

Alabama Afterschool Quality Standards



PREPARED BY
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ABOUT THE STANDARDS

Developed in collaboration with the **Alabama Department of Human Resources (ALDHR)** and the **Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE)**, the Alabama Afterschool Quality Standards are designed to provide clear guidance to school-aged Afterschool and Summer School programs for quality implementation.

Alabama's Standards are grounded in national research and best practices in both the youth development and educational fields.

The **Alabama Afterschool Quality Standards** are voluntary statewide programmatic standards that may serve as the following:

- A framework of clear expectations for all stakeholders
- A guide to inform statewide decision-making, to direct professional development focus areas, and to garner support in both advocacy and funding
- A guide for program providers to assess their own program sites and organizations to help determine what they are doing well and/or needs improvement
- A guide for parents, families, youth, and educational professionals to identify quality programming
- A guide for school principals and district superintendents to reinforce and advance educational priorities
- A guide for Daycare and Childcare Centers' supervisory and programmatic staff regarding differentiated oversight for 'school-aged' children





ABOUT AFTERSCHOOL

The term “Afterschool” is often used interchangeably with “Out-of-School” time (OST). Out-of-School time refers to youth development programming that occurs beyond the traditional school day – including before school, afterschool, holidays, weekends, and summers. Programs are structured and offer a wide range of learning and enrichment activities that promote foundational wellness, as well as the academic, artistic, and physical development for all participating children and youth.

Decades of extensive research have shown that regular and consistent participation in quality OST programs can help advance the foundational wellness of youth; enhance their academic achievement; promote their own positive self-identity; improve school attendance; and heighten constructive behavioral outcomes.

Quality is the key to such success! The process toward quality must be an ongoing systemic approach of both self-assessment and external review. A dual methodology must be employed to ensure continual accountability and progressive improvement.

INTENTIONAL PROGRESS

The Alabama Quality Standards are not designed to be the definitive answer to ‘all things Afterschool,’ but a driving force toward continual improvement.

Therefore, the components are designed to be brief and succinct, highlighting the critical areas of effectiveness that are supported through vast research and substantial resources for each.

The Standards are divided into 8 separate components with an additional STEM disciplines engagement addendum.

Each component is comprised of multiple elements that either ‘are or are not’ at standard. If areas of opportunity for improvement are identified, a plan of action to address potential growth areas should be articulated.

As a guide for continual and ongoing advancement, the Standards should serve as a guide or pathway toward programmatic stability that enhances, enriches, and cultivates a child’s progressive learning experiences.





WHY QUALITY?

Other than the obvious answer – Alabama’s children deserve our best – programs that choose to utilize and adhere to the Alabama Afterschool Quality Standards in the pursuit of continual improvement will be awarded the Afterschool Seal of Pledge to Quality. *

The Badge of Approval recognizes a program’s quest for learning and standards of excellence that may then be publicized to the local community for communication and marketing of the program’s endeavor toward quality.

To attain the recognition, programs must observe the following:

- Embrace the process of ongoing self-assessment while utilizing the Standards
- Allow for the process of external review
- Receive the sanctioning of the Alabama Expanded Learning Alliance (AELA) with the corresponding vetting of the ALDHR and the ALSDE

AFTERSCHOOL QUALITY STANDARDS

STANDARD 1: Environmental Safety, Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Healthy Lifestyle Initiatives

STANDARD 2: Staff and Youth Relationships

STANDARD 3: Youth Participation, Learning, and Engagement

STANDARD 4: Family and Community Partnerships

STANDARD 5: Programming and Alignment with Regular School Day Learning

STANDARD 6: Administration and Organizational Development

STANDARD 7: Staffing and Professional Development

STANDARD 8: Evaluation for Continuous Quality Improvement



<p><u>Standard 1</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supervision ○ Health and Well-Being ○ Emergencies ○ Program Space ○ Nutrition ○ Physical Activity 	<p><u>Standard 2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Youth Support ○ Value Different Perspectives 	<p><u>Standard 3</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Positive Youth Development ○ Supportive Learning ○ Youth Leadership and Voice 	<p><u>Standard 4</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Family Engagement ○ Family Partnership ○ Family Support ○ Community Partnerships
<p><u>Standard 5</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Planning and Communication with Regular School Day Faculty and Staff ○ Alignment of Activities 	<p><u>Standard 6</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Operations and Management ○ Sustainability and Resource Development ○ Financial Management 	<p><u>Standard 7</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff Qualifications ○ Orientation ○ Professional Development ○ Intra-Staff Relationships ○ Retention Indicators 	<p><u>Standard 8</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continuous Quality Improvement Indicators

STANDARD 1: Environmental Safety, Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Healthy Lifestyle Initiatives

Quality Afterschool programs maintain the health and safety youth by establishing staff supervision protocols that are consistently implemented. Emergency procedures are in place and understood by staff, so they can effectively respond to injuries and other health and well-being issues. The physical space is kept clear of safety hazards while supporting a variety of learning activities and differentiated needs. Healthy snacks and meals are consistently provided to meet the nutritional needs of the youth served. Physical activity is intentionally incorporated into daily programming to encourage movement.

Supervision				
Concepts	Key Indicators	Meets Standard	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
1 Account for youth at all times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program implements corresponding written procedures for check-in and checkout system and participant location system, and trains staff on written procedures for check-in and checkout system and participant location system. Check-in and checkout system is in place for authorized-only pick-up and sign-out of youth. Staff account for youth at all times, whether inside, outside, or during transition periods. Organization communicates clearly and regularly with youth, families, and staff about safety rules and check-in/check-out transition procedures. 			
2 Maintain acceptable staff-to-student ratio based on research and best practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program provides an adequate staff-to-student ratio to provide optimal supervision for safety. Adequate staffing numbers are maintained at all times to ensure safety and an optimal learning environment. Supervisors monitor staff compliance with procedures and provide training as needed. 			
3 Address risky behaviors through preventative measures and positive discipline structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program activities inspire positive behavior, cooperative learning, and positive peer-to-peer interactions. Staff are trained and monitored in identifying, managing and reporting risky behaviors and activities. Supervisors monitor staff compliance with procedures and provide additional coaching as needed. Organization provides an ideal staff-to-student ratio to provide optimal supervision and learning experiences for both on and off-site activities. Organization communicates clearly and consistently with youth, families and staff about all behavior policies. 			

