

CASE Program Quality Framework

To promote high quality program design and delivery,

CASE recommends an afterschool program should include the following five core elements:

Element One: Safe and Inclusive Environments

A quality program provides a safe and structured environment that is secure, nurturing and inclusive for all to learn and explore.

- Program environment is designed for social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of youth.
- Program environment provides an inclusive environment for all youth, family and members of the community.
- Program policies and procedures are in place to protect the health & safety of youth and are responsive to the needs of youth and families.
- Program environment is welcoming and fosters supportive staff-youth relationships, positive peer relationships and connections with families.

Element Two: Diverse Learning Opportunities

A quality program provides a balanced variety of activities that support the growth and development of program participants.

- Program activities are well-organized and age-appropriate.
- Program learning environment is aligned with educational standards and integrates engaging hands-on learning techniques.
- Program offers opportunities to learn and build new skills focused on social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development.
- Program pace is relaxed, flexible and offers instructional approaches geared toward encouraging youth to push beyond their level of competency.
- Program assesses youth interest and fosters opportunities for youth voice and choice.

Element Three: Effective Administrative Strategies

A quality program has a solid administrative system that invests in human capital and utilizes sound fiscal management and business practices.

- Program has a coherent vision/mission and maintains an internal communication plan.
- Program budget is in line with vision and mission, appropriate for organizational size, and is monitored routinely.
- Program has a system for measuring and analyzing information for staff assessment, intentional program planning, and evaluation.
- Program provides professional development opportunities to ensure staff are properly qualified and equipped with the academic and experiential knowledge needed to fulfill their job requirements.
- Program leadership monitors evolving trends in order to make strategic decisions and develop sustainability strategies.

Element Four: Collaborative Relationships

A quality program creates and maintains linkages in the community to broaden services available to youth and community served and builds relationships that can lead to program sustainability.

- Program encourages diverse community and volunteer involvement based on student need and in accordance with best practices.
- Program participants and staff build and sustain multiple partnerships that garner resources to support the program.
- Program leadership monitors relationships and interactions among participants, staff, families, volunteers, service providers, and community partners.
- Program invites partners to become part of the planning process in an effort to support quality services and program sustainability.
- Program encourages parental involvement and provides opportunities to serve and engage parents.

Element Five: Program Promotion

A quality program markets the success of their innovative programming and raises awareness of its positive contributions to the community.

- Program has a marketing/communication plan that highlights the services that are provided to youth and the community and their benefits.
- Program has a unified message that is evidenced by leadership and staff.
- Program staff and administration meet with existing and potential stakeholders regularly to foster positive relationships and work toward sustainability.
- Program shares its message and promote activities throughout the community.

CASE provides services to help program enhancement through the levels of competencies within each element.

For more information call 713.696.1331 or go to www.afterschoolzone.org.