity itself, such as leading warm-up exercises in a sports activity. Another is to be receptive to emerging youth leadership about the course an activity may take and allowing changes based on that leadership. Still another is to provide opportunities for youth leadership within the program overall—perhaps through a youth governance council or youth membership on your board of directors. Creating these opportunities for leadership encourages youth to take pride in their work and helps them to develop important skills for the future. It is important, however, that these opportunities for leadership do not fall into the trap of “tokenism.” This is when youth are given token

leadership roles that don't really mean anything or have any real impact on the program; it can be more harmful than not involving them at all. It is easy, for example, to put a program participant on your board of directors, but then not give them a vote, or to hold your meetings during the day when they are in school. Doing this can actually disempower youth and leave them feeling discouraged. Whatever you do to promote leadership, be sure it is genuine.

Making Time for Reflection

Reflection refers to the careful thought or consideration of an idea or event, with the intent of making change or focusing on improvement. This practice is important and effective at all levels—with youth to help them get the most out of their program experience and with staff members as you consider the effectiveness of your program.

Reflection with youth participants is a particularly important, and often forgotten, component of successful program delivery. Youth will learn more from an activity if they have time to process what they did and why. There are many benefits to youth self-reflection. These processes teach youth a higher level of thinking and problem solving. Youth gain lifelong learning skills, including how to learn from their experience. Furthermore, youth become more aware of changes in themselves and are more in tune with and thus accountable for their behavior.

Although it is easy to leave reflection exercises out when time is tight, it is important to remind staff members to keep at least a few minutes during each session to process the activity. We suggest integrating youth reflection into your program by setting up a time for reflection at the end of each activity or at the end of the program. Remember to use a variety of ways to facilitate youth reflection, including group discussion, pair shares, journal writing, or an arts project. A simple but effective activity for reflecting on the overall feel of the program is to have youth indicate how they feel about their engagement with the program with their thumb: thumbs up for good, thumbs sideways for so-so, thumbs down if it wasn't so great. Follow up the thumbs activity with a group conversation asking young people to volunteer to share why they gave a thumbs up, or sideways, or down, or have everyone journal their reason for their thumb election. Here are some reflection questions for youth:

- What did you learn today?
- What did you like about this activity?
- What did you contribute (or give) to the activity?
- How can we improve the activity?
- What should we do next to build on what we did today?
- What else is going on that we should pay attention to?

Just as youth should reflect to better learn from their experiences, effective program leaders should reflect on their practice. Going over what worked and didn't work and why in the activities can help program staff members improve activities and interactions with other staff members, families, and youth. As a program leader, you can foster an environment that promotes reflection as a daily practice. To help keep these issues in mind, Hellison and Templin (1991) suggest two important questions that staff members can ask themselves at the end of each day:

- What is worth doing in the program?
- Is what I am doing working?

The first question is philosophical and requires reflection regarding your beliefs and values related to afterschool and expanded learning programming. It can lead to additional, more specific questions. For example: Is academic enrichment more important than recreation? Does service learning fit into our program? The second question focuses on your choice of programming, your relational strategies, and how you address problems that occur. It also leads to additional, more specific questions. For example: Do our activities promote academic enrichment? How can we design an activity to meet the needs of all youth? How could I have better handled a disruptive situation? Here is a list of additional reflection questions for program staff:

- How did I do today? What can I do to improve tomorrow?
- Did my activity plan work? If not: Should I make adjustments? Did my plan B work?
- Was there a good balance of planned time and time for youth to transition, wind down, and reflect?
- Were youth engaged throughout the course of the planned activities?
- Did I offer youth authentic opportunities to make choices and decisions, and to lead?
- If something unexpected came up, was I prepared enough to be flexible and responsive?
- If today was a challenge, can I look at the above questions and figure out why and make adjustments?

Most importantly, staff members may ask themselves:

- What did I learn today, and how can I apply that to tomorrow?

The better at reflection the staff members become, the better they can teach youth to reflect on their daily actions, thoughts, and behaviors. Let staff members reflect on the types of qualities they have as afterschool and expanded learning practitioners.

Skill Building

As you think about the kind of program opportunities you want to offer, you will likely need to think about the skills you want to build and how you will go about identifying activities and implementation approaches that foster those skills. Research has identified four common elements in afterschool and expanded learning programs that are most effective in developing skills (Durlak et al., 2011). These **SAFE** elements and characteristics include the following:

S = Activities are **sequenced**

A = Learning is **active**

F = Activities are **focused** on developing personal and social skills

E = Activities **explicitly** target specific skills and outcomes

Read through the following sections and use **Tool 70: Structuring Activities for Skill-Building** as you go to ensure your activities are SAFE.

Sequenced

Sequencing activities (also known as *scaffolding* or *building*) occurs when staff members structure activities in order to meet youth at their level—where youth are in terms of their development, skill level, readiness, and interest—and help build their knowledge and skills in sequential order. In order for youth to develop new skills, activities should fall into what the developmental psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1978) referred to as their “zone of proximal development.” This refers to the difference between what youth can do independently and without help versus what they can do with the support of an adult or more advanced peer (Vygotsky, 1987). As youth build new skills, it is important for staff members to offer guidance when needed, ask questions to further their thinking, and provide specific feedback on how they are doing. Sequencing refers to meeting youth at their current level of development and learning and intentionally building from there to the next set of skills or level of learning. For example, in a cooking class, the program may start out with youth watching the instructor cook something. Next, youth might be given a little more freedom but still be following very clear and explicit recipes. As youth become more comfortable with following a recipe and measuring ingredients, the instructor might allow them to experiment more, and by the end of the course, youth may be able to develop their own recipe based on what they have learned about appropriate measures and ingredients.

Active

The idea behind active learning is based on the research that shows that youth (and adults, for that matter) learn best by doing. Often referred to as *experiential* or *hands on*, active learning involves young people interacting with the materials and activity, trying things out, and receiving feedback from adults to help them process what they have learned.

This occurs in cycles of testing, receiving feedback, and applying that feedback until the young person masters the content. Active learning is most often associated with science programs (e.g., conducting an experiment), but can really be applied to any content area. For example, young people can learn about geometry by taking a sailing class where they learn about sail size and shape and the implications of wind direction.

Although active learning involves a level of independence for the learner, it is not intended to be “pure discovery” with minimal adult interaction. The most effective active learning experiences are ones in which the staff members support youth in making connections and discovering new ideas.

Focused and Explicit

Programming that is focused and explicit targets specific skills and outcomes, and focuses on building those skills through explicit program activities. In other words, if you want your program to improve a young person’s problem-solving skills, then the lessons and activities within the program should explicitly teach problem-solving. To continue the example, there may be many ways to focus on problem-solving. In an academic program, you may be working on solving math problems; in a service learning program young people may be tasked with identifying a solution to the problem of litter in their neighborhood. The point here is that your activities should match your intended outcomes.

Youth Development Strategies by Developmental Stage

Although all of the approaches above are important, they may not look the same at every developmental level. The table on the following page offers suggestions for what youth development practice might look like at each developmental level. We suggest staff members build upon these practices as youth progress through programming.

Table 11. Youth Development Practices for Specific Age Groups

Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Creating a warm and welcoming environment		
■ Greet every young person as he or she comes into the program.	■ Greet every young person as he or she comes into the program. ■ Create a group agreement for behavior with youth.	■ Greet every young person as he or she comes into the program. ■ Allow for peer time at the beginning of the program so young people can interact casually. ■ Stagger start times to accommodate other extracurricular activities and social exchanges.
Building supportive relationships and opportunities to belong		
■ Create a program ritual such as a shared song or saying that you do at the beginning of each day.	■ Invite youth to create names for activities or the program as a whole. ■ Ask youth to create a logo to represent the program.	■ Invite youth to create names for activities or the program as a whole. ■ Have young people form within-program groups based on interest.
Promoting positive behavior management		
■ Create group agreements for how you want youth to behave. Ask youth, “How should we act together in this program?” Even young children will usually come up with a list that includes things like share, be nice, don’t talk when it isn’t your turn, and so on.	■ Build in plenty of time for recreation and physical activity. ■ Provide outdoor team-building activities. Such activities teach cooperation, encourage creative problem solving, and provide new opportunities for leadership.	■ Develop mentorship opportunities in which older youth pair up with younger youth. ■ Create opportunities for youth governance on behavior issues such as a peer jury.

Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Youth choice		
■ For ages 5 to 8, first expose them to a variety of activities. Then keep the choices simple. Provide choices <i>within</i> those activities. ■ For ages 9 to 11, allow them to choose their activities, but provide clear procedures, because choice may be a new experience.	■ Survey youth for their interests. Asking their opinions and offering choices that reflect their interests will help to keep them involved in the program.	■ Survey youth for their interests. Asking their opinions and offering choices that reflect their interests will help to keep them involved in the program. ■ Allow young people to create the array of choices and participate in the overall design of the program, where appropriate. ■ Create opportunities for service learning. (See pages 136–138 for more information on service learning.) Teens indicate a strong preference for helping others. Have them brainstorm areas in which they feel they can make a difference in the community.
Decision-making		
■ Allow youth to make decisions within a range of choices, such as helping to choose from among three snack offerings the program should serve.	■ Allow youth flexibility during the registration process (e.g., only register for one day a week or one semester per year). ■ Design a project that allows youth to leave a mark on the community or school, such as painting a bench or mural, creating a mosaic, or planting flowers.	■ Allow youth flexibility during the registration process (e.g., only register for one day a week or one semester per year).

Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Leadership		
■ Give youth opportunities to have jobs that are meaningful (e.g., taking attendance, distributing snacks).	■ Create a youth council made up of youth to serve as advisors to your governing board.	■ Make sure youth are represented on your advisory board. Make sure you are representing the young people you most want to reach, not the ones who are always involved. ■ Invite youth to serve on a governance board and in program planning and evaluation processes. ■ Provide opportunities for youth to help with your program. Older youth often can create meaningful and creative brochures, websites, public service announcements, and videos.
Reflection		
■ Have youth draw a picture of what they learned that day or how they are feeling at the end of the day. ■ Offer youth a choice of two or three items to keep in their portfolio.	■ Have youth write in a journal for five minutes at the end of the program about what they learned, enjoyed, and want to do in the next session. If youth are comfortable, journal reflections can be kept in the portfolio.	■ Have a group discussion about the things youth are learning and how to extend their learning. For example, in an environmental program, youth could talk about ways they can help protect the environment at home. ■ You might also ask youth to contribute two or three items of reflection to their portfolios. Youth can select what they do (e.g., write a journal entry, draw a picture).

Creating a Program Schedule

So far, we have talked about management practices, overarching program design and goals, youth development principles and practices, and partnerships. Keeping in mind the decisions you have made so far, it is finally time to think about planning how you and your team will structure your program. Depending on your funding sources, goals, space, and target population, the amount of freedom and flexibility you have in terms of scheduling and content will vary. Nevertheless, you will have to make certain decisions about the structure of the daily program to optimize youth experiences. Consider the following questions:

- Will we have registration periods throughout the year or just at the beginning of the year?
- Will the program calendar follow the school calendar or use another format (e.g., weekly or monthly)? Multiple sessions per year? Will we offer a summer program?
- What days of the week will programs run? For how many hours? Do youth have to participate every day the program is in session or can they pick and choose?
- Will the programming have a unifying theme? If so, what is it?
- What kinds of program activities will we offer?
- How will we identify and integrate youth development practices into our program?
- Will homework time be a required part of our program?
- Will we provide snacks? When? What are the protocols for program start and departure and transportation to and from the program? Can youth come and go freely, or are the start and end times concrete?
- Will we offer special events (e.g., field trips, theater outings, holiday parties)? If so, is there a purpose for the trips?

As you answer these questions, your daily and weekly schedule will begin to take shape. Use **Tool 13: Program Schedule** to keep track of all program offerings, including days, times, locations, staffing, and additional information. This tool provides a sample schedule, as well as a blank form, to plan your program's actual schedule. We recommend making two kinds of program schedules. One is an internal program schedule for staff members and program partners. This is the "working schedule" that includes all of the daily operations of the program, including details of running the program (e.g., staffing, getting supplies, preparing space, transitions, and food). The other is an external program schedule that shows weekly and daily program activities. This is the schedule you want to post publicly and share broadly with families and community members.

Probably the single biggest difference we see between higher quality afterschool and expanded learning programs and those that struggle is whether they have included appropriate activity planning time for staff. Even when there is a full-time program leader planning activities, staff members working directly with youth must have enough time to stop and think about how the activity will flow, how they should be working with young

people in their program, and how they can improve their practice. It is much easier to do this at the outset of creating your program, but it is not impossible to implement regardless of how long your program has been in operation. You may feel there is no time in the day or funds in the budget to support staff planning time that is separate from the time they spend delivering instruction, but it is worth the effort to find time and funding. An extra 30 minutes a day or one hour a week can make a difference and is not a huge financial burden. Planning time builds stronger, more confident staff members who buy in to the activities and have a better understanding of young people's interests, needs, and strengths.

Tips for Incorporating Staff Planning Time



Suggestions and strategies for incorporating staff planning time into the routine of your program are highlighted below. Try one (or a few!) of these strategies in your program and modify them as needed based on your unique circumstances.

- Host a retreat annually to plan for the **year**. The retreat doesn't have to be someplace fancy, but try to have it outside of the program space, perhaps in a park or local coffee shop. Use this time to plan out the year (e.g., enrollment periods, vendors, monthly schedules, and culminating events).
- Take one day out per month to plan for the following **month** with staff members and partners. This is big-picture planning (themes, field trips, family events).
- Use every Friday (or any day of the week that makes sense; Fridays are a popular day off for programs) for **weekly** staff planning time. Vary the format; allow a different staff member to lead each week. If possible, make one Friday a month a potluck or other community-building activity. Invite (but do not require) contract staff members and volunteers to attend so they feel like part of the planning process.
- Use or add an extra 20 minutes at the beginning of the program time to allow staff members to get ready for the program that day. This brief time before the program should not be used to plan for the day (that should take place during your weekly planning) but to prepare supplies and space and to make any slight modifications to the plan already in place.
- If you cannot add time to the beginning or end of the day, find some time during the program to meet. If you use contract staff members for activities, meet with individual staff members during this brief break to go over the plan for the week and make any necessary adjustments.

These are just some practices to get you started. You can be creative and flexible about planning, as long as you allow adequate time and a variety of opportunities to plan the overall program, as well as the day-to-day operations.

Developing Activities

Programming is not static—it should be dynamic and responsive in a way that allows you to build on participants’ assets. Your program should offer the type, balance, and number of activities that best reflect your community’s context, assets, interests, requirements, available resources, participants, and staff members. Programming is not “one size fits all”—some programs offer highly structured activities that are year-long, while others rotate content areas every six months, and others offer a menu of choices every day. Many try to develop a blend of these formats. As you identify your specific menu of program offerings, keep two things in mind:

- Create intentional programming that is aligned to your logic model and driven by your theory of change.
- Create an appropriate balance of activity type and content.

You can use **Tool 71: Sample Activity Planner** to incorporate the program delivery practices we have described to intentionally support young people’s engagement, learning, and development.

Intentional Program Activities Based on Assets, Interests, and Outcomes

As you read earlier, being *intentional* means having a clear intent or goal and making purposeful decisions based on that goal. There is a difference between being intentional in program design, as we discussed in  **Chapter 2**, and being intentional in the delivery of program activities, although both are purposeful. In the first instance, you are **purposefully** planning a program based on program vision and goals; in the second instance, you are **purposefully** planning activities with the specific youth characteristics and outcomes you hope youth experience as a result of the program. In this section, we are discussing the latter. Being intentional in the delivery of afterschool and expanded learning activities means:

- Selecting age- and stage-appropriate activities that address young people’s interests, meet them in their developmental and learning space, and build on their strengths
- Creating clear, consistent, and fair guidelines and expectations
- Developing written activity plans with content-specific strategies and embedded youth development practices
- Including reflection as a key component of your activity

You can be creative and flexible about how you develop activities and how you and your staff interact with youth in the program, but be sure to have a rationale for why each activity is chosen (use your asset map!). Have a clear sense of the activity you want to offer, why you want to offer it, and how this activity will help youth develop.

As you are determining activities and developing your program, ask yourself the following questions to ensure intentionality:

- What is the purpose of this activity?
- Does the purpose align with our program's vision?
- Is the activity aligned with young people's interests or aimed at expanding interests?
- Will this activity build on young people's strengths?
- Is this activity age and stage appropriate for our participants?
- Do I have a clear activity plan?
- What will young people learn, or how will they develop, as a result of the activity?
- What outcomes do we want to achieve?
- Does the activity match an expressed interest from youth, teachers, and families?
See **Tool 72: Youth Preference Survey** for a sample survey that you can adapt and use to gauge youth preferences. You can also use **Tool 73: Intentional Activities** to help maintain a focus on intentionality.

Although this *Toolkit* does not contain a dedicated section on programming for older youth—there is enough similarity between what encompasses “high quality afterschool or expanded learning programs” for both age groups that we didn’t need it—it is still important to be intentional about how you plan your activities for older youth. Remember that programming for older youth needs to *be flexible to reflect the interests of the youth, and that it needs to truly reflect youth voice.*

Balancing Activity Content and Type

Just as there is no single best way to operate an afterschool and expanded learning program, there is no single balance of activities that is best for every program.  To make sound programming decisions, you must use the tools we outlined in **Chapter 2** to identify the assets and interests of youth participants. If your program becomes a place where youth simply do their homework, they may miss out on opportunities to explore new interests and talents, develop leadership skills, and give back to the community. Likewise, a program that becomes merely a place to play sports ignores opportunities for youth to develop new skills and knowledge. The key to most successful programs is balance.

In the following sections, we describe some of the most common program types. Program leaders can use these sections to develop a mixed balance of programming and create professional development opportunities for their staff.

A Note on Snacks and Meals

Don't underestimate the importance of snack or a meal! Remember, young people are constantly growing, and after a long day at school they're hungry. If they don't have a healthy snack, they may find it difficult to concentrate on activities. Snacks should be nutritious as well as easy to prepare and serve. Some programs use snack time as a transition between a structured school day and a more informal afterschool period.

Likewise, serving meals in your program can be a great way to not only meet the nutritional needs of young people (in some cases it may be the only dinner they will get), but also a way to engage families and become a resource for your community.

Snack and meal time can also be a learning opportunity: Preparing and providing snacks can reinforce mathematics concepts; menu creation can strengthen literacy skills; and when youth take part in food preparation, serving, and workspace clean-up, they acquire valuable life skills.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture offers a federally assisted afterschool snack and meal program in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. For more information, visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/afterschool-snacks>. In some cases, these programs provide most of the nutrition the young person will get. If your school or program is eligible for snack or meal assistance, the food provided is funded directly from federal tax dollars and will not come out of your program budget.

In recognition that too many children do not get enough to eat over the weekends, many programs are developing "backpack programs" to provide a backpack full of easy to prepare, healthy foods like boxed oatmeal, whole grain pasta and sauce, fruit, or granola bars to children on Friday afternoons. Peyton's Promise (<http://www.peytonspromise.org>) was started by an eight-year-old in Weston, Wisconsin, who was distressed to see a news story about a boy struggling with hunger. The program works with local food stores, which sell prepackaged bags of these foods for \$10 each near the checkout counters. The program collects the bags and disseminates them to local schools and programs. The program has expanded as it has harnessed the energy and efforts of other young people who want to help address this issue.

Activity Types and Content

Afterschool and expanded learning is a unique field because we are able to offer a variety of activity types and content areas in programs. The common thread in activity types and content areas is that in all cases, we are promoting learning and development through enrichment activities. Enrichment activities are often interactive and project focused. They enhance young people's learning and development by bringing new concepts to light or using old concepts in new ways. The activities are fun for youth, but they also impart knowledge. They encourage youth to apply the knowledge and skills that are emphasized in school to real-life experiences. Although many characteristics are shared by high-quality enrichment activities, some of the more significant characteristics are outlined below:

- They are hands on and interactive.
- They make learning relevant by connecting learning to young people's lives.
- They exhibit well-integrated academic content.
- They provide opportunities for youth to participate in authentic decision-making.
- They allow for youth leadership in the activity.
- They develop strong relationships between youth and caring adults, older youth, and peers.
- They are age and ability appropriate for youth in your program.

When planning an enrichment activity, remember to be intentional about creating an activity that is purposefully geared toward learning, growth, and development. To help with this, you can use **Tool 73: Intentional Activities** when planning your enrichment activities. The activity types described below can fall under the broader heading of enrichment. Use **Tool 74: Connections to Learning** as you work to integrate academic content and connections to various disciplines into several common afterschool and expanded learning activities. You can also use **Tool 75: Academic Enrichment Activity Planning Tool** to help staff members reflect on the academic activities in your program.



Tips for Embedding Academic Enrichment Activities in Your Program

Academic enrichment activities can expand the way that youth think about what they are learning during the day by showing it in a different light or through different methods:

- Plan your academic enrichment activities based on young people's expressed academic needs and interests.
- If possible, link your program's enrichment activities to the subjects that youth are studying during the school day.
- When designing new enrichment activities or modifying current ones, think about how the activity may fulfill each component of a high-quality activity.
- Be intentional about incorporating academic content in a way that allows learning to grow out of the activity, rather than being added as an afterthought.
- If you are working with other staff members (especially volunteers), make sure that everyone knows and can articulate the goals of the activity. They should also understand how the activity exhibits the high-quality components discussed in this section.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)

Afterschool and expanded learning programs are particularly well suited to incorporating STEM activities and content into their academic enrichment. STEM programs work best when they are hands on and inquiry based, and programs can take advantage of community partners and the natural setting to enhance their STEM offerings. For example, local environmental groups such as the Audubon Society, zoos, local computer and engineering companies, colleges and universities, and community parks and gardening groups can all help you to develop high-quality STEM learning opportunities.

Reading and Literacy

Reading and literacy can be incorporated into your program as stand-alone activities (e.g., book clubs, journalism or newspaper clubs) or as part of other enrichment activities (e.g., journal writing as a reflection activity, reading cookbooks and science texts as part of other academic enrichment activities). Reading and literacy activities can be a fun way to promote a life-long love of reading. Furthermore, writing activities in afterschool and expanded learning programs can provide a variety of methods for self-expression (e.g., poetry, creative pieces, play writing), unlike traditional school day writing exercises. Regardless of how you embed this content into your programming, be sure your staff members have the skills to support struggling readers and writers. Afterschool and expanded learning programs aiming to improve reading fluency should be sure to use experts to plan and implement activities and to measure success.

Don't Be Afraid of Standards



Many afterschool and expanded learning providers feel that education standards are the purview of teachers and have no place in their program. With today's increasing emphasis on meeting core content, however, it is smart for afterschool and expanded learning activity instructors to become familiar with the standards and explore how they can be incorporated into activities. In **Chapter 3**, we talked about the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and other state and local standards. It is important for any provider to understand these standards—not necessarily in detail, but understanding the overall purpose and structure of them can be useful. Standards outline what youth should know and what they should be expected to do in different content and performance areas at each age or grade level. The CCSS covers math and literacy standards for grades K–12. In addition, each state has individual learning standards for other content areas not covered by the CCSS. The CCSS and your state's standards can help you make programming decisions that will enhance youth learning in your program. Understanding the standards can also be an important part of creating partnerships with schools. Whether you are a school-based program or a community-based program hoping to partner with schools, showing that you have an understanding of the standards and a willingness to help schools support them can be an asset. Use **Tool 53: Aligning With Learning Standards** when planning your activities.

Creative Arts

Another kind of activity you may want to incorporate is creative arts programming. This can range from drawing to clay to painting to sculpture to woodworking to fashion design to theater to voice. This is a great time to think about how to draw on community resources and the talents and expertise of your staff members. Many programs hire teaching artists or partner with community-based organizations specializing in arts programming to offer these kinds of activities to participants. Arts integration is a method in which teaching artists pair with afterschool and expanded learning staff members and teachers to offer arts experiences that are academically enriching. You can also build creative arts into your program through field trips to local museums or performances. To some extent, your program options will vary based on the age and interests of your participants. A participant survey can help you determine which arts programs are of greatest interest to your older youth. Younger youth may want to be exposed to a wide variety of activity types as a way to determine what they want to pursue as they get older.

Health and Wellness

Health and wellness programs are often paired with sports and fitness programs. They often include topics like nutrition and physical wellness while also addressing mental health and well-being. Cooking classes are a great way to engage youth in something they enjoy (everyone loves to cook and eat!) while teaching them about nutrition and even core math concepts like measurement. Health and wellness can be brought into sports

programs—for example, rather than playing basketball purely for recreation, time can be spent before or after the basketball drills talking about being healthy, staying fit, and making good choices.

Personal and Social Skills

A strength of afterschool and expanded learning programs is their ability to promote and support the development of personal and social skills among youth participants. They do this both by creating a strong youth development foundation for all of their programming, and by offering specific activities geared toward building these skills. We have already discussed the former extensively. The latter (activities geared toward building personal and social skills) can take many forms and can include social and emotional learning programs that focus on building self-awareness, self-management, relationships, decision-making, and problem-solving skills. Personal and social skill development can be integrated into other content areas as well. During reading and literacy activities, for example, time can be spent discussing the different characters' feelings or how their actions had an impact on other characters. Creative arts activities offer a prime opportunity to role play different emotions or act out social situations such as joining a new group of friends, dealing with negative emotions, or making responsible decisions. Finally, sports and recreation activities can emphasize the power of teamwork and offer youth opportunities to collaborate with their peers to accomplish goals.

Sports and Recreation

Afterschool and expanded learning programs that offer recreational activities play an important role in promoting healthful, active lifestyles in youth. Recreational activities such as sports, outdoor activities, and activities emphasizing physical fitness or movement can encourage positive youth values, improve social skills, teach responsibility, improve grades, increase mental alertness, and promote lifelong healthful habits. Promoting healthful habits is a crucial part of eliminating childhood obesity, and afterschool and expanded learning programs are an ideal venue for addressing this issue. Effective sports and recreation activities share the following characteristics:

- They offer a variety of fun, age-appropriate, and culturally relevant activities based on community interest.
- They create a sense of belonging for youth (i.e., activities are developed to eliminate isolation and comparison of youth).
- They have fair and consistent rules.
- They are challenging but positive.
- They promote physical as well as social and emotional development.
- They promote youth development (i.e., staff members build on the strengths of youth).
- They are run by positive, enthusiastic staff members who actively participate in the activities.
- They focus on teamwork and leadership rather than competition.
- They provide youth opportunities to lead and coach.

Each of these characteristics is important for creating a recreational activity that is relevant and purposeful while keeping youth engaged and enthusiastic. Use **Tool 76: Staff Development Tool on Recreational Activities** to plan your program activities and ensure they meet the characteristics of effective recreational activities described above.

Supporting Physical Development

To promote young people's physical development, be sure to select age- and ability-appropriate activities. In addition, make sure that your programming considers the learning styles and young people's physical abilities. Youth will stay interested if they are learning new recreational skills and consistently being challenged. For example, if some youth have high recreational skills and abilities, let them coach and teach others how to gain these skills. If some youth have lower skills, set up activities that will allow them to increase their skills through mastery. Key tips for supporting physical development include the following:

- Become familiar with key development stages in youth and adolescence.
- Find multiple activities that are appropriate for the grade levels served.
- Observe ability levels and adapt activities accordingly.

In addition to promoting physical development, recreation and sports programs play a huge role in promoting the social and emotional well-being of young people. They can help build skills in teamwork, decision-making, strategic thinking, and conflict resolution. In addition, young people who are engaged in sports often experience increased levels of self-confidence, which can be important for success in school and life.

Determining Locations for Recreational Programming

Finding a suitable space and adapting it to the needs of your program are two of the most important responsibilities of staff members. With recreational programming, these tasks can also be the most challenging. Programs can be located in various locations: schools, community buildings, faith-based facilities, parks, and other places. All of these locations have different spaces and resources. Wherever your program is run, be sure to communicate frequently with the staff and management of that facility.

Assess your space to determine what activities you can plan. If you are limited to a classroom but want to do a physical activity, you will be forced to be creative with your programming. For example, you could have a martial arts club or dance class in that space. Ideally, of course, you would love to have unlimited gyms, dance studios, and outdoor space to run your program. Because the space most likely will be limited, however, you should assess your needs, resources, and space before you begin planning your recreation programming. See **Tool 77: Assessment of Recreational Needs, Resources, and Space**.



VOICES FROM THE FIELD | Project-Based Learning

The Harlingen Consolidated Independent School District Afterschool Program in Harlingen, Texas, has developed an award-winning and innovative plan for project-based learning enrichment activities. One activity, for example, involved creating a fully produced video. The activity was entirely driven by the young people in the program; with program instructors acting only as facilitators, program participants created the choreography, costumes, song, and props, and a youth-run film crew was responsible for splicing and editing the sound and video material. When the video was complete, the group posted it to YouTube, where it was an instant hit! Program instructors attribute this success to awareness, planning, and strategy on the part of youth participants. Encouraging young people to use their voice and giving them opportunities to make choices and demonstrate leadership not only resulted in a successful project but has also led to an increase in program attendance and longevity.

To learn more, visit <http://www.hcisd.org>.

Service Learning

Service learning is a hands-on approach to learning that provides participants with the opportunity to learn critical skills through project development, implementation, and reflection. By participating in high-quality service-learning experiences, participants build on social and academic capacities (e.g., the ability to organize information and resources and work with peers) in order to complete tasks. Programs can use service learning to help improve youth academic achievement, develop youth leadership skills, strengthen ties to the community, and provide structured activities that apply learning to real-life experiences.

Youth Service California (n.d.) has identified the seven key elements of high-quality service learning:

- **Integrated or Applied Learning.** Quality service-learning projects offer a variety of opportunities for youth to apply academic content to their experience.
- **Service to the Community.** Service-learning projects bring youth, teachers, and community partners together to meet the needs of their community.
- **Collaboration.** A high-quality project incorporates many partners in its design and implementation, including youth, families, community-based organizations, school personnel, and recipients of service.
- **Youth Voice.** Youth participate actively in every step of the project, including identifying community needs and choosing and planning the project.
- **Civic Responsibility.** By participating in a service-learning project, young people learn that they can have an impact on their community; they learn that their voice counts and that what they do can make a difference.

- **Reflection.** Service-learning projects incorporate reflection time before, during, and after the project to connect the social and personal aspects of the project (e.g., team building); discuss accomplishments, attitudes, and feelings; and apply academic skills and concepts to the real world.
- **Evaluation.** Measuring and tracking progress toward meeting the project's goals keeps everyone accountable. When evaluation is done properly and all partners participate (including youth), the project can be championed by everyone in the community.

Adapted from *Youth Service California: Making Service a Part of Every Young Person's Life in California*, courtesy of Youth Service California (510-302-0550, <http://www.stanford.edu/group/YSCAL>).

There are endless topics and possibilities for service-learning projects, and they provide great opportunities for engaging youth in a full range of learning. Projects can be structured in a variety of ways to address the interests of individual youth or small groups. Service-learning projects offer staff members a great opportunity to empower youth to work together, make collective decisions (when age appropriate), and choose topics that interest them. Activities such as a community garden, mural, or beautification project or a recycling campaign are good for all ages and connect youth to the world around them. Staff members can take the opportunity to engage older youth in longer, more complex projects (examples include organizing events, mentoring younger youth, or petitioning to change school policies). When possible, staff members can formalize service projects to act as a career development experience (e.g., an internship) to help build work experience and develop career skills and responsibility. Staff members and youth can use **Tool 78: Community Inventory for Service Learning** to begin assessing where they can make the biggest impact.

Incorporating Service-Learning Activities Into Your Program

The National Institute on Out-of-School Time (2000) and Youth Service California (n.d.) offer multiple suggestions for incorporating service learning into afterschool and expanded learning programs. These suggestions include ideas for the program staff, for youth, and for partners.

- **Have youth brainstorm ideas.** Ask youth what type of interests, needs, and issues they want to address in the community. Older youth can take more of a leadership role in brainstorming and planning. Across age groups, youth can investigate and research issues together.
- **Choose appropriate projects.** Have youth work together to narrow their choices. Remember that younger youth respond better to quick and tangible projects while older youth respond better to longer projects that require planning and relationship building. One way to help narrow the focus is to have youth vote for their choice.

Have older youth walk around and survey the neighborhood (i.e., interview community members, take notes on the strengths and weaknesses of the neighborhood, research issues on the Internet). They can then develop ideas for improvement (i.e., brainstorm ways to turn weaknesses into strengths), and their project can stem from those ideas. Use **Tool 79: Service Learning Project Development** to get started.

- **Keep it simple.** Try to arrange a project that can be done easily and close by. Look at the resources around you. A good project does not require complicated materials or transportation.
- **Develop partnerships.** Create a partnership with a nearby community center, food bank, nursing home, homeless shelter, or hospital. Have a representative from one of these organizations come by and talk to youth participants about how the project can help a specific issue or group in the community.
- **Engage youth in reflection.** Reflection should be done throughout the planning and execution process. After the project has been completed, ask youth what they thought of the project, whether they made a difference, what else can be done, and what they learned.
- **Celebrate contributions.** Make sure you and all the partners involved congratulate, recognize, and thank youth for their work. The culminating activity at the end of the project provides a great opportunity for all the stakeholders to celebrate their accomplishments and reflect on sustainability.

For more information, tools, and tips on service learning, see the websites of Youth Community Service (<http://www.youthcommunityservice.org>) or the National Service-Learning Partnership (<http://www.service-learningpartnership.org>).

Homework Help and Tutoring

Some of the most common types of activities in afterschool and expanded learning programs are homework help and tutoring. Almost every program builds in some time for youth to complete homework, whether it is half an hour of self-study in a supervised location or a one-on-one tutoring activity that lasts for an hour or more. There is no “right” way to conduct your homework help and tutoring activities, but there are a few characteristics that are shared by many high-quality programs:

- Regardless of whether your program is held in a school or some other location, your homework help and tutoring should take place in a comfortable space that is conducive to learning and study. The specific space can vary widely from program to program, from standard desks and tables to more cozy study nooks.
- Youth have the necessary materials to complete their work (e.g., textbooks, worksheets, resource materials such as dictionaries and encyclopedias, and computer software).

- Youth are allowed to develop their own solutions on homework assignments and in projects.
- Alternative learning opportunities are provided for youth who do not have homework or have already completed it.
- The youth-to-staff ratio is appropriate for the level of interaction desired.
- Program staff members provide guidance and instruction that is appropriate to the young person's developmental level and that helps youth engage in and understand the material rather than simply get the answer.
- Staff members are knowledgeable about the academic content that youth are learning and are equipped to provide support in a variety of ways.
- Staff members are kept informed about what youth are doing in their classes and what homework their teachers have assigned.
- Families are included in the process through homework logs or other methods of communication that inform them of their child's progress and areas for improvement.  (For additional ways to involve families in your program as a whole, see **Chapter 3**.)

Homework help and tutoring activities are often popular with family members, because they like their children to complete their homework before returning home from school. These activities are also appreciated by teachers, because they know that these activities result in increased rates of homework completion and improved youth understanding. Homework help and tutoring sessions are especially helpful for youth whose family members may not know enough English to help them with their homework, or for youth who benefit from having a consistent time and place to complete their work. Use **Tool 80: Homework Help Tool** to better understand how your program can provide strong homework help activities for youth.

As you plan your activities, you'll have to think through the following issues:

- Consider whether participating in your homework help and tutoring activities should be optional or mandatory. Determine whether participation should require registration or referral, or whether it should happen on a drop-in basis.
- Homework help and tutoring activities can generally be seen as a direct extension and expansion of the work that youth do during the school day, though tutoring activities can sometimes fall under the classification of academic enrichment as well. These activities don't have to take place at a school, however. They can be located at a community center, faith-based facility, or some other location. Regardless of their location, you'll need to decide how your staff members will be informed about homework assignments. Will staff members be told by the young person or by the classroom teacher (in person, by note, by phone, or by email)? Will there be a formal structure (written in a planner and signed by the teacher,

posted on the school website, written on a homework sharing tool)? Use **Tool 81: Homework Sharing Tool** and **Tool 82: Tutoring Log** as ways to share information between classroom teachers and program staff members about homework assignments and tutoring assistance.

- Developing a strong communication strategy with classroom teachers (perhaps via class web pages) can help determine whether there are big projects coming up, or multiple projects or tests with the same due date. Often, subject matter teachers may not be aware of assignments in other subjects. A strong communication strategy can also help determine whether or not the young person is keeping up or turning in work.
- Think about whether your goal should be to help youth finish homework or to help them understand the concepts they are learning.
- Identify the recommended approaches staff members should take when a young person is having problems with a homework concept. Will staff members try to clarify the problem, urge the young person to note on the homework what he or she does not understand, share the information (in person, by note, by phone, or by email) with the classroom teacher, or use another approach?
- Helping develop stronger “executive function” skills (e.g., organizing their papers, managing their time well, turning in assignments) may need to be the focus of your “homework” time with some young people (particularly those who struggle with organization). Organization issues tend to compound themselves as students get older and assignments get more complex, so addressing the topic directly may be the most important skill a young person can learn.

Choosing the Appropriate Time and Length of Homework Help and Tutoring Activities

Afterschool and expanded learning programs differ in terms of when they offer homework help and tutoring activities and how much time they devote to such activities. Some programs begin with the homework portion of their program offerings to ensure that it will get done and so youth won’t be distracted by the other activities. Other programs offer youth a break from the school-day routine by conducting academic enrichment and recreational activities first and leaving the homework help for the end of the day. Some programs have found that this second method is helpful in ensuring that family members don’t pick up their child too early.

Table 12. Two Options for Homework Completion

Pros	Cons
Homework done first	
■ Youth still have the school-day mindset and may be better able to focus on homework without distraction. ■ Homework is completed early, making it more likely that youth will have their homework done by the time a family member picks them up. ■ Depending on who you use as volunteer tutors, you may have more willing youth if they can leave the program earlier in the evening.	■ Youth may need a break from the school day and a chance to transition from the school day to an afterschool and expanded learning mindset. ■ Some programs find that offering homework help first leads more family members to pick their child up early; as a result, participants don't get to experience some of the more engaging activities offered at the end of the day.
Homework done last	
■ Youth have fully transitioned into the afterschool time and have had a break from the work of the school day. ■ Youth are calm and under control when family members come to pick them up. ■ A later homework help period may allow more flexibility for volunteer tutors who either work or have college or high school courses in the afternoon.	■ Youth may be too wound up to concentrate on their homework after finishing all of the day's recreational activities. ■ Youth may not be able to complete all their homework in the time remaining, causing family members to have to help them finish at home. (Note: This result may actually be desirable if you want to encourage family involvement in homework help.)

There is no right answer. Some programs even choose to blend the two approaches by offering multiple sessions of homework help and tutoring that run concurrently with other activities to allow youth to choose when they want to participate.

It's also important to consider how much time you allow for homework help and tutoring activities. This can vary widely depending on where your participants go to school and their age. Typically, youth in grades K–3 need 15–30 minutes, youth in grades 4–8 might need 30–45 minutes, and high school youth might need as much as an hour or more. It is critical to have a quiet space for tutoring and homework help. Too often, space constraints result in young people trying to do homework on gymnasium floors or in other spaces that aren't conducive to concentration. Do your best to coordinate your schedule so that there is dedicated time and space for homework completion if it is a part of your program offering.

Understanding the Difference Between Homework Help and Tutoring

The primary difference between homework help and tutoring is that they have different purposes. The goal of homework help is to provide an opportunity for youth to complete their homework assignments. This goal is achieved through providing youth with the knowledge, conceptual understanding, and study skills to accomplish their work. The goal of tutoring activities, on the other hand, is to help youth learn. This goal often is accomplished through homework assignments, additional instruction, and the provision of opportunities and resources targeted to skill development. In summary, both types of activities involve completing homework. However, while homework help activities result in a completed homework assignment, tutoring activities result in improved youth learning.

The two activities also differ in terms of the amount of individual attention that youth receive. Homework help tends to have a higher youth-to-staff ratio than tutoring. Tutoring can be one on one, or it can involve one tutor working with a small group of youth. The two activities also measure success differently. The success of homework help is usually measured in terms of homework completion rates and the quality of the homework completed. Tutoring activities involve more complex measurements, possibly including pre-testing and post-testing and tutor or teacher assessments of a participant's progress.



See **Chapter 5** to learn more about measuring academic success.

Using Peers, Older Youth, and Volunteers as Tutors

Afterschool and expanded learning programs can provide more individual support to youth in their homework help and tutoring by employing peers, older youth, and volunteer adults as tutors. This strategy has many benefits, but it can also require additional care to ensure that the quality of support is consistently high for all youth. Here are some ideas to consider when using non-staff tutors:

- Figure out how you are going to obtain tutors. Will they be family members, local college or high school youth, classroom teachers, or other youth of the same age?
- Make sure that your tutors have the knowledge and the skills required to provide high-quality support to youth.
- Provide the tutors with training on academic content and teaching skills.
- As much as possible, try to match the same young person with the same tutor for every session. Providing a consistent tutor helps to ensure that the tutor is aware of the individual young person's academic standing and the types of material he or she is studying. Try to find volunteers who are willing to commit to a full program session rather than just coming in once or twice.
- Establish procedures for situations that may arise and make sure that your tutors are aware of these procedures. Possible situations include conflict (verbal, physical, or otherwise) between two youth, conflict between a young person and a tutor, medical emergencies or fire alarms, and communication with family members.

Remember earlier in **this chapter** when we discussed the importance of youth leadership? Allowing youth to help their peers or younger youth is a great way for individual youth to practice responsibility.



Incorporating Technology Into Tutoring Programs

Many software programs promise to help youth learn academic concepts in fun, engaging ways. Afterschool and expanded learning programs often use these software programs and the Internet to provide additional learning experiences after youth have completed their homework, or to help youth work on a specific academic area that needs to be strengthened. When considering using software in your programs, here are some points to keep in mind:

- Teach youth how to use the Internet as a resource for learning. Point out specific interesting sites and include them in the computer's bookmarks or favorites list so that youth can easily access them.
- Be sure to teach safe search skills if younger youth are using the Internet. Set up the browsers to use search sites with parental controls set at the highest level. Search engines specifically intended for schools are also available for purchase (for example, NetTrekker: <http://www.nettrekker.com>). These search engines provide lists of safe links.
- Do some research before purchasing a software program that provides academic content. Perform an Internet search to find independent reviews of the products by researchers, teachers, and family members. See if there is a trial version available for download. Make sure that the type of activities and academic content fit the goals of your program.
- Make sure that you have staff members or volunteers present when youth are using computers. These people can answer questions, as well as monitor youth computer use.
- Remember that there is no substitute for face-to-face interaction. When possible, combine online or computer-based tutoring with in-person instruction for optimal learning.



VOICES FROM THE FIELD | Using Technology to Promote Engaged Learning

Greenville Independent School District's After School Program, in Greenville, Texas, is dedicated to using technology in innovative ways to promote engaged learning. The program incorporates technology in a way that ensures program activities not only meet requirements but also embrace academic standards. The VoiceThread app, for example, affords youth an opportunity to record voice comments on lectures from both school-day materials and afterschool and expanded learning activities. VoiceThread links learning during the traditional school day with afterschool and expanded learning activities by using an interactive method that youth enjoy. Similarly, the district has implemented a Skype mentoring program that uses videoconferencing technology to enable older youth to mentor younger youth without leaving their home campus. Creativity and innovation in the use of technology in academic assistance and in youth engagement has helped the Greenville program improve academic achievement.

For more information, visit <http://www.greenvilleisd.com>.

Providing Options for Youth Who Finish Their Homework Early

Afterschool and expanded learning programs should have preplanned activities for youth who finish their homework before the end of the designated homework time or do not have any homework to do. Here are some possibilities to consider:

- Allow youth to do self-study on a “Question of the Day.” At the end of the session, provide a reward for youth who find the answer.
- Have youth act as peer tutors for other youth. Having youth teach material will help them solidify and retain that knowledge for the future. Peer tutors should be chosen carefully and monitored. Ensure that the support they provide is useful to the young person being tutored.
- Allow youth who are finished with their work to use an educational software program.
- Have a daily or weekly riddle or puzzle. Allow youth to work together to figure it out. Provide a reward to the group that gets the question right, or to all youth for the work of their peers.
- Provide quiet reading time and materials for youth, or have one young person read a book out loud to another. We recommend providing reading incentives (contests or campaigns) and providing reflective questions on reading topics.

Homework Help Websites



Many websites offer resources for homework help. Take a look at them to determine whether they will be useful for youth in your program. Make sure that you don't overwhelm youth with information. Choose one or two of the sites that you like best and let youth get comfortable with them before adding more.

- National Geographic Kids: kids.nationalgeographic.com
- Scholastic Homework Hub: scholastic.com/kids/homework
- U.S. Government for Kids: kids.gov
- Discovery Channel's Cosmeo: cosmeo.com
- Fact Monster Homework Center: factmonster.com/homework
- The Math Forum @ Drexel: mathforum.org/dr.math

Conclusion

This chapter has introduced you to the core youth development practices that should serve as a foundation for any strong afterschool and expanded learning program. We have also talked about the variety and type of activities you might incorporate into your program and have made suggestions for how to use those core youth development practices to develop an overall activity plan that is responsive to the needs of youth and families. As you set out to develop a new program or improve on an existing one, revisit this chapter for ideas about how to create a balanced menu of activities that meet your program goals, engage youth and their families as partners, and draw on community resources. Your programming will be the best it can be for youth, staff members, families, and community partners if you customize it based on their circumstances and interests and on your program's vision, goals, and resources.

Points to Remember



- A youth development philosophy can provide a strong foundation for your program. Incorporate the key principles of choice; youth leadership; creating a warm and welcoming environment; reflection; and fun, hands-on activities to help youth get the most out of your program.
- Determine the type of programming you want to offer—academic, recreational, arts, service learning—and then create a balanced menu of activities. Don't underestimate the importance of having appropriate space for activities and snack time as a way to revive youth after school and get them ready for a new set of activities.
- Academic enrichment does not have to mean that all of your programs are academic, or that they look and feel like school. Remember, academic enrichment can be incorporated into many types of programs, and should use strategies that are distinctly different from what youth experience during the day.



CHAPTER 5

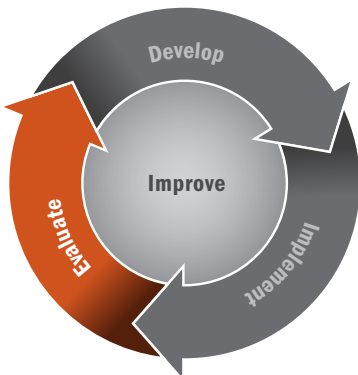
Evaluation

Evaluation

Throughout the *Toolkit*, we have discussed a variety of practices that contribute to the continuous process of improving program quality. Evaluation is a critical component of the continuous improvement cycle because it provides programs with the information they need to answer important questions about their program—information that can be used as a basis for making program improvements.

We know, however, that for many program staff members, evaluation can be a little overwhelming and is often seen as someone else's job—not the job of the people who plan programs and work directly with young people. The truth is that evaluation can be complicated and does require some specialized expertise. In fact, there are whole books and graduate school programs dedicated to learning how to do an evaluation properly. At the same time, evaluation provides the most value when it can include a role for all program staff. Our goal in this chapter is not to cover the universe of topics related to evaluation and make you an expert. Rather, it is to demystify the process, break down the basic steps, and share why it is important for program staff members to get involved in evaluation activities.

This chapter will help you think about evaluation as a tool for guiding ongoing improvement. It will look at the evaluation decisions afterschool and expanded learning programs like yours will have to make, and it will help clarify the what, when, how, and who of basic program evaluation. The chapter is organized around the basic steps of evaluation, including:



- Determining the purpose of your evaluation
- Developing evaluation questions
- Deciding who will do the evaluation
- Developing a data collection system
- Exploring and making sense of data

Defining Evaluation

So what is evaluation, exactly? Evaluation is asking and answering important questions you may have about your program and the young people you serve. When we evaluate a program, we pose questions and then systematically collect information (data) to answer those questions. It is through the process of analyzing this information that we can answer our questions and assess what works and what does not work in our program. Depending on the questions you ask—and when you ask them—evaluation can be formative, summative, or both. Formative evaluation is when you use information to

assess how your program is doing during the planning, development, or implementation of a program or activity. It is used to modify or improve a program or activity while it is still in progress.

A good way to think of formative evaluation is that it helps you answer questions like these:

- How is our program going?
- Are we offering the activities we planned?
- Are youth engaging in these activities in the ways we hoped and expected?
- How might we modify these activities to enhance youth engagement?

Summative evaluation is based on data obtained and summarized at the end of a program or activity. It is used to determine the program or activity's overall effectiveness (that is, did the program achieve the program goals or outcomes anticipated).  Program goals and outcomes are defined in **Chapter 2**.

A good way to think of summative evaluation is that it helps you answer questions like these:

- Did youth benefit from their participation in our program?
- How did youth benefit?
- What evidence do we have that they benefited?

Table 13. Formative Versus Summative Evaluation

	Formative	Summative
What do I want to learn?	How I can improve the program or activity while it's in progress	Whether the program or activity was effective and produced the desired result
What type of data do I have?	Data collected during program planning and implementation	Data collected at or after the end of the program or activity
What type of data should I collect?	Data that will let me know whether or how to improve the program before it ends (e.g., data on participant satisfaction and program quality)	Data that will indicate whether youth achieved the desired outcomes (e.g., improved skills or beliefs, grades, test scores, attendance, and engagement)
What type of evaluation does my funder require?	An evaluation that allows for continuous improvement while the program is ongoing	An evaluation that provides evidence that the program was effective in achieving desired program or youth outcomes
Am I conducting an internal evaluation or contracting with an external evaluator?	If you are conducting an internal evaluation, a formative evaluation is likely to be more feasible.	If a summative evaluation is required or desired, it may be best to hire an experienced evaluator to collect and analyze program and outcome data.

Note: Formative and summative evaluations are not mutually exclusive. If your answer falls into both columns, you may be conducting an evaluation with both formative and summative components.

Both types of evaluation are important. In fact, a well-designed evaluation plan will use data collected for formative evaluation to inform program development and identify questions for a summative evaluation. Formative evaluation can be ongoing and conducted internally with tools available in-house, and it can be part of the continuous improvement process.



Improvement as a result of formative evaluation is detailed in [Chapter 6](#).

When undertaking an evaluation, be sure to understand the terms. **Evaluation** is the process of analyzing information (data) to assess what works and what does not work in achieving program goals and outcomes.  The questions your evaluation is designed to answer should be based on the program goals and outcomes you have identified (see details in [Chapter 2](#)). **Data collection**, on the other hand, is just one part of the evaluation process; it involves program staff members gathering and recording information in order to answer key evaluation questions related to your program's goals. This distinction is important. Many of the evaluation forms that staff members and participants are asked to complete are actually part of data collection. They are not the evaluation itself. In order to be useful, data collection has to be followed by exploring and making sense of the information.

Determining the Purpose of Your Evaluation

Before you develop evaluation questions, set up a data collection system, or decide who will conduct the evaluation, you have to determine the purpose of your evaluation. Every other decision is tied to this one. To start, your team should ask itself the following questions:

- What do we want to learn about the program? What do we want to learn about the participants?
- Is our goal to gather data that will help us to improve our program? Or is it to gather data so that we can report on the effectiveness of our program to funders, families, partners, schools, and other key stakeholders? Or is it a combination of both?
- What do our funders require us to report? What types of evaluation are we obligated to conduct?

These key questions will help you determine whether you want to do a formative or summative evaluation—or some combination of the two. If you are early in your program development and you have minimal requirements from your funder, you may want to focus on doing a formative evaluation to make sure you are offering the quality of programming you had intended. For instance, you might gather data about how much young people like your program, how often they are coming, whether families are satisfied, and how you can improve what you are offering. As your program develops and you begin to have higher levels of funding with higher stakes, you may find that you are being asked to report on whether youth in your program are achieving certain outcomes. At that point, you may want to focus on conducting a more rigorous summative evaluation that explores the impact your program may be having. An *impact evaluation* is a form of summative evaluation that

uses an experimental or quasi-experimental design (i.e., compares participants to non-participants) to show that a program *caused* the outcomes of interest. Impact evaluations are very expensive and should be conducted by trained external evaluators. We recommend careful consideration and extensive formative evaluation focused on program improvement before your program invests in an impact evaluation. It is important to recognize that programs cannot “prove” that they benefit the young people they serve unless they have designed their evaluation using impact evaluation methods. Newer programs, or those with limited time and resources, may want to stick to a more formative evaluation focused on program improvement or look at outcomes to assess trends and begin to explore whether the program may be having an effect on certain outcomes. Use **Tool 83: Determining Your Evaluation Purpose** to help you determine what is best for your program.



In **Chapter 2**, we spent some time discussing how to develop your program's logic model and theory of change (see page 59). As we mentioned, the logic model is your roadmap for how you and your planning team think your program will reach its ultimate goals. The theory of change is the process you go through in order to say, “We think that if we do X, then Y will happen.” For evaluation planning, the logic model is the place to start. So if you skipped this step in **Chapter 2**, go back and work through it now.

Developing Evaluation Questions

Good evaluations start with a set of important questions that you or someone else will try to answer with the data that are collected. Developing effective evaluation questions should be a group endeavor. Bring your staff together to discuss your program's intended program and outcome goals. The group can then discuss whether—and how—your planned activities and processes will lead to the realization of these goals or outcomes. Spend some time developing the milestones or benchmarks that must be reached along the way. These benchmarks will help you decide what you should be seeing in the short term and the long term to help you reach your goals, and can guide you in developing appropriate evaluation questions that are aligned with your program activities and goals. Spending time developing sound evaluation questions and an associated evaluation plan increases the likelihood that your evaluation will yield convincing evidence about how your program has succeeded, as well as information that you can use to improve it. Here are some sample questions you may ask yourself:

- What are our program's goals?
- Do our funders require us to report on specific information? Levels of participation? Program quality? Youth outcomes?
- What is the range and nature of activities that we offer?
- Are we serving more young people?

- Are youth accessing our program more often and attending in higher numbers than before?
- Are some activities more effective than others?
- What changes in youth knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors do we expect (or hope) will result from their participation in program activities?
- Are some activities more popular than others? What do participation levels tell us about the quality and popularity of programs?
- What is the quality of our programs?
- Are some aspects of our program stronger than others?
- What strategies are our staff members using to engage youth in activities?

Developing Indicators to Measure Program Goals

 As you start thinking about your evaluation questions, revisit the goals you developed for your program (which you recorded in **Tool 37: Goal Setting Worksheet** in **Chapter 2**) and your intended outcomes (which you recorded in **Tool 40: Logic Model Planning Tool** in **Chapter 2**). Are you looking to increase access to opportunities for youth? Would you like to help your local school improve academic achievement by improving youth motivation or school attendance? Do you want to help young people develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills? Become more connected to their community? Have stronger social and interpersonal skills?

To determine whether you are reaching your goals and to answer your evaluation questions, your evaluation will need to collect evidence. An important source of evidence is *indicators*—quantified measurements that can be taken repeatedly over time to track progress. It is important that you identify specific indicators that you can use to track progress in meeting program goals and to answer evaluation questions. Here are a few questions to ask when choosing indicators:

- Is this indicator relevant—does it tell me anything about the expected result or condition I am seeking to find?
- Will this indicator provide sufficient information to convince both supporters and skeptics?
- Are data for this indicator currently being collected? If not, can cost-effective or simple mechanisms for data collection be developed?

You can use **Tool 84: Indicators for Program Goals** to help generate your list and answer some of these questions about each indicator. Remember that you may decide to look at only a few of the indicators you identify during the brainstorming process.

Ideally, your program goals and indicators will align with your program activities. That is the purpose of developing a logic model and building in evaluation from the outset. Select goals and indicators that you think your program is working toward accomplishing. If you are still in the early stages of developing your program activities, you may choose a goal or indicator first and then design an activity that works toward accomplishing that goal. However, if your program is already well established, be sure to identify goals and indicators that match your activities.



VOICES FROM THE FIELD | Evaluation Questions and Indicators

The After-School Corporation (TASC), an intermediary organization based in New York City, is working on an effort to expand learning time in schools across New York City, Baltimore, and New Orleans. As part of that effort, they have developed a tool called *GradTracker* to help schools monitor their students' progress toward high school graduation. Using three research-based indicators—behavior, school attendance, and academic proficiency in math and English—the tool determines the proportions of youth who are on track to graduate, closing in on graduation, or not on track to graduate. TASC developed this tool because they wanted to connect the shorter-term impacts from expanded learning to longer-term impacts on things like high school graduation, an important step in lifelong success. Schools that partner with TASC use the data not only to monitor the progress of young people in their programs but also to identify program strengths and areas for improvement. By understanding youth progress and performance, they can make data-driven decisions regarding their expanded learning programming.

To learn more, visit <http://www.expandedschools.org>.

Deciding Who Will Perform the Evaluation

Deciding whether your evaluation should be conducted by an outside party or by your own staff members is an important decision. It can have implications for the validity of the findings and can affect how you can use the evaluation results.

Table 14. Determining What Type of Evaluation to Conduct

Goal of Evaluation
■ Are you conducting a formative or summative evaluation? ■ Is your goal to improve your program or to determine whether it has an impact on the young people it serves?
Staff Capacity
■ Do you have staff members with the expertise or experience to lead an internal evaluation? ■ Do your staff members have time to devote to leading or implementing an internal evaluation?
Budget
■ Do you have funding to support staff members for tasks related to internal evaluation, including developing methodology and collecting or analyzing data? ■ Do you have a sufficient budget to consider an external evaluator?
Funder Requirements
■ What type of evaluation does your funder require, if any? ■ Would your funder permit an internal evaluation, or is an external evaluation required?
Data
■ What data do you already collect? How can you use them to answer your evaluation questions? ■ What are you interested in learning in the future, and can you start collecting data that will help you find this out internally?
Resources
■ What resources for internal and external evaluation do you have access to? ■ Are you familiar with existing self-assessment tools or evaluation guides?

Conducting an Internal Evaluation

Many sources exist to help programs that are new to evaluation. If you plan to conduct your own evaluation, break it into doable parts: Start with what is possible now and, when you are ready, gradually increase your evaluation activities. It is better to evaluate a few things well—such as attendance or the number of teachers reporting better homework from program participants—rather than lots of things poorly. Conducting an internal program evaluation will enable your program staff to witness the benefits of engaging in evaluation and prepare them to participate fully should you choose or need to expand your evaluation or work with an external evaluator later on.

Key things to keep in mind if you are doing your own evaluation are the expertise of your staff and the rigor of your results. It is helpful to have someone on staff who understands evaluation methods and can make sense of the data you collect. This doesn't have to be someone with a Ph.D. in statistics, but it should be someone with more than a basic understanding of the purpose and methods (i.e., the why and the how) of evaluating programs. In addition, when conducting an evaluation internally, it is important to interpret your results cautiously. Remember, internal evaluation is best suited to formative evaluation and program improvement, or at most, an examination of trends and potential outcomes. Everyone wants to be able to announce definitively the impact of their program on young people, but an internal evaluation (and even most external evaluations!) won't be able to do this. It is only at the most rigorous levels of external evaluation that you can confidently say that X caused Y to happen at your program.

A good way to start an internal evaluation is to focus not on impact but on program quality. There are a number of existing self-assessment tools (see **Tool 85: Program Observation Tools**) available online and free of charge that are designed to help afterschool and expanded learning programs assess their strengths and weaknesses. Conducting a self-assessment with your staff can be a great way to identify strengths and to determine where the program may need to focus more professional development or program redesign efforts. Program quality assessment (observations using the tools noted above), youth satisfaction surveys, and participation data are also great internal evaluation activities that are relatively inexpensive and require little formal evaluation expertise but that yield data that will help inform and improve your program.

Using an External Evaluator

There are many different types of external evaluators, including individuals based at a university, private evaluation consultants, and evaluation firms or organizations. When considering an external or third-party evaluator, two of the most important things to consider are their expertise and familiarity with your type of program and your budget for evaluation.

When possible, it is best to work with an evaluator who is familiar with evaluating programs of your size and scope. Too often, programs hire an outside evaluator who has never worked with staff members or participants of an afterschool and expanded learning program; without the appropriate experience, an evaluator may design an evaluation that is ill suited to the nature and goals of your program. Fortunately, there are a variety of existing tools and protocols that have been designed and validated for use in afterschool and expanded learning settings. Ask potential external evaluators what tools they would recommend and why. Become familiar with some of the existing tools so you can recommend them to your potential evaluator or identify an evaluator with experience using them. You do not want to spend valuable resources paying evaluators to create new tools when very good ones exist at little or no cost. Finally, check references and ask for work samples. This will help you to figure out how well the evaluator's work fits with your program philosophy and evaluation needs.

Budget is another important factor when considering an outside evaluator. The cost of an evaluation can range quite dramatically, depending on a variety of factors, including whether you use an individual or a firm or organization, the complexity of your evaluation design, and how you plan to use your findings. If you determine that it is essential to have unbiased, outside evaluation results but you have a small budget, you may want to consider the following cost-saving tips:

- Find a graduate student or other individual rather than hiring a larger evaluation firm.
- Do your own data collection (e.g., distributing surveys, gathering youth-level data from the school district) rather than having the evaluator do the legwork.
- Phase your evaluation over multiple years to ensure you have formative data at multiple points and one final summative report at the end.
- Partner with other programs in your area or school district to participate in a multi-site evaluation. This allows programs to share the costs of the evaluation effort.
- Work with school or district staff members (if you are working with or in a school district) because you might have access to people who are experienced in conducting evaluations. Such people are familiar with school data sources and also may know some or all of the staff members working in your program. If an individual is already working with the school or district, he or she may be less expensive than hiring someone without those connections.

Tips for Working With an External Evaluator



- Plan on allocating at least 10 percent of your budget to the evaluator.
- Interview the evaluator. See [Tool 86: External Evaluator Questions and Worksheet](#) for guiding questions you can ask during the interview and selection process.
- Select the evaluator early—ideally before programming begins—and work to build an ongoing relationship. The better they know you and your program, the more they can help you answer the questions you want answered.
- Spend considerable time, very early and often, working with the evaluator and the rest of your planning team to develop an evaluation plan.
- Provide the evaluator with copies of grant proposals, your theory of change or logic model, your goals, and other important planning documents.
- Spell out clearly and in writing the tasks the evaluator will do and the tasks that will be done by program staff members, including reporting requirements and data collection.
- Require that the evaluator spend some time on site attending meetings, observing programs, and becoming familiar with your program's staff.
- View the evaluator as your ally. His or her input can help your program operate more effectively and demonstrate the value of your efforts to others.

Developing a Data Collection System

No matter how well you plan your activities, your evaluation questions, and your evaluation plan, it will all be for naught if you don't have a useful way to collect the data you need to answer your evaluation questions. Some indicators are easier to measure than others—for example, as long as you can get access to academic records from the school or district, you will be able to easily measure grades, attendance in school, and test scores. Other indicators are more cumbersome and labor-intensive to measure—for example, determining whether a young person has increased motivation, is more engaged in school, or is better able to solve problems requires a youth survey of some kind, which can be difficult to implement.

Keep the relative complexity of data collection in mind as you finalize your indicators, select data sources, and develop your data collection plan. In most afterschool and expanded learning programs, staff members will have to participate in data collection. As a result, selecting strategies that do not overburden your staff is a good idea. If you know in advance that you need to collect hard-to-find data, it is good to make arrangements early.

Each evaluation question and associated indicator for which you intend to track data should be matched to a good data source, as the examples in Table 15 demonstrate.

Table 15. Sample Evaluation Questions, Indicators, and Data Sources

Evaluation Question	Indicator	Data Source
Is our program more accessible and reaching more young people than it was previously?	Young people are attending programs in higher numbers than last year.	Attendance data from web-based tracking system
What is the quality of our programs? Is our quality improvement system having an impact on program quality?	The quality of programs is higher than it was last year.	- A program observation tool - Youth surveys
Does our program help young people feel more connected to school?	Youth report feeling more connected to school.	Youth surveys
Are we having an impact on homework completion?	Youth are submitting more accurate and timely homework than in the beginning of the year.	Interviews or surveys of teachers
What impact are we having on achievement?	Mathematics grades have improved.	- Data from school or district on quarter 1 and quarter 4 math grades - Interviews with math teachers

You can collect data in many different ways. Whichever way you choose, it is important that you collect data in a systematic and reliable manner—that is, collect data the same way each time; use existing, tested surveys and tools when possible, rather than creating your own; and create appropriate conditions for data collection. Some of the more common forms of data collection are as follows:

- Attendance or participation tracking
- Surveys (see **Tool 87: Tips for Developing and Administering Surveys**)
- Focus groups (see **Tool 88: Tips for Running Good Focus Groups**)
- Program observations (see **Tool 89: Tips for Conducting Program Observations**)
- Interviews (see **Tool 90: Tips for Conducting Good Interviews**)
- Collection of demographic information about participants in the program
- Information reports from schools, the district, the police department, or other entities collecting relevant information (grades, test scores, comparisons of crime statistics, detention reports)
- Other documents (newsletters, meeting minutes, and other sources of information)

Participation Tracking

One of your most important tools for data collection will be a strong system for tracking participation and attendance in your programs. Ideally, this system will be some kind of web-based electronic management information system. There are a number of companies with existing, well-developed tools that offer the ability to purchase a license. In many cases, this option can be cheaper (as low as \$500/year) than customizing or developing your own system. A great reference for selecting a system is *Building Management Information Systems to Coordinate Citywide Afterschool Programs: A Toolkit for Cities*, written by the National League of Cities.

Having a good system doesn't automatically ensure good data, however. Participation tracking systems are only as good as the data that get entered. Consider some of the following suggestions for keeping track of youth attendance:

- Make one or two staff members responsible for tracking attendance and entering the data into your database. The fewer people entering data into your system, the cleaner the data will be.
- Be timely with data entry! If possible, enter it on a daily basis. It is more likely to be accurate if it is entered regularly rather than all at once during a long data-entry session.
- Most web-based tracking systems have reports you can generate automatically with attendance sheets. Use those to track daily attendance. That way even if you can't enter the data immediately, you will have a paper trail that your assigned staff member can use at the end of the week to enter the data into your system.

- Train your staff in how to use the data system, including important tips and tricks to ensure good data.
- Keep accurate attendance lists. Add and drop youth from your activities as needed in order to maintain good attendance sheets so that you aren't marking participants as absent when they actually aren't enrolled in the program.
- Select a set time in your program to check young people in and take attendance. If you offer a snack at the beginning of your program, this can be a good time. Most youth don't want to miss snack, so you can have them sign an attendance sheet as they receive their snack. Alternatively, ask activity leaders to gather everyone together and take attendance before beginning any activities.

Data on the Quality of Your Program

It is a good idea to monitor the quality of your activities and program offerings on a regular basis. You can do this through observation. Refer to **Tool 85: Program Observation Tools** for a list of sample tools, most of which are free. Using an observation tool will allow you to collect data on your program quality that can be recorded and analyzed. At a minimum, quality scores from observation tools can be used to inform the professional development you offer. As your program gets more sophisticated or your data analysis skills develop, you can begin to compare participation data with quality data to look for correlations, use the quality data to create a system for one-on-one coaching for program providers and instructors, and incorporate quality data into your evaluation.



VOICES FROM THE FIELD | Collecting Data for Continuous Improvement

The Urban Gateways Afterschool Artist in Residence Program, which serves youth of all ages in Chicago, has developed a unique methodology for conducting program observations for continuous program improvement. Program staff members first developed a tool to observe their teaching artists and then developed an aligned data collection and reporting system. The tool was created as a form in Adobe Acrobat XI Pro, and it allows the observer to complete it on a laptop or iPad in real time while observing the session. The data can then be extracted into an Excel document—a critical task, as the program has completed more than 100 observations to date! The Excel document is also set up to generate an automatic report, which minimizes the burden of data entry, analysis, and reporting. As a result, program staff members can focus their time on sharing what they have learned, identifying and understanding trends, and discussing ways to improve the effectiveness of their programs.

For more information, visit <http://www.urbangateways.org>.

School Data

If you have a partnership with your school or district, student-level data may be easier to come by than if you are an independent, community-based organization with no school district affiliation. Either way, these can be powerful data for examining how youth in your program are doing and may open the door to exploring the impact of your program down the road. Schools keep records of grades, attendance, test scores, demographics, and behavior, as well as many other types of information. If you can access these data, through a data-sharing agreement or a formal evaluation request, you may be able to use them for evaluation purposes. For example, you or your evaluator could link school data to participation data to look at the effect participation seems to have on youth. At a more basic level, you could use the data in aggregate form to understand your population—for example, you may learn that youth in your program are struggling in math, or that your community has a larger English language learner population than you realized. These data can help inform your program design before an evaluation even takes place.

Survey Data

Survey data can be collected from youth and families, and even from partners and staff members. Distributing simple surveys two or three times a year can help you to monitor how happy your various stakeholders are with your program, learn more about youth attitudes and beliefs, and gather ratings of participant or staff skills and behaviors. You can compare results from the beginning of the year with results from the middle and end of the year to see whether things are getting better or worse. Review the results with staff members and incorporate the data into your ongoing staff meetings to discuss adjustments based on the results.



Tips for Data Collection

- When participants enroll in your program, make sure you get signed consent from family members to collect information about their children, particularly to conduct surveys and access school records. Having permission from the outset helps simplify data collection requests you may need to make to the school or other personnel in the future. Emphasize that the information will be aggregated and used for program improvement, not to identify individual participants.
- Collect only the data you will need. For example, if you only want to know age and grade, do not ask other demographic questions.
- Ask only for data you do not already have. For example, if your program is based at a school, you may be able to get all the demographic information you need from the main office. Ask your school about their policies on sharing certain kinds of data.
- Know the languages spoken in the homes of your participants and consider translating permission and consent forms, family surveys, and other evaluation materials into the languages most commonly spoken by participants' families.
- Make sure that you are aware of cultural norms for the population you are serving, and be respectful of roles or positions, particularly with youth and family surveys and focus groups. Try not to use youth as interpreters for their families, because this puts them in a potentially uncomfortable role. A bilingual staff member or translator can be more effective.
- Assign each participant an identification number or use their school-assigned ID number (if one exists). Keep data filed by that number. This practice reduces the chance of mixing up two youth with similar names or birthdays, allows you to make surveys and other documents anonymous, and is useful when it comes to data analysis. Be sure that you have all of the data protections in place.  See **Chapter 1** for guidance on policies that support the data rights of participants.
- Collect all your information at one time. For example, the easiest time to collect demographic data is when young people enroll.

Exploring and Making Sense of Your Data

The last step of evaluation is, in many ways, the most important. After you ask questions, determine your evaluation methods, and collect data, it is time to examine and explore those data to learn about your program and make changes. Data about youth, about your program, and about your partners are all important for continually monitoring your program, understanding its effectiveness, and making appropriate changes. Think about the data you have, decide who needs to be part of discussing it, and begin to make discussing and reflecting on data a regular part of how you do business.

Determining What Data You Have

One important step in exploring your data is identifying it. Data can take many forms. You may have basic enrollment data, daily activity attendance data, and participant demographics in your system that you can review and analyze as part of your formative, internal evaluation process. Likewise, you may have data on the quality of your programs and youth and family survey data that can be used to make changes to your professional development plans, your program design, and your family engagement practices. Finally, you may have more complex evaluation findings, including youth-level data on school performance and attitudes and beliefs to explore and digest.

Who Should Review Data and Evaluation Findings?

As we mentioned previously, depending on the stakes and purpose of your evaluation, you will want to consider who analyzes and interprets your evaluation findings. For example, if you are examining attendance trends in your program, you may be able to look at these data internally, make some assumptions, and then broaden the conversation to incorporate other stakeholders, including youth in your program. If you see a dip in program attendance, you may interpret those data to mean an activity is less interesting or appealing to youth. When you bring your interpretation to young people, however, they may add additional context. For example, they may suggest it was because a trusted staff member left the program, because of the weather, or because of other activities happening in the community. Alternatively, they may confirm your interpretation. Either way, this is a great start to a conversation about improving the program.

In answering other, more complex evaluation questions, we recommend that you seek internal or external expertise for data analysis but that you always share their interpretations with stakeholders. This is called a *feedback loop*. The feedback loop serves multiple functions: It verifies evaluation findings; it provides a platform for discussing the findings and subsequent improvement activities; and it may shed light on unusual or unknown circumstances that provide valuable context to the findings. Finally, do not forget to share your evaluation findings within your program and with stakeholders. You do not have to share the whole report, but sharing an executive summary or a brief description of the findings is a great way to promote transparency.  In **Chapter 1**, we describe communication methods for your program that can be used to post or distribute your evaluation findings.

Creating a Culture of Data Analysis and Discussion

Once you have begun to collect data on a regular basis, you'll need to begin using it. You may want to set aside time in staff meetings, talk regularly with your advisory board, or find other ways to discuss data and evaluation findings continuously. Use **Tool 90: Data Discussions** and see below for some tips on making the most of those conversations:

- Make sure you have a complete set of data before launching into a discussion. It isn't useful to discuss incomplete data.

- Ask yourselves (either your staff or your advisory group) the following questions:
Can we see any themes? What is surprising? What is not surprising?
- Are there any “left field” responses—that is, anything out of the ordinary?
- How do the responses and trends you see fit together with your theory of change?
- What themes or trends do you see? Brainstorm reasons for these trends. Do you need any other information?
- Map out the possibilities for making changes based on what the data tell you.
Can your financial resources be shifted around? Do you need to account for these changes in a long-range plan? What are the impacts of the changes? Do you need anyone’s approval to make the changes?
- Decide on a communication method for any decisions you make. Who will you talk to about your data, and how will you talk about what the data said and what you decided to do?

Conclusion

A program focused on reaching its goals and cultivating continuous improvement must also focus on evaluation. Evaluation is the tool that allows you to answer two crucial questions about your program: What are we doing well, and what do we need to change in order to produce the desired outcomes for our community?

It is important to note that the first four steps in the evaluation process are meaningless without the last step—using the evaluation to improve your program. In the next chapter, we talk about how to use the information you gather from an evaluation to continually improve your program.



Points to Remember

- Data collection is not evaluation. An evaluation seeks to explain what does and does not work—and why—using the information gathered during data collection.
- Evaluation is complex and can be time consuming and expensive. Think carefully about what you want to know, and why, so you can select an evaluation plan and an evaluator that are appropriate for the developmental stage of your program.
- Your logic model can direct you in determining indicators of success. The indicators should be directly related to your goals. You need to take time to develop strong intermediate and advanced indicators so that you can make midcourse adjustments and communicate your successes as your program moves along.
- Evaluation results should be used to shape the activities, structures, and resource allocation of your program. They can also be used to help direct your staff’s professional development.
- Share your evaluation findings to garner participation in improvement efforts.
- Meaningful evaluation should foster a cycle of continuous improvement for your program.



CHAPTER 6

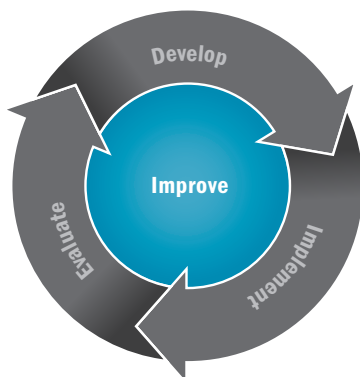
Program Improvement

Program Improvement

Now it's time to reap the benefits of all your hard work by using your evaluation results to improve your program.

 As discussed in **Chapter 5**, there are two kinds of evaluation: formative and summative. Both are important for program improvement, although for different reasons. Formative evaluation will likely give you information about what is and isn't working in your program. Often, these kinds of evaluations include information about how satisfied youth and families are with the program, how well programs and activities are implemented, and how often young people come to the program. Summative evaluations may tell you more about what kind of effect your program is having on youth and whether you are targeting the right things, both of which are important details to consider as you think through your program activities for the coming years. No matter what kind of evaluation took place, it is critical to take time with your staff, advisory boards, youth, and others to reflect on the findings and determine what changes need to be made in the short and long term.

You'll find that this chapter is deceptively short—don't let its brevity diminish the importance of what it says. Throughout this guide, we have discussed the value of developing a cycle of continuous improvement—of planning, doing, reflecting, and revising. Each of the previous chapters covers an important part of the cycle, including key steps in the



process of building a high-quality afterschool and expanded learning program. Now, with this concluding chapter, we bring all of the pieces together to focus on the last stage of the continuous improvement cycle—improving your program—before it starts over again. Topics will include:

- Using evaluation findings for program planning and improvement
- Developing a quality improvement process

Using Evaluation Findings for Program Planning and Improvement

When you get your evaluation results, it is often a good idea to revisit your logic model (see page 59)—and perhaps even your theory of change (also on page 59)—to look at your activities and intended goals. If your evaluation results show that you did not have the effects you were hoping for or that your program quality is not where you want it, it may be time to change your activities or your program plan.

Sometimes the findings from your evaluation are not entirely clear, or not what you hoped or expected. Other times findings can be overwhelming, and they may suggest that there are dozens of things to fix and improve. When it is time to sit down with staff members

to review the evaluation results and make decisions about improvements, it can be a good idea to have your evaluator (if you have one) or someone knowledgeable about the evaluation sit with you to explain the findings, identify the key points, and help to narrow down the planned reaction. Most likely you won't be able to address everything that came out of the evaluation. Begin with recognizing the strengths and positive findings, and then work with your staff or advisory board to identify two or three short-term goals and two or three long-term goals to address and brainstorm potential solutions. Be concrete. For example, don't just note that the evaluation showed program attendance was low in academic activities and high in sports programs. Discuss as a team why that might be the case, identify one or two specific steps to address that problem (e.g., allow young people to attend their sports program only if they have attended their academic program first), and assign specific staff members the task of implementing the action steps. Use **Tool 92: Post-Evaluation Planning Tool** to identify your short- and long-term goals and assign staff members and deadlines for each action step.

Once you have an action plan based on your evaluation, don't leave it at that. Revisit the plan every couple of months to make sure everyone is still on task with the short- and long-term goals. Identify any challenges that have come up. Determine whether there are new concerns or areas that need attention in addition to the action steps you identified based on the evaluation. If possible, review your data to see if the short-term changes you have made are improving your targeted problem areas. If we take the example given above, for instance, you could collect data on attendance for your sports programs and academic programs after implementation of your new attendance policy to see whether your change is having the intended effect. If it is, great! If it isn't, revisit your strategy and determine whether new action needs to be taken.

Who to Involve in Reflecting and Using Data to Improve Your Program

As we noted above, it is important to involve a wide variety of people and roles as you use your evaluation findings to make program improvements and changes. Anyone who has a stake in your program will want some input and should have an opportunity to contribute thoughts and ideas on how to improve the program. Some people may need to have more input than others. For example, program staff members at all levels should be involved not only in hearing the evaluation results but also in making decisions, testing solutions, and reflecting on their effectiveness. Others, such as your community partners, may just need to be informed through a community forum but won't need to have key decision-making authority. Carefully consider the stake each type of person has in your program and involve them accordingly.

Remember the all-important role youth can play in your reflection process. Youth of all ages can and should be involved in making decisions about program improvements. If you run a program for elementary school youth, their involvement may be limited to answering questions with a staff member about what they like and don't like about the program or making suggestions for new kinds of activities. For programs serving high school youth, involve them in your overall advisory board or create a youth advisory board, have them

conduct surveys of their peers about what is and isn't working, or hold a planning session with them to review the evaluation results and discuss suggested changes. The most important thing is to involve them in authentic and developmentally appropriate ways.

Finally, advisory boards are critical stakeholders in the improvement process.  See **Chapter 1** for guidance on forming an advisory board. Advisory boards are key partners when it comes to looking at evaluation findings and helping guide programs toward improvement planning and decision-making. Advisory boards may also provide expert guidance that is not internally present in your program. For example, an advisory board member with expertise in research may be able to help with interpreting findings, or you may have a board member who is a key opinion leader in the community and can provide valuable insight on a finding of interest. Consider your advisory board your inner circle when reviewing evaluation findings and making improvement strategies for your program. This promotes transparency and buy-in, and you are bound to get more great ideas and insights by including your local trusted experts.

Developing a Quality Improvement Process

Instead of thinking of evaluation as a one-time, annual activity, it is important to foster a culture of continuous assessment and improvement in your program that allows for change at any point in time. Programs that are nimble and responsive to their constituents' needs will be more effective in the long run and will have happier, more satisfied participants and staff members.

The Quality Improvement Cycle

There are three key components of a good quality improvement process—program observation, professional development that aligns with that observation, and one-on-one coaching. Although it may seem like a good idea to wait until your program is well established to implement some of the things described below, it is actually a good idea to start incorporating these activities from the get-go. If your staff and program providers see quality as an important part of their work from the beginning, they are more likely to be supportive of—and to engage in—continuous improvement. Each important step in the quality improvement cycle is described in greater detail below.

- **Program Observation.** It is a good idea to incorporate program observation into your quality improvement work. There are a number of existing tools that are either free or available for a fee as part of a larger quality improvement process (see **Tool 85: Program Observation Tools** for a list). These tools can help you to provide staff members with needed feedback. They can also be an intervention in themselves. By reviewing the tools, staff members can learn about what is expected of them and work toward improvement, even without being observed. Try to observe your staff members and programs at least once a session or a couple of times a year. Sit down with staff members after conducting the observation to talk about what you saw. You may want to incorporate your observations into a larger quality

improvement process that involves professional development and coaching, as described below. Some programs invite external people in to conduct observations to provide an objective viewpoint.

- **Professional Development.** It is essential that you provide your staff members with a strategy for improvement once you have given them feedback from an observation. You can provide internal professional development that is only for your staff—delivered by staff members or local experts—or you can send your staff members to professional development opportunities in your community. What you can provide will depend on your budget. Regardless of the format, it is critical that staff members feel supported in making change.
- **Coaching.** A third important aspect of professional development is coaching. Although group professional development is a good start, one-on-one coaching that is specific to a staff member and based on their performance and context can be so much more valuable. Coaching requires a consultant or peer with strong expertise both in program delivery and coaching. This is a more sophisticated technique but can pay huge dividends in staff improvement.

Cultivating a Culture of Continuous Improvement

Although implementing the formal activities outlined above is a crucial step in moving toward program improvement, equally important is creating a mindset about the ongoing and continuous nature of program improvement. The following are suggestions for how to foster a culture of continuous improvement in your program:

- It starts with leadership. Program leaders can promote a culture in which evaluation is viewed in a positive light and seen as an opportunity rather than a burden. Strong, positive leadership makes a difference in staff perceptions of evaluation.
- Share results! All too often, evaluation results are seen only by senior management, and changes are made without explanation. It is essential to involve the front-line staff members who deliver activities in reviewing findings and contributing ideas for change. See **Tool 93: Evaluation Report Template** and **Tool 94: Sharing Evaluation Results** for guidance and ideas.
- Don't wait until the evaluation results are released to discuss change. Make continuous improvement and reflection part of every staff meeting. Set aside time once a week with your team to talk about what is and isn't working and what changes should be made.
- Although it is important to recognize the extra effort required from staff members to enter data into a participant tracking system, hand out surveys, and gather permission slips, do not convey the message that they are doing someone a favor or should feel burdened. Try not to apologize for asking them to do these important tasks. Rather, make sure they understand why they are being asked to do these tasks, how important their contribution is, and what you will do with the results. Make them part of the evaluation and the results, and value their contribution to

the process. Foster an atmosphere in which staff members recognize data collection and analysis as opportunities to increase their marketable skills and professionalism.

- Develop a strategy that allows your program to keep all potential supporters and participants informed about the process of change. Everyone who has a stake in the program should be notified of evaluation results and informed about the process through which changes based on those results will be made. Host a “town meeting” one evening for families and program providers. Hand out information sheets during pick-up time or send them home with youth if you use buses. Schedule a lunch with your board, local funders, or other key stakeholders in the community. Set up one-on-one meetings with your superintendent or principal if you are a school-based program.
- Once or twice a year, bring partners together to discuss “big picture” issues and your vision for the program. The daily demands of running an afterschool and expanded learning program encourage a “putting out the fires” management approach. Often, staff members and other partners feel like they never get to discuss their hopes and dreams for the program. Provide time for that. Use **Tool 95: “Big Picture” Meeting Agenda** to get started.

Whether through formal quality improvement activities that are part of a larger system of supports, or through smaller, everyday discussions and fixes, continuous improvement must become a way of operating for afterschool and expanded learning programs. It simply can’t be an add-on or extra that you do when and if you have time. Use **Tool 96: Continuous Improvement Reflection Tool** to help you and your team be intentional about planning for continuous improvement and incorporating it into all that you do.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD | Continuous Quality Improvement

The Center for Dynamic Learning (CDL) in Providence, Rhode Island, serves youth of all ages, and has built a culture of continuous improvement into its day-to-day routine. Staff members are encouraged to participate in professional development and are compensated for their time. They build continuous improvement into everything they do as a staff team. The center uses the Youth Program Quality Assessment and its associated definition of quality as a foundation for its staff orientation at the beginning of the new program year and whenever new staff members come on board. They also use the tool for program observations, for performance reviews, to craft appropriate job descriptions, and to discuss quality practices at staff meetings. By creating a common definition of quality for their staff, the program administrators are able to encourage everyone to focus on improving their own practice individually while collectively contributing to the mission of the program. The CDL is a Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics, and Manufacturing (STEAMM)-based program. They report that all of their programs exceed all state and national Next Generation Science Standards.

To learn more, visit <http://www.cdli.org>.



Conclusion

As we have noted again and again throughout this guide, it is critical that afterschool and expanded learning programs develop intentional programming, implement it with care, and evaluate it to determine its effectiveness. Once this cycle is complete, it is time to improve the program based on everything you have learned throughout the cycle. This chapter has just begun to touch on the concept of continuous quality improvement. A great resource for learning more about quality improvement is *Building Citywide Systems for Quality: A Guide and Case Studies for Afterschool Leaders* (Yohalem, Devaney, Smith, & Wilson-Ahlstrom, 2012). Regardless of how you incorporate it, make sure to build intentional reflection and subsequent improvement into your program practice.



Points to Remember

- Break your evaluation results down into manageable chunks so you and your staff don't feel overwhelmed.
 - Remember to include youth in your process of reflecting on evaluation findings and discussing improvement.
 - Develop a quality improvement process that includes assessment, well-aligned professional development, and coaching.
 - Promote a culture of continuous improvement by building reflection on data and evaluation into all aspects of your program—staff meetings, advisory board meetings, partner meetings, and day-to-day practice.
-



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Beyond THE Bell

• Tools





TOOL 1		Defining Advisory Board Purpose
TOOL 2		Partnership Planning Worksheet
TOOL 3		Invitation for Advisory Board Member
TOOL 4		Template for Advisory Board Agenda
TOOL 5		Procedure Checklist
TOOL 6		Sample Policies and Procedures Table of Contents
TOOL 7		Tips for Developing Outreach and Marketing Materials
TOOL 8		Sample Participant Enrollment Form
TOOL 9		Participant Enrollment Confirmation to Family
TOOL 10		Consent to Share Information
TOOL 11		Participant Assent Form
TOOL 12		Making Rules as a Team
TOOL 13		Program Schedule
TOOL 14		Portfolio Guide
TOOL 15		Market Analysis
TOOL 16		Grant-Writing Tips
TOOL 17		Budget Worksheet
TOOL 18		Calculation of In-Kind Contributions
TOOL 19		Job Description for Program Staff
TOOL 20		Job Description for Program Leader
TOOL 21		Candidate Expertise Questionnaire
TOOL 22		Sample Interview Questions
TOOL 23		Professional Development Plan
TOOL 24		Staff Training Survey
TOOL 25		Developing as an Afterschool and Expanded Learning Professional
TOOL 26		Self-Assessment of Effective Qualities
TOOL 27		Staff Satisfaction Survey
TOOL 28		Developing a Communication Strategy
TOOL 29		Community Communication Survey
TOOL 30		Communication Log
TOOL 31		Communication Format Guidelines
TOOL 32		Sample News Release

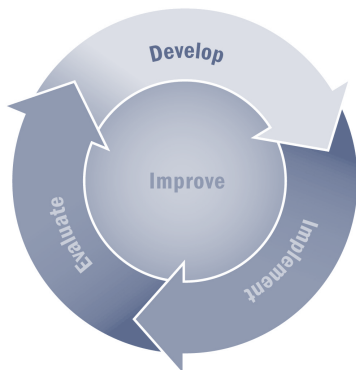


TOOL 33		Communication Survey
TOOL 34		Asset Mapping
TOOL 35		Conducting a Needs Assessment
TOOL 36		Visioning Worksheet and Meeting Agenda
TOOL 37		Goal Setting Worksheet
TOOL 38		Developing SMART Outcomes
TOOL 39		Developing a Theory of Change
TOOL 40		Logic Model Planning Tool
TOOL 41		Program Plan Template
TOOL 42		Summer Program Schedule
TOOL 43		Sample Memorandum of Understanding
TOOL 44		Template for Introductory Communication With Principals and School Staff
TOOL 45		Shared Responsibility Worksheet for the Program Leader and Principal
TOOL 46		Draft Agenda for Meeting With the Principal
TOOL 47		Template for Communicating With School Staff
TOOL 48		School Staff Meeting Topics
TOOL 49		Identifying Program-School Alignment Opportunities
TOOL 50		School Day Alignment Progression
TOOL 51		Template for Field Trip Planning and Communication With School Staff Members
TOOL 52		Field Trip Permission Form
TOOL 53		Aligning With Learning Standards
TOOL 54		Tips for Data-Sharing Agreements With School Partners
TOOL 55		Family Engagement and Interest Survey
TOOL 56		Volunteer Form
TOOL 57		Template for Introductory Communication With Families
TOOL 58		Identifying Potential Partnerships
TOOL 59		Rating Worksheet for Potential Vendor Services
TOOL 60		Involving Current and Potential Stakeholders
TOOL 61		Community Connections
TOOL 62		Professional Development Session on Youth Development
TOOL 63		Youth Development Checklist
TOOL 64		Sample Youth Satisfaction Survey

TOOL 65		Decision Wheel
TOOL 66		Activity Ideas for Creating a Warm and Welcoming Environment
TOOL 67		Community-Building Activities for Staff Members
TOOL 68		Recipe for Success
TOOL 69		Peer Consultation Process
TOOL 70		Structuring Activities for Skill-Building
TOOL 71		Sample Activity Planner
TOOL 72		Youth Preference Survey
TOOL 73		Intentional Activities
TOOL 74		Connections to Learning
TOOL 75		Academic Enrichment Activity Planning Tool
TOOL 76		Staff Development Tool on Recreational Activities
TOOL 77		Assessment of Recreational Needs, Resources, and Space
TOOL 78		Community Inventory for Service Learning
TOOL 79		Service Learning Project Development
TOOL 80		Homework Help Tool
TOOL 81		Homework Sharing Tool
TOOL 82		Tutoring Log
TOOL 83		Determining Your Evaluation Purpose Worksheet
TOOL 84		Indicators for Program Goals
TOOL 85		Program Observation Tools
TOOL 86		External Evaluator Questions and Worksheet
TOOL 87		Tips for Developing and Administering Surveys
TOOL 88		Tips for Running Good Focus Groups
TOOL 89		Tips for Conducting Program Observations
TOOL 90		Tips for Conducting Good Interviews
TOOL 91		Data Discussions
TOOL 92		Post-Evaluation Planning Tool
TOOL 93		Evaluation Report Template
TOOL 94		Sharing Evaluation Results
TOOL 95		“Big Picture” Meeting Agenda
TOOL 96		Continuous Improvement Reflection Tool



Defining Advisory Board Purpose



In Chapter 1, you learned that advisory boards can serve an important function—providing guidance in program design, offering advice and suggestions, and helping to form partnerships. Although a board is important, it can sometimes be difficult to decide exactly what type of board you want and what role board members should play. This tool is designed to help you answer those questions.

Directions: Answer the questions and fill in the information in this tool to help you determine what kind of advisory board you need and what role you want members to play.

1. **What types of tasks do you need help with?** – Check any task you think you would like your advisory board to help with. Look at the types of people listed below the task who might be helpful with this task. List specific people you might include.

☐ **Advice on program design and activity plans**

Types of people: Program providers; staff/administrators from partner school(s)

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

☐ **Help creating job descriptions and hiring procedures**

Types of people: People with expertise or a background in human resources. Look to the local business community.

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

☐ **Help creating operational policies**

Types of people: Program leaders of other local programs; administrators from partner school(s)

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

☐ **Help connecting to community**

Types of people: Individuals with close ties to the community, such as a community center program director, a faith-based leader, or someone from local government

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

☐ **Help connecting to families**

Types of people: Head of PTO or other local group for parents and families; family members of participating youth

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

☐ **Fundraising support**

Types of people: Individuals from the business community; staff members from local community or family foundations; individuals with connections to potential donor population

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

☐ **Help evaluating the program**

Types of people: Faculty from local college or university; graduate students; research staff members from other organizations

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

☐ **Help with marketing**

Types of people: Marketing professionals from for-profit sector or large non-profit organization

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

☐ **Help developing a business plan/support for accounting and bookkeeping procedures**

Types of people: Accountants; CPAs from local accounting firms; business managers or CFOs from large non-profits in the community

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

☐ **Legal advice**

Types of people: Local attorneys; in-house counsel for local businesses

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

2. Who are your key stakeholders?

In addition to the roles you identified above, you need to make sure your key stakeholders are represented by your board. Some of the individuals you select to fill the roles in question 1 will also be your stakeholders (e.g., a director of a community-based organization can help you build partnerships and is also a member of the community). Use the checklist below to be sure you have someone in each key group. It is okay to list someone in both questions 1 and 2.

☐ Staff

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

☐ Families

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

☐ Partners/community-based organizations

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

☐ School staff/administrators

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

☐ Funders

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

☐ Youth

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

☐ Local government representatives

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

Name, Title, Affiliation: _____

3. How much time do you have to dedicate to an advisory board?

☐ Bi-annual meetings (approximately 10 hours per year)

☐ Quarterly meetings (approximately 20 hours per year)

☐ Every other month (approximately 30 hours per year)

☐ 1 meeting per month (approximately 60 hours per year or 5 hours per month)

☐ 2 meetings per month (approximately 120 hours per year or 10 hours per month)

4. **Do your stakeholders have conflicting viewpoints?**

☐ Yes

Describe. Be specific:

☐ No

5. **How active do you want your advisory board to be? (Select a number from 1 to 5, with 1 being the most involved and 5 being least involved.)**

☐ 1 – I want my advisory board to provide feedback and guidance on specific aspects of the program. I need guidance on all of my program decisions.

☐ 2

☐ 3

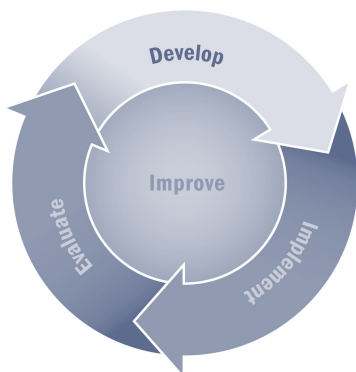
☐ 4

☐ 5 – I prefer a hands-off advisory board that provides guidance and advice on big-picture decisions but does not get involved in day-to-day decision-making.

Use questions 3–5 to help you determine the structure and frequency of your advisory board meetings. For example, if you answered bi-annually or quarterly to question 3, you probably want to stick with one large advisory board that represents all of your stakeholders. On the other hand, if you indicated that you want a lot of guidance and input from your board in question 5, you might want to consider forming a subcommittee structure for your board that will allow you to maximize your membership and get a lot out of each member. If your stakeholders have conflicting viewpoints, multiple small committees might be best. If your answers to the three questions vary, you may want to go with a middle-of-the-road approach—one or two committees that meet every other month, for example.

What's Next? *This tool should have helped you to identify the structure and format for your advisory board as well as a list of potential members. Once you have completed the tool, look at your answers to develop a board structure that will work for you, and then begin to reach out to your potential members. Revisit this tool periodically and as board members change to ensure you are maintaining adequate representation of your stakeholders and that the board is serving all of your purposes.*

Partnership Planning Worksheet



In Chapters 1 and 3, you learned that developing and maintaining successful partnerships is vitally important for afterschool and expanded learning programs. By clearly establishing roles for each partner you will help set the stage for a successful relationship.

Directions: Use this tool to think through the details of your partnership, including any potential issues that may arise. In some cases, the decisions made will require a joint response, while other instances will require individual responses. The tool shows when a joint response is needed. **NOTE**—the responses on this worksheet do not need to be developed all in one meeting or session. It can be used to first explore potential intersections of goals, then be used later to help identify the role required of each organization.

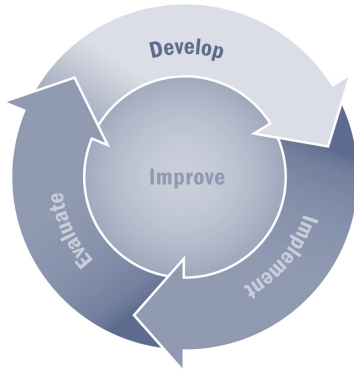
Topics of Conversation	Afterschool and Expanded Learning Program Priorities	Partner Organization Priorities
Goals for the Partnership		

Responsibilities	Afterschool and Expanded Learning Program Role	Partner Organization Role
Day-to-Day Program and Activity Management		
Programming Decisions		
Staffing		

Responsibilities	Afterschool and Expanded Learning Program Role	Partner Organization Role
Staff Training		
Providing Materials		
Budget Decisions		
Decisions Regarding Facilities Use/Space		
Program Evaluation		
Communication and Reporting Strategies		

Respective Responsibilities	Afterschool and Expanded Learning Program and Partner Organization
Governance Structure and Processes	Joint Response:
Method for Establishing Meeting Time and Place, and Meeting Preparation Responsibilities	Joint Response:
Communication Structure That Encourages Partners to Discuss Perceptions, Satisfaction Levels, and Suggestions for Relationship Building	Joint Response:
Processes for Resolving Conflict Among Youth and Adults	Joint Response:
Process for Ensuring That Partners Receive Recognition for Contribution to Mission	Joint Response:
Process for Evaluating Usefulness of the Relationship	Joint Response:
Other:	Joint Response:
Other:	Joint Response:

Invitation for Advisory Board Member



In Chapter 1, you learned that advisory boards are important for providing guidance and support as you develop your program. Recruiting advisory board members early in your program development process can help them feel ownership of the program and provide you with much needed start-up input.

Directions: Use the following template when you are inviting individuals to join your advisory board. The made-up invitation on the next page provides a sample of tone and language. Adapt and adjust it for your specific program and for the person you are inviting to participate on your board.

Tips for Written Communication

- Adapt and adjust all communication for your specific program and the person with whom you are communicating. Personalize whenever possible—refer to how you know the person, ask about something in his or her life, or simply wish the person well!
- Alter the format of your communication to fit the method you are using to communicate.
 - If you are sending an email, for example, make sure your subject line clearly identifies the purpose of your email. An email that says “Invitation to Join ABC Afterschool Program Advisory Board” is much more informative and likely to get the attention of your recipient than “Invitation.”
 - Make sure your contact information is always included in your email signature.
 - If you are sending a letter or memo, be sure to include the date and always sign your name at the bottom.
- If you are communicating via letter or a printed memo, use your program’s letterhead. If you do not have letterhead, use brightly colored paper.
- Remember to proofread the invitation, and follow up your letter, memo, email, or other written communication with a personal phone call. Taking a little extra time can go a long way.

Dear Ms. Garcia,

Greetings! I hope this email finds you well and enjoying the start of the school year. It was great seeing you last week at the back-to-school picnic. As you may know, I recently received a grant from the state Department of Education to develop a 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program for the students at Jefferson Middle School in the West End neighborhood. This is an exciting opportunity to serve the young people of this community!

Although it is still early in the planning process, our intention is to serve approximately 300 youth in grades 6–8. Our program will be open five days per week after school until 5:30 starting in January, and will focus on preparing youth for high school with a mix of academic enrichment, homework help, sports, arts, and social development programming.

We are putting together an advisory board of representatives from all the groups that have a key stake in the implementation and outcome of this program to ensure our program meets the needs of families and youth in the school, identifies strong partners, and takes advantage of this community's tremendous assets. Given your leadership of the West End Community Center, your deep understanding of the needs of families and youth in this community, and your strong relationship with the Jefferson school faculty, I would like to invite you to participate on our board. Your advice and insight into our program design and approach would be invaluable.

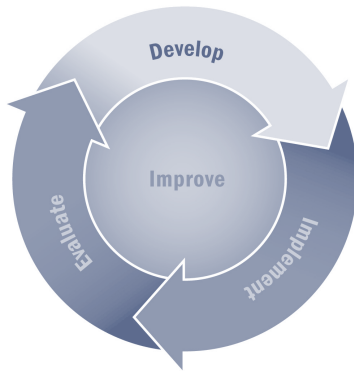
We anticipate convening the advisory board once every other month for approximately 1–2 hours. Meetings will be held at mutually agreed on times and locations. Outside of the meetings, I don't anticipate a large time commitment. We may ask advisory board members to volunteer for specific activities from time to time, but only on an as-desired basis.

I hope you will consider joining this important board and helping to shape the direction of the 21st CCLC at Jefferson Middle School. Your input and guidance will make it a better program. Please let me know if you have any questions or would like to discuss this further. I can be reached at 000-000-0000 or sampleemail@gmail.com. I hope to have the board members identified by September 25 and to hold our first meeting in the second week of October. If you can let me know by then if you are able to serve, I would appreciate it.

My best,

Jennifer Smith
Program Director

Template for Advisory Board Agenda



In Chapter 1, you learned that having a strong advisory board to provide guidance and support for your program can be helpful. It is a good idea to create a process for each meeting, complete with a set of goals and key decision points to help focus the meeting.

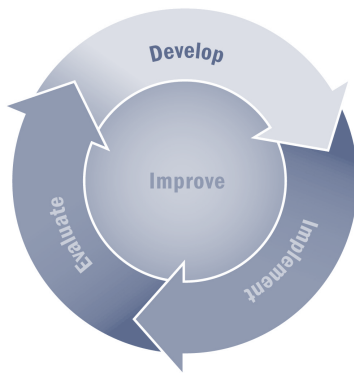
Directions: *Customize the template below and use it for each advisory board meeting. Having a consistent format to the agenda will help you keep your advisory group on track and increase your efficiency as a group.*

Tips for a Successful Meeting

- Start and end on time.
- Have a clear agenda and stick to it. Try not to get off on tangents or allow discussion to wander too far from the intended goals.
- Provide some kind of refreshments, even if they are just water or coffee. Food and beverages help people feel respected for their time commitment.
- Try to identify a nice meeting space. If your program has one, great. If not, see if a local business, a college or university, a partner non-profit, or a local foundation has a nice room you can use.
- Mix up the format during the meeting—have some presentations, some large group discussion, and some small group discussion.
- Keep the meeting under two hours. Anything longer and people lose focus.
- Pick meeting times that are agreeable to everyone. If you have families and youth on your board, be sure your meetings are after school, in the evening, or on weekends.
- If your members are from a variety of local organizations, they may want time to network at the beginning or end of the meeting. Consider offering food or coffee for 20–30 minutes at the beginning or end of the meeting.

[Program Name] Advisory Board Meeting	
Agenda	
[Date] – [Time]	
Meeting Goals • Include three or four goals for the meeting. Any more will feel overwhelming and fewer may make the meeting feel unnecessary. • Goals should be broad things you want to cover in the meeting. They might include things you want to inform your board about or key decisions that need to be made. • Sample goals: 1. <i>Share new discipline policy and get reactions/edits before disseminating to families</i> 2. <i>Determine date for spring gala fundraising event</i> 3. <i>Come to agreement on decision to expand program by an hour next school year</i>	
[Start time]	Introductions and Agenda Description <i>Everyone should introduce themselves, their role, and their organization at the first meeting. If you have revolving membership or guests who attend, it may be a good idea to do this every time. Consider some kind of icebreaker or opening activity each time. When you review the agenda, invite others to suggest additional topics that they would like to discuss.</i>
[Start + 10 min]	Meeting Norms <i>Establish or reiterate the rules for the meeting and group discussion.</i>
[Time]	Agenda Item 1 <i>Suggested advisory board topics include program development activities (such as visioning, creating a logic model), fundraising, partnership planning, and developing plans for continuous improvement. If you have specific stakeholder advisory boards (e.g., a family board), select topics in which they may have a particular interest or expertise to share.</i>
[Time]	Agenda Item 2 <i>Try to vary the format. Don't simply have three large group discussions. You might break attendees into pairs to review the discipline policy and then come back together to discuss. Or you might have a short presentation on why you want to expand the program and then break into small group table discussions before coming together again to make a decision.</i>
[Time]	Additional Agenda Items
[Time]	Closing and Next Steps <i>Be sure to end the meeting on time and have some kind of closing activity—whether it is reviewing the final decisions that were made, talking about next steps, or simply asking everyone to reflect on the group process. Closure and reflection are important to any successful meeting.</i> <i>Be sure to use this time to confirm the time and location of the next meeting.</i>
[End time]	Adjourn

Procedure Checklist



In Chapter 1, you learned that it is important to craft procedures so that staff members understand how to implement or support existing policies. In some cases, however, it might be better to let your staff members develop their own procedures rather than prescribing one for them. Use this checklist to help you determine whether you should establish a specific procedure or leave your staff with flexibility to define procedures locally.

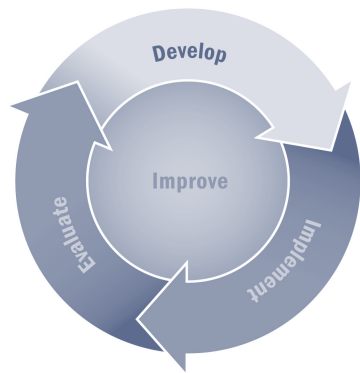
Directions: First, describe the policy or issue in question in the space provided. Then, place a checkmark next to each question for a “yes” or “no” answer. When you are finished, tally your “yes” checkmarks. If you have four or more “yes” checkmarks (particularly if it is a legal liability question), you may want to consider establishing a procedure.

Policy or Issue

	Yes	No
Is it a matter that will directly affect the health and safety of participants or the staff?	☐	☐
Is it a situation that occurs on a regular basis?	☐	☐
Would law enforcement officials or attorneys suggest that it should be a policy?	☐	☐
Could flexibility on this matter lead to inconsistent or conflicting practices?	☐	☐
Are your staff members relatively inexperienced in this area?	☐	☐
Do your staff members have difficulty taking initiative or responsibility without direction?	☐	☐
Is this a matter that could result in liability for your program?	☐	☐
Is this a matter that could be interpreted in a variety of different ways?	☐	☐
Would families be likely to want a clear procedure in place?	☐	☐

Total Number of “Yes” Answers: _____

Sample Policies and Procedures Table of Contents



In Chapter 1, you learned that having policies and procedures promotes standardized practices that ultimately ensure safety, support staff member retention, and promote high-quality programming.

Directions: Use this sample table of contents to guide the development of your policies and procedures manual or handbook. You may decide to use all or some of the policies and procedures listed here, and you may decide to add policies and procedures specific to your program. Make sure your handbook is available in multiple formats (online and in print), at all of your locations, and in the languages spoken in your program.

Facilities Policy: To ensure a safe and secure environment that adheres to local building codes and licensure requirements

Facilities Procedures pg XX

- Safety/Security
- Indoor/Outdoor Maintenance
- Emergency
- Licensure
- Weather Conditions
- Special Facilities Procedures (e.g., pools, computer labs, gymnasiums)
- Fire Escape Procedures

Development Policy: To secure diversified funds and goods for programming, to convene and respond to stakeholder groups, and to disseminate information broadly

Development Procedures.....pg XX

- Board Stewardship
- Fundraising
- Communications
- Reporting
- Conflict of Interest

Accounting Policy: To uphold accounting practices to the highest standard and within the specifications of the designated business model/tax code

Accounting Procedures pg XX

- Internal Controls
- Financial Planning
- Reporting, Revenue/Accounts Receivable
- Expense/Accounts Payable
- In-Kind Contributions
- Asset Management

Staff/Personnel Policy: To hire and retain staff members without bias and in the interest of their professional development

Staff/Personnel Procedures pg XX

- Recruitment/Hiring
- Background Checks
- Supervision
- Promotion
- Salaries/Benefits
- Leave/Vacation
- Staff Member Dismissal
- Substitute Procedures

Program and Participant Policy: To be equitable in the recruitment, enrollment, and retention of participants; to promote the strengths of each participant and to offer high-quality programs where youth can learn and develop

Program and Participant Procedures.....pg XX

- Enrollment/Wait Lists
- Participant Inclusion
- Attendance
- Activity Planning and Implementation
- Medical History and Intervention
- Behavior Supports and Management
- Discipline
- Mandated Reporting
- Transportation
 - Pick-Up and Dismissal
 - Bus Policies
- Field Trips

Data and Evaluation Policy: To use evaluation studies and participant data ethically in program improvement efforts and for research

Data and Evaluation Procedures pg XX

Data Use

Data Storage, Security, and Sharing

Privacy and Guardianship

FERPA

Family Consent/Youth Assent for Surveys and Other Data Collection

Reporting

External Relations/Liability Policy: To protect the organization/program, staff members, and participants from potential harm or exposure

External Relations/Liability Procedures.....pg XX

Social Media

News Media

Advocacy

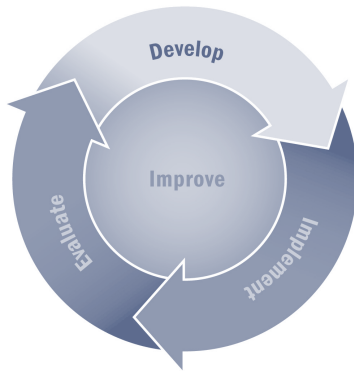
Consent (e.g., photo, information)

Other Employment

Conflict of Interest

Intellectual Property

Tips for Developing Outreach and Marketing Materials



In Chapter 1, you learned that it is important to develop materials that provide clear information about your program that you can share with schools, families, community partners, and the media. Getting the word out about your program will support your recruitment, retention, and marketing efforts, and it will also help staff members and stakeholders develop a sense of identity for your program.

Directions: Consider the following tips as you think about outreach and marketing materials for your program. These materials may take many different forms, such as a one-page information sheet, a brochure, posters, or a flyer. You may want to develop these materials with middle or high school students in your program and/or consider enlisting the aid of a graphic artist or printer in the community.

Before you begin developing your materials:

- **Collect materials from other programs and agencies.** You can find these by visiting different organizations in person or viewing their websites. Identify what it is about those materials that you find attractive, and identify what you don't like. Use these characteristics to guide your thinking.
- Determine **how much money** you can spend on your materials, and stick to the budget.
- If you are printing materials, **identify how many copies you will need.**

Developing your materials:

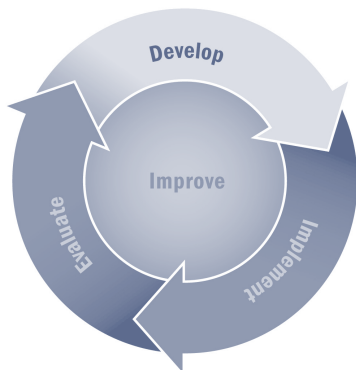
- **Think about the purpose of the materials you are developing.** What do you want them to achieve? Some purposes might be:
 - To inform potential participants about the program
 - To secure funding for the program
 - To educate nonparticipants about the program
- Next, **identify your audience.** As you start writing, keep that audience in mind and use words and phrasing that are both familiar and appealing to them.
- **Write from the reader's point of view.** Focus your writing on what matters most to that specific audience. If families are your focus, you might highlight the importance of youth having a safe place to spend their time out of school, whereas if your focus is community members you might highlight the service learning projects your program plans for the upcoming year.
- **Use simple language that is clear.** Avoid "talking down" to your audience, but make sure that the language you use is easy to understand for a variety of readers.

- Use words and phrases that **engage the reader**. Avoid clichés and jargon. For example, most afterschool and expanded learning programs claim to be “committed to student success,” and many say they’re “standards based.” What exactly do those phrases mean? Be sure your materials convey the point of your message clearly.
- **Emphasize the benefits of your program** rather than its features. For example, write this: “Young people will complete their homework at the program every day,” rather than this: “The first hour is devoted to homework assistance. Tutors are available to help youth.”
- **Use a simple design for your materials.** Whatever you create should not attempt to be a comprehensive manual detailing every aspect of your program, and you should avoid creating something that has every inch of space covered with text or images. Instead, make sure that there are only two or three sentences per paragraph and fewer than 10 lines of type per paragraph. Use bold or italic type sparingly to emphasize a point. Avoid using underlining or all caps. These styles are leftovers from the typewriter age!
- **Choose potential images for your materials**, if necessary. Photos of youth from your program are always good, but require that the materials be printed directly. (If photocopied, photographs often lose their clarity.) Using photos of youth in your program also requires family permission, so make sure you obtain that from families first!
- **Choose your paper, ink, and font colors and texture with care.** Remember...
 - Glossy paper with bold colors creates an upscale image, while plain copier paper creates a poor image.
 - Dark ink works best for most type, although brighter colors can be used for headings.
 - Extra ink colors often translate into extra charges.
 - Select fonts with an eye to the message you want to convey. Do not use more than three fonts in your brochure. The fonts you use the most should carry your message and be easy to read.
 - Check with your printer about supplies that he or she may have in stock. Sometimes a printer can offer you a deal if you will use up the rest of some “expensive” materials purchased for another job.
- **Emphasize your program’s name and logo.** This should be the first thing the reader will see. It should jump out and seize the reader’s attention. Also be sure to include contact information.

Once you are finished:

- **Distribute your materials!** Even an excellent information sheet won’t be helpful unless it is received by people, organizations, and agencies in the community.
- **Evaluate your communication and supporting materials for ongoing improvement!**

Sample Participant Enrollment Form



In Chapter 1, you learned that a key part of your recruitment process is creating a clear way for youth to enroll in your program. All new participants should complete a program enrollment form that asks, at a minimum, for things like name, address, and family member contact information, and provides opportunities for families to sign various permission forms.

Directions: Use or adapt this form for your program. If you are using a printed form, consider printing it on your program's letterhead or brightly colored paper. If you have a website, consider creating an online enrollment form.

Youth Information

Participant's Name (please print): _____

Gender: _____ Date of Birth: _____

School: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: _____

Primary Language Spoken at Home: _____

Grade: _____ Teacher Contact: _____

Description of Your Child

Please tell us about your child. Describe his or her interests, hobbies, extracurricular activities, and anything else that will help us get to know your child better.

Family Information

Family Member Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone No(s): _____ Email: _____

Family Member Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone No(s): _____ Email: _____

Transportation

- ☐ I (or someone I designate) will pick my child up from program.

Name of Person and Alternate: _____

- ☐ My child will take the bus (or other provided transportation home) after the program ends.

- ☐ My child will walk home alone from the program.

- ☐ Other: _____

Health Release

I give permission for the activity leader in charge to act on my behalf to take measures he or she deems necessary in the event of sickness or injury during the field trip. I agree to pay for any medical expenses for my child whose name appears above.

Current medical conditions
(including allergies) or medication: _____

Insurance Company: _____

Policy No.: _____ Policyholder's Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Permissions

Please indicate below whether you give permission for the following things:

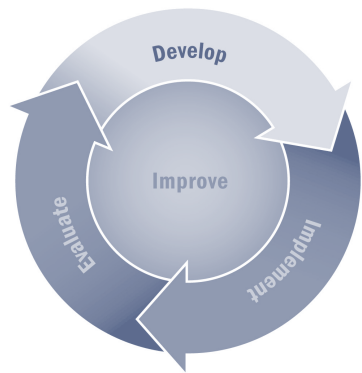
- The program to take and use photos of your child for the purpose of promoting the program (e.g., on our website, in program brochures)

☐ Yes ☐ No

- The program to survey your child occasionally in order to improve the program (*Note: Any survey that is part of a research study or for any purpose other than program improvement will have a separate permission process. This is just for program improvement information.*)

☐ Yes ☐ No

Participant Enrollment Confirmation to Family



In Chapter 1, you learned that it is important to give family members an information sheet about the program after enrollment so they know what to expect, including when the program starts, attendance policies, and other logistical details.

Directions: You may use or adapt this enrollment confirmation form for your own program. If available, print it on the program letterhead.

To the Family Members of **[Name of Young Person]**:

This notice is to let you know that your child is enrolled in the **[Program Name]** at **[Organization and Location]**.

We want to do everything possible to make sure your child has an enjoyable learning experience. We are confirming your child’s start date, program enrollment, instructor, and transportation plan.

[Instructor Name] and the **[Program Name]** will be prepared for **[Name of Young Person]** to begin on **[start date]**. The program ends on **[end date]**. We will be off during **[list breaks, if any]**.

Please do not send your child to the program before this date.

Immediately after school, all young people will meet at **[name of centralized meeting location for transportation to program, if applicable]**.

[Name of Young Person] is enrolled in the following activities for this session:

	Activity	Activity	Activity
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			

Based on our records, the transportation for your child is:

Transportation Type (e.g., bus, walk)	Time of Departure	Time of Arrival

A family member should accompany younger participants until they are familiar with their new routine.

If for some unforeseen reason your child does not arrive home at the expected time, please call the program/school at **[phone number]**.

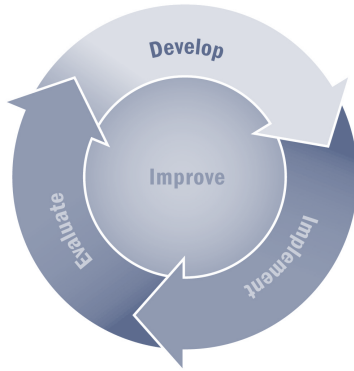
We are making every effort to ensure that participants have a fun, safe, and enriching experience.

If you have any questions, please contact us by **[phone number]** or **[email address]**.

Sincerely,

[Your Name/Program Name]

Consent to Share Information



In Chapter 1, you learned that there are a variety of reasons staff members are asked to share participant information and that it is important to establish policies and procedures to protect participants' privacy and to help staff members respond to requests for information.

Directions: This is a generic consent form that you can customize for your program. Consents should be obtained for a variety of reasons, including photo releases, collecting academic or other data on participant school achievement, for internal program evaluation and related data collection purposes, and sharing information among adults to promote the success of youth. We suggest

getting this form signed at the beginning of the program cycle along with the enrollment form. If your program is recruited to participate in a research study of any kind, be sure to ask the researcher for informed consent materials and allow youth and staff members to participate only after they have completed the researcher's specific consent forms.

ABC Program Consent to Share Information

I authorize the following organizations and cooperating agencies to exchange information related to [Participant Name] (please check all that apply):

- ☐ Personal identification information (name, age, birth date, gender, family background)
- ☐ School records (grades, standardized test scores, unique identification information)
- ☐ Photographs taken during program activities
- ☐ Videos taken during program activities

This agreement will expire on [date]: _____

Name (please print): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Relationship: _____

If your program cooperates with outside organizations or agencies to support a young person's success (for example, if you share information for an Individualized Education Program), use the following section specifically for data sharing. Using this section permits organizations and cooperating agencies to share confidential information and work together in providing programs for young people. Examples of organizations and cooperating agencies include educational service organizations, social service agencies, law enforcement agencies, mental health service providers, health care providers, and research and evaluation organizations.

For Internal Use

This form has been sent to the following agencies:

Agency Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Agency Name: _____ Date: _____

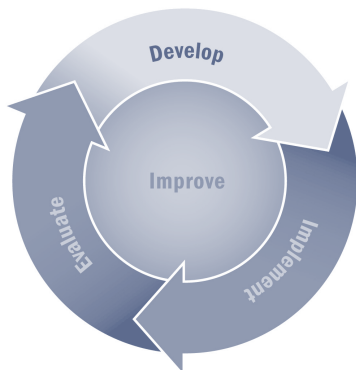
Address: _____

Agency Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

This information will be kept confidential by the receiving organization or agency.

Participant Assent Form



In Chapter 1, you learned that there are a variety of reasons staff members may be asked to share participant information and that it is important to establish policies and procedures to protect young people’s privacy and respect their rights as individuals. It is ideal to get “assent” or agreement from participants before sharing their information, whether informally or via a separate assent form. This is not a stand-alone document, and it needs to be accompanied by a permission or consent form (e.g., **Tool 10: Consent to Share Information**).

Directions: Use this form to obtain assent or agreement from participants in your program to share their information. You should explain clearly the purpose of the

assent and the consequences of signing the assent form to the young person. An assent form is not legally binding and should not take the place of a consent form.

ABC Program Participant Assent Form

You are being asked to help us by letting us share information about you. Your parents or guardian say it is okay, but it is up to you if you want to share your information, or not. If you want to know more about sharing information, you may ask us. You are not obligated to sign this form.

We will share the following information:

- **[List information that will be shared]**

Information will be shared with: _____

I understand what is being asked of me. Please sign below.

☐ Yes, I will allow you to share my information. _____

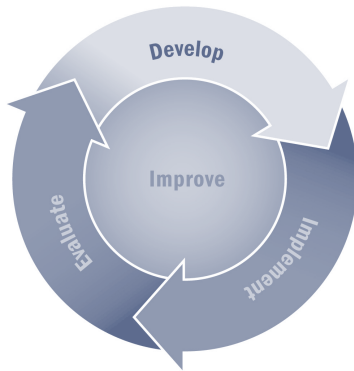
☐ No, I do not want you to share my information. _____

Date: _____

Name of Participant (please print): _____

Signature of Witness: _____ Date: _____

Making Rules as a Team



In Chapters 1 and 4, you learned that developing clear rules and guidelines at the beginning of the program with input from youth creates an environment characterized by inclusiveness where young people feel a sense of community. In addition, when youth contribute to program rules, we see reduced instances of problems because there are relevant program guidelines.

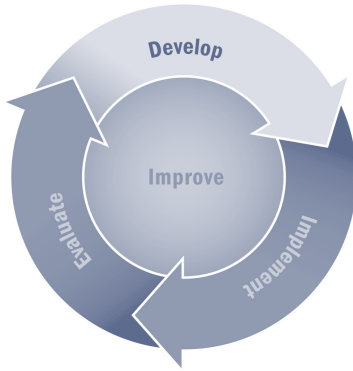
Directions: Use the following steps with program staff members and youth at the start of the program cycle. Work together to develop rules for your program.

How to Develop Rules as a Team

1. Think about hopes and goals for the program as an activity. Have youth and staff members share what their hopes and goals looks like and make a list as a group (or in small groups if you have a larger group). Each person may write his or her ideas down on flip chart paper or raise a hand to share thoughts aloud with the group.
2. Brainstorm a list of rules that will be needed in order to achieve the goals identified in step 1. Ask youth to share ideas for rules, and list everything each person says. This shows that everyone has a voice and that everyone's suggestion is important.
3. Suggest criteria for good rules. Example criteria may include not having too many, making sure the rules apply to everyone, clarity, and positive language.
4. Clean up your list of rules. Combine any duplicates and ask if anything is missing. Ensure that the rules are clear. If there are too many rules or the rules are too complicated, ask youth to prioritize or simplify.
5. Talk about common rules in life (school rules, rules at home). Discuss the commonalities and differences between common rules and the list you came up with, and why. This is important to talk about so that rules like "be quiet in the classroom" are common in school but not in the afterschool and expanded learning program (we hope!); then youth should have the opportunity to process this totally acceptable difference. It is also nice to talk about rules that might be the same everywhere, like "be a good helper."
6. Document the rules and post them somewhere in the program space where they are easily visible to all youth, staff, and program partners.
7. Review the rules periodically to ensure that they are relevant.

Remember: It is important not only to develop and agree to the rules as a group but also to determine the consequences of not following the rules. These activities will help youth in identifying the cause of their own behavior and coming up with proactive plans to improve.

Program Schedule



In Chapter 1, you learned that everyone benefits from having a well-defined schedule. Program staff members should know what program activities are happening and when, and young people should know where to go and for what activity. Developing and maintaining a program schedule and posting it for all to see (physically in your program as well as online, if possible) will help your program run smoothly.

Directions: Use or adapt this tool to schedule and keep track of all program offerings that occur during the school year. Be sure to include days offered, time, location, staffing, and any additional information. A sample schedule is provided below to get you started. Use the blank form on the last page for your program.

Afterschool All-Stars!

First Program Session (September–December) – 10 weeks

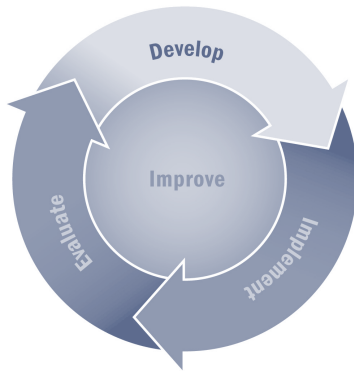
	Time	Activity	Room	Staff
Monday	3:00–3:30	Snack (all grades)	Cafeteria	John Smith, Ann Moore, community college volunteers
	3:30–4:15	Homework Center (3–5)	8	Community college volunteers
		Homework Center (6–8)	2a	
	4:15–4:30	Transition to enrichment activities		All staff members oversee
	4:30–5:30	Science Alive! (3–5)	6	Audubon Society staff
		Karate (3–5)	Gym	Mark Jennings
		Service Learning Group (6–8)	4a	Sally Lincoln
		Art Club (6–8)	4b	Arts for All staff
	5:30–6:00	Open Rec.	Gym	John Smith, Ann Moore, community college volunteers
Tuesday	3:00–3:30	Snack (all grades)	Cafeteria	John Smith, Ann Moore, community college volunteers
	3:30–4:30	Yoga (3–5)	Gym	Jennifer Sloan
		Math Club (3–5)	2b	Sarah Perry
		Step Dancing	Auditorium	DJ dance staff
		Robotics	6	Jeff Fisher

	4:30–4:45	Transition to Homework Centers		All staff members oversee
	4:45–5:30	Homework Center (3–5) Homework Center (6–8)	8 2a	Community college volunteers
	5:30–6:00	Open Rec.	Gym	John Smith, Ann Moore, community college volunteers
Wednesday	3:00–3:30	Snack (all grades)	Cafeteria	John Smith, Ann Moore, community college volunteers
	3:30–4:15	Homework Center (3–5) Homework Center (6–8)	8 2a	Community college volunteers
	4:15–4:30	Transition to enrichment activities		All staff members oversee
	4:30–5:30	Science Alive! (3–5) Karate (3–5) Service Learning Group (6–8) Art Club (6–8)	6 Gym 4a 4b	Audubon Society staff Mark Jennings Sally Lincoln Arts for All staff
	5:30–6:00	Open Rec.	Gym	John Smith, Ann Moore, community college volunteers
Thursday	3:00–3:30	Snack (all grades)	Cafeteria	John Smith, Ann Moore, community college volunteers
	3:30–4:30	Yoga (3–5) Math Club (3–5) Step Dancing Robotics	Gym 2b Auditorium 6	Jennifer Sloan Sarah Perry DJ dance staff Jeff Fisher
	4:30–4:45	Transition to Homework Centers		All staff members oversee
	4:45–5:30	Homework Center (3–5) Homework Center (6–8)	8 2a	Community college volunteers
	5:30–6:00	Open Rec.	Gym	John Smith, Ann Moore, community college volunteers
Friday	Program Closed – Staff Planning			

[Program Name]
[Program Session (Dates) – # Weeks]

	Time	Activity	Room	Staff
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				

Portfolio Guide



In Chapter 1, you learned that creating a portfolio is a collaborative process that can be a great way for program staff members and youth to document their experience in the program. The primary purpose of a portfolio is to allow a young person to showcase his or her program experiences and successes and to enable program staff members to monitor and support youth by understanding their work, their interests, and their lives outside of the program. Young people should be the primary drivers of constructing their portfolios, and the process should help to develop bonds between youth and staff.

Directions: *This tool suggests a variety of information that you might want to include in youth portfolios. You can easily start with basic demographic information gathered at enrollment and then add more over time. Youth and program staff members should update portfolios with notes regarding participant accomplishments, areas of interest, participant and family surveys, interest inventories, and other work products described below. You may not want or be able to collect all the information right away; youth and staff members should actively gather information for different sections of the portfolio over time.*

Creating a portfolio should be a joint effort between the young person and staff members. There is no “correct” format for a portfolio. You may just have manila folders or binders that you add to over the course of the year with photos, printouts, report cards, reflections, surveys, and other materials. Alternatively, you may have something more extensive and organized that includes different sections and that formally captures data; it could even be electronic. The format you choose will depend on how much time you have to dedicate to this and how you anticipate using the portfolio throughout the year. Whatever your format, remember that your portfolios contain a great deal of confidential information and that they should be kept in a safe place, preferably in a locked drawer or a password-protected file on a computer.

Basic Information

You should capture basic demographic information at enrollment. You can include your enrollment form in the folder or transfer it onto a separate form. If you use an online participant tracking system, you may be able to print out a demographic information sheet to include in the portfolio. Include, at a minimum, the following information:

- Participant name
- Date of birth
- Gender
- Languages spoken, including primary home language
- School name
- Year/grade level
- Years in the program
- Reasons for attending the program (*Interest? Family members? How did you hear about the program? Do you have friends in the program?*)

Youth Interest Information

You likely use youth surveys to capture information about youth in your program. Surveys may ask questions about their interests as well as their social and emotional, academic, and physical well-being. Keep survey results in your youth portfolios. It is best to transfer the answers to key survey questions onto a separate page or form rather than just including the survey itself in the portfolio. In addition to (or instead of) surveys, you may have your staff members interview or talk with youth one on one or in small groups to get the information you need. Participants can also do a project that reflects their interests (such as self-portraits with magazine clippings that represent their interests). Collecting participants' reflections is also a great way to capture youth assets and interests. Staff members should reference this section during planning time to develop specific strategies and support youth interests. Some topics to include in your portfolios include:

- Favorite school class/subject (*Why?*)
- Least favorite school class/subject (*Why?*)
- What you look for in adult leaders (*Why?*)
- Sports or extracurricular activities (*e.g., school, park district, club team*)
- Career aspirations (*What type of job/career would you like to have in the future? What are you interested in? Do you know what it takes to get that type of job/career?*)
- Postsecondary aspirations (*What college would you like to attend? Do you know where that is located/what its entry requirements are?*)
- Favorite afterschool activities (*at this program*) and suggestions for or interest in new programs
- Reasons you like the program
- Reasons you do not like the program

Youth Asset Inventory

Each participant brings his or her own contribution to the afterschool and expanded learning setting through his or her unique and individual characteristics. This information is more difficult to capture and collect. Decide with your group and with each participant how to best capture this information. We have outlined some ideas here, but it is best to be creative and let young people drive the process. Information recorded here should extend beyond the basic data collected during enrollment. You can collect it through project work throughout the year, conferences with family members, talking with youth directly, conversations with school faculty and administrators, and observation and note-taking. Below are examples of information that could be gathered and that should be updated regularly.

- Learning style (*e.g., school grades/courses, learning ability, visual learner*) – This can be gathered through school-related data, talking with school day teachers, observation by instructors in the afterschool and expanded learning program, and conversations with family members.
- Social observations (*e.g., introvert, popular, social group, cliques*) – This can be gathered through circle time conversations with youth, reflections on social situations and role play, observations, talking with school day teachers, talking with youth one on one, talking with family members, and through surveys with relevant questions.

- Emotional competencies (*e.g., assertive, empathetic*) – This can be gathered through conversations with youth and conversations with their school day teachers and other adults in the young person’s life, as well through observations.
- Character observations (*e.g., leadership, confidence, problem solving*) – This can be gathered through conversations with youth and with their school day teachers and other adults in the young person’s life, as well through observations.
- Skills and interests (*e.g., sports, art, theater, independent learning*) – This can be gathered through an inventory of programs in which the young person has participated, as well as youth surveys.
- Other relevant information (*e.g., behavior*) – This can be gathered through observation, youth surveys, and talking with teachers and other adults in the young person’s life.
- Reflections from youth on all of the above.

Program Participation

Youth are more likely to experience the benefits of the afterschool and expanded learning program if they participate consistently in a variety of activities. Program staff members should incorporate participants’ interests to ensure that they actively engage in program activities and projects. The following list suggests information that could be included in this section:

- School attendance and grades (*self-reported, report card, test scores*)
- Program participation data (*average days of program attendance per week, per month, per year; types of activities youth are participating in*)
- Challenges to participation or attendance (*e.g., babysitting younger siblings, jobs, sports*)
- Results from satisfaction surveys (*e.g., satisfaction with activities and topics*)
- Notes from conversations, observations, and discussions about attendance
- Notes from formal meetings or discussions with a school teacher, tutor, or counselor related to the participant’s attendance
- Notes from formal meetings or discussions with family related to the participant’s attendance
- Reflections from youth on all of the above

Youth Work

It is important to capture a snapshot of a young person’s passion in school and in other aspects of his or her life and the growth of his or her work over time. In this portion of the portfolio, you can capture young people’s favorite work products and the type of work they are doing at the beginning and end of the program. You can use work products as a way to inform family members about growth, celebrate success, and plan for additional supports. Types of work to capture in this section include:

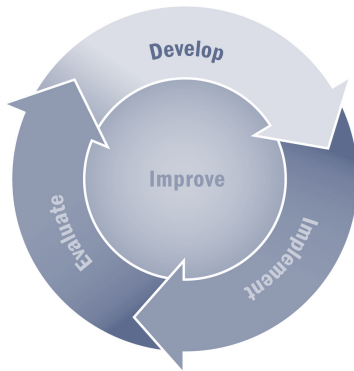
- Academic work (*e.g., homework sheets, handwriting work, math problems*)
- Art work (*e.g., drawings, photographs of sculptures or stage performances, musical recordings, etc.*)
- Project work (*e.g., artifacts from service learning projects, pages from a youth-designed newspaper, posters from a public service campaign, etc.*)
- Reflections from youth on all of the above

Community Context

*Staff members should pay close attention to the resources and characteristics of the local and school community where youth live and develop. Young people and staff members should gather information for this section from various sources to discuss everyday issues that may affect the life of a participant. Staff members can also gather information for this section from the asset mapping activity (**Tool 34**). Examples of information that could be gathered include the following:*

- Local assets frequented by participants (e.g., park, recreation center)
- Critical information about the participants' community (e.g., local news)
- Local neighborhood issues/areas of concern (e.g., violence, poverty, unemployment)
- Youth comments (notes from conversations, products from service learning projects, observations, and discussions with the program participant about his or her friends, school, neighborhood, program, or household issues)
- Classroom teachers' comments (notes from formal meetings or discussions related to the program participants' neighborhood or household circumstances)
- Family comments (notes from formal meetings or discussions related to the program participants' school, neighborhood, or household circumstances)
- Reflections from youth on all of the above

Market Analysis



In Chapter 1, you learned that conducting a market analysis is one way to begin to explore resources in your community—funding resources as well as potential partners and supporters. Taking the time to do this will help you in the long run as you work to sustain your program with a diverse funding and partnership base.

Directions: Below we suggest a set of steps for conducting a market analysis. You can follow the steps in order or pick and choose based on your existing knowledge of your community and the types of resources you want to identify. We have included a table at the end of this tool to help you begin collecting information.

Step 1 – Conduct a Community Inventory

The first step is to begin brainstorming all the possible partners in your community that may have an interest in an afterschool and expanded learning program. Think about the following categories of partners:

- School district and individual school staff
- City and county government
- Local funders
- Community-based organizations
- Local colleges and universities
- Research and policy organizations

Keep a comprehensive list of each type of partner and the specific organizations you can think of that are associated with each partner type. Make a note of why you think the potential partner may be interested in your program or what type of partnership you might have with the organization. It is a good idea to include a variety of people (e.g., your staff, advisory board, board of directors, etc.) in the brainstorming process in order to draw up a comprehensive list.

Step 2 – Identify Key Informants and Conduct Interviews

Think about key informants in each of the groups above and set up a time to talk with each one. These can be informal conversations or more formal interviews. Questions you might consider asking include:

- Can you think of ways our program could help your organization achieve its core mission?
- Who is your target population?
- Are there ways we can partner to increase efficiency or reduce costs for both of us?
- What kinds of resources might you (or similar organizations) be able to contribute to the afterschool and expanded learning program?
- How should I think about approaching other [insert type of organization here] to discuss the possibilities of partnering? Are there any you think are particularly worth reaching out to?

Step 3 – Collect and Capture Data

Be sure to capture all of the data you are gathering through your inventory and your interviews. You can start by using the table we have provided with this tool. You may also want to create an Excel spreadsheet or other database to capture information about each potential partner, which you can add to over time as you gather new data. Be sure to note potential contacts, types of resources, and other details about their possible interest in your program and afterschool and expanded learning in general. The more comprehensive your data, the more actionable it will be.

Step 4 – Turn Your Data Into Action Steps

Although a market analysis isn't actually a plan for action, it is a good idea to take the information you capture through this market analysis activity and turn it into a set of next steps. Using the table that follows, identify specific staff members to follow up on each activity. If possible, include a timeline for each next step. These don't have to be comprehensive and detailed, but they should include actions you can take to move your market analysis into its next logical phase.

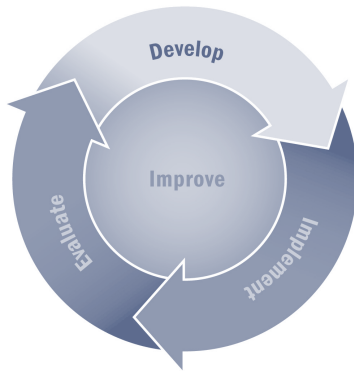
Capturing Market Analysis Data

Name of Resource	Type of Support/Resource	Notes/Next Steps
Fundors		
<i>Example – Community Foundation</i>	<i>Provide small grants for professional development for program staff members</i>	<i>Program director will follow up with program officer to establish meeting to discuss (by Dec. 4)</i>

Name of Resource	Type of Support/Resource	Notes/Next Steps
Partners		
<i>Example – The local Y</i>	<i>May be willing to bring Y on the Move bus to program for additional sports enrichment</i>	<i>Education director will contact Y on the Move director to discuss fall programming (by Sept. 15)</i>

Now What? *In the end, you will have a comprehensive set of potential partners and resources, and you may make some friends and meet collaborators on the way. At the very least, you have raised awareness about afterschool and expanded learning and your program’s vision.*

Grant-Writing Tips



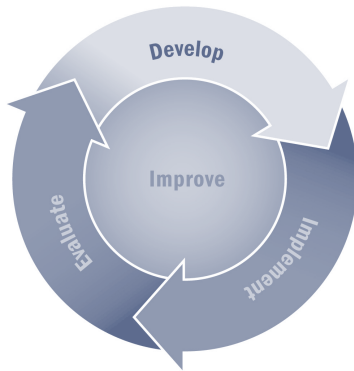
In Chapter 1, you learned that grants are probably the most common type of funding for afterschool and expanded learning programs. These come from both local and national sources and can be both public and private. Writing a grant is not an easy task, nor is it one to rush through. Taking the time to research the funder and carefully explore each opportunity will pay off.

Directions: Use the following tips for successful grant writing.

Do	Don't
Make sure you are eligible. Read the entire grant application to make sure it is right for the afterschool and expanded learning program you have or have in mind.	Don't try to "fit" your program to a grant if it is not a natural match. Chances are your application won't be competitive.
Follow all instructions for page limits, font requirements, spacing, appendices, and other specifications.	- Don't exceed the page limit recommendation for your proposal's narrative text or get too creative with fonts and margins to give yourself more room. Such actions may hinder your chances of getting the grant. - Don't add additional appendices to include more information unless the instructions indicate that this is allowed.
Make sure you organize the grant narrative to address explicitly any stated selection criteria. If criteria are presented, your grant will probably be rated on how well you address these criteria. Often, the instructions will indicate what sections should be included in the narrative.	Don't be vague about goals, objectives, and intended outcomes in the narrative.
- Make sure you address each item the grant asks for in the narrative, appendices, and additional forms and assurances. Create a checklist of required elements and check them off as you address them in the application. - Make it easy for the reviewer to "check off" each requirement without having to hunt for information.	Don't forget to include critical information required on forms and any other assurances necessary.

Do	Don't
• Ask for enough funding, based on what the grant provides or recommends.	• Don't ask for an inflated amount of funding, especially if you are seeking funding for only one site.
• Write clearly for the reviewers, providing specifics about your program and community. Use headers, keep your sentences short, and organize your text into paragraphs.	• Don't assume that the readers know anything in advance about your community or program.
• Proofread the proposal! Have someone else (someone not involved in the process) read your grant.	• Don't assume that the writing is error free. • Don't rely on computer spell checks and grammar checks. They don't find all the errors.
• Provide a budget for each year for the amount you are requesting from the funder. Be careful to review any matching requirements and make sure you can meet them. If budget forms are required (federal grants require them), make sure you fill them out completely. Check your math!	• Don't assume the readers will know what you "meant" to say if you make a mistake. If you mistakenly ask for less money than your budget details, you may be awarded only the lower amount (if you get an award at all). • Don't use your own budget forms if specific budget forms are required.
• Follow the application's instructions for submission. The instructions may ask you to submit both electronic and paper copies of the application. • Make sure you are familiar with any online submission system well before the due date. • Sign your paper version of the application in blue ink and submit the required number of copies.	• Don't wait until the last minute to submit an electronic version of your application in case there are issues with the online system. • If you are posting paper copies, make sure you leave enough time for them to reach the location by the due date. • Don't submit additional material after you have already sent in your application. It may not be considered in the review process.

Budget Worksheet



In Chapter 1, you learned that it is important that someone oversees the budget by tracking revenue and expenses and planning detailed budgets for at least two years. Planning your revenue and expenses for two years will help you identify where you may have shortfalls, how many staff members you can afford to hire, the types of programming you can run, and the materials you can purchase.

Directions: Use this worksheet to help you think about the costs associated with operating an afterschool and expanded learning program. The first part of the worksheet lists potential funding sources and allows you to record the total amount of funding available from each source in order to compare your

estimated costs with your estimated revenue. The second part of the worksheet provides an itemized list of typical expenses. For each item, record the estimated or actual cost.

Part I – Potential Resources

Potential Funding Sources	Estimated Contribution
Local government	
School district	
State grants	
Federal grants	
Foundation funds	
Parent-teacher organizations	
Local civic and service clubs	
Local businesses	
Tuition and user fees*	
In-kind contributions	
Other	
Total Revenue	

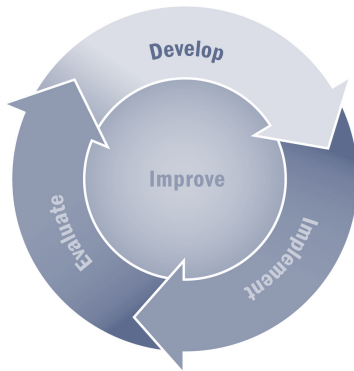
Part II – Typical Expenses

Item or Service	Estimated Total Cost/Fiscal Year
Management (percentage of staff time/salary for human resources, development, quality improvement, administrative)	
Professional development (internal and external)	
Project staff member salaries	
Contractual services	
Fringe benefits	
Annual rental fee/costs for modifying space	
Furniture/equipment	
Program materials	
Field trips	
Office supplies	
Technology (phones, computers, tablets, printers) <i>These are onetime purchasing costs, with upkeep (or depreciation) expenses thereafter</i>	
Utilities	
Transportation/travel	
Annual fees/licenses	
Insurance	
Total Costs	
Total Revenue (from Part I)	

Now, put the total revenue from Part I in the last row of your budget in Part II. Do the two numbers align? If so, then great! If not, you may need to adjust your anticipated expenses or make a more aggressive plan for bringing in revenue. Remember that in-kind, or donated, goods and services are a great way to offset costs at the start of a program. Use **Tool 18** to learn more about in-kind contributions.

*Note: Participation must be affordable for families in the community. Be careful of fees that are too high and that make the program inaccessible for families.

Calculation of In-Kind Contributions



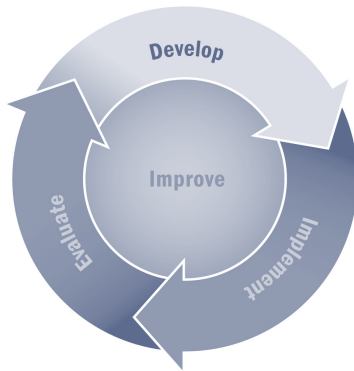
In Chapter 3, you learned that partnerships are vitally important for afterschool and expanded learning programs. Partners contribute many things to programs that are non-monetary in nature. Capturing this information will not only allow you to calculate the true costs of your program but also allow you to determine the monetary value of each of your partnerships.

Directions: Use this tool to calculate the amount and value of in-kind contributions and services that your partners provide to your afterschool and expanded learning program. This information is useful when seeking out additional funding or making presentations about the contributions of partners

to the collaborative effort. By calculating the value of these in-kind contributions, you can make a powerful statement about the community's support and the stability of the program.

	Item	Value	Contribution Details (Who? What? When?)
Space	Use the fair rental value. Real estate agents or property managers should be able to give you an estimate of that value. Be sure to include the value of utilities—heating, cooling, electricity, and phone—if they are provided.	\$	
Goods and Supplies	Calculate the fair market value of each item (i.e., what it would cost to purchase it).	\$	
Equipment	Calculate the fair market value. Check with an equipment rental company to find out what it would cost to rent similar equipment.	\$	
Personnel Services	- If another agency contributes staff members to your program, you can calculate the value of those staff members by dividing their combined annual salary by 2,080 (the number of hours in a 52-week work year) to obtain the hourly rate, then multiplying by the number of hours of service. The result is the value of their in-kind contribution. - For volunteers, there are two ways that you can calculate the value of their efforts. For nonprofessional volunteers, use the minimum wage and multiply by the number of hours served. For professional volunteers, use the same formula that you would for personnel services.	\$	
Other	Often, partners will do mailings, make copies, and send staff members to meetings. All of these are in-kind contributions. Be sure to count them.	\$	
Total In-Kind Contributions		\$	

Job Description for Program Staff



In Chapter 1, you learned that you should provide staff members a detailed job description that lists the qualifications for the position, the duties and benefits of the position, and the expectations associated with the position. A good job description will help your program attract qualified candidates and establish a positive culture of accountability.

Directions: This tool is divided into three parts. First, consider the following job description questions to identify the necessary requirements for your program. Second, read the example job description for this position. Finally, use the requirements identified in Part I and the example provided in Part II to complete

the job description template in Part III.

Part I. Job Description Questions and Considerations

Job Description Section	Questions and Considerations	Requirements for Your Program
Position Title	- What is the name of the position? - What title have others previously used?	
Position Definition/Description	What role will this individual play within the organization? Summarize the role in one or two sentences.	
Responsibilities	- What will this individual do on a day-to-day basis? - What duties will be assigned?	
Required Qualifications	- What educational background should this person have? - How many years of work experience should this person have? - Does it matter where the work experience has been? - Should this person have experience working with youth? - Does this position require any certifications? - Are there other skills that are necessary for fulfilling this role on a day-to-day basis?	

Job Description Section	Questions and Considerations	Requirements for Your Program
Preferred Competencies and Skills	• Are there certain skills that you feel would be beneficial but that are not necessary for fulfilling this role? Should this person have other professional skills such as time management, multitasking, or decision-making? • Are there any educational experiences you think would benefit a person in this position? • Are there any training or professional development certifications that would enable a person to better perform in this role?	
Salary	• Do you want to state the salary in this job description? • If so, what is the salary for this position? • Is this a salaried position or paid at an hourly rate? • Are benefits included with this position? If so, what are they?	
How to Apply	• What materials should an interested applicant submit to be considered for this position? • How and to whom should potential applicants submit their materials for this position?	
Statement of Nondiscrimination	• It is important to include a statement that describes your organization as an equal opportunity employer that does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, age, disability, religion, or national origin.	

Part II. Example Job Description for Afterschool and Expanded Learning Staff

Position Title

Activity Leader – Facilitator

Position Description

This individual will lead program activities with elementary and middle school–age youth during weekday programming.

Responsibilities

1. Works collaboratively with the afterschool and expanded learning team to support young people’s opportunities for positive growth and development
2. Follows the direction of the program leader and/or the center’s management with regard to policies and procedures
3. Leads, participates in, and is responsible for program activities at the assigned site
4. Creates a quality program environment and implements age-appropriate activities or projects
5. Serves as a member of the program team
6. Participates in program planning and design
7. Participates fully (i.e., facilitates, provides individual attention) in all activities at the assigned site
8. Identifies needed supplies and resources and informs the program leader of needed supplies
9. Assists the program leader to ensure the integration and coordination of multiple program activities
10. Maintains effective communication with the program leader and/or program partners at the assigned site
11. Meets with families, youth, and community members; addresses concerns in a respectful, sensitive manner
12. Respects cultural diversity and creates an inclusive, welcoming, and respectful environment
13. Ensures the safety and wellness of youth by upholding policies through the program’s procedures
14. Prepares reports as required in an accurate, timely manner
15. Participates in professional development and program-related trainings as assigned
16. Other responsibilities as assigned

Required Qualifications, Competencies, and Skills

1. Holds a high school diploma
2. Must pass a criminal background check
3. Has prior experience in activities development and implementation
4. Has prior experience working with youth

5. Has a desire to work collaboratively with youth
6. Able to multitask
7. Able to resolve challenging situations productively and without personalization
8. Able to manage time and classroom group
9. Pays attention to detail
10. Able to work well under stress
11. Shows willingness to work evenings, nights, and weekends
12. Has a valid driver's license and personal vehicle insurance or access to reliable transportation

Preferred Qualifications, Competencies, and Skills

1. Holds a bachelor's degree in education, recreation, or a related field
2. Understands program assessment techniques and tools
3. Has prior experience in an educational or recreational setting, in a school- or community-based organization
4. Is committed to afterschool and expanded learning
5. Has strong knowledge of one or more content areas (e.g., STEM, arts, health and wellness)
6. Has knowledge of the local community
7. Has a recommendation from program partners

Salary

Hourly rate is commensurate with experience. Please inquire for details.

How to Apply

Please submit your letter of intent, résumé, and any additional materials to John Smith at jsmith@abcprogram.org.

ABC Program provides equal employment opportunities without regard to race, color, sex, age, disability, religion, or national origin. ABC Program uses only job-related criteria in making decisions concerning applicants and employees.

Part III. Job Description Template

Position Title

Position Description

Responsibilities

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

Required Qualifications, Competencies, and Skills

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Preferred Qualifications, Competencies, and Skills

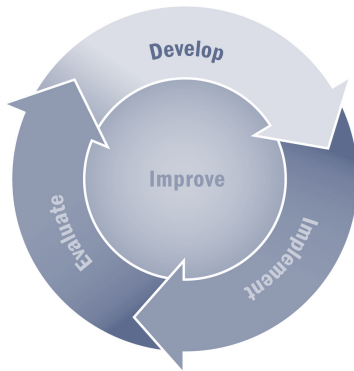
- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Salary

How to Apply

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Job Description for Program Leader



In Chapter 1, you learned that you should provide program leaders a detailed job description that lists the qualifications required, the duties associated with the position, and the expectations associated with the position. A good job description will help your program attract qualified candidates and establish a positive culture of accountability.

Directions: This tool is divided into three parts. First, consider the following job description questions to identify the necessary requirements for your program. Second, read the example job description for this position. Finally, use the requirements identified in Part I and the example provided in Part II to complete

the job description template in Part III.

Part I. Job Description Questions and Considerations

Job Description Section	Questions and Considerations	Requirements for Your Program
Position Title	- What is the name of the position? - What title have others previously used?	
Position Definition/Description	What role will this individual play within the organization? Summarize the role in one or two sentences.	
Responsibilities	- What will this individual do on a day-to-day basis? - What duties will be assigned?	
Required Qualifications	- What educational background should this person have? - How many years of work experience should this person have? - Does it matter where the work experience was? - Should this person have experience working with youth? - Does this position require any certifications? - Are there other skills that are necessary for fulfilling this role on a day-to-day basis?	

Job Description Section	Questions and Considerations	Requirements for Your Program
Preferred Competencies and Skills	• Are there certain skills that you feel would be beneficial but that are not necessary for fulfilling this role? Should this person have other professional skills such as time management, multitasking, or decision-making? • Are there any educational experiences you think would benefit a person in this position? • Are there any training or professional development certifications that would enable a person to better perform in this role?	
Salary	• Do you want to state the salary in this job description? • If so, what is the salary for this position? • Is this a salaried position or paid at an hourly rate? • Are benefits included with this position? If so, what are they?	
How to Apply	• What materials should an interested applicant submit to be considered for this position? • How and to whom should potential applicants submit their materials for this position?	
Statement of Nondiscrimination	• It is important to include a statement that describes your organization as an equal opportunity employer that does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, age, disability, religion, or national origin.	

Part II. Example Job Description for Program Leader

Position Title

Program Leader

Position Description

This individual will be employed full time by the program organization, the school, or the partner community-based organization (Youth Works!) to oversee the programs, activities, and collaborative processes.

Responsibilities

1. Lead the afterschool and expanded learning team in an environment where they can support young people's opportunities for positive growth and development
2. Ensure that the program adheres to any organizational or grant requirements
3. Hire and supervise program staff
4. Assume responsibility for the building during afterschool hours
5. Oversee enrollment, recruitment, and data collection
6. Develop relationships and work with partner staff, families, and the local community
7. Make presentations to the community, including local school boards, businesses, and community organizations
8. Meet regularly with program partners (and, if school based, the principal or school leadership)
9. Work closely with and provide ongoing supervision to staff members (i.e., program, sub-contractor, and volunteer staff members)
10. Engage and support staff members in implementing program activities to achieve program goals
11. Develop reports and oversee evaluation activities
12. Develop and track budgets
13. Secure donations and funding for the program
14. Develop or contribute to the development of and adherence to program policies and procedures
15. Analyze and apply information from periodic program evaluations
16. Coordinate the planning, development, and implementation of the program
17. Establish and maintain communication with members of partner agencies (for example school staff members about participants' progress in the program)
18. Implement applicable district, agency, and grant policies and regulations

19. Provide oral and written reports to the organization, the agency, the public, and the local school system
20. Facilitate partnerships with appropriate public and private agencies that provide supports to participants and their families
21. Prepare proposals for supplemental funding
22. Participate on local and state committees related to afterschool and expanded learning programs
23. Maintain the records needed for program administration or monitoring
24. Report to the organization director for other duties, as assigned

Required Qualifications, Competencies, and Skills

1. Holds a bachelor's degree in education, youth development, nonprofit administration, or another related field
2. Must pass a criminal background check
3. Has prior experience in strategic planning, program development, and operation
4. Has prior experience in afterschool and expanded learning programs, either in a school- or community-based setting
5. Has prior experience working with youth
6. Possesses strong leadership skills
7. Is able to multitask
8. Is able to resolve challenging situations productively and without personalization
9. Pays attention to detail
10. Is able to work well under stress
11. Has a valid driver's license and personal vehicle insurance or access to reliable transportation

Preferred Qualifications, Competencies, and Skills

1. Holds a master's degree in education, youth development, or another related field
2. Has previous experience in grant writing, management, and reporting
3. Has previous experience in program evaluation and data use for continuous program improvement
4. Has prior experience in an educational or recreational setting, in a school- or community-based organization
5. Is committed to afterschool and expanded learning
6. Has knowledge of or connection to the local community
7. Has a recommendation from program partners

Salary

This is a full-time salaried position. Salary is commensurate with experience, and a benefits package is included. Please inquire for details.

How to Apply

Please submit your letter of intent, résumé, three references, and any additional materials to John Smith at jsmith@abcprogram.org.

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Part III. Job Description Template

Position Title

Position Description

Responsibilities

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

Required Qualifications, Competencies, and Skills

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Preferred Qualifications, Competencies, and Skills

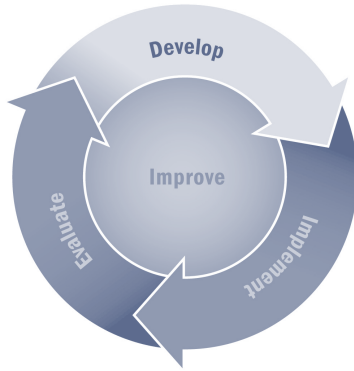
- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Salary

How to Apply

[Agency Name] provides equal employment opportunities without regard to race, color, sex, age, disability, religion, or national origin. [Agency Name] uses only job-related criteria in making decisions concerning applicants and employees.

Candidate Expertise Questionnaire



In Chapter 1, you learned that your staff is central to the success of your afterschool and expanded learning program. For that reason, it is critical to recruit, hire, and retain staff members who are passionate about working with young people, creative and thoughtful, and committed to their work.

Directions: Use the following questions to learn more about the candidates interested in applying for staff positions.

Candidate Expertise Questionnaire

Name (please print): _____ Date: _____

Position you are applying for: _____

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

Why are you interested in this position?

What job experiences have you had that would help you in this position?

Describe your experience with youth development or working with youth.

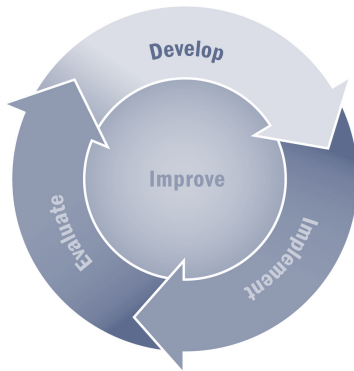
What skills have you acquired in your present or previous positions that make you an ideal candidate?

What is your highest level of education? Please list the degrees you have earned and give the name of the institution from which each degree was earned and the field of study of each degree.

List any other education or training relevant to this position.

What days of the week and time of day are you available to work?

Sample Interview Questions



In Chapter 1, you learned that your staff is central to the success of your afterschool and expanded learning program. You can create perfect policies and procedures, have a strong management system, and develop great programming, but your program won't be successful without a great staff. For this reason, it is critical to recruit, hire, and retain staff members who are passionate about working with young people, creative and thoughtful, and committed to their work.

Directions: The lists below contain examples of questions you may use when interviewing candidates. This is a comprehensive list, so select the questions that best fit your needs. An interview should include about 10 good questions with some prompts and opportunities to elaborate.

Tips for a Good Interview

- Start by introducing yourself and the program. Explain the job in greater detail.
- Ask a couple of general questions about why the candidate is interested in the job and his or her background and experience with youth.
- Include several questions that allow the candidate to reflect on his or her strengths and what he or she can bring to the program.
- Make sure your questions are open-ended and that they allow room for elaboration.
- Be sure to leave time for the applicant to ask questions, too.
- If you are interviewing more than one person for a position, be sure to ask all candidates the same questions.
- End the interview by providing information about your process (e.g., how many people you are interviewing, how many rounds of interviews there will be, and when you expect to make a decision).

Questions About Background and Experience

1. Why are you applying for this job?
2. Tell us about your experience working with young people.
3. What previous experience have you had working in afterschool and expanded learning programs?
4. What do you think are some of the most important qualities of a youth development staff member in an afterschool and expanded learning program?
5. What are your short- and long-term career goals?
6. What do you like about working with youth?
7. Can you describe a challenging work situation and how you handled it?

Questions About Personal Qualities

1. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths? Weaknesses?
2. What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
3. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
4. What kind of work environment are you most comfortable in?
5. How do you work under pressure?
6. What two or three things are most important to you in your job?
7. What contributions do you see yourself making to this job?
8. Can you describe a time when you have had to work in a team? How did you make that a successful experience?
9. Describe your working style.

Questions for Candidates for Leadership Positions

1. How would you describe your management style?
2. Tell us about your experience:
 - a. Supervising staff
 - b. Coordinating program schedules
 - c. Planning programs
3. How would you go about building relationships or partnerships with the community? Local businesses? Local government? Other programs? Schools?
4. Give us some examples of things you would do to make families feel welcome at the program.
5. How would you go about planning programming for the school year? For the summer?
6. What two or three things are most important to a successful afterschool and expanded learning program?
7. What qualities would you look for in staff?

Questions for School-Based Programs

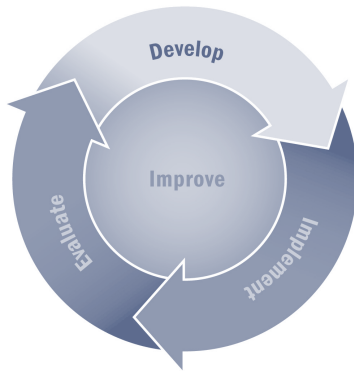
1. How would you go about building a relationship with your principal? With school faculty?
2. What do you see as the role of an afterschool and expanded learning program in a school setting?
3. How can an afterschool and expanded learning program support what goes on during the school day?

Questions for Potential Activity Leaders

Many programs look for staff members to offer classes or activities. These people may be volunteers, teachers at the school, or employees of other agencies. You can use the following questions for these interviews:

1. Describe the class or activity you can offer.
2. What do you hope participants will gain from your class or activity? What skills do you try to help youth develop?
3. How do you incorporate opportunities for youth to have leadership in your program?
4. How do you build a sense of community in your program? What do you find works best to promote a positive environment in your program?
5. Tell us about a challenging experience in your program and how you handled it.
6. Why do you like working with youth? With adults?

Professional Development Plan



In Chapter 1, you learned that professional development is an umbrella name for the variety of learning opportunities staff members can engage in as a part of their job. Prioritizing high-quality, consistent, and responsive professional development will develop the capacity of staff members to implement quality activities.

Directions: This form can be used to develop professional goals and professional development strategies to help staff members achieve identified goals. Use it in multiple ways. Perhaps encourage staff members to reflect on possible performance and development goals and complete this form together, or have

program leadership complete this form for staff members and then review and revise it together. Staff members should be given the opportunity to update their professional development plan at the end of each program cycle or about every six months, and their plans should be included in performance reviews to monitor and develop staff members' capacity in their role.

Employee Name: _____

Employee Position Title and Group/Area: _____

Supervisor Name: _____

Supervisor Title: _____

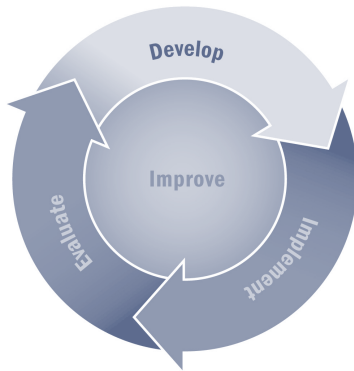
Date Completed/Date of Next Review: _____

What? Developmental Goal	Why? Reasons for Goal	How? Strategies/Resources to Achieve Goal	When? Target Date
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

Examples of strategies to achieve goals:

- Attend an afterschool and expanded learning conference
- Take a class at a university or accredited institution
- Attend a training course or a course in a specific academic content area
- Meet regularly with colleagues to discuss teaching and learning
- Visit other afterschool and expanded learning programs
- Subscribe to a journal or newsletter to stay current on research and activities

Staff Training Survey



data on a yearly basis.

In Chapter 1, you learned that professional development is an important part of supporting staff retention and providing a high-quality program. To that end, it is important to solicit staff member input on professional development topics and to identify what staff members hope to get from the experience.

Directions: Use the survey on the following pages to determine staff training needs and interests for the afterschool and expanded learning program. Distribute the survey to staff members once or twice a year to ensure that everyone feels supported, grows in his or her position, and has an opportunity to give feedback. Program leadership should analyze and distribute staff survey

Tips for Developing and Administering Surveys (For a Full List, See Tool 87)

- Consider your goals and expected outcomes for the survey. What are you trying to learn? Design a survey and develop questions that will help you achieve those goals and answer your ultimate question.
- Make sure you are familiar with the legal and institutional requirements, if any, when surveying families, community members, and especially youth.
- Prioritize your selection of survey questions.
- Consider your audience and make sure your survey will be understood easily.
- Write short questions that respondents can read quickly and easily.
- Make sure that each question has one central idea.
- Focus your questions on suggestions for improvement rather than focusing on negative experiences.
- Avoid leading questions that appear to advocate a particular answer.
- Provide instructions on how to record answers and how many options to select.
- For multiple choice questions, allow respondents to select “Other” so that they can provide another response that wasn’t included in the options.
- Test your survey with a small group before distributing it to all of your intended respondents.
- Think about how you will deliver the survey. Will it be delivered by mail, by telephone, in person, or online? These different methods will affect the survey design. It is likely that a paper survey will be the most convenient method for respondents, but an electronic survey has advantages as well (such as allowing for skip logic and requiring less data entry) if it seems like a viable format for your respondents.
- Provide respondents with a contact person whom they can reach if they have any questions or concerns about the survey.

[Program Name] Staff Training Survey

To All Program Staff:

We need your help! In order to develop a high-quality program, we need to provide all staff members with meaningful learning and skill development opportunities. Please tell us what training activities you would like us to provide. This survey will take only a few minutes to complete.

Please give your completed survey to [name of program director] by [date].

If you have any questions, please call [telephone number] or email [email address].

Thank you for your time.

1. What type of training activities do you think we should provide for staff members in the program? (Mark all that apply. Put a * next to the topics that are the highest priority.)

Management

- ☐ Fundraising
- ☐ Staff development
- ☐ Working with an advisory board/board of directors
- ☐ Data collection/how to survey youth
- ☐ Evaluating your program

Administration/Program Coordination

- ☐ Identifying and recruiting participants
- ☐ Learning general afterschool and expanded learning program procedures
- ☐ Creating a safe program environment
- ☐ First aid and CPR

Connecting to the School Day/School Alignment

- ☐ Delivering academic content (please specify subject): _____
- ☐ Linking with the school day
- ☐ Successful homework help strategies
- ☐ Building relationships with school day teachers and staff

Program Delivery

- ☐ Creating a warm and welcoming environment
- ☐ Planning hands-on projects
- ☐ Creating great lesson plans
- ☐ Incorporating reflection into activities

- ☐ Providing youth leadership opportunities
- ☐ Incorporating the SAFE (sequenced, active, focused, explicit) features into programs
- ☐ Promoting positive behavior
- ☐ Conflict resolution
- ☐ Planning successful field trips

Family and Community Engagement

- ☐ Strengthening communication with families
- ☐ Involving families in programming
- ☐ Community outreach/development
- ☐ Creating partnerships for effective programming

☐ Other: _____

☐ Other: _____

☐ Other: _____

2. Are you able/willing to provide training to your peers?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, on what topics?

3. Please suggest any specific trainers or resources you would like us to consider using.

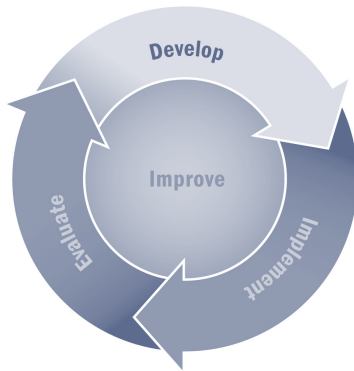
Name (Optional): _____

Phone (Optional): _____

Email (Optional): _____

Thank you.

Developing as an Afterschool and Expanded Learning Professional



In Chapter 1, you learned that program staff members should not only have an opportunity to reflect on their own practices but also feel as though they have an opportunity to progress in their career. It is important to encourage staff members to reflect on their strengths and identify areas of growth that will help them in their career and contribute to the overall success of the program.

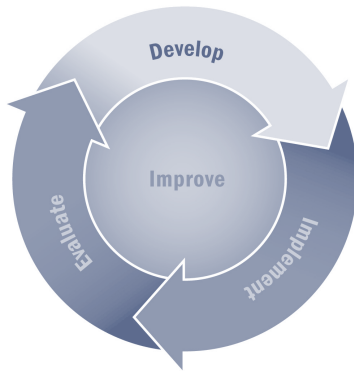
Directions: Read each action in the column on the left and then use the grid to determine where you are in your development as an afterschool and expanded learning professional. Highlight or mark that square for each action and work with your team or supervisor to develop a plan for ongoing professional

development. Use these ratings when completing **Tool 26**—a self-assessment of effective qualities. Together, these two tools can help staff members identify a professional development plan.

Action	Beginning	Emerging	Applying	Integrating	Innovating
Reflecting on practice and planning professional development	Reflects on elements of youth learning (e.g., activities, relationships, skills, and interests)	Reflects on successes and dilemmas Plans professional development to add to activities and youth engagement strategies	Reflects on the relationship between program offerings and youth learning Plans professional development based on reflections	Analyzes and reflects on activities and learning based on evidence or data (grades, observations) gathered regularly	Integrates analysis and reflection into daily practice based on a wide variety of evidence and relationships with youth
Establishing professional goals and pursuing opportunities to grow professionally	Develops goals through required processes Attends required meetings	Sets goals considering self-assessment and other feedback Expands skills through professional development	Sets short-term professional goals based on self-assessment of effectiveness, youth learning, and feedback	Sets and modifies short- and long-term goals considering self-assessment and feedback	Contributes to professional organizations, literature, and development Leads professional development

Action	Beginning	Emerging	Applying	Integrating	Innovating
Working with communities to improve your practice	Learns about the young people's communities May take youth into community as part of activities or projects	Increases understanding of the roles of the community in young people's lives Attends community events	Identifies needs and resources Expands knowledge of connections to community	Uses knowledge of the community to strengthen connections with the local community, culture, services, and resources to aid the program	Promotes program and community collaboration with advisory group Provides youth with a wide range of community activities and service projects
Balancing professional responsibilities and maintaining motivation	Has a positive attitude with youth Has a basic understanding of professional responsibilities	Maintains a positive attitude, demonstrates understanding of professional responsibilities, and seeks support to balance responsibilities	Maintains a positive attitude through the year, demonstrates professional integrity, and balances responsibility with personal needs	Maintains motivation and a commitment to all youth; demonstrates professional integrity	Maintains motivation and models commitment to all youth, school, staff, and community

Self-Assessment of Effective Qualities



In Chapter 1, you learned about the importance of reflective practice for program staff. Providing staff members an opportunity to identify their strengths and opportunities for improvement—rather than telling them how to improve—is an effective way to promote professional development and improve program quality. Establishing an open and reflective culture will encourage staff growth and retention.

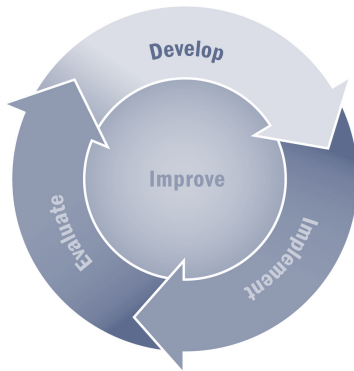
Directions: Before completing this tool, revisit the previous tool on developing as an afterschool and expanded learning professional (**Tool 25**). Review how you rated yourself. Now, in the center column, read the list of qualities relating to staff effectiveness. Think about your strengths for each quality and list them in the column on the left. Now reflect on the areas of growth for each quality and list them in the column on the right.

My Strengths	Qualities of Effectiveness	My Areas for Growth
	Engages and supports all youth - Always treats all young people equally - Knows the typical benchmarks for growth and development - Uses knowledge to provide a program that identifies, celebrates, and builds on youth strengths	
	- Employs youth development principles - Ensures the safety and well-being of all youth - Creates a warm and welcoming program environment - Knows the names of all youth and what is going on in their lives - Builds respectful, reciprocal relationships among youth and staff - Provides opportunities for choice in activities - Provides opportunity for youth voice and authentic decision-making - Allows opportunities for reflection	

My Strengths	Qualities of Effectiveness	My Areas for Growth
	Plans program schedule/activities intentionally • Uses provided program planning tools to plan program schedule/activities in advance • Plans activities by using data (see below) • Plans activities in consideration of the principles of SAFE (sequenced, active, focused, and explicit) to ensure skill-building opportunities • Reflects on program schedule/activities to make improvements	
	Uses data to drive program • Conducts self-assessments or observes activities and uses program observation data to make improvements • Asks youth, teachers, and families what youth are working on in other settings and where they may need additional support • Conducts formal and informal check-ins with youth and their families on program satisfaction; uses data to make improvements	
	Develops relationships with the community, school, and families • Interacts frequently with teachers, school personnel, families, and community members • Shares data • Collaboratively develops strategies • Celebrates success publicly	

My Strengths	Qualities of Effectiveness	My Areas for Growth
	Develops as a professional afterschool and expanded learning program staff member Committed to professional growth by engaging in professional development activities (conferences, classes, technical assistance, or coaching) related to afterschool and expanded learning, youth development, education, and in specific content areas (e.g., STEM)	

Staff Satisfaction Survey



In Chapter 1, you learned that creating a supportive environment where staff members feel valued and supported will lead to a higher quality and smoother functioning program. Use the staff satisfaction survey on the following pages to gauge staff members' satisfaction with their jobs and roles.

Directions: Have staff members complete the survey on the following pages by indicating their level of satisfaction with each area. You can add other items to the list if there are additional areas in which you want to get staff input. You may choose to make the surveys anonymous to achieve a greater level of honesty. This will give you general information that you can use for improvement. If you have a

high level of trust with your staff, consider asking them to put their name on the survey to get specific information about their satisfaction. Note: If you are unable to make changes (e.g., to wages), be sure to discuss areas of dissatisfaction with your staff and explain why you can't make a change. Reassure your staff that you will work to address their needs in other ways (e.g., through other means of recognition that aren't financial).

Tips for Developing and Administering Surveys (For a Full List, See Tool 87)

- Consider your goals and expected outcomes for the survey. What are you trying to learn? Design a survey and develop questions that will help you achieve those goals and answer your ultimate question.
- Make sure you are familiar with the legal and institutional requirements, if any, when surveying families, community members, and especially youth.
- Prioritize your selection of survey questions.
- Consider your audience and make sure your survey will be understood easily.
- Write short questions that respondents can read quickly and easily.
- Make sure that each question has one central idea.
- Focus your questions on suggestions for improvement rather than focusing on negative experiences.
- Avoid leading questions that appear to advocate a particular answer.
- Provide instructions on how to record answers and how many options to select.
- For multiple choice questions, allow respondents to select "Other" so that they can provide a response that wasn't included in the options.
- Test your survey with a small group before distributing it to all of your intended respondents.
- Think about how you will deliver the survey. Will it be delivered by mail, by telephone, in person, or online? These different methods will affect the survey design. It is likely that a paper survey will be the most convenient for respondents, but an electronic survey has advantages as well (such as allowing for skip logic and requiring less data entry) if it seems like a viable format for your respondents.
- Provide respondents with a contact person whom they can reach if they have any questions or concerns about the survey.

Staff Satisfaction Survey

Directions: Please check the box under the number that most closely matches how you feel about each area using the response categories below.

- 4 Very Satisfied
- 3 Satisfied
- 2 Dissatisfied
- 1 Very Dissatisfied

	4	3	2	1
Salary	☐	☐	☐	☐
Benefits	☐	☐	☐	☐
Workload	☐	☐	☐	☐
Flexibility of work hours	☐	☐	☐	☐
Job security	☐	☐	☐	☐
Physical work environment	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ability to influence decisions that affect you	☐	☐	☐	☐
Opportunity to participate in program planning and decision-making	☐	☐	☐	☐
Opportunity to work on interesting projects	☐	☐	☐	☐
Access to professional development opportunities such as training and seminars	☐	☐	☐	☐
Communication with supervisor	☐	☐	☐	☐
Recognition for work	☐	☐	☐	☐
Relationship with peers	☐	☐	☐	☐
Relationship with youth	☐	☐	☐	☐
Relationship with program partners	☐	☐	☐	☐
Understanding of the mission of the afterschool and expanded learning program	☐	☐	☐	☐
Overall satisfaction with the afterschool and expanded learning program	☐	☐	☐	☐
Overall satisfaction with your job	☐	☐	☐	☐

If you marked dissatisfied or very dissatisfied for any category, please say why in a few words below.

Area(s): _____

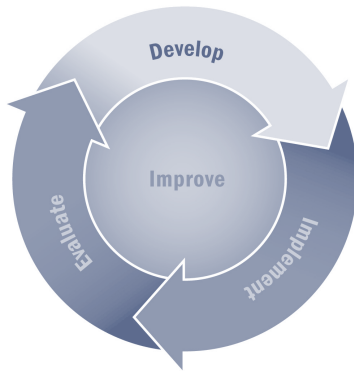
Reason: _____

If you marked very satisfied for any category, please say why in a few words below.

Area(s): _____

Reason: _____

Developing a Communication Strategy



In Chapter 1, you learned that an effective communication strategy is critical to ensuring you meet your goals for two-way communication between your program and your stakeholders. You should design your communication strategy within the context of an overall visioning process that identifies assets and opportunities for your program. Use this tool as a starting point and, depending on your strategy, in conjunction with **Tools 29 – 30**.

Directions: Use the following list of questions to guide the design of your communication strategy. These questions should be used during the initial planning of the strategy and should be revisited periodically to ensure that your

program’s communication efforts continue to meet the needs of your stakeholders. You can also use the table at the end of this tool to plan your strategy.

Objective(s)

- What do we hope to achieve with our message?
- Why are we communicating with our stakeholders?
- Does our communication align with our program vision, mission, and goals?

Audience(s)

- Who is our audience?
 - What percentage of the community has school-age youth in public schools?
 - What percentage of the community has school-age youth in private or parochial schools?
 - What are the primary languages used in the community?
 - Who are the primary employers in the community?
 - What are the largest or most active faith-based communities, civic organizations, or other groups in the community?
- Have we identified all of our audiences?
- Have we targeted all messages appropriately to each audience?
- What kind of information does this group want or need to know about the program?
- How does this group like to receive its information?
- What is this group’s association with the program?
- How involved has this group been in the past?
- Does this group have leaders who influence the group’s opinions?

- What is the group's familiarity or comfort level with the program?
- What is the level of trust between this group and the program?
- What is the level of support provided by this group to the program?
- Who is this group most comfortable receiving messages from?
- What are the major sources of news or information in the community?

Message(s)

- What is the key message we want to share with our audience(s)? What are the different components of this message that we want to share with different audiences?
- Does each message have a "hook" that will make the audience more likely to pay attention to it?
- Is each message concise? Does it contain more than two main ideas?
- What language(s) should be used for each message, given its audience?
- What are the best formats for our messages?
- Is this message presented in an appealing, easily understood format?
- How will the target group feel when receiving each message?
- What reading level is required for this message?

Tools and Activities

- How will we share our message? Do we want to distribute newsletters? Flyers? Will we develop a website? Maintain social media accounts?
- How often will we communicate with our stakeholders and about what?
- Do we maintain an ongoing record of communication with each audience?
- Have we given one person or group ultimate responsibility for communication?

Resources and Timeline

- Have we said we would communicate in specific ways or at specific points during the school year or program cycle?
 - If so, have we communicated the way we said we would?
 - If not, what expectations do we want to set for how we will communicate with our stakeholders?
- What materials do we need to effectively communicate our message?
- Will we dedicate specific staff members to maintaining our communication plan? Do we have the staff and time to deliver each message?

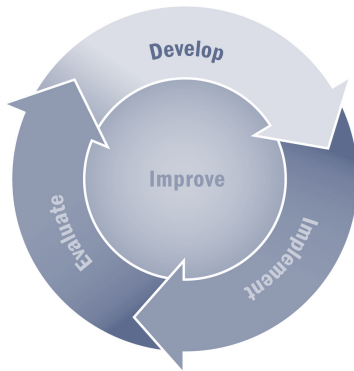
Feedback and Improvement

- How will we assess the effectiveness of our communication strategy?
- Do we regularly review our communication strategy to ensure it is still meeting the needs of our audiences?
- Have we requested feedback using different formats that respond to the needs or preferences of each group?
- Have we requested feedback in a variety of locations and at a variety of times to take into account the varying needs or preferences of each group?
- Have we demonstrated that we listen carefully and respectfully to all audiences? How?
- Have we used the input of our audiences? How?
- Have we demonstrated to our audiences that their input influenced program decisions? How?

[Program Name] Communication Strategy

Objective	Audience	Message	Tools/ Activities	Resources	Timeline	Feedback
To share program information so our stakeholders are up-to-date	Youth	Short program reminders	• Updates via social media sites—Facebook, Twitter	• Need to set up online accounts, link to program website	• Daily	Will survey all stakeholders twice a year using the Communication Satisfaction Survey
	Families	Sharing program schedule and changes or updates	• Email updates • Posting on website • Monthly newsletter	• Develop and maintain program website, email account	• Weekly emails and updates to website • Monthly newsletter	
	Community members	Sharing program schedule	• Posting on website • Monthly newsletter	• Work with local printer to distribute monthly newsletter via mail and email		

Community Communication Survey



In Chapter 1, you learned that understanding the preferences of the audience you are communicating with is a key component of effective communication. This tool can be used in conjunction with **Tools 28 – 30** to support a comprehensive communication strategy for your program.

Directions: Use or adapt the survey on the following page to better understand the communication needs and preferences of community members.

Tips for Developing and Administering Surveys (For a Full List, See Tool 87)

- Consider your goals and expected outcomes for the survey. What are you trying to learn? Design a survey and develop questions that will help you achieve those goals and answer your ultimate question.
- Make sure you are familiar with the legal and institutional requirements, if any, when surveying families, community members, and especially youth.
- Prioritize your selection of survey questions.
- Consider your audience and make sure your survey will be understood easily.
- Write short questions that respondents can read quickly and easily.
- Make sure that each question has one central idea.
- Focus your questions on suggestions for improvement rather than focusing on negative experiences.
- Avoid leading questions that appear to advocate a particular answer.
- Provide instructions on how to record answers and how many options to select.
- For multiple choice questions, allow respondents to select “Other” so that they can provide a response that wasn’t included in the options.
- Test your survey with a small group before distributing it to all of your intended respondents.
- Think about how you will deliver the survey. Will it be delivered by mail, by telephone, in person, or online? These different methods will affect the survey design. It is likely that a paper survey will be the most convenient for respondents, but an electronic survey has advantages as well (such as allowing for skip logic and requiring less data entry) if it seems like a viable format for your respondents.
- Provide respondents with a contact person whom they can reach if they have any questions or concerns about the survey.

[Program Name] Community Communication Survey

Dear Neighbor:

[Program Name] offers programs for youth in [Location]. We want to keep you informed about our activities and about ways you can get involved. Please complete this brief questionnaire to let us know how we can best communicate with you about our program. All responses are anonymous.

If you have questions about the survey, please contact [Name] by phone (Phone Number) or email (Email).

1. Please indicate which group(s) you belong to by checking the appropriate box(es).

(Check all that apply.)

☐ School staff member	☐ District administrator
☐ Program staff member or volunteer	☐ School board member
☐ Family member of a school-age youth in public school	☐ Elected official (other than school board member)
☐ Family member of a school-age youth in a private or parochial school	☐ Faith community leader
☐ Adult with no school-age youth	☐ Civic organization leader
☐ Retired person	☐ Employer
☐ School administrator	☐ Other (specify): _____

2. What formats do you prefer for receiving general news and information about the program?

(Check your top three choices.)

☐ Written newsletter	☐ Cable television
☐ Online newsletter	☐ Newspaper
☐ Email	☐ Public meeting
☐ Radio	☐ Social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter)
☐ Television	☐ Other (specify): _____

3. Where would you prefer to have public meetings concerning the program? (Check one.)

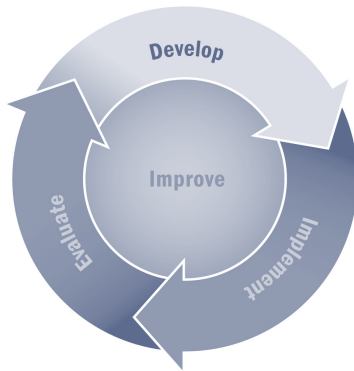
☐ At the school	☐ At a centrally located site
☐ Other (specify): _____	

4. What times are best for reaching you by telephone? (Check your top two choices.)

☐ Weekdays, 6:00–8:00 a.m.	☐ Weekends
☐ Weekdays, 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.	☐ I am not easily accessible by telephone
☐ Weekdays, 5:00–9:00 p.m.	

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Please return it to [Name] at [Address].

Communication Log



In Chapter 1, you learned that a communication strategy can promote effective and comprehensive two-way communication with program stakeholders. Tracking your communication can be useful both for monitoring communication efforts and for evaluating the effectiveness of that communication.

Directions: *There are many different ways to monitor and track your program communication. Using the template on the following page, you can create a log, like the example below, to keep track of your communication efforts in chronological order. Another strategy for tracking communication in your program is to use a notebook stored in a place that is accessible to all staff*

members. Each staff member can add a note to the log whenever the communication occurs, bearing in mind the following categories: date, audience, content/format, objective, results, and feedback.

Under “Objective,” include what you were hoping to achieve through that particular communication. Under “Result,” include things like attendance levels at meetings, the number of new volunteers, the number of returned surveys, greater adherence to a particular policy, a more cordial relationship with the group, or positive feedback from recipients. Over time, you will be able to see which communication efforts yield better results, and you can use this information to improve your communication strategies.

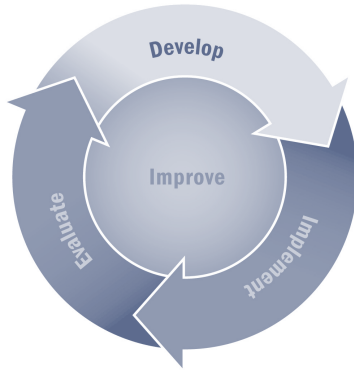
Communication Log – Example

Date	Audience	Content/Format	Objective	Result	Feedback
5/23/13	Families of Elm Street School Youth	Radio ad on WACL about upcoming car wash fundraiser	To persuade people to come to the car wash	Bigger turnout than last year	Some families liked that we used youth in the radio ad; other families said that the remaining youth felt left out as a result.
6/19/13	Families of Elm Street School Youth	Flyers (in English and Spanish) sent home with youth about program-sponsored booth at Fourth of July carnival	To let families know about the carnival and to request adult volunteers for the booth	20 parents volunteered to staff the booth; more families of participants attended than last year	Several parents asked to be involved in planning the booth next year.

Communication Log – Template

Date	Audience	Content/Format	Objective	Result	Feedback

Communication Format Guidelines



In Chapter 1, you learned that a key component of effective communication is knowing your audience and method of delivery so that you can create content and a format that is appropriate and valuable.

Directions: Consider the following guidelines when formatting your communication for a variety of different messaging formats.

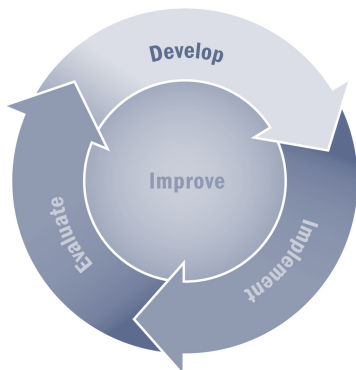
Guidelines for Formatting Your Message

Message Format	Guidelines	Suggested Content Ideas
Hard Copy		
Letters home	• Share important information or updates. • Maintain a focus and be specific—usually letters home are designed to let people know about one important topic. • Always include the date and a signature at the end. • Provide contact information in case people have follow-up questions.	• Beginning-of-year planning • Upcoming events • Emergency closing • Change in program schedule • Enrollment in new activities • End-of-year planning
Newsletter	• Involve young people with design, writing content, and distribution. • Have multiple sections for different content but try to keep those sections the same every time you send one out. • Keep the information in each section short, sweet, and varied. • Share pictures of different program activities.	• Program updates • Upcoming special events • Review of past events • Special topics based on what young people learned during programming
Flyers and brochures	• Keep the message(s) short and to the point. • Make it colorful and include one or two high-resolution pictures. • Post or share in public places.	• Program enrollment • Special events • Fundraising

Message Format	Guidelines	Suggested Content Ideas
Electronic		
Online newsletter	• Involve young people with design, writing content, and distribution. • Have multiple sections for different content but try to keep those sections the same every time you send one out. Keep the sections short and sweet. • Hyperlink to different organizations' websites if you mention them. • Always provide an option to unsubscribe or reduce the frequency of messages.	• Program updates • Upcoming special events • Review of past events • Special topics based on what young people learned during programming
Email blast	• Always include a full and informative subject line. "Program Name – Calendar of Upcoming Events" is more likely to get someone's attention than "Program Events." • Keep the language formal even though we often communicate in a more relaxed tone over personal email. Always start with "Dear," "Hello," or "To," and end with "Sincerely," "Best," or "Regards." • Include a signature at the end of all emails that has important contact information such as your name, email address, and phone number.	• Beginning-of-year planning • Upcoming events • Emergency closing • Change in program schedule • Enrollment in new activities • End-of-year planning
Facebook	• Share "exclusive information" in addition to basic updates. Use social media as a platform for unique information that you can't find on your website or in a newsletter. • Post frequently if you have updates to share. • Make sure that what you post is relevant and useful for your program and the field you are in. • Use engaging and high-quality photos when you post but make sure you have permission first, especially if they are of young people. • If you have a website, use links in your posts that will drive people to that page.	• Non-urgent program updates • Short, funny stories and anecdotes • Photos of youth enjoying the program • Reminders of upcoming events • Questions or things to think about

Message Format	Guidelines	Suggested Content Ideas
Twitter	• Your message cannot be longer than 140 characters, so be concise. • Tweet what is relevant and useful for your program and the field you are in. • Tweet often—at least once a day—as long as you have something relevant to share. • Use shorter hyperlinks if you want to share. Many sites (like http://tinyurl.com) can shorten longer hyperlinks for free. • Encourage dialogue. Ask questions when you tweet, and encourage other Twitter users to retweet your posts. • Use #hashtags to identify posts about a specific topic. Make one up for your program and encourage others to join the conversation. • Add a link to your Twitter feed in your program’s email and on your website. Twitter provides these tools for free through the site.	• Non-urgent program updates • Photos of youth enjoying the program • Reminders of upcoming events • Questions or things to think about • Responses to others about topics that are relevant to your program and the afterschool and expanded learning field more broadly

Sample News Release



In Chapter 1, you learned that building relationships with the media is a useful mechanism for getting the word out about your program.

Directions: This tool shows the basic format and elements of a news release. Make sure you include your program name and contact information, and then include a few paragraphs on the news you want to share and distribute it to your local news media outlets. A template and an example news release are provided.

News Release Template

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: [Date]

CONTACT: [First and Last Name], [Role]

[Program Name]

[Phone Number]

[Email Address]

[Program Website Address]

Title of News Release

Lead Paragraph: Who, What, When, Where, Why

Second Paragraph: Quote from organizational spokesperson

Third Paragraph: More information about the announcement

Fourth Paragraph: More information and examples

Fifth Paragraph: Second quote from another organizational spokesperson

Sixth Paragraph: Contact information for the organization

News Release Example

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 15, 2013

CONTACT: Jane Project Director
Anytown Afterschool Program
123-456-7890, Ext. 123
jane@anytown.net
<http://www.anytownafterschool.net>

Anytown Afterschool Program Launches Student-Created Website

ANYTOWN, U.S.A.—The Anytown Afterschool Program, which serves 200 9th- through 12th-graders in the Anytown Unified School District, has launched its youth-designed website, at <http://www.anytownafterschool.net>. The website details program news, provides contact and registration information for the program, and highlights the work of young people in the program. It also links to the school website and to the websites of organizations in the community that partner with program, including the Anytown Y, Anytown Medical Center, Anytown Widget Company, and the Anytown Players.

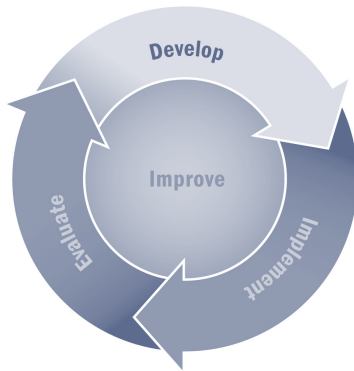
Youth in the program worked on the project for several months with the help of Bill Web and Julie Techno of the Anytown Widget Company Technology Department. When asked what it was like to work with 30 high school youth, Web said, “It was a great experience. I learned as much from the kids as they learned from me.” Techno added, “That’s right. The kids were not afraid to try new and creative graphics, and as a result, they’ve got an informative website that’s also terrific to look at.”

The Anytown Afterschool Program operates from 3:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., five days a week, in the Anytown High School. John Principal at Anytown High has reported that youth who participate in the program have improved their leadership skills and increased school day attendance by 15 percent over those who do not participate in the program.

“Youth love the program,” Principal said. “This website shows how much enthusiasm they have and how much they are able to contribute.” Jane Project Director concluded, “The Anytown Afterschool Program is always looking for community partners who can help us create fun and interesting activities in partnership with our participants. Now, the Anytown community can check out our site and contact us if they have any ideas.”

For additional information on the Anytown Afterschool Program or details on how you can help out, visit the website at <http://www.anytownafterschool.net> or call 222-555-4953, Ext. 328.

Communication Survey



In Chapter 1, you learned that assessing the effectiveness of your communication is critical to successfully communicating with key stakeholders. An easy way to assess the effectiveness of your communication is to simply ask your audience what they think of your strategy.

Directions: Use or adapt the survey on the following pages to better understand the effectiveness of your communication.

Tips for Developing and Administering Surveys (For a Full List, See Tool 87)

- Consider your goals and expected outcomes for the survey. What are you trying to learn? Design a survey and develop questions that will help you achieve those goals and answer your ultimate question.
- Make sure you are familiar with the legal and institutional requirements, if any, when surveying families, community members, and especially youth.
- Prioritize your selection of survey questions.
- Consider your audience and make sure your survey will be understood easily.
- Write short questions that respondents can read quickly and easily.
- Make sure that each question has one central idea.
- Focus your questions on suggestions for improvement rather than focusing on negative experiences.
- Avoid leading questions that appear to advocate a particular answer.
- Provide instructions on how to record answers and how many options to select.
- For multiple choice questions, allow respondents to select “Other” so that they can provide a response that wasn’t included in the options.
- Test your survey with a small group before distributing it to all of your intended respondents.
- Think about how you will deliver the survey. Will it be delivered by mail, by telephone, in person, or online? These different methods will affect the survey design. It is likely that a paper survey will be the most convenient for respondents, but an electronic survey has advantages as well (such as allowing for skip logic and requiring less data entry) if it seems like a viable format for your respondents.
- Provide respondents with a contact person whom they can reach if they have any questions or concerns about the survey.

[Program Name] Communication Survey

Dear [Respondent or Respondent Group],

This survey is intended to gain feedback on how well we are communicating with you about activities and events at [Program Name]. Your responses will remain anonymous, so please answer honestly. If you have any questions, please contact [Name] by phone (Phone Number) or email (Email Address).

1. How would you rate the program's efforts to keep you informed and involved? (Check one.)
 - ☐ Excellent—I feel informed about all activities and events, and I am aware of all the ways I can get involved.
 - ☐ Good—I feel generally informed about the program and its involvement opportunities.
 - ☐ Fair—I occasionally receive information about the program and its involvement opportunities but feel somewhat “out of the loop” at times.
 - ☐ Unsatisfactory—The program does very little to keep me informed or involved.
2. How would you rate the program's efforts to request your input about its activities? (Check one.)
 - ☐ Excellent—The program regularly asks for feedback from the whole community. The program also reports to the community how it has used this input or reports why it was unable to do so.
 - ☐ Good—The program asks for feedback and tries to address the issues raised by those they survey. However, the program should ask for feedback more often and/or survey other groups.
 - ☐ Fair—The program asks for feedback but not often or not in a very structured way. Not much seems to change as a result of the feedback it receives.
 - ☐ Unsatisfactory—The program does not ask for feedback from the community.
3. How would you rate the frequency of the program's communications about its activities and events? (Check one.)
 - ☐ Just right
 - ☐ Too little
 - ☐ Too much
4. Please provide any comments or suggestions regarding the frequency of the program's communications about activities and events.

5. Which methods of communication would you like the program to use more often when providing information about activities and events? (Check two or check "No change is needed.")

☐ Written newsletter

☐ Social media sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter)

☐ Online newsletter

☐ Radio

☐ Newspaper

☐ Television

☐ Email

☐ Telephone

☐ No change is needed

☐ Other (specify): _____

6. How would you rate the frequency of the program's requests for feedback? (Check one.)

☐ Just right

☐ Too little

☐ Too much

7. Please provide any comments or suggestions regarding the frequency of the program's requests for feedback.

8. What methods would you like the program to use for requesting feedback? (Check two or check "No change is needed.")

☐ Written surveys

☐ Focus groups held at the program

☐ Online surveys

☐ Focus groups held at another location

☐ Telephone surveys

☐ One-on-one conversations

☐ No change is needed

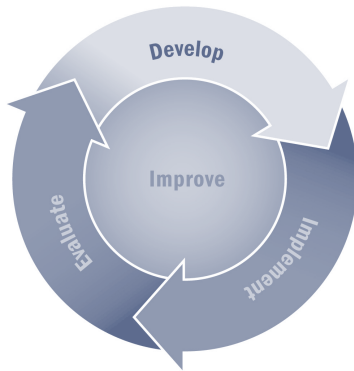
☐ Other (specify): _____

9. What suggestions do you have for improving the program's communications overall?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Please mail your completed survey by **[Date]** to **[Name]** at **[Address]**.

Asset Mapping



In Chapter 2, you learned that asset mapping is a great way to uncover the talents and skills of your staff, participants, family members, and community. You can use the assets you uncover to assist with your program planning.

Directions: *There are multiple ways to do an asset map. This tool contains some tips and suggestions for developing your map and answers some questions you might have about the process. You can use this information to develop a process that will work best for you and your team.*

Who Should Be Involved?

It is difficult to do asset mapping alone. We strongly suggest that you bring together a group to conduct the process. This can be one large group or several smaller groups of stakeholders. You may want to include staff, family members, older youth, community organizations, community members, program providers, school staff, etc. You can do several asset maps with individual stakeholder groups (youth, families, or teachers). Post all of the asset maps in a public place, and let people reflect on the commonalities or differences among them.

How Long Will Asset Mapping Take?

Asset mapping can typically be done in one meeting of approximately two hours. If you are engaging different groups of people, you may have several two-hour sessions.

What Kinds of Assets Should We Try to Uncover?

There are many different assets you can uncover through this process. Some of the most common are listed below, but be creative and think about what is in your own community.

- Skills and expertise in your community – Try to identify individuals and organizations with specific skills or expertise that can be turned into activities for your program. Maybe you have a theater company that can offer acting classes, a library that can host a weekly book club, or a strong local arts community with many individual artists willing to share their talents. Think about all of the types of organization in your community and what they have to offer (community-based organizations, hospitals, colleges and universities, arts organizations, etc.).
- Facilities in your community – Think about the facilities that exist in your community that might be useful to your program. These might include local parks with playgrounds, tennis courts, and sports fields; community centers with pools; colleges and universities with auditoriums, gymnasiums, science labs, etc.; arts organizations with specialized rooms or equipment such as a pottery studio or dance studio; organizations to support specialized sports instruction such as karate studios, horseback riding facilities, community sailing programs, tennis courts, gymnastics programs, etc.

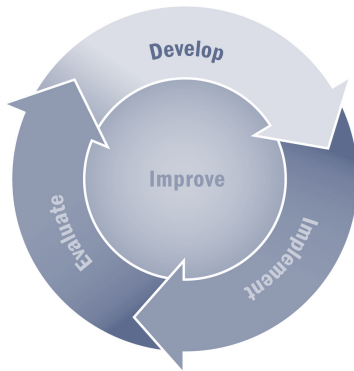
- Expertise among your staff and community members – Identify the specific expertise among your staff, family members, and school partners (if you are a school-based program) that can contribute to your programming. Perhaps a teacher in your school is also a yoga instructor on the weekends. Maybe a family member of one of your participants is a chef. You may have a staff member with a degree in journalism. Consider how all the people in your community can contribute to your program options.
- Potential partners – Think about organizations and entities in your community that might make good partners. These might be organizations or businesses that could offer something to your program but would also benefit from being involved. Think about organizations with a mission that you could support—for example, a local environmental organization may have a goal of providing environmental education to as many young people in the community as possible, or a local museum may have a goal to reach out to more high-need youth.
- Potential funding sources – Take time to identify possible funding sources. These don't have to be concrete or planned funders, but rather possible partnerships you could explore or create down the road. These might include local businesses, family foundations, United Way, etc. Think broadly for now.

Finally, ask people to name at least one asset that cannot be found easily. For example, participants may identify the best place to read a book, or a person to go to for advice. These are the most valuable kinds of assets!

How Should We Capture the Information?

Again, there is no right way to do an asset map. You might use clay, make lists, draw pictures, or create graphic organizers. To some extent, it depends on your preferences. Be creative and use the best format for you and your team!

Conducting a Needs Assessment



In Chapter 2, you learned about several ways to shape your program plan around the assets and needs in your community. You can identify the needs you should address by conducting a needs assessment. In **Tool 15** you learned about conducting a market analysis, and in **Tool 34** you learned about going through an asset mapping process. This tool shows you how to do a needs assessment, the third component in helping you think about how to shape your program plan.

Directions: *A needs assessment can be done in many different ways, depending on how much time you have, the resources you have available, and how thorough you want to be. Below are a series of ideas and activities you might include in your needs assessment. Together with your staff and advisory team, select one or several of these activities. We've noted what kinds of resources and how much time is required for each to help you select the most appropriate activities for you.*

Surveys

Surveys are a great way to capture quantitative information about what is needed in your community (see **Tool 87: Tips for Developing and Administering Surveys**). Youth and family members are the most common types of people to survey. You might consider asking the following types of questions:

- What kinds of activities or programming would they like to have in an afterschool and expanded learning program (e.g., sports, academics, arts, personal and social development)?
- What kinds of activities or programming do they already access in the community (e.g., sports leagues, local Ys, scouting organizations, Boys and Girls Clubs, etc.)?
- What kind of schedule they would like to see—that is, do they want a program that is offered every day? How late do they want programs to go? For how many weeks? Throughout the school year? Summer?
- Do they need transportation home?

Time Commitment: High—you need to identify the population to survey (perhaps all of the young people and their families in the school where you are planning to run your program), distribute the surveys, enter the data, analyze the data, and create some kind of report.

Resources Required: Moderate—the main expense is staff time. You'll need to copy and distribute the survey and then have someone enter the data, which can be time-consuming if you distribute a large number of surveys. You may want to hire someone to tally and present the results.

Focus Groups

Focus groups can be a good way to get qualitative and more in-depth information from a smaller number of people. Focus groups might be with youth, families, community members, or potential providers. You will need to identify the groups of people you want to talk to, develop a focus group protocol that includes the questions you want to ask, schedule the groups at a time that is convenient for your participants, and identify people to conduct the groups. Generally, focus groups should include five to eight people. Any more can get

unwieldy, but fewer than five requires people to talk too much and can be tiring. See **Tool 88** for tips on conducting good focus groups.

Time Commitment: Low—these can just require a few hours of time to coordinate and organize, and then each group typically lasts between 45 minutes and 1.5 hours.

Resources Required: Moderate—these can be expensive or relatively inexpensive depending on how many people you include, whether you provide food, and who conducts the groups. You may want to hire someone with experience doing focus groups; it can be challenging to keep the group on track and elicit the information you want, so having someone with expertise may be useful.

Program Inventory

One way to determine where there are gaps in programming in your community is to do a program inventory. This can be a formal survey of providers in the community or a more informal review. Some questions to ask providers include:

- What age range do you serve?
- How often do you run programs? What days of the week? What hours? How many weeks each year? Do you run summer programs?
- What types of activities do you offer?
- What neighborhoods or schools do you serve? What is your target population?

Time Commitment: High—an inventory can be quite time-consuming. You will need to either set up and conduct interviews or develop and disseminate a survey. Getting community providers to respond to a survey will require follow-up because most are very busy and may not see it as a priority.

Resources Required: Moderate—this does not have to be an expensive process, but it will require a fair amount of staff time, especially if you decide to distribute surveys. Interviews or more informal program reviews may be less time-consuming and therefore less expensive.

Interviews

Interviews with key stakeholders in the community can be a great way to learn more about what is needed and how your program might be received. Think about people in your community who could serve as key informants. This might include local leaders such as city council members or faith-based leaders, school officials, directors of local non-profits, the head of the parent-teacher organization, and other high-profile individuals representing your constituents. Develop a set of interview questions unique to each person that targets the information they may be able to provide. Contact each individual to set up an interview. The interview should last between 45 minutes and 1 hour. Any more than that may be overwhelming. If possible, meet in person rather than doing it over the phone in order to build relationships.

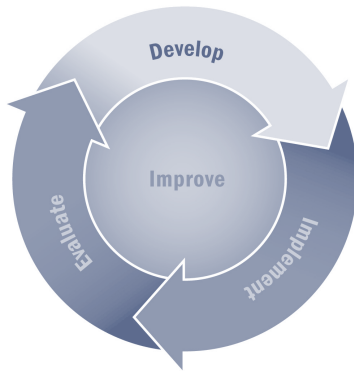
Resources Required: Low—these can be relatively inexpensive to conduct and they only require the time of one individual to develop questions and conduct the actual interviews.

Time Commitment: Again, these only require the time of one person to develop a set of questions and set up and conduct interviews. Depending on how many people you talk to, these might take as little as 5 or 6 hours to conduct.

Now What? Take the information you have gathered for the activities above and write it up in a brief one-page report. This can be a bulleted list or PowerPoint presentation. Present the findings to your advisory board and other local stakeholders to make sure the information you have gathered is accurate. This is called a feedback loop. Ask your stakeholders to make suggestions based on the findings; note their suggestions in your document. Keep the document for future use. You are likely going to have to demonstrate the need or background for the program in grant proposals, program plans, or evaluation reports (see **Tool 41** for program plan template). This information can be compelling for recruiting program partners and in-kind donations from local businesses. A little bit of information can go a long way in gathering support for your program.

Finally, think about ways to modify this activity to engage young people in the process once your program is up and running. This is a great way to kick off a service learning project or to engage youth in the ongoing process of program planning.

Visioning Worksheet and Meeting Agenda



In Chapter 2, you learned about the importance of creating a shared and powerful vision that can remain constant as you shape and develop your program over the next several years. A strong vision communicates to your participants, families, and community what you hope to accomplish with your afterschool and expanded learning program. Remember, when developing a vision, it is important to include families, youth representatives, volunteers, staff members, school faculty and administrators, and community organizations.

Directions: First, have individuals read the questions below and write down their initial thoughts. Next, meet as a group to identify the top priority answers to the questions and craft a vision statement out of them (a sample agenda is included on the following pages). After you have established your vision, be sure to post it prominently along with your organization’s mission.

Visioning Worksheet

Directions: Please complete the questionnaire below prior to our visioning meeting. It is important that everyone comes to the meeting ready to discuss their answers and engage in an open-minded process to turn our collective ideas into one succinct vision statement for our program.

1. What is our vision of where the program will be in 5 years? 10 years?

2. What does our program value?

3. What are our program’s strengths?

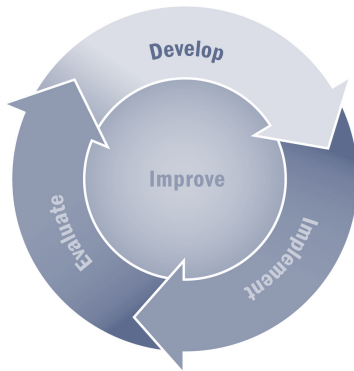
4. What is the most pressing need our program is trying to fill?

5. List three words that *must* be in our vision statement—these should be words that represent our key values and goals for the program.

[Program Name] Visioning Meeting	
Agenda	
[Date] – [Time]	
Meeting Goals <i>Include three or four goals for the meeting. Any more will feel overwhelming, and fewer may make the meeting feel unnecessary.</i>	
[Start time]	Introductions and Agenda Description Ask participants to introduce themselves and their role, and to share one key value and strength from their list of answers to question 2 on the visioning worksheet. When you review the agenda, invite others to suggest additional topics that they would like to discuss.
[Start time + 10 minutes]	Priority Words On large pieces of chart paper, write down all the keywords that people came up with. Go around the room, asking each person in turn to share their words. When a word is repeated (or a very similar word is used), place a hash mark next to it to indicate it has been selected by more than one person and note any variations of wording for the same concept (e.g., “fun” and “enjoyable” might be grouped as one). When everyone has shared their words, discuss as a group, noting which words have multiple hash marks next to them.
[Time + 10 minutes]	Key Values and Vision for the Program Have participants pair up to share their answers to questions 1–3 and discuss key priorities (five minutes). Ask each pair to come up with one or two key points that they agree on and share them with the large group. Note the points on chart paper and highlight when any points overlap with another pair. Open things up to the large group for discussion. Try to identify consistent themes.
[Time + 20 minutes]	Draft Vision Statements Back in their pairs, ask each team to draft a vision statement based on the priority words and key themes raised during the first half of the meeting. When they have a statement, ask them to write it on a piece of chart paper and post it on the wall for everyone to see.
[Time + 15 minutes]	Vote and Discuss - Discuss as a group. Did everyone vote on the same statement? Are they very similar? Very different? What stands out? - Next, give each person a sticker (or simply ask them to write their initials) to vote for their favorite vision statement. Allow people to write in suggested edits to their favorite statement. - Next, discuss as a group. Can you narrow it down to two? Is there a clear favorite? Are there wording changes that might make one perfect? - You may need to do several rounds of editing, narrowing, and voting before you can finalize the vision statement. - If there is a great deal of division between members of the group, you may need to end the discussion and offer to create a final draft for people to vote on or approve at a later time. - How much time you have available to spend on this meeting, your willingness to allow partners to craft your vision, and the level of agreement among the group members will dictate how this part of the meeting unfolds.

[Time + 35 minutes]	Closing and Next Steps • <i>Be sure to end the meeting on time and have some kind of closing activity—whether it is reviewing the final decisions that were made, talking about next steps, or simply asking everyone to reflect on the group process. Closure and reflection are important to any successful meeting.</i> • <i>Be sure to use this time to confirm the time and location of the next meeting.</i>
[End time]	Adjourn

Goal Setting Worksheet



In Chapter 2, you learned about the importance of creating a strong program vision and a set of goals related to how you are going to accomplish that vision. Having a clear set of goals can be important for ensuring that everyone associated with your program is working toward the same purpose.

Directions: This worksheet can be used to record both goal areas and specific goals. First, write down the vision statement you created with your stakeholders. Do not attempt to create goals without first knowing your vision. Next, think about the areas in which you want to set goals. Record these in the column on the left. A few examples are provided to get you started. Then, in the middle

column, record your specific goals for each area. Make sure your goals support your vision. Use the third column to indicate a timeline for achieving each goal (e.g., this month, this program year, within two years, etc.). Finally, use the last column to make notes about your goals—for example, you might include specific staff members tasked with overseeing the goal or notes on partnerships or resources that can help you accomplish the goal.

Goal Setting Worksheet – Example

Vision Statement

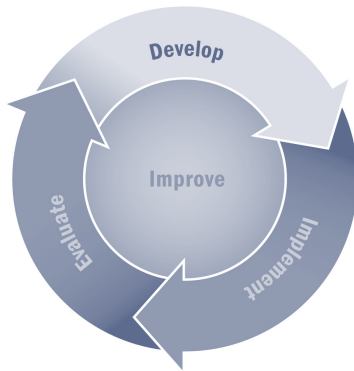
Goal Areas	Specific Goals	Timeline	Activities/Notes
Programming	Ensure programming integrates youth development principles.	This month	Conduct a review of activity plans to see whether youth development principles are represented.
Fundraising			
SMART Outcomes (See Tool 38)			
Community Participation			

Goal Setting Worksheet – Template

Vision Statement

Goal Areas	Specific Goals	Timeline	Activities/Notes

Developing SMART Outcomes



In Chapter 2, you learned that you need to develop a set of intended outcomes for your program that accompany your vision and goals. These outcomes should be **SMART** (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, **T**ime-Specific) in order to be useful. This tool will help you begin to identify outcomes and to determine whether they meet the **SMART** criteria.

Directions: Use the definitions below to help you fill out the table on the next page. Start by working with your team to develop a set of draft outcomes. Try to think of a realistic number (maybe four to six), and write them down in the left-hand column of the table. Then, once you have identified the outcomes, fill out

the **SMART** table for each outcome to determine whether it meets the criteria. If one does not meet the criteria, work to revise it until it does.

Specific – It is easy to create broad outcome statements that don’t clearly mean anything. Instead, outcomes should be clear, and they should identify specifically what it is you will achieve with your program.

Measurable – Outcomes are not useful to you if you can’t measure them. Make sure it is possible to measure the outcome so there is some concrete or tangible way to identify whether the outcome has been achieved.

Achievable – Nothing is more frustrating for staff, funders, and program leaders than creating lofty outcome goals that are impossible to accomplish. Your outcomes should be things you think your program can accomplish either in the short or long term. They need not be easy and basic—you should stretch yourself a bit—but they do not need to be so big that they are unattainable.

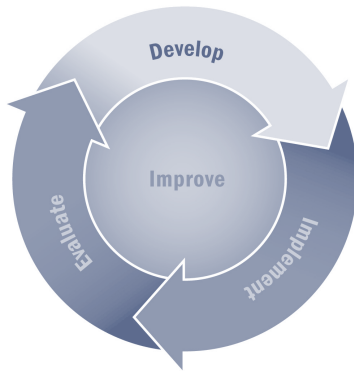
Relevant – Outcomes should be relevant to your program. Don’t plan to have an impact on things that your program doesn’t target. Choose outcomes that are specifically related to the program activities you are planning.

Time-Specific – Outcomes should be tied to a specific time frame, rather than being left open, in order to encourage staff members and partners to work toward them.

Developing SMART Outcomes

Outcome	Is It Specific?	How Will You Measure It?	Is It Achievable?	Is It Relevant?	When Will It Be Achieved?
<i>Example:</i> Youth will have an increased knowledge of STEM-related careers.	☒ Yes ☐ No	<i>We will host a STEM fair where pairs of young people will present a STEM career that they researched. After the fair, we will ask young people to reflect on what they learned from the project and the fair in their portfolio. We will document their learning from their portfolio reflection.</i>	☒ Yes ☐ No	☒ Yes ☐ No	<i>At the end of the session</i>
	☐ Yes ☐ No		☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	
	☐ Yes ☐ No		☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	
	☐ Yes ☐ No		☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	
	☐ Yes ☐ No		☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	
	☐ Yes ☐ No		☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	

Developing a Theory of Change



In Chapter 2, you learned that a theory of change can be an important way to graphically depict your program's overall vision and goals and to illustrate how you will achieve them. A theory of change is an important communication tool as well, and it helps you ensure that your program activities are targeted toward achieving your goals.

Directions: *Developing a theory of change can be a complex process, and there are many great resources out there to help you. Rather than tell you exactly how to create one, this tool will provide you with important definitions and resources so you can explore the topic yourself in more depth.*

What Is a Theory of Change (TOC)?

A TOC is a visual representation of what your program is going to do to achieve its larger vision or goals. Simply put, it shows the change you are going to make and how that change is going to happen. A good TOC can help guide your programming decisions and serve as a communication tool for funders and other key stakeholders.

How Is a TOC Different From a Logic Model?

Many people use the two terms interchangeably, but they are actually two different and separate documents. A TOC shows a causal link between strategies and outcomes. A logic model goes into a bit more detail about your activities, your inputs, and your outcomes but doesn't necessarily show how one affects another.

Is There a Specific Format I Should Use?

No. There are different kinds of theories of change and different ways of graphically representing your program. Some are artistic, using images and pictures. Others are linear, using sets of boxes connected by arrows. The important thing is to show your intended goals and the strategies you will use to accomplish them. We can't tell you what format will work best for your program. It is best to look at a variety of examples to get ideas. Here are a few different ones to give you a sense of the range and styles organizations use:

- The Wallace Foundation's TOC for their philanthropy work: <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/learn-about-wallace/approach-and-strategy/Pages/our-approach-to-philanthropy.aspx>
- The Forum for Youth Investment's TOC for their Ready by 21 initiative: <http://www.readyby21.org/what-ready-21/our-theory-change>
- Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative's TOC: <http://www.dsni.org/youth-opportunities-and-development-0>

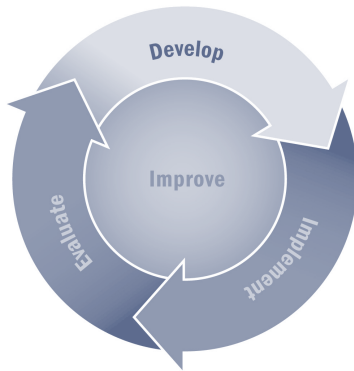
What Are Some of the Key Steps in Developing a TOC?

- **Determining the purpose of a TOC** – Before you start developing your TOC, you'll have to spend a little time thinking about how you want to use it. Is it for evaluation purposes? To communicate your program model to funders, legislators, and board members? As a guide for program leadership and staff? Determining your purpose will help you decide how to proceed with the next several steps.
- **Gathering stakeholder input** – It is important to involve a variety of key stakeholders in your TOC process. You may gather input from them individually or in small groups, or you may involve them in a large group TOC process.
- **Identifying assumptions** – Every afterschool and expanded learning program is built on a set of assumptions relating to how and why it is operating. Even before you develop your goals, it is a good idea to identify the assumptions that are built into your program. This might include things like “being in afterschool programming is better for the young people of our school than going home and being alone after school” or “youth in our school who are falling behind won't be able to catch up without additional academic support.”
- **Developing goals** – Having clearly articulated goals is essential when developing a TOC. You have done this as part of your goal-setting process by using **Tool 37**. You'll want to revisit these as you start working on your TOC.
- **Outcome mapping (sometimes called backwards mapping)** – Developing an outcome map is often part of developing a TOC. This step involves brainstorming a list of outcomes (which can be short and long term) and linking them to specific strategies or program elements.
- **Creating a narrative to accompany your TOC** – Ideally, you'll want some kind of narrative to accompany your TOC in order to explain what people are seeing. You want your TOC to be understandable without a narrative, of course, but a paragraph explaining exactly what you hope will happen with your program can be useful when distributing the TOC to outside audiences.

Where Can I Learn More?

- ***You Can Get There From Here: Using a Theory of Change Approach to Plan Urban Education Reform***
James P. Connell and Adena M. Klem of the Institute for Research and Reform in Education (2000), *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, 11(1), 93–120. This article can be accessed online at http://www.irre.org/sites/default/files/publication_pdfs/jepc_0.pdf. It provides a definition of a TOC and explains how it is used, what features it should contain, and other relevant information.
- ***Theory of Change: A Practical Tool for Action, Results and Learning***
This document, prepared for the Annie E. Casey Foundation in 2004 by Organizational Research Services, contains a wealth of information about how to develop a theory of change in partnership with your community and contains several specific exercises to help you with the process. Learn more by visiting <http://www.aecf.org/upload/publicationfiles/cc2977k440.pdf>.
- ***Center for Theory of Change***
The Center for Theory of Change is a nonprofit organization established to promote quality standards and recommendations for the development and implementation of a theory of change, with a particular focus on its use and application in the areas of international development, sustainability, education, human rights, and social change. Their website contains a variety of information about defining and building a TOC, which you can access at <http://www.theoryofchange.org/>.

Logic Model Planning Tool



In Chapter 2, you learned about the importance of developing a logic model to accompany your goals, action steps, and theory of change. A logic model helps you articulate how you are going to achieve your vision and goals by implementing specific strategies.

Directions: As we mention in the text, there are many different ways to create a logic model and many good resources out there to help you along your way. One of the best and most comprehensive is the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide, which can be downloaded from their website (<http://www.wkkf.org>). We offer one simplified approach below to get you

started, but feel free to adjust, adapt, and seek out additional resources to support you as you develop a logic model that suits your program.

Step 1 – Bring Together Your Planning Group

A logic model should be developed in partnership with a strategic group—perhaps your advisory board or a group of representatives from your key stakeholder groups. It will likely take several meetings to develop your logic model. Ask people to commit to attending at least two or three meetings of at least two hours and to reviewing drafts between meetings. This can be a lengthy process, and it is important not to rush.

Step 2 – Determine the Scope of Your Logic Model

Together with your team, decide whether you are creating one logic model for your whole program or one for each major program goal. Based on this decision, talk about the level of detail you want to include.

Step 3 – Identify Your Components

As we stated in the text, a logic model shows the steps you need to take to make your program goals happen. It is your picture of how things will change and how you will achieve your intended outcomes. Most logic models contain five or six main components:

- Goals
- Objectives or action steps
- Inputs
- Activities
- Outputs (optional)
- Outcomes

Together with your planning team, use the table below to develop a list of things to include under each component. Don't worry about order and format right now. Just make a list under each column.

Goals	Objectives or Action Steps	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
You developed your goals using Tool 37 , so you shouldn't need to create new ones. Fill in the goals from Tool 37 here.	Take these from your goal-setting process. Fill in the steps you noted in Tool 37 .	These are what you need to carry out the action steps, including staff, supplies, and space. Don't forget to put your program theory here; that is your most important input.	These are the actual activities staff members will do with young people.	These are the direct results of a program—usually the size or scope of services.	This is where your SMART outcomes from Tool 38 should go. You may want to break these up into two columns—one for long-term outcomes (sometimes called impacts) and one for short-term or intermediate outcomes.
<i>Example: To provide a variety of arts classes after school</i>	<i>Partner with local arts organizations to facilitate on-site arts classes</i>	• Local arts partners • Staff • Art supplies, messy space, and performance space	• Self-portraits • Dance • African drumming • Final showcase	• 150 middle school youth served annually	<i>Participants are able to talk about a variety of art media.</i> <i>Participants demonstrate improved skill in their chosen medium.</i>

Step 4 – Develop a Presentation

For simplicity, you can use the grid above to show the progression of your program from goals to outcomes. At a minimum, you will want to take your lists from the above grid and put them in some kind of logical order so that it is clear how one component flows into another. Most logic models, however, have some kind of graphic representation of this progression that uses some combination of shapes and arrows. This can be as simple as putting arrows between the columns above or as complicated as creating a flowchart with different levels and types of boxes and arrows. Together with your team, determine whether you want to turn the grid and lists above into a graphic that shows the relationship of one item to another and how you want to do that.

A couple of key tips to keep in mind:

- Remember your audience. Make sure that you aren't using abbreviations or jargon and that others can understand what you have written.
- Keep it simple. A page crowded with boxes and words will overwhelm people. Do your best to simplify your language and create multiple logic models if you simply can't cut back.
- Use uniform shapes, line thicknesses, and fonts to avoid visual clutter.

Step 5 – Gather Feedback

Share the draft logic model with staff, partners, community members, and families. Make sure that what you have created is clear and that it depicts what you want to depict about your program. Make adjustments based on feedback.

Step 6 – Revisit and Revise Often

A logic model is not intended to be created once and never used or revised. It should be a living document—one you update and revise regularly with your team as you make changes, adapt program elements, or tweak your program goals and intended outcomes. We suggest revisiting the logic model quarterly (or at least twice a year) to see whether it still makes sense.

Program Plan Template



In Chapters 1 and 2, you learned about the various activities that yield useful information when designing a program, from asset mapping to needs assessments. You also learned about defining a vision and identifying a series of goals to achieve that vision via action steps. Producing a clear and concise program plan will help you to bring the findings from all of your planning activities together into one coherent document that you can share with stakeholders.

Directions: In crafting your program plan, use the Program Plan Checklist below to ensure that you have covered all possible sources of information. You may not be ready to include all of the sections listed here. Start with the information you have and add more as you go along. Try to be as comprehensive as possible. You may want to use a written report format, create a binder with dividers for each topic, or organize the information into a PowerPoint presentation. Choose a format that makes sense for you and your stakeholders. If you choose to compile your plan in a written format, you may use the sections for various purposes in the future (e.g., grant writing, writing an evaluation report).

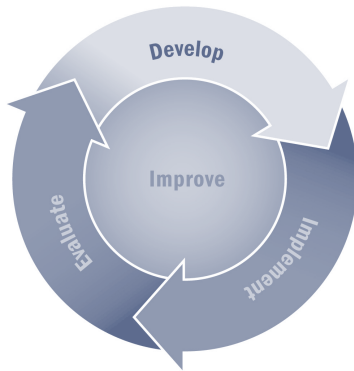
Program Plan Checklist

Title	- Name of the program and organization - Title of the program - Names (and organizations, if external) of the individual stakeholders involved in the planning process <i>Comment: Avoid the use of acronyms in the title page.</i>	☐
Table of Contents	- Provide sufficient detail to guide the reader through the report, including page numbers. - Include boxes, figures, tables, and appendices.	☐
Executive Summary	- State the vision for the program and the theory of change (if the theory of change is a visual only, do not include). - Define the program goals and activities. - Describe the program planning activities (asset mapping, market analysis, needs assessment). - Summarize the key program activities and partners. <i>Comment: The executive summary should serve as a stand-alone component of the program plan because intended users of the plan may refer to the summary rather than the larger document. The executive summary should not include any information that is not covered in the report.</i>	☐

Program Vision and Theory of Change	This section should clearly state the vision for the program and the theory of change. <i>Comment: If the theory of change is primarily a visual representation, provide a brief narrative describing the thinking behind it, including citations of any relevant literature/research.</i>	☐
Background/Supporting Information	- Briefly outline the literature base/research in the field of afterschool and expanded learning, stating the benefits of such programs. Hint: The references for this <i>Toolkit</i> should provide you with a good start! - If you are targeting a certain content area (e.g., STEM), make sure to include a sentence or two on the importance of that content area and the literature/research that supports it. - Describe the context of the program. This should include the community characteristics, the local school(s), and any relevant information about local assets, family information, and other local programs. Source: market analysis and/or asset map. - Explain how the idea for program originated, relating this to the organization's mission, program vision, and population needs. Make sure to support this presentation with research literature and community needs assessment findings where possible. - State the demand, gap in the field, or interest in the program. Source: market analysis, asset map, and needs assessment.	☐
Goals, Action Steps, and Outcomes	- State clearly each of your program goals. - Under each program goal, detail the action steps you will take to achieve the goal. - The action steps should be practical and specific, and they should identify who is responsible for the action. - You may choose to associate a timeline or start and end dates with your action steps. - State the intended outcome for each goal. <i>Comment: If you have a program logic model, you should include this here, making sure to explain the elements in detail.</i>	☐
Program Structures, Reach, and Partners	- Describe the scale of the program, detailing the size and details of the target population (grades, ages). - Describe the program setting. This should include both the space for the program and the time of year and day it is offered. - Identify and describe the key partners that collaborate with your organization in the delivery of the program. Source: asset map.	☐
Organizational Capacity Statement and Fundraising Plan	- Describe the program's resource capacity, providing details of the total human resources (e.g., staffing plan) and financial budget supporting the program. - Describe any fundraising activities planned for the year to earn revenue.	☐

Evaluation Plan	- Clearly state the evaluation questions and tie the questions to the following bullets: - Describe the types of data that you will collect (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed). - Describe who you will collect information from (e.g., program participants, staff, community members, stakeholders) and how these individuals will be selected to participate in the evaluation. - Explain what data collection tools you will use, how they were chosen, and how the data produced is intended to answer the evaluation questions. - Explain how stakeholders will participate in the evaluation. - Explain the ethical considerations you are taking into account when conducting the evaluation. Make sure to explain how you are protecting the confidentiality of respondents. <i>Comment: It is ideal to think about the evaluation plan at the beginning of the program design phase, using your logic model. However, you may not feel ready to do this yet. This section can be added later, but don't wait too long because the earlier you plan your evaluation activities, the easier it is to seamlessly integrate them into your program.</i>	☐
Conclusions, Challenges, and Recommendations	- Conclusions should summarize the program plan into one comprehensive paragraph. - The challenges should outline for the reader practical problems to the execution of the plan and recommended solutions to that challenge. For example, a challenge may be that the contract for programming needs to be executed before the school year begins so that the organization can take the appropriate time required to hire skilled staff.	☐
Appendices	- Summary findings from the market analysis, asset mapping, and needs assessment - Blank tools (surveys, interview protocols) that were used to conduct the market analysis, asset mapping, and needs assessment - Lists of individuals interviewed, including position titles - Sample monthly planners, or any tool that illustrates the program clearly for the reader	☐
References	A comprehensive list of sources, including documents reviewed.	☐

Summer Program Schedule



In Chapters 1 and 2, you learned that everyone benefits from having a well-defined schedule. This ensures that both the staff and stakeholders (i.e., youth, families, partners, and community members) know what to expect.

Directions: Use or adapt this tool to schedule and keep track of all program offerings that occur during summer programming. Be sure to include days offered, time, location, staffing, and other relevant information. A sample schedule is provided to get you started. Use the blank form at the end of this tool for your program.

Summer Science Camp Week 1 – Theme “Bugs Gone Wild”

	Time	Activity	Location	Staff
Monday	8:00–8:30	Breakfast/check-in	Cafeteria	John Smith, Ann Moore, community college volunteers
	8:30–8:45	Transition time		All staff members oversee
	8:45–11:45	Group 1 Group 2 Group 3 Group 4 Group 5	Park Park Rm. 2b Rm. 3 Rm. 5	Audubon Society staff Smith Hill Park Zoo staff Jennifer Johnson and Mark Smith Joe Jennings and Lydia Farmer Adrian Foster and Jenna Ryan
	11:45–12:00	Transition to lunch		All staff members oversee
	12:00–12:30	Lunch	Cafeteria	All staff members oversee—program staff members sit with youth in groups
	12:30–12:45	Transition time		All staff members oversee
	12:45–2:00	<i>Activity Choice 1</i> Yoga Hip-hop Theater Clay studio Baseball	2b 5 Auditorium Art room Field	Jennifer Sloan DJ Dance staff Sophia Carter Arts for All staff Jeremiah Singer and Jose Lopez
	2:00–3:15	<i>Activity Choice 2</i>	All rooms stay same	Same instructors
	3:15–3:30	Dismissal	Cafeteria	All staff members oversee

	Time	Activity	Location	Staff
Tuesday	8:00–8:30	Breakfast/check-in	Cafeteria	John Smith, Ann Moore, community college volunteers
	8:30–8:45	Transition time		All staff members oversee
	8:45–11:45	Group 1	2b	Jennifer Johnson and Mark Smith
		Group 2	3	Joe Jennings and Lydia Farmer
		Group 3	Park	Audubon Society Staff
		Group 4	Park	Audubon Society Staff
		Group 5	Park	Smith Hill Park Zoo Staff
	11:45–12:00	Transition to lunch		All staff members oversee
	12:00–12:30	Lunch	Cafeteria	All staff members oversee—program staff members sit with youth in groups
	12:30–12:45	Transition time		All staff members oversee
	12:45–2:00	<i>Activity Choice 1</i>		
Beat-making		2b	Julie Firestone	
Girls, Inc.		5	Sasha Jones	
Chorus		Auditorium	Lawrence Fletcher	
Puppet making		Art room	Arts for All staff	
2:00–3:15	Soccer	Field	Jeremiah Singer and Jose Lopez	
	<i>Activity Choice 2</i>	All rooms stay same	Same instructors	
3:15–3:30	Dismissal	Cafeteria	All staff members oversee	
Wednesday	Same as Monday schedule			
Thursday	Same as Tuesday schedule			
Friday	Field Trip—Potters Beach Day!			

[Program Name]
[Program Session (Dates) – # Weeks]

	Time	Activity	Room	Staff
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				

Sample Memorandum of Understanding



In Chapter 3, you learned how important it is to make sure you and your partners are on the same page. Clearly articulating expectations and writing them down is recommended for all partnerships.

Directions: *Develop a memorandum of understanding to set expectations for your community partners and your program. The following example memorandum can be adapted to help you outline who will be responsible for what activities. It will be particularly helpful in avoiding misunderstandings and ensuring continuity if there is turnover in either organization. Make sure that the signers have the authority to commit the time or resources of each entity.*

[Agency/organization] will partner with [names of schools] participating in [program name], and commits to do the following:

1. *If the organization is committing volunteers*, list the number of volunteers it is willing to commit, how many hours per week, and for how long. If you will provide some training for those volunteers, list it here. For example: “ABC Organization commits to providing five hours of volunteer service per week. Volunteers will go through a brief reading tutoring program offered by Neighborhood School.”
2. *If the organization is committing supplies*, list that commitment here. For example, “ABC Organization will provide extra paper and other office supplies to the program as available.”
3. *If the organization is committing time* by providing one of its representatives to sit on your advisory board, list that commitment here. For example, “John Smith from ABC Organization will join the Advisory Board meeting on XX/XX/XXXX. He will attend XX meetings and will have the following responsibilities: _____.”
4. List any other commitments that the agency or organization is willing to make to your program. These commitments could include advertising, community relations, and solicitation of further funding opportunities.

[Agency/organization] sees its role as assisting [program name] in reaching its goals, and will be as flexible as possible to accommodate any special needs or changes. In turn, [program name] will be flexible in accommodating the concerns of [agency/organization].

Signed this _____ day of _____, 20_____

Agency/Organization Representative

School/Program Representative

Template for Introductory Communication With Principals and School Staff



In Chapter 3, you learned that developing a positive relationship with the principal of the school or schools you work with is important. Setting up a meeting with the principal to discuss your partnership is an important first step in forming a successful relationship.

Directions: Use the template on the following page as a starting point when drafting communication to the principal or school administrator. Modify the body of the message to meet your purpose and needs.

Tips for Written Communication

- Adapt and adjust all communication for your specific program and the person with whom you are communicating. Personalize whenever possible—refer to how you know the person, ask about something in his or her life, or simply wish the person well!
- Alter the format of your communication to fit the method you are using to communicate.
 - If you are sending an email, for example, make sure your subject line clearly identifies the purpose of your email. An email that says “ABC Afterschool Program: Update and Meeting Request” is much more informative and likely to get the attention of your recipient than “ABC Afterschool Program.”
 - Make sure your contact information is always included in your email signature.
 - If you are sending a letter or memo, be sure to include the date, and always sign your name at the bottom.
- If you are communicating via letter or a printed memo, use your program’s letterhead. If you do not have letterhead, use brightly colored paper.
- Remember to proofread and to follow up your letter, memo, email, or other written communication with a personal phone call. Taking a little extra time can go a long way.

Introductory Communication – Template

Dear [fill in the blank with one of the following: Principal, School Administrator, Dean of Students, or other],

I want to introduce myself and [name of your program].

The vision and goals of our program are to:

I'd like to set up some time to meet with you or your representative to discuss how we may further support the school. The following are a list of dates and times that work for me:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Please let me know if any of these work for you.

I look forward to meeting with you and working together to ensure the students at [school name] are able to participate in our full range of afterschool and expanded learning activities.

Sincerely,

[Your name, address, telephone number, and email address]

Shared Responsibility Worksheet for the Program Leader and Principal



In Chapter 3, you learned that developing a positive relationship with the principal of the school or schools you work with is important. Setting up a meeting with the principal to discuss specific tasks and who is responsible for each will go a long way toward creating a partnership with the school.

Directions: The principal and program or site leader should complete this worksheet together. Review the tasks in the left column. Add any additional tasks that may be needed. Then, for each task, indicate who will be responsible—the principal or the program or site leader—or whether it will be a shared responsibility. If a responsibility will be shared, decide how it will be shared.

Task	Responsibility of Program or Site Leader	Responsibility of Principal	Shared Responsibility (Indicate How)
Secure space for afterschool activities.			
Inform school day teachers that their classrooms will be used.			
Provide supplies and materials for program.			
Handle discipline issues that arise in program.			
Communicate with families about the content of program.			
Recruit youth for program.			

Task	Responsibility of Program or Site Leader	Responsibility of Principal	Shared Responsibility (Indicate How)
Decide on the type of activities to be offered.			
Hire and supervise program staff members.			
Register participants for program.			
Define the program staff's training needs.			
Other			

Draft Agenda for Meeting With the Principal



In Chapter 3, you learned that developing a positive relationship with the principal of the school or schools you work with is important. Setting up a meeting with the principal to discuss your partnership is an important first step in forming a successful relationship.

Directions: Use the form on the following page as a basic template for creating an agenda for your meetings with the school principal or head administrator, or for any other meetings you have. The agenda items will differ based on your needs for the specific meeting.

Tips for a Successful Meeting

- Start and end on time.
- Have a clear agenda and stick to it. Try not to get off on tangents or allow discussion to wander too far from the intended goals.
- Provide some kind of refreshments, even if they are just water or coffee. Food and beverages help people feel respected for their time commitment.
- Try to identify a nice meeting space. If your school or program has one, great. If not, see if a local business, a college or university, a partner nonprofit, or a local foundation has a nice room you can use.
- Mix up the format—have some presentations, some large group discussion, and some small group discussion.
- Pick meeting times that are agreeable to everyone. If you have families and youth on your board, be sure your meetings are after school, in the evening, or on weekends.
- If you have guests from a variety of local organizations, they may want time to network at the beginning or end of the meeting. Consider offering food or coffee for 20–30 minutes at the beginning or end of the meeting.

[Program Name] Principal Meeting	
Agenda	
[Date] – [Time]	
Meeting Goals • Include three or four goals for the meeting. Any more will feel overwhelming, and fewer may make the meeting feel unnecessary. • Goals should be broad things you want to cover in the meeting. They might include things you want to inform your board about or key decisions that need to be made. • Sample goals: 1. <i>Share new discipline policy and get reactions/edits before disseminating to families</i> 2. <i>Determine date for spring gala fundraising event</i> 3. <i>Come to agreement on decision to expand program by an hour next school year</i>	
[Start time]	Introductions and Agenda Description <i>Everyone should introduce themselves, their role, and their organization for the first meeting. If you have guests who attend, it may be a good idea to do this every time. Consider some kind of icebreaker or opening activity when appropriate. When you review the agenda, invite others to suggest additional topics that they would like to discuss.</i>
[Start time + 10 minutes]	Meeting Norms <i>Establish or reiterate the rules for the meeting and group discussion. Determine and/or confirm the principal's preferred methods of communication.</i>
[Time]	Agenda Item 1 <i>Suggested topics may include shared responsibilities (using Tool 45), space and resource allocation, updates on youth who attend the program, academic alignment, or communication with teachers and other staff.</i>
[Time]	Agenda Item 2 <i>Try to vary the format. Don't simply have three large group discussions. You might have attendees break into pairs to review the discipline policy and then come back together to discuss. Or you might have a short presentation on why you want to expand the program and then break into small group table discussions before coming together again to make a decision.</i>
[Time]	Additional Agenda Items
[Time]	Closing and Next Steps <i>Be sure to end the meeting on time and have some kind of closing activity—whether it is reviewing the final decisions that were made, talking about next steps, or simply asking everyone to reflect on the group process. Closure and reflection are important to any successful meeting.</i> <i>Be sure to use this time to confirm the time and location of the next meeting.</i>
[End time]	Adjourn

Template for Communicating With School Staff



In Chapter 3, you learned that it is important to connect with the staff members in the school or schools your participants attend. Keeping everyone in the loop will help you maintain a positive relationship with school personnel.

Directions: Use the template on the following page when communicating with school staff members. Adapt this template for your specific topic. Some areas you may wish to communicate about with school staff members include program and school events, data sharing, space and resource allocation, field trips (see **Tool 51: Template for Field Trip Planning and Communication With School Staff Members**), and success stories.

Tips for Written Communication

- Adapt and adjust all communication for your specific program and the person with whom you are communicating. Personalize whenever possible—refer to how you know the person, ask about something in his or her life, or simply wish the person well!
- Alter the format of your communication to fit the method you are using to communicate.
 - If you are sending an email, for example, make sure your subject line clearly identifies the purpose of your email. An email that says “ABC Afterschool Program: Upcoming Events” is much more informative and likely to get the attention of your recipient than “ABC Afterschool Program.”
 - Make sure your contact information is always included in your email signature.
 - If you are sending a letter or memo, be sure to include the date, and always sign your name at the bottom.
- If you are communicating via letter or a printed memo, use your program’s letterhead. If you do not have letterhead, use brightly colored paper.
- Remember to proofread, and to follow up your letter, memo, email, or other written communication with a personal phone call. Taking a little extra time can go a long way.

Dear [fill in the blank with one of the following: Teacher, School Nurse, School Counselor, Kitchen Staff, Custodian, Principal, or other],

Here is some timely information that you should know about our afterschool and expanded learning program:

OR

I'm happy to share the following information with you:

OR

Just want to keep you posted on the following developments in our afterschool and expanded learning program:

[Add your information here. Be sure to keep it to just two or three sentences; people are more likely to read something that is short and concise.]

Please let me know if you would like more information or if you have a suggestion about something we can do to improve our program.

Sincerely,

[Your name, address, telephone number, and email address]

School Staff Meeting Topics



In Chapter 3, you learned that it is important to involve the school day staff in the afterschool and expanded learning program. Keeping school personnel in the loop and also providing them the opportunity to weigh in on program goals helps forge positive relationships. Staff meetings are a great time to update school staff members and get their input on what is happening in the program.

Directions: Below are some specific topics you might want to address at a school staff meeting. Don't try to talk about everything at once. Instead, pick one topic to cover per meeting. Share information about your program and then ask for input from school staff.

Homework Help

Information to share/discuss:

- The goal of the homework assistance program
- Whether participation in homework assistance is optional, mandatory for all, or mandatory for some young people
- How staff members know what students' homework assignments are (e.g., youth tell them, they are notified by school day teachers, assignments are written in a planner)
- How staff members are told to help youth who are struggling with specific homework concepts (e.g., try to clarify the problem, urge the young person to note on the homework what he or she does not understand and share that information with the school day teacher)

Enrichment Activities

Information to share/discuss:

- The goal of the enrichment program
- Whether participation in enrichment is optional or mandatory
- How recruitment happens for enrichment (e.g., by registration/sign-up, through referral, on a drop-in basis)
- The types of enrichment activities offered (e.g., art, drama, music, dance, photography; cooking, woodworking, sewing, arts and crafts; computer lab; STEM; health and wellness)
- How the program chooses what kinds of enrichment activities to offer (e.g., based on activity leader interest/talent; youth interest, school staff member interest)
- School staff members' ideas for enrichment and how enrichment can support the school day

Academic Content

Information to share/discuss:

- Types of academic content the program covers
- How the program connects with school day teachers to identify appropriate content (e.g., conversations with school administration, notes from teachers, etc.)
- Areas of greatest concern/need for student improvement

Use of Physical Space

Information to share/discuss:

- Needs for classroom and other space (e.g., library, computer lab, gym, cafeteria)
- How teachers would like their classrooms kept (e.g., policies about use of boards, desk rearranging)
- Goals for use of space (e.g., desire to hang student work from the program, need for program ownership in school)

Identifying Program-School Alignment Opportunities



In Chapter 3, you learned that aligning with the school day is one way to promote learning and school success for youth who participate in your program. Asking school day teachers for specific suggestions on how your program can support students is a great way to begin alignment with the school day.

Directions: Use the following survey to ask school day teachers about the academic, social, emotional, and physical areas they are working on during the school day and in which their students need additional support or where they see opportunities for curriculum alignment with the afterschool and expanded learning program. For each subject or topic area, have them list specific skills

they see as priorities. Then ask them to assign a priority level—low, medium, or high—to these skills. Once you have collected feedback from all teachers, use the matrix on the next page to keep the information organized.

Teacher Name: _____

Grade Level(s): _____

Subject/Topic Area	Specific Skills	Priority Level	
		☐	High
		☐	Medium
		☐	Low
		☐	High
		☐	Medium
		☐	Low
		☐	High
		☐	Medium
		☐	Low
		☐	High
		☐	Medium
		☐	Low

Please identify areas where you think the program and school can collaborate to better support youth and reinforce important skills:

Directions: After collecting the forms from teachers, compile the information in a table like the example below. To aid in the decision-making process, you can sort the information by grade level, subject/topic area, or priority level. Use the blank form on the following page for your program.

Lincoln School Teacher Programming Needs – Example

Teacher Name and Grade Level	Subject/Topic Area	Specific Skills	Priority Level	Suggestions for Collaboration
Ms. Meier, Grade 4	Math concepts	• Long division • Fractions	Medium	Math teachers can provide list of concepts to the program staff weekly
Mr. Davidson, Grade 4	Interacting with special-needs students	• Understanding disabilities • Communicating respectfully	High	Form partnership with community organization for special-needs students
Mrs. Smythe, Grade 5	Life-science labs and experiments	• Life stages of insects • Plant structures and functions	Low	Collect insects during program as part of Audubon Society enrichment program
Mr. Johnson, Grade 8	Time management	• Weekly homework planning • Finishing long-term projects on time	Medium	Specific time in afterschool and expanded learning program to work on long-term English project
Mrs. Fleming, physical education, Grades K–3	Coordination	• Reinforce basic coordination skills like dribbling, balancing, running	High	Joint training for the afterschool and expanded learning staff and gym teachers

[School Name] Teacher Programming Needs – Template

Teacher Name and Grade Level	Subject/Topic Area	Specific Skills	Priority Level	Suggestions for Collaboration

School Day Alignment Progression



In Chapter 3, you learned about the value of aligning your curriculum and activities with the information being covered during the school day. Allowing participants to build on school day learning through hands-on learning can reinforce school day lessons in a different way and provide a real-world application for participants.

Directions: The process of creating alignment with the school day takes time. The matrix below illustrates various areas where you may align with the school day and identifies the typical phases your program may go through as you move toward greater alignment. Examine this chart to determine your program's

current level of alignment, and then use the blank chart that follows it to plan strategies for moving from one level to the next.

Characteristic	Beginning Alignment	Intermediate Alignment	Advanced Alignment
Curriculum	School identifies activities cut from traditional school day because of budget issues (e.g., music, art) to be offered during program.	- Youth activities in the program are highlighted in school assemblies, or student work is hung in school building. - School day teachers suggest various afterschool activities that extend classroom learning. - Program activities are specifically designed to support core skills in math, literacy, and other skills identified by teachers.	- Activities are planned to coordinate with the school day curriculum. - Students can submit work done in program for extra credit in class. - Students can receive core academic credit for completion and documentation of high-quality program learning opportunities.
Recruitment of Young People	Promotional materials for the program are distributed in classrooms.	- Program promotes itself in school day assemblies or recruitment fairs. - Teachers actively encourage students to register.	- School day teachers recruit and refer students for the program. - The school staff and program staff review data together to identify students in need of services.

Characteristic	Beginning Alignment	Intermediate Alignment	Advanced Alignment
Tutoring Program and Homework Help	• School day teachers work as tutors in the program. • The district shares its standards and curriculum goals with the program. • Time and resources are provided for young people to complete their homework.	• School day teachers send assignments to the program staff. • School day teachers provide activities for program staff members and/or tutors to use to reinforce and enrich classroom activities. • Program staff communicates with school day teachers about difficulties that students are having with homework. Teachers and program staff members /tutors develop two-way communication about homework.	• School day teachers and program tutors meet regularly to review student progress.
Recreational Activities	• Program recreational activities are coordinated with the school's existing recreational offerings.	• School day staff informs program staff about schedule, and program staff plans activities to support and reinforce basic skills.	• Program and school staffs work together to plan recreational activities that support self-esteem, problem solving, character education, and other skills, in addition to physical development.
Internal Communication and Feedback	• Program activities are highlighted in school newsletters and other communication vehicles. • Program offerings are displayed on school bulletin boards. • Presentations about the program are made at school staff meetings.	• Program staff members participate in in-service trainings. • The program's site-level leadership regularly checks in with the school day staff about the program.	• There are joint staff meetings for program and school day staff members. • Program staff members plan and present in-services for school day staff members. • Joint planning of activities is ongoing.

Characteristic	Beginning Alignment	Intermediate Alignment	Advanced Alignment
Family Involvement	• Program staff members independently inform families about the program. • Some family members may offer their help in the afterschool hours.	• School day staff members share information about afterschool activities with family members. • School day staff members work with family members to recruit youth for the program. • The program offers opportunities for families to learn about school activities and expectations.	• Afterschool and expanded learning staff members attend and participate in conferences/IEP meetings. • School and program staff members share information about family needs in order to better support students.
Logistics	• The program is limited to one or two areas of the school—usually the gym or library media center. • The program is coordinated with custodial and security staff.	• The program has access to several areas of the school, including classroom space. • Space is designated for a program staff office. • The program is responsible for its own transportation.	• Staff members from the program and school day plan for use of school building together. • No space in the school is off-limits for the program. • Transportation is considered as an area for cooperation.

Directions: After reviewing the matrix on the previous pages, use the table below to identify where you currently fit on the continuum (beginning, intermediate, advanced), the specific things your program is doing in each area, and steps you can take to move your program to the next level. It might be a good idea to complete this tool in partnership with school staff members as a way to discuss alignment and next steps. If you are in the very early stages of collaboration, complete the form without school input at first and bring them on board slowly. Your advisory board and other key stakeholders may also be important contributors to this conversation.

Characteristic	Current Level	What Your Program Is Doing	Steps for Enhancing Alignment
Curriculum			
Recruitment of Young People			
Tutoring Program and Homework Help			
Recreational Activities			
Internal Communication and Feedback			
Family Involvement			
Logistics			

Template for Field Trip Planning and Communication With School Staff Members



In Chapter 3, you learned about the importance of aligning your curriculum and activities with the information being covered during the school day. Allowing participants to build on school day learning through hands-on learning can reinforce school day lessons in a different way and provide a real-world application for participants.

Directions: Use the template on the following page when planning field trips and coordinating with teachers and staff members in your local school.

Tips for Written Communication

- Adapt and adjust all communication for your specific program and the person with whom you are communicating. Personalize whenever possible—refer to how you know the person, ask about something in his or her life, or simply wish the person well!
- Alter the format of your communication to fit the method you are using to communicate.
 - If you are sending an email, for example, make sure your subject line clearly identifies the purpose of your email. An email that says “ABC Afterschool Program: Update on Field Trip Plans” is much more informative and likely to get the attention of your recipient than “Field Trip.”
 - Make sure your contact information is always included in your email signature.
 - If you are sending a letter or memo, be sure to include the date, and always sign your name at the bottom.
- If you are communicating via letter or a printed memo, use your program’s letterhead. If you do not have letterhead, use brightly colored paper.
- Remember to proofread and to follow up your letter, memo, email, or other written communication with a personal phone call. Taking a little extra time can go a long way.

Dear Teacher,

Our afterschool and expanded learning program is planning field trips for the next few months. Currently, we have the following trips planned:

[List trips here.]

We know that field trips are a wonderful way to expand the learning that goes on in our program and in your classroom. We would like to plan an afterschool field trip that supports a part of your curriculum. For example:

- If you are studying a particular play, we could go to a performance.
- If your class is studying Egypt, we could arrange a visit to an antiquities museum.
- If your class is studying plants and photosynthesis, we could take a trip to an arboretum.

[Provide another example if appropriate.]

If you would like to discuss ways in which afterschool field trips might support the teaching you are doing, please contact:

[Provide complete contact information here.]

Sincerely,

[Your/program name]

P.S. We are also happy to work with you to create enrichment guides for the field trips. Please let us know if you would be interested.

Field Trip Permission Form



In Chapter 3, you learned about the importance of aligning your activities with the information being covered during the school day. Building on school day lessons will help your program align with the school day and can provide a real-world application for your participants.

Directions: Below is a sample permission slip that you can use or adapt for your own afterschool and expanded learning program.

Dear Family Member:

Your child has chosen to participate in the following activity:

Activity: _____ Location: _____

Date: _____

Departure time: _____ Location: _____

Mode of travel: _____

Return time: _____ Location: _____

[If there is a fee] There is a _____ fee for this activity.

Please return the form below with cash or a check payable to _____

(Please detach and return)

Itinerary Information

I give my permission for _____ **[young person's name]** to participate in the **[program name]** on _____ **[date]**.

Contact _____ in the event of emergency.

Phone Number: _____

Health Release

I give permission for the activity leader in charge to act on my behalf to take necessary measures in the event of sickness or injury during the field trip. I agree to pay for any medical expenses for my child (named above).

Current medical conditions
(including allergies) or medication: _____

Insurance Company: _____

Policy No.: _____ Policyholder's Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Aligning With Learning Standards



In Chapters 3 and 4, you learned about the importance of aligning activities with local and state learning standards and the Common Core State Standards. Intentionally integrating learning standards into activities supports learning and youth development.

Directions: Use or adapt this worksheet to ensure your activities and lessons align with learning standards. You may use this tool in conjunction with **Tool 73: Intentional Activities** to develop and implement learning components in every program activity or project. Staff should also reference the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics and English Language Arts in addition to other state

learning standards by visiting their local department of education website.

Standards Alignment Worksheet – Example

Component	Instructions	Example
Name of activity		<i>Cooking Club – “Being a Vegetarian” activity</i>
Grade level		<i>Fifth and sixth grades</i>
Description of activity	Identify the purpose and goals of the activity as well as how youth will meet those goals. What will youth learn as a result of this activity? What skills will they develop? How will they do that?	<i>This club focuses on reinforcing and improving the math and science skills of participants in the program through cooking. The club aims not only to develop the learning of participants but also to develop a deep appreciation of a healthy diet and lifestyle.</i> <i>In this activity, youth will first learn what it means to be a vegetarian by reading a magazine article. They will discuss what vegetarians do and do not eat in small groups and will brainstorm possible breakfast, lunch, and dinner options. Next, youth will work in small groups to prepare a vegetarian meal. Finally, youth will enjoy the meal they have made together.</i>

Component	Instructions	Example
List the learning standards that are integrated into this activity/project	A helpful first step is to identify the subject that this activity most likely aligns with. Next, locate the standards for the grade level of youth served in the content area you have identified. Think about the description and what you think youth will learn from this activity, and find standards that match or align.	• <i>Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings (CCLS for Informational Text 6–12).</i> • <i>Read and interpret a variety of math-related concepts (CCLS Math 5–6).</i> • <i>Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one on one, in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners (CCLS for Informational Text K–5).</i>
Are there opportunities to integrate skills or competencies (e.g., leadership, group work, critical thinking) or other “embedded” learning (e.g., applied learning, exposure to new topics, themes, or vocabulary) into this activity?	Are there other skills that youth will have the opportunity to develop as a result of participating in this activity? Think about how the activity will flow—how youth will interact with their peers or with the materials. Are there other related topics that you can integrate into this activity that will enrich the learning experience?	• <i>Budgeting and managing money</i> • <i>Applied chemistry (e.g., cooking temperature, pesticides, herbicides)</i> • <i>Applied biology (e.g., plant and pest classification)</i> • <i>Planning and making healthy choices</i> • <i>Team building via community dinners</i>

Standards Alignment Worksheet – Template

Component	Instructions	Example
Name of activity		
Grade level		
Description of activity	Identify the purpose and goals of the activity as well as how youth will meet those goals. What will youth learn as a result of this activity? What skills will they develop? How will they do that?	
List the learning standards that are integrated into this activity/project	A helpful first step is to identify the subject that this activity most likely aligns with. Next, locate the standards for the grade level of youth served in the content area you have identified. Think about the description and what you think youth will learn from this activity, and find standards that match or align.	
Are there opportunities to integrate skills or competencies (e.g., leadership, group work, critical thinking) or other “embedded” learning (e.g., applied learning, exposure to new topics, themes, or vocabulary) into this activity?	Are there other skills that youth will have the opportunity to develop as a result of participating in this activity? Think about how the activity will flow—how youth will interact with their peers or with the materials. Are there other related topics that you can integrate into this activity that will enrich the learning experience?	

Tips for Data-Sharing Agreements With School Partners



In Chapter 3, you learned that having access to data on youth and young people’s educational experience is important for program planning and reporting. Developing a data-sharing agreement with the school or district you partner with will facilitate your program’s ability to access and use these data.

Directions: Consider these tips when developing a data-sharing agreement for your program and partners. This may not be exhaustive, but it can facilitate a discussion with your school partners and get you started thinking about data. You can brainstorm about your data needs and ideas in the space below each question so you will be prepared with notes for your discussions about data with partners.

When you are writing a data-sharing agreement, there are a few key concepts to consider. Laws and regulations may differ among states or cities, so be sure to understand the local context and legal requirements when developing a data-sharing agreement. Note that this tool focuses on requesting data from a school or school district, but certain elements may still apply if you identify other partners that may be able to share data that will help your program.

Why do you want data from your partner school district?

A key question to consider is *why* you want the data from the school district. Is this for an external evaluation? Keeping track of participants’ progress in school? How you plan to use data has implications for what data will be shared and how you will use it.

List the purposes for the data you plan to request.

What type of data are you looking for?

The data-sharing agreement should lay out in detail the data you hope to obtain. Are you looking for grades, test scores, or behavior data? Which years, and how often would you like them to be updated? Including this information in the agreement ensures that you have access to useful data and that the school district is up to date on what you are requesting. Try to list all the fields or variables you would like to access, as well as the level of data (e.g., student level, school level) and the time period you would like the data to cover.

List the type of data are you looking for.

What types of laws in your state or city govern the use of data pertaining to youth?

The requirements for data sharing may differ among states and other entities. Be aware of the requirements in your area, and, if necessary, consult an expert in this area, such as a data specialist from the school district or partners who may already have data-sharing agreements with the school.

What are the relevant laws in your state? If you're not sure, who might you contact as a resource?

How does the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) apply to your state and program?

FERPA is a critical component in sharing school data. It is a federal law that governs how student-level data can be used and shared. In January 2012, FERPA was amended to make it easier to share student-level data by clarifying ambiguities and addressing certain barriers. There are resources available to help you navigate FERPA both at the federal level and in your state, so make sure you address FERPA regulations when you discuss data with your partners and develop your agreement.

What elements of FERPA are you familiar with, and how do they apply to your program? If you're not sure, what or who might be a good resource to find out?

Who is going to have access to your data?

It is important to specify what staff members in your organization will have access to the student data, especially if the data involve sensitive or personally identifiable data (such as Social Security numbers). It is possible that, depending on the sensitivity of your data, you will have to get security clearance or confidentiality agreements specifically for the individuals who will have access to the data (which includes storing, managing, and analyzing data).

List the staff members who will have access to the data, their roles at your organization, and how they will interact with the data.

How are you going to transfer and store your data?

When considering the sensitivity of your data, it is also important to think about how you are going to transfer data and store the data on site. What format will the file be in (e.g., Excel, SPSS, comma- or tab-delimited text file)? Is it going to be transferred via secure file transfer protocol (FTP), CD, or USB drive? Will it need to be encrypted? Will you be storing it on a server or hard drive, and who will have access to this machine? These questions may depend on how sensitive and identifiable your data are. Not all data may require encryption, for example, but it is important to consider data security when developing an agreement with the school.

Describe how you plan to transfer and store the data. If you're not sure, list what you would need to find out before making this decision.

How are you going to dispose of the data when you are done using them?

Certain entities may require that you destroy the data after a certain period of time for security reasons. This may depend on requirements and data sensitivity, but you may need to include a section on how and when you will dispose of the data. Some agencies require this as part of their data agreements.

Brainstorm feasible options for how to dispose of data at your program. It is likely that this will be determined by the school, rather than your program, but you can think ahead about what you can propose that may be easier for your program.

How are you going to identify youth in your data?

In order to keep track of the young people in your data, youth need to be uniquely identified. However, the ID that you use may have implications for your agreement and how you use or store your data, depending on how much other information you can learn about each young person based on this ID. For example, using Social Security numbers is highly identifiable and sensitive; however, it likely will not be necessary to have access to youth's Social Security numbers in order to use their academic data. One option is to generate an ID number specifically for your program that the school can use to match and that would not provide unnecessary information on youth.

Brainstorm about whether you need identifiers such as Social Security numbers in your data and what systems you might want to use to link youth. For example, if you are hoping to link youth to other systems such as juvenile justice, what might the system use to identify youth? This may be an element that you have to rely on the school for, but if you have ideas, it may help to include them here.

When will you need the data?

Creating a timeline for when you will request and receive the data, as well as specifying which time periods you would like the data to cover, will allow the school district to plan for your data requests. This will also allow you to plan your analysis or evaluations around when important data become available.

Write down your ideal timeline for the analysis and when you would like to have the data.

How do you need to involve parents or guardians in data sharing?

Because participants are likely to be minors, you may need to obtain parental or guardian consent to ask for data regarding them. Review FERPA and state-level regulations and consider the best way to inform and obtain consent from parents or guardians. For example, you might include a consent form in the introductory packet when youth enroll in the program.

Brainstorm some ideas for how you could include parental or guardian consent in your program's existing materials or processes.

How will you structure your data-sharing agreement?

Data-sharing agreements may take on different forms, depending on the requirements of your partner schools, your state, and other contextual factors. Below is a very high-level outline that may help guide you as you begin to structure an agreement and negotiate its terms with your partners.

Sample Outline for Data-Sharing Agreement

1. Participants in the agreement
 - a. Who possesses the data?
 - b. Who is requesting the data?
2. Data
 - a. Purpose/reason for requesting data
 - b. What type of data
 - c. When the data will be available and provided to requester
3. Compliance with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and other laws or regulations
 - a. FERPA
 - b. Obtaining consent from youth and/or parents as necessary

4. Security measures
 - a. How data will be transported, stored, and disposed of
 - b. Who will have access to the data
 - c. Other security precautions
5. Other contractual or liability concerns
 - a. The duration of the agreement
 - b. How to change the agreement if necessary
 - c. How and why the agreement may be ended by any participant

What resources are available to support you in developing data-sharing agreements and considering how to use data in your program?

A variety of available resources cover the above issues in greater detail. Check out the resources listed below to see how you can develop a strong data-sharing agreement and relationship with the schools you work with and other partners.

Resources and References

- Ferber, T., & Evennou, D. (2011). *First look: New FERPA regulations*. Retrieved from http://forumfyi.org/files/First_Look_FERPA.pdf
- Harvard Family Research Project. (2013). *Data sharing resources for afterschool and expanded learning programs and systems*. Retrieved from <http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/data-sharing-resources-for-afterschool-and-expanded-learning-programs-and-systems>
- National League of Cities. (2012). *Building management information systems to coordinate citywide afterschool programs: A toolkit for cities*. Retrieved from http://www.nlc.org/Documents/Find%20City%20Solutions/IYEF/Afterschool/YEF_MIS%20Toolkit_2012.pdf
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- The Urban Institute. (2013). *National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership lessons on local data sharing* (Online Guide). Retrieved from <http://www.neighborhoodindicators.org/library/guides/nnip-lessons-local-data-sharing>
- The Wallace Foundation. (2012). *After-school data: Six tip sheets on what cities need to know*. Retrieved from <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/collecting-and-using-data/Pages/After-School-Data-What-Cities-Need-To-Know.aspx>

Family Engagement and Interest Survey



In Chapter 3, you learned about the importance of involving family members in your program planning. Surveying family members about their interests and how they would like to be engaged in your program will allow you and your staff to offer programming that is most useful to families.

Directions: The survey on the following pages will help you determine how families want to be engaged on behalf of their children, on their own behalf, and on behalf of the program (i.e., as volunteers). You can use and adapt this survey in its entirety or pull sections out as needed during your program cycle. Be sure to personalize the survey by filling in the missing information wherever indicated.

Tips for Developing and Administering Surveys (For a Full List, See Tool 87)

- Consider your goals and expected outcomes for the survey. What are you trying to learn? Design a survey and develop questions that will help you achieve those goals and answer your ultimate question.
- Make sure you are familiar with the legal and institutional requirements, if any, when surveying families, community members, and especially youth.
- Prioritize your selection of survey questions.
- Consider your audience and make sure your survey will be understood easily.
- Write short questions that respondents can read quickly and easily.
- Make sure that each question has one central idea.
- Focus your questions on suggestions for improvement rather than focusing on negative experiences.
- Avoid leading questions that appear to advocate a particular answer.
- Provide instructions on how to record answers and how many options to select.
- For multiple choice questions, allow respondents to select “other” so they can write in another response that wasn’t included.
- Test your survey with a small group before distributing it to all of your intended respondents.
- Think about how you will deliver the survey. Will it be delivered by mail, by telephone, in person, or online? These different methods will affect the survey design. It is likely that a paper survey will be the most convenient method for respondents, but an electronic survey has advantages as well (such as allowing for skip logic and requiring less data entry) if it seems like a viable format for your respondents.
- Provide respondents with a contact person whom they can reach if they have any questions or concerns about the survey.

Dear Families,

We need your help! We want to create an afterschool and expanded learning program that is engaging for your child and for you. Please tell us what activities you think we should offer and when, and let us know what role, if any, you would like to play in the afterschool and expanded learning program. This survey will take only a few minutes to fill out.

If you have questions, please contact [name] at [telephone] or [email]. Please complete this survey by [date].

1. Would your child or children participate in an afterschool and expanded learning program?

☐ Yes

☐ No

2. What types of activities do you think an afterschool and expanded learning program at our school should offer? (Rank your top eight choices from 1 to 8, with 1 as your top choice.)

_____ Chess

_____ Aerobic exercise

_____ Arts and crafts

_____ Community service

_____ Basketball

_____ Card and board games

_____ Computer club

_____ Cheerleading

_____ Cooking

_____ Homework help or tutoring

_____ Gymnastics

_____ Dance

_____ Junior achievement

_____ Martial arts

_____ Drama

_____ Photography

_____ Soccer

_____ Field trips

_____ Poetry writing

_____ Softball/baseball

_____ Music

_____ Peer counseling/conflict resolution

_____ Volleyball

_____ Woodworking

_____ School newspaper

_____ Yoga

_____ Science experiments

_____ Other: _____

3. How much would you be willing or able to pay per child for an afterschool activity that met [X] times a week for [X] weeks (a total of [X] sessions)? _____

4. Please indicate the days and times that you would like your child or children to be able to attend activities. (Check all that apply.)

☐ Monday

☐ Friday

☐ Before school

☐ Tuesday

☐ Saturday

☐ After school

☐ Wednesday

☐ Sunday

☐ During school vacations

☐ Thursday

☐ During the summer

5. How would your child go home after the program activities end? Would he or she need transportation?

☐ Yes, I would need the program to provide transportation for my child or children after an activity.

☐ No, I would be able to pick up my child or children after an activity.

☐ No, my child or children can walk home after an activity.

☐ No, older siblings can pick up my child or children after an activity.

☐ No, I belong to a carpool group with other families that have youth in this program.

Other: _____

6. Would you participate in adult programming?

☐ Yes

☐ No

7. What types of courses would interest you? (Rank your top five choices from 1 to 5, with 1 as your top choice.)

_____ Academic content areas

☐ English language arts

☐ Math

_____ Homework help

_____ Tutoring

_____ Computer/technology skills

_____ Creative arts

_____ Healthy living

_____ Other, please specify: _____

☐ Science/science, technology, engineering, math (STEM)

☐ History/social studies

_____ Social and emotional well-being

_____ Sports

_____ Physical fitness

_____ Service learning

_____ Cultural appreciation and diversity

8. How much would you be willing or able to pay per course if it met [X] times a week for [X] weeks? _____

9. Please indicate the days and times that you would be able to attend.

	Example	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
From:	4:00 p.m.							
To:	6:00 p.m.							
Exceptions:	First week of the month							

10. Would you need transportation in order to attend an adult education course?

☐ Yes, I would need the program to provide transportation for me.

☐ No, I don't need transportation.

11. Are you interested in volunteering to help with the adult education program?

☐ Yes

☐ No

12. In what ways would you like to volunteer? (Check all that apply.)

☐ Teach a class

☐ Help with paperwork (e.g., keep attendance, fill out forms)

☐ Greet participants and answer questions

☐ Other, please specify: _____

☐ Help a staff member with a class

☐ Help market the program (e.g., write for the newsletter, pass out flyers)

☐ Provide help wherever needed

13. Are you interested in volunteering to help with our program?

☐ Yes

☐ No

14. If yes, how would you like to volunteer? (*Check all that apply.*)

☐ Teach a class or activity with youth

☐ Join the family advisory group

☐ Help a staff member with a class or activity with youth

☐ Join the organization/program advisory board

☐ Greet young people and answer questions

☐ Help with paperwork and other administrative tasks

☐ Teach a class or activity with adults

☐ Support fundraising efforts

☐ Help a staff member with adult programming activities

☐ Help market the program (e.g., write for the newsletter, pass out flyers)

☐ Other, please specify: _____

15. Are there specific content areas or skills that you could contribute to our program?

_____ Academic content areas

☐ English language arts

☐ Science/science, technology, engineering, math (STEM)

☐ Math

☐ History/social studies

_____ Homework help

_____ Social and emotional well-being

_____ Tutoring

_____ Sports

_____ Computer/technology skills

_____ Physical fitness

_____ Creative arts

_____ Service learning

_____ Healthy living

_____ Cultural appreciation and diversity

_____ Other, please specify: _____

16. Please indicate when you would be available to volunteer with the program.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
From:							
To:							
Exceptions:							

Personal Information

Your name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Telephone: _____

Best time of day to reach you at this telephone number: _____

Your child's/children's name(s) and grade(s):

Name: _____ Grade: _____

Name: _____ Grade: _____

Thank you.

Volunteer Form



In Chapter 3, you learned about the importance of involving families, community members, and other stakeholders in program planning and delivery. Having volunteers join your program can be a rewarding experience for everyone.

Directions: Use this form to learn more about individuals who are interested in volunteering with your program.

Dear Volunteer,

Volunteers are extremely valuable components of our program, and acting as a volunteer is a great way to learn more about what goes on in our program and to help support the program and school. Because of the tremendous impact that volunteers can have on young people, we believe that all volunteers should possess the following personal characteristics.

[Program Name] volunteers must:

- Enjoy working with young people
- Feel that being a volunteer is an important position, worthy of your time and effort
- Be willing to work with youth in a variety of situations
- Accept the responsibility that goes along with your position
- Be of good and reliable character

If you are interested in being a volunteer, please fill out the remainder of this form and return it to **[Name]**.

Your name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Telephone: _____

Do you have a child in this program? _____

1. Please tell us why you would like to volunteer with our program.

2. How would you like to volunteer? *(Check all that apply.)*

☐ Teach a class or activity with youth	☐ Join the family advisory group
☐ Help a staff member with a class or activity with youth	☐ Join the organization/program advisory board
☐ Greet young people and answer questions	☐ Help with paperwork and other administrative tasks
☐ Teach a class or activity with adults	☐ Support fundraising efforts
☐ Help a staff member with adult programming activities	☐ Help market the program (e.g., write for the newsletter, pass out flyers)
☐ Other, please specify: _____	

3. Are there specific content areas, skills, or competencies that you could contribute to our program?

_____ Academic content areas	
☐ English language arts	☐ Science/science, technology, engineering, math (STEM)
☐ Math	☐ History/social studies
_____ Homework help	_____ Social and emotional well-being
_____ Tutoring	_____ Sports
_____ Computer/technology skills	_____ Physical fitness
_____ Creative arts	_____ Service learning
_____ Healthy living	_____ Cultural appreciation and diversity
_____ Other, please specify: _____	

4. Please indicate when you would be available to volunteer with the program.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
From:							
To:							
Exceptions:							

5. Please provide the name and contact information (e.g., phone number, email address) for two references.

Template for Introductory Communication With Families



In Chapter 3, you learned that ongoing communication between the program and families is probably the most important factor in getting families involved and keeping them involved. Setting up a meeting to discuss how your program can support the community is an important first step in forming a successful and ongoing relationship.

Directions: Use this template to communicate with families in your community about your program.

Tips for Written Communication

- Adapt and adjust all communication for your specific program and the person with whom you are communicating. Personalize whenever possible—refer to how you know the person, ask about something in his or her life, or simply wish the person well!
- Alter the format of your communication to fit the method you are using to communicate.
 - If you are sending an email, for example, make sure your subject line clearly identifies the purpose of your email. An email that says “ABC Afterschool Program: Update and Meeting Request” is much more informative and likely to get the attention of your recipient than “ABC Afterschool Program.”
 - Make sure your contact information is always included in your email signature.
 - If you are sending a letter or memo, be sure to include the date, and always sign your name at the bottom.
- If you are communicating via letter or a printed memo, use your program’s letterhead. If you do not have letterhead, use brightly colored paper.
- Remember to proofread and to follow up your letter, memo, email, or other written communication with a personal phone call. Taking a little extra time can go a long way.

Dear Families,

I want to introduce myself and **[name of program]**. The vision and goals of our program are to **[describe vision and goals]**.

I’d like to set up some time to meet with you or your representative to discuss how we may further support the school. The following are a list of dates and times that work for me **[list dates and times]**.

Please let me know if any of these work for you.

I look forward to meeting with you and working together to ensure the youth at **[school name]** are able to participate in our full range of afterschool and expanded learning activities.

Sincerely,

[Your name, address, telephone number, and email address]

Identifying Potential Partnerships



In Chapter 3, you learned that not only are partnerships important, but selecting individuals or organizations to complement your mission is also crucial.

Collaborations should encourage partners to contribute the resources they have to the broader collective. Several organizations and individuals (including your program) working together can create a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Directions: Review the tips below and then complete the worksheet on the following page to begin identifying partners and strategies for reaching out to them.

Tips for Identifying and Reaching Out to Potential Partners

- **Revisit the work you have already done.** By now, you have likely already captured a great deal of information about potential partners. Look back at your market analysis (**Tool 15**), your asset mapping process (**Tool 34**), and your needs assessment (**Tool 35**). In those tools, you identified a number of potential organizations for partnerships. List them in the appropriate categories below.
- **Ask for what you need.** Once community organizations have been identified, decide which ones offer the most potential to help with your program. Then reach out to the organization to discuss the possible collaboration you have in mind. Don't be afraid to ask the organization for what you need—ask to set up a museum visit, for instance, or tell a local business you'd like a two-hour meeting with 20 youth and a top executive—and set an agenda. Start slowly and build. Consider opening your request list with items that can be delivered free of charge.
- **Let your partners know why they could be so valuable,** and explain how their participation benefits them. (For example, youth may return as future employees to a business; museums will build future members from the local community.)
- **Consider a variety of partnership roles.** Partners can lend support to a fundraising idea; mentor young people; offer expertise; or provide materials, services, or facilities to the program.
- **Nurture your partners.** Follow up after activities. Make sure youth send thank-you notes after events in which partners have participated. If a partnership is not working, end it gracefully. If a partnership is working, find ways to publicize its success—call your local newspaper or news blog, or invite them to an event.
- **Bring partners together.** Consider a year-end event at which partners can be honored for their participation. Ensure that youth participate and, ideally, that they plan the event.
 - **Make sure your partners represent your community.** Make sure to include partnerships with people and organizations that represent the diversity of your community.

Name of Partner	Type of Partnership	Notes/Next Steps
Major businesses or industries in our community		
Major civic and professional organizations		
Colleges and universities		
Public services (e.g., libraries, parks)		
Religious groups		
Artistic organizations		
Other afterschool and expanded learning programs		
Organizations that provide services for senior citizens		
Media (newspapers, radio, TV stations that reach out to our community)		

Rating Worksheet for Potential Vendor Services



In Chapter 3, you learned that many afterschool and expanded learning programs work with external vendors to provide program activities, workshops, and services. Properly vetting the vendors will ensure a high level of quality in the activities that are offered.

Directions: Before meeting with external vendors, discuss each question below with your staff and advisory board and record the answers. By articulating your expectations, you will be better prepared to question and negotiate with the vendors. After interviewing each vendor, use the rating scale on the last page of this tool to rate how well the vendor meets your expectations for each question.

Use the rating page in your final review of vendors and to make a selection.

Category I: Results, Philosophy, Services, and Materials

1. What evidence of success (e.g., independent studies, school testimonials) does the vendor possess?

Notes: _____

2. What are the main components of our program approach that we would like the vendor's program to support?

Notes: _____

3. Which district or state standards should the vendor's program address?

Notes: _____

4. What types of materials (e.g., books, teacher guides) do we want the vendor to provide? What about specific materials to support all learners (e.g., texts in various languages, large print, audiotapes)?

Notes: _____

5. Do we want a program that incorporates technology? What kind? How should it be used?

Notes: _____

6. What degree of instructor expertise do we want the program to require (e.g., will our program staff members need to have college degrees to effectively deliver the program)?

Notes: _____

7. How much and what type of training do we want the vendor to provide?

Notes: _____

8. How much and what type of technical assistance (e.g., on-site consulting, conference calls, email exchanges) do we want the vendor to provide?

Notes: _____

Category II: Expected or Preferred Outcomes

9. What outcomes (e.g., increased participation, positive attitude toward learning, academic success, decision-making skills) do we expect for youth after one year? After three years?

Notes: _____

Category III: Programs Costs

10. How much can we afford to spend on an external program vendor? Ideally, how much would we like to spend?

Notes: _____

11. Do we want the vendor to support sustainability or embedding of the program after initial training, purchase of program materials, and support?

Notes: _____

Vendor Review Checklist

Directions: Complete one checklist for each vendor for which you are considering using the criteria or preferred characteristics identified above. Review the total score for each vendor. The vendor with the highest score is likely the best match for your priorities. However, you might want to weigh certain priorities more than others as you review your total scores.

Rating Scale

- 4** This vendor **fully meets** our expectations or preferred characteristics in this area.
- 3** This vendor **meets most** of our expectations or preferred characteristics in this area.
- 2** This vendor **meets some** of our expectations or preferred characteristics in this area.
- 1** This vendor **does not meet** our expectations or preferred characteristics in this area.

	4	3	2	1
Evidence of success	☐	☐	☐	☐
Support for program approach	☐	☐	☐	☐
Alignment with state standards	☐	☐	☐	☐
Program materials	☐	☐	☐	☐
Use of technology	☐	☐	☐	☐
Expertise required of instructors	☐	☐	☐	☐
Training	☐	☐	☐	☐
Technical assistance	☐	☐	☐	☐
Expected academic outcomes	☐	☐	☐	☐
Expected non-academic outcomes	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cost	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sustainability	☐	☐	☐	☐

Total Score:

Involving Current and Potential Stakeholders



In Chapter 3, you learned about the importance of developing and maintaining partnerships. There are people who may already be vested in the success of your program and can help by contributing time or resources.

Directions: Use this tool to first brainstorm about all of your current and potential stakeholders (e.g., staff members, volunteers, families, funders, community partners, local politicians, and community groups). Refer back to your asset map (**Tool 34**), needs assessment (**Tool 35**), and market analysis (**Tool 15**) for more ideas about who to include here. Then record how they can and do benefit from, as well as contribute to, your afterschool and expanded learning program. When you can clearly spell out the benefits of working with your program, stakeholders will be much more likely to want to participate. Think about how you might encourage them to take their involvement or contribution to the next level.

Stakeholder	What can they offer your program? (Think about what they have offered in the past and how they could take their involvement to the next level.)	How might they benefit from the partnership? (Consider the stake they may have in preparing youth and how your program can help them meet this goal.)
<i>Example:</i> A local business that provides \$1,000 in funding to your program each year.	<i>Example:</i> Businesspeople could volunteer as guest speakers to talk about how their business is connected to the community or about their experiences visiting or working in other countries.	<i>Example:</i> Your program helps educate a future community workforce that will know how the company works and has been exposed to information about other countries where the company works.

Community Connections



In Chapter 3, you learned about the importance of involving the community in your program. Thinking about where you and your staff might already have connections is a great place to start the process for these partnerships.

Directions: Using **Tools 15 and 34**, you should have already created an asset map and a market analysis, identifying potential resources in your community that may contribute to your program. Take those tools out now as you begin to work with this tool. While those tools helped you identify organizations, this tool is designed to help you think about the specific connections you want to make to your community and which organizations can help you do that.

Use the list of organizations and resources in your community you have already identified through other tools and fill them in under the categories below to identify how potential partners can benefit your organization or make connections that will benefit your participants. You are provided with a starting point for each category.

Community Connections for Partnerships

- **Population diversity** — Start with community and heritage organizations.

Community Organizations:

- **Cultural traditions** — Start with local museums, cultural centers, and historical societies.

Community Organizations:

- **Schools** — Start with school boards, school administration, principals, and parent-teacher organizations.

Community Organizations:

- **Educational exchange organizations** — *Start with* AFS Intercultural Programs, American Institute For Foreign Study (AIFS), American Councils, EF Education First, and others that have networks throughout the country. The Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET) maintains a list of K–12 travel and study programs at <http://www.csiet.org/publications-resources/publications/listed-programs.html>.

Community Organizations:

- **Colleges and universities** — *Start with* local education programs, faculty, and students, as well as the 120 federally funded (Title VI) university-based National Resource Centers focusing on Africa, Asia, Canada, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, the Pacific Islands, and international studies. The Outreach World website (<http://www.outreachworld.org>) highlights various K–12 teaching resources and educational activities produced by the National Resource Centers, beginning with the Middle East.

Community Organizations:

- **Business, economic development, and trade organizations** — *Start with* the chamber of commerce or World Trade Council.

Community Organizations:

- **Policy centers** — *Start with* state and national government representatives' offices and websites.

Community Organizations:

- **International affairs organizations** — *Start with* the World Affairs Councils of America, United Nations Association and Model United Nations, and state geographic alliances.

Community Organizations:

- **Faith-based programs** — *Start with* local churches, temples, mosques, and other houses of worship.

Community Organizations:

- **International volunteer programs** — *Start with* Kiwanis, Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs, and other international humanitarian organizations.

Community Organizations:

- **Media** — *Start with* local print, Internet, media, television, and radio stations, especially those whose audiences include diverse cultural groups. International education organizations, such as the International Education and Resource Network (iEARN) and ePals, also provide electronic linkages globally.

Community Organizations:

Personal Connections for Partnerships

Consider the many connections that you and your staff already have that can support your program:

- **Heritage** — Where in the world do your and your staff members' families live, and where have they lived in the past?

Notes:

- **Community connections** — What connections do you and your staff have to the community? (Think about religious groups, membership organizations, former employment, and community groups.)

Notes:

- **Culture** — What are your or your staff members' musical and artistic talents, or other cultural connections?

Notes:

- **Travel** — What experiences have you or your staff had traveling, moving, or migrating? (Consider armchair and virtual travel as well.)

Notes:

- **Language** — What languages do you and your staff speak, and how have you learned them?

Notes:

- **Education** — What areas of interest have you and your staff pursued through school or personal study, such as current affairs, historical knowledge, or scientific research?

Notes:

- **Employment** — Where have you and your staff worked in the past? What industries or professional experience can they share with the program?

Notes:

Now What? *Once you have identified the organizations and connections that you can make, compare this list to the list of organizations you identified in **Tool 58: Identifying Potential Partnerships**. Look for commonalities. If there are four or five organizations that show up on both lists, those are the best places to start. Reach out to those organizations. Ask for a meeting. Talk to them about how you see them as a potential asset to your program. Let them know how you think the program can benefit them. Begin to establish a potential partnership, and use some of the other tools in this section to help you think through strong partnership plans.*

Professional Development Session on Youth Development



In Chapters 2 and 4, you learned that strong youth development principles are essential to a high-quality program. Incorporating youth development principles in the program practices can create positive academic and life trajectories for young people.

Directions: Use the following guidelines and worksheet to conduct a professional development session for staff members about integrating youth development principles into your program. All staff members should be encouraged to join in the discussion. This process will take anywhere from 70 to 90 minutes, depending on the number of team-building activities, the amount of discussion generated, and the number of activities addressed.

Objectives

1. To understand the features necessary to create a youth development program
2. To collectively establish how your program incorporates those features
3. To determine how well a selected activity fulfills the criteria for youth development
4. To develop a culture of continuous program improvement

Suggested Format

5 minutes	Facilitator describes the process for the meeting and explains the anticipated benefits and the importance of youth development.
5 minutes	Staff members read the section titled “Integrating Youth Development Practices Into Activities.” This section appears on pages 105–125 in this <i>Toolkit</i> .
10 minutes	The group discusses which of the afterschool and expanded learning program’s current or future activities and settings foster youth development. Then the group decides on one activity to focus on for further discussion.
10 minutes	Using the following worksheet, each staff member writes a brief description of the activity from his or her perspective and how the activity promotes or integrates youth development principles.
5 minutes	The group discusses how the goals of this activity align with youth development principles.
10 minutes	Individually, staff members complete Tool 63: Youth Development Checklist to see which features of youth development are being met throughout the entire afterschool and expanded learning program and which ones are not.

15 minutes	The group discusses the checklist results, revealing which aspects of youth development are being met and which are being neglected. <i>An easel pad or whiteboard can be used so everyone can see the results.</i> Then, the group discusses how activities can be adapted to achieve youth development.
5 minutes	The group determines the actions to be taken based on this discussion and who will be responsible for implementing any recommended changes to the activity.
5 minutes	The group discusses what has been learned by examining an activity in this manner.

Activity: Write a brief description of a current or future afterschool activity that incorporates one or more youth development principles.

Brief description of the activity:

In the following section:

1. Write about how your activity purposefully integrates the following youth development practices. If it doesn't align with all of them, that is okay.
2. After you do that, get together with your group and discuss how you can improve your activity by *either* being more intentional about integrating youth development principles *or* by adding more youth development practices. Write down your new ideas in a different color if you have one.

Creating a Warm and Welcoming Environment – pages 106–108 in this *Toolkit*

Building Supportive Relationships and Opportunities to Belong – pages 109–113 in this *Toolkit*

Promoting Positive Behavior Management – pages 114–117 in this *Toolkit*

Offering Youth Choice – pages 117–118 in this *Toolkit*

Opportunities for Authentic Decision-Making – page 118 in this *Toolkit*

Youth Leadership – pages 118–119 in this *Toolkit*

Time for Reflection – pages 119–120 in this *Toolkit*

Skill Building: Sequenced – page 121 in this *Toolkit*

Skill Building: Active – pages 121–122 in this *Toolkit*

Skill Building: Focused and Explicit – page 122 in this *Toolkit*

Great job! Remember these practices every time you plan a set of activities, and remember, they are somewhat sequential, meaning that a warm and welcoming environment comes first, before you can expect youth to feel comfortable engaging in leadership activities, for example.

Youth Development Checklist



As you learned in Chapters 2 and 4, youth development refers to various means of fostering positive growth in youth, building on their strengths, and addressing their developmental needs. You can use this checklist to gain an overall view of how your entire program is incorporating youth development principles and practices.

Directions: Read the following list of youth development principles and practices and then indicate how well you think your program is addressing each one. When you have finished, review your checkmarks to determine the areas that appear strong and the areas that could be improved. This checklist can be completed and reviewed individually or discussed as a group.

Youth Development Checklist

	Yes	In Process	No
Warm and Welcoming Environment			
Procedures are in place to ensure young people's safety (e.g., emergencies, security).	☐	☐	☐
Adult supervision is provided at all times.	☐	☐	☐
Emergency and contact information is available for all youth.	☐	☐	☐
Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted.	☐	☐	☐
Healthy snacks are offered daily.	☐	☐	☐
The program's hours of operation are based on families' schedules.	☐	☐	☐
Cultural and linguistic differences are respected.	☐	☐	☐
The program or activity has a name that youth can identify.	☐	☐	☐
Youth are respected for their individuality.	☐	☐	☐
Programs are available for all youth who want to participate.	☐	☐	☐
Support for Positive Behavior			
Youth understand the expectations of the program.	☐	☐	☐
Staff members regularly offer sincere praise with specific comments and feedback for positive behavior.	☐	☐	☐
Youth participate in setting program or activity rules.	☐	☐	☐
Rules are clear, consistent, and fair.	☐	☐	☐

	Yes	In Process	No
Rules address cooperating, sharing, caring for materials, participation, behavior strategies, and conflict resolution.	☐	☐	☐
Youth and staff members define and implement strategies for resolving conflicts.	☐	☐	☐
When conflicts arise, they are minimized and resolved quickly.	☐	☐	☐
Program expectations are communicated to families regularly.	☐	☐	☐
Supportive Relationships and Opportunities to Belong			
Staff members engage youth and consistently call each person by his or her name.	☐	☐	☐
Staff members intentionally build and promote relationships characterized by warmth, respect, honesty, and caring.	☐	☐	☐
Staff members respond to youth with respect, acceptance, and appreciation; they listen to what youth have to say.	☐	☐	☐
Staff members are cooperative and respectful; they model positive adult relationships.	☐	☐	☐
The program offers a mix of one-on-one interactions and small- and large-group activities on a weekly basis.	☐	☐	☐
Youth are involved in the community, and community members are involved in the program.	☐	☐	☐
Activities allow all youth to interact in a variety of ways.	☐	☐	☐
Programs meaningfully involve families, schools, and the community.	☐	☐	☐
Participation for long periods of time is encouraged.	☐	☐	☐
Staff members emphasize belonging and membership.	☐	☐	☐
Opportunities for Youth Choice, Decision-Making, Leadership, and Reflection			
Youth are given choices of a wide variety of activities.	☐	☐	☐
Youth are given choices within activities.	☐	☐	☐
Youth have authentic leadership opportunities.	☐	☐	☐
Youth are encouraged to take on meaningful challenges.	☐	☐	☐
Youth can articulate their goals and their progress toward achieving those goals.	☐	☐	☐
Youth and staff members are given frequent opportunities to reflect on activities and learning.	☐	☐	☐
Youth have opportunities to showcase their work, learning, growth, and development.	☐	☐	☐

	Yes	In Process	No
Opportunities for Learning and Skill Development			
Activities build on the strengths of youth in the program.	☐	☐	☐
Activities are age/development appropriate and align with the styles, abilities, and interests of youth in the program.	☐	☐	☐
Activities reflect the local context/culture of the program and participants.	☐	☐	☐
Activities intentionally build on school day learning and expand learning opportunities.	☐	☐	☐
Activities are targeted at skill development.	☐	☐	☐
Activities are active and employ hands-on approaches to learning.	☐	☐	☐
Activities promote basic skills, higher order thinking, exploration, and practice.	☐	☐	☐
Coaching and feedback strategies are implemented to build skills.	☐	☐	☐

Checklist Results

Were you surprised by your checklist results? What areas appear strong? What areas could use improvement?

Sample Youth Satisfaction Survey



In Chapter 4, you learned that to be effective, youth development programs require careful and thoughtful planning and work best when young people are included in the planning and ongoing improvement of the program. There are many ways to get feedback for improvement, including reflections and check-in times, and through individual meetings. Another good way to get youth feedback is via satisfaction surveys.

Directions: To understand how young people are experiencing your program, you can ask them directly by using a short survey. In this tool, we provide some tips for conducting good surveys and provide you with a sample survey and

question bank that you can use or adapt based on your needs and the age of the respondents.

Tips for Conducting Good Surveys

See **Tool 87: Tips for Developing and Administering Surveys** for more ideas.

- Keep a satisfaction survey like this one to one double-sided page. Too many questions will make it hard for you to use the results, and youth may lose interest.
- For younger youth, ask only multiple choice questions. You can use open-ended questions for older youth, but limit them to two or three.
- Make sure your questions are easy to understand and are developmentally appropriate for your audience.
- Be specific in your questions and ask only one thing in each question.
- For youth in grades K–2, adults should ask youth the questions and record their answers.
- Use a three-point rating scale for youth in grades 3–6 and a four-point rating scale for youth in grade 7 and up. Sample rating scales are given below for your use. You can cut and paste the appropriate scale into your survey.

For youth in grades 3–6, use this rating scale:

Always	Sometimes	Never
😊	😐	😞

For youth in grades 7 and up, use this rating scale:

Always True	Often True	Sometimes True	Never True
4	3	2	1

Sample Survey Items

Logistics:

- The program schedule works for me and my family.
- I get to help make decisions about things like rules in the program.
- I know what is expected of me at this program.

Open-ended question:

- What, if anything, would you change about the program schedule?

Staffing:

- The program staff helps me learn new things.
- I feel that the program staff respects me.
- When I do well, the program staff members give me positive feedback.
- The program staff knows my name.

Open-ended questions:

- What would you change about the adults in this program?
- What do you like most about the adults in this program?

Activities/Content:

- I am given choices about activities in my program.
- I like coming to this program.
- I have fun when I am at this program.
- I have opportunities to lead activities.
- I feel bored when I come to this program.
- I can always find things that I like to do here.
- I feel challenged in this program.

Open-ended question:

- What kinds of activities would you like to see offered in this program?

Program Environment:

- I feel safe at this program.
- I feel I belong at this program.
- I feel comfortable with the other youth in this program.
- I learn about positive ways to resolve conflicts in this program.
- Kids in this program treat each other with respect.

Open-ended questions:

- What do you like most about this program?
- What do you like least about this program?

Decision Wheel



In Chapter 4, you learned that it is important for youth to learn conflict resolution skills. Having young people practice making decisions can help them prepare for situations when they have to make real-life decisions.

Directions

- **Define the problem, issue, or situation.** Youth should think about the choice or problem, ask others to help them identify the problem, and look for information to help them understand the problem.
- **Identify alternatives, choices, or options.** Youth should list or brainstorm all of the possible ways to solve the problem or choices available to them. This step helps them to think before making a choice and identify more than one way to deal with the problem.
- **Identify consequences and risks for each choice.** Think about the advantages or positive aspects of each possible choice. Then identify the disadvantages or risks involved with making each choice. Encourage youth to think about their family and personal values and how each decision may affect other people.
- **Decide on one choice.** What is the best alternative? Encourage youth to think about all the information they gathered about each choice and how their decision will affect them and others. Choices may also be based on knowledge, values, religious beliefs, and present and future goals.
- **Evaluate the decision.** Using the steps necessary for sound decision-making will not guarantee that all of the decisions youth make will be the right ones. After they make an important decision, encourage youth to think about the consequences and use this knowledge to change the decision the next time or be assured that the right decision was made.

Materials Needed

- Flip-chart paper
- Marker
- Yellow sticky notes
- Copy of Decision Wheel
- Paper fasteners to assemble Decision Wheel
- Blank decision page to develop own decision situations
- Scissors
- Heavy (60-pound) paper
- Age-appropriate decision wheel page (elementary, middle, or high school)

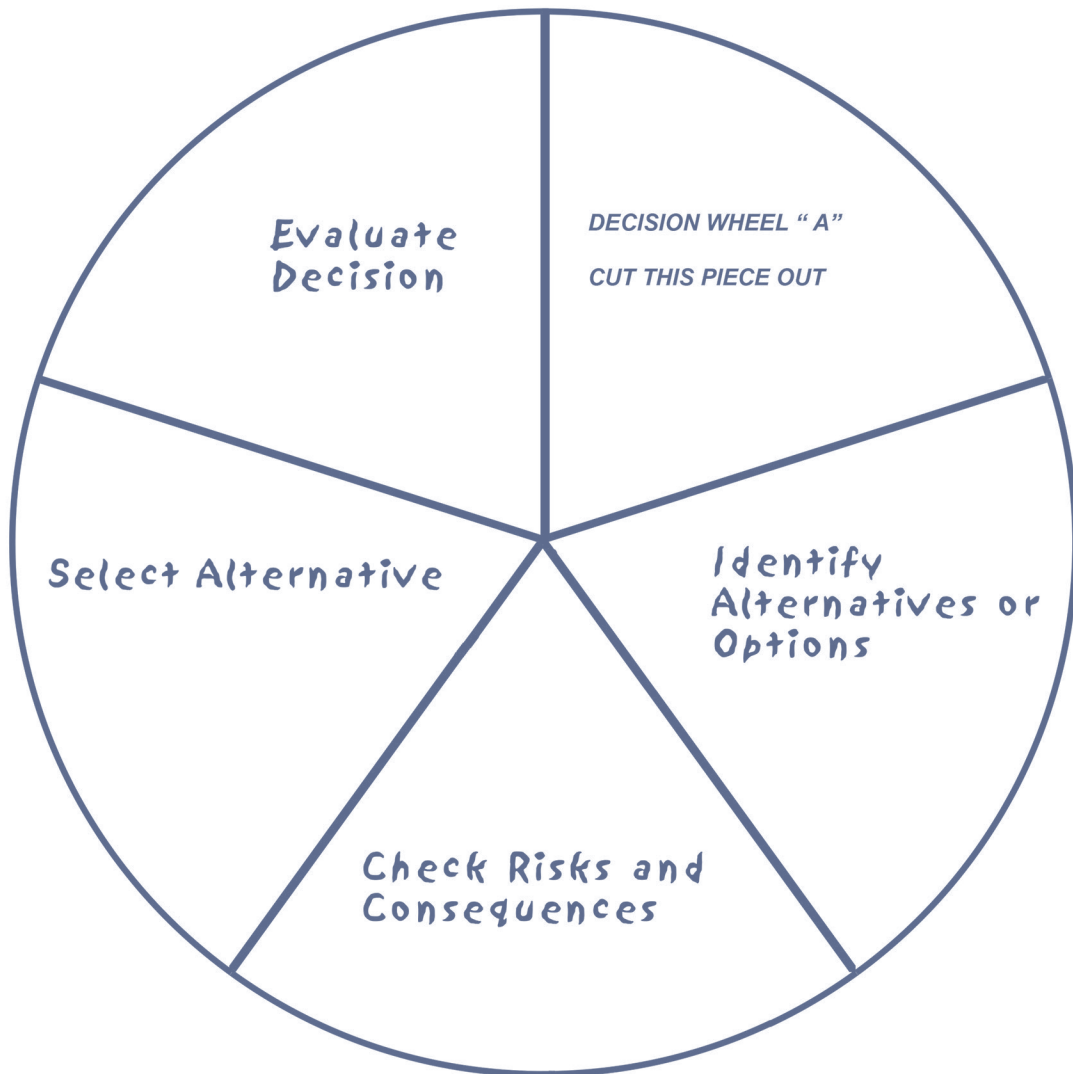
Leading the Activity

- Make the Decision Wheel:
 1. Copy (on heavy paper) enough of the Decision Wheel handouts (A and B) (on the following pages) for each youth in your group.
 2. Cut out the wheel with the steps to sound decision-making (wheel A) printed on the front. Cut the blank slice of the wheel out.
 3. Cut out the wheel with the decision situations (wheel B). Put the paper fastener through the center of the wheel to connect the two parts of the wheel.
- Draw a large Decision Wheel on a flip chart or chalkboard, and review with youth. Explain that the Decision Wheel is designed to give them practice using the skills needed for sound decision-making.
- Write the first situation from the wheel at the top of the flip-chart paper.
- Pair up youth to discuss the situation. Youth should follow the steps around the wheel to discuss the decision.
- Ask each pair to write one solution to the problem or situation per sticky note. Ask them to think about all of the possible options.
- Ask each pair to also write the consequences of each solution on a separate sticky note.
- Bring the group back together and share the options and the consequences. Put the sticky notes for the choices in the “Identify Alternatives or Choices” slice of the Decision Wheel.
- Put the consequence sticky notes in the “Identify Risks and Consequences” slice of the Decision Wheel.
- When all of the options and consequences are posted, discuss with the group why they would not choose an option because they don’t like the consequences. Remove one option at a time until there is only one option left. That is the choice the group made. Remind youth that this may not be the choice that each individual would have made.

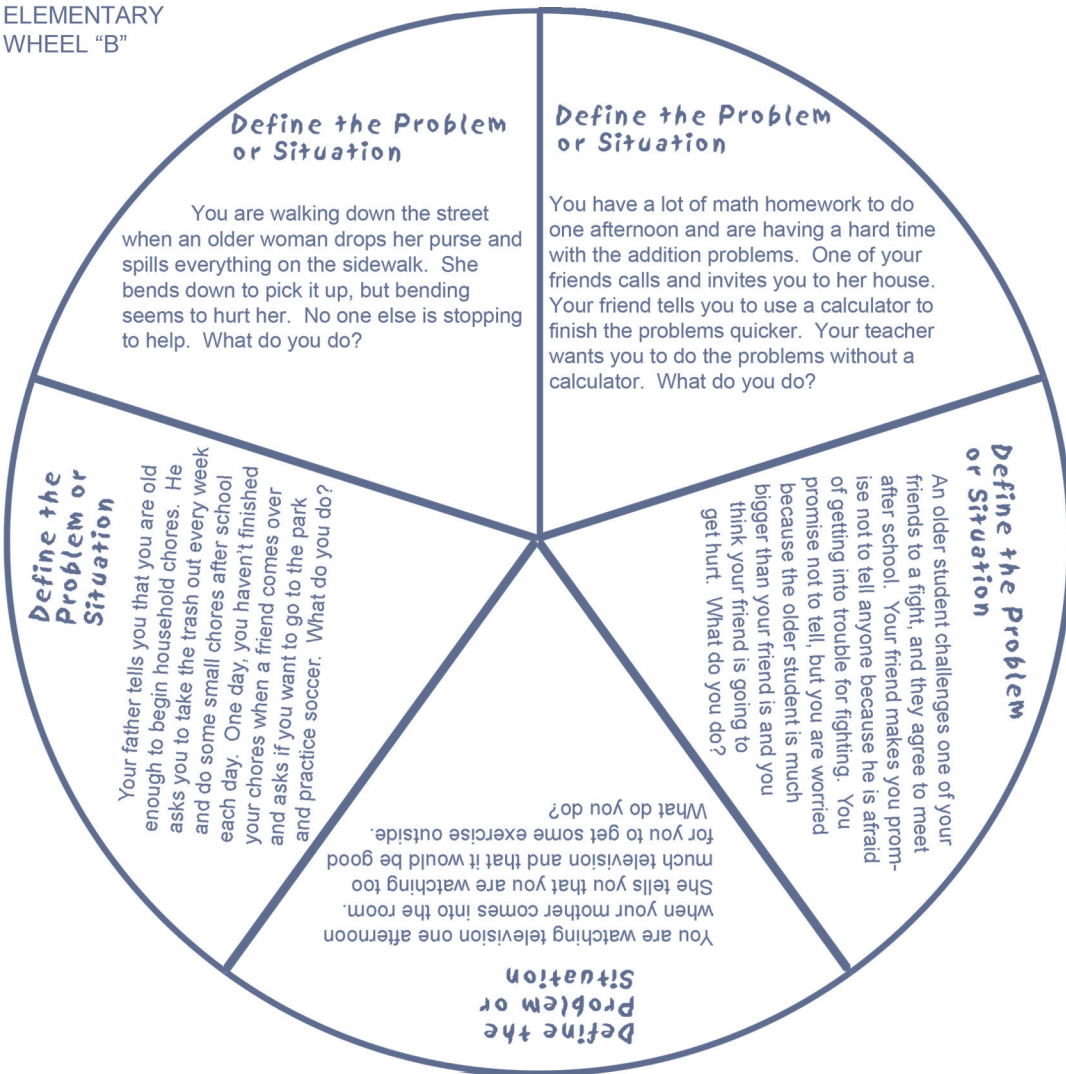
Process What the Group Learned

- Was it more difficult to think of options with positive or negative consequences?
- Why is it important to think of consequences when making a decision?
- How can collecting information about a situation help make decision-making easier?
- Describe a situation where one of your options had both negative and positive consequences.
- The next time you make a decision, what will you do differently?

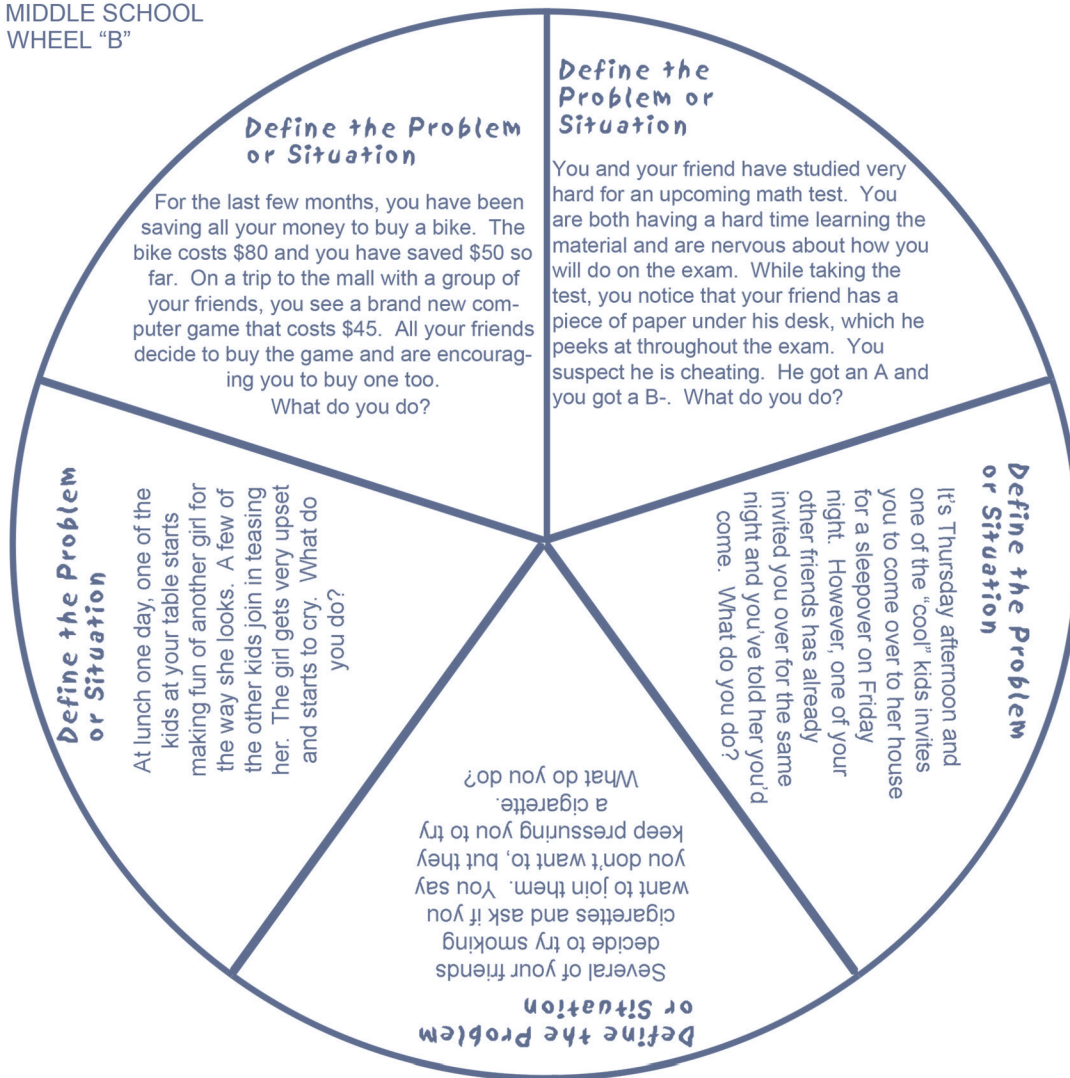
The Decision Wheel handouts (see the following pages) were adapted from Hoy, P. E., Perkins, D. F., Webster, P. V., Christner, B. J., & Mock, L. (2005). *After-school programs behavioral issues toolkit*. University Park, PA: Department of Agricultural and Extension Education, The Pennsylvania State University. Reprinted and adapted with permission.



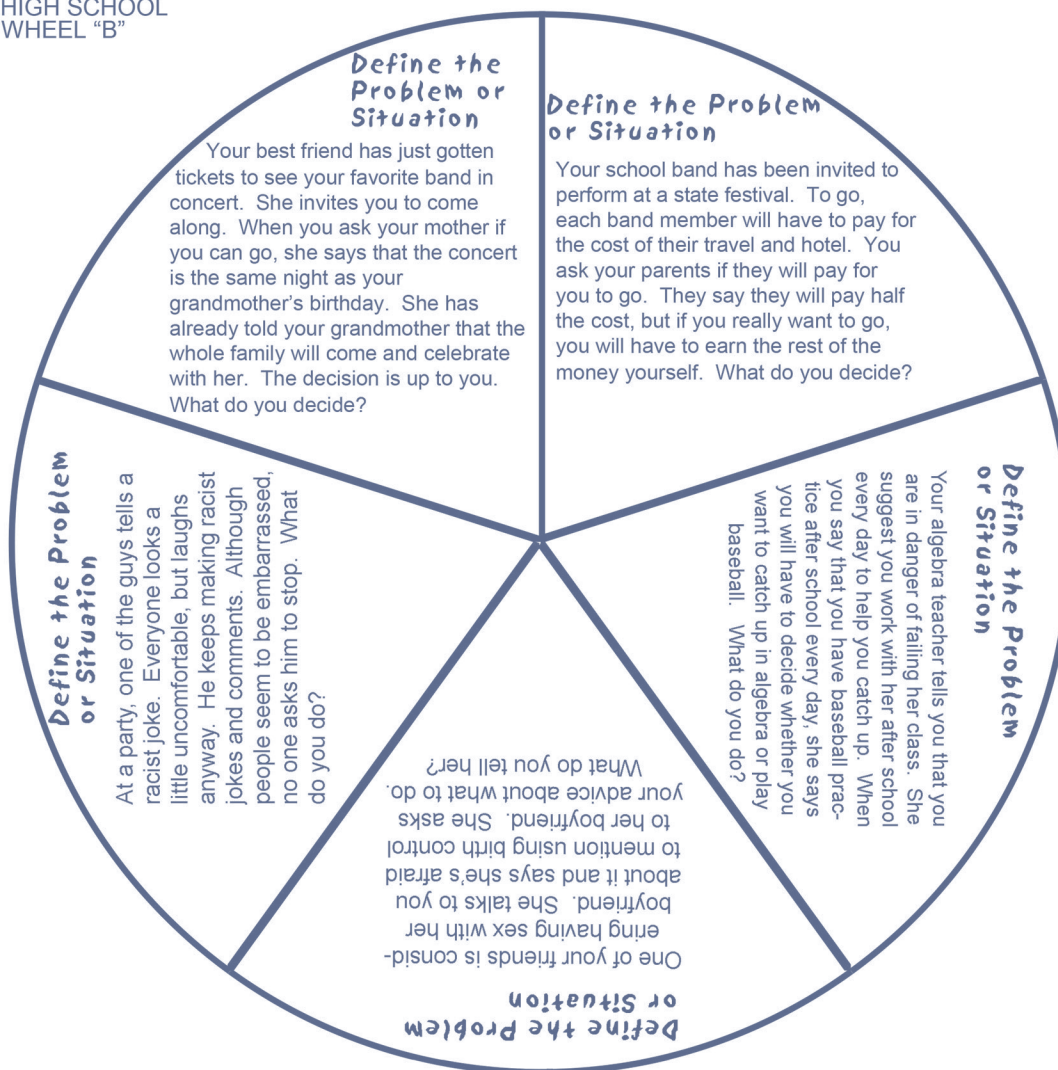
ELEMENTARY
WHEEL "B"

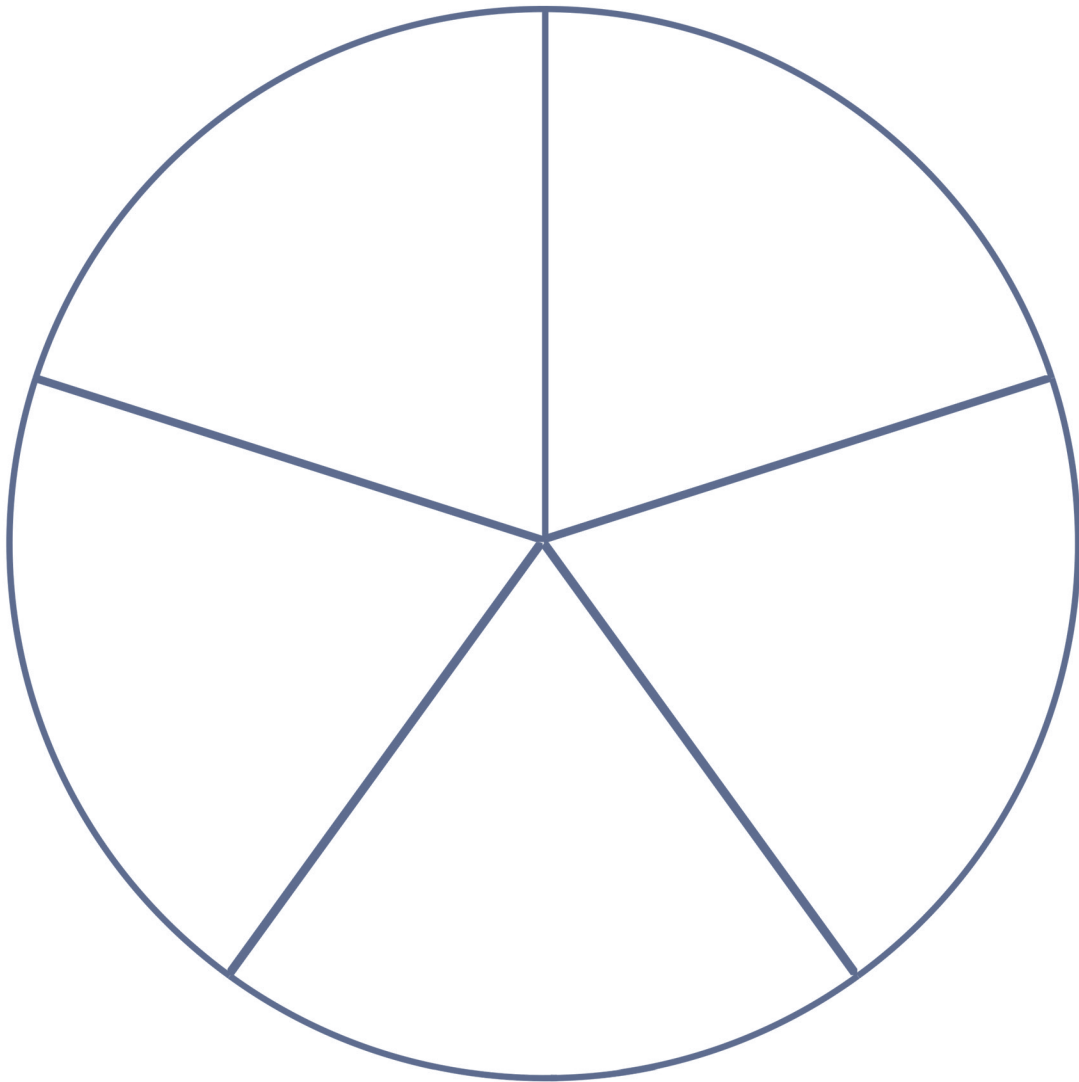


MIDDLE SCHOOL
WHEEL "B"



HIGH SCHOOL WHEEL "B"





Activity Ideas for Creating a Warm and Welcoming Environment



In Chapter 4, you learned that having a warm and welcoming environment is a building block for programs. In fact, research shows that youth having a sense of belonging and security in programs has been linked with improved academic performance, increased levels of motivation, a strong willingness to learn, and decreased behavior problems (Faircloth & Hamm, 2005; Kauh, 2011; Marzano & Marzano, 2003). That said, the environment of the program is influenced greatly by the interactions among people within the program, so implementing activities that create a warm and welcoming environment will be critical to the success of your program.

Directions: Use (or adapt) these activity ideas during your program sessions. The activities below are split into different activity types, with different focus areas, and suggestions for using them during the session.

Remember:

- We all need to feel like we belong, and young people are no different. That's why you're doing this, right? But it takes time to establish trust and develop bonds both among youth in your program and between the staff and youth. Offer a variety of activities that give youth an opportunity to get to know each other in different ways and see what works best.
- Pay close attention to grouping. Using grouping strategies (e.g., counting off, birthdays, straws) allows for youth to expand their peer group and avoid unwanted exclusion or cliques. Make sure to alternate grouping strategies so all youth have a chance to work, grow, and develop positive relationships.
- Always offer youth the option to pass—these activities should be a fun and positive experience. Do take note if certain youth always pass or if certain activity ideas don't go over as well as others, and let that inform how you do things the next time.
- Getting to know other people and sharing personal information can sometimes be intimidating. Start out with easy questions and activities that allow youth to maintain personal space and increase the level of intimacy and sharing as the year progresses and everyone gets to know each other better.
- Give youth freedom to make choices. Maybe this means letting them choose whether this is done as an individual sharing activity or as a pair-share or in small or large groups. You might have them choose their own partners or groups. Do what is most comfortable for youth in your program.

Group Activities

Practices	Activities	Example	Ideas for Your Program
Greetings	Alphabetical	Youth pick random letters and find peers with a name that starts with the letter chosen.	
	Compliments	Youth sit in a circle and take turns giving peers a compliment.	
	Nonverbal	Youth silently greet each other with handshakes, high fives, ankle taps, fist bumps, or other unique ways of silently saying hello.	
Think and Tell	Getting to Know You	Have youth explain their favorites: color, food, sport, subject, animal.	
	Thinking Forward	Have youth describe their life goals or dreams.	
	Reflections	What is your favorite thing about yourself?	
Teamwork	Relay Race	Have youth pick groups and work on a time challenge (groups should be randomized to avoid exclusion).	
	Mysteries	Divide youth into pairs or small groups to solve a mystery involving clues (groups should be randomized to avoid exclusion).	
	Silent Puzzles	Have youth get into a line by their birth month without talking.	
Brain Breaks and Energizers	Smiles and High Fives	Have youth walk around the room and acknowledge each other with smiles and high fives.	

Practices	Activities	Example	Ideas for Your Program
	Catching Questions	<i>Each person writes down a question and throws his or her question to someone else to answer.</i>	
	Remember What You Learned	<i>Youth go around and share one thing they learned during the lesson or activity.</i>	
Responsibilities	Clean-Up Coordinator	<i>Assign or encourage youth to select duties to coordinate clean-up time.</i>	
	Timekeepers	<i>Assign youth (or encourage them to volunteer for) duties to manage program activities.</i>	
	Attendance	<i>Assign youth duties to sign participants in and out.</i>	
Closing	Checkout	<i>Have youth share one thing they enjoyed doing today and why.</i>	
	“Props”	<i>Youth share compliments with a peer on something they did during the program. This can be done in pairs or in a large group.</i>	

Community-Building Activities for Staff Members



In Chapter 4, you learned that it is important to put practices in place that will strengthen the relationships among staff members in your program. This not only ensures that they get along with each other but also builds a support system that ultimately strengthens the daily operations of the program.

Directions: *The following activities can be used during staff meetings, get-togethers, and other times that the staff members come together as a group to get to know each other and build a stronger sense of community in your program. As the community grows, solicit ideas from staff members and allow them to organize and lead activities.*

- “Getting to know you” questions. You can either add a “and why?” to the end of your question **or** you can instruct everyone **not** to explain their answer so that follow-up conversations can occur after the activity is over. Sample questions may include:
 - If you could have any super power, what would it be?
 - What is your favorite meal?
 - If you could be any animal what would it be?
 - Name one thing you love about yourself.
 - Describe your perfect day.
 - Who would you invite to your last meal? (The table only seats six.)
 - Name one person during your school-age years who had a big influence on you.
- Silent puzzles/problem solving
 - Charades (with topical themes)
 - Line up according to last name or birthday without talking
 - Everyone has a piece of a picture; put it together without any words
- Status update
 - Tweet of the day: Explain your day in 140 characters or less and share with the group.
 - Write a quick status update that explains your day.
 - P.I.E.S.: Write down how you feel Physically, Intellectually, Emotionally, and Spiritually and share with the group.
- Strangers no more: Sit next to someone you don’t know, don’t say anything to them, write down how you feel today and how your partner (the person next to you) is feeling (without asking them). Write down whether they were born in an urban/rural/suburban area, how many siblings they have, their favorite thing about their job, and so on. Introduce them to the group. Then the person shares what the person got right, if anything, and shares missing information.

- Each person writes down a question he or she wants answered on a piece of paper. Next, have each person crumple up his or her piece of paper into a ball and throw it to someone else. Take turns answering the questions. Go for as many rounds as time permits.
- Staff members should split into pairs and find three things that they have in common. Encourage pairs to find “uncommon commonalities”—that is, things that are not obvious. For example, a pair might discover that they both love the same pop singer or that they have a shared interest in painting. Pairs can then share what they learned with the larger group.
- “Rose and a thorn” at the end of the day. Everyone shares one positive thing that happened and one thing that could have gone better.
- At the beginning of an official meeting or training, allow time for silent reflection and focusing. While this is an independent activity, creating an atmosphere where your staff members can be quiet and contemplative with each other is important. This will also allow your staff members to fully engage during the meeting.

Recipe for Success



In Chapter 4, you learned about supporting positive behavior in programs. Creating a recipe for success with young people involves them in the process of setting behavior expectations and helps gain their buy-in.

Directions: *Creating a recipe for success can be as simple or as elaborate as you make it. Below are a few ideas to get you started, but feel free to exercise your creativity. This activity works well at the beginning of a new school year or program cycle to develop expectations that will last throughout the year, or at the beginning of a session or specific activity to last the duration of the session or activity.*

Basic Recipe for Success

- Gather together the group of youth you are working with and ask them to think about what they might need from each other to have a successful year, session, or activity.
- Depending on the age group you are working with, you can have them take turns writing down what they think of on a large piece of flip-chart paper, or you can have them take turns calling out what they think of and you can record their answers. Be sure to make yourself part of the group so that you can include things you think are important.
 - If the group has a hard time getting started, you might want to prompt them with things like listening to each other, waiting your turn to talk, keeping a positive attitude.
- Once the group has exhausted their ideas, review everything that was said. Provide time for any last-minute additions.
- Have everyone in the group, including you, agree to the things written on the flip-chart paper by signing their names. You can then hang the paper up in a prominent location as a reminder of the agreed-on expectations for the group.
- Refer back to the recipe for success throughout the year, session, or activity. Check in with young people about certain concepts that might be more abstract, such as keeping a positive attitude, and discuss what this looks like during the activity.

Variations for Creating a Recipe for Success

- **Pirate Map:** Create a pirate map before you meet with the young people in your program. The starting point should be the beginning of the year, session, or activity, and the treasure should signify the successful end of the year, session, or activity. The map can wind and twist and turn along the way. As with the basic directions above, have young people write on the map what they will need from the group to successfully reach the treasure.

- **Baking Cookies:** In this variation, you are creating an actual “recipe” for success. This works particularly well for elementary-age youth. As young people are calling out what they might need from the group to be successful, you can make a list with measurements (e.g., one cup of listening, two tablespoons of cooperation). When you have listed all of the ingredients, remind youth that when everything is mixed together they make delicious cookies.
- **Leaves on a Tree:** Use construction paper to cut out enough leaves for each of the young people to have at least one. Draw a large tree trunk on a piece of flip-chart paper. When you introduce the activity, have young people write down and/or draw what they will need from the group on their leaf. Once everyone is finished, have them present their leaf to the group and tape the leaf to the tree.
- **Puzzle Pieces:** Create a large puzzle ahead of time using cardboard. As with the leaves example above, each young person gets one piece of the puzzle on which to write down and/or draw what they will need from the group. Have everyone present what they wrote or drew and then have the group put the puzzle together. You can then stress the importance of each of their pieces in making the group successful.

Peer Consultation Process



In Chapter 4, you learned that even with a focus on setting an environment for positive behaviors, sometimes there are disruptions that need to be addressed. Giving young people a chance to talk through issues and come to mutually agreeable solutions will empower them to solve problems on their own and will create a safe environment for all youth.

Directions: *This process is designed to allow a group of people to discuss an issue in a productive, non-confrontational way. This can be an issue for one person, between two people, or among many in the group. The process has been successful with people of all ages, as it gives young people a chance for their*

voices to be heard, as well as allowing adults a forum for uninterrupted sharing. There are many variations on peer consultation (sometimes called mediation), so you should structure this in the way that works best for your program and youth who attend.

The Roles

The Coordinator/Timekeeper. In all cases, you should designate or let the group choose a coordinator or timekeeper. The coordinator/timekeeper will notify all involved of the start and end time of each two-minute segment. It is important for the group to not interrupt the individual as he or she is explaining the issue or problem, and a coordinator can be critically useful in reinforcing this.

The Consultant/Mediator. In some cases, you may also wish to have one person serve as the consultant/mediator. The individual or group will ask questions to clarify and resolve the issue and may lead the group in a brainstorming session for alternative solutions. It is possible to structure this so that the group acts as a coordinated mediator where everyone asks questions, but often it is helpful to have one person who facilitates the process.

The Listener(s). In some cases, you may wish to do this as a small group. If two young people have a disagreement, for example, it may be best for those two to work with a timekeeper, a consultant, and one objective listener to solve the problem. Sometimes setting up a safe zone (also known as a *mediation center* or *peace corner*) in the program space where youth can resolve these issues is beneficial. Other times, you may wish to go through this process as a larger group. In this case, you will likely have a group of listeners who will both listen and ask questions to help resolve the issue.

The Rules

- Use active listening to understand.
- Show respect when someone else is speaking by being silent and letting them finish.
- Remain objective. Describe what happened and how it made you feel.
- Use “I statements” to describe your feelings. For example, “I felt angry when you knocked me down during basketball.”

The Process

1 minute	Introduction	The timekeeper and consultant review the process and rules.
2 minutes	Sharing	The individual(s) with issue explain(s) the issue to the group (<i>group does not talk</i>). The individual(s) should explain their version of what happened and how it made them feel.
2 minutes	Clarifying and Additional Information	Group can ask individual(s) clarifying questions to fully understand the issue.
2 minutes	Defining the Issue	The consultant/mediator restates the issue and details as he or she understands it.
2 minutes	Brainstorming Solutions Part 1	The individual(s) describe any strategies they have used so far to resolve the issue and the reasons those strategies have not worked (<i>group does not talk</i>). The individual(s) may also describe any other strategies not yet tried that they think may solve the issue.
2 minutes	Brainstorming Solutions Part 2	Listeners may suggest alternative solutions that the individual(s) have not tried yet.
2 minutes	Selecting a Solution	The individual(s) may reflect on any strategies suggested by the listeners and discuss (one at a time) which solution is best for all parties. The individual(s) should think through which solutions are best, which solutions will not work and why, and whether a compromise is possible.
1 minute	Closing	The consultant/mediator should ask the individual(s) whether there is anything else they need and should thank them for participating in the process.

Peer Mediation Worksheet

1 minute Consultant	Introduction	
2 minutes Individual(s)	Sharing: Describe the issue and how it made you feel	
2 minutes Consultant, Individual(s), Listener(s)	Clarifying and Additional Information: Ask questions to understand.	
2 minutes Consultant	Defining the Issue: Restate the issue as you understand it.	
2 minutes Individual(s)	Brainstorming Solutions Part 1: Describe solutions that you have already tried.	
2 minutes Consultant, Individual(s), Listener(s)	Brainstorming Solutions Part 2: Suggest additional solutions that may resolve this issue.	
2 minutes Individual(s)	Selecting a Solution: What solutions will work, what will not, and is there a compromise?	
1 minute Consultant	Closing	

Structuring Activities for Skill-Building



In Chapter 4, you learned that a critical component of youth development involves structuring activities so that youth are building and reinforcing new skills. Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, and Schellinger (2011) have identified four common elements in afterschool and expanded learning programs that are most effective in developing skills. These elements or characteristics, dubbed the **SAFE** features, are:

S = Activities are sequenced

A = Learning is active

F = Activities are focused on developing personal and social skills

E = Activities explicitly target specific skills and outcomes

Directions: Use the worksheet below to develop or review program activity plans to ensure that they are **SAFE**. An example is provided below, followed by a template for your use.

Skill-Building Activity Worksheet – Example

Anger Management: Just Breathe	
Description: As part of working with youth to self-regulate individual and collective behavior, this activity will be used to introduce a culture of calm and weave it into the program.	
What skills will you develop by conducting this activity?	Youth will learn how to calm down when they are angry to reduce anxiety, stress, and conflicts. They will learn self-regulation strategies such as deep breathing, counting to 10, and self-talk. Youth will also learn to identify emotions and their causes.
What ages are appropriate for this activity?	All ages; can be modified as necessary for younger or older youth
How long will it take to complete this activity?	Introduction: 10 minutes Discussion: 10 minutes Planning: 10 minutes
What materials are required for this activity?	Bell or chime Tranquil music Space to role-play
Have the young people in your program had experience with this topic before? (This will help you know how best to conduct the activity!)	Many youth (but not all) attended a three-week anger management course by ABC Community Services during school time earlier in the year.

Anger Management: Just Breathe

SAFE Principles

Is the activity Sequenced? Is there a step-by-step approach for teaching the skill? Outline the process.	First, youth will discuss different situations that might make them angry or sad and the different reactions they might have to those feelings. Next, youth will engage in small group discussion about the cause and effect of different responses to anger and other negative emotions. Youth will then be introduced to different regulation strategies. They will begin with learning a deep breathing technique. In a large group everyone practices the breathing technique. Youth reflect or write down their experience. They will also discuss times when deep breathing is necessary, and they will share any tricks they use to calm down in their lives (and will record the results). Next they will learn a counting strategy, followed by self-talk strategies, and then engage in reflection and discussion. Next, youth will engage in role-play scenarios that could potentially evoke a negative response in the real world. Youth will role-play the scenario and practice using one of the regulation techniques they have just learned. Staff members will observe and provide feedback to all youth. Youth will discuss how it felt to engage with those strategies. Finally, youth and staff members will brainstorm ways to incorporate the various techniques into the program (e.g., every time the bell rings, stop and take a deep breath).
Is the activity Active? What opportunities will youth have to interact with and practice new skills? Describe those opportunities.	Youth learn an individual skill and come together to share feelings and coping strategies. All youth will engage in the practice of deep breathing, counting to 10, and self-talk. Youth will role-play situations in small groups where these strategies would be needed and discuss what it felt like to engage in self-regulation.
Is the activity Focused? Have you allotted specific time and attention for skill development? Describe when and how you will devote time to skill development.	This activity will take 30 minutes, and time has been allotted for this activity during the weekly program schedule.
Is the activity Explicit? Do youth know which skills they will be developing as a result of the activity? Identify the specific skills and describe a plan for sharing with youth.	Social and emotional competencies developed through this activity include self-management, emotion regulation, emotion identification, and understanding cause and effect. The instructor will first identify the goals of the activity and will then describe the skills that youth will work to develop. Youth will engage in small group discussion about the skills and goals of the activity.

Anger Management: Just Breathe

Integrating Skills Into Other Activities

Youth need opportunities to connect newly developed skills to other areas and real-world experiences.

Highlight other areas of programming where these new skills can be embedded and further developed.

This activity will result in strategies to reinforce self-regulation techniques throughout programming. Use these strategies when youth are feeling stress, if a conflict arises, or after playing an energizing game in the gym.

This activity can be tied to science lessons on anatomy and bodily responses (e.g., how the heart works, why deep breathing calms us down).

Youth can read about different figures in history who have practiced self-restraint and peace.

Skill-Building Activity Worksheet – Template

[Name of Activity Here]

Description

What skills will you develop by conducting this activity?

What ages are appropriate for this activity?

How long will it take to complete this activity?

What materials are required for this activity?

Have the young people in your program had experience with this topic before? (This will help you know how best to conduct the activity!)

[Name of Activity Here]	
SAFE Principles	
Is the activity Sequenced? Is there a step-by-step approach for teaching the skill? Outline the process.	
Is the activity Active? What opportunities will youth have to interact with and practice new skills? Describe those opportunities.	
Is the activity Focused? Have you allotted specific time and attention for skill development? Describe when and how you will devote time to skill development.	
Is the activity Explicit? Do youth know which skills they will be developing as a result of the activity? Identify the specific skills and describe a plan for sharing with youth.	
Integrating Skills Into Other Activities	
Youth need opportunities to connect newly developed skills to other areas and real-world experiences. Highlight other areas of programming where these new skills can be embedded and further developed.	

Sample Activity Planner



In Chapters 2 and 4, you learned that making and having a plan for program activities is key not only to smooth implementation but also to integration of youth development principles and intentionally supporting participants' engagement, learning, and development.

Directions: This sample activity planner integrates all of the program delivery practices described in Chapter 4. Staff members can use this planner or modify as needed. We recommend that staff members complete the activity planner at least once for each activity. After trying the activity out, use the reflection questions to adapt and revise.

Logistics

1. Activity name:

2. Staff member(s) and youth leader(s) facilitating the activity:

3. Duration of activity (number of sessions/weeks/days/hours):

4. Supplies/materials/space required:

5. Ages/grades of participants:

6. Number of participants:

Content Area (check all that apply, but circle the primary content area)

☐ Creative arts	☐ Health and wellness	☐ STEM	☐ Personal and social skills
☐ Sports and recreation	☐ Service learning	☐ Tutoring	☐ Homework help
☐ Literacy	☐ Other, please specify:		

Youth Development Principles

Briefly describe how you will structure the activity to intentionally incorporate core youth development principles.

- **Warm and Welcoming Environment** (*e.g., icebreakers, welcomes, and introduction to both the activity and the participants*):

- **Supportive Relationships and Opportunities to Belong** (*e.g., identity development and structuring of groups*):

- **Support Positive Behaviors:**

- **Youth Choice** (*e.g., choices within and across activities*):

- **Authentic Decision-Making:**

- **Youth Leadership:**

- **Time for Reflection:**

Description

Describe your activity in detail. Be sure to include details about what participants will be doing, what the staff member will be doing, and how you will break up your time. Be sure to make this clear and specific enough that another person could read it and be able to implement that activity:

Activity Structure to Support Skill Development

Describe how the activity will meet the SAFE (Sequenced, Active, Focused, and Explicit) criteria:

Sequenced:

Active:

Focused:

Explicit:

Outcomes/Connections

List the intended outcomes of the activity (what knowledge you hope youth will learn or what skills you hope they will develop):

Describe if/how the activity intentionally supports the participants' academic learning:

Is this activity linked to other activities? Which ones and how?

Reflection

How did the activity go?

What did you learn?

What would you do in the future?

Would you share this activity with other afterschool and expanded learning programs?

Youth Preference Survey



In Chapter 4, you learned that using youth surveys can help you intentionally develop activities and programming. This sample youth survey can support intentional decision-making when designing your program by identifying what youth are looking for, what they would enjoy, and how you can connect this information to your programming.

Directions: You may use or adapt this survey to determine young people’s programming preferences for your program. Feel free to add or edit questions or response options as necessary for your program. Make multiple copies of the survey; ask teachers to distribute and collect it during homeroom period or at another convenient time, and have program staff members distribute it during the opening activities.

Survey of Youth Program Preferences

We need **your** help! We want to create an afterschool and expanded learning program that is exciting and useful for you. Please answer the following questions about your opinions and ideas for program activities. If you would like to get even more involved in planning afterschool activities or being a club officer, ask your teacher for more information about our program.

1. Please check the sentence that *best* describes your feelings about attending an afterschool and expanded learning program at our school. (Check one.)

☐ I already participate in afterschool and expanded learning activities at our school.

What activities do you participate in?

☐ I would be interested in going to an afterschool and expanded learning program at our school, but I don’t go right now.

☐ I have other responsibilities after school and could not go to an afterschool and expanded learning program at our school.

☐ I would not be interested in going to an afterschool and expanded learning program at our school.

2. What kinds of activities would you like to do after school? (Rank your top five choices from 1 to 5, with 1 as your top choice.) Feel free to add your own ideas.

_____ Academic content areas

☐ English language arts

☐ Math

_____ Homework help

_____ Tutoring

_____ Computer/technology skills

_____ Creative arts

_____ Healthy living

_____ Other, please specify: _____

☐ Science/science, technology, engineering, math (STEM)

☐ History/social studies

_____ Social and emotional well-being

_____ Sports

_____ Physical fitness

_____ Service learning

_____ Cultural appreciation and diversity

3. What are some ways you would like to get involved in the afterschool and expanded learning program? (Check all that apply.)

☐ Deciding what programs to offer

☐ Advertising the program

☐ Planning afterschool activities

☐ Being a club officer

☐ Your idea:

☐ I am not interested in getting involved.

If you checked "not interested," please explain why:

4. Which types of “advertisements” would convince you and your friends to participate in afterschool and expanded learning activities? (Check all that apply.)

- ☐ Student-designed posters around your school
- ☐ Flyers mailed home
- ☐ Social media updates (Facebook, Twitter)
- ☐ Presentations by youth who are in the program
- ☐ Articles about the program in the school newspaper
- ☐ Daily announcements about the program (read by an adult)
- ☐ Daily announcements about the program (read by a young person)
- ☐ Rewards—such as homework passes, gift certificates, or other treats—for youth who regularly attend activities
- ☐ Your idea:

- ☐ Your idea:

Your Name (please print): _____

Your Homeroom Teacher or
Room Number (if applicable): _____

Thank you.

Intentional Activities



In Chapters 2 and 4, you learned that being intentional in the delivery of afterschool and expanded learning activities means selecting age-appropriate activities, making consistent and fair rules, developing lesson plans with clear goals and intended youth outcomes, and including reflection as a key component of activities. When activities are intentional, youth will experience more positive outcomes (e.g., improved academic success, communication, and skill development).

Directions: In the left column, list the activities (e.g., academic enrichment, games, tutoring/homework help, physical activity) or project (e.g., mural, science, garden, service learning) offered by your program. In the middle column, list the rationale for the activity (e.g., youth interests, community needs, learning, or even fun). Finally, in the right column indicate how the activity will help participants achieve positive outcomes.

Activity or Project	Rationale for This Activity (e.g., to support youth learning, to apply academics to the real world, to experience learning)	Intentional Outcomes for Youth (e.g., social skills, positive development, emotional competencies)
<i>Example: Public Mural Project</i>	1. Apply academics to real world 2. Community development 3. Decision-making (what to paint based on the strengths in the community) 4. Exercise youth voice	1. Math (graphing) 2. Sense of belonging 3. Research and leadership skills 4. Youth voices heard in the community
	1. 2. 3. 4.	1. 2. 3. 4.
	1. 2. 3. 4.	1. 2. 3. 4.
	1. 2. 3. 4.	1. 2. 3. 4.

Connections to Learning



In Chapter 4, you learned about the variety of programming you can offer in afterschool and expanded learning programs and got some ideas of what types of programs to offer. One of the most important things a program can do is make learning fun and engaging and build academic content into a range of program types.

Directions: This tool provides some examples of how you can integrate academic content and connections to various disciplines into several common afterschool and expanded learning programs. These are just suggestions to get your creative juices flowing. Use these or come up with your own. There are many ways to bring academic content or concepts into fun, engaging afterschool and expanded learning programs.

How Can I Make the Connection to Learning...				
	In Math?	In English Language Arts?	In Science?	In History?
Art projects	Geometry through mosaics	Illustrating stories	Eye science	Art history
Comic book design	Plotting the story on graph paper	Writing text to accompany illustrations	Illustrating a scientific concept	History of comics
Gardening	Planning space for garden	Reading about plant care	How things grow	WWII victory gardens
Cooking	Measuring ingredients	Reading recipes	How ingredients interact	History of certain foods or cultures
Journalism	Calculating subscriptions	Writing stories, editing, reading	Environmental monitor	The history of newspaper
School store	Budgeting	Creating flyers	Selling equipment related to science class	Economic history
Theater	Calculating ticket sales	Reading or writing a script	A play about a famous scientist	Read historical plays
Photography	Shutter speeds	Photojournalism	Film developing	Use of photography during wartime
Baseball	Baseball statistics	Reading stories of famous players	Effect of wind speed on the game	History of the sport

Academic Enrichment Activity Planning Tool



In Chapter 4, you learned that academic enrichment activities and projects (sometimes referred to as embedded learning) present academic concepts in ways that differ greatly from traditional school day instruction.

Directions: Use this tool to plan your academic enrichment activities or projects to make sure they meet academic learning goals and also to present information in a way that draws on recommended youth development practices. Staff members can reference **Tool 53: Aligning With Learning Standards** to help strengthen the connections between the activity or project and explicit learning outcomes.

Activity Name

Give the activity or project a name.

Description of the Activity

Provide a general overview of the activity.

Desired Outcomes for This Activity

List the desired learning outcomes from the activity. Be sure to address which academic standards will be strengthened by the activity or project. Also list the various skills and competencies that will be explicitly targeted. Plan your academic enrichment activities based on participants' academic needs, social needs, and interests. For example, two possible goals for a business development activity might be:

- *Example: Improve arithmetic skills (budgeting, making change)*
- *Example: Encourage youth to use creativity in advertising (research marketing strategies)*

Is This an Enrichment Activity?

Check the appropriate boxes below for the activity you have chosen:

- ☐ The activity integrates academic content.
- ☐ The activity links to subjects youth are currently studying.
- ☐ The activity teaches academic concepts through methods that differ from typical school day instruction.
- ☐ The academic learning happens as an intrinsic part of a fun, engaging activity.
- ☐ The activity encourages youth to apply the learning they are doing to their own experience or to witness how academic concepts are used in real-life situations.
- ☐ The activity encourages youth to take on leadership roles.
- ☐ The activity promotes positive relationships among youth (across different ages) and between youth and caring adults.

The more boxes you have checked, the more likely it is that the activity can be characterized as an academic enrichment activity. If you believe that this activity does not promote academic enrichment, use the space below to describe how it could be modified to do so.

What Is the Academic Content of This Activity?

In the space below, describe how this activity encourages youth to apply and deepen understanding of academic concepts. The following prompts may help you get started.

- Is the academic content intrinsic to the activity, or could it be removed without affecting the activity?
- Is the learning explicitly aligned to the Common Core State Standards and local learning standards by grade level?
- How does the activity make the academic content relevant, interesting, or fun for youth?
- Is the content appropriate for the age and abilities of youth?

What Opportunities Does This Activity Present for Authentic Decision-Making?

In the space below, describe how this activity presents youth with authentic decision-making opportunities. The following prompts may help you get started.

- How are youth encouraged to take ownership of the activity?
- Do youth make real decisions with real outcomes?
- How do these decisions have a demonstrable impact on youth experience?
- Are the decision-making aspects of the activity age appropriate?
- How do you provide insight or feedback to help drive the activity?
- What are some ways in which the opportunities for authentic decision-making in this activity could be strengthened?

What Opportunities for Youth Leadership Does This Activity Present?

In the space below, describe how this activity provides the potential for youth leadership. The following prompts may help you get started.

- Are there particular roles available for youth? What are they?
- Are youth given the opportunity to take responsibility for their part of the activity?
- Does the activity encourage the opportunity for rotating leadership roles equitably with all participants?
- Has any part of the activity been influenced by youth input?
- What are some ways in which the potential for youth leadership in this activity could be strengthened?

How Does This Activity Create Strong Relationships?

In the space below, describe how this activity helps to develop strong relationships between youth and staff members and among youth. The following prompts may help you get started.

- How does the activity encourage cooperation and teamwork?
- What grouping strategies are used to establish a culture of inclusion?
- How does the activity encourage the development of strong relationships?
- Are youth exposed to positive role models other than staff members?
- Are the relationships created during the program ongoing and long term?
- Do adults in the program show that they are invested in the growth of specific youth? How?
- Are both strong youth-adult and peer relationships developed by the activity?
- What are some ways in which the development of relationships in this activity could be strengthened?

Additional Notes

Use this space to reflect on how the activity has gone in the past and list suggestions and strategies for improvement.

Staff Development Tool on Recreational Activities



In Chapter 4, you learned that recreational activities play an important role in promoting healthful, active lifestyles for youth. Recreational activities that incorporate physical fitness or movement can encourage positive values, improve social skills, teach responsibility, and promote lifelong healthy habits.

Directions: Staff members can use this tool in conjunction with **Tool 71: Sample Activity Planner** to develop high-quality recreational programs. For each activity being offered, answer the questions to help your program meet the characteristics of high-quality recreational activities listed below.

Characteristics of High-Quality Recreational Activities

- They offer a variety of fun, age-appropriate, and culturally relevant activities based on community interest.
- They create a sense of belonging for youth (i.e., activities are developed to eliminate isolation and comparison of youth).
- They have fair and consistent rules.
- They are challenging but positive.
- They promote physical as well as social and emotional development.
- They promote youth development (e.g., staff members build on the strengths and address the developmental needs of youth, and teach youth positive self-talk).
- They are run by positive, enthusiastic staff members who actively participate in the activities.
- They focus on teamwork and leadership rather than competition.
- They allow youth opportunities to lead and coach.

1. Is the activity age appropriate and culturally relevant? In what ways?

2. How will you make the activity fun?

3. How will you create a sense of belonging for youth? How will you foster inclusion and a positive environment in the program?

4. In what ways is your activity challenging?

5. In what ways do you promote teamwork? A positive attitude?

6. Describe your program's rules. Are they fair and consistent?

7. How do you promote physical development in your program?

8. How do you promote social and emotional development in your program?

9. What experience do program staff members have? Who will be the lead staff member? How do staff members get involved in the program?

10. What opportunities do you provide for youth to lead or coach?

Assessment of Recreational Needs, Resources, and Space



In Chapter 4, you learned that it is important to take your program's available space and resources into account when developing your recreational activities.

Directions: Use this tool to compare your recreational needs with your available resources and space. Then consider ways to address your needs.

Recreational Activity	Space/Resources Needed	Space/Resources Available	Ideas to Address Remaining Needs
<i>Example:</i> Youth in the program want to start a marching corps.	<i>Space: Large space, outdoors during fall and spring, but indoors in the winter</i> <i>Resources: Music and batons</i>	<i>Space: Program has outdoor space</i> <i>Resources: iPod and the theater speakers for music</i>	<i>The local high school may allow us to use the gym on their off days. We will work with youth to organize a fundraiser to buy batons.</i>
	Space: Resources:	Space: Resources:	
	Space: Resources:	Space: Resources:	
	Space: Resources:	Space: Resources:	

Community Inventory for Service Learning



In Chapter 4, you learned that service learning can help improve youth academic success, develop a sense of civic responsibility, and support connections to the community. Identifying the needs in your community can help you develop service learning activities that are beneficial for youth while also providing an important service to the community.

Directions: Youth, in partnership with adult advisors, should read the following list of topic areas and put a check next to the ones they believe are priorities in your community or in your school. Then have them circle the three issues they believe are most important or are of most interest and list them below. Finally,

youth and their advisors should brainstorm ideas for projects or community partners based on these needs.

Cultural

☐ Cross-cultural communication	☐ Other cultural issues
☐ Supporting recognition of cultural connections in the community	

Education

☐ High-quality early childhood education	☐ Ninth-grade transition
☐ Afterschool and expanded learning programming	☐ Other educational issues
☐ High school completion	

Employment

☐ Youth employment	☐ Job training
☐ Building the local workforce	☐ Other employment issues

Environment

☐ Recycling	☐ Community gardening
☐ Parks/green space	☐ Other environmental issues
☐ Neighborhood beautification	

Health

☐ Access to health care	☐ Nutrition
☐ Prenatal care	☐ Other health issues
☐ Substance abuse prevention	

Recreation

☐ Access to open space	☐ Sports and recreation opportunities for youth
☐ Fitness for adults	☐ Other recreation issues

Safety

- ☐ Access to safe facilities
- ☐ Public transportation
- ☐ Community policing
- ☐ Streetlights
- ☐ Other safety issues

Social Services

- ☐ High-quality child care
- ☐ High-quality senior care and services
- ☐ Support for families living in poverty
- ☐ Other social services issues

Top Three Issues

Issue/Topic	Possible Program Partners	Possible Project Ideas
1.		
2.		
3.		

Service Learning Project Development



In Chapter 4, you learned that service learning is an activity that promotes many of the youth development principles (e.g., connection with the community) and practices (e.g., youth decision-making, leadership, and reflection). Staff members can use service learning activities or projects to help improve youth academic achievement, develop their leadership skills, strengthen ties to the community, and provide real-life experience.

Directions: Use this template in partnership with youth to design a service learning project. There are a variety of ways to come up with a service learning project. You can use the *Community Inventory for Service Learning (Tool 78)*. We

also suggest identifying your service learning project through a youth-led asset mapping activity (**Tool 34**) or conducting a youth-researched market analysis (**Tool 15**) or a needs assessment (**Tool 35**). Ideally, youth should drive the development of the activity. Younger youth may need additional support to complete this template. Staff members should provide support and guidance throughout the process.

Service Learning Project Plan

Project Name: _____

Subject Area/Grade Level: _____

Purpose of the Project: _____

Provide a short description of the service learning project and issue that will be addressed:

Task	What Is Needed?	Resources Available?	Strategies/Action Steps	Who Is Responsible?
Scheduling the service project (i.e., logistics)				
Permission process (e.g., parents, release time)				
Transportation (i.e., how youth will get to service site)				
Identifying needs of community				
Outreach to community partner				
Documentation of service project (i.e., hours spent, credit)				
Safety/risk management				
Fundraising (e.g., for additional activities)				
Other				

Academic Goals

List the academic subject area(s) and corresponding learning standard(s) that the project will address.

Civic Goals

List the knowledge, skills, and competencies that will be emphasized in the project.

Youth Voice and Choice

What opportunities for youth to take on leadership roles exist for this project?

Timeline

How much time will you need to complete this project? Develop a detailed timeline with a clear start and end date and milestones along the way. Make sure to give the project enough time to make progress and see the results of your work.

Start date:

Milestone 1:

Milestone 2:

Milestone 3:

Milestone 4:

End date:

Celebrating Your Project Through a Culminating Event

How will you celebrate the achievement when the project is done? How will you involve and celebrate the community?

Reflection

How you will you reflect on and share your growth at the conclusion of this project?

Evaluation

How you will you evaluate the success of the project, including progress toward expected goals and outcomes for the community?

Homework Help Tool



In Chapter 4, you learned about the difference between homework help and tutoring. Providing structured and intentional homework help activities for youth will help youth complete their homework assignments as well as develop the skills and content knowledge to complete assignments independently in the future.

Directions: Consider these tips, based on the suggestions of the homework expert Dr. Harris Cooper, when designing homework help activities for your program. After reviewing the tips in each category, use the prompts to think about how to improve your own homework help activities.

Homework Help Tips

Environment

- The program sets aside time for the completion of homework assignments and provides a schedule for when the homework can be completed. (This time can run simultaneously with other program activities.)
- The program sets aside space for the completion of homework assignments in a clearly marked area away from other competing activities. Only homework is done in this space, and youth can enter only once.
- The program provides materials (such as paper, pencils, calculators, and computers) that are needed for the successful completion of assignments. It also provides tools (such as reference works, study guides, and test preparation materials) to support independent learning.
- The program creates a learning environment that supports both independent and group learning during homework time.
- The program provides study or learning opportunities for youth who do not have homework or who already have completed their assignments. Possibilities include high-interest reading materials, test study groups, test practice areas, mathematics games, and art materials.

How can we improve the *environment* of our homework help sessions?

Staffing

- Staff members view homework as an important element within an active learning environment. They have the necessary training to understand the importance of adult roles meant to motivate, mentor, and monitor the homework process.
- Staff members have the skills needed to assist youth with proper homework behavior. They have had training on techniques such as mentoring and the use of basic reference materials.
- Staff members are trained in techniques for helping with homework, study skills that can be taught to youth, and basic test-taking techniques.
- Additional non-staff resources are available to assist with homework assignments, including cross-age, peer, and adult volunteer tutors.

How can we improve the *staffing* of our homework help sessions?

Youth Development

- The program seeks to develop youth study skills in a time separate from that used for homework. Staff members teach assignment tracking, how to use resource materials, or other topics.
- The program includes training in time management skills for youth.
- The program fosters self-direction, self-discipline, inquisitiveness, and independent problem solving.
- The program teaches youth when and how to seek assistance.

How can we incorporate more *youth development* practices into our homework help sessions?

Links Between School and Home

- The program has mechanisms (such as homework or learning contracts and logs) that help youth focus their attention on academic tasks.
- The program uses homework to facilitate communication among youth, teachers, and families. It encourages the sharing of information about successes and problem areas.

How can we improve the *links between home and school* in our homework help sessions?

Adapted from *Homework in the Afterschool Program*, by Harris Cooper, Ph.D. (2005). Reprinted with permission.

Homework Sharing Tool



In Chapter 4, you learned that homework help and tutoring activities are often an integral part of afterschool and expanded learning programs. Providing a dedicated time and space for youth to receive help on their schoolwork can help youth improve their academic performance. Creating opportunities for school day teachers and afterschool and expanded learning program staff members to share information and keep track of youth's work can facilitate this goal.

Directions: This form can be used by the school day teacher and program staff members to share information about an individual's homework assignments and study habits. For each homework assignment, the teacher fills out the information in the left column and gives the form to the program staff member. After assisting youth, the program staff member fills out the information in the right column and returns the form to the teacher. Youth complete the section at the bottom. For younger youth, the staff member can help them with what to include in their section.

Note: This form is an example of the kind of information teachers and program staff members can share. It may not be realistic to expect a teacher to complete this form every day for every youth in the afterschool and expanded learning program. Instead, use it periodically to establish a relationship between teachers and staff members or adapt it to a form that teachers are willing to complete daily.

Homework Information Form

Youth Name:	Date:
Teacher Name:	Afterschool and Expanded Learning Staff Member Name:
Completed by Teacher	Completed by Afterschool and Expanded Learning Staff Member
The homework for today is:	This young person: ☐ Completed the homework easily and independently ☐ Had difficulty understanding what was asked in the homework ☐ Had difficulty completing the homework ☐ Had difficulty focusing on the assignment Comments:

Please pay special attention to:	This young person required: ☐ No help with the assignment ☐ A little help ☐ Moderate help ☐ A great deal of help Comments:
This homework should take _____ minutes to complete.	The homework took _____ minutes to complete.
Completed by Youth	
This homework was: ☐ Easy ☐ Just right ☐ Hard	I have questions about:

Staff Member Signature: _____ Youth Initials: _____

Tutoring Log



In Chapter 4, you learned about tutoring activities in afterschool and expanded learning programs. Documenting the sessions that a tutor completes with youth is an important component of information sharing for school day teachers and program staff members who also work with youth.

Directions: The form on the following page can be used by the afterschool and expanded learning tutor to record information about his or her work with an individual youth over time. During each tutoring session, record what the young person studies and accomplishes. In the “Notes” column, include areas in which the young person needs work, successes experienced, or any other pertinent information. In the last column, ask youth (grades 3–12) to write down an accomplishment or a question or concern. For K–3 youth, ask them for their ideas and write them in the column for them.

This log can be used throughout a semester or program session to capture progress and to serve as a record of what a young person is studying. It should be shared with classroom teachers periodically. Classroom teachers can complete the bottom section with questions, notes, and additional areas in which the young person should concentrate.

Tutoring Log

Youth Name: _____ Tutor Name: _____

Date	Subjects/Topics Studied	Work Accomplished	Notes	Youth Comments

Teacher Notes

Date Questions/Areas for Additional Focus

Determining Your Evaluation Purpose Worksheet



In Chapter 5, you learned that it is crucial to determine the purpose and scope of your evaluation very early on in the process. You need to decide what is important and relevant to you and your stakeholders, as well as understand what is feasible. Framing a clear and concise evaluation purpose will help you decide who will perform the evaluation, help you develop evaluation questions, and help you set up a data collection system.

Directions: Gather together a working group of staff members who are familiar with how the program is currently managed and also how it currently conducts evaluation activities. Use the worksheet on the following pages to guide

discussion. Jot notes down in the space provided and use the answers to move toward a clear and concise evaluation purpose.

Connecting Developmental Stage of Program to Appropriate Evaluation Activities		
<i>This table provides some recommendations for what type of evaluation activities and goals you might have at each stage of your program's development. Identify where your program is in its developmental lifecycle and review the suggested evaluation purpose and activities for ideas. This is a starting point to help you as you discuss the questions below.</i>		
Program Stage	Characteristics of Program	Suggested Evaluation Purpose
New Program	Your program is at "square one," because it either has just been started or has been substantially changed.	The program should begin developing data collection procedures on a small set of targeted measures. The evaluation purpose should focus on program activities, outputs, short-term outcomes, and participant satisfaction in order to assess program implementation. Methods might include end-of-program surveys, monitoring enrollment and participation rates, program quality observations, focus groups, and interviews with key people in the program.
Developing Program	You have implemented your program successfully for one or two years. Though some or most of your program elements are being implemented consistently, you are still experiencing change.	The evaluation purpose should focus on changes in outcomes that might be associated with the program as well as continue to monitor implementation. Methods could include pre- and post- surveys, comparing outcome indicators (such as attendance, behavior, school connectedness) before and after participation to identify trends and begin to determine whether (but not prove) positive changes are associated with the program.
Mature Program	You have implemented your program successfully and consistently for more than one or two years. Participants' activities, experiences, and responses are consistent across sessions. The afterschool and expanded learning program has formal procedures, protocols, and lesson plans in place, and these are followed consistently by staff. Mature programs might also be implemented across multiple sites.	The evaluation purpose should focus on the effectiveness or impact of the program, investigating whether the program caused intended outcomes. Methods include statistical controls, comparison groups, or experimental/quasi-experimental procedures.

Evaluation Purpose Worksheet

Evaluation Goal	
1	What is your goal for the evaluation? <i>For example, is your goal to gather data that will help you to improve the program, or to report on the effectiveness of your program to stakeholders? Or is your goal a combination of both?</i>

Funder and Stakeholder Interests	
1	What do your funders require you to report? What type of evaluation are you obligated to conduct? <i>Funders will have priorities regarding which program elements they want to be evaluated, and what kind of information is useful and credible to them.</i>
2	Which stakeholders have an interest in your evaluation activities or results? Are there any outcomes that multiple stakeholders have a keen interest in? <i>The evaluation purpose should focus on the outcomes with the most stakeholder interest to ensure the findings are useful and relevant to their needs.</i>

Evaluation Capacity	
1	What financial resources are available for the evaluation? <i>If the budget available for the evaluation is small, this limits the scope and purpose of the evaluation. External evaluation generally requires more financial resources than internal evaluation.</i>
2	Which staff members can contribute to the evaluation? What formal or informal evaluation expertise do those staff members have (e.g., survey design, research methods, statistical/data analysis)? <i>If staff expertise is limited, you may want to limit the scope of your evaluation or consider contracting with an outside evaluator.</i>
3	How much time can these staff members provide? <i>If staff members cannot dedicate substantial time and energy to the evaluation, you may want to limit the scope of your evaluation or consider contracting with an outside evaluator.</i>
4	What information do you already have or collect? What data collection processes do you currently use (e.g., attendance sheets, satisfaction surveys, web-based tracking system)? What data elements would you like to collect as part of an evaluation? <i>For instance, if you don't currently collect data on participant satisfaction it will be difficult to focus your evaluation purpose on the participants' responses to the program. Alternatively, you could develop a data collection tool and start collecting these data.</i>

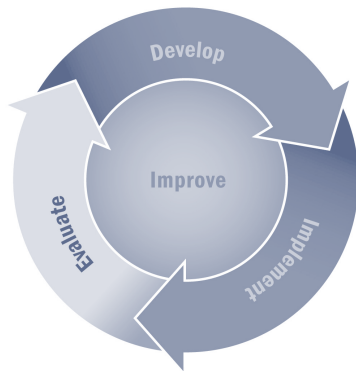
Evaluation Capacity	
5	Which elements of your program are most critical (revisit your logic model, Tool 40, and your theory of change, Tool 39, to identify the program elements that are most likely to contribute to improve youth outcomes). Do you have data regarding these elements? <i>For example, if attendance is the most important output of your logic model, then having data on attendance will help you to determine whether your goals are being achieved.</i>

Now What? After discussing the questions with your evaluation planning team, you should have a better sense of what your evaluation purpose and priorities are. You may now be able to make decisions about the following questions:

- *Should we use an external evaluator?*
- *Will we conduct a formative or summative evaluation?*
- *Are we using a comparison group?*
- *What is our primary evaluation purpose?*

As you answer these questions and finalize your plans, craft a purpose statement that you can share with potential evaluators so you can be sure they understand your goals and can help you develop an evaluation plan that makes sense for your program.

Indicators for Program Goals



In Chapter 5, you learned that identifying indicators is a critical step in assessing whether your program is meeting its goals. Choosing indicators that relate directly to your program's goals will ensure that you can measure your program's progress and can identify activities to help achieve these goals.

Directions: Use this tool to develop indicators for your goals. After you have agreed on goals, identify a set of indicators for each goal and answer the questions about each one. Then assign activities that lead to the eventual achievement of the goals. This order should be followed carefully. An example of a completed form is on the next page and a template that you can use is on the page that follows.

Goal and Indicator Alignment Table – Example

Goals*	Possible Indicators	Questions to Ask About Each Indicator				Activities
		Is This Indicator Relevant?	Will This Indicator Provide Sufficient Information?	What Data Sources Are Available for This Indicator?	Is This Indicator Quantifiable?	
Improve youth achievement in mathematics	Mathematics grades improve	Yes	Yes	• Report cards • Test scores	Yes	1. Homework help session 2. Family math 3. Chess club
	Teachers report that youth now have homework in on time and correct	Yes	Yes	• Teacher survey	Yes	4. Computer-based math activities 5. Peer-tutoring group
	Youth report that they better understand math assignments	Yes	Yes	• Youth survey	Yes	
	Youth enjoy math more than before	Yes	Yes	• Youth report • Teacher observation	Maybe	
	Fewer youth are in remedial sections of math	Yes	Yes	• Office records	Yes	

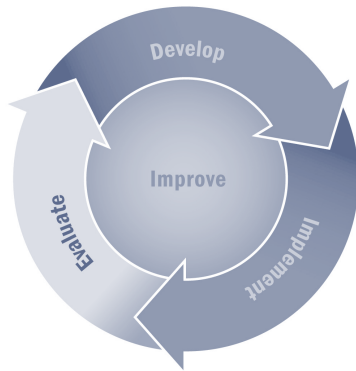
****Use your Tool 37: Goal Setting Worksheet** and insert those goals here.

Goal and Indicator Alignment Table – Template

Goals*	Possible Indicators	Questions to Ask About Each Indicator				Activities
		Is This Indicator Relevant?	Will This Indicator Provide Sufficient Information?	What Data Sources Are Available for This Indicator?	Is This Indicator Quantifiable?	

* Insert your goals from **Tool 37: Goal Setting Worksheet** here.

Program Observation Tools



In Chapter 6, you learned that it is a good idea to monitor the quality of your program using some kind of observation tool. Using an observation tool can be a good way to capture information about your activities that you can then share with your staff to celebrate success and encourage improvement.

Directions: Program observation is typically part of a larger quality improvement system. Although there are many observational assessments available for programs to use, the tools included in this document are some of the most common in the field, and all meet a set of criteria: They are research-based, are appropriate for a variety of program settings, and focus on the interactions

among people in the program. Many of the tools are available for free, but are most useful when implemented as part of a larger quality improvement process that includes professional development, coaching, and a consistent focus on using data to drive improvement. The tools listed below were included in a review of commonly used program quality assessments in afterschool and expanded learning settings (Yohalem & Wilson-Alhstrom, 2009). In addition to reviewing the following information, we recommend visiting the developers' websites to find new and updated versions of the tools.

Common Tools

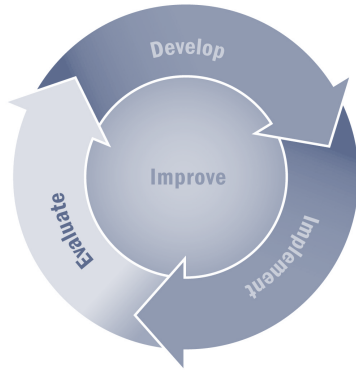
- [Assessing Afterschool Program Practices Tool \(APT\)](#)
National Institute on Out-of-School Time and Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education
- [Out-of-School Time Observation Tool \(OST\)](#)
Policy Studies Associates, Inc.
- [Program Quality Observation Scale \(PQO\)](#)
Deborah Lowe Vandell and Kim Pierce
- [Program Quality Self-Assessment Tool \(QSA\)](#)
New York State Afterschool Network
- [Promising Practices Rating Scale \(PPRS\)](#)
Wisconsin Center for Education Research and Policy Studies Associates, Inc.
- [Quality Assurance System® \(QAS\)](#)
Foundations, Inc.
- [School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale \(SACERS\)](#)
Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute and Concordia University, Montreal
- [Youth Program Quality Assessment \(YPQA\)](#)
David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality

Target Age and Purpose

	Program Target Age	Primary Purpose			Target Users		Data Collection Methods			
		Improvement	Monitoring/ Accreditation	Research/ Evaluation	Program Staff	External Observers	Observation	Interview	Questionnaire	Document Review
	Grades Served									
Assessing Afterschool Program Practices Tool (APT)	Grades K–8	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	
Out-of-School Time Observation Tool (OST)	Grades K–12			✓		✓	✓			
Program Quality Observation Scale (PQO)	Grades 1–5			✓		✓	✓			
Program Quality Self-Assessment Tool (QSA)	Grades K–12	✓			✓		✓			✓
Promising Practices Rating Scale (PPRS)	Grades K–8			✓		✓	✓			
Quality Assurance System® (QAS)	Grades K–12	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS)	Grades K–6	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA)	Grades 4–12	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		

Adapted with permission from: Yohalem, N., & Wilson-Alhstrom, A. (2009). *Measuring youth program quality: A guide to assessment tools, second edition*. Washington, DC: The Forum for Youth Investment.

External Evaluator Questions and Worksheet



In Chapter 5, you learned that finding an external evaluator that is a good fit for you and your program is critical for conducting an evaluation that is useful for you. Interviewing potential evaluators and asking key questions will help you choose an evaluator that is right for you.

Directions: When considering an external evaluator, use the following general guidelines and ask the following questions, filling in relevant program-specific elements where necessary. Then use the worksheet on the pages that follow when meeting with potential external evaluators.

General Guidelines

1. Look for experience in evaluations generally and in your program type specifically.
2. Look for a research base that informs the evaluator's strategies.
3. Look for attitudes regarding evaluation that suggest compatibility with your program, evaluation goals, and organizational dynamics.

General Questions

- What is your general experience in evaluation?
- What is your general experience with afterschool and expanded learning programs?
- What is your knowledge base about programs like ours? About youth or stakeholders like ours?
- How do you ensure that the evaluation plan is nonintrusive to partners and youth?
- We want to know X about our program. Have you answered this type of question before for other programs?
- What evaluation approaches do you think are relevant to our situation? What evaluation approaches do you recommend in these kinds of circumstances?
- What do you consider to be characteristics of a strong evaluation? A weak evaluation?

Specific Questions on Evaluator Functioning

Generally you contract with the evaluator, who provides a cost estimate for services that the two of you have discussed. As to how these services get done, certain aspects may be less relevant. For example, does it really matter if the evaluator sends data out to be entered or does it himself or herself? You do have every right, however, to know how the evaluations are staffed to ensure that the individual components are being conducted by qualified personnel. To influence your decision, you might want to ask the following questions:

- How many staff members work for you?
- How do you structure the work?

These questions can lead to other questions regarding who does what and how hands-on the evaluator will be. Will the evaluator have more of a management role in the evaluation and delegate work to lower level staff? Or will the evaluator do most of the tasks himself or herself? If you are working with a larger organization, you can expect the former, which can end up being more cost-effective for you. The evaluator may delegate the work, but he or she is your contractor and the quality-assurance funnel that everything goes through before it gets to you. If you're working with an independent consultant, chances are that he or she will be much more hands-on in the work, although it's likely that tasks such as data entry and routine analysis will be delegated to administrative staff members or other service providers.

- Do you sub-contract for any services? Can résumés of vendors be provided for our information?
- How frequently do you submit reports?

Regarding reporting, you are ultimately the one who determines the reporting schedule. You'll discuss with the evaluator a schedule of reporting, both internal and external, that meets the evaluation requirements and keeps you informed.

- What information will your evaluation provide, and how will that information be provided?
- Who will:
 - Develop the data collection instruments?
 - Collect the data?
 - Process the data?
 - Analyze and evaluate the data?

Specific Questions on Funding

First you will need to determine your budget. This will greatly shape the role the evaluator plays. The most involved role an evaluator can play is designing the actual evaluation and planning the management of it (e.g., staffing and timelines). The second largest role an evaluator can fill is actually managing the evaluation in terms of tasks, timelines, and budget, which takes this role off your shoulders. If you don't have a lot of extra money, use local resources—such as program or district staff members—to the degree that they have availability and expertise. If there is extra money, these additional tasks should be taken on by the evaluator. Be sure to probe how the evaluator works with his or her clients (you).

- What is your rate?
- What will be your role in the evaluation?
- What additional tasks will be your responsibility?

Specific Questions on References

- Could you provide references from groups or agencies similar to ours that have used your services?
- Do you have samples of reports from previous evaluation projects?
- How well have you met deadlines in previous work?
- What are your procedures regarding confidentiality?

External Evaluator Review Worksheet

Organization: _____

Name: _____

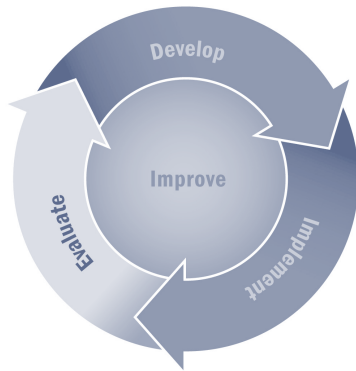
Date: _____

Question	Notes
General Questions	
What is your general experience in evaluation?	
What is your general experience with afterschool and expanded learning programs?	
What is your knowledge base about programs like ours? About youth or stakeholders like ours?	
How do you ensure that the evaluation plan is nonintrusive to partners and youth?	
We want to know X about our program. Have you answered this type of question before for other programs?	
What evaluation approaches do you think are relevant to our situation? What evaluation approaches do you recommend in these kinds of circumstances?	
What do you consider to be characteristics of a strong evaluation? A weak evaluation?	

Question	Notes
Evaluator Functioning	
How many staff members work for you?	
How do you structure the work?	
Do you subcontract for any services? Can résumés of vendors be provided for our information?	
How frequently do you submit reports?	
What information will your evaluation provide, and how will that information be provided?	
Who will develop the data collection instruments?	
Who will collect the data?	
Who will process the data?	
Who will analyze and evaluate the data?	

Question	Notes
Funding and Cost	
What is your rate?	
What will be your role in the evaluation?	
What additional tasks will be your responsibility?	
References	
Could you provide references from groups or agencies similar to ours that have used your services?	
Do you have samples of reports from previous evaluation projects?	
How well have you met deadlines in previous work?	
What are your procedures regarding confidentiality?	

Tips for Developing and Administering Surveys



In Chapter 5, you learned that data collection is a key part of measuring your program's success. If you decide to develop your own survey, ensuring that it is clear and precise will contribute to more reliable data.

Directions: Use the following tips when creating a survey. You can also use this guide as a checklist as you are developing a survey.

Survey Goals

- Consider what you hope to find out from a survey and from whom you would like to gather data. Is this survey asking for opinions, such as family or youth satisfaction with the program? Or is it more of an outcome-focused data collection, such as determining youth engagement in your program? This may impact how you design and administer your survey and what types of questions you decide to ask.
- If you are collecting data on youth and asking them to fill out a survey to do so, you may need to get parental consent. Make sure you are familiar with the legal and institutional requirements for administering data collection surveys to youth beforehand.
- Think about the audience you are targeting and consider how receptive and sensitive it might be to the questions you want to ask. Make sure to incorporate these considerations when designing the survey questions and administering the survey.

Questions: General Tips

- Prioritize your selection of survey questions. Only ask questions that you are really interested in learning about and that will be useful for your program. It can be tempting to ask all the questions you *may* want to know about when conducting a survey, but this makes it more burdensome for respondents and can impact the quality of your data.
- Write short questions that respondents can read quickly and easily when taking the survey. If respondents have to read a question more than once, they may be less willing to finish taking the survey or more likely to misunderstand the question, which will impact your results.
- Ensure that each question has only one central idea. An example of asking a single question with multiple ideas would be "Were activities appropriately difficult and well-paced for your child?" These ideas should be separated into distinct questions so that the respondent can answer each individually, as they may have different responses to the two ideas. For example, you could ask, "How would you rate the difficulty of the activity for your child?" and "How would you rate the pacing of the activity for your child?"
- Consider the audience you are trying to reach and make sure the survey is understandable to this group (e.g., youth or adults, people inside or outside the program, special language or reading needs, and so on). Try to avoid jargon that may be difficult for your audience to understand.

- Use precise language in your questions (e.g., at least once a week, once a day) and avoid vague words (e.g., generally, usually, typically, about what often, and rarely). Using more specific words will improve the quality of your data by communicating clearly with respondents you would like to know.
- Focus your questions on asking for suggestions for improvement, rather than focusing on negative experiences. For example, instead of asking, “What did you dislike about the activities?” instead ask, “How can the activities be improved?” This avoids focusing on the negative aspects while also providing constructive information about what respondents would like to see in the program.
- Avoid leading questions that appear to advocate a particular answer. Such questions will impact the quality and accuracy of your data.
- Provide instructions on how to record answers and how many options to select. For example, state clearly how many options the respondent should select for multiple-choice questions and how to select their answer (e.g., circle the statement, check a box).
- Create a survey that is clear, easy to follow, and aesthetically pleasing. This will encourage respondents to complete the survey by making it less burdensome (and less burdensome looking), and will allow respondents to follow the flow of the survey.
- Pilot your survey. Before sending it out to the entire audience you would like to survey, ask a small group to take the survey beforehand so that you can incorporate its feedback. It may help to include individuals who would not ordinarily take the survey in addition to individuals from the audience you are trying to reach. Ask them questions such as whether the questions are easy to understand, how long the survey took, and whether they have any other concerns about the survey.
- Make sure to place more specific questions first in the sequencing of the survey. For example, you could ask, “How would you rate this afterschool and expanded learning program?” followed by, “How would you rate the afterschool and expanded learning programming available in your community?” This prompts the respondent to consider your program separately from others offered in their community.

Questions: Multiple-Choice Questions

- Allow respondents to write their own answers or select an “Other” option. It is possible that multiple-choice questions will not include all the possible answers, and providing extra options could improve the quality of your data and give you more information about your respondents.
- When appropriate, consider asking respondents to rank their responses to questions that allow multiple answers. For example, consider asking youth to rank the top five types of programs they would be interested in attending, with 5 being the most interested and 1 the least. However, make sure that ranking is appropriate for the question. Some questions may lend themselves better to simply checking off options, and asking for ranked options could be more burdensome for respondents.
- Make sure response option scales go in the same direction. For example, do not make one option start with “Strongly Disagree” and lead to “Strongly Agree” and the next question go the opposite direction, from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree.” This will confuse respondents and may result in unreliable data.
- Provide categories for all responses on a scale. For example, instead of providing options 1 through 4, where only 1 and 4 are labeled “Strongly Disagree” and “Strongly Agree,” respectively, ensure that 2 and 3 have clear sentiments associated with them as well (e.g., 2 = “Disagree” and 3 = “Agree”).

- If possible, avoid neutral response options and only provide an even number of response options. If you offer respondents a choice of 5 responses on a scale, where the middle response is “Neutral,” they may choose the neutral option to avoid expressing a more dramatic opinion. This can lead to unnecessary ambivalence in your data.
- Although you do not want to provide a neutral option, be sure to include a “Not Applicable” response option that allows respondents to indicate that they do not have enough information to complete a question. If this is not an option, respondents may either choose an option that does not really reflect their views or may skip the question.

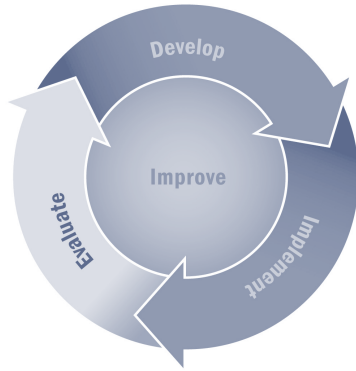
Administering Your Survey

- The way you deliver the survey has important consequences for the type of responses you might expect to receive, the type of respondent you will reach, and the format of your survey questions. Therefore, it is important to think about whether the survey will be delivered by mail, telephone, in person, or online, and how these different methods will affect the survey design. It is likely that a paper survey will be the most convenient method for respondents, but an electronic survey has advantages as well (such as allowing for skip logic and requiring less data entry) if it seems like a viable format for your respondents. Popular online survey sites include SurveyMonkey (<http://www.surveymonkey.com>), Survata (<http://www.survata.com>), and Zoomerang (<http://www.zoomerang.com>), but there are many options to choose from.
- Try to limit how long the survey will take respondents. Although you may have a lot of questions you want to ask, respondents will be less likely to complete a survey that takes a long time to fill out. It is also helpful here to consider your audience, as having shorter surveys may be more important for certain groups (such as youth).
- Depending on how you intend to deliver the survey, you might want to include a compelling introduction explaining why the survey is being conducted, why the respondent’s view matters, and that responses will be confidential. This will help create buy-in with respondents.
- Provide respondents with a person they can contact if they have any questions or concerns about the survey.
- Consider how long the survey will take and include this estimate in the introduction to the survey. This way, respondents can plan accordingly and you will have fewer respondents who sit down to take the survey and then stop without completing the survey because it took longer than they anticipated.
- Surveys can require an intense amount of follow-up to get a useful number of responses. When considering a survey, think about how you will follow up, who will conduct the follow-up, and when you will want to do it. Respondents may need reminders, but it is also important to be respectful of their time and other obligations.
- Depending on the nature of your survey, you can consider providing incentives or the possibility of incentives (e.g., a drawing of respondents for a gift card or other item). This will increase the cost and logistical burden of administering a survey, so consider whether the incentives are truly necessary or helpful before deciding to offer them.

Managing Your Survey Data

- Have one person in your organization whose role it is to enter the data if you are giving a paper survey. This will ensure that the data are entered consistently.
- In addition to having a single person responsible for entering the data, it is also helpful for this person to document or log how the data are entered and what he or she does when there are inconsistencies in the data. This will ensure that others can use or enter the data consistently as well if this staff member leaves or changes roles.

Tips for Running Good Focus Groups



In Chapter 5, you learned that no matter how well you plan your activities, your evaluation questions, and your evaluation plan, it will all be for naught if you don't have a useful way to collect the data you will need to answer your evaluation questions. One way to collect data is through focus groups.

Directions: Use the following tips when running focus groups. Focus groups might be with youth, families, community members, or potential providers. You will need to identify the groups of people you want to talk to, develop a focus group protocol that includes the questions you want to ask, schedule the groups at a time that is convenient for your participants, and identify people to conduct the groups. Generally, focus groups should include five to eight people. Any more can get unwieldy, but fewer than five requires people to talk too much.

- It is important to choose or set up a physical space for the focus group that is going to feel welcoming and comfortable to the participants. It should be neutral, private, free from distractions, and easily accessible.
- Arrange participants in a circle.
- Tell participants where the bathrooms are.
- Provide refreshments if possible and place them away from the circle to avoid distractions.
- Have at least two people facilitating the focus group: a moderator and a note taker.
- Keep an open mind about the participants and what they might say.
- Remain neutral throughout the focus group and be careful about using common phrases such as “that’s good” or “excellent” and nonverbal cues like nodding your head.
- Make sure the questions flow (i.e., are logically sequenced), practice them out loud, know why you are asking each question, and know how much time you plan to spend on each question.
- Take notes, record the focus group, and transcribe the recordings. Be sure to check that the tape recorder is working before the focus group starts, and have a back-up recorder with you.
- Be ready for unexpected problems, such as bad weather, fewer participants than expected, poor meeting space, inadequate preparation by the field coordinator, participants bringing other adults, other uninvited people showing up, or a group that doesn’t want to talk.
- Anticipate running low on time—think about what you would do to modify the agenda.
- Debrief after the focus group to finalize notes and discuss any overall impressions and key ideas.

Tips for Conducting Program Observations



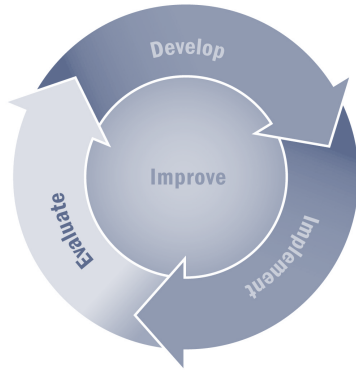
In Chapter 5, you learned that no matter how well you plan your activities, your evaluation questions, and your evaluation plan, it will all be for naught if you don't have a useful way to collect the data you will need to answer your evaluation questions. One way to collect data is through program observations. Program observation data are also incredibly useful in making immediate program improvements.

Directions: Use the following tips when conducting program observations as part of your data collection efforts. Please note that there are many observational assessments available for programs to use. Refer to **Tool 85: Program**

Observation Tools for a list of tools that are the most common in the field, are research-based, are appropriate for a variety of program settings, and focus on the interactions between people in the program.

- Review the observation protocol in advance of conducting the observations so that you are familiar with what you need to be observing.
- Bring a hard copy of the observation protocol.
- Bring a notepad and pen to take notes in case you have computer problems.
- Turn off cell phones.
- Be prepared to explain why you are conducting the observation.
- Select a location in the room that is out of the way so you do not disrupt the activity.
- Stay on schedule and allow yourself enough transition time between observing different activities.
- Plan to observe an activity for at least 50 minutes in order to collect enough information for the observation.
- Keep an open mind. You are observing behaviors—not judging them in terms of good or bad, or right or wrong.
- Take detailed notes, including recording the date, time, and place; and review and clean your notes as soon as possible after completing the observation.
- It is helpful to have a reflection form to complete after an observation that captures overall observations and specific details about the behaviors you were observing.

Tips for Conducting Good Interviews



In Chapter 5, you learned that no matter how well you plan your activities, your evaluation questions, and your evaluation plan, it will all be for naught if you don't have a useful way to collect the data you will need to answer your evaluation questions. One way to collect data is through interviews.

Directions: Use the following tips when conducting interviews as part of your data collection efforts.

- Review the interview questions in advance of conducting the interview so that you are familiar with all of the questions. Practice asking the questions.
- Bring a hard copy of the interview questions.
- Notes and tape recording should be used for all interviews. If interviewees don't want to be taped, rely on notes.
- Bring a notepad and pen to take notes in case you have computer problems.
- For recording, say the name, position, school, and date of person being interviewed before beginning interview.
- Maintain confidentiality (do not reveal what others have said in interviews; keep notes safe).
- Turn off cell phones.
- Clearly state the purpose of the interview and how the information from the interview will be used.
- Stay on schedule, and prioritize questions if you will not have enough time to ask all of them.
- Ask to conduct the interview in a private meeting space.
- When asking the questions, avoid using jargon, and rephrase questions if needed to enhance the interviewee's understanding.
- Ask for clarification if the interviewee is using terms or acronyms that you are not familiar with.
- Ask follow-up questions if needed.
- Review and clean your notes as soon as possible following the interview.

Data Discussions



In Chapter 6, you learned that it is important to review data from your program on a regular basis and use them to make changes and improvements. Incorporating data discussions into your staff meetings and other regular conversations can be an important part of establishing a culture of data collection and use.

Directions: This tool describes some common types of data and tips for using and discussing them on a regular basis with your staff and advisory teams.

Data Type: Youth Participation Data**Ways to use data for planning:**

- Look at the average daily attendance for each activity or program—look for patterns. Do certain types of programs have high attendance while others have low attendance? Are there certain days of the week that have higher attendance than others? Do certain instructors or staff members have better attendance than others? Are there certain times of year (e.g., right before and after vacations) where attendance appears to be low?
- Think about programmatic changes you can make to boost attendance. For example, if attendance is low on Fridays, consider placing highly popular programs on that day, or create a “Fun Fridays” program with alternative, engaging programs like movies, field trips, or themes. If you notice some types of programs have low attendance and others high, consider combining activities so that youth receive both during a given program period.
- Analyze and discuss these data at regular intervals—a few weeks after the start of programming to make course corrections and toward the end of the session to look at trends and prepare for the next session.

Data Type: Youth Program Satisfaction Survey Data**Ways to use data for planning:**

- If you survey youth on a regular basis, make sure you use the data. Youth need to see that it was worth their time to fill out the survey so they will take it seriously in the future.
- First you’ll need to have someone tally the survey data. Put the results in an easy-to-read presentation to share with the staff at a staff meeting.
- Discuss what you found and how/if you can make changes—for example, if youth report high levels of satisfaction with the adults in the program but are less positive about their peers, you might need to promote team building and peer-to-peer interaction in your next session. If youth report frustration with the behavior of some youth during program time, you may need to spend more time on your group guidelines and program rules.

- Some things you won't be able to change—say, the schedule of the program—but you should still discuss how to address them. Talk to youth about the change they requested and why it isn't feasible to make a change right now (e.g., “We don't have enough funding to make the program an hour longer, but we hear that you want that and we will work to identify funding for next year”).
- Use youth interest to drive program selection. Ask youth what activities they would like to see and tally the results. If certain activities show up a lot, consider adding them or including them as special requests in your request for proposals for outside providers or vendors.

Data Type: Program Observation Data (e.g., from a quality assessment tool)

Ways to use data for planning:

- After a series of program observations, when you have enough data for them to be anonymous and aggregated (i.e., combined) bring the staff together to discuss. It is important that there be enough data (at least 5–10 observations) so that no one program or instructor can be identified.
- Talk about strengths and weaknesses for the program as a whole—what do you notice about the data? Where is the program as a whole doing the best? Are there one or two areas that all activities are struggling with? How can you, as a team, address the areas that need growth?
- With a smaller management team, you might use the data to discuss professional development you want to offer, key characteristics you want to add to job descriptions for new staff members, mentoring opportunities for some staff members, and other staffing changes that might address some of the problem areas while celebrating the success of strengths.

Data Type: School-Related Youth Data

Ways to use data for planning:

- If you are able to get records from the school, you may have access to student-level data on things like attendance, discipline incidents, grades, and test scores. These data, although challenging to work with, can be very useful for your program planning.
- If possible, hire someone to crunch the data for you. At a minimum, use the data to identify the highest risk/need youth in your program. You may define those as the lowest performing, those with the most discipline incidents, those with the most absences, or some combination of those.
- Next, discuss ways to improve the program to better serve youth in need of additional support. What can you do to improve their attendance? How might you connect them to better tutoring supports—perhaps assigning certain youth a one-on-one tutor to help boost their grades or assist with homework completion? Is there a young person with behavioral problems who would benefit from participating in a mentoring activity? Work with your staff members who know them best to identify solutions.

Post-Evaluation Planning Tool



In Chapter 6, you learned that it is important to take the time to use your evaluation results for future planning. Rather than just noting the results, you and your team should sit down and discuss what actions you are going to take to improve your program based on what your evaluation is telling you.

Directions: *This tool outlines some of the key steps you may want to take in using your evaluation results to plan and make changes to your program. We suggest you undertake the actions in this tool with a team—this team may include staff members, advisory board members, family members, partners, and youth.*

Step 1 – Talk With Your Evaluator (If You Have One)

If you had an evaluator helping to assess your program, don't just have them turn in a report and disappear. Now you need them more than ever. Ask your evaluator to come to a meeting with your planning team or meet with you one on one to go over the results and share key strengths and key areas for growth. Sometimes evaluation results can be confusing and hard to understand. Things like effect sizes and statistical significance don't mean much to those without a research background, so it is important for your evaluator (or someone with expertise if your evaluator can't or won't do this) to translate those findings into lay terms.

Step 2 – Review Evaluation Findings

Again, with your team and ideally your evaluator, review the evaluation findings. Make sure everyone involved in the planning session understands what the findings mean. Pull out key points and highlight them on chart paper or in a PowerPoint slide. Focus on what is working as well as what might need to be improved. Now is the time to look at all the findings. You don't need to prioritize yet—just make sure that everyone understands the findings and is able to focus on the key points.

Step 3 – Prioritize Findings

Evaluations can be overwhelming, especially if they are comprehensive and consider many different factors. If you and your team try to come up with action steps to address every finding, you may end up feeling frustrated and discouraged. Instead, use this time with your planning team to prioritize two or three areas for growth in the short term and two or three for the long term. Start by filling in the chart below.

Target Improvement Areas

Area for Growth	Long Term or Short Term?	Is It Fixable?	Level of Importance
In this column you should list all the areas for growth identified in your evaluation. Try to create a succinct description or target issue.	Note whether this is a long-term or a short-term fix. For example, if your evaluation finds that youth feel unsafe in the program, this may be an urgent, short-term goal you want to address now. If the evaluation finds that families want a new summer program to go with the school year program you currently offer, this may be a longer term issue.	This is a yes/no column. Indicate whether the target area is something you can actually fix or not.	Here you should indicate how important this issue is to you and your team.

Step 4 – Create an Action Plan

Take the time now to discuss the chart with your planning team. You can immediately eliminate the areas or issues you can't fix. It is tempting to get caught up discussing things you really have no control over. Don't! If it isn't something you can change, cross it off and move on. Likewise, you can look at the column related to level of importance and cross off the areas that simply aren't a priority for your program. Perhaps an evaluation finding is related to something tangential to your mission or not of particular importance to your program. Once you have eliminated low-priority and unfixable issues, you should be left with a more reasonable list of target areas. Now look at the short and long term column. You should select only two or three short-term and two or three long-term target areas to keep your action plan realistic. Discuss priorities with your team and enter them into the table below. Discuss your key action steps, deadlines, and assigned staff members. Be sure to revisit this planning grid at least quarterly at staff meetings or other key gatherings to ensure that you are making progress on your goals.

Action Plan

Area for Growth	Action Steps	Timeline	Lead Staff
List your four to six short- and long-term priorities in this column.	Develop specific action steps to address each area. Be concrete.	Indicate short or long term and when you hope to see action steps accomplished.	Identify a staff member to take the lead for each area.

Evaluation Report Template



In Chapter 5, you learned about the various steps of an evaluation, from defining the purpose to using the findings to refine your program. Producing a clear and concise evaluation report will help you translate your evaluation's findings into action. In writing your evaluation report, use the checklist below to ensure that you have covered all necessary areas.

Directions: This tool provides you with a checklist of all the information you may include in an evaluation report. Don't worry if you don't include all of the information we have detailed here or in the order we suggest. The good news is that some the information should stay the same from year to year and that you should

be collecting a lot of the information for the report throughout the program year. Look at this checklist before you start your evaluation—it may give you some ideas of things you may want to include and gather earlier on.

Evaluation Report Template – Checklist

Title Page	- Name of the program and organization. - Title of the evaluation. - Names (and organizations, if external) of the individuals conducting the evaluation. <i>Comment: Avoid the use of acronyms on the title page.</i>	☐
Table of Contents	- Provide sufficient detail to guide the reader through the report, including page numbers. - Include page numbers for boxes, figures, tables, and appendices.	☐
List of Acronyms	Include definitions of all acronyms used in the report, in alphabetical order.	☐
Executive Summary	- Briefly describe the program you are evaluating. - Explain the evaluation purpose and objectives, making sure to identify the intended users of the evaluation report. - Describe the main methods and data collection tools used. - Summarize the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations. <i>Comment: The executive summary should serve as a stand-alone form of the evaluation report, as intended users of the evaluation report may refer to it independently of the report. The executive summary should not include any information that is not covered in the report.</i>	☐
Evaluation Purpose and Evaluation Questions	- Define and explain the evaluation purpose. This section should address why the evaluation is being conducted now, the intended use of the evaluation's findings, and what practical decisions can be informed by the evaluation's findings, and the section should identify the intended audience of the report. - Define and explain the evaluation questions detailed in the statement of work, linking these to the evaluation purpose.	☐

Program Background	• Describe the program that is being evaluated, detailing the various activities of the program. • Describe the scale of the program, detailing the size of the target population. • Describe the program’s resources, providing details about the total human resources (staffing) and financial budget supporting activities. • Identify and describe the key partners that collaborate with your organization in the delivery of the program. • Explain how the program originated, relating this to the organization’s mission, program vision, and population assets and needs. Support this presentation with research literature and findings from the market analysis, asset mapping, and community needs assessment findings where possible. • Provide an overview of the program’s vision and goals, including a description of the intended participants, geographic location, and the theory of change supporting the program’s design. • Describe and explain any changes to the program’s goals or activities that have occurred since its inception. • Describe any weaknesses in the design of your program and any resource capacity limits on your activities. <i>Comment: If you have a program logic model, you should include it here, making sure to explain the elements in detail.</i>	☐
Evaluation Methodology and Limitations	• Provide a description of the methods and data collection tools used in your evaluation. • Describe the types of data collected (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed). • Describe who information was collected from (e.g., program participants, staff members, community members, stakeholders) and how these individuals were selected to participate in the evaluation. • Explain why these data collection tools were chosen and how the data produced were intended to answer the evaluation questions. • Explain the tradeoffs that led you to decide on particular methods, making sure to describe data availability and quality, sampling strategies, and subject/site selection. • Explain how stakeholders participated in the evaluation. • Explain the ethical considerations you took into account while conducting the evaluation. Make sure to explain how you protected the confidentiality of respondents. • Present evidence supporting the credibility of your findings. For example, explain how stakeholder involvement contributed to the credibility of your evaluation findings. • Explain any limitations associated with your methodology (e.g., data issues such as selection bias or recall bias, or unobservable differences between comparison groups). Make sure to explain any challenges you faced in collecting data, and whether your methods changed over the course of the evaluation.	☐

Findings	• Present clear analysis of quantitative/qualitative evidence. Include findings that assess outcomes and impacts of the program. • Describe your findings. For example, you could present frequencies, percentages, and averages or visual depictions of quantitative data; for qualitative data you could summarize patterns or clusters of respondent answers. • Avoid interpreting your findings in this section: “interpretations” often refer to why the objectives were not achieved, and are presented in the next section of the report. <i>Comment: Consider structuring this section around the evaluation questions so that the user of the report can easily draw connections between what was asked and what was found by the evaluation.</i>	☐
Conclusions and Recommendations	• Conclusions and recommendations should synthesize and interpret the findings of the evaluation and make judgments supported by specific findings. • Provide recommendations that are action-oriented, practical, and specific. Define who is responsible for the action. • Evidence supporting conclusions and recommendations should be presented visually where possible to aid the readers’ understanding of judgments made. <i>Comment: Consider structuring this section around the evaluation questions so that the user of the report can easily draw connections between what was asked and what was found by the evaluation.</i>	☐
Appendices	• Statement of work • Methodology-related documentation, including the evaluation matrix and copies of the data collection tools used (e.g., questionnaires, surveys, and checklists) • Lists of individuals interviewed, including position title • List of sites visited for data collection purposes • Short biographies of the evaluators <i>Comment: Consider structuring this section around the evaluation questions so that the user of the report can easily draw connections between what was asked and what was found by the evaluation. If this is not possible for this section, put the recommendations in priority order.</i>	☐
References	• A comprehensive list of sources, including documents reviewed, external data sources, and key discussants	☐

Sharing Evaluation Results



In Chapter 6, you learned that it is important to use your evaluation results in a variety of ways—for planning purposes, to spread the word about your program, and to promote a culture of continuous improvement. Sharing your evaluation results with your staff members, partners, funders, and participants can help ensure they get used for improvement.

Directions: This tool provides information about the types of people with whom you may want to share evaluation results, the purpose for sharing them, and tips on the best way to share the information with each stakeholder group. You'll have to adapt the tool to your own community and circumstances, but this can

get you started thinking about the best way to share your results.

Sharing Evaluation Results

Stakeholder Group	Purpose for Sharing	Tips and Tricks
Staff	- Planning for program improvements - Celebrating success	- Bring evaluator to planning meeting to explain results. - Prioritize using Tool 92: Post-Evaluation Planning Tool to prevent frustration.
Program Providers	- Planning for program improvements - Celebrating success	- Share the executive summary and action planning results. - Share results that are relevant to their work with youth in the program.
Funders	- Conveying value of their investment - Identifying concrete plans for improvement - Encouraging new funding	- Share positive evaluation results immediately and give them credit for funding a successful innovation. - Own negative results. Before sharing, be sure you have specific and targeted plans for improvement that you can describe. - If you create a brochure, media release, or other public-relations document to highlight positive evaluation results, be sure to give your funders credit. - Share marketing and outreach materials with potential funders to promote key aspects of your program.

Stakeholder Group	Purpose for Sharing	Tips and Tricks
Community Partners	• Celebrating success • Identifying concrete plans for improvement • Encouraging partnership	• If your partners are active in your program's implementation, include them in the planning process. If they are more symbolic partners, treat them more like funders by celebrating their role in success and sharing negative evaluation findings only after you have a concrete plan to address them.
Families	• Marketing program effectiveness • Sharing plans for improvement • Recruiting new participants	• Families want to know their child is attending a worthwhile program. Use positive evaluation results to underline the value of their child's experience. • Use positive results in marketing materials to attract new families. • Make sure evaluation results are clear and in lay terms. Translate them into other languages as needed and appropriate.
Youth	• Marketing program effectiveness • Sharing plans for improvement • Recruiting new participants	• Keep it simple. Share key points in easy-to-understand language (e.g., "This program is helping young people like you feel more confident.") • If youth were involved in surveys or observations, let them know the results of the evaluation in terms of their role (e.g., "You told us..."). • Let youth know you are going to improve the program to make it better for them, but use general terms. (e.g., "We heard that you don't always feel safe in this program, and we want to fix that by...").
School District	• Sharing program impact on school-related indicators • Encouraging partnership • Highlighting areas for improvement	• Treat school and district staff members as you would funders, even if they are key partners. Schools want to know that programs are benefitting the young people who attend them. Share key points in succinct, easy-to-understand language. • As with funders, share negative evaluation findings after you have developed a plan for improvement. • Focus on how your results will help youth thrive in school.

Stakeholder Group	Purpose for Sharing	Tips and Tricks
Local Government (city/town council, mayor's office, local legislators)	• Influencing policy • Encouraging partnership or public funding	• Be brief and clear! Use bullet points and boil evaluation findings down to understandable sound bites. Never use more than one page to explain your findings. • Lead with the positives. • If the program has city or county funding, offer local politicians the opportunity to get their photo taken with youth in the program as part of a press release about positive evaluation findings. • Don't hide negative evaluation findings. Own them but be ready to share how you are already addressing them.

“Big Picture” Meeting Agenda



In Chapter 6, you learned about the importance of creating a culture of continuous improvement and taking the time to reflect and plan for the future. One good way to do that is to bring together a variety of stakeholders for an annual “big picture” planning meeting.

Directions: This tool provides a sample agenda (see the pages that follow) for a “big picture” planning meeting. We suggest you host a meeting like this once or twice a year. The conclusion of school-year programming can be a good time to host a meeting like this to debrief on the past year and make plans for the next one. Mid-year is also a good time to check in and adjust your course. At a

minimum, we recommend that this meeting include staff members and key program providers and community partners. You may also consider inviting funders, local officials, district staff, families, and youth.

Tips for a Successful Meeting

- Plan on 2 to 2.5 hours—enough time to get things done but not so much that people start leaving to get back to their other work.
- Offer food and beverages if you can, even if they are just pastries and coffee.
- Try to find a nice location. A community partner, college, or local business may be able to provide a nice meeting facility. It is nice to get out of the school or program space, and to make people feel taken care of and like this is a special occasion. You want to promote a sense of importance to the meeting.
- Consider your audience and schedule the meeting at a time that is conducive to attendance. If you plan to include youth or families, hold the meeting in the evening. If not, your partners may find a breakfast meeting, just slightly before their regular day begins (e.g., 8:00–10:00), a convenient time.
- Start and end on time. Always respect people’s time!
- Have all of your materials printed and ready to go. Take care with the meeting preparation to convey a sense of importance. For example, print meeting materials in color, provide notepaper and pens, and spend the time to make your PowerPoint presentations look professional.

Agenda

[Date] – [Time]

Meeting Goals

- Include three or four goals for the meeting. Any more will feel overwhelming and fewer may make the meeting feel unnecessary.
- Goals should be broad things you want to cover in the meeting. They might include things you want to inform your board about or key decisions that need to be made.

[Start time]

Welcome and Introductions

The Executive Director or Program Director should start the meeting by welcoming people and explaining the purpose of the meeting. Key points:

- Thank them for coming
- Explain how important they are to a successful program
- Encourage their questions, input, and discussion
- Talk about the importance of reflection and planning as a break from the day-to-day urgency of program management

Ask people to introduce themselves by sharing their name, their organization/role, and their connection to your program.

Depending on the size of the group you can have an icebreaker activity—for example, have people pair off to introduce themselves and then introduce each other to the group or share the answer to a fun question appropriate to your program (e.g., what was your favorite thing about middle school?)

[Start + 10 min]

The Year in Review/Program Overview

This is your opportunity to present the program to your staff, partners, funders, and other stakeholders. There are a variety of ways to use this time depending on your audience, the time of year you host the meeting, and what you want to accomplish. No matter what you choose to present, plan on 20 minutes of clear, concise presentation and 10–20 minutes of Q & A and discussion. This is the time to set up the discussion for the rest of the meeting, so give some thought to the key questions you are trying to raise with your presentation. Some sample ways to use that 20 minutes:

- Share evaluation results if you have a mid-term or final evaluation report. Include positive and negative results, and be sure to share your thinking on any negative findings.
- Share an overview of the past year, including key data points such as number of participants, demographics of participants, key program activities, and highlights/anecdotes.
- Present your past program model along with a key problem or question for the future—for example, you may have a successful school year program and have just been asked to introduce a summer component. Or your school district may have asked you to focus on aligning with the Common Core in the coming year. Share what you have done in the past, and present the question or problem for the future.
- Present some new trends in the field or issues you want your program to address, such as Common Core, social and emotional learning, school alignment, STEM, and so on. Set up the issues that you want your meeting participants to discuss.

[Time + 30–40 minutes]	Small Group Discussions Now it is time to get into the substance of the meeting and ask your participants to help you with a task—whether it is developing a new program strand, addressing a key problem, brainstorming improvements after a negative evaluation, or simply reflecting on the past year. Break your participants into small groups. Your small group size will depend on the number of people and your room arrangements. Try to have at least three or four small groups to ensure diversity of discussion. Ask each group to pick a recorder and take notes on the discussion to report back to the large group. Present your group with a discussion question or challenge. This should be the main thing you were hoping to address at the meeting. Sample group assignments: • If we were to add a summer program, what are the key things we should consider before moving forward? • What are our highest priority goals for the next school year for this program? • How can we attract more of the neediest, lowest achieving youth in our school and ensure we aren’t just serving the “cream of the crop?” • Should we incorporate more academics into our programming? How?
[Time + 30–40 minutes]	Large Group Discussion and Planning Back in the large group, have some kind of report-out on the small group discussions. It can be boring and unproductive to have a reporter read off a long list of things the group discussed. Instead, ask each group to report two key strategies discussed or two concrete steps group members think the program should take. Record each group’s ideas on large butcher paper posted around the room. After all ideas are recorded, open a discussion on the ideas, encouraging dialogue on positives, negatives, and alternatives. If appropriate, you may even want to have a round of voting (using checkmarks or writing initials) on the posted ideas to identify areas of consensus.
[Time + 30–40 minutes]	Next Steps and Conclusion Be sure to wrap up the meeting by identifying specific next steps and letting people know how they will hear back from you (e.g., another meeting in six months, a program newsletter, a report). Give people an opportunity for final questions and consider asking for volunteers to participate in a work group or on specific next steps if you have them.
[End time]	Adjourn

Continuous Improvement Reflection Tool



Throughout this guide, and in particular in Chapter 6, you learned about the importance of embedding a continuous cycle of planning, implementing, evaluating, and improving in your program. In order to do this, you have to plan for and implement a continuous improvement process that builds upon all you have learned in this guide.

Directions: This tool is designed take you through a reflection process for the various sections of this Toolkit. You may not need to revisit everything in here all at once. In fact, we recommend you review the whole document as a reminder of what you should constantly reflect on, review, and revise as your program

evolves—but take one chunk or section to review at a time so that it doesn’t become overwhelming. We also recommend that you bring together your advisory board, staff, families, youth and other key stakeholders in your reflection process as appropriate for each stage. For each step, we’ve listed a set of questions or issues to consider and have provided space for you to reflect and make notes. At the end, we’ve included some exercises and planning suggestions for embedding a culture of continuous improvement in your program.

Reflection Questions for Continuous Improvement

Management Practices		Notes
Organizational Structures	Is our management and organizational structure still working? Revisit your advisory board membership: - Are all of our key stakeholders represented? Do we need to add anyone? - Is our meeting schedule allowing us to accomplish what we want? (Too often? Not often enough?)	
Staffing	Are our job descriptions up to date and do they reflect our current program structure? Are we able to recruit highly qualified and effective staff members? If not, why not? What can we change? Is our orientation process for new and returning staff members still preparing our staff adequately? What might we need to change? Are our staffing policies and procedures still appropriate for our organizational structure and our program’s developmental stage?	

Management Practices		Notes
Policies and Procedures	Revisit the following policies and procedures. Are they still appropriate? Are they meeting our needs? Do we need to revise any based on changes in your program? • Participant recruitment, enrollment and attendance • Ratios • Background checks and other safety procedures • Behavior guidelines and discipline • Program schedule	
Resource Management	Are there new funders we should be targeting as our program grows and develops? Are there new funding strategies we haven't considered (e.g., program fees, donors, special events)? Are our financial procedures still appropriate as our program has grown? Do we need to revisit our accounting practices?	
Communication	What are our communication goals for the coming year? What key messages do we want to convey about our program at this stage in our development? Are we communicating effectively with families? The community? Key policymakers? Funders? How can we improve our messaging? Are there any audiences we aren't reaching that we should be?	

Program Design		Notes
Vision	Is our vision still appropriate? Does it still reflect what we are trying to accomplish with our program?	
Goals	Is our program adequately working toward accomplishing our goals? Are our goals still appropriate? Are any unrealistic? Do we need to change or add any program goals to reflect the developmental stage of our program?	

Program Design		Notes
Theory of Change	Does our program implementation reflect our theory of change? Are we deviating from our planned activities? Does our theory of change still seem appropriate?	
Logic Model	Does our logic model still reflect our program? Have our goals or intended outcomes changed? If yes, how? Can we add any inputs or outputs to the logic model now that our program has been under way for some time?	

Partnerships		Notes
School	How is our school partnership progressing? What can we do to better connect with school administration? What can we do to better connect with school faculty? What do we need from the school? How can we get it? What data are we sharing with the school, if any? How can we connect those data to our participation data?	
Family	How well are families engaged in our program? What else can we do to engage families appropriately? What roles can family members play now that our program is up and running?	
Community	What partnerships with community organizations are particularly successful? Which aren't going so well? What community organizations should we target for partnerships? What community resources could we be using better?	

Program Delivery		Notes
Program Plan	Does our program plan match our program goals and intended outcomes? Does our program schedule/plan meet the needs of youth and their families? If not, what changes can we make to better meet their needs? Consider things like: • Program schedule—do the hours meet the needs of working parents? If we aren't offering the program five days a week, should we add more days? How many weeks per year are we offering programs? Do we need to adjust that? • Summer program—should we offer one? • Does our session structure work for families? • Transportation—are youth getting home safely? Do we need to revisit our transportation options?	
Activities	Does our mix of program activities still reflect the assets, interests, and needs of youth and their families? In what ways do we need to change or add to our programming to better build on young people's strengths? What activities would we like to offer if we can find staff members or providers to deliver them? Does our mix of program activities still reflect our program goals? Is it helping us work toward our intended outcomes? What changes do we need to make?	

Evaluation		Notes
Evaluation Questions	How can our evaluation questions better match our program goals and intended outcomes? What do we want to know? Are there things we want to explore on a regular basis?	
Data Collection System	Is our data collection system allowing us to capture the data we want? What can be improved? What additional data do we want to track? Will we need to make changes to our data system to allow that?	

Evaluation		Notes
Use of Data	What data are we examining on a regular basis? Are there other data we could examine and discuss regularly to better serve youth in our program? Are there data we could examine regularly in partnership with the school in order to target or serve specific youth? What are our attendance data telling us?	

Improvement Planning		Notes
Quality Improvement Planning	What data about our program quality do we want to capture? Do we want to use a quality assessment tool? Which one? What professional development and training does our staff need? How can we access it? What can we learn from our quality assessment data? What changes to our program do we want to make? How are we doing in implementing youth development practices, including: • Creating a warm and welcoming environment? • Building supportive relationships? • Promoting positive behavior management? • Offering youth choices? • Providing youth with opportunities for decision-making? • Providing youth with opportunities for leadership? • Making time for reflection? What coaching do we need for our staff? How will we get it?	

Improvement Planning		Notes
Continuous Improvement Practices	How can our program leadership better promote and support improvement? Are we sharing evaluation results with all staff members? How can we engage staff members more fully in evaluation planning and reviewing evaluation results? Are we incorporating reflection into our staff meetings? How can we keep stakeholders informed about and engaged in improvement planning? What is working? What could we try next?	

What's Next? After engaging in conversation with your staff, partners, and other key stakeholders about any of the sections above, identify some key action steps and who is responsible for carrying them out. Use the table below to formalize those action steps and monitor their progress. This table can then become fodder for the next round of reflection and improvement so that reflection, planning for action, acting, and reviewing can become a constant process.

Planning for Continuous Improvement

Management Practices		
Program Area	Next Steps	Who Is Responsible
Organizational Structures		
Staffing		
Policies and Procedures		
Resource Management		
Communications		
Program Design		
Program Area	Next Steps	Who Is Responsible
Vision		
Goals		
Theory of Change		
Logic Model		

Partnerships		
Program Area	Next Steps	Who Is Responsible
School		
Family		
Community		
Program Delivery		
Program Area	Next Steps	Who Is Responsible
Program Plan		
Activities		

Evaluation		
Program Area	Next Steps	Who Is Responsible
Evaluation Questions		
Data Collection System		
Use of Data		
Improvement Planning		
Program Area	Next Steps	Who Is Responsible
Quality Improvement Planning		
Continuous Improvement Practices		

