Service Standards

Out-of-School Time Services

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.

Definition

Out-of-School Time programs engage school-age children and youth in social, educational, and recreational activities appropriate to their needs, interests, and abilities; promote the development of positive relationships with adults and peers; and provide a physically and emotionally safe environment for young people to spend their out-of-school time hours. Services may be provided in a variety of different settings and at different times, including before school, after school, mid-day, on weekends, and during school vacations, including summer vacations. It is also important to note that organizations may describe the services they provide using a variety of different terms, from “after school,” to “school age care,” to “youth development,” to “out-of-school time,” to “expanded or extended learning.”

As noted in the Glossary, children and youth from the ages of five to eighteen are considered to be of “school age,” and this Service Standard is designed to accommodate programs serving a variety of age groups within that range. For example, while one program might serve only children in elementary school, another might be specifically designed for high school youth. In some cases standards include specific guidance (e.g., Interpretations or NAs) to clarify how the standard might apply to children and youth of a particular age range. When standards reference “older youth,” this includes middle- and high-school students (i.e. youth age 13 and up).

Note:*Please see OST 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 OST Crosswalk or the CYD-OST Crosswalk, for Child and Youth Development Programs.*

Table of Evidence

Self Study Evidence

No Self Study Evidence

Out-of-School Time Services

OST 1: Person-Centered Logic Model

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.

The organization implements a program logic model that describes how resources and program activities will support the achievement of positive outcomes.
Note: *Please see the Logic Model Template for additional guidance on this standard.?*

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.

Logic models have been implemented for all programs and the organization has identified at least two outcomes for all its programs.

2

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

- Logic models need improvement or clarification; or
- Logic models are still under development for some of its programs, but are completed for all high-risk programs such as protective services, foster care, residential treatment, etc.; or
- At least one outcome has been identified for all of its programs.

3

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

- Logic models need significant improvement; or
- Logic models are still under development for a majority of programs; or
- A logic model has not been developed for one or more high-risk programs; or
- Outcomes have not been identified for one or more programs.

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.,

- Logic models have not been developed or implemented; or
- Outcomes have not been identified for any programs.

Table of Evidence

Self Study Evidence

* • Program logic model that includes a list of child/youth outcomes being measured	
• See program description completed during intake	

Site Visit Evidence

No Site Visit Evidence

On-Site Activities

*

- Interviews may include:
    1. Program director
    2. Relevant personnel

OST 1.01

A program logic model, or equivalent framework, identifies:

a. needs the program will address;
b. available human, financial, organizational, and community resources (i.e. inputs);
c. program activities intended to bring about desired results;
d. program outputs (i.e. the size and scope of services delivered);
e. desired outcomes (i.e. the changes you expect to see in persons served); and
f. expected long-term impact on the organization, community, and/or system.

Examples: *Please see the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide and COA Accreditation's PQI Guide for more information on developing and using program logic models.*

Examples: *Information that may be used to inform the development of the program logic model includes, but is not limited to:*

1. *the needs of children, youth, families, and the community; and*
2. *the best available evidence of effectiveness.*

OST 1.02

The logic model identifies at least two outcomes appropriate to the program or service population.

Interpretation: *Outcomes data should be disaggregated to identify patterns of disparity or inequity that can be masked by aggregate data reporting. See PQI 5.02 for more information on disaggregating data to track and monitor identified outcomes.*

Examples: *Desired outcomes can include, but are not limited to: improved social and emotional functioning; improved school attendance/participation; reduced behavioral problems; increased academic achievement; and increased aspirations for college and career. Logic models will often also include outputs and outcomes related to establishing a positive program climate that allows all children and youth to feel socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually safe and supported, as addressed in OST 5.08.*

Out-of-School Time Services

OST 2: Personnel

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.

Program personnel have the competency and support needed to provide services and meet the needs of children and youth.

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.*

Interpretation: *COA Accreditation recognizes that job titles in some programs may differ from those listed below. Accordingly, the responsibilities personnel assume determine the qualifications required. COA Accreditation also understands that in some programs, one person may assume the responsibilities of more than one position. When this happens, the person should meet the qualifications required for the highest level of responsibility.*

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, including education, experience, training, skills, temperament, etc., 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, including education, experience, training, skills, temperament, etc.; 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 orientation curricula	
* • Table of contents of training curricula	
* • Procedures for conducting personnel observations	
* • Tool/rubric for personnel observations	

* • 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	

* • Procedures for supervising occasional/casual volunteers	

Site Visit Evidence

* • Sample job descriptions from across relevant job categories
• Documentation tracking staff completion of required trainings and/or competencies and training hours
• Orientation curricula
• Training curricula
• Documentation of:
  1. wages
  2. benefits
  3. paid time to plan/set up activities
  4. paid time to participate in training/professional development
  5. opportunities for advancement

On-Site Activities

* • Interviews may include:
  1. Program director
  2. Relevant personnel
  3. Volunteers
• Review personnel files
• Review volunteer files
• Observe staff interactions

OST 2.01

The Program Administrator is qualified by:

a. a bachelor's degree in a related field, one year of related experience, and six credits of professional preparation; or

b. a bachelor's degree in an unrelated field, two years of related experience, and 12 credits of professional preparation.

Interpretation: *The Program Administrator is responsible for the overall direction of the program, including: (1) developing goals and policies; (2) program planning and evaluation; (3) program administration, including fiscal management; and (4) organizational development, including management of human resources.*

Examples: *Related fields can include education, child development, developmental psychology, youth studies, family social sciences, and recreation.*

Credits represent approximately 15 hours of participation in a post-secondary course, and can be earned through college classes, technical vocational classes, or community-based trainings or workshops. Credits of professional preparation may be in areas including administration (e.g., human resources, fiscal management, organizational development, strategic planning, marketing, and community development), child and youth development (i.e. development during middle childhood and adolescence), and other areas related to out-of-school time programming (e.g., health and safety, developmentally-appropