



*North Carolina Center for Afterschool Programs
Increasing Access to Quality Afterschool*

NC Afterschool Funders Group Standards

Supported By:

NC General Assembly Dropout Prevention Committee
NC Department of Public Instruction
NC Department of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention
Governor's Crime Commission
NC Department of Health & Human Services



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Development of Standards:

The Afterschool Funders Group Standards were developed in 2009 by a group of state and federal funders of afterschool programs, including the NC Departments of Juvenile Justice, Public Instruction, Health and Human Services and Governor's Crime Commission. Led by the NC Center for Afterschool Programs, the agencies designed the standards as a roadmap for afterschool programs to develop a quality baseline and improve the quality of services to children and youth in North Carolina.

The standards have been adopted by the NC Committee on Dropout Prevention, NC Departments of Juvenile Justice, Public Instruction (21st Century Community Learning Centers and Supplemental Education Services), Health and Human Services (Division of Child Development and TANF) and Governor's Crime Commission. Each agency is incorporating the standards into their Request for Proposal (RFP) and evaluation criteria, beginning with the 2009-2010 academic year.

Training and Technical Assistance:

NC CAP has created a supplementary standards manual to provide additional resources for afterschool programs to implement the standards. Additional quality resources are available by visiting the NC CAP website at www.nccap.net, or calling (919) 781-6833.

Acknowledgements:

NC CAP would like to thank the following individuals for their assistance in developing the Afterschool Funders Group Standards:

Belinda S. Black, Ed.D., Charlotte N. Hughes, and Debora S. Williams, NC Department of Public Instruction
Secretary Linda Hayes, Fred West, Ph.D., Venecia Malloy, Angela McGavisk, NC Department of Juvenile Justice
Justin Davis, Governor's Crime Commission
Cyndie Bennett, June Locklear, Kristin O'Connor, Ed.M., NC Department of Health and Human Services

Afterschool Funders Group Standards

Goals for Program Management and Delivery

Orderly, Safe, and Healthy Environment

A quality afterschool program provides participants with an environment conducive to growth and learning.

At a minimum a program serving quality program has the following elements:
1. Primary program environment* that is in a safe building approved for occupancy by:
a. Building Inspection/Approval: The applicant shall arrange for inspection of the building by the local building inspector. The applicant shall provide an approved inspection report signed by the appropriate inspector with their application for funding.
b. Certificate of Occupancy from a building inspector can be provided in lieu of a building inspection.
c. Certificate of Maximum Occupancy: The applicant shall arrange for inspection of the building by the local fire inspector. The applicant shall provide an approved inspection report signed by the appropriate inspector indicating the maximum occupancy of the building and submit with the application for funding.
d. Other External Safety Review: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approved fire extinguishers mounted properly and in good working order shall be available.• All exits and their access (<i>e.g.</i>, aisles, hallways and corridors) shall be free from obstructions.
e. Playground Safety Inspection** shall be conducted regularly by a trained staff person, including inspection of surfacing, potential hazards, equipment, hardware, and drainage.
2. Written safety policies and procedures, including, but not limited to:
a. Sign in/Sign out Policy for children which includes the date and the time the youth arrives and departs the program each day.
b. Identification process for children and visitors.
c. Staff CPR / First Aid – At least one person with current certification in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) shall be present at all times youth are present.
3. Risk management procedures in place, including, but not limited to:
a. Fire drills: Records of monthly fire drills giving the date each drill is held, the time of day, the length of time taken to evacuate the building, and the signature of the person who conducted the drill must be maintained on file at the program.
b. Tornado drills: Records of a bi-annual tornado drill must be maintained on file at the program, along with an identified sheltering area within the facility.
c. Crisis Management Plan (inclusive of a 2-block radius from primary program environment) shall be in place.
d. Evacuation plan must be posted in each space occupied by youth that identifies a primary and secondary evacuation route. Identify a safe place to gather and account for all participants.
4. Safe transportation to and from the program (if applicable) and program-sponsored field trips:

a. Vehicle:

- All vehicles used to transport youth shall be in good repair.
- The driver shall be 18 years old or a licensed school bus driver; have a valid driver's license of the type required under North Carolina Motor Vehicle Law for the vehicle being driven and have no convictions of driving while impaired or any other driving offense within the last three years.
- All vehicles used to transport youth have been properly inspected and meet North Carolina Motor Vehicle Laws.
- A CDL license is required of drivers, paid or volunteer, who drive a vehicle designed to transport 16 or more persons, including the driver. All CDL driver's must follow the guidelines of the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles Commercial Driver's Manual.

b. Policies/procedures shall provide clear guidance for staff members to assure youth are adequately supervised while being transported.

- Procedures for how staff members accurately account for all youth at all times during field trips (*e.g.*, rosters, checklists, name to face recognition, etc.) should be in place.

c. Staff/youth ratio: The maximum number of youth assigned to one adult can never exceed twenty-five.

5 Nutrition: At least one nutritious snack and/or meal per 4 hours the participant is in care.

6. Program design or curriculum supported by evidenced-based research.

7. Administration:

a. Insurance***:

- Worker's Compensation (unless there are less than 3 people on staff).
- For community-based programs, Director's & Officer's Insurance and Professional Liability Insurance.
- General Liability Insurance (minimum of \$50,000 in coverage).
- All vehicles shall be insured for liability as required by State laws governing transportation of passengers.

b. Each participant will have an individual registration form that includes at a minimum:

- Identifying information: name, address, parent/guardian(s) name, telephone number in case of an emergency, and date of birth.
- Emergency medical care information, including any allergies or chronic illnesses.
- Names of individuals to whom program staff may release the participant as authorized by the person who signs the registration form.
- Media / Publicity release.
- Parent/guardian permission for release of records from school to program and information sharing.

* School-based and county government programs are exempt.

**For information on playground safety trainings, contact the local Child Care Resource and Referral office in your area. Call the Division of Child Development's Customer Service number (1-800-859-0829) for a directory and checklist that may be used for safety inspections. Other agencies that offer playground safety training include NC Partnership for Children, Cooperative Extension and Private Trainers.

***County or local government entities may follow their own policies and procedures.

Administration – Policies and Procedures

A quality afterschool program has appropriate policies and procedures in place relating to governance, fiscal responsibility, personnel, and operations.

A quality program has the following elements:
1. Establishment of a Board of Directors* (for nonprofits only) with regular program operations and staff review.
a. The board of directors should have a minimum of five voting members.
b. A minimum of three evenly spaced meetings per year of the full governing body with a majority in attendance, with face-to-face participation and documentation of meeting minutes.
c. Not more than one or 10% (whichever is greater) directly or indirectly compensated person(s) serving as voting member(s) of the board. Compensated members shall not serve as the board's chair or treasurer.
d. No transaction(s) in which any board or staff members have material conflicting interests with the charity resulting from any relationship or business affiliation.
2. Board approved policies and procedures in an Accounting/Fiscal manual** that should at minimum address the following:
a. All required documents pertaining to internal accounting procedures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash Requests / Handling Petty Cash • Expenditure Reporting • Tracking and managing checks • Tracking and filing of invoices • Budget Amendment/Revision • Annual Certified Audit
b. Ensure adherence to all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations including submission of financial information.
c. Separation of duty in place.
d. Automation of accounting functions with appropriate software.
e. Verification of any pro-rata basis when applicable.
f. Reimbursement to Employees**: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verify that a supervisor approves reimbursement requests. • Reimbursement requests must have copies of receipts attached (<i>e.g.</i>, hotel, food and gas). • Verify organization's mileage rate (<i>e.g.</i>, state rate). • Verify the amounts and purposes for the reimbursement.
g. Credit cards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credit cards should be maintained in a locked/secured drawer or cabinet and a log maintained to reflect the card usage. • Receipts should be maintained for all credit card purchases and reconciled with the statement monthly. • Receipts should be attached to statement as backup.

h. Consultants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verify a valid contract is in place, with social security number, address, and hourly/daily rate. • Verify timesheets or amounts paid are correctly billed based on the contract.
3. Board approved policies and procedures Personnel manual that should at minimum address the following:
a. Procedures for recruitment, hiring, and equal opportunity employment.
b. Sick and Vacation Leave.
c. Job descriptions on file.
d. Minimum qualifications.
e. Employee/Volunteer personnel file in place, with applications and resumes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verify employee social security number and address in files. • Verify the hourly rate or salary is shown in the employee files. • Verify amounts paid are correct based on employee's timesheet and salary information.
4. Board approved policies and procedures Program Operations manual that should at minimum address the following:
a. Documentation of how student is referred.
b. Regularly reviewed student needs assessment used for design of service delivery.
c. Program activities being delivered with regular review to ensure services are aligned to needs of participants.
d. Established minimum staff to student ratio of no more than 1:20, unless otherwise mandated by funding agency.
5. Copy of executed funding contract on site.
6. Documentation of articles of incorporation and IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter for nonprofit organizations.
7. Operational policies and procedures, as it relates to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict of interest. • Certification of no overdue tax debt at local, state, and federal level. • Nondiscrimination policies and procedures. • Confidentiality.
8. Evaluation plan in place that should at minimum address the following:
a. Description of the evaluation design that includes methods, tools, and resources.
b. Timeline for internal monitoring of evaluation plan.
c. Outcomes/Goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, quantifiable, verifiable, time-phased, and linked to mission.
d. Strategies developed for improving program processes to include identified gaps in service delivery, program modifications, increased collaboration, and staff training.
e. Analysis with performance results and future recommendations shared with staff and/or board for continuous improvement and major stakeholders.
9. Sustainability plan in place, including, but not limited to:

a. Building and sustaining community partnerships.
b. Evidence of in-kind support, as stated in MOA/MOU's or letters of support.
c. Ability to track cost-value of in-kind support.
d. Marketing to ensure student participation and increase awareness of the program's availability.
e. Creation and development of an ongoing fund diversification plan.
10. Fundraising policies and procedures in place, including, but not limited to:
a. Managing receipts of donations or other revenues generated from fundraising.
b. Management of restricted and unrestricted funds.

* School-based and county government programs are exempt.

**County or local government entities may follow their own policies and procedures.

Qualified and Diverse Staff

A quality afterschool program recruits, hires, trains, and retains a qualified and diverse staff representative of the community.

A quality program has the following elements:
1. Background checks on all staff (age 18 and above) by a recommended source, such as SafetyNET, City/County Bureau of Identification, or an approved list of companies that have access to the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) database that can provide unofficial criminal record checks. The list is available at http://www.nccourts.org/Citizens/GoToCourt/Documents/Websitelisting_062209.pdf .
a. Minimum of local check for employees (obtained by application) for all residences employee lived at dating back 2 years.
b. If employee has resided in NC less than 6-8 months, a state or nationwide check is required.
c. If employee has resided in NC for more than 6-8 months, a statewide check is recommended.
2. Educational qualifications for staff are aligned with NC Core Competencies for Afterschool Staff.**
a. Minimum of high school diploma (or equivalent) for staff working directly with kids.
b. Minimum of 4-year degree for program director (or equivalent experience; or completion of degree within 6 months of employment).
3. Adult volunteer policies and procedures in place:
a. State and national criminal background checks required upon recruitment and conducted at a minimum of every 3 years, or more often as directed by program funding agency.
b. Obtain copy of driver's license or government-issued identification.
c. Volunteer handbook that describes program policies and procedures, responsibilities and expectations.
4. Youth volunteer policies and procedures in place:
a. Check with school guidance counselor for volunteers who are under the age of 18, accessing discipline records.
b. Obtain copy of driver's license, government-issued or school-issued identification.
c. Volunteer handbook that describes program policies and procedures, responsibilities and expectations.
d. Required supervision of youth volunteers at all times working directly with kids.
5. Employee handbook that describes program policies and procedures.
6. A way for staff to conduct a self-assessment of training needs:
a. Front-line staff training needs self-assessment reviewed by program director. Program director's training needs self-assessment reviewed by administration or board.
b. Training linked to NC Afterschool Staff Competencies.**
c. Cross-sharing of best practices among staff or grantee networks.

** The North Carolina Afterschool Professional Core Competencies provide a framework of the knowledge and skills needed in eight content areas of professional development in the field of school-age care. They address the wide variety of skills and abilities necessary to work with school-age children and youth. The competencies are based on the following assumptions:

- Competent, well-trained professionals are the key to quality school-age care
- Competencies can be used to establish standards for employment and job performance
- Individual competencies are considered emergent; developing over time with experience
- Competencies are cumulative and create a continuum for professional development

The Core Competencies are based on five levels of skills necessary to provide quality programming. The levels establish a continuum from the preliminary skills necessary to enter the field (Level 1) to an advanced level of academic preparation (Level 5). Professionals progress from one level to another through a combination of formal study and practical experience. Depending on a professional's role, setting, or experience, he or she may have skills at varying levels in the different areas.

The competencies are broken down into eight content areas. They are:

Growth and Development	Families and Communities	Program Management
Learning Environment & Curriculum	Health, Safety, and Nutrition	Professional Dev. & Leadership
Observation and Assessment	Interactions with Children and Youth	

Competency Levels:

Level 1: Includes the knowledge and skills expected of a professional new to the field with minimal specialized training/education. A level 1 professional can be considered a new staff with limited to no background in the youth development field. Possible positions may be volunteers (adult or teen), episodic volunteers or staff.

Level 2: Includes level 1 plus the knowledge and skills commensurate with a Youth Development Credential, a certificate in youth development or equivalent training/education. Possible positions may be the bottom level frontline worker who has attended minimal training, however has interaction with the youth on a regular basis.

Level 3: Includes levels 1 and 2 plus knowledge and skills commensurate with an associate's degree in child, adolescent, or youth development or related fields. Level 3 positions can often be equated with the site coordinator, as a staff member who has slightly more responsibility than the average frontline worker.

Level 4: Includes levels 1, 2, and 3 plus knowledge and skills commensurate with a bachelor's degree in child, adolescent, or youth development or related fields. Level 4 positions are often the Program director or Coordinator.

Level 5: Includes levels 1, 2, 3, and 4 plus knowledge and skills commensurate with an advanced degree in child, adolescent, or youth development or related fields. Level 5 positions are often the supporting agencies Executive Director, State/Regional specialists, or funding agency representative familiar with youth development best practices.

Goals for Program Linkages

Consistent Participant Attendance

Participants in a quality afterschool have regular and frequent attendance.

A quality program has the following elements:
1. A procedure for:
a. recording daily attendance.
b. calculating average daily attendance.
c. monitoring attendance and establish minimum number of attendees per day.
2. Clear attendance policy:
a. enforced equally for all students.
b. withdrawal policy on a case-by-case basis.
c. termination policy.
d. drop-in policy, if applicable.

Active Family and Community Partnerships

A quality afterschool program establishes and maintains strong partnerships with families, businesses and communities and promotes participant involvement in the community.

A quality program has the following elements:
1. A way for involving community members, including former participants, to serve as volunteers or staff.
2. Conduct a community needs assessment that fosters ongoing communication with community collaborators that enhance program activities and sustainability.
3. Working system and plan for regular communication with:
a. families
b. schools
c. partners that had a role in referring child to program (<i>e.g.</i> , mental health department, juvenile court counselor, etc...).
4. Parent / guardian engagement in program services and activities.

Goals for Program Participants

Improved Academic Achievement

A quality afterschool program provides activities and opportunities that support their academic and cognitive growth and development

A quality program has the following elements:
1. Programming that supports academic development.
2. Ongoing feedback with school-day personnel, including data sharing, to ensure academic progress for children and youth.
3. Conduct student needs assessments:
a. Implemented to develop programming that support students' individual needs.
b. Includes opportunities for students to develop confidence in abilities.
c. Services connected to community needs assessment.

Greater Creativity and Well-Being

Participants in a quality afterschool program are provided activities that support their emotional, social, and physical growth.

A quality program has the following elements:
1. Knowledge of essential life skills, including but not limited to:
a. Financial Literacy
b. Civic Literacy
c. Health Literacy
d. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
e. Communication and Collaboration
f. Social and Cross-Cultural Skills
2. Opportunities to develop a sense of belonging with peers, with emphasis on cultural diversity, community, and social/interpersonal skills.
3. Activities and resources designed for skill acquisition or enrichment in health and safety.
4. Community service (<i>e.g.</i> , service learning, project-based, volunteer work, mentoring).