

# Wyoming Program Quality Practices

## for Afterschool and Youth Development Programs DRAFT

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The Wyoming Program Quality Practices (PQP) begin with the simple idea that every child in Wyoming is entitled to experiences and settings that will prepare him or her for success in school and beyond. Quality afterschool and youth development programs, combined with highly qualified staff, result in positive outcomes for children and youth. To help ensure that Wyoming's children thrive, we need well-designed and intentional programs that promote a range of high quality, relevant and engaging learning experiences with expectations that go beyond the minimum child care licensing rules. The PQP provide a clear and common understanding of what makes a high-quality program, and a framework for the development of such dynamic, enriching, and safe environments.

**What the Program Quality Practices are:** The Wyoming Program Quality Practices provide a common understanding of the essential components of quality practice in afterschool and youth development programs. They are not requirements nor intended to be a regulatory checklist. Rather, they provide a definition of quality for which programs can strive as they pursue continuous quality improvement. These guidelines capture the practices that have been demonstrated through research to lead to quality programs, and incorporate the priorities and values unique to Wyoming.

The PQPs provide programs, communities and stakeholders with a way to voluntarily examine the quality of programs and to engage in important discussions about program quality. They set the stage for development of a comprehensive and coordinated system of services that will best serve Wyoming's children and youth. Most of all, they send the message that we believe quality is important, and we hold ourselves accountable for improving quality.

### **Quality standards provide:**

**A common definition of quality that is based in research** and serves as a foundation for decisions and practices in all settings and programs.

**A framework that connects system-building elements** (e.g., training, collaboration, and using data) and allows for the advancement and professionalization of our connected fields of early childhood, afterschool and youth development, and summer learning.

**A benchmark for programs** to hold themselves accountable through continuous quality improvement.

**A guide for families and youth** when looking for a quality program.

**A message to potential investors and policymakers** that we believe quality is important and we hold ourselves accountable for improving quality.

### **How the Quality Program Practices can be used:**

Wyoming recognizes that supports for children and families are stronger when built through collaboration, but also that each program is unique with missions and philosophies that serve specific communities. Thus, Wyoming's Program Quality Practices are broad-based; they address programs that serve a range of ages in a variety of settings (including classroom-based programs, family child care settings, and out-of-school time programs). Common PQP allows for a seamless system that will best serve children, youth, and families. They can be used:

#### ***By programs***

- To examine the quality of the program through self-assessment and determine areas to work on for quality improvement.
- To identify specific areas of need for future professional development training and education.

#### ***By families and communities***

- To help understand the expectations of afterschool professionals and programs, and select high quality programs for their children.

## ***By system leaders and advocates***

- To create a framework for schools, communities and programs to determine what quality programs look like and how it can have positive results for children and youth.
- To develop and implement state and local policies that will enhance the professionalism of the field.

Program Quality Practices work best when they are part of a larger quality improvement system which defines, assesses, and supports quality. Wyoming has been developing such a system under the leadership of the Wyoming Afterschool Alliance. System components already in place include adoption of the National Afterschool Association's (NAA) Core Knowledge and Competencies for Afterschool and Youth Development Professionals (CKC) that, along with the PQP, define quality; quality assessment tools such as the APAS tools used across the state to assess quality; and high-quality professional development opportunities such as trainings and coaching that support quality.

The PQPs are designed to work in concert with other tools and frameworks that are part of this quality improvement system. They are aligned with the NAA CKCs, working hand in hand to define quality at the program level (PQPs) and at the individual level (NAA CKCs). The PQPs also work in conjunction with assessment tools, defining the quality that the tools assess at a deeper level.

**How the Program Quality Practices were developed:** The creation of the PQPs was a collaborative process led by a committee representing state agencies, early care and education leaders, and after school and youth development leaders. During the first phase (beginning in December, 2014), quality practice statements were determined. The committee, facilitated by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST), met to review existing documents from other states. Once a set of practice statements was drafted, a survey was sent to a wide audience of stakeholders; feedback from the survey was incorporated into the final draft. In a second phase of development (beginning in Summer, 2016), the committee, again facilitated by NIOST, added indicators for each practice statement, largely drawn from existing documents and customized for Wyoming. Again, feedback from stakeholders was solicited and incorporated into the final document.

**How the Program Quality Practices are organized:** The Wyoming Program Quality Practices are organized by eight *domains* that represent the key areas of quality for afterschool and youth development programs. Each domain is followed by *practice statements* which describe best practice for that domain. Each practice statement includes several *indicators*. The indicators are observable examples of that best practice; these are not intended to be an exhaustive list, but give a picture of what quality practice looks like in action.

The eight Program Quality Domains are<sup>1</sup>:

- Physical Environment, Curriculum, and Program Activities
- Assessment, Planning, and Improvement
- Relationships
- Child and Youth Engagement
- Families and Communities
- Safety, Health, and Wellness
- Leadership and Administration
- Professional Development

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<sup>1</sup> These domains align with the content areas of the NAA Core Knowledge and Competencies: Child and Youth Growth and Development; Learning Environment and Curriculum; Child/Youth Observation and Assessment; Interactions with Children and Youth; Youth Engagement; Cultural Competency and Responsiveness; Family, School, and Community Relationships; Safety and Wellness; Program Planning and Development; Professional Development and Leadership.

## Resources:

National Afterschool Association Core Knowledge and Competencies for Afterschool and Youth Development Professionals:

<https://naaweb.org/resources/core-compentencies>

National Afterschool Association Code of Ethics: <http://naaweb.org/images/NAACodeofEthics.pdf>

HOST (Healthy Out-of-School Time) Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Standards: <https://www.niost.org/HOST-Site>

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards: <https://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/buildings-and-sites/about-the-ada-standards/ada-standards>

APAS (A Program Assessment System): <https://www.niost.org/Training-Descriptions/afterschool-program-assessment-system-apas-training-description>

## Acknowledgements

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There have been many efforts in other states and localities to define quality in afterschool programs. The Wyoming team is grateful for the work of others from which we drew heavily, including:

Arizona Quality Standards for Out-of-School Time Programs

Arkansas Standards for Quality Afterschool Programs

Illinois Statewide Afterschool Quality Standards

Indiana Afterschool Standards

Louisville Quality Standards for Out of School Time Programs

Michigan Out-of-School Time Standards of Quality

Nashville After Zone Alliance Standards and Indicators of Program Quality

Quality Standards for Expanded Learning in California

Washington State Quality Standards for Afterschool and Youth Development Programs

# Wyoming Program Quality Practices - DRAFT

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## 1. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT, CURRICULUM, AND PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

*A. The program ensures a safe and developmentally appropriate physical indoor and outdoor environment for all activities.*

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Indoor and outdoor facilities are clean, and there are no observable safety or health hazards.

The environment can safely and comfortably accommodate the various activities offered and/or can be re-arranged to do so (e.g., there are spaces for active and quiet activities, creative arts, homework or other individual/quiet work, and eating/socializing, physical activities).

The program provides adequate and convenient storage space for equipment, materials, and personal possessions of children/youth and program professionals.

The indoor and outdoor space is accessible to children, youth, and families with disabilities (e.g., based on Americans with Disabilities standards) and is suitable for the sizes and abilities of all children and youth. The program has a system in place to identify and rectify physical barriers.

The program works closely and cooperatively with other program leaders in meeting space constraints in shared spaces.

*B. The indoor and outdoor physical environment is organized to foster learning and inspire individual creativity.*

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Materials, equipment, and resources are available and accessible to children and youth, are appropriate for the age and number of children and youth participating, and accommodate the learning styles and abilities of all children and youth.

Children and youth can arrange materials and equipment to suit their activities.

Children and youth can access materials and put them away by themselves with ease during appropriate times.

The space reflects the work, interests, and family backgrounds of the children and youth, and represents a variety of cultures and abilities while avoiding stereotypes.

*C. Activities offer opportunities for structured, engaging, developmentally-appropriate experiences that promote physical, cognitive, social, linguistic, emotional, and creative development.*

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Activities are intentionally designed to align with the mission and goals of the program.

The program allows opportunities for children and youth to engage in a combination of individual and group tasks which encourage accountability to each other.

The program allows enough time to complete activities (including a beginning, middle, and end, with time to reflect on their learning and its applications) and ensures smooth transitions.

The program has scheduled times and provides quiet places for academic support/homework completion if applicable.

Program professionals demonstrate awareness of children's and youth's age, and individual daily needs, and learning styles/abilities, and plan to accommodate them in daily programming/activities (e.g., program activities and structure are adaptable for different levels of ability and require the use of multiple senses).

The program uses culturally responsive programming and promotes the development of positive identities, respect for differences, and cross-cultural understanding among all youth.

The program includes activities that develop “21st century skills” (for example, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity) to inspire and prepare children and youth for success in school, higher education, and career/workplace readiness.

Program design and activities reflect best practices – that is, active, meaningful and engaging learning methods (i.e., of high interest and relevant to youth) with a clear purpose that promote collaboration and expand student horizons (e.g., may include 21st C skills, are research-based, strive to align with school day as appropriate).

The program provides opportunities to learn through project-based or experiential and real-world contexts (e.g., field trips, service learning).

Activities offer a progression of skill levels and provide children and youth with opportunities to be introduced to, develop, and master new skills.

***D. The program provides daily planned sports or fitness activities or other physical activity.***

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The program provides daily recreation, sports, or fitness activities, making accommodations to include children and youth of all abilities.

Outdoor activities are offered. When weather does not permit outdoor participation, active indoor movement and games are offered.

The program aims to follow the National AfterSchool Association Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Standards.

## **2. ASSESSMENT, PLANNING, AND IMPROVEMENT**

***A. The program establishes clearly defined and measurable goals and outcomes.***

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Measurable program goals are written.

Measurable goals and objectives are aligned with the organization's vision, mission, and program design.

Program professionals are aware of program goals (e.g., goals might be posted and/or discussed regularly) and how they align with vision and mission.

***B. The program regularly monitors and assesses its progress toward goals and outcomes.***

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The program regularly uses a variety of methods to collect data (e.g., focus groups, surveys and/or evaluations).

The program can demonstrate how data are used to measure quality, program effectiveness, and quality improvements.

***C. The program uses a formal quality assessment process, using data to drive decision making.***

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The program intentionally creates and maintains a culture that promotes excellence and continuous quality improvement (e.g., the leadership supports participation in a continuous quality improvement and evaluation process).

Program quality is assessed against clear practices and indicators, using identified assessment/evaluation strategies.

The program collects and manages data, perhaps using a data management system.

The program has a system for using information from assessments for continuous improvement (e.g., assessment results drive training and professional development and other adjustments to increase effectiveness and satisfaction).

***D. The program leadership engages stakeholders - including internal stakeholders (such as program professionals, volunteers, children/youth, and families, and board members), and external stakeholders (such as principals and school personnel) in the assessment, planning, and continuous improvement process.***

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The program fosters understanding of and appreciation for program quality practices, evaluation/assessment, and program improvement strategies among program professionals and other stakeholders.

Stakeholders are included in ongoing evaluation activities and receive results.

Program professionals and other stakeholders are made aware of continuous improvement and strategic plans and assist with implementation when appropriate.

### 3. RELATIONSHIPS

#### *A. The program promotes positive, respectful relationships among all children/youth.*

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Program professionals promote (e.g., model) supportive peer interactions by encouraging collaboration, teamwork, and positive communication.

Program professionals teach about and foster respect for individual differences.

#### *B. Program professionals respond appropriately to the individual needs of children and youth, helping them maintain a sense of individual worth by incorporating their unique strengths and cultural diversity, and accommodating developmental needs.*

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Program professionals are aware of and respond appropriately to the range of children's and youth's abilities, interests, temperaments, emotions, and cultures.

Program professionals intentionally and continuously garner information on children's and youths' learning styles and development (e.g., by observing, talking to parents, informally/formally assessing, etc.) to better understand individual needs.

The program builds on the unique interests, talents, and skills of each child/youth.

#### *C. Program professionals relate to all children and youth in positive ways.*

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Program professionals and volunteers greet youth and their families upon arrival.

Program professionals engage with all children and youth respectfully, positively, and warmly with acceptance and appreciation (e.g., staff and youth seem relaxed, staff are active listeners and intentionally inclusive).

Program professionals develop trusting relationships with children/youth and their families.

***D. Program professionals provide an emotionally safe and welcoming environment with opportunities for children and youth to connect with each other and build community.***

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Program professionals provide an environment where children and youth experience physical, social, and emotional security.

Program professionals encourage children and youth to cooperate, share, and join in activities.

Program professionals encourage children and youth to establish guidelines to maintain an environment that strives to be free from bias and fosters respect for individual differences.

Children and youth are encouraged to express their own cultural identity in the program; youth have intentional opportunities to explore, share, and celebrate each other's heritage and culture in the program.

Child/youth comments are taken seriously by staff.

***E. Program professionals foster children's and youth's ability to have positive interactions with each other and resolve peer conflicts in appropriate ways.***

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Program professionals model and encourage communication, cooperation, and child and youth-centered approaches to reframe conflict.

Program professionals help children and youth develop appropriate, effective social problem-solving skills and positive social behavior (e.g., help them talk through social conflicts and negotiate solutions).

Program professionals encourage children and youth to resolve their own conflicts in a positive manner whenever possible.

*F. Program professionals use positive techniques to guide the behavior of children and youth.*

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Clear expectations are established cooperatively with children and youth and maintained consistently.

Program professionals intentionally and continuously communicate - verbally and/or in writing, or via another method the children, youth, and families understand - clear limits, rules, and expectations of desired behaviors with children, youth and families.

Program professionals use positive and age appropriate behavior support techniques to guide children and youth (e.g., setting appropriate limits and encouraging children to choose positive behaviors).

*G. Program professionals interact in positive ways with each other to model healthy relationships.*

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Program professionals communicate and cooperate with each other to ensure that the program flows smoothly.

Program professionals support each other through shared planning, coordination, and flexibility.

Program professionals practice positive social skills when interacting with each other (e.g., listen, empathize, cooperate, show respect).

## **4. CHILD AND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT**

*A. The program encourages child and youth input and participation in planning and implementation of activities, as is age appropriate.*

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Program professionals encourage all children and youth to offer ideas and suggestions, take initiative, and take on challenging tasks and

activities, regardless of ability.

Program professionals actively and intentionally involve all children and youth in decision making and leadership roles through structured opportunities to influence program format and/or content.

***B. Children and youth are encouraged and supported in making choices and solving problems.***

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Staff interact with children and youth using various approaches to help them learn to think for themselves, develop problem solving skills and improve language skills through frequent conversation or a shared communication system.

Program professionals provide appropriate mentoring or role modeling around making choices and solving problems.

Program professionals support children and youth with encouragement and attribute success to effort, attention, practice, and persistence.

***C. Children and youth are encouraged to take initiative and explore interests.***

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Program professionals provide children and youth many opportunities to choose what they will do and how they will do it from a wide variety of activities.

Program professionals ask questions that encourage children and youth to think for themselves and express their ideas and opinions.

The program design integrates opportunities to foster the development of personal responsibility, self-direction, and authentic leadership throughout the program.

The program modifies and adapts activities to enable all children to participate.

***D. Children and youth receive recognition for their accomplishments.***

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Recognition of individual achievement occurs informally on a continuous basis (e.g., pat on the back, high five, or specific positive feedback).

The program provides opportunities for children and youth to display examples of their work.

The program provides opportunities for children and youth to make formal presentations of their work (e.g., plays, poetry readings, art or talent shows).

## 5. FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

### *A. The program involves and engages families.*

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The program develops and implements effective ongoing family engagement strategies that are mindful of diverse communities and responsive to youth and family needs and strengths (e.g., family nights, English language classes, etc.).

The program respectfully communicates with families about any academic, physical, social, emotional, or behavioral accomplishments or concerns in a timely manner.

The program provides tools and resources for families to reinforce and/or expand on the academic, social, and emotional learning opportunities provided by the program.

Program professionals keep families informed about the program through multiple systems (e.g., orientation sessions for new families, using arrival and/or departure to share positive information and develop relationships with family; newsletters; phone calls and email, etc.).

### *B. Program policies and procedures are responsive to family and community needs.*

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The program's hours of operation are based on families' needs and the program's capacity.

The program makes itself affordable to all families by using all possible community resources and sources of subsidy.

Clear, concise, and thorough handbooks are developed, updated regularly, and given to families, participants, and employees. The policies and procedures are administered in a consistent and equitable manner.

The program monitors, evaluates, and shares community and family engagement outcomes through ongoing data collection (e.g., requesting input from families about program planning).

The program makes every effort to communicate in the language(s) of the families and communities served.

***C. Program professionals recognize and celebrate cultural differences in children, youth, and families.***

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The program commits to learn about, value, and respect the backgrounds and experiences of children/youth and their families.

The program states its explicit commitment to diversity and equity in its outreach materials and/or policies.

Administrators and program professionals receive training that emphasizes the needs of diverse youth that come from varying family experiences and backgrounds/reflects sensitivity to diversity - including meeting diverse needs of children and youth - helping program professionals become more culturally competent and responsive.

The program's environment, activities and projects promote gender equity and diversity in culture, ethnicity, and religion (e.g., program content and activities are representative of the cultures of the children and youth, displays in the program are reflective of varying ages, cultures, and abilities of the program participants).

Engagement strategies that support child and youth development reflect this sensitivity to children's and youth's culture, religion, home language, and beliefs.

***D. The program appropriately shares information with schools, early childhood programs, and involved youth-serving organizations and aims to align support through reciprocal relationships.***

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The program establishes ongoing partnerships with schools and youth-serving organizations to share information about child/youth academic, social, and emotional needs and learning goals, and to provide strategic support.

Program professionals collaborate with and support the local school with their planning and improvement processes.

Program professionals understand school-day curriculum and incorporate programming that integrates and complements the school-day activities.

The program communicates with school personnel (e.g., teachers, administrators, health staff, and others) about the afterschool curriculum, approach, and goals.

The program encourages collaboration and leverages resources by aligning and coordinating professional development activities with those of school and community partners.

***E. The program intentionally partners with the community to fully support youth.***

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Program professionals provide information about community resources to children and youth and their families, and connect families with specific community resources to assist in meeting their needs (e.g., healthcare or early childhood education resources).

Program professionals enrich children's and youth's experiences and knowledge of the larger community through planned activities and conversations. There are opportunities for children and youth to participate in and develop connections with their larger community (e.g., planning and participating in community service and service learning).

The program develops partnerships and professional relationships with organizations and other partners (e.g., early childhood) in the community that further the program's capacity to meet the needs and interests of the children, youth, and families it serves.

Program professionals are in communication with community leaders and stakeholders about community needs and cultural concerns.

## 6. SAFETY, HEALTH, AND WELLNESS

### *A. The program has clear procedures to ensure the safety and security of children, youth, and adults during program hours.*

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The program establishes policies and procedures for the documentation and notification of suspected abuse, neglect, and physical, verbal and sexual harassment, as required by law.

Program professional to child/youth ratios are set according to ages and abilities of children/youth and the level of risk involved in an activity.

The program has a plan to provide adequate staffing coverage in case of emergencies or absences.

The program maintains an easily accessible list of all daily participants.

Family contact and medical information is maintained, continually updated, and available at all times.

A process is in place for children/youth to enter and exit the program's facilities (e.g., participants and families know which doors to use, etc.).

Only authorized adults are allowed to pick up children. The program maintains a current list of authorized/unauthorized adults.

The program has established policies to transport children and youth safely, and complies with all legal requirements for vehicles and drivers.

Staff and volunteers are easily identifiable to participants, families, and other stakeholders (e.g., wear staff shirts, badges, etc.).

The program has an established system to ensure confidentiality of participant information.

### *B. The program uses best practices to ensure the health and wellness of all children, youth, and program professionals.*

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Program professionals are trained in CPR and first aid. First aid kits are stocked and available at all times.

The program has policies in place for the storage and dispensing of medication (including training someone to do so).

Staff model, teach, and promote proper health, nutrition, and safety and hygiene practices. Frequent handwashing is encouraged, especially after using the bathroom and immediately prior to snacks and meals.

The program has a system to inform program professionals of the individual health needs of children/youth (e.g., allergies or chronic medical conditions such as asthma or diabetes) and modifies activities or meals accordingly.

Children and youth are separated at the first sign of illness and supervised by staff who take proper health precautions protect children from communicable diseases. Parents are notified when appropriate.

The program fosters partnerships to provide wraparound services to children and families to meet health care needs.

#### *C. The program addresses the nutritional health of children and youth.*

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The program serves healthy and nutritious foods (as defined by the NAA HEPA Standards) and promotes the benefits of healthy eating and nutritional guidelines with children and youth.

Food allergy information and special nutritional needs are posted and readily available to program professionals along with action steps to address food allergy reactions.

Children and youth participate in food selection, preparation, distribution, and clean-up when possible to increase engagement in and understanding of healthy eating.

Program professionals sit with the children/youth during the daily program snack or meal when possible.

#### *D. The program follows relevant health and safety guidelines.*

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There are written policies and procedures to ensure the health and safety of children and youth.

Program professionals are trained to meet relevant health and safety guidelines (e.g., fire codes, bloodborne pathogen compliance) as appropriate, and to report health and safety hazards.

***E. Program professionals, children and youth, and families know what to do in case of emergencies, both on- and off-site.***

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The program has clearly outlined procedures for emergencies, including but not limited to fire, natural disasters, and lockdowns.

Program professionals and youth are trained in and practice these emergency procedures (e.g., drills).

Contingency plans for emergencies, including closings, are communicated to families upon enrollment and as needed.

A procedure for emergency communication with families (e.g., phone trees, text messages, email and web postings, cell phone usage) is established and communicated.

## **7. LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION**

***A. The administration has strong fiscal management to ensure continued and sustained program operations.***

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The administration ensures that financial management supports the program's goals (e.g., funds are allocated for professional development opportunities, family involvement initiatives, program assessment and continuous quality improvement, and enrichment and intervention activities for children and youth).

The administration develops and strictly follows an annual budget.

The administration utilizes an appropriate accounting system and maintains accurate records of revenue and expenses.

Opportunities for community members and other partners to support the program through financial or in-kind donations may be pursued to

increase sustainability.

*B. Program decisions are made with input from children and youth, staff, families, and the community, and are communicated clearly back to stakeholders.*

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Systems are in place for the director to involve the staff, children/youth, families, and the community in long-term planning and decision making.

Ongoing communication and linkages (e.g., formal advisory committees) between and among program professionals, community members, school staff, youth advisory councils, and families are established and encouraged.

*C. The program has a clear vision/mission and a plan for supporting sustainability and growth.*

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The program has a clear mission statement and strategic plan that is responsive to community needs.

The program has a strong organizational structure that includes an organizational flow chart with a communication process and a process for recruitment, retention, and management of staff.

The program has a long-range plan for sustaining the program (e.g., a written resource and funding development plan).

The program establishes partnerships and maintains relationships to increase program quality and accessibility (e.g., with community leaders, businesses, and elected officials who can be champions for afterschool).

The administration advocates for the program with an effective communication strategy that publicizes the program and its achievements within the school (if applicable), district, and broader community.

*D. Program policies and procedures reflect inclusionary practices.*

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The building adheres to the Americans with Disabilities standards for accessibility or there is a plan to ensure the program is accessible for individuals with disabilities if the building is not ADA accessible.

The program is aware of, records, and informs staff of any special needs of children and youth (including physical, behavioral, and social emotional needs) that are relevant to participation in the program.

Program policies aim to make the program accessible and include a process to reach out to prospective participants. Barriers to participation are addressed through reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures (e.g., wheelchair ramps are installed, staff ratios are adjusted).

The program responds appropriately to provide reasonable accommodations to support the individual needs of all children and youth (e.g., when a participant is enrolled, program professionals receive training related to the child's specific needs when necessary; ratios are re-evaluated to see if adjustments are needed; program professionals work with participants, families, and other identified community resources to support existent needs).

## **8. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### *A. Program professionals and volunteers are qualified to work with children and youth.*

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A standard hiring process (including reference checks and an interview process) is implemented that ensures all program professionals have the personal attributes, professional qualifications, and ability to learn needed skills appropriate for their position, the type of programming offered, and the ages and needs of the children and youth served.

The program actively recruits and hires qualified staff that reflect the community of the children and youth served.

All program professionals, subcontractors, and volunteers have passed the appropriate background checks and child abuse clearances in accordance with program policies.

Job qualifications align with the program's goals and objectives and are based on the National AfterSchool Association's Core Knowledge and

Competencies for Afterschool and Youth Development Professionals.

***B. The program ensures all program professionals develop and follow a professional development plan.***

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Individual professional development plans are created and reviewed at least annually.

Professional development plans address multiple areas (e.g., core programmatic areas, positive child and youth development strategies, appropriate guidance and discipline techniques, health and safety practices), and reflect the NAA Core Knowledge and Competencies.

Program professionals are formally evaluated semi-annually (e.g., at the beginning of the program and then in the spring) in addition to continuous informal evaluation (e.g., informal observation and self-evaluation).

***C. Professional and career development efforts are supported by administrative policies, practices and resources.***

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The program has a plan for staff development that is reflected in the budget and aligned with the program's needs assessment. Professional development activities are documented and on file.

The program conducts informal assessment of training needs through ongoing observation.

Program professionals have access to professional development resources (e.g., organizational memberships, virtual learning resources, opportunities to visit other sites, opportunities to attend local, state, or national training conferences, and support to earn a certification/credential).

***D. The program provides new program professionals with a comprehensive orientation to the program's - and field's - philosophy, routines, and practices.***

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A written job description that outlines responsibility to youth, families, and the program and includes the title and qualifications needed, job duties, and salary/benefit range is reviewed with each program professional.

Written program policies and procedures, including emergency procedures and confidentiality policies, are reviewed with all program professionals.

New program professionals are introduced to pertinent local, state, and national resources (e.g., the Wyoming Program Quality Practices, the NAA Core Knowledge and Competencies, a code of ethics, etc.).

*E. In addition to regular professional development opportunities, program professionals receive the necessary support to work effectively.*

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Program professionals receive continuous supervision and feedback that promote personal professional development. Opportunities for reflective practice are incorporated (e.g., in supervision or during staff meetings).

Regular staff meetings are conducted; attendance is expected.

Long-term volunteers are supported (e.g., receive a written job description; attend an orientation; are invited to attend regular meetings where they have an opportunity to provide input and ask questions; and are provided an opportunity to attend professional development training).

The program provides leadership and management training (including financial management and staff supervision) for appropriate staff.

The compensation plan offers the best possible wages and benefits and working conditions, including preparation time.