Health and Well-Being				
Concepts	Key Indicators	Meets Standard	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
1 Protect youth from spreading illness and disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Staff is aware of how to identify signs of illness in a student. • Program implements procedures to protect youth from communicable diseases that includes isolation from other youth and the monitoring of ill youth until families can collect them. • The organization provides for, or negotiates separate space, for ailing youth in a comfortable and supervised room or partitioned-off space until picked up. • The organization communicates clearly and regularly with youth, families, and staff about the illness policy. 			
2 Promote hygiene best practices and precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hygiene supplies are available. • Youth are encouraged to wash their hands, cover their coughs and disinfect areas. • Program prominently posts hygiene best practice instructions. • Staff instruct and models hygiene best practices (i.e. washing their hands, covering their coughs, and disinfecting areas.) • The program provides families with written information about hygiene best practices. • The organization implements a policy for blood borne pathogen universal precautions and annually trains staff according to proper protocol. (OSHA) • The organization communicates clearly and regularly with youth, families, and staff about hygiene policy. 			
3 Make available First Aid and CPR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Aid kits and First Aid procedures are available. • Staff are provided with training opportunities to receive first aid certification, including CPR. • The organization requires that all staff is certified in First Aid and CPR and provides at least one person on site who is First Aid and CPR certified at all times. 			
4 Communicate and document emergencies and accidents appropriately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth medical conditions and emergency contacts are documented during registration and are readily available during program hours. • Families are told of any medical incident. • The program implements written procedures for communicating accidents and emergencies to families and emergency personnel • The organization implements policies that define how emergencies are handled, documented, and communicated to all stakeholders. • Staff is trained and monitored in identifying, managing, and reporting emergencies. 			

Emergencies				
Concepts	Key Indicators	Meets Standard	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
1 Establish a site-specific emergency plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A site-specific emergency management plan is available and implemented as needed. • Documentation is kept showing staff have reviewed the plan and agree to comply with the plan in case of an emergency. • All staff is trained on the plan and can identify their roles in an emergency. • The organization annually reviews and updates site-specific emergency management plans that are relevant to afterschool program locations, personnel and management structure. • The organization communicates clearly and consistently with youth, families and staff about the site-specific emergency management plan including the evacuation routes and parent pick-up procedures. 			
2 Practice emergency responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both the staff and youth are aware of how to respond to both evacuation and shelter-in-place responses. • Staff are designated to assist youth with disabilities. • Program provides periodic fire and emergency drills. • Documentation is maintained in confirmation of regularly scheduled and conducted emergency drills. • The organization implements an emergency response with drill schedule and policy that requires drills are conducted for staff and youth in a variety of settings. • The organization reviews each drill performance and makes corrections. 			
3 Secure emergency supplies and equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency supplies are stored properly and readily accessible and available to staff. • The staff is trained annually and knows the location of emergency supplies and equipment and their use. • Documentation is kept confirming staff training. • The organization inspects and utilizes emergency supplies and equipment; and maintains records of periodical examination. 			

Program Space				
Concepts	Key Indicators	Meets Standard	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
1 Provide safe and appropriate outdoor spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outdoor spaces are clean and meet or exceed local health and safety codes and are adequate for planned activities. The staff inspect outdoor spaces to ensure they are free of safety hazards. The program implements procedures for periodic safety checks and appropriate maintenance of outdoor space and equipment. Documentation is kept confirming safety checks are conducted and remedies are made. The organization provides and secures outdoor spaces and equipment that are appropriate and safe for the ages and abilities of youth. 			
2 Provide safe and appropriate indoor spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indoor spaces are clean and meet or exceed local health and safety codes and are adequate for planned activities. The staff inspect indoor spaces to see that they are free of observable safety hazards. Ample and dedicated space is available for small group activities, large play areas, reading and reflection, and open conversation. The organization provides and secures resources to create separate activity spaces that have comfortable furniture in which youth can be active, or reflect, read, and relax. 			
3 Manage environmental hazards appropriately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are aware of any potential hazards. The staff takes action to protect youth from existing or potential hazards. The organization implements a policy for handling environmental hazards. The program implements procedures for the handling of materials/products that may pose an environmental hazard. Documentation is kept confirming what is stored and that scheduled checks occur to ascertain stores are current and remain safe. Appropriate local environmental agency contact information is current. Staff are trained and monitored in identifying, managing and reporting environmental hazards. The organization communicates clearly and consistently with youth, families and staff about the environmental hazards policy. 			

Nutrition and Hunger				
Concepts	Key Indicators	Meets Standard	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
1 Provide healthy and adequate food and beverages to youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth have access to healthy and sufficient food, beverages, and drinking water. The program plans and implements activities that allow youth opportunities to select and prepare food and beverages served in the program, using preparation as a teachable moment. The organization successfully meets the federal and state requirements to reimburse food service. Where available and feasible the program works with the state's Child Nutrition program (CNP). The type and amount of food offered is appropriate for the ages and sizes of the youth, addressing their level of hunger. 			
2 Address food restrictions appropriately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth food restrictions, including allergies, are documented during registration, and are readily available during programming hours. The program provides food and beverage alternatives to address allergies and food restrictions. The organization provides resources needed to involve youth and families in planning with staff for healthy and appropriate food and beverage alternatives that are needed, including an education component. 			
3 Prepare and store food properly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food and beverage storage and preparation meet or exceed local health and safety codes. Staff are trained in food storage and preparation that meets or exceeds local health and safety codes. Written procedures for food storage and preparation are posted. Appropriate equipment and supplies are available to support procedures. The organization uses appropriate equipment to properly prepare and store food. 			
4 Expose youth to nutrition activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nutritional information that promotes healthy lifestyle choices is available for youth. Staff serve as role models for nutrition best practices. Programming includes a nutrition education component. Activities and materials provided meet the needs, interests, abilities, and talents of youth. The organization uses appropriate equipment to properly prepare and store food. 			
5 Engage families in nutrition activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nutrition information is available for families. Quarterly Workshops are provided to families on nutrition topics and healthy lifestyle choices. 			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The organization integrates nutrition education activities as a regular part of their outreach to families. 			
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Physical Activity				
Concepts	Key Indicators	Meets Standard	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
1 Provide opportunities for physical activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth have access to opportunities for movement. Staff serve as role models for participation in physical activities. The program plans and implements activities that allow youth opportunities to select and participate in a variety of physical activities, using the activity as a teachable moment. The organization integrates physical activity across programming to achieve maximum impact. 			
2 Address physical activity restrictions appropriately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth physical activity restrictions are documented during registration and are readily available during program hours. The program provides physical activity alternatives to meet the capacity of all youth. The organization provides the resources needed to involve youth and families in planning with staff for appropriate physical activity alternatives that are needed, including an education component. 			
3 Encourage youth to be physically active	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The staff encourages youth to participate in a variety of physical activities daily. The staff serves as role models for physical activity best practices. Programming includes a physical activity component. The activities and equipment provided meet the needs, interests, abilities, and talents of the youth. Organization promotes physical activity as an organizational value. Programming promotes and provides educational resources which support the direct linkage between healthy lifestyle choices in nutrition and physical activities. 			
4 Engage families in physical activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical activity information is available for families. Workshops are provided for families on physical activity topics (i.e. easy and inexpensive family activities, encouraging activity during TV commercial breaks, youth-friendly isometrics). The organization integrates physical activity education programs as a regular part of their outreach to families. 			

STANDARD 1: Environmental Safety, Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Healthy Lifestyle Initiatives

Areas of Opportunity:

Prescriptive Plans/Steps toward improvement:

STANDARD 2: Staff and Youth Relationships

A quality Afterschool program incorporates positive youth development principles to inspire cooperation, respect and other indicators of effective relationships between youth participants and Afterschool staff. A quality program consistently communicates and reinforces expectations. Youth feel welcome and supported as the program addresses their interests, abilities, talents and learning styles. Practices are targeted toward encouraging positive behavior, building confidence, and engaging youth as partners in the program. The program makes an intentional effort to hire and develop staff who bring a wide range of skills, experiences, and perspectives that support the needs of those they serve. In a quality Afterschool program, Afterschool staff are expected to demonstrate commitment to children, youth, families, and communities through a high level of ethical conduct and positive interaction.

Youth Support				
Concepts	Key Indicators	Meets Standard	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
1 Welcome and support youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff help youth feel welcome, appreciated, and comfortable. • All youth are greeted by name upon arrival. • The staff is trained in active listening and positive youth development strategies. • The organization implements policies that support youth centered practices. • Staff are monitored as they provide active listening and positive youth development strategies and coaching is provided as needed. • The organization communicates clearly and consistently with youth, families, and staff about the youth-centered policy. 			
2 Practice positive interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and youth interact with each other in positive ways. • Staff and youth treat each other with respect. • The staff treats all youth with dignity and kindness with a standard of fairness. • The program plans and implements activities that promote cooperation and respect including cooperative learning. • Staff are trained in conflict resolution and bullying prevention. • Staff and youth collaboratively develop rules for positive interactions and respect for self and others that are reviewed regularly. • The organization implements policies for anti-bullying that include escalating consequences for bullying. • Staff are monitored as they provide conflict resolution and bullying prevention and coaching is provided as needed. • The organization communicates clearly and consistently with youth, families, and staff about the anti-bullying policy. 			

3 Communicate and reinforce participation expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff set and communicates reasonable behavior limits and expectations for youth. • The staff does not use harsh, belittling disciplinary methods. • Guidance is positive and includes redirection that encourages youth to become self-disciplined. • The staff engages youth in the development of program participation expectation. • The program regularly communicates expectations for participation and reinforces standards to youth both verbally and in written form. • The organization communicates clearly and regularly with youth, families, and staff about the participation policy. 			
4 Address youth interests, abilities, talents, and learning styles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are aware of each youth's interests, abilities, and talents. • The program plans and implements a range of activities tailored to the interests, abilities, talents, and learning styles of youth. • Staff are trained in learning style differences. • Youth are regularly surveyed on their interests. • Youth are given opportunities to be involved in creating program activities and events. • The organization actively seeks partnerships to enhance the delivery of activities that meet the interests, abilities, and talents of youth. • Staff are monitored to provide support to learning style differences and coaching is provided as needed. 			

Value Different Perspectives				
Concepts	Key Indicators	Meets Standard	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
1 Implement practices that respect students' experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs create a supportive environment that values the youth's unique experiences, interests, and personalities. • Youth are offered opportunities to share their stories, experiences, and personal interests with others in a safe and open atmosphere. • Organization regularly reviews programming to ensure it appropriately considers the experiences of the youth served. 			
2 Acknowledge youth perspectives, experiences, and interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization includes activities and events that reflect the interests and experiences of youth. • Organization communicates regularly and clearly with youth, families, and staff about relevant program policies and expectations. 			
3 Provide lessons and experiences that promote understanding and respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth are offered opportunities to share their stories, experiences, and personal interests with others in a safe and open atmosphere. • Staff foster a positive interrelationship among youth, their families, the community, school, and Afterschool program. • Program staff are mindful of the different learning styles and needs of youth and adapt their approaches accordingly. • Staff and administration make reasonable accommodations to serve youth with varying abilities. 			

STANDARD 2: Staff and Youth Relationships

Areas of Opportunity:

Prescriptive Plans/Steps toward improvement:

STANDARD 3: Youth Participation, Learning, and Engagement

A quality Afterschool program employs staff with knowledge in positive youth development strategies, academic enrichment, classroom management and community engagement leading to youth leadership and voice in the program. Quality programs provide high quality staff performance by providing staff coaching and mentoring. In a quality Afterschool program, Afterschool staff demonstrate commitment to children, youth, families and communities through positive interaction. A quality Afterschool program ensures that participants feel a sense of ownership in the program by engaging them on a consistent basis in program activities that have an opportunity to inform.

Positive Youth Development				
Concepts	Key Indicators	Meets Standard	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
1 Provide strengths-based programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities and opportunities are designed to build on existing youth strengths that accentuate successes rather than failure. Utilizing non-punitive methodologies, staff work with school staff to identify skill and attainment gaps to reinforce learning through experiential learning activities. The program is designed to provide a variety of strengths-based activities. Activities support self-direction, resilience, goal-setting, and leadership development. The staff are trained in strengths and competency-based approaches. The organization implements a policy for the adoption of a positive youth development framework. Supervisors monitor staff compliance by providing strengths and competency-based approaches and provide coaching as needed. The organization communicates clearly and consistently with youth, families, and staff about the framework. 			
2 Build new skills through experiential learning activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities are provided for youth to develop new interests, abilities and talents. Program design provides multiple, diverse opportunities for youth that are project-based, support experiential learning and relate to real-world experiences. The organization engages the community to provide service learning, entrepreneurial opportunities for youth to experience career pathways. 			
3 Celebrate and showcase participant strengths, talents, and accomplishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth demonstrate and celebrate what they have learned. The program and organization events celebrate and showcase youth strengths, learning, and talents at community events. The program allows youth talents and accomplishments to be highlighted for greater parental and family engagement. 			

