Service Standards

Experiential Education Supplement

Purpose

Experiential Education provides safe, activity-based opportunities for learning and reflection that support the achievement of identified program outcomes.

Definition

The Experiential Education Supplement applies when an organization conducts experiential activities such as hiking, ropes courses, or horseback riding as part of any service accredited by COA Accreditation other than Wilderness and Adventure-Based Therapeutic Outdoor Services. Activities are designed to support the achievement of treatment or service objectives through direct experience and focused reflection.

Note: *Supplemental, experiential activities that are accredited by the Association for Experiential Education (AEE) or American Camp Association (ACA) are exempt from this section.*

Note: *Please see EES Activities Table for additional guidance on this standard.*

Note: *Please see EES Reference List for the research that informed the development of these standards.*

Note: *For information about changes made in the 2020 Edition, please see the EES Crosswalk.*

Table of Evidence

Self Study Evidence

No Self Study Evidence

Experiential Education Supplement

EES 1: Personnel

Purpose

Experiential Education provides safe, activity-based opportunities for learning and reflection that support the achievement of identified program outcomes.

Program personnel have the competency and support needed to provide services and meet the needs of individuals and families.

Interpretation: *Competency can be demonstrated through education, training, or experience. Support can be provided through supervision or other learning activities to improve understanding or skill development in specific areas.*

Rating Indicators:

1 All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice Standards.

2

Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards; e.g.,

- With some exceptions, staff (direct service providers, supervisors, and program managers) possess the required qualifications, but the integrity of the service is not compromised; or
- Supervisors provide additional support and oversight, as needed, to the few staff without the listed qualifications; or
- Most staff who do not meet educational requirements are seeking to obtain them; or
- With few exceptions, staff have received required training, including applicable specialized training; or
- Training curricula are not fully developed or lack depth; or
- Training documentation is consistently maintained and kept up-to-date with some exceptions; or
- A substantial number of supervisors meet the requirements of the standard, and the organization provides training and/or consultation to improve competencies when needed; or
- With few exceptions, caseload sizes are consistently maintained as required by the standards or as required by internal policy when caseload has not been set by a standard; or
- Workloads are such that staff can effectively accomplish their assigned tasks and provide quality services and are adjusted as necessary; or
- Specialized services are obtained as required by the standards.

3

Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- A significant number of staff (direct service providers, supervisors, and program managers) do not possess the required qualifications, and, as a result, the integrity of the service may be compromised; or
- Job descriptions typically do not reflect the requirements of the standards, and/or hiring practices do not document efforts to hire staff with required qualifications when vacancies occur; or
- Supervisors do not typically provide additional support and oversight to staff without the listed qualifications; or
- A significant number of staff have not received required training, including applicable specialized training; or
- Training documentation is poorly maintained; or
- A significant number of supervisors do not meet the requirements of the standard, and the organization makes little effort to provide training and/or consultation to improve competencies; or
- There are numerous instances where caseload sizes exceed the standards' requirements or the requirements of internal policy when a caseload size is not set by the standard; or
- Workloads are excessive, and the integrity of the service may be compromised; or
- Specialized staff are typically not retained as required and/or many do not possess the required qualifications; or
- Specialized services are infrequently obtained as required by the standards.

4 Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards.

Table of Evidence

Self Study Evidence

* • Table of contents of training curricula	
* • A list of activity personnel and their credentials	

* • List of program personnel that includes:
  • Title
  • Name
  • Employee, volunteer, or independent contractor
  • Degree or other qualifications
  • Time in current position
• See organizational chart submitted during application	

Site Visit Evidence

* • Sample job descriptions from across relevant job categories • Documentation tracking staff completion of required trainings and/or competencies • Training curricula

On-Site Activities

* • Interviews may include: 1. Program director 2. Relevant personnel • Review personnel files

EES 1.01 (FP)

Personnel who assume responsibility for supervision of individuals in the field are trained on, or demonstrate competency in:

a. navigating and operating in a given terrain;
b. using materials and equipment employed in the field;
c. interpreting and responding to changes in weather and environmental conditions;
d. improvising solutions to unanticipated problems and emergencies in the field such as environmental hazards, harmful plants or animals, and extreme weather conditions; and
e. conducting medical evacuation, when applicable.

