

# School's Out, Make It Count:

## Quality Standards for Out-of-School Time Programs

### Training Series 1 | Trainer Copy

## Standard 3: Intentional Programming & 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.**



### SUPPLIES NEEDED

- Dry Erase Board or Giant Post-It pads
- Notepad/Paper
- Markers
- Pens
- Projector & screen
- Copies of Agenda
- An icebreaker activity (with related supplies)
- A small-group activity (with related supplies)
- Several pop-culture trivia questions (with related supplies)
- A project-based activity (with related supplies)
- Fun closing activity (with related supplies)
- Open space to participate in activities

### INTRODUCTIONS | (5 minutes)

Introduce yourself and the purpose of this training. With small groups, you may wish to have participants introduce themselves as well.

### ICE BREAKER | (5-10 minutes)

**TRAINER |** Conduct your icebreaker activity. While facilitating, speak about why you chose this activity and the purpose of the activity (Was it to have fun? Was to get people to laugh? Was it to introduce everyone to each other?). Once you have completed the activity, talk to the group about whether you accomplished what you “intended” to.

### KEYS

- 1. Youth actively engage in learning activities that promote critical and creative thinking skills.**

**TRAINER |** When discussing this key, it is important to stress that “learning activities” covers a variety of choices, from games that are used to teach strategy or leadership to activities that are used to teach literacy or math skills in a fun way. You can challenge the group to share about programs that they currently facilitate that promote critical and creative thinking skills in the different emphasis areas like recreation, art, wellness, sports, educational, etc. Facilitate group discussion and take notes on a Notepad about the different ideas that can be shared at a later time with the group.

- 2. Youth assume leadership roles and contribute to program planning, development, implementation and evaluation.**

**TRAINER |** Discuss this key briefly and ask if any programs have an existing Youth Advisory Council or other youth groups that help with program planning. Ask for a couple of examples of how sites currently engage their youth in leadership roles.

**IN PRACTICE – ACTIVITY 1 |** Implement an activity that utilizes small groups. Suggested activities: Human Knot, Impossible Knot, The Maze, and Traffic Jam.

**3. Activities are intentional and are aligned with the program’s mission.**

**TRAINER |** Discuss the importance of understanding your organization’s mission and how missions may differ in municipal, nonprofit, school-based, community education and private programs. “How many of you know your program’s mission statement?”

Ask the group to share some professional development experiences they’ve had in their programs that are intended to train staff to implement mission-driven programming. Ask for participants to share their personal “missions” as they relate to their work in out-of-school time programs.

**4. Youth interests and strengths are reflected in program activities.**

**TRAINER |** Ask pop-culture trivia questions that relate to current movies, books, music artists, TV shows, video game systems, technology or comic books. After the trivia game, ask participants to share their ideas about how to stay current or informed about youth interests.

**IN PRACTICE – ACTIVITY 2 |** Implement a project-based activity. Suggested activities: Building the tallest tower using spaghetti and marshmallows or build a tower of cards.

**5. Program is explicit about the specific physical, social and emotional skills it seeks to develop and what program activities support these goals.**

**TRAINER |** Break into small groups of 3 or 4 people and give each group several pieces of paper. Have groups discuss and write down the physical, social and emotional skills they believe out-of-school time professionals should focus on. Have small groups share out a few of their suggestions with the larger group. Have participants go back to their small groups to discuss and identify 2-3 program activities that can support these goals. It is important to stress to the group that some activities, if used correctly, can address multiple skill areas. Have each group share their suggested activities.

After group discussion, speak to the fact that this list sets the foundation for *Intentional Programming In Practice #4* which discusses backwards programming and the idea of looking at the outcomes that we want in the program, and then selecting appropriate activities to get us there.

**6. Materials and activities are developmentally appropriate and accessible to all youth.**

**TRAINER |** Discuss this key briefly and speak about age-appropriate programming. Discuss the importance of speaking *with* youth, not at them or over them, when explaining an activity or project. Sometimes in haste, we don’t always make sure that every kid understands and we get frustrated when kids are repeatedly asking the same question. Also, remind the staff that it is important to share our intention for a project so that the proper amount of enthusiasm is put behind each activity.

**IN PRACTICE – ACTIVITY 3 |** Implement a fun, closing activity. Plan an activity that will get the group laughing so that they finish the day with a smile on their face!

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#### I. INTRODUCTIONS

#### II. ICE BREAKER

#### III. KEYS

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 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.

#### IV. STANDARDS 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 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.