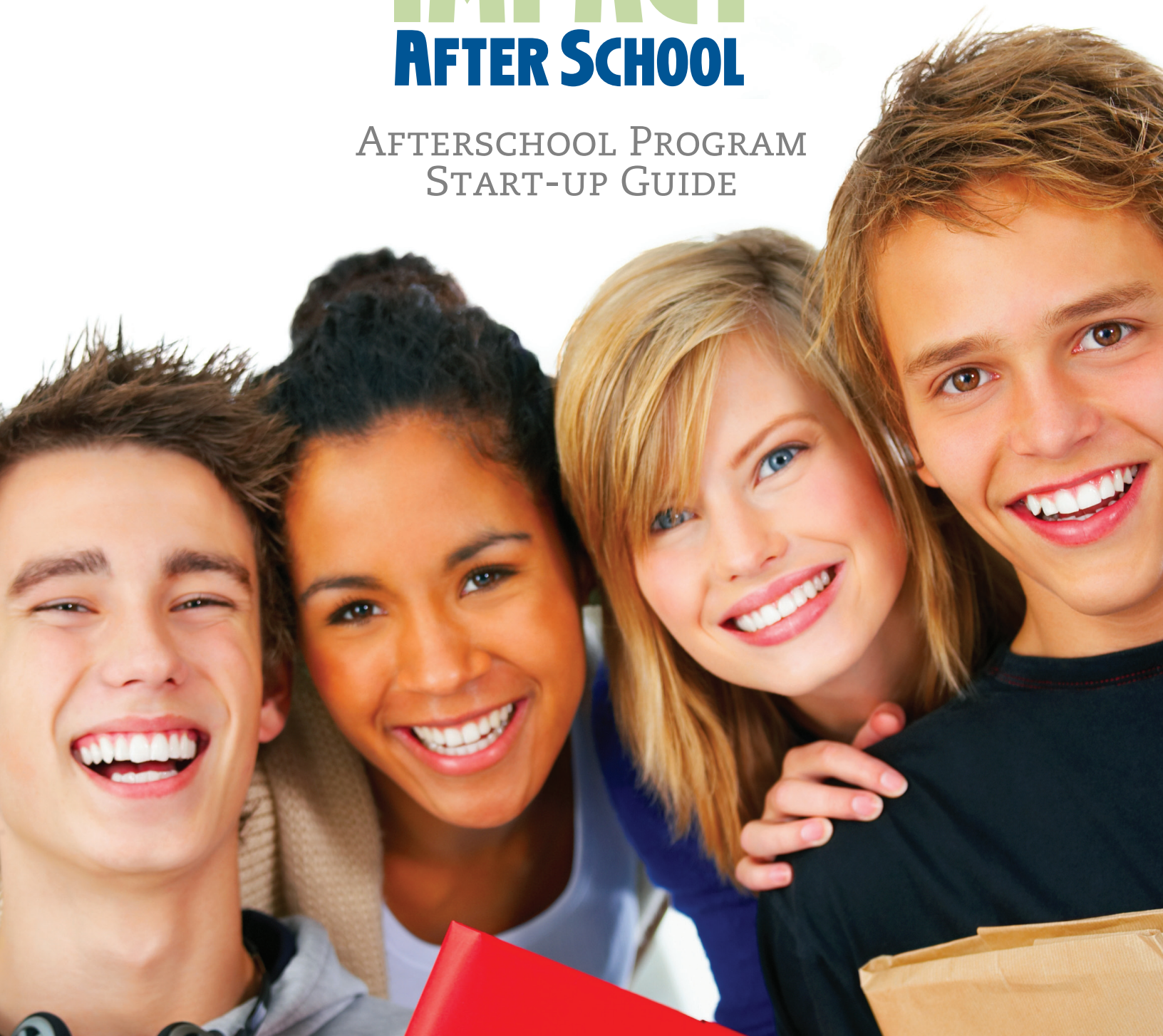




# **IMPACT** **AFTER SCHOOL**

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM  
START-UP GUIDE



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# About This Guide

This start-up guide was developed based on needs expressed by program providers and community leaders wishing to start their own programs. The Iowa Afterschool Alliance (IAA), a network of over 600 advocates and providers of quality out-of-school time programming, brought together a small group of youth development and out-of-school time practitioners and experts to provide input into the development of this guide. The IAA would like to thank the following individuals for their work on this guide:

*Amy Croll, Community! Youth Concepts*

*Leslie Stonehocker, Central Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral*

*Keli Tallman, Iowa State University Extension/4H Youth Development*

The IAA would also like to thank other members of its Advisory Board for their broader vision and guidance, of which this Start-Up Guide is just one critical piece. The Iowa Afterschool Alliance is a member of the [\*National Network of Statewide Afterschool Networks\*](#). The California Afterschool Network's [\*High School After School Program Start-Up\*](#) was used as a model and starting point for this publication. For more information on the Iowa Afterschool Alliance, please visit our website at [www.iowaafterschoolalliance.org](http://www.iowaafterschoolalliance.org).

Claire Parrish, an AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) with the Iowa Afterschool Alliance, was instrumental in seeing that this guide is useful to the most important people in our work – local program practitioners looking to meet the needs of our children and youth. Thank you, Claire, for your hard work in support of Iowa's out-of-school time programs.



# Where to Start?

So you need to start an afterschool program. What now? Where do you start? No doubt you feel overwhelmed by the task at hand: create something from very little. This manual is intended to help equip you with strategies and tools to get you up to speed faster and to achieve more, sooner. Use this as a blueprint for creating your action plan and guide through the start-up phase of program implementation.

Planning for, starting up, and managing an afterschool program is a comprehensive and complex undertaking. There are many components and moving parts that must be coordinated. It is important to note that what is presented here is not intended to be a complete, all-inclusive plan. Every program's needs and circumstances are unique. The information and checklists provided in this resource are intended to provide you with a starting point for strategic thinking and intentional action. Be sure that you are not duplicating existing community services. If a need or gap in services is identified, keep focused on your goal to serve your community's children and youth. It will take a lot of work to plan and start the program, but remember that it is all worth it in the end!

Before you begin, it's always best to have an idea of where you want to go and the resources needed to set the course, as well as those that will be useful along the way.

## **STEP 1: GET GROUNDED.**

Knowing exactly what you want to accomplish with your program is essential in the initial stages of planning. It drives the decisions of who you need to partner with in the community, where you can find funding, and where your program should take place.

## **STEP 2: GET ORIENTED.**

Once you have clearly outlined what you want to accomplish, begin looking for those people who can become your core planning team. Make connections with people who can provide you support with planning, funding, and positive advertisement of the program throughout the community. Another good idea is to survey students to find out what they are most interested in after school. Be sure you're addressing community needs so the program will be a worthwhile addition. If you are proposing something that already exists, you may not be successful and can step on toes along the way. Programs should not be competition with each other, but rather complement one another, so it is important to find out what already is available. This can be accomplished through a scan of school, community, and faith-based programs.

## **STEP 3: DO WHAT YOU SAID YOU WOULD DO.**

Although it seems obvious, it is important to deliver the program you advertised to the public.

# Components of a Successful Program Start-up

The following components are essential when planning for, starting up, and managing a new afterschool program. It takes a coordinated approach, as each is a vital component to achieving a successful program. Keep in mind: planning is not a single event, but rather a continuous process.

## PROGRAM LEADERSHIP

Before a program can even begin, your group needs to designate or hire a program leader or coordinator to oversee the decision-making. Any successful program needs to have a strong, full-time leader who can create a quality program with devoted staff. The most ideal situation would be for the program leader to also be physically located close to key school administrators or community organizations to gain the most support for their programs through strong personal relationships and access to resources.

This may not be possible for all programs with funding or space limitations. It would then be very important for the program leader to set up regular meetings with key administrators in order to maintain a positive relationship and keep updated on any resources available to the program. Program leaders should also encourage their staff to maintain the same kind of relationships with teachers, working together on similar goals, coordination of plans, and sharing available resources.

Maintaining open communication and supportive relationships with all staff members is a must in order to have a successful program. The most successful programs are those in which the program leaders listen to what their staff suggests, collaborate with them on new ideas, and support each others' efforts. Leaders should feel confident in the abilities of staff members and reflect that confidence on a regular basis. If program leaders are supportive of staff members, those staff are more likely to stay.

## Characteristics of Effective Program Directors

High-functioning programs have strong leaders that are dedicated to the afterschool program. Strong leaders:

- » Articulate the program's vision, mission, and goals of the afterschool program to staff, administrators, students, families, and community leaders to generate support.
- » Are organized and help site leaders organize and document their work.
- » Recruit and support high-performing staff members.
- » Create and expect positive work environments for staff and students.
- » Are "hands on" and are highly involved in the various sites.
- » Collaborate often and frequently with staff and all stakeholders.

- » Have high expectations for student behavior, school attendance, work habits, and attitudes toward learning.
- » Require and foster frequent communication and collaboration between regular school day and afterschool program staff.
- » Provide real-time and job-embedded professional learning to program staff that meet staffs' needs.
- » Are very familiar with and committed to the effective implementation of grants.
- » Require and foster ongoing monitoring of student progress.
- » Develop, publish, and implement effective procedures and policies to ensure an effective program.

### Helpful Resource:

National Afterschool Association, *Responsibility Checklist for the Principal and After-School Program Director*: [http://www.naaweb.org/downloads/LeadershipLessons/Checklist\\_for\\_Program\\_Directors\[1\].docx](http://www.naaweb.org/downloads/LeadershipLessons/Checklist_for_Program_Directors[1].docx)

## PRESENTING THE VISION

Powerful vision motivates, incites passion, and cultivates measurable impact. Knowing what your program stands for and what it provides to youth is important. The key to your success is being able to articulate the program's vision and purpose to administrators and teachers, program staff, and key members of the community. By doing so, you bring together people of diverse interests and backgrounds with a common purpose to create and implement the program together. Equally important is that the students themselves understand the role they play in making that vision a reality. It is the combined efforts of all that are crucial to the success of your program.

### Create an action plan

Using a logic model (visual model for goal-setting), your action plan can become a picture of what you hope to accomplish. A visual representation is also helpful in reminding you what your plan is, and is a good handout to show others what the goals of the program are, as well as demonstrating how the community will benefit from the program. The plan will also get you thinking about how you are going to evaluate different aspects of the program. When mapping your goals, include how you will measure your progress so you will know from the first day what needs to be documented for evaluation and outcome measurement. Data collected can be used for reporting to funders or showing the community how the program is working.



## Have S.M.A.R.T. Goals

Accomplishing the goals you set may be easier said than done. That is why it is important to have S.M.A.R.T. goals, providing a standard for performance to be measured and reviewed.

- S Specific, significant, stretching, strategic, scope-oriented** (Well defined; clear and easy; answer: who, what, when, where, why, which)
- M Measurable, meaningful, motivational** (Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward attainment of each goal; answer: how)
- A Attainable, agreed upon, achievable, acceptable, action-oriented** (Agreement with all of the stakeholders on what the goal should be; slightly stretching requiring real commitment, however accomplishable)
- R Realistic, relevant, reasonable, rewarding, results-oriented, reinforcing** (You must be both willing and able to work toward the goal; you must believe it is relevant and accomplishable; not easy but do-able within the stretching principles agreed to)
- T Time-based, timely, tangible, trackable** (Set a clear timeframe for accomplishing the goal; be sure it is in sync with scaffold goals and respective timelines; be sure you can experience it as tangible with one of your senses)

### Helpful Resources:

Harvard Family Research Project, *Learning From Logic Models in Out-of-School Time*: <http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/publications-resources/learning-from-logic-models-in-out-of-school-time>

Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Core Curriculum: [www.corecurriculum.iowa.gov](http://www.corecurriculum.iowa.gov)

SEDL National Center for Quality Afterschool, *Afterschool Lesson Plan Database*: <http://www.sedl.org/afterschool/lessonplans/>

University of Wisconsin, *Extension Program Development and Evaluation*: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evallogicmodel.html>

## Plan lessons around goals

Once you have mapped out your goals, make sure that your lessons will lead the students and program towards reaching those goals. Include different approaches to meeting those goals according to what the area might be. For example, if the goal is to increase student creativity in the arts, provide lessons on a variety of arts disciplines, such as drawing, music, and theater. Each of these offers different students an opportunity to find an avenue for creativity that best suits them.

## Connect lessons with the Iowa Core Curriculum

Every program should develop specific activities with learning objectives aligning with the Iowa Core Curriculum (the Core). Professional development for staff should be targeted at developing knowledge of the Core and how to create lesson plans that integrate learning that aligns with the Core. Not all

programming needs to be based around the Core, but it is a good idea to include some work that can enhance students' abilities to meet the standards. Developing such programming is also a good way to build strategic relationships with school administrators and teachers.

## COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Building partnerships and implementing a successful collaborative process takes time, energy, and dedication. To collaborate effectively means providing enhanced opportunities, sharing resources, and making commitments to achieve desired results. This requires creating and committing to a common vision and shared goals through collaborative planning with partners.

Do not overlook the importance of building partnerships with key individuals, including: principal, teachers, custodian, front office staff, food services, counselors, school nurse, data processors, librarian, security officers, etc. Some of the most important relationships to develop are with the school in order to maintain a consistent and cohesive connection between the instructional day and the afterschool program. Make sure you get to know the school site administrators if you do not know them already. Understand how they will provide support, identifying their expectations for the program, and ensure that all school leaders are familiar with the program. Maintain consistent communication with school leaders by scheduling regular meetings with administrators as well as attending staff and departmental meetings.

The key to success is engaging the school leaders, administrators, and staff from the beginning to build the capacity of the program. Keep the lines of communication open and clearly articulate the vision and expectations for the program, while also noting their expectations and considering their ideas as a part of the greater objective. Also, become familiar with the other afterschool clubs and programs currently in existence and begin to build relationships with them.

Another important source of partnership to consider is community organizations. By bringing together community



organizations with school districts, programs can take advantage of multiple resources and extend curriculum to include even more opportunities. Afterschool programs can offer residents in the community an opportunity to volunteer their time and expertise to help students achieve academic standards and master new skills. Service learning is another great way to engage community members, giving them a chance to get to know what the program is about and the students involved. With students supporting community groups through service learning, it is a great way for those community groups to give something back to the program. The engagement with the community also gives students an opportunity to explore different career fields and create personal relationships with members of the community they would not have gotten to know otherwise. Students also get a better understanding of what their community means to them and can take away a more positive image of where they come from than they did previously. If a program is highly visible in the community, it has a much greater chance of being supported by those individuals and groups. Collaborative partnerships can also ensure that the children attending a program benefit from the collective resources and expertise throughout the entire community.

## Helpful Resources:

Findyouthinfo.gov

Collaboration Center: <http://www.findyouthinfo.gov/collaboration.shtml>

California Afterschool Network, *Quality After School Partnerships Guidebook*: <http://www.afterschoolnetwork.org/article/guide-quality-after-school-partnerships-case-studies-effective-ases-21st-cclc-partnership>

Kretzmann, John P. and John L. McKnight, *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets* (1993): <http://www.abcdinstitute.org/publications/basicmanual/>

## DOCUMENTATION: FORMS, FILES, AND DATA COLLECTION

This may sound basic, but instituting a clearly outlined procedure concerning securing and maintaining appropriate documentation, forms, records, and completing evaluations is a solid foundation for smooth day-to-day operations. You will need forms for such things as: enrollment, emergency contact information, photo and/or video releases, participant requirements, participants' daily sign in/out, monthly attendance, behavior contract for discipline, and special incident reports. Equally important are the policies and procedures for completing the forms and who is responsible for each item. Having these forms and procedures in place at the beginning of your program can save you from encountering issues down the road. Consider how technology can make tracking of data, especially enrollment, easier.

Things to keep in mind:

- ✓ How will the forms be distributed? (Mail, email, in-person, sent home with student, etc.)
- ✓ Who will distribute the forms?
- ✓ How will the forms be collected?

- ✓ How will the program gain access to student records?
- ✓ Who is in charge of which forms?
- ✓ Is there a definitive plan for early releases or weather delays that has been distributed?
- ✓ Who contacts the school to learn absentee information?
- ✓ Who is tracking snack information?

Federal legislation mandates how student information can be used and shared. Called the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record but allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to some parties under certain circumstances. It will be important to understand FERPA rules when undertaking data collection that requires education records.

### Helpful Resources:

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

Harvard Family Research Project, Out-of-School Time Evaluation Methods and Design Resources: <http://hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/publications-resources?topic=34>

## SAFE SPACE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Federal and state policy has long supported the basic requirements that afterschool programs conduct programming in safe and supportive environments. Federal legislation supports the provision of services for children, youth, and their families in elementary and secondary school-site settings or at other locations that are at least as available and accessible as the school site. Iowa child care licensing regulations have created standards for safe environments for programs serving children from birth to age 12. Some school-based afterschool programs are license-exempt, but such standards represent good practice and should be followed as able even if your program is exempt.

Being intentional and flexible when creating a safe and supportive environment is fundamental to furthering youth involvement in the more formal structures of the program. Transform the program space into a comfortable setting, which also fits the goals of your program. This can be done in a variety of ways, including: ensuring staff conduct themselves as role models for the youth they serve; creating a comfortable lounge area in one corner of the room; providing a conference table where they can come together to meet and plan; ensuring adequate open space in the activity areas; decorating the walls with color and posters of leaders; posting quotes of inspiration; and most importantly, highlighting their activities and experiences through their own words and pictures. The look, feel, and safety of the environment will depend on the age of youth you are serving.



Questions to ask:

- ✓ Is there a fee to use the space?
- ✓ What time can the space be accessed?
- ✓ Who will set up the area and tear down if another group also uses the space?
- ✓ Who will have the responsibility of opening and closing the space if it needs to be locked?
- ✓ Can you have food, animals, and messy arts and crafts in the space?

Once space is obtained and the program has started, keep these things in mind to continue to create a welcoming environment:

- ✓ Hang signs around the room with supportive quotes like “Mistakes are okay,” or “Respect Yourself, Respect Others.”
- ✓ Display student accomplishments regularly and ensure that each student is highlighted at least once.
- ✓ Images on the wall should represent the diversity of the group being served.
- ✓ Books collected should encompass a wide range of reading levels and interests.
- ✓ When people enter the room, they know where to go and what is expected of them.
- ✓ Youth, staff, and others feel comfortable interacting with each other.
- ✓ Staff represent students served or are provided training on being culturally competent to ensure that students participating feel welcomed and involved.
- ✓ Everyone speaks respectfully to one another.
- ✓ All participants are comfortable asking questions, participating in conversations, and sharing their thoughts.
- ✓ Each participant has a positive role in the group.
- ✓ There is a consistent response when rules are broken.
- ✓ Conflicts are managed through talking, and harsh statements are avoided.
- ✓ No student is mocked when they fail to accomplish a task; rather, they receive support and encouragement from staff and other participants.

### Helpful Resources:

Iowa Department of Human Services, Child Care Regulations: [http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/Consumers/Child\\_Care/LicensingRegs/CCRegs.html](http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/Consumers/Child_Care/LicensingRegs/CCRegs.html)

Iowa Safe and Supportive Schools: <http://safesupportiveschools.ed.gov/index.php?id=01>

Iowa’s Quality Rating System: <http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/iqrs/>

## LICENSING

Licensing requirements for afterschool programs vary by state. In Iowa, if your program is church-run or school-run, you may be exempt from specific licensing requirements. Otherwise, your afterschool program will be required to demonstrate compliance with a set of state requirements. For school-age programs, these will include issues such as food-handling, child sign-in and sign-out procedures, building cleanliness, child-to-staff ratios, and space requirements. Contact your regional Department of Human Services contact for more information about licensing requirements for your specific program.

### Helpful Resources:

Child Care Licensing Contacts:

[http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/docs/3.14.11\\_DaycareMap.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/docs/3.14.11_DaycareMap.pdf)

Iowa's Quality Rating System:

<http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/iqrs/>

## TRANSPORTATION

Transportation may also be an issue that the program needs to address. Since transportation is a key component for program start-up, it is important to look into what options are available in your community early on in the planning stage. Depending on your program location, transportation may be a small detail or a large part of the budget. Through your community needs assessment and mapping of current programs, you should have an idea of what times parents could provide the transportation, or if there is a way to partner with other programs for transportation. As many programs are located in highly rural areas, there may already be a school bus that runs later in the day to drop off students who are involved in sports or other activities.

Other ideas include purchasing a van that can be shared with other programs, planning program in areas where participants live so they can walk, or asking local businesses to donate funds. A local bus company or the school may also be willing to give you a reduced price. Getting support of community members and the school when approaching the bus company may make them more likely to donate their time or establish a lower rate. Another source of potential transportation is faith-based organizations or service groups that maintain vans for use mainly on the weekends or for specific trips. Those organizations may be willing to allow the program use of their vans during the week. Transportation tends to be one of the hardest components of programming, so make sure this is something that is a priority right from the start.

### Helpful Resources:

National Center for Safe Routes to School: <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org>

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, School Bus Safety: <http://www.nhtsa.gov/School-Buses>

## STAFFING

The requirements and expectations for your staff will vary based on the type of programming being offered. Hiring staff who have a genuine interest in working with youth, understand the philosophy of youth development, and advocate for youth's interests and needs are basic attributes of good afterschool programming staff. The most successful programs will hire individuals who have a bachelor's degree in a field like education, counseling, or administration. An ability to lead groups and individuals, positive interaction with students, and organizational skills are all qualities to look for when hiring strong staff. Also try to keep a low participant to staff ratio in order to better develop relationships and offer quality one-on-one time with the participants. The Iowa Afterschool Alliance suggests a 1:10 to 1:15 ratio for youth age 6 and up and 1:8 to 1:12 for programs serving children age 6 and under.

Having the budget to hire experienced staff may be a challenge for your program at this time. You should still look for quality staff, but you may need to get creative. For example, if the program is geared toward youth development and mentoring, your best choice for staff may be college students or older high school-age students who can lend their own experiences to the relationships with the students. If your program has a science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) focus, think about asking science teachers, 4-H leaders, or local STEM employees to work with the program. Also look into any opportunities to have an AmeriCorps State or AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) volunteer be a part of your staff, as they can be a great resource that is often overlooked.

Background checks should be completed with all staff members before they are hired. As a program, you may also need to discuss the role that interns have in the program, whether they will be paid positions or strictly volunteer, and what kind of responsibilities they will be given.

Regular staff meetings with agendas to keep the meeting focused and remind staff of program goals are also a great idea because they remind everyone of what the program should be working toward as well as give staff time to raise concerns or share success stories. Remember that monetary incentives are not typically the reason that staff are attracted to programs. For most, it is more about the opportunity to enrich student academic and social opportunities, work with other supportive staff, and flexibility to develop their own lesson plans and structure instructional time. If they feel staff, like participants, have a voice within the program, they are more likely to put forth their strongest effort and stay with the program.

### Helpful Resource:

The After-School Corporation (TASC), *Identifying Staffing Needs and Recruiting Qualified After-school Staff*: <http://www.afterschoolresources.org/kernel/images/tascrec.pdf>

## TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Another key element to success is training, both initial and ongoing. Based on the programming available, the areas of training can include: training in academic areas, including alignment with the instructional day, content standards, and specific subject areas; staff management; team building; forms, policies, and procedures; youth development; conflict resolution; and emergency procedures. Staff should also have training that addresses physical, mental, emotional, and social outcomes for youth. Conferences and expert-led workshops are great resources for professional development and can give leaders and staff new ideas on how to do their job.

Professional development is often a challenge due to lack of funding and time constraints. It doesn't have to be a distinct activity on a Saturday, however. Professional development can often be structured around organization and management issues. Staff should have access to school-based professional development and be highly encouraged to attend, if possible. These opportunities should be shared across school and community sites. Also look for online training opportunities that may be free of charge and less time-consuming than traveling to a full-day meeting or conference. The Iowa Afterschool Alliance releases a monthly newsletter, The Afterschool Advisor, which provides practitioners a listing of training opportunities statewide. Sign up for the Advisor at [www.iowaafterschoolalliance.org](http://www.iowaafterschoolalliance.org).

### Helpful Resources:

Center for Afterschool Education, Foundations Inc. Afterschool Academies: Guidebook for Action:

[http://www.cnyd.org/home/documents/Afterschool\\_Academies\\_Guidebook\\_for\\_Action.pdf](http://www.cnyd.org/home/documents/Afterschool_Academies_Guidebook_for_Action.pdf)

Community! Youth Concepts: [www.cyconcepts.org](http://www.cyconcepts.org)

Iowa Afterschool Alliance: [www.iowaafterschoolalliance.org](http://www.iowaafterschoolalliance.org)

Iowa Department of Human Services Child Care Provider Training Registry: <https://ccmis.dhs.state.ia.us/trainingregistry/>



## SCHEDULING

Coordinating hours of operation with the school calendar is important in scheduling afterschool activities. Your program needs to create a schedule clearly outlining the time, location, and topic of each activity, along with a respective lesson plan. Consider also how students will transition from school to the afterschool program, and also from activity to activity. Scheduling needs to take into account various academic, enrichment, recreational, and extracurricular activities that can affect attendance. Rotating activities throughout the schedule is something many programs do in order to attract different students and keep them coming back.

The schedule should also reflect the needs to the community; when does it work best for program components that involve community organizations? Schedules should also include time at the beginning and end of the program to check students in and out. A rotation of staff should be developed, so that all get to know the students as they come in, as well as what happens with the student when they leave the building. Copies of any schedules should be posted in the site and school, as well as being made available to all school staff, parents, students, and partners.

### Helpful Resource:

Storm Lake Middle School Afterschool Program activities schedule

<b><u>Monday</u></b> <b>3:45-4:45</b>	<b><u>Tuesday</u></b> <b>3:45-4:45</b>	<b><u>Wednesday</u></b> <b>3:45-4:45</b>	<b><u>Thursday</u></b> <b>3:45-4:45</b>
5th gr. Reading Rm. Computer Lab 6th gr. Reading Rm. Media Center 5/6 Boys Study Rm. 108 5/6 Girls Study Rm. 103 5th-8th gr. Math Rm. 111 7/8th gr. Reading #311 7th/8th Study Rm. 221	5th gr. Reading Rm. Computer Lab 6th gr. Reading Rm. Media Center 5/6 Boys Study Rm. 108 5/6 Girls Study Rm. 103 5th-8th gr. Math Rm. 111 7/8th gr. Reading #311 7th/8th Study Rm. 221	5th gr. Reading Rm. Computer Lab 6th gr. Reading Rm. Media Center 5/6 Boys Study Rm. 108 5/6 Girls Study Rm. 103 5th-8th gr. Math Rm. 111 7/8th gr. Reading #311 7th/8th Study Rm. 221	5th gr. Reading Rm. Computer Lab 6th gr. Reading Rm. Media Center 5/6 Boys Study Rm. 108 5/6 Girls Study Rm. 103 5th-8th gr. Math Rm. 111 7/8th gr. Reading #311 7th/8th Study Rm. 221
<b><u>Monday</u></b> <b>4:45-5:30</b>	<b><u>Tuesday</u></b> <b>4:45-5:30</b>	<b><u>Wednesday</u></b> <b>4:45-5:30</b>	<b><u>Thursday</u></b> <b>4:45-5:30</b>
Pump Up with Pumpkins Create a Culture Spelling Bee Outdoors	Arcade Book Club Pinata Outdoors	Amazing Art Book Buddies Elementary 1st grade Origami Disc Golf	SAS (BV students) Mystery Game (visit newspaper) (Pitsco) Dragster Outdoors

## COSTS AND FINANCING

Once you have everything planned out, it's important to put everything down to see how much money you will need for the program. Include the costs for not only start-up but program implementation, as well.

### Participant Fees

Fees are consistent charges assessed to participants to cover the cost of programming. While it may seem impractical to charge fees to students of high need, fees must be considered to ensure program sustainability over time. Even programs operating under significant grants find the need to charge minimal fees from the beginning of a program's lifetime to avoid the perception that the program will always have grant resources to continue.

Fees must be well-evaluated and reflect what the market for child care and afterschool services will bear in your community. You do not want to charge more than you need to cover the cost of services or charge more than what parents will pay. Thus, it will be important to first identify the cost of operation (what it will cost to provide the programming) and the number of youth you can reasonably serve.

What if some families cannot afford even a very small fee for service? Some children may qualify for child care reimbursement. Contact your local Child Care Resource & Referral to find out more about reimbursement. Also think about setting aside some of the fees in a "scholarship fund" to cover the cost for those students who are unable to afford the fees. Some community members or organizations may be interested in donating to such a fund, as well.

### Local Partners

If your program has a specific theme, such as technology, approach businesses that may be willing to fund certain aspects of the program. This could be something such as providing guest speakers, giving tours of the company, or providing volunteers. Local businesses may also be able to provide supplies and materials to the program. A local food pantry could donate food at a reduced price. Artists from the area may provide materials or work sessions to students. Don't be afraid to reach out to community partners – not only might it save a few dollars, but your programming will also be more varied and of greater interest to more students.



## Grants

Grants offer the potential for various resources to address the needs of your program. However, there are typically stipulations to grants, and you need to make sure that you are aware of them before applying. For example, some grants may ask for matching funds, evidence of partnerships, a sustainability plan, and reports on progress. Make sure that the program can meet these requirements before applying.

Grant writing also involves a lot of time and planning. Often smaller programs struggle to complete grant writing because of all the work it entails, and in these cases it is very important to plan far in advance so that you have plenty of time to get everything organized and written. Schools often have their own grant writers and may be willing to donate their time if the program meets the district's or school's goals. Be sure to organize your proposal, pay close attention to details, be concise and persuasive, and request reasonable funding. Make sure it is clearly outlined where and how you will be spending the funds and why they are needed. Most importantly, make sure that your program goals and objectives fit those of the grant and that you are clear on their alignment.

According to the Afterschool Alliance, the most accessed funds for afterschool are 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21CCLC) grants, Child Care Development Fund, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and Supplemental Education Services. The Afterschool Alliance maintains a more extensive database that programs can search to find potential funding. The AmeriCorps program through the Corporation for National and Community Service is also an excellent place to look for grants or matches on salary for any AmeriCorps employees the program hires.

### Helpful Resources:

21st Century Community Learning Centers:

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/index.html>

Afterschool Alliance, *Funding and Sustainability*: <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/funding.cfm>

Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies: [http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/Consumers/Child\\_Care/LicensingRegs/CCProviderMap.html](http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/Consumers/Child_Care/LicensingRegs/CCProviderMap.html)

Iowa Grants Guide: [www.iowagrantsguide.org](http://www.iowagrantsguide.org)

## FISCAL MANAGEMENT

Strong fiscal management practices can make or break an organization. Effectively tracking the money spent on providing programs and services (expenditures) and funds coming in to cover those costs (revenues) is important for any organization, but especially for those organizations serving our most vulnerable.

The first step is developing a budget template for tracking revenues and expenditures over time. Here is an example budget from First Children's Financial ([www.firstchildrensfinance.org](http://www.firstchildrensfinance.org)). A worksheet is provided on page 39 that may help you to identify potential sources of revenue.

REVENUE AND SUPPORT		FY _____	%
Revenue	Tuition (Parents)		
	Tuition (Child Care Reimbursement)		
	CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program) Food Reimbursement		
	Registration and Holding		
	Activity Fees		
	Contract Income		
	Other Revenue		
	<b>Subtotal Revenue</b>		
Support	Individual contributions		
	Corporate/Foundation Grants		
	Other Support		
	<b>Subtotal Support</b>		
Other	Events and Fundraising		
	Interest		
	Other Income		
	<b>Subtotal Other</b>		
<b>TOTAL REVENUE AND SUPPORT</b>			
EXPENSES			
	Salaries - Director		
	Classroom Wages and Salaries		
	All Other Wages and Salaries		
	Payroll Taxes		
	Health Benefits		
	Other Benefits		
	<b>Subtotal Salaries and Benefits</b>		

Accounting		
Advertising, Marketing, Promotion		
Bad Debt		
Bank Charges		
Cleaning Contract		
Depreciation		
Dues and Subscriptions		
Food		
Insurance		
Legal		
Licenses		
Mortgage Interest		
Office Supplies		
Printing and Postage		
Program Supplies		
Property Taxes		
Rent		
Repairs and maintenance		
Scholarships and Tuition Discounts		
Special Programming		
Staff development		
Telephone and Internet		
Transportation		
Utilities		
Other		
Other		
Other		
<b>Total Expenses</b>		
<b>Net Surplus/(Deficit)</b>		
<i>Cash Flow</i>		
<i>Less: Principal Payments</i>		
<i>Cash Flow after Principal Payments</i>		
<b>Budgeted Set Aside for Cash Reserves</b>		

As much as possible, nonprofits should strive to minimize overhead or administrative costs, meaning costs that support the entire organization and all programs, rather than just one program. Sometimes these costs are also called indirect costs. Examples of administrative costs are rent for a building, office supplies, labor costs for personnel who support the central office or more than one program, and insurance.

Your statement of financial position depicts the overall value of your organization at a given time (usually at the end of the year), including by reporting your total assets, subtracting your total liabilities and reporting the resulting net assets. Net assets are reported in terms of unrestricted, temporarily restricted and permanently restricted assets. Funders often want to see the statement of financial position and you should be as transparent as appropriate regarding your financial position, revenues, and expenditures.

Roles of participants in an inclusive budgeting process:

- » Board members provide big-picture direction and oversight to the process; they also approve the final budget.
- » The program manager or coordinator develops the plan for the costs needed to accomplish objectives; in some cases, they are also the best people to plan for program-generated income.
- » Development staff plan for the contributed income that can realistically be included as well as the costs they will incur to raise it.
- » The finance manager serves as budget manager collecting input, building the budget workbook, and updating and distributing drafts.
- » The executive director provides overall strategic direction for the budget and activities.

## EVALUATION

Depending on the program, there are different evaluations that may need to be completed. Regardless of funding requirements, good evaluation helps programs improve over time and provides programs a snapshot of their effectiveness over longer periods of time. Thus, evaluation is critical to making sure your program is effective and that you know how to improve if it's not.

It is important to identify the right measures to be tracked from the beginning of the program. Programs should administer surveys to staff, students, families, and school administrators to collect input (pre-

### Helpful Resources:

The Finance Project: [www.financeproject.org](http://www.financeproject.org)

Financial Accounting Standards Board: [www.fasb.org](http://www.fasb.org)

First Children's Finance: [www.firstchildrensfinance.org](http://www.firstchildrensfinance.org)

Iowa Nonprofit Resource Center: <http://nonprofit.law.uiowa.edu/>

Nonprofits Assistance Fund, 10 Step Annual Budgeting Checklist: [http://www.nonprofitsassistancefund.org/clientuploads/directory/resources/budgeting\\_checklist.pdf](http://www.nonprofitsassistancefund.org/clientuploads/directory/resources/budgeting_checklist.pdf)

) and feedback (post-). Pre- and post-surveys are a good way to gauge successes and failures. Qualitative evaluation can be collected through conversations with staff, feedback from families and community members, and school-day teachers. Based on the level of evaluation needed, programs may also use content-specific evaluations forms. Evaluation forms should be as succinct as possible. If too much time is required to complete them, you may get no input instead!

You may also consider speaking early with school administrators to lay out a plan for sharing of student data to evaluate the academic and behavioral progress of students. Programs may face difficulty obtaining student achievement data because of the school's concern about confidentiality. If the school will not share data, programs may need to ask the students directly for the data by having them bring in report cards, testing results, and other reports in order to get the information for evaluations.

## DEVELOP THE CULTURE, PROGRAM, AND CURRICULUM

The afterschool program is an opportune setting to get your students excited about learning while pursuing their own interests. No matter what they are designed to teach, make sure the activities offered are meaningful, fun, and engaging. Guide students in connecting their interests to continued learning and help them to understand the importance of academic achievement, and setting personal goals and high expectations.

### Culture

Purposely structure the program to build a constructive and encouraging culture based on mutual caring and respect for all participants and staff. The staff should make it a priority to get to know the participants and create an environment where the youth feel comfortable asking for guidance and support. It is also extremely important that the program activities are linked directly to youth development and academic outcomes, providing the opportunity for students to learn how to confront difficult situations, unknown settings, and new challenges. It is also very important for the staff to get to know each other so that there is a comfortable work environment. Staff should collectively address issues that arise and have weekly meetings to discuss those issues, as well as successes that the program has.

### Helpful Resources:

Harvard Family Research Project,  
*Out-of-School Time Evaluation  
Snapshot Measurement Tools  
for Evaluating Out-of-School  
Time Programs:* <http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/publications-resources/measurement-tools-for-evaluating-out-of-school-time-programs-an-evaluation-resource>

University of Wisconsin  
Extension, *Building Capacity in  
Evaluating Outcomes Manual:*  
<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/bceo/index.html>

## Program

A balance of enriching and engaging activities is crucial. A successful program offers a variety of academic support, enrichment clubs, reaction opportunities, and youth leadership building. Youth will gravitate toward activities that meet an interest, focus on experiential learning, or meet a personal need.

## Curriculum

The best programs are those that are connected with the school day and content learning standards of the Iowa Core Curriculum. Ideally, staff would participate in district-sponsored training so they understand the links to the instructional day curriculum, how to encourage the students to ask questions, and how to ensure that components like homework assistance are meaningful to the participants. Academic approaches directly aligned with the instructional day result in higher academic achievement and confidence building. Activities anchored in service and project-based learning make the knowledge gained more relevant and real-world based.

- » Activities such as reading aloud and book groups can help improve reading skills, vocabulary, comprehension, interpretation, and, for some students, language proficiency.
- » Math programs may take advantage of math centers, research-based activities, or math that can be found in everyday activities that the students may not realize is math, improving basic skills, word problem analysis, and interpretation of instructions.
- » Science can incorporate research-based activities to demonstrate how a scientific inquiry is conducted, how data is analyzed, and how that data can be used as evidence to confirm or disprove a hypothesis.
- » Art activities should allow the students to create something that can be critiqued by the students themselves or their peers, fostering skills in self expression and interpretation.

The success of your program will rely on the students' sense of belonging and their meaningful participation in the program. This can be achieved by providing opportunities for the students to give input on program design, participate in group decision-making, and the development and practice of leadership skills. For students to feel motivated to attend, they should be involved in the creation and ongoing implementation of the program.

### Helpful Resources:

Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Core Curriculum: <http://www.corecurriculum.iowa.gov/Home.aspx>

Iowa State University Extension 4-H Youth Development, After School Lesson Plans: <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/Afterschool/lessonplans.htm>

SEDL National Center for Quality Afterschool, Afterschool Curriculum Databases: <http://www.sedl.org/afterschool/resources/curriculum.html>

## YOUTH VOICE AND CHOICE

With afterschool programs, youth must have the opportunity to participate in the design, delivery, and evaluation of the program, effectively creating an environment that meets their personal needs and builds critical skills for their future. It is also a great way to get them excited about attending the program and for them to encourage their friends to attend, as well. Think creatively of ways that youth can be involved in the planning process; what would they want most from an afterschool program? Put together an interest survey to be distributed to a wide range of students to get feedback on what they would most like to see. Have the students come up with the logo and slogan for the program; create a committee of students who can brainstorm ideas on how to keep the program going successfully; engage them in a service learning project with reflections being shared on how the experience affected them and if they would like to do more similar things. There are several ways to involve youth in the planning process, so don't overlook them as a source.

### Helpful Resources:

Afterschool Alliance, *Recruiting and Retaining Older Youth*: [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/issue\\_37\\_recruitingandretaining.cfm](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/issue_37_recruitingandretaining.cfm)

Harvard Family Research Project, *Attracting and Sustaining Youth Participation in After School Program*: <http://www.hfrp.org/evaluation/the-evaluation-exchange/issue-archive/evaluating-out-of-school-time-program-quality/attracting-and-sustaining-youth-participation-in-after-school-programs>



## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

An easy way to engage families is to encourage them to volunteer on-site in some way. This could be once a week to once a year. This gets the parents into the program environment to see what their child is learning. Volunteering could mean chaperoning a field trip, offering their expertise in a specific area, or providing help with homework. Actually getting parents to come in to the program, even with extensive invitations, can be a difficult task. Many parents work multiple jobs or have a language barrier that stops them from coming in. One way to address this issue is to offer programming for the parents. Cooking classes, English as a second language, and GED courses are all things that may attract more parents to come. Depending on the program location, you may even be able to offer job, life, and parenting skills to build parents' capacity to support students' education.

Formal communication with families is also a very important aspect of family engagement. Examples of this are: producing bi-monthly or monthly newsletters targeted to parents; program orientations at the beginning of the year; end of year celebrations; family nights; phone calls; or scheduling individual meetings off-site. Offering all these options will hopefully make a connection to each student's parents possible at least once during the year. It is also a good idea to offer an end of program survey to parents to get their feedback on how the program has affected their child.

### Helpful Resources:

Afterschool Alliance,  
*Afterschool: Supporting Family Involvement in Schools*: [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/issue\\_32\\_parent\\_involvement.cfm](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/issue_32_parent_involvement.cfm)

Barrera, John M; Warner, Laverne, *Involving Families in School Events*: [http://www.redorbit.com/news/education/348612/involving\\_families\\_in\\_school\\_events/index.html](http://www.redorbit.com/news/education/348612/involving_families_in_school_events/index.html)

Peterson, Terry K. and Kimberly Parker, *Facilitating Parental Involvement in Afterschool Programs: Research and Practice*: [www.statewideafterschoolnetworks.net/published/resources/dat/facilitating.doc](http://www.statewideafterschoolnetworks.net/published/resources/dat/facilitating.doc)

TASC, *Increasing Family and Parent Engagement in After-School*: <http://www.tascorp.org/content/document/detail/1455/>

# “What I Wish I Would Have Known In My First Year”

Developed by afterschool professionals with the Cooperative for After School Education (CASE), Harris County (Texas) Department of Education. Find out more about CASE at [www.afterschoolzone.org](http://www.afterschoolzone.org).

1. What I know now about soliciting donations and community support...
  - » Be daring, just ask, and make the request early. Prepare ahead of time.
  - » This is important to keep your program strong.
  - » Present it in a way that shows you cherish the community and that you need them and they need you.
  - » Make a brochure and develop a sponsor letter.
  - » Tap into corporate sponsors.
  - » Have go-sees (go door-to-door). Go out and speak with companies and non-profit organizations.
  - » Tap into your district resources as a starter and make sure you are following district guidelines.
  - » Tag team your staff and get the support of school administrators.
  - » Have a good attitude.
2. What I know now about hiring staff...
  - » Always have a back-up plan.
  - » Look for staff who are energetic, passionate, kid-friendly, creative and committed.
  - » Go after the teachers on campus who have a great rapport with the students.
  - » Hire based on the program's needs, not on the applicant's needs.
  - » Seek diversity and those who are flexible.
  - » Make sure you are clear on your expectations and the expected duties upfront.
  - » Be sure to check their references.
  - » Sometimes you never really know someone until three months into it – don't be afraid to let go of those who are not working out.
3. What I know now about incorporating student voice...
  - » Kids' opinions are always the best and listening to them gives students more of an incentive to come back each year.
  - » Actually listen to what they have to say.
  - » It works best when you let them play a part in developing the club and making some decisions.
  - » Give them a sense of ownership; this will also aid in recruiting others.
  - » Present a safe environment that allows every student to have some say. Everyone needs to feel some sense of autonomy. If they build it, they will come.
  - » Students actually like being asked their opinion; don't just ask one time.
  - » Allow students to take a survey to determine their interests.
  - » A close-knit afterschool culture is essential.

4. What I know now about scheduling and selecting activities...
  - » Check room capabilities first to see the space that is allotted.
  - » Work the schedule within the school schedule, i.e. when it's testing week, provide a lighter afterschool week with less academia.
  - » A large part of it is trial and error, so don't give up.
  - » Allow students to pick the classes they are interested in each semester.
  - » Plan ahead, but still have a solid Plan B.
  - » Incorporate key teachers in this process and the community.
  - » Usually, twice a week per activity works well.
5. What I know now about parental involvement...
  - » Strong parent involvement is highly dependent upon the relationships you build with the parents.
  - » Calling parents helps increase parent participation.
  - » Maintain consistent communication. It will make it easier to ask for assistance when you need it and easier to solve problems that will arise.
  - » It is important to have parents on your side, especially as a member of your community support group (advisory council).
  - » Seek all marketing resources/methods – fliers, face-to-face meetings, emails...It is a big challenge, but so well worth it.
  - » Start with a small activity and ask parents to encourage other parents to attend.
  - » Their time is often limited, so make sure each activity is meaningful.
6. What I know now about choosing vendors...
  - » Research credentials; this can make or break an activity.
  - » Get security and district clearance beforehand.
  - » Research past client satisfaction because what you pay for is not always what they advertise.
  - » Do not assume they will do a great job. You will have to monitor them consistently.
  - » Talk to other site coordinators to see if they have used them before.
  - » Remember, these individuals are sellers. Perhaps start with a trial run first before making a major contract with them.
7. What I know now about recruiting students...
  - » Establish good relationships with them and they'll keep coming back. In fact, they'll probably invite a friend; remember friendship sells.
  - » Talk to teachers to get them to recruit and advertise the afterschool program. This is the backbone for a successful program.
  - » Start early and plan a campaign. Make students a part of the recruitment team.
  - » Be energetic, honest and obtain a target audience to build from.
  - » Continue to recruit, don't just do it for a few weeks. This must remain constant.
  - » Use kids to create PowerPoints, allow them to present during lunch hours, on the campus TV, and on the school announcements.

8. What I know now about selecting staff and keeping them motivated...

- » Once you get staff on board let them know you are grateful and supportive.
- » It is important to work with your business department to make sure they are paid on time.
- » Encourage staff to recommend other great staff members.
- » Remember that most staff work with students because the passion drives them. Use it, explore it, and nurture it.
- » Have staff meetings weekly to get ideas and feedback from staff.
- » Remember to tell them they are doing a great job and engage in friendly conversations to get to know them.
- » Small applications go a long way, i.e. a simple thank you note, candy, a smile, or a personal thank you.
- » Make expectations clear and reward/acknowledge people who meet them.
- » Providing them with food works.
- » Monitor them to see how they get along with children, if possible, before you hire them for your program.
- » Allow staff members to vent, when needed.
- » Have a staff appreciation activity per semester.

9. What I know now about connecting afterschool to the regular school day...

- » Work within the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) and be creative.
- » Get to know the school curriculum director and see how the afterschool program can help them attain those goals.
- » Make sure you build a good relationship with secretaries and custodians.
- » Become familiar with the subjects the students are taking and align with those topics.
- » Get to know the teachers and their curriculum.
- » Meet with teachers during the school day, collect homework, and find out about upcoming tests.
- » Make efforts to meet with school administrators/teachers regularly and participate in school events or host events for the entire school.
- » Keep communication open. Perhaps get on the morning announcements.
- » Email teachers to let them know about the program.
- » Incorporate a graphic arts class where the kids make a monthly newsletter.

10. What I know now about time management and planning...

- » Plan at least one month in advance for big things, i.e. summer programming, showcase events, parent events, etc.
- » Remember a peaceful mind achieves more than a stressed, negative one. Begin each day with positive thoughts and prioritize tasks.
- » Be realistic about what you can accomplish.
- » Remember, it takes time to find a rhythm that works.
- » Remember Murphy's Law exists every day – if something can go wrong, it will. Be prepared by always having a back-up plan.
- » Use technology – it can help make a job easier.
- » Delegate tasks appropriately.

# Useful Checklists

## Before the first day of the program:

- ☐ Familiarize yourself and have a clear understanding of the following documents: Iowa Core Curriculum, outcome measures, and your grant program narrative.
- ☐ Create a compelling purpose and clear vision for the program that can be shared in understandable terms.
- ☐ Be able to articulate your beliefs about the interest and needs of the youth, the role they can play in the program, and how you will include their vision to make it a reality.
- ☐ Create a name/logo/slogan and market it consistently through several media sources (newsletter, posters, announcements, flyers, newspaper, online, etc.).
- ☐ Identify space needed for the program implementation; secure all keys or access codes necessary to gain entrance to the site.
- ☐ Design and create a program board where announcements/updates can clearly be posted.
- ☐ If the space allows, clearly post banners or signs identifying the program so the site is easily found.
- ☐ Post a daily, weekly, or monthly program schedule that clearly outlines activities, times, and locations, as well as the nutritious snack options.
- ☐ Create and distribute enrollment forms.
- ☐ Ensure that the first aid kits are stocked and easily accessible.
- ☐ Have an outline of the program policies and procedures that can easily be referenced.
- ☐ Prepare job descriptions and staffing responsibilities.
- ☐ Hire and orient key staff.
- ☐ Set and post security and emergency plans.
- ☐ Host an orientation for parents and staff.
- ☐ Meet with key stakeholders to present the program and introduce yourself (principal, front office staff, custodians, teachers, students, etc.).
- ☐ Develop a plan on how to include students in the planning processes of the program.
- ☐ Connect with student leaders who can spread the word about the program.

### First day of the program:

- ☐ Make it a top priority to get to know the students.
- ☐ Be sure that all program space is clearly identified.
- ☐ Have attendance sheets for each activity.
- ☐ Provide an orientation guide to all participants.
- ☐ Be sure all enrollment materials have been turned in by all participants.
- ☐ Provide a healthy snack that complies with the USDA's National School Lunch Program.
- ☐ Make sure all program staff are easily recognizable by utilizing name tags or shirts, and having them introduce themselves.
- ☐ Check that staff to student ratios are appropriate.

### First week of the program:

- ☐ Check that the program and staff structure are working.
- ☐ Invite school administrators to visit the program.
- ☐ Provide any information to the school that they may require.
- ☐ Show youth how they can be leaders in the program.
- ☐ Ensure that students know the program is for them and their input is more than welcome.
- ☐ Facility space should be left cleaner than it was when you arrived, especially if it is a shared space.
- ☐ Meet with staff on a regular basis to answer questions, get feedback on progress, and provide additional guidance if needed.
- ☐ Be available during the school day to meet with teachers and other administrators who would like to learn more about the program.
- ☐ Connect with students who would like to take on leadership roles and have the ability to recruit more students.

### First month of the program:

- ☐ Get to know your peer connections through the Iowa Afterschool Alliance, who can offer you support and guidance throughout the program.
- ☐ Reach out to other afterschool programs in the area.
- ☐ Request to attend instructional staff meetings, as well as school board meetings.
- ☐ Identify and contact other student organizations in the district.

- ☐ Speak with teachers and counselors to see if they are interested in taking part in the program, filling in within their area of interest.
- ☐ Using the students in the program, create a marketing campaign.
- ☐ Provide sufficient staff training for core subject areas, program implementation, and other areas that are applicable.
- ☐ Understand your administrative duties such as the process for purchasing and paying for program supplies, processing payroll, and enrollment reporting.
- ☐ Assess whether the students are engaged in intentional learning experiences that contain depth and they find fun.
- ☐ Assess whether staff is organized, knowledgeable, caring, and readily available.

### **Second and third months of the program:**

- ☐ Set up regular meetings with school administrators.
- ☐ Offer more programs that are aligned with the needs of the participants.
- ☐ Meet with school counselors to identify students who need additional assistance with homework, tutoring, or college prep if applicable.
- ☐ Identify program ideas from each grade level participating.
- ☐ Formalize leadership opportunities.
- ☐ Expand the program with new community partnerships.
- ☐ Collect necessary attendance data required by your grant.
- ☐ Visit other afterschool sites to see first-hand how other programs are running.
- ☐ Attend additional training as needed.

### **Ninety days and forward:**

- ☐ Continue to look for other enrichment programming available.
- ☐ Invite local businesses, leaders, and organizations to speak with the participants in your program.
- ☐ Continue planning: stay organized, form priorities, identify goals, implement performance measures.
- ☐ Celebrate and advertise any successes, no matter how small, with participants, staff, and key stakeholders.

# Iowa Afterschool Alliance Standard Categories and Corresponding Indicators of Quality Afterschool Programs

## STANDARD CATEGORIES

- » Positive human relationships
- » Appropriate indoor and outdoor environments
- » Effective programming
- » Strong partnerships
- » Effective administration
- » Effective staffing and professional development
- » Youth development principles and practices
- » Outcome measures
- » Fiscal management
- » Advocacy

## CORRESPONDING INDICATORS

### Positive Human Relationships

- » Staff relate to all children and youth in positive and respectful ways; staff are dedicated to having fun and being involved; staff model personal interest in youth; allow for one-to-one time with all youth; staff connect in ways that support youths' feelings and ideas.
- » Staff encourage youth to interact positively with peers, families, community, school, and afterschool staff; children demonstrate good conflict resolution skills; staff and youth develop a plan for policies for behavior; staff seek input from youth in order to determine both the cause and solution of conflicts and negative behavior; staff use positive techniques to guide the behavior of children and youth.
- » Staff respond appropriately to the individual needs of children and youth; staff work to accommodate youths' needs through meetings with parents, teachers, and youth; program builds upon children and youths' individual strengths; staff interact with children and youth to help them learn; staff support children's success in learning.
- » Staff provide opportunities for meaningful engagement of participants' family members; staff and families interact with each other in positive ways; staff provide regular communication and support services for parents; staff use arrival and departure as information sharing time with parents.
- » Staff are patient, fair, and listen to each other and youth; show respect for all staff and students and model positive relationships.
- » Adult-to-youth ratio is between 1:10 and 1:15 for youth ages six and older; adult-to-child ratio is between 1:8 and 1:12 for children under the age of six.

- » Staff encourage youth to make choices and become more responsible.
- » Staff are sensitive to the culture and language of children and youth; staff model inclusion/equity values in their work; program environment is affirming/inclusive of many identification groups.

## Appropriate Indoor and Outdoor Environments

- » The program's indoor space meets the needs of children and youth; environment is suitable for all offered activities; adequate materials and supplies are available; a wide variety of books, games, and art supplies are available; indoor space allows children and youth to take initiative and explore their interests.
- » The outdoor play area meets the needs of children and youth and the equipment allows them to be independent and creative; the outdoor play area is clean, safe, and hazard-free; access to outdoor program space is supervised during program hours.
- » Program staff provide an environment that protects and enhances the health and development of children and youth; a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment is provided; environment supports mutual respect, rapport, and fairness; the physical safety and security of children and youth are protected; during hours of operation, an adult oversees entering and exiting of members and visitors within a safe program space.
- » There are a variety of spaces (small group, large play areas, quiet areas); planned cozy area available in other programming space locations; spaces are available in program to promote quiet reflection, conversations, and safe interactions.
- » The temperature is easy to manage and the space has adequate ventilation, noise and light levels.
- » Regular safety checks (indoors and outdoors) of equipment are conducted; daily upkeep of all routine care furnishings is maintained; indoor and outdoor equipment meets safety standards and is inspected, modified, and documented.
- » Written emergency procedures are readily available to staff.
- » At least one first aid kit and fire extinguisher are accessible and visible from program area.
- » Site is physically accessible to youth/staff/families with disabilities.

## Effective Programming

- » Children and youth can choose from a wide variety of activities including free time; learning opportunities are available for youth to belong and form friendships and to develop personal responsibility, self direction, dance, music, leadership, problem solving, character, communication, healthy lifestyles, cooperation, safety, physical activity, theatre, art, civic engagement, literacy, career/workforce, teamwork, technology, nutrition, social, emotional, and cultural skills.
- » Balance of academics, homework assistance, and enrichment programming exists; programs/activities are designed to allow youth to master at least one program component in academic and non-academic areas.
- » The daily schedule is flexible and offers a favorable social and emotional climate, physical security, independence, stimulation and youth-centered, age-appropriate activities to meet the needs of all children and youth.
- » Activities reflect the mission and goals of the program and promote the development of all the children and youth in the program.

- » Staff have all materials and supplies ready to begin all activities; there are sufficient materials to support program activities; activities are planned with enough materials and staff members are prepared to lead activities.
- » The program serves healthy foods and drinks that meet the nutrition needs of children and youth.
- » Participants learn about and experience diversity.
- » Program provides opportunities where participants' work can be showcased; youth contributions and accomplishments are acknowledged.
- » Opportunities to learn through experiential learning (do-reflect-apply) and real world contexts are available; strategies to engage students in learning are implemented.
- » Established schedules are known to staff, participants, and families; complete program schedules are posted prior to the beginning of the program cycle and are kept up-to-date.
- » Programming is based on best practices derived from child and youth development research.
- » Staff and youth learn to recognize/challenge stereotypes, biases, and discrimination; activities/curriculum introduce youth to groups with different backgrounds/experiences than their own; activities/experiences increase knowledge/connection to youth culture, language, gender, and other identification groups.
- » Daily time for outdoor play is part of the schedule.

## Strong Partnerships

- » A plan for family and community involvement is developed, activated, reviewed, updated, and supported; program involves families and community in program events and decision-making, planning, and implementing roles.
- » Program provides families with information about community resources to meet their needs; staff communicate with family about youth experiences and activities.
- » Program builds partnerships as part of sustainability efforts with youth, families, municipal government, businesses, organizations, and institutions for strengthened funding, expanded volunteering, increased program quality, broadened resources and materials, and visible advocacy for the program.
- » Program provides opportunities for literacy and educational experiences for families and participants; program strengthens family/youth relationships and communication.
- » Youth are involved in the community through planning and participating in service learning projects; links are built between youth and community.
- » Program information is regularly communicated (across language groups) with families, community partners, and schools to coordinate support and opportunities for youth; staff, families, and schools share information to encourage and support the development of youth.
- » Program collaborates with the mission and vision of local schools to support program development.
- » Program coordinates staff development activities with those of school and community partners.
- » Program collaborates with other afterschool programs.
- » Programs are tailored to address community and/or neighborhood needs.
- » Program stakeholders, partners, and staff communicate program's vision, purpose, and goals in many settings across the community.

## Effective Administration

- » Staff/child ratios and group sizes permit the staff to appropriately meet the needs of children and youth.
- » A fiscal infrastructure/management system is developed that includes an approved budget, periodic review of budget, and appropriate tracking of expenses and record keeping.
- » Afterschool opportunities are considered as extended learning time that complements the school day; strong links to the school day are established; learning standards are connected to afterschool program; learning opportunities in afterschool program are connected to but different from school day.
- » Strategies for program improvement and staff development are employed that are based on regular assessment of youth outcomes, staff performance, and/or program quality.
- » Program policies and procedures are available to, and responsive to, the needs of children, youth, and families in the community.
- » Staff (paid, volunteer, and substitute) receive appropriate support and communication opportunities to make program effective and efficient and to share new professional ideas; staff from different program offerings meet as a group to plan or coordinate prior to the start of a program cycle and regularly during the program cycle.
- » Program policies, procedures, and schedules ensure that staff, youth, and parents understand expectations; approved safety and health plans and procedures are developed, implemented, and shared with staff, youth, and family members.
- » Effective arrival and dismissal procedures are developed, managed, and shared with staff and families; clearly defined, written organization policies are on how to enter and exit building are posted and shared.
- » Program policies and procedures are in place to protect the safety and health of the children and youth.
- » Staff (paid, volunteer, and substitute) are given an orientation to the job before working with children and youth.
- » Complete and current enrollment and registration documents for all participants are on file including emergency information for each participant.
- » All required fire and safety drills are conducted regularly; emergency plans are easily accessible and rehearsed.
- » Staff, substitutes, and volunteers are recruited, screened, provided orientation, effectively managed, and trained regularly and consistently.
- » Program develops a long-term plan for sustaining the afterschool program; leaders involve participants, families, staff, and board members in long-term decision making and planning.
- » Staff have passed background check.
- » Program has a written statement of mission, vision, and goals.
- » Program has an effective marketing strategy that publicizes the program and its achievements within the school and broader community.
- » Fee structure allows for any family to participate in the program.

## Effective Staffing and Professional Development

- » Program staff (administrator = overall direction of the program; director = daily operations of the program; support staff = supervision and guidance of children in the program under the direction of the director) receive training and attend ongoing professional development activities both within and outside of the organization that support their own growth; program staff maintain current knowledge of field.
- » Program support staff have training in child and youth development, planning activities, community outreach, service learning, group guidance, and/or working with families; a majority of support staff have one or more years of experience.
- » Mentoring and training support working with diverse populations; program staff and volunteers are culturally aware in working with participants.
- » Program staff (administrator, director, support staff) are trained in CPR, first aid, universal precautions, and mandatory child abuse reporter training; updated listing of staff who are CPR and first aid certified is readily accessible.
- » Program employment includes benefits and competitive wages; program pays staff for planning time (developing and preparing activities) and to complete paperwork.
- » Program administrator/director assesses job performance and satisfaction among support staff and volunteers and makes improvements where necessary; program administrator/director gives feedback and is a role model to improve staff performance; support staff can request guidance from program administrator/director.
- » Program administrator has a degree in child or youth development or a related field, including coursework in administration; program administrator has a minimum of two years of relevant job experience.
- » Program director has a degree in child or youth development or a related field; program director has a minimum of two years of relevant job experience.
- » Program provides professional development opportunities related to diversity/equity.
- » Program staff are knowledgeable about youths' different learning styles/special needs and adapt programming accordingly.

## Youth Development Principles and Practices

- » Youth have opportunities to explore, plan, and make choices based on their skills and interests; participants are empowered with freedom, and provided peer and/or adult support, to plan their time and pursue interests; youth have multiple opportunities to make plans for projects and activities.
- » Youth development principles are infused into programming; youth have opportunities to partner with adults; staff share ownership of most activities with youth, providing guidance and facilitation; participants are involved in program planning and development; program views youth as individuals with strengths and skills; staff support youth as partners.
- » Program affords participants opportunities to express their ideas, concerns, and opinions; youth voice and ownership of program is encouraged; youth voice is respected/valued.
- » Program activities enable participants to develop life skills, a sense of belonging, resiliency, and self-esteem.

## Outcome Measures

- » Plans for participant and program evaluation include gathering both qualitative and quantitative data; program evaluation includes formal and informal feedback from stakeholders (youth, parents, teachers, staff, advisory council, etc.); youths' interests, needs, and satisfaction with program are regularly assessed.
- » Program uses objective data to measure participants' learning progress, creates an internal method for assessing student engagement levels, and regularly assesses youth outcomes; decision-making is based on student performance.
- » Program has measurable program goals/objectives that are aligned with the program vision, mission and identified needs; short and long term goals are defined with all program partners.
- » Program makes evaluation summaries available to the general public and community stakeholders.
- » Program evaluates for continuous improvement, identifying additional resources, and assessing program effectiveness; buy-in for the continuous improvement process and evaluation is secured from the advisory council or governing body and all stakeholders.
- » Program participates, when available, in local, state, and national review and recognition systems.

## Fiscal Management

- » Funding is diversified and sustainable to operate within a budget.
- » Program seeks financial support from parents, businesses, government agencies, private foundations, individuals, or other available resources.
- » Budget mirrors vision, mission and goals.
- » Program updates and monitors budget on regular basis.
- » Community linkages, partnerships, and connections support enhanced services; strong partnerships exist to support the program and services from which all partners benefit; long-term alliances ensure continued funding is in place.
- » Program administrators understand policy issues and funding streams.

## Advocacy

- » Program increases public and policymakers awareness of need for a continuum of services that support youth learning outside of school time; program increases public awareness of needs of school-age programs; program advocates for school-age programs as part of student learning.
- » Constituency building activities occur intentionally and effectively; program is actively involved in and leads community mobilization efforts to affect funding levels and policies; program partnerships, linkages, and connections include community outreach and advocacy as a goal.
- » Evidence of program quality is used to build the case for the necessity of afterschool as part of a larger field-building effort.

# Year One Timeline

(Assuming funding has been secured)

Adapted from Iowa State 4-H Extension Program Start-up Timeline

Month	Done	Activity
January-February		Program planning group meets to assign members work assignments; curriculum planning begins; policies and procedures of other programs are researched; begin developing promotional idea; budget and evaluation committees formed; bring school staff up-to-date on project development.
March		Program planning and work groups continue to meet; parent evaluation created and distributed; policies and procedures from other programs reviewed; service providers through grant meet and decide on contracts; advertise for project director if one has not already been hired; report on curriculum and evaluation development.
April		Program planning and work groups continue planning; policies and procedures decided on; curriculum report; evaluation measures reviewed; space identified for project and staff use; parent survey data compiled.
May		Program planning and work groups continue to meet; interview and hire project leader; advertise for staff; review staff training plan; continue advertising program; complete student sign up if desired.
June-July		Program planning group meets, work groups if necessary; hire staff; continue advertising.

Month	Done	Activity
August		Program planning group meets; child sign-up; advertising continues; program staff meet with school day staff and community partners.
Late August-December		Program begins; evaluation tools completed; program group meets; address issues that arise; collect data as needed.
December		Midway checkpoint; ensure data collection is occurring; ask students' and parents' opinions regarding the program.
January-May		Program continues with any adjustments needed; program planning and work groups continue to meet; begin searching for funding if necessary.
May		Evaluation of all program components; program planning group continues to meet; plan for next year or summer program if applicable.
June		Reports completed and distributed to appropriate sources; continued planning for next year.
July		Summer programming; celebration of successful completion of first year!

# Budget Worksheet

Adapted from “A Community Learning Center Budget Worksheet (Appendix B)” of *Keeping Schools Open as Community Learning Centers: Extending Learning in a Safe, Drug-Free Environment Before and After School*, by A. de Kanter, L.Fiester, A.Lauland, & V. Romney (1997), original available online (<http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/LearnCenters/append-b.html>).

Funding Needs	Estimated Cost	Potential Sources	Notes
<i>Start-Up Planning and Development</i>			
» Community Needs assessment			
» Focus Groups			
Surveys and/or Polls			
Program Staff			
Printing Costs			
Renting/buying/building/modifying a space			
Recruitment and Training of Staff			
Advertising Campaign			
Start-Up Subtotal			
<i>Ongoing Planning and Development</i>			
Program Materials			
Salaries-Instructional Staff			
Salaries-Administrative Staff			
Salaries-Fringe Benefits			

Contractual Services
Office and Classroom Supplies
Custodial Services
Transportation
Utilities
Telephone/Internet/Fax
Computers and Other Technology
Insurance
Staff Travel
Professional Development
Ongoing Planning and Development Subtotal

**TOTAL COSTS**

(Start-up and ongoing planning  
and development)

# Sustainability Checklist

This checklist provides an overview of critical characteristics of programs with a higher likelihood of program sustainability. Program sustainability is defined as providing a consistent level of service quality and capacity despite funding fluctuations and changing policy priorities.

Adapted from Iowa State 4-H Extension Sustainability Worksheet

- ☐ Leader clearly established the program's vision and mission.
- ☐ Leaders are committed to long-term project goals.
- ☐ Leaders plan within the first two years for sustaining the project.
- ☐ Leaders continue planning for sustainability.
- ☐ Leaders have developed and are following a realistic project plan.
- ☐ Leaders have identified multiple sustainability plans.
- ☐ Community organizations are involved in program leadership.
- ☐ Local decision makers are collaborators.
- ☐ Representatives from businesses are collaborators.
- ☐ Community service agencies are project collaborators.
- ☐ All collaborators are involved in project design.
- ☐ Collaborators are involved in program implementation.
- ☐ Collaborators are involved in evaluations.
- ☐ Collaborators contribute to program resources when appropriate.
- ☐ Collaborators take part in program successes.
- ☐ Collaborators have clearly defined roles in helping the program succeed.
- ☐ There is a shared vision among the program and collaborators.
- ☐ The program is part of the collaborators' shared vision or mission.
- ☐ Community needs are regularly addressed.
- ☐ Resources of the community are regularly assessed and utilized by the program.
- ☐ Program goals are matched with community needs and resources.
- ☐ The program addresses the diversity of the community.

- ☐ Community members are given the opportunity to participate in program design and implementation.
- ☐ The program addresses key community needs.
- ☐ The program has strong support of local government officials.
- ☐ Evaluation plans are implemented before the start of the program.
- ☐ Project effectiveness is demonstrated through program evaluations.
- ☐ Evaluations are conducted on a regular basis.
- ☐ Evaluations are used to modify problem areas of the program.
- ☐ Project successes are shared with the community, businesses, and funders.
- ☐ Marketing strategies are in place and successful.
- ☐ Current funding for the program is sufficient.
- ☐ Funding is available on a long-term basis.
- ☐ There are plans in place to secure additional funding.
- ☐ There is someone assigned to grant writing.
- ☐ There is adequate funding for hiring and maintaining quality staff.
- ☐ Staff are involved in program design, evaluation, and decision making.
- ☐ Staff turnover is low.
- ☐ Staff are committed to project goals, mission, and vision.
- ☐ Staff are flexible and creative.
- ☐ Staff are recognized and rewarded for quality work.
- ☐ Adequate training is provided for staff members.
- ☐ Staff represent the community being served.

# Suggested Components of Student and Parent Handbook

*Please note that the items below are just a suggested list. You should design student and parent handbooks to meet the unique needs of your program.*

## A. Welcome

1. Purpose, goals, and outcomes of the afterschool program
2. Registration and enrollment
3. How the afterschool program is different from student's school day (enrichment, unique opportunities, class size, parent involvement, etc.)
4. How the afterschool program supports and communicates with student's school day program
5. Program duration
6. Daily, weekly, and monthly schedules
7. School holidays, early release days, and inclement weather
8. Fieldtrip information and requirements
9. Eligible students
10. Fee structure (if applicable)

## B. Student Health and Safety

1. Code of Conduct
  - i. Expectations for student behavior
  - ii. Student leadership development and opportunities
  - iii. Social skills
  - iv. Consequences for poor choices
  - v. Appropriate Internet and computer usage
  - vi. Dress code (appropriate footwear, clothing, etc.)
2. Wellness
  - i. Nutritional snacks and availability of drinking water
  - ii. Proper nutrition
  - iii. Recreation and physical activity
  - iv. Dental health
  - v. Tobacco, drug, and alcohol prevention
  - vi. Resistance behaviors (with regards to poor choices, peer pressures, risky behaviors, and bullying, etc.)
  - vii. Medicine, student illness, and injuries, etc.

3. Transportation
  - i. Check-out procedures
  - ii. Parent drop-off and pick-up procedures
  - iii. To whom students are release and parent visitation
  - iv. Bus transportation procedures
  - v. Bus safety actions procedures
4. Emergency Procedures
  - i. Practice drills
  - ii. Maintaining emergency contact information
  - iii. Inclement weather procedures

#### **C. Student Progress**

1. Goals and objectives of the program
2. Homework and tutoring
3. Enrichment opportunities
4. Communication on student progress with regular school day teachers
5. Communication with parents and student on student progress
6. Parent permission to obtain grades and standardized test results from student's school (should also be included in registration form)
7. Evaluation data collected to determine program's effectiveness (grades, attendance, surveys, standardized test results, etc.)
8. Goals students set for themselves
9. How the program will be evaluated
10. Accommodations for students with IEPs and culturally diverse needs
11. Student discipline records and progress

#### **D. Attendance**

1. Transition from regular school day to program
2. Maintaining enrollment or inactive status
3. Incentives and benefits of regular attendance

#### **E. Parent Engagement**

1. Programming specifically for families
2. Opportunities for parents
3. Communication in various languages
4. Opportunities for parent feedback and input
5. Resources for parents
  - i. Outside agencies
  - ii. Community resources
6. Communication on sustainability plan
7. Community linkage and work with partners

# Suggested Components of Staff Handbook

The staff handbook may contain many of the components of the student and parent handbook or may be a supplement to that handbook. *Please note that the items below are just a suggested list. You should design staff handbooks to meet the unique needs and expectations of your program.*

## A. Student Achievement – Expectations for Staff

1. Program goals and objectives
2. Lesson planning
3. Terms of employment
4. Schedules, early release, and holidays
5. Enrichment opportunities
6. How progress toward goals and objectives will be measured through continuous assessment and evaluation
7. Assessments of student progress
8. Communication of student progress with students, parents, and day school teachers
9. Maximizing student-teacher interactions/instruction
10. Appropriate homework and tutoring practices
11. Program partners and Advisory Council
12. Results of needs assessment
13. Required documentation
  - i. Communications with regular day school staff (formal and informal contacts)
  - ii. Parent contacts
  - iii. Parent involvement activities
  - iv. Student attendance
  - v. Student progress
  - vi. Other

## B. Expectations for Instructional Staff

1. Application process for employment
2. Lesson plans
3. Formal and informal observations, walk-throughs, and performance evaluation
4. Professional learning requirements and additional opportunities
5. Evaluations/feedback/results of poor performance and/or employee disciplinary action (follow district/organization's human resource procedures)
6. Required documentation of time and effort to meet any guidelines
7. Code of Ethics

8. Role in parent engagement
9. Policies
  - i. Conflicts of interest
  - ii. Purchasing procedures
  - iii. Inventory and maintenance of supplies, equipment, and materials
  - iv. Internet and computer usage
  - v. Reporting of suspected child abuse, etc.
  - vi. Process for reporting fraud, waste, and abuse
  - vii. Complaint procedure
  - viii. Non-discriminatory expectations (see Assurances)
  - ix. Instructional staff evaluations and subsequent actions
  - x. Confidentiality requirements
  - xi. Compliance with ADA, IDEA, other Federal regulations/laws

#### **C. Student Safety**

1. Emergency plan, evacuation routes, and practice drills
2. Discipline plan at the student, classroom, and grade level
3. Social skill instruction, anti-bullying strategies, and relationship building with students and parents
4. Transportation procedures, drop off and pick up procedures
5. Student Internet usage
6. Fieldtrip procedures

#### **D. Nuts and Bolts**

1. Obtaining materials and supplies
2. Safeguarding materials, equipment, and supplies
3. Reporting staff absences
4. Staff dress code
5. Observation of copyright laws with copying or using materials

# Suggested List of Agenda Topics for Advisory Council and/or Partner Meetings

Regularly convening an advisory council made up of program stakeholders (i.e. parents, partners, community members, elected officials, and others) provides you an opportunity to develop community-wide buy-in. This is critical to implementing a quality program and sustainability. *Please note that the items below are just a suggested list.*

1. Results of the needs assessment.
2. Program goals and objectives.
3. Basic information about target population, such as the number of students, grade levels, activities, etc.
4. How the program is different from the student's regular school day.
5. How the program supports student achievement.
6. Solicit input, perspectives, and questions from Advisory Council members.
7. Purpose of program and how funding is obtained.
8. Innovative programs in other areas.
9. Have instructional staff share their learning from professional learning opportunities.
10. Invite students to share their experiences and perspectives on the program.
11. Invite students to share their work or projects.
12. Discuss community issues, goals, and initiatives.
13. Conduct a panel discussion with program leaders, school, district, state leaders regarding pertinent issues.
14. Program results and supporting data (not individual student data due to confidentiality issues).
15. Conduct problem solving (brainstorming, setting priorities, planning) sessions regarding community issues and challenges.
16. Sustainability plan.
17. Community resources.
18. Have the evaluator discuss formative and summative evaluations.
19. Examples of researched based activities.
20. Parent involvement or family engagement.

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# **IMPACT** **AFTER SCHOOL**

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM  
START-UP GUIDE