NA: The organization does not conduct trips or activities away from the program site.

EES 1.02 (FP)

Personnel are supervised by fully trained individuals until they have completed training, and do not assume sole responsibility for individuals engaged in high-risk activities.

EES 1.03 (FP)

Before assignment as a group leader or assistant, the organization provides and documents in the personnel record:

a. supervised field experiences;
b. competency testing; and

c. certification in the area of assigned responsibility, when certification is available.

EES 1.04 (FP)

Personnel must receive training at least every two years in first aid and age-appropriate CPR that includes an in-person, hands-on CPR skills assessment conducted by a certified CPR instructor before assuming primary responsibility for a group.

Experiential Education Supplement

EES 2: Screening

Purpose

Experiential Education provides safe, activity-based opportunities for learning and reflection that support the achievement of identified program outcomes.

The organization evaluates individuals for their ability to participate in physical activities and obtains written, signed permission slips from parents or legal guardians when applicable.

Interpretation: *Organizations that serve children and youth should obtain a medical records release, or a signed document from a qualified medical professional stating that the individual is physically capable of participating, whenever parents or legal guardians are unreachable, or if children and youth are participating in strenuous physical activities.*

Rating Indicators:

1 All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice Standards.

2

Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted; however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions, procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations and training; or
- Active participation of persons served occurs to a considerable extent.

3

Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- Several case records are missing important information; or
- Participation of persons served is inconsistent.

4 Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing.

Table of Evidence

Self Study Evidence

*	• Procedures for obtaining clearance to participate in physical activities	

Site Visit Evidence

No Site Visit Evidence

On-Site Activities

*

- Review case records

Experiential Education Supplement

EES 3: Program Activities

Purpose

Experiential Education provides safe, activity-based opportunities for learning and reflection that support the achievement of identified program outcomes.

Program activities are designed to meet individual needs, build on strengths, develop skills, and promote learning and healing through experience.

Rating Indicators:

1 All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice Standards.

2

Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted; however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions, procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations and training; or
- Active participation of persons served occurs to a considerable extent.

3

Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- Several case records are missing important information; or
- Participation of persons served is inconsistent.

4 Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing.

Table of Evidence

Self Study Evidence

*	• Procedures for tailoring activities to the abilities of persons served	
*	• Policy on coercion/force	

Site Visit Evidence

No Site Visit Evidence

On-Site Activities

*

- Interviews may include:
    1. Program director
    2. Relevant personnel
    3. Individuals or families served

- Review case records
- Observe group activities, if possible

EES 3.01 (FP)

The organization tailors activities to the abilities of individuals by:

a. planning, adjusting, and graduating experiences to a level of difficulty appropriate for the skill levels and capacities of individuals;
b. teaching needed skills and techniques progressively;
c. providing appropriate support and supervision for lesser-skilled individuals; and
d. pacing group activities according to the capabilities of the least able or fit member of the group.

EES 3.02

The organization prohibits:

a. the use of coercion or force to induce any individual to engage in a specific adventure-based activity; and
b. deliberately limiting reasonable options or alternatives to participation.

Interpretation: *Organizations must take any strong objections from persons served seriously and examine all implications, such as illness or skill level, and offer encouragement to participate, when needed. Organizations must clearly specify in their informed consent procedures (1) if the program has a "challenge by choice" philosophy; (2) whether individuals will be required to complete all or most elements of the experience; or (3) if alternative activities can be used to accomplish the same goals to ensure that the person granting informed consent understands in advance this feature of the program.*

Examples: *The organization can apply principles of trauma-informed care when designing and implementing program activities by, for example: (1) informing individuals of upcoming experiences and monitoring for signs or expressions of stress or discomfort; and (2) enabling participant choice whenever possible throughout the program and at each new activity.*

EES 3.03

Personnel help individuals learn from their experiences and integrate acquired skills into practice by:

a. engaging individuals in briefing and debriefing sessions before and after each activity;
b. facilitating formal and informal discussions;
c. providing opportunities for individuals to share and receive feedback with personnel and peers; and
d. providing opportunities for individual introspection and self-reflection.

Interpretation: *Discussions focused on evaluating individual needs should be recorded in the case record. Discussions regarding group dynamics and environmental concerns should be recorded in a guide or therapist log.*

Examples: *Personnel can encourage individuals who are uncomfortable speaking in large group settings to process and share their experiences by, for example: (1) leading ice-breaker activities to facilitate group cohesion; (2) creating individual and small group reflection opportunities; and (3) providing time for additional processing or journaling.*

Examples: *Personnel may use therapeutic metaphor to draw connections between a physical activity and an individual's life experiences or emotions. For example, personnel may design exercises that require individuals to (1) take appropriate risks; (2)*

place trust in other people; and (3) overcome physical challenges that may intentionally or unintentionally relate to the individual's clinical needs.

Experiential Education Supplement

EES 4: Safety and Risk Management

Purpose

Experiential Education provides safe, activity-based opportunities for learning and reflection that support the achievement of identified program outcomes.

The organization ensures safe practice through advanced planning, safety procedures, and training of personnel and persons served.

Rating Indicators:

1 All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice Standards.

2

Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted; however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions, procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations and training; or
- Active participation of persons served occurs to a considerable extent.

3

Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- Several case records are missing important information; or
- Participation of persons served is inconsistent.

4 Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing.

Table of Evidence

Self Study Evidence

*	• Safety procedures	
*	• The table of contents for participant safety training curricula	
*	• Drug and alcohol policy	

*	• Program or activity discharge policy

Site Visit Evidence

*	• Sample of completed activity safety manuals, evacuation plans, or other safety documentation from past trips • Contracts, including safety expectations, with any outside transportation providers • Participant safety training curricula • Sample of documentation tracking participant completion of required safety training for three trips • Procedures for maintaining medication and emergency and first aid supplies

On-Site Activities

*	• Interviews may include: 1. Program director 2. Relevant personnel 3. Persons served • Observe first aid kits

EES 4.01 (FP)

When conducting offsite activities, the trip or activity plan includes:

a. an itinerary maintained at the organization's central location;
b. weather conditions under which evacuation may be warranted;
c. evacuation and search and rescue procedures for trips or activities in remote areas;
d. detailed information regarding contact with the program director, or a designee, and rangers when appropriate;
e. means of contacting rescue resources, medical facilities, and law enforcement; and
f. any public or private entity notified of the itinerary.

NA: The organization does not conduct trips or activities away from the program site.

EES 4.02 (FP)

Safety procedures include:

a. use of a written safety manual or equivalent safety plan for each type of activity offered;
b. completion of a safety or risk-management plan before each activity that contains safety preparations and other emergency planning information;
c. providing activity leaders with funds or other means for obtaining emergency resources during trips or programs held off-site;
d. providing appropriate equipment for communication links from field personnel to emergency responders for trips or activities in remote areas;
e. filing reports for accidents or incidents in which personnel or participants were injured or at risk;
f. making an individual's relevant health and medical information available to staff conducting activities including bringing such information into the field when applicable; and
g. notifying the chief executive officer or designee if emergency procedures are invoked or an unanticipated problem or incident occurs.

Interpretation: *Elements (c) and (d) will not apply when activities are always conducted at the program site.*

EES 4.03 (FP)

Safety procedures related to missing persons address:

a. search and rescue;
b. emergency responder involvement, when necessary; and
c. notification of all relevant personnel and parents/legal guardians when applicable.

EES 4.04 (FP)

An organization that transports persons served in agency-owned vehicles, or in vehicles owned by personnel or contractors, has safety procedures that require:

a. access to emergency roadside repair tools, spare tires, and parts;
b. pre-trip vehicle checks;
c. advance planning for supervision of persons served during scheduled stops; and
d. advance planning for appropriate breaks and rest stops, with a full day of rest scheduled following four consecutive days of vehicular travel.

NA: The organization does not provide transportation directly or by contract.

EES 4.05 (FP)

The organization educates persons served on relevant risks, including how to:

a. prevent and recognize sunstroke, sunburn, hyperthermia, dehydration, frostbite, and snow blindness as appropriate to the type of activity and weather conditions;
b. recognize allergic and anaphylactic reactions and alert the appropriate staff person;
c. identify and avoid dangerous plants, situations, and other hazards that may be associated with particular activities or locations; and
d. stay safe in encounters with wild animals.

Interpretation: *Individuals only need to be trained on the risks associated with the type of trip or activities being conducted. For example, training on frostbite, snow blindness, or sunburn would not be needed for experiential activities conducted indoors.*

EES 4.06 (FP)

First aid kits, emergency response supplies, and medications needed by persons serve are:

a. available and under the control of the activity leader or other responsible personnel at all times; and
b. routinely inspected to ensure they remain fully stocked, unexpired, and otherwise in proper working condition.

EES 4.07 (FP)

Policy prohibits persons served and personnel from using alcohol or other substances while engaging in organization-sponsored activities.

EES 4.08 (FP)

Individuals may be discharged from a specific activity if:

a. their behavior or other problems make continuation unsafe or ineffective; or
b. evacuation from remote locations is deemed necessary for health or mental health reasons.

Interpretation: *Element (b) will not apply when activities are not conducted in remote locations.*

Experiential Education Supplement

EES 5: Physical Environment

Purpose

Experiential Education provides safe, activity-based opportunities for learning and reflection that support the achievement of identified program outcomes.

The organization's activities provide for land or facility use that is safe, hygienic, and respectful of the natural environment and the area's cultural traditions.

Rating Indicators:

1 All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice Standards.

2

Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted; however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions, procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations and training; or
- Active participation of persons served occurs to a considerable extent.

3

Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- Several case records are missing important information; or
- Participation of persons served is inconsistent.

4 Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing.

Table of Evidence

Self Study Evidence

*	• Environmental protection and land use procedures	
*	• Health and safety procedures	

Site Visit Evidence

No Site Visit Evidence

On-Site Activities

*

- Interviews may include:
    1. Program director
    2. Relevant personnel
    3. Individuals or families served

EES 5.01

The organization obtains the appropriate permits or permissions for land and/or water use and adheres to any associated guidelines or regulations.

NA: The organization owns or leases the lands used for the program.

EES 5.02

Outdoor activities are conducted in a manner that:

a. minimizes impacts on the natural environment; and
b. is respectful of the cultural land use, traditions, and heritage of the indigenous communities whose land the program operates on.

Examples: *Ways to minimize impacts on the natural environment can include: (1) refraining from moving or marking natural objects; (2) removing all food and trash when leaving an area; (3) remaining on marked trails when indicated; (4) observing wild animals from a safe distance; and (5) following all posted rules and regulations in the area.*

Examples: *Ways to respect the culture, traditions, and heritage of local indigenous communities can include: (1) avoiding sacred or culturally significant sites; (2) establishing collaborative partnerships with local indigenous leaders, community representatives, and cultural experts to gain insight into appropriate practices and protocols and incorporate their knowledge into program activities and language used where relevant; and (3) seeking permission and guidance from local authorities or community leaders before conducting activities that might impact the land or local traditions.*

EES 5.03 (FP)

To ensure the health and safety of persons served and personnel, the organization provides for:

a. a safe, hygienic environment;
b. adequate shelter from the elements;
c. nutritious food;
d. clothing and equipment appropriate for the activities and environment;
e. infection control measures related to wilderness living including safe drinking water, toileting, food, and response to illness; and
f. personal hygiene measures that ensure privacy.