4 Support older youth skill-building and career orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Older youth are engaged as volunteers and encouraged to participate with younger children when appropriate and possible.Program design for older youth connects new learning and skill building to service learning and career pathways.The organization implements a policy that supports older youth engagement, and communicates clearly and regularly with youth, families, and staff about the policy.			
5 Honor youth choice and input	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Youth choice and voice are built into activity design to ensure engagement.Program design allows for youth input and encourages youth to make choices suited to their interests, abilities and talents.Supervisors monitor staff compliance with providing youth choice and input and provide coaching as needed.Staff is trained to support and guide youth choices.			
Supportive Learning				
Concepts	Key Indicators	Meets Standard	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
1 Use learning reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Youth acknowledge and reflect on their learning progress daily/weekly to ensure learning is relevant to their own world and perspective.Staff are trained in how to ask questions that inspire deep reflection of what was studied, and all activities include a reflection component.Organizational practice incorporates experiential and reflective learning for staff as well as youth.			
2 Respond to different learning styles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Staff recognize different learning styles and range of youth abilities.Staff respond appropriately to the individual learning needs of participants.Program activities reflect varying learning approaches and materials to meet the different learning styles of youth.The staff is trained in learning styles, and staff compliance to supporting different learning styles is monitored by the supervisors with coaching provided as needed.			
3 Coordinate grade level learning goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Program activities are correlated to school day learning goals throughout the school year and into the summer months to prevent summer learning loss.The staff and classroom teachers collaborate to coordinate grade-level expectations for afterschool activities in order to maintain a working partnership.Program staff and school staff collaborate on communicating with the youth and their families about student learning, goals, and challenges.			

4 Build a supportive learning environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Program staff demonstrates the value of respect for others, self-improvement, and life-long learning toward a productive life.• Group skills are explicitly taught for collaborative projects to demonstrate real-world cooperative workplace environments.• The organization strives to build a learning community among the staff, youth and families to promote collective outcomes.			
Youth Leadership and Voice				
Concepts	Key Indicators	Meets Standard	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
1 Engage the input of youth on program activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Youth are encouraged to express their ideas and opinions regarding activities, and the program acknowledges and incorporates these ideas into activities.• The staff helps youth develop language skills through frequent conversations.• The organization implements a policy for youth input into program design and provides opportunities for youth to serve on decision-making boards.• Supervisors monitor staff compliance with supporting youth input into program design and provide coaching as needed.			
2 Strengthen confidence of youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff offer support in a way that supports the participants' initiatives.• Staff assist participants without taking control.• Staff encourage participants to take on leadership roles.• Programming supports youth initiative and ownership.• The staff is trained to strengthen the confidence of youth.• Ongoing leadership opportunities are cultivated to link youth to other organizations and community efforts.			

STANDARD 3: Youth Participation, Learning, and Engagement

Areas of Opportunity:

Prescriptive Plans/Steps toward improvement:

STANDARD 4: Family and Community Partnerships

A quality Afterschool program actively engages families and fosters meaningful collaboration between families, program staff, the school, and the broader community. Quality programs acknowledge community environment by aligning program philosophy and practices with that of the community. Quality programs seek to increase the effectiveness of family members in navigating the school system and working with school staff to support school goals and student achievement. The program connects to needed community businesses and resources; and in turn, helps participants and families connect to the array of supports that exist within the community.

Family Engagement				
Concepts	Key Indicators	Meets Standard	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
1 Relate respectfully to families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The staff has experience in relating to families in respectful and positive ways. The program implements written procedures to ensure the staff/family interactions are positive and respectful. The organization recruits program staff from within the community to best serve youth and families. 			
2 Create a family welcoming environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The staff creates a welcoming and comfortable place for families. The staff is approachable and communicates with families that they are welcome to visit. The program structure allows parents to observe activities, and the organization implements a policy that allows family members to visit unannounced anytime during program hours. The organization communicates clearly and regularly with youth, families, and staff about the visitation policy. Parent volunteers are recruited. Families receive information and educational resources on a regular basis, and a centralized place for program and community information sharing is provided. 			
3 Engage family input and participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open lines of communication enable sharing between staff and families. The staff sees families as valuable contributors to the program, asking them how they might want to support the program. The program provides an avenue for feedback that includes identifying their child's interests, abilities, and talents. Feedback from families is acknowledged and addressed. Families are invited to contribute their expertise and talents to program support and activities. The organization supports staff and families joining together to communicate and work with the schools. Families are offered opportunities to serve in the organization's leadership roles. 			

4 Develop a communications and outreach plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A wide variety of communication is distributed to families about activities.• Staff communicate effectively with all families based on their needs.• Clear, effective two-way communication methods are in place to support strong connections with families, ensuring easy to understand formats.• Family activities are planned and implemented.• The organization implements a family engagement outreach plan that dedicates financial and staff resources.			
Family Partnership and Engagement				
Concepts	Key Indicators	Meets Standard	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
1 Utilize and value families as a resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff have experience working with a wide range of families with different perspectives.• Staff incorporate families' experiences and strengths to enrich activities.• Resources support family members in leadership roles that help build understanding, respect, and connection across the program.			
2 Provide a welcoming program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Registration practices are designed to be clear, easy to navigate, and available in formats that meet the needs of the families served.• The organization has a clear approach for engaging families, and communicates regularly with youth, families, and staff about how they can be involved.• The organization collects demographic data on the community to assess possible gaps in service, needed outreach and barriers to participation; it recruits youth based on this assessment.			

Family Support					
Concepts	Key Indicators	Meets Standard	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable	
1 Provide a family-friendly program schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Hours of operation take into consideration the working hours of families.Program planning, program events, and celebrations occur when families can reasonably attend.The organization provides that a program calendar and schedule is disseminated to families to support connection between program and family schedules.				
2 Provide families with tools to support student learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The staff communicates the link between program activities and school day education.The program supports families in navigating the school system.The organization dedicates staff, tools, and financial resources to provide workshops for families on how they can support student learning.				
3 Connect families to services and supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Staff provide information about community resources to meet the needs of families.The program provides a directory of family services and support in the community.The organization dedicates staff and financial resources to support families in connection with family services and support.				
Community Partnerships					
Concepts	Key Indicators	Meets Standard	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable	
1 Cultivate community-based supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The staff identifies what supports are needed for program activities.A list of community resources is maintained, and the staff draws from these resources to expand program offerings.Local community-based organizations and businesses are consistently invited to program events.The organization implements a partnership development plan that identifies and engages community-based organizations and businesses on a regular basis.				
2 Link program activities to existing community events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Both the staff and youth participate in community events, festivals, and activities.The program seeks opportunities to showcase youth activities at community events.The organization implements a partnership development plan that identifies opportunities to link program activities to community events and identifies community service options for youth.				

3 Acknowledge community-based organizational support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff formally thanks supporters in person or through a written thank you. • The program engages youth in designing and implementing activities that result in a public recognition of community support. • The organization provides resources to publicly or formally recognize organizations that have provided significant support to the program and its families. 			

STANDARD 4: Family and Community Partnerships

Areas of Opportunity:

Prescriptive Plans/Steps toward improvement:

STANDARD 5: Programming and Alignment with Regular School Day Learning *

Quality Afterschool programs are both structured and flexible. The program inspires active and life-long learning through experiential, project-based activities that address developmental learning, academic progress, and future orientation of the real world. A range of well-supplied activities allow for choice and contribution by youth. A quality program is well planned by staff with stakeholders so that activities are relevant, linked to the school day, engaging and varied.

Planning and Communication with Regular School Day Faculty and Staff				
Concepts	Key Indicators	Meets Standard	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
1 Develop deliberate and strategic plan of alignment and coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish an action plan and organizational structure to facilitate coordination. Program demonstrates knowledge of State and localized educational goals and objectives for the community served. Program staff work to form partnerships with area schools to facilitate regular conversations that support linking school day and Afterschool learning practices and outcomes. Program leadership and staff monitor localized school day curricula to identify and increase linkage with program activities that enhance and enrich youth learning experiences. Afterschool program leadership & staff attend and are included in school meetings and discussions that monitor student academic progress and behavior. Active relationship building is pursued to foster trust with school staff to secure student achievement data and address – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall program activities design Individualized student academic enrichment to alleviate learning gaps 			
2 Coordinate plans of communication with educational leadership, administration, and all constituents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program leadership and staff have developed a strategic communication plan to engage local area educational leadership. Communication plans are extensive in nature to include all stakeholders in children's success. From the inception of each academic year, solicit and ensure collaborative efforts regarding alignment of standards. The staff utilizes resources, pacing guides, and any information obtained from the local schools, school boards, principals, teachers and staff to align programmatic objectives. Where possible and feasible, school/educational leadership is involved with programmatic design and guidance to assist with collaborative efforts for positive youth outcomes. The program arranges for shared cross-sector professional development opportunities that link school day and Afterschool learning practices. 			

Alignment of Activities with Regular School Day Learning				
Concepts	Key Indicators	Meets Standard	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
1 Link afterschool activities to the school day curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities are different from school day activities but complement school day learning. Activities challenge children intellectually, creatively, and/or physically. All activities are purposeful and meaningful and are directly linked and aligned with comprehensive learning goals. To key stakeholders and local and state constituencies, it is apparent there is a seamless line and correlation across all sectors of the youth' educational spectrum – school day, Afterschool and summer school. 			
2 Activities are fun, experiential, hands-on, and engaging while addressing learning goals and objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence-based curricular materials and resources focused on enhanced, experiential learning are employed. Activities cover a broad and expansive array of interests while addressing the holistic needs of the child. Educational objectives, though not explicitly communicated or apparent to youth, are clearly quantifiable and outcome-driven to educational and administrative personnel. 			
3 Summer Programming and Enrichment <i>* If local summer programming is not made available, this element may not be applicable. However, if school-aged children are involved in summer activities, the standards should be implemented.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summer programming is comprised of deep experiential activities that would not be otherwise made available during the academic school year. (i.e. Field trips, excursions, museums, science centers, exploratory adventures, etc.) Learning is inherently interwoven in all opportunities. Program leadership performs student diagnostic assessments to determine learning and achievement gaps. Activities and intervention services are designed to address student educational needs – to not only countermand summer learning loss – but provide opportunities for progression. Events are scheduled throughout the summer to provide parent and family involvement that highlight experiences and activities for both the student and parent. 			

*** This component is of particular significance and uniquely challenging to address. Children are always learning, even during what they perceive to be enjoyable and fun. Therefore, it is the responsibility of program staff to ensure educational, deliberate intentionality is built into all experiential activities. *Nothing in Afterschool/Summer programming can have the appearance of a 'punitive nature' as related to grades, tests, scores, or failure of any kind.***

STANDARD 5: Programming and Alignment with Regular School Day Learning

Areas of Opportunity:

Prescriptive Plans/Steps toward improvement:

STANDARD 6: Administration and Organizational Development

A quality Afterschool program has effective administrative practices, detailed organizational processes, sound financial management, mission marketing, resource development, policy development, and strategic planning. The program encourages its administrators to monitor for effectiveness and efficiency throughout its organizational structure, while also building the capacity of the organization to support collaboration and advocacy among stakeholders. The program provides outreach to community and school partners and consistently informs its stakeholders of its operations, policies, and funding priorities.

Operations and Management				
Concepts	Key Indicators	Meets Standard	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
1 Provide program management and oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A program manager/director is identified, and management oversees the recruitment and retention of program staff. • Program managers are trained to follow protocols, align program vision/mission to program delivery, and work toward achieving program outcomes. • The program and organizational structure adhere to all federal and state laws and regulations for program delivery. • The organization implements continuous quality improvement systems and processes, aiming for improvement in all areas of the program. 			
2 Develop a recordkeeping system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive and detailed record and bookkeeping practices are established, observed and employed. • Records are kept in accordance with the governing organization's programmatic requirements and follows program and follows all privacy and confidentiality protocols. • Organization recordkeeping system is aligned to partner agency recordkeeping systems for data sharing. 			
3 Share established program policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program policy and procedure handbooks guide program operations and management. • The program's policies are reviewed and refined on at an annual or semi-annual basis by management and staff. • The organization provides communication that supports youth, families, and staff knowing and understanding the policies. • Program policies are made available to community stakeholders. 			

Sustainability and Resource Development				
Concepts	Key Indicators	Meets Standard	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
1 Develop community partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A logistical plan is established to target and build a broad array of partnerships that will support the program's goals to address long-term sustainability.• Community is developed to support enhanced or continued services.• Organizational partnership meetings are regularly scheduled to garner support and share decision-making power with the local community. (Semi-annual recommended.)			
2 Create and sustain school linked resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff communicate with the administration of schools served regarding resource needs.• Applicable school administration helps secure or identify resources that secure continued school-linked afterschool activities.• The organization implements agreements that identify the roles and responsibilities of a collaborative school/afterschool partnership.			
3 Develop Marketing Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff and management seek opportunities to convey basic program information including the schedule, location, scope of activities, philosophy, etc. for sustained ongoing community support• Informational flyers, brochures, and digital campaigns are created and updated that include a description of the program, key personnel, and contact information.• The organization provides resources for the development of a website, use of social media, and other marketing materials.			
Financial Management				
Concepts	Key Indicators	Meets Standard	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
1 Fiscal Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Program leadership has established and adheres to sound financial management practices that continually consider and remain consistent with the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Federal laws, regulations and guidance– Alabama state statutes, fiscal rules and responsibilities– Generally accepted accounting and finance principles• A sound, transparent operational Budget is established with systems of compliance and accountability clearly delineated.			

2 Accounting Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A basic fiscal management system is deployed to track income and expenses and manage budgetary constraints. • The bookkeeping system supplies a system-generated accounting report capable of meeting the reporting requirements to all funders and constituents. • All income, purchases, and expenditures are well-documented with the necessary signatures and adhere to the approval process. 			
3 Internal Controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A system of <i>Internal Controls</i> must be implemented to ensure the successful implementation of effective financial management. • Everyone who personally participates in <u>any</u> fiscal transaction must ensure the program's system of checks and balances are always observed: approval, appropriate signatures, adequate budgeted funded, documentation disposition, inventory management and updates. 			

STANDARD 6: Administration and Organizational Development

Areas of Opportunity:

Prescriptive Plans/Steps toward improvement:

STANDARD 7: Staffing and Professional Development

A quality Afterschool program attracts and employs staff equipped with knowledge of positive youth development strategies, academic enrichment, classroom management, and community engagement. Quality programs reach beyond mandatory training requirements to provide staff with additional tools, professional practice, coaching, and an environment of cooperation and learning. In a quality Afterschool program afterschool staff are expected to demonstrate commitment to contributing to a professional working environment through a high level of ethical conduct and positive interaction.

Staff Qualifications				
Concepts	Key Indicators	Meets Standard	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
1 Secure staff that possess knowledge of working with youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff have education and experience in working with youth, ideally in an Afterschool program environment. • The staff are trained in research and best practices related to working with youth. • The organization offers staff opportunities to keep up with the professional standards and innovations in working with youth. • Supervisors monitor staff compliance with the professional standards required to work with youth, and provide additional coaching as needed. 			
2 Recruit and hire staff that possess knowledge in the afterschool field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff are educated, trained, and experienced in working in an Afterschool program environment. • The staff is provided with materials and information on best practices in the Afterschool field. • The organization offers staff opportunities to transfer and share the most current knowledge of the afterschool field. 			
3 Provide background checks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and volunteers are fingerprinted and receive a background check clearance in accordance with both federal and state compliance, prior to working with youth. • Documentation is maintained of background check clearance for all staff and volunteers. • The organization provides communication that supports youth, families, and staff knowing and understanding of the policy. • Though not mandated in Alabama – <i>unless the program is receiving DHR funded childcare subsidies</i> – it is HIGHLY recommended that all staff have a background check every five years, as is customarily expected by DHR. 			

Orientation				
Concepts	Key Indicators	Meets Standard	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
1 Orient staff to essential program elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Program staff and substitutes are provided with a basic orientation to the program, and the staff handbook is distributed to all staff.• The program maintains a written staff handbook that is reviewed and updated annually, using staff input, and maintains legal compliance with state laws.• Documentation is kept confirming staff training and agreement to comply with the handbook.• The organization implements a policy that requires all new staff receive an in-depth orientation, with an annual review of essential policies.			
2 Support staff in understanding its roles and responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Each staff member understands his or her scope of work including responsibilities to the program, how they interrelate with other program roles, its youth, and family members.• Formal written job descriptions are developed and provided for each program position.			
3 Support staff in understanding program policies and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Procedures and expectations are clearly and consistently communicated to staff, substitutes, and volunteers.• Staff members annually confirm their review and knowledge of program policies, procedures, and expectations.• The organization provides staff opportunities to make recommendations to the program policies, procedures, and expectations based on field experience.			
Professional Development				
Concepts	Key Indicators	Meets Standard	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
1 Support staff in possessing and demonstrating core competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff are aware of and trained in the National Afterschool Association Core Competencies and reach out to the Alabama Afterschool Network for assistance.• There is a written plan for on-going professional development for each staff member, including the director.• The organization dedicates resources to building and aligning core competencies consistent with broader program goals.			

2 Support staff in understanding quality program aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The staff receives a handbook that outlines the multiple aspects of program quality, and the staff are trained to increase their competency in critical aspects of quality programming.• The program leaders receive training in program management and staff supervision, and the staff is monitored to understand quality program aspects and coaching is provided as needed.• The organization implements policies that support staff understanding of multiple aspects of program quality and child developmental needs.• Program staff are presented with Professional Development opportunities throughout each calendar year that are reflective of their needs and their own growth and personal attainment.• The organization communicates clearly and consistently throughout the entirety of the year with youth, families, and staff about programmatic quality assurances – and the steps being taken to ensure the program’s ongoing efforts.			
Intra-Staff Relationships				
Concepts	Key Indicators	Meets Standard	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
1 Build a cohesive team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The staff works as a team, building on individual strengths and demonstrating cooperation.• The staff are trained in team building and encouraged to demonstrate positive team interaction.• The organization conducts semi-annual to annual staff retreats to deepen cooperation and respect.			
2 Encourage positive communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The staff maintains open, positive, and respectful lines of communication.• The staff-to-staff relationships are professional and do not interfere with their responsibilities in caring for and interacting with youth.• The program incorporates structured opportunities for staff to reflect on and plan effective communication practices.• Supervisors monitor staff compliance with positive inter-staff relationships and provide additional coaching as needed.			

Retention Indicators				
Concepts	Key Indicators	Meets Standard	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
1 Provide competitive compensation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are offered the best possible wages and working conditions to reduce staff turnover. • If staff is paid, the program pays for planning or prep time. • If the program has paid staff, full-time staff receives equitable wages, benefits and health insurance. 			
2 Establish a positive, rewarding work environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff experiences a safe, respectful, and rewarding work environment. • The staff receives consistent, public recognition for its contribution to the program. • The organization provides a structure and a process for staff to express concerns and make recommendations. • Management is responsive to staff concerns and recommendations. 			
3 Supervise staff through effective and positive practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff receives on-going supervision and feedback throughout the program year. • Staff participate in an annual self-evaluation process based on an objective observation tool, which includes discussion with the supervisor on performance goals and the development of an improvement plan. • Supervisors are trained in staff supervision. • The organization implements an annual needs assessment with all staff to identify professional development needs; and the organization provides resources to meet the needs. • The organization implements a policy for regular staff reviews that assess knowledge of supervisory role (if appropriate) and quality of team contribution. • Exit interviews with all staff members whose employment is terminated are conducted and feedback is addressed. 			

STANDARD 7: Staffing and Professional Development

Areas of Opportunity:

Prescriptive Plans/Steps toward improvement:

STANDARD 8: Evaluation for Continuous Quality Improvement

A quality Afterschool program has a clearly defined mission with aligned goals and specific outcomes. Programs align their mission and goals with those of the school and community that they serve. The program establishes a continuous, internal evaluation process to assess the efficacy of their progress towards program goals through various methods and measures such as focus groups, surveys, observation, self-monitoring, student and program assessments, etc. Programs gather information from youth, families, teachers, school administrators, staff, volunteers, and community stakeholders to make improvements.

Continuous Quality Improvement Indicators				
Concepts	Key Indicators	Meets Standard	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
1 Establish program mission goals and objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program's mission is defined and supported by current, measurable program goals and objectives. • The program's mission, goals, and objectives align with the identified needs of participants. • Participant needs are identified through existing data, document review, key informant interviews, surveys, most significant change stories, concept mapping or other means. • Program leadership develops and reviews evaluation questions at least once per year. • The organization collaborates with school and community members to derive program mission, goals, and objectives that are aligned with school and community goals as well as the identified needs of participants. • The organization collaborates with staff, school personnel, community stakeholders, and/or family members to derive evaluation questions at least once per year. 			
2 Collect data for continuous improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program selects and deploys digital platforms and data collection system that best meets the needs of the individual program and community. • Records are maintained of youth participation, attendance, and retention levels. • The program identifies and sustains data collection processes from various stakeholders that inform continuous program improvement. • The organization regularly collects multiple measures of program goals and objectives from a variety of different stakeholder groups and uses the data to build the case for investment in the program. • Data is shared with all constituents and stakeholders. 			

3 Collect stories that exemplify quality practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff share success stories on a regular basis amongst themselves and with families they serve. • Program has a process in place to collect and archive success stories. • Stories are connected to data snapshots and are posted/distributed to showcase program and youth accomplishments on a regular basis. • The organization uses success stories to promote the program with stakeholders, policymakers, funders, and the greater community. 			
4 Enlist family input on the value of the program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff discusses the value of the program with families on a regular basis. (Monthly, semi-annual is highly recommended.) • The program conducts family surveys. • The organization solicits input from families and includes them in the program planning process. 			
5 Use of self-assessment data for program improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff participates in a self-assessment of the program and understands how program assessment correlates with personnel core competencies. • The program utilizes staff input to adopt a standard self-assessment instrument that is used to assess overall program effectiveness. • The program utilizes self-assessment to develop and implement a continuous quality improvement action plan. • The organization implements a policy for regular assessment through a written Continuous Quality Improvement Plan. 			
6 Use of program data for program improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff reviews program participation and retention data at least once per year and identifies best practices for improvement. • The staff is aware that some program measures of effectiveness have been defined, and data are being tracked. • The program utilizes participation and retention data, as well as measures of program goals and objectives to inform continuous program improvement planning. • The organization develops an annual summary of data and continuous quality improvement activities. • The organization collaborates with staff, school personnel, family members and community stakeholders to review the results of and help plan any changes to the Continuous Quality Improvement Plan. 			

7 Share evidence of best or promising practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff regularly review and reflect on progress reports, program data, evaluation findings as well as research/literature reviews and other professional development information to confirm evidence of best or promising practices in the program. • The program documents evidence of best or promising practice in program materials and shares them with staff and stakeholders. • The organization facilitates staff participation in events that allows them to share and learn about the best and promising practices with stakeholders and other afterschool providers. 			

STANDARD 8: Evaluation for Continuous Quality Improvement

Areas of Opportunity:

Prescriptive Plans/Steps toward improvement:

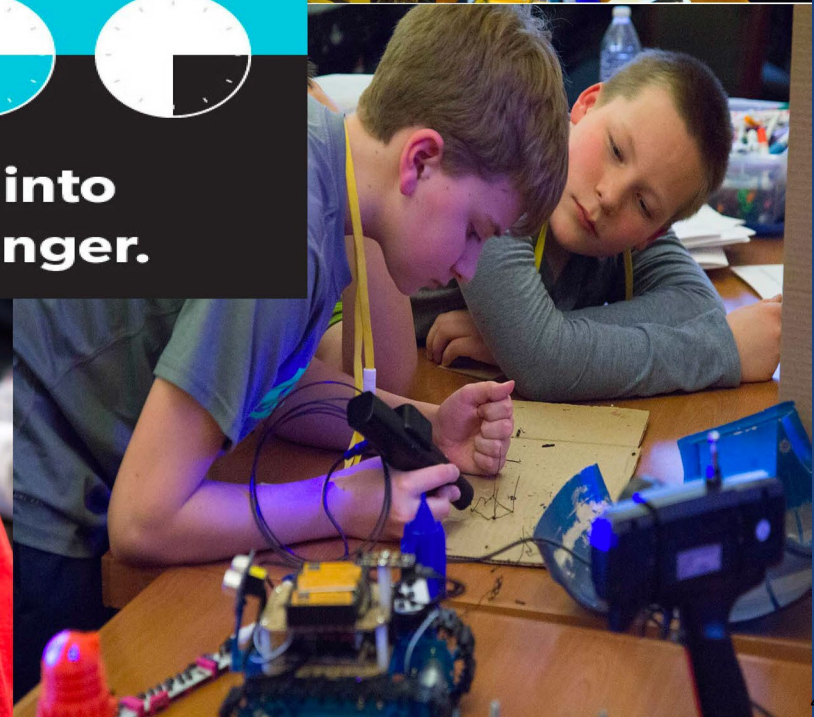
Afterschool Works!



These 3
hours get
kids into
science—



or into
danger.



Afterschool + STEM Engagement = Student Success!

By 2020, there will be **1.4 million** computing jobs open—fewer than one-third can be filled by U.S. computing graduates.

Afterschool is changing that.



This is afterschool.
Preparing kids for college and careers.

The ability for all children and youth to become competitive, global citizens who can navigate our world's economic landscape and successfully participate in the workplace depends on their exposure to *quality* **STEM** opportunities. This is why improving STEM educational platforms has become a national priority. Opportunities that provide inquiry, competency, and project-based learning have risen to the forefront. Across all educational, childcare, and youth development sectors these initiatives are now prevalent and promoted in every arena.

As emphasized in a recent report from the **National Research Council**, the **National Academy of Sciences**, the **National Academy of Engineering**, and the **National Academy of Medicine** – the nature of a child's learning and engagement has fundamentally changed specifically related to **Science**, **Technology**, **Engineering**, and **Math** education (the **STEM** disciplines). Students have unprecedented 24/7 access to science & math-related information from the cradle to the grave with much greater interaction from on-demand learning resources, materials and opportunities.

The NRC report accentuates that in today's challenging educational world, Science and Math engagement must begin at the earliest point in life, of course include high quality K-12 classroom instruction, but must also reach far beyond our known traditional boundaries to encompass Childcare/Daycare, Parks and Rec, libraries, museums, zoos, aquaria, science centers, parks, reserves, Afterschool/Summer school, organized youth programs (4-H, YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs), institutions of higher education, and the ever-increasing diverse array of broadcast media.

Science —

A way of exploring, knowing and understanding

Technology —

The innumerable tools we use to examine, investigate, and create

Engineering —

The creation, exploration process – the product of, and what we do with Science

Math —

The beautiful and elegant language we use to describe, to quantify, and to predict it all

As with the other Quality Standards contained herein, the STEM Engagement components are not designed to be the definitive answer to "*all things STEM.*"

They are to be used as a basic framework toward deliberate intentionality around fun, experiential STEM learning.

Around the resources and activities there must be sound instructional strategies that relate student findings and explorations to real world applications to ensure connected learning.

Use the Standards with your children, and enjoy the process with them!

Only **26 percent** of computer scientists are women.

Afterschool is changing that.

This is afterschool.
Where kids explore STEM and future careers.



Addendum: STEM Engagement and Learning

Concepts	Key Indicators	Meets Standard	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
1 The program creates an inspiring STEM learning environment for <u>ALL</u> youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The STEM program encourages youth to discover, explore, experiment and take learning risks. The STEM activity space feels different than school (e.g. youth can sit at workstations or on carpet pieces). The space encourages interest in STEM (e.g., scientific tools, visible posters or other visual displays). The space is arranged to maximize STEM learning and exploration (youth have room to do group work, staff assemble for discussion and group work, etc.). 			
2 STEM resources, equipment and supplies support STEM learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff and youth have access to resources, equipment and supplies that support STEM learning. There is an adequate amount of STEM materials for all youth to participate. STEM materials are age and developmentally appropriate. STEM materials are well maintained and safe to use. Staff and youth use STEM materials safely and appropriately. 			
3 The STEM program engages families, regular school day staff, and the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program collaborates with schools to share STEM resources and expertise. The program partners and connects with STEM-rich institutions (e.g. museums, libraries, science centers, and STEM education organizations). The program engages families in a variety of ways (e.g. family science nights, sending home materials that support STEM at home). 			
4 Staff receive professional development that increases their confidence and ability to facilitate STEM learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> STEM is integrated into existing trainings and broader program goals. Staff development focuses on youth development and STEM learning. Staff are exposed to interesting, easy to implement STEM content and curricula. Staff learn real world applications of STEM. Staff learn to use the inquiry process and other methods for teaching informal STEM. Staff are resource gatherers, knowing where to find expertise and how to use it. Staff learn from STEM experts in the community. 			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are partnership builders, actively engaging STEM experts and organizations to support STEM programming. • Staff is encouraged to learn alongside youth and facilitate ways to find answers. 			
5 Activities inspire and engage youth in STEM learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities are fun, hands-on, active, and experiential. • Activities are collaborative and use a team-based approach. • Youth identify topics and questions of interest. • Activities connect to the interest and experiences of youth. • Youth learn how STEM connects to their daily lives and the world in which they live. • Youth have opportunities to experience STEM learning through projects. • Youth have opportunities to practice new skills, present and showcase their work to guests. 			
6 The program provides opportunities for you to learn STEM content, skills and knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curricular standards with the corresponding courses of study inform STEM activities' planning. • Program curricula and activities complement, enrich, and enhance school day learning. • The program selects and utilizes STEM curricula that supports youth voice that promotes engagement and learning. • Lessons and activities are approached in an inter-related, cross-disciplinary approach to demonstrate how the STEM disciplines correlate one with the other. • Activities develop higher-order critical thinking skills (e.g. inquiry, decision making, planning, problem solving, and reflecting). • Youth have opportunities to apply scientific reasoning (e.g. manipulating, testing, investigating, predicting, questioning, and observing). • STEM activities include a variety of subject areas (e.g. reading, writing, and art). • Youth have opportunities to learn about and explore STEM careers. 			

7 The program utilizes a variety of data to measure the impact of it STEM programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program has a written plan with established goals • The program collects data from staff, youth, parents, and community partners to demonstrate STEM learning • Programming is adjusted based on data findings • The program shares the progress and outcomes with key stakeholders • The program maintains confidentiality of all student data and adheres to all federal, state, and local privacy laws 			

Addendum: STEM Engagement and Learning

Areas of Opportunity:

Prescriptive Plans/Steps toward improvement: