

School's Out, Make it Count

Arizona Quality Standards for Out-of-School Time Programs



Developed by a statewide committee convened
by Arizona Center for Afterschool Excellence and
Valley of the Sun United Way

October, 2013





We're making
it count!



Table of Contents

Using the Standards	4
Vision	6
Why Does Quality Out-of-School Matter?	10
Out-of-School Time Quality Standards	14
I. Safe and Healthy Environments	
II. Positive Relationships	
III. Intentional Programming and Activities	
IV. Equity and Inclusion	
V. Family, School and Community Engagement	
VI. Program Management	
VII. Program Evaluation and Data	
Defining Key Terms	23
How the Standards were Developed	24
Appendix I	25
Resources	26
Quality Out-of-School Time Program Check List	Back Cover

Out-of-school programs can support all youth to develop the tools they need to navigate the world



Using the Standards

The *Arizona Quality Standards for Out-of-School Time Programs* support out-of-school time program providers' reflection on where they are now, opportunities for growth, planning with quality in mind, and measuring success and outcomes for youth.

Based on the fundamental idea that each program has a unique approach to actively assess and meet the needs of youth in the community, these quality standards are intended to foster continuous improvement in a variety of programs across the state of Arizona.

These quality standards are intended to foster continuous improvement



Youth and families are encouraged to use these standards to:

- Understand and articulate what to expect from a quality program
- Make informed decisions when choosing programs
- Identify which program activities and components to look for when visiting a program
- Compare programs to one another using the standards as a guide
- Collaborate with out-of-school time programs for greater impact on youth

Providers are encouraged to use these standards to:

- Plan and develop strategies to incorporate the standards
- Identify and develop strategies for addressing program gaps and maximizing program impact
- Establish benchmarks for program improvement
- Determine effective resource allocation in budgeting and program planning
- Determine areas where partnerships are needed
- Promote individual program strengths and improvements to families, potential funders and community partners

Schools and districts can use these standards to:

- Develop a common language to simplify collaboration efforts between school and out-of-school time
- Collaborate with out-of-school time programs around programming and support for youth
- Establish a baseline of quality across programs in a school or school district
- Develop accountability measures in quality assurance reporting
- Drive conversations about what changes are needed for greater impact on youth
- Use the standards to assess quality if they provide out-of-school time programs

Funders and evaluators can use these standards to:

- Understand and articulate what to expect from a quality program
- Invest in programs that are actively committed to the pursuit of quality
- Collaborate with programs to set benchmarks and indicators to help programs achieve quality
- Establish a baseline of quality across programs
- Develop accountability measures in quality assurance reporting
- Drive conversations about what changes are needed for greater impact on youth



Vision

Youth have access to and actively engage in a diverse range of learning opportunities that prepare them to be successful adults in the 21st Century.

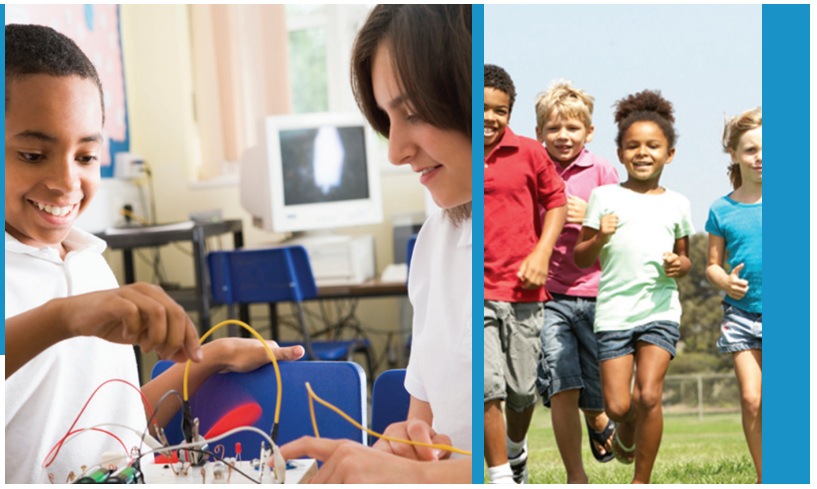
Youth discover who they are, what they love to do, and how they fit into the world

Families, schools, and community organizations each play a role in supporting youth, and out-of-school time programs are a critical component of this system of support. It is in quality programs that youth discover who they are, what they love to do, and how they fit into the world.

Quality **out-of-school** time programs encourage youth to develop a love for **learning**, larger than what can be found in a book or taught in a traditional classroom. They draw connections between the personal interests of youth by promoting community involvement, and putting hands-on project-based learning in the context of their lives, their community, and the world.

Quality out-of-school time programs provide **enrichment**, developmental supports, and opportunities that promote success, increase self-esteem, and prevent risky behaviors. Content-rich intentional programming in out-of-school time, coupled with supportive and caring adults, make a difference — often leading to an improvement in resiliency, and social and emotional development. Quality programs also provide much-needed time for recreation, sports, and games that promote healthy physical development and teambuilding.

Successful programs build on learning in the classroom by translating academic concepts into hands-on activities and personal experiences. For the many visual and tactile learners, simply hearing a description of a new academic concept is not enough. Quality afterschool programs, like quality education, tap into the specific learning styles of youth, and make learning more relevant and hands-on.



Defining Key Terms

Out-Of-School

An inclusive term referring to programming that takes place during the out-of-school time hours, which includes before school, after school, summers, holidays and weekends. It is structured, providing a diverse range of programming to enrich learning experiences and support positive emotional, social and cognitive development in youth.

Learning

Learning is the acquisition of new knowledge, skills or interests through personal experience, practice, or study, or by being taught. Learning doesn't merely come from reading a textbook or being taught by a teacher, rather it can be acquired through a person's own exploration, through sharing information and ideas, or by instruction from another person.

Enrichment

Enrichment refers to expanding on learning with the intention of broadening and deepening knowledge and skills. This can be developing a particular content area or skill in depth or providing greater context and relevance. Enrichment might also connect previously learned concepts to new areas and provide youth with new experiences and opportunities to explore their interests and passions.



School's Out, Make It Count!

In Arizona, an average school year is 175 days

↳ An average school day is 7 hours

↳ Only 21% of a child's waking hours are spent in school

↳ ***Quality out-of-school time programs are key to keeping Arizona youth positively engaged***



Quality out-of-school time programs allow youth to guide program content — giving them a voice and a choice in the activities in which they participate. This level of inclusion and agency results in youth who are far more engaged and invested, and more likely to be successful.

Out-of-school time programs are uniquely positioned to have a significant impact on youth. Utilizing non-traditional methods and a flexible, youth-driven, and hands-on learning environment, out-of-school programs can support **all** youth to develop the tools they need to navigate the world.



Out-of-school time programs are uniquely positioned to have a significant impact on youth

Case Study 1

Brisas Kyrene Kids Club in Tempe prioritizes **building strong relationships with the school** faculty at Brisas Elementary School. Afterschool staff meet regularly with teachers and administrators to discuss how to best meet the needs of students and connect afterschool activities with the learning in the classroom. This collaborative environment leads to positive academic outcomes for participating youth.

Case Study 2

The City of Yuma Housing Authority's Sports Helping Influence Neighborhood Excellence (SHINE) Program is a volunteer-run afterschool program. The SHINE program is dedicated to improving the lives of youth in the Carver Park area, comprised of both high poverty and high crime rates, through physical activities, **character building and leadership development** in the afterschool hours.

Case Study 3

Tucson's Oury Recreation Center KIDCO out-of-school time program teaches teens **essential job skills** through the Junior Leadership Development Program. Junior Leaders navigate the same challenges that they will encounter throughout their careers, such as filling out job applications and interviewing for a position. Teens are given responsibility for planning activities for younger youth and develop concrete leadership skills.

Case Study 4

Girls on the Run in Flagstaff is a nonprofit youth development program that combines running with participant-driven curriculum, with the goal of promoting **self-respect and healthy life choices** for pre-teen girls. As part of the program, girls train to run a 5K and participate in community service. Lessons learned with Girls on the Run provide girls with the tools to make positive choices, avoid risky behaviors, and connect with their community.



Why Does Quality Out-of-School Matter?

How do we effectively prepare youth in a rapidly changing and complex world for college, work and life in the 21st Century?

Enrichment, exploration, and social development

Youth need opportunities to be physically engaged, to grow socially and emotionally as well as academically, and to experiment with new and diverse content. A greater emphasis is now placed on a holistic learning approach for youth with learning no longer being confined to the classroom, and occurring in school, after school, at home and in the community.

With increased pressure on formal education to focus primarily on reading, writing, and math in preparation for standardized tests, the time to teach science, history, the arts, physical education and social and emotional skills in the school day is waning. Quality out-of-school time programs fill this gap, supporting the learning in the school day while simultaneously exposing youth to new concepts and catering programming to their specific passions and skills. Programs serving younger youth encourage them to dabble in a variety of subject areas, while teen programs tend to focus on more specific topics of interest which emphasize college, career and life skills.

Service learning can increase youth personal, interpersonal and social development, increase engagement and motivation, and lead to more positive lifestyle choices and behavior.²⁻³



A study of nearly 3,000 low-income, ethnically-diverse K-8 students, found that those who regularly attended high-quality programs over 2 years showed gains of up to 20 percentiles in standardized text scores, compared to their peers who were routinely unsupervised afterschool.¹

Out-of-school time programs have long been thought of as simply a place to keep youth safe when the school bell rings. But in the 21st Century, they are now a necessary source of additional enrichment, exploration, and social development for all youth. Families are increasingly reliant on out-of-school time programs to provide opportunities for their children to be actively engaged in exploring yet undiscovered talents, gaining new knowledge, and developing critical thinking and communication skills through hands-on, project based activities.



Out-of-school time programs are a powerful tool to help youth develop the skills needed for the 21st Century workplace. Programs develop leadership, communication, and problem-solving skills — traits that are most sought after by today’s employers. Real world experiences and community involvement are commonplace in out-of-school time programs, allowing teens the opportunity to apply what they are learning in relevant context and preparing them for the demands of college, work and life.

The higher a child’s resiliency — the skills and attitudes to help them handle life’s challenges — the better their academic and lifelong success.⁴

There is widespread agreement that while out-of-school time programs can be strong tools for [youth development](#), this is only the case when these programs are of high quality. Quality programs come in a variety of shapes and sizes. There is no one program, style, curriculum, or method that meets the needs of all youth. Rather, a quality program is

one that is a living organism, growing and adapting to meet the needs of all youth. It is a program in which the staff are caring, passionate, creative and energetic. It is a program that collaborates with classroom teachers, families and communities, and introduces youth to new ideas, encouraging them to explore unfamiliar territory.

As the importance of out-of-school time programming in preparing youth for the future has increased, so has the need to develop specific guidelines for “quality” in out-of-school time. Out-of-school time providers, educators, families and policymakers are all seeking ways to enhance quality, measure success and increase positive outcomes for youth.

Defining Key Terms

Positive Youth Development

A comprehensive framework outlining the supports young people need in order to be successful. It emphasizes the importance of focusing on youths’ strengths instead of their risk factors to ensure that all youth grow up to become contributing adults.



Out-of-school time programs are a powerful tool to help youth develop the skills needed for the 21st Century workplace

Developed with input from statewide stakeholders representing out-of-school time providers, educators and policymakers, the *Arizona Quality Standards for Out-of-School Time Programs* is a compilation of out-of-school time standards aimed at providing an answer to the pressing question: *What is Quality in Out-of-School Time?* **This question is addressed in the context of best practices and organized into the following key areas:**

- I. Safe and Healthy Environments**
- II. Positive Relationships**
- III. Intentional Programming and Activities**
- IV. Equity and Inclusion**
- V. Family, School and Community Engagement**
- VI. Program Management**
- VII. Program Evaluation and Data**

Arizona Quality Standards for Out-of-School Time Programs is the first step of a three-step continuous quality improvement process. Steps two and three will build on these standards by focusing on the adoption of program assessment tools to further identify and refine program strengths and areas of improvement. They will

also result in a comprehensive professional development system for out-of-school time program providers and staff.

Youth who meet regularly with their mentors are 46% less likely than their peers to use illegal drugs and 27% less likely to start drinking.⁵

OST programs are in a unique position to rapidly respond to the demands of youth and quickly adapt to implement innovative and best practices that best support their learning styles and areas of interest. Adopting a continuous quality improvement process is a way for programs to

Assess > Design > Do

- **Assess** the quality of programs,
- **Design** strategies and activities that increase quality as well as respond to youth needs and interests, and
- **Do** — i.e. implement these strategies and activities, understanding they may not at first be perfect, allowing the process of Assess > Design > Do to begin again.



Out-of-School Time Quality Standards

To best serve youth, out-of-school time programs should implement continuous improvement systems that are designed to reach high levels of program quality that include, but are not limited to, the following standards. The standards are not intended to dictate policy and practice. They are intended to be a framework and a strong foundation for quality programming.

Each of the standards begins with a guiding principle that defines the intent of the category, followed by the quality standards and examples of how the standards could look in practice. These examples are not meant to be all-inclusive; they but rather an illustration of how the standards can be incorporated. Note that the term “youth” is used to refer to the children served by the program regardless of their age.

I. Safe and Healthy Environments

Key Principle:

Youth experience physically and emotionally safe, healthy and developmentally appropriate learning environments.



1. All staff and volunteers submit to background checks and fingerprint clearance.
2. Staff implements policies, procedures and supervision to maintain safety for all youth.
3. Written health and **safety** policies are provided to families and understood by youth.
4. Healthy lifestyles and behaviors are promoted.
5. Snacks and meals provided are well balanced and nutritious.
6. Youth, families and staff experience a welcoming and supporting environment.
7. The indoor and outdoor space provides an environment of comfort, ownership and respect for youth and their families.
8. The physical space reflects the interests of and displays the work of youth.

Defining Key Terms

Safety

Programs that decrease potential for danger, risk, or injury and are designed with injury prevention in mind. Safe programs promote safe and positive peer group interaction and decrease unsafe or confrontational peer interactions.



Examples of the Standard in Practice:

- Staff is in each room, activity or program space to ensure that all youth are properly supervised.
- The program conducts regular inspections using checklists to ensure the indoor and outdoor environment is clean and free of hazards that can cause injury or illness to youth.
- There is a quiet area for youth who need it.
- Physical health and nutrition activities are a part of daily programming for all youth.

II. Positive Relationships

Key Principle:

Youth benefit from the positive relationships and interactions that are promoted, developed, nurtured and maintained by the program staff and volunteers.



1. All interactions reflect a culture of mutual respect, support and belonging.
2. Verbal and physical interactions amongst youth are positive and respectful.
3. Youth work together and support one another's success.
4. Staff and volunteers model cooperation, conflict resolution and positive relationships with each other.
5. The relationships between staff, volunteers, youth and families are consistent, supportive, nurturing and recognize individual needs.
6. Staff and volunteers treat youth with respect and listen to what they say.



Examples of the Standard in Practice:

- Youth have opportunities to celebrate the accomplishments and strengths of their peers.
- When youth have a conflict with each other, they are able to resolve it without a physical altercation.
- Staff, volunteers, and families routinely share information about how to support individual youth development.
- The program and schedule are structured so that youth, staff, and volunteers have the opportunity to develop close, sustained relationships with each other.

III. Intentional Programming and Activities

Key Principle:

Youth experience a variety of fun and stimulating opportunities for engagement and learning that support positive physical, social, emotional and cognitive development.



1. Youth actively engage in learning activities that promote critical and creative thinking skills.
2. Youth assume leadership roles and contribute to program planning, development, implementation and evaluation.
3. Activities are intentional and are aligned with the program's mission.
4. Youth interests and strengths are reflected in program activities.
5. Program is explicit about the specific physical, social and emotional skills it seeks to develop and what program activities support these goals.
6. Materials and activities are developmentally appropriate and accessible to all youth.

Examples of the Standard in Practice:

- Youth have opportunities to play/work individually as well as collaboratively in a small or large group.
- Most activities are hands-on, interactive, project-based, and/or encourage youth exploration of new concepts that relate to their everyday experiences.
- Staff intentionally plans activities that build upon the specific interests of youth in their program.
- Program goals for youth outcomes are used for backwards planning to develop program activities that support desired outcomes.



IV. Equity and Inclusion

Key Principle:

Youth thrive in the program regardless of their background, including but not limited to race, color, religion, sex, income level, national origin, physical, mental and learning ability, sexual orientation, or gender identity and expression.



1. Youth represent the full diversity of the community, as it applies to the mission of the program.
2. Youth are exposed to **culturally responsive** programming, and the program promotes the development of positive identities, respect for differences and cross-cultural understanding among all youth.
3. Program commits to understand, value and respect the backgrounds and experiences of program youth and their families.
4. The needs of diverse youth that come from varying family experiences and backgrounds are included and emphasized in the professional development of staff, helping staff become culturally competent and responsive.

Defining Key Terms

Culturally Responsive

A term referring to the use of cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse youth to make learning more appropriate and effective for them; it teaches to and through the strengths of these youth.⁶



Examples of the Standard in Practice:

- Activities are adapted for different learning styles and English language development levels to ensure active participation from all youth.
- The program has a written strategy to reach underserved youth, and implements this strategy as capacity allows.
- The program incorporates multicultural activities that explore a diversity of cultures, promote respect for a variety of perspectives, and encourage youth to share about their own culture.
- The major languages represented in the community being served are integrated into program materials and information.

V. Family, School and Community Engagement

Key Principle:

Youth benefit when families, schools and communities are actively engaged in program development and implementation.



1. Program develops and nurtures family, school and community partnerships to leverage resources and support for the youth and families served.
2. Program engages in family, school and community collaborations to plan and implement intentionally designed activities based on youth needs and interests.
3. Out-of-school time academic components and activities compliment and enrich school standards and curriculum.
4. Family relationships and involvement are fostered by the program's meaningful communication with families.
5. The involvement and support of families, community organizations and schools are sought as a means to enhance diverse and engaging programming and activities.

Examples of the Standard in Practice:

- There are established mechanisms for communication with school day administration and staff regarding academic and behavioral progress of youth.
- Programs provide tools and resources for families to reinforce and/or expand on the learning opportunities provided in the program.
- Programs engage community members and families as volunteers.
- Programs consider Arizona Academic Standards and Common Core State Standards when planning program activities.



VI. Program Management

Key Principle:

Youth benefit from effective leadership, strong program management and sound fiscal management.



1. Program embraces a clear mission statement and philosophy that is widely understood and shared among youth, staff, families and the community.
2. Program policies and procedures are reflective and responsive to the needs of all youth and families.
3. Program policies and practices meet ethical and legal standards.
4. Program administrators ensure effective fiscal management of the program's budget and available resources.
5. Staff and volunteer qualifications and roles are clearly defined.
6. Program administrators recruit, hire, and develop staff and volunteers that reflect the diversity and culture(s) of the community.
7. Program administrators hold regular staff meetings and opportunities for formal and informal communication among staff and volunteers.
8. Program administrators, staff and volunteers participate in relevant and ongoing professional development that supports their own growth and builds more effective program practice.
9. Program administrators conduct frequent and consistent evaluations of program staff, and volunteers.

Examples of the Standard in Practice:

- Program utilizes multiple funding and in-kind resources to promote sustainability.
- Program maintains an employee handbook outlining staff expectations and policies and procedures.
- Staff receives training appropriate to their position and responsibilities regarding working with families and relating to youth in ways that promote positive development.
- Staff is formally evaluated by program administrators at least annually.



VII. Program Evaluation and Data

Key Principle:

Youth benefit from continuous quality improvement systems that include measurable goals aligned with children, youth and family needs.

1. Written measurable goals are aligned to the program's mission statement and purpose.
2. Regular assessments of program activities, staff performance, and youth and family satisfaction are relied upon for program planning and continuous improvement.
3. Quality improvement is an established part of the organizational culture, engaging youth, staff, volunteers, families and leadership in the process.
4. Program uses assessment tools that are valid, reliable and aligned with quality and desired youth outcomes.



Examples of the Standard in Practice:

- Families are given the opportunity to evaluate the program, at least annually, and the results are used for systematic program improvements.
- Youth give oral and written feedback on program activities.
- Every program activity is written with clear goals and objectives.
- Program administrators and staff have regular assessments built into yearly programming and use resulting data to plan for future improvement.



Key Terms Process Appendix I Resources

Quality out-of-school programs encourage youth to develop a love for learning, larger than what can be found in a book or taught in a traditional classroom.

Defining Key Terms



Community

The term community can refer to a specific geographic location such as a neighborhood, suburb, village, town, city or region. The term can also refer to elements of culture, ranging from a specific sub-culture, or a specific ethnic or religious group. Additionally, community can refer to a multicultural group living across multiple locations, but with a shared need or interest such as the LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Questioning) community.

Cultural Competency

Cultural competency is the ability to work effectively across cultures. For individuals, it is an approach to learning, communicating and working respectfully with people different from themselves. For organizations, cultural competency means creating the practices and policies that will make services more accessible to diverse populations, and that provide for appropriate and effective services in cross-cultural situations.⁷

Culturally Responsive Programming

A term referring to the use of cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse youth to make learning more appropriate and effective for them; it teaches to and through the strengths of these youth.⁸

Culture

Culture encompasses the evolving identities, beliefs, and practices derived from the intersection of one's national origin, religion, language, sexual orientation, socio-economic class, age, gender identity, race/ethnicity, and physical, mental or developmental ability.

Enrichment

Enrichment refers to expanding on learning with the intention of broadening and deepening knowledge and skills. This can be developing a particular content area or skill in depth or providing greater context and relevance. Enrichment might also connect previously learned concepts to new areas and provide youth with new experiences and opportunities to explore their interests and passions.

Enrichment and Expanded Learning

Refers to out-of-school time "as encompassing a wide range of program offerings for young people that take place before school, after school, on weekends, and during the summer and other school breaks. Typically these programs are designed to provide safe places for young people, opportunities for

experiencing consistent relationships with peers and adults, and unstructured play and physical recreation. These programs also help young people develop skills and explore interests, enhance life skills and positive character traits, and strengthen academic skills." (National Institute on Out-of-School Time, www.niost.org)

Intentional Programming

Designing out-of-school time program activities with specific measureable outcomes or goals in mind for youth development and learning.

Learning

Learning is the acquisition of new knowledge, skills or interests through personal experience, practice, or study, or by being taught.⁹ Learning doesn't merely come from reading a textbook or being taught by a teacher, rather it can be acquired through a person's own exploration, through sharing information and ideas, or by instruction from another person.

Out-of-School

An inclusive term referring to programming that takes place during the out-of-school time hours, which includes before school, after school, summers, holidays and weekends. It is structured, providing a diverse range of programming to enrich learning experiences and support positive emotional, social and cognitive development in youth.

Positive Youth Development

A comprehensive framework outlining the supports young people need in order to be successful. It emphasizes the importance of focusing on youths' strengths instead of their risk factors to ensure that all youth grow up to become contributing adults.

Safety

Programs that have decreased potential for danger, risk, or injury and are designed with injury prevention in mind. Safe programs promote safe and positive peer group interaction and decrease unsafe or confrontational peer interactions.

Youth

For the purposes of this document, youth are defined as youth ages 5 – 21.

How the Standards were Developed



The Arizona Center for Afterschool Excellence (AzCASE) is the leading statewide advocate and information resource for promoting high quality, out-of-school time programs as a critical component in the positive development of Arizona's youth. AzCASE collaborates with a network of diverse statewide partners, including Valley of the Sun United Way (VSUW), the largest nonprofit funder of health and human services in Maricopa County. With an overall goal of improving youth readiness for college, career and life, VSUW strives to develop and support diverse programs that address needs, reduce risk, build protective factors and ensure success in the lives of youth.

In fall 2012, responding to demand across the state, AzCASE and VSUW identified a committee charged with creating a quality framework for enrichment and expanded learning programs serving youth across Arizona. Phases of the process included:

- Research and analysis of best practices of quality standards from other states and in the field of youth development
- Consideration of the vision and goals desired in developing standards leading to better outcomes for youth
- Definition of common terms and key values
- Interviews with diverse stakeholders
- Multiple rounds of drafting, reviewing and refining standards
- Development of effective adoption and advocacy strategies

The committee was led by AzCASE and VSUW, in partnership with a diverse, representative committee of stakeholders from key sectors: youth development program providers, policymakers, state agencies, schools and districts, funders, advocacy organizations and others, including:

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Arizona 4-H | • Helios Education Foundation |
| • Arizona Department of Education | • Humboldt Unified School District |
| • Arizona School Boards Association | • Jobs for Arizona's Graduates |
| • Association for Supportive Child Care | • Kyrene School District |
| • AZ College Access Network | • Mesa Public Schools |
| • Be a Leader Foundation | • Mesa United Way |
| • Boys and Girls Clubs of Casa Grande | • Native Americans for Community Action |
| • City of Peoria | • Office of the Governor |
| • City of Tempe | • Science Foundation of Arizona |
| • Coconino County Board of Supervisors | • Tempe City Council/Phoenix Union High School District |
| • Deer Valley Unified School District | • The SHINE Program |
| • Department of Economic Security | • Union Elementary School District |
| • First Things First | • United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona |
| • Flagstaff Unified School District | • Vail School District |
| • Garza & Associates | • Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust |
| • Governor's Office for Children Youth and Families | • YMCA |

In spring of 2013, the first draft of the Arizona Quality Standards for Out-of-School Time Programs was shared with a broad range of stakeholders and program leaders for their review and input. Stakeholders were asked to critique the content and scope of the proposed standards as well as what it would mean to them to adopt these standards and engage in a continuous improvement process.

The final standards were released in fall 2013.



Appendix I

Young people need safe, structured places to learn and links to basic services that, if absent, can prevent them from learning and functioning within our society. A report by the National Research Council on

Community Programs to Promote Youth Development summarizes what research tells us about adolescent development, the necessary ingredients or “personal and social assets” that support young people’s well being, and outcomes of community program participation. This report includes the expertise of youth advocates, policy researchers and program planners.

The following are essential features of effective learning environments and settings that facilitate positive youth development for young people inside and outside of school. These features of positive developmental settings and characteristics of successful positive youth development staff can be used for training staff, designing programs, and developing standards and assessment tools:

Physical and Psychological Safety

Safe and health-promoting facilities; practice that increases safe peer group interaction and decreases unsafe or confrontational peer interactions.

Appropriate Structure

Limit setting, clear and consistent rules and expectations, firm enough control, continuity and predictability, clear boundaries, and age-appropriate monitoring.

Supportive Relationships

Warmth, closeness, connectedness, good communication, caring, support, guidance, secure attachment, responsiveness.

Opportunities to Belong

Opportunities for meaningful inclusion, regardless of one’s gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or disabilities; social inclusion, social engagement and integration; opportunities for socio-cultural identity formation; support for cultural and bicultural competence.

Positive Social Norms

Rules of behavior, expectations, injunctions, ways of doing things, values and morals, obligations for service.

Support for Efficacy and Matterings

Youth-based, empowerment practices that support autonomy, making a real difference in one’s community, and being taken seriously. Practice that includes enabling, responsibility granting, meaningful challenge. Practices that focus on improvement rather than on relative current.

Opportunities for Skill Building

Opportunities to learn physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional, social skills; exposure to intentional learning experiences; opportunities to learn cultural literacy, media literacy, communication skills, and good habits of mind; preparation for adult employment; opportunities to develop social and cultural capital.

Integration of Family, School, and Community Efforts

Concordance, coordination, and synergy among family, school and community.⁹



Resources

Additional Sources

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Forum for Youth Investment
www.forumfyi.org

National Afterschool Association
www.naaweb.org

National Institute on Out-of-School Time
www.niost.org

National Summer Learning Association
www.summerlearning.org

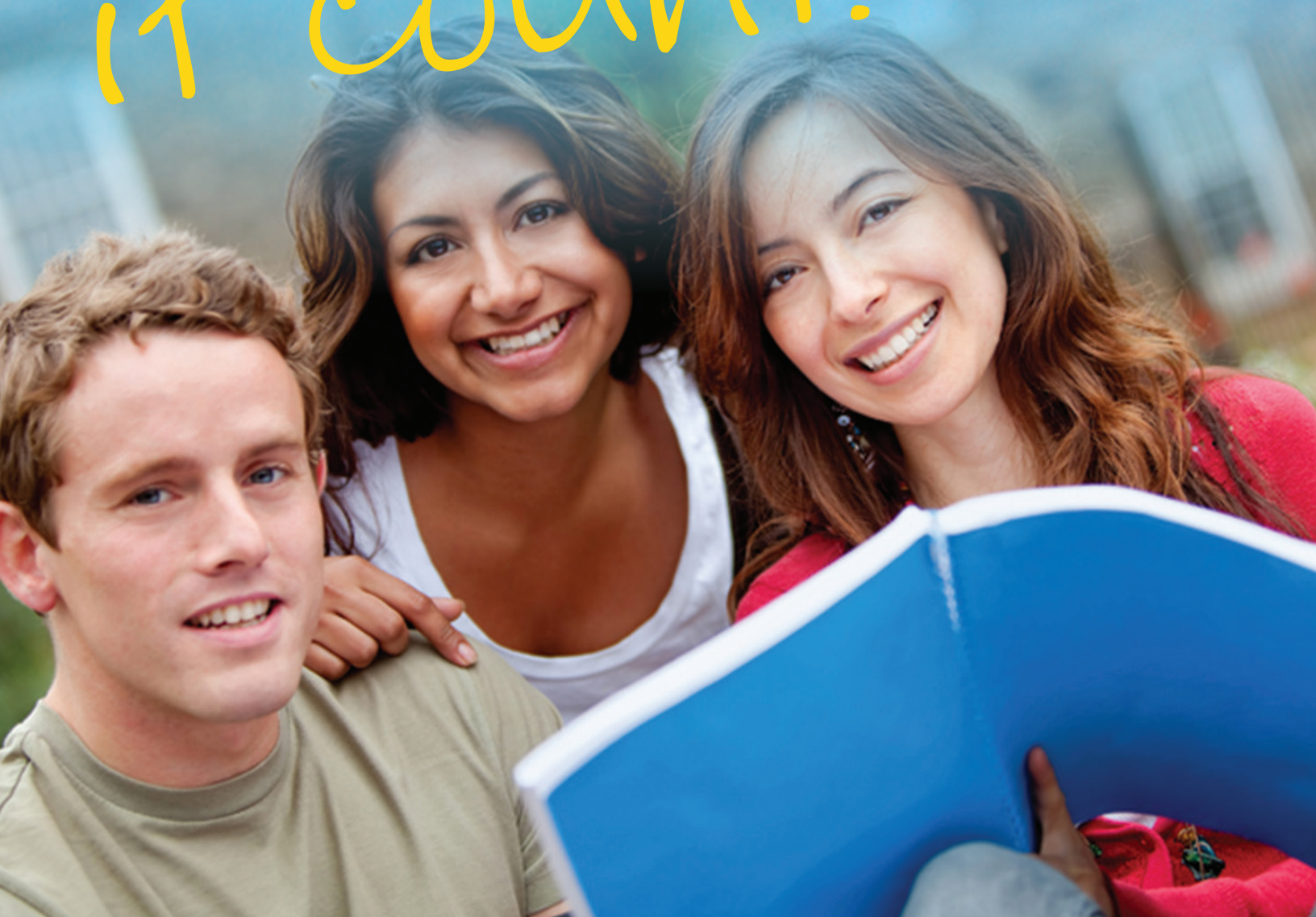
National Conference of State Legislatures
Positive Youth Development Frameworks
www.ncsl.org/issues-research/human-services/positive-youth-development-pyd.aspx

Partnership for 21st Century Skills
www.p21.org

The Expanded Learning & Afterschool Project
Expanding Minds and Opportunities: Leveraging the Power of Afterschool and Summer Learning for Student Success (2013)
www.expandinglearning.org/expandingminds

The Free Child Project
www.freechild.org

We're making
it count!



Quality Out-of-School Time Program Check List

Prepared by the Arizona Center for Afterschool Excellence
www.azafterschool.org



Provides Safe and Healthy Environments

- What is the staff to child/youth ratio?
- Does the facility appear clean, safe and organized?
- Are there quiet, soft spaces for reading, homework, quiet games and those times when a child or youth might want to be away from the larger group?
- Is the outdoor space safe and large enough to host a range of recreation and physical activities?
- What is the procedure for handling emergencies?



Fosters Positive Relationships

- Does the staff greet each child's arrival in a warm and friendly manner?
- Is staff actively engaged in activities and conversations with the children and youth?
- How are children and youth encouraged to resolve differences among themselves?
- Is staff respectful to each other, the children, youth and the parents?



Provides Intentional Programming and Activities

- Is there adequate space and materials for a variety of activities?
- Are children and youth encouraged to **try new activities and build new skills** that may be unfamiliar to them and out of their comfort zone?
- Do the children and youth have a **role in planning program activities**, content and schedule?
- Is **creativity fostered** and encouraged through music, art, dance, theatre?
- Is **problem solving and critical thinking** fostered and encouraged through hands-on experiments, Lego's, blocks, Keva planks, gardens, etc.?
- Are the children and youth happy, having fun and actively engaged in the program?
- Is **physical activity** an important component of the program?
- Is **technology available** and what meaningful role does it play (beyond the playing of video games)?
- Is the **programming sufficiently varied** or change with some frequency so as not to become boring and repetitive?



Endorses Equity and Inclusion

- Does the program serve children and youth with special needs?
- What is the program fee? Is there financial assistance available?



Engages Family, School and Community

- How are families involved in the program?
- Does the program provide a rich, **informal** learning atmosphere that expands on and reinforces concepts learned in the classroom?
- Does the program have an orientation and policy manual for new families?
- Is **homework assistance** provided?
- Does the staff give meaningful and frequent feedback to parents about their child's growth and development?



Ask About Program Management

- What is the program's mission and philosophy?



Ask About Program Evaluation and Data

- Is the program licensed? Is it license-exempt?



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