Interpretation: *Elements (e) and (f) do not apply if the organization does not conduct trips or activities away from the program site.*

Interpretation: *The program may use natural consequences, such as repercussions from changing environmental conditions, as an educational or therapeutic tool; however, the organization must ensure that the natural consequence does not endanger persons served or personnel.*

Examples: *Personal hygiene includes bathing, oral health, toileting, and feminine hygiene.*

Experiential Education Supplement

EES 6: Equipment Safety

Purpose

Experiential Education provides safe, activity-based opportunities for learning and reflection that support the achievement of identified program outcomes.

Equipment is properly maintained and safe to use.

Rating Indicators:

1 All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice Standards.

2

Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted; however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions, procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations and training; or
- Active participation of persons served occurs to a considerable extent.

3

Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- Several case records are missing important information; or
- Participation of persons served is inconsistent.

4 Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing.

Table of Evidence

Self Study Evidence

*	• Procedures for maintaining equipment	
*	• Policy on field testing equipment	

Site Visit Evidence

*	• Documentation of equipment inspections and maintenance for the past 12 months

On-Site Activities

*

- Interviews may include:
    1. Relevant personnel
- Observe equipment

EES 6.01 (FP)

All sports and outdoor equipment, including equipment that belongs to persons served or personnel, meets national safety standards.

EES 6.02 (FP)

Equipment maintenance procedures include:

a. pre- and post-activity equipment inspections, routine servicing, preventive maintenance, and repair;
b. proper cleaning and/or disinfecting of equipment;
c. rehabilitation or removal of substandard equipment; and
d. documentation of inspections and maintenance.

EES 6.03 (FP)

Field testing materials or equipment that are new on the market in order to provide feedback to the manufacturer is prohibited while conducting service activities.

EES 6.04

The organization properly stores equipment according to manufacturer instructions and ensures all equipment is inaccessible to persons served or other unauthorized personnel when not in use.

Experiential Education Supplement

EES 7: Activity Technical and Safety Requirements

Purpose

Experiential Education provides safe, activity-based opportunities for learning and reflection that support the achievement of identified program outcomes.

The organization considers safety and technical requirements, competence of leaders, and the abilities of persons served when engaging in potentially demanding or high-risk activities.

Rating Indicators:

1 All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice Standards.

2

Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted; however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions, procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations and training; or
- Active participation of persons served occurs to a considerable extent.

3

Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- Several case records are missing important information; or
- Participation of persons served is inconsistent.

4 Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing.

Table of Evidence

Self Study Evidence

*	• Procedures for activity preparation, including group safety and skill level	
*	• Procedures regarding use of protective gear and equipment	
*	• Fire safety procedures	

• Fire safety training curricula	

Site Visit Evidence

- Authoritative information regarding compliance with accepted standards for all climbing equipment owned or used by the organization
- Credentials of individuals responsible for supervising climbing equipment
- Climbing equipment inspection and safety reports for the past 12 months
- Proof of accreditation, licensure, or certification appropriate for high-risk activities

On-Site Activities

- Interviews may include:
    1. Program director
    2. Relevant personnel
    3. Individuals and families served
- Review personnel files

EES 7.01 (FP)

Before initiation of an activity, the organization:

a. orients personnel to the terrain, sites, or waterways that will be used;
b. verifies that personnel have direct experience with, and up-to-date information about, the conditions that may be encountered; and
c. provides persons served with complete information about geographic boundaries for the activity, rendezvous times and places, emergency procedures, and relevant goals and expectations.

NA: The organization does not conduct trips or activities away from the program site.

EES 7.02 (FP)

The organization evaluates potentially demanding activities for level of difficulty and undertakes only those within the competence of the leaders and the abilities of persons served.

EES 7.03 (FP)

When the activity involves travel or movement, individuals receive instruction in pacing, fluid intake, clothing and footwear, equipment, and possible hazards.

NA: The organization does not conduct activities that involve travel or movement.

Examples: *Relevant activities may include hiking, running, climbing, canoeing, bicycle touring, or similar pursuits.*

EES 7.04 (FP)

Persons served and personnel use protective gear and equipment when appropriate, including:

a. personal flotation devices (Type III) for water activities;
b. Global Positioning System (GPS) for activities in complex or unfamiliar terrain;
c. reflectors for dusk and night activities;
d. helmets for biking, climbing, caving, or other appropriate activities; and
e. other protective gear and equipment, as appropriate to the activity to be undertaken.

EES 7.05 (FP)

The organization maintains clear guidelines and trains personnel and persons served on safely building and extinguishing fires, as applicable to the activity being conducted.

NA: The organization does not conduct activities that involve building and extinguishing fires.

EES 7.06 (FP)

Ropes courses, alpine or climbing towers, and artificial wall climbing activities meet the following requirements:

a. the facilities and equipment used have been constructed by, or are under the supervision of, recognized experts in the field;
b. personnel have been trained by recognized experts in the field and have a working knowledge of ropes course and climbing equipment elements, technology, construction, usage, and inspection; and
c. appropriate inspection and safety procedures have been fully implemented.

NA: The organization does not operate the specified activities or program components.

Note: *COA Accreditation does not approve, certify, or accredit ropes courses, alpine or climbing towers, or artificial wall climbing programs. The organization must seek independent review by recognized experts for that purpose. The organization's primary responsibility is to ensure the safety of persons served and personnel. Therefore, EES 7.06 applies to facilities owned or operated by the organization as well as facilities used by the organization but owned and operated by others. In all cases, the organization must provide authoritative information regarding compliance with accepted standards for special program components.*

EES 7.07 (FP)

Organizations that offer high-risk activities use certified instructors and maintain proof of accreditation, licensure, or certification with a nationally recognized authority for the activity being conducted.
NA: The organization does not offer any high-risk activities.

Examples: *High-risk activities can include:*

1. *white water rafting, kayaking, or canoeing;*
2. *snow and ice climbing or glacier travel;*
3. *mountaineering, bouldering, and rock climbing;*
4. *top rope climbing and rappelling;*
5. *caving;*
6. *river crossing;*
7. *solo expeditions;*
8. *activities involving flying, hang gliding, gliding, and parachuting; and*
9. *other high-risk activities.*

Experiential Education Supplement

EES 8: Care and Supervision

Purpose

Experiential Education provides safe, activity-based opportunities for learning and reflection that support the achievement of identified program outcomes.

The organization provides close supervision, and group size is adjusted to promote safety and limit liability and risk.

Rating Indicators:

1 All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice Standards.

2

Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted; however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions, procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations and training; or
- Active participation of persons served occurs to a considerable extent.

3

Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- Several case records are missing important information; or
- Participation of persons served is inconsistent.

4 Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing.

Table of Evidence

Self Study Evidence

*	• Procedures for establishing and adjusting personnel/participant ratios	
*	• Procedures for staffing activities	
*	• Procedures that address solo activities	

Site Visit Evidence

*

- Coverage schedules for a recent six month period that includes personnel/participant ratios and group sizes for each activity, including off-site events

On-Site Activities

*

- Interviews may include:
    1. Program director
    2. Relevant personnel
    3. Individuals and families served

EES 8.01 (FP)

Qualified staff adjust group sizes and determine personnel to participant ratios according to:

a. the nature of the activity;
b. the level of the activity's difficulty, risk, and distance from the organization's central location;
c. the skill and experience of personnel; and
d. the ages, abilities, developmental level, and needs of group members.

EES 8.02 (FP)

Group activities are supervised by:

a. at least two group leaders or instructors; and
b. additional staff when known risks are present.

EES 8.03 (FP)

For solo activities, a group leader or instructor:

a. is responsible for the safety of that individual or group;
b. maintains sight or sound contact 24 hours a day, or has a plan for making contact in the event of urgent or emergent situations; and
c. adjusts the degree of supervision to the individual's ability, the terrain, and environmental conditions.

NA: The organization does not conduct solo activities.

EES 8.04 (FP)

A coverage and supervision plan is developed for off-site groups that:

a. indicates the reporting relationships and delegation of authority; and
b. gives decision-making authority to a person qualified by a combination of education, field experience, technical and safety expertise, and maturity.

NA: The organization does not conduct off-site trips or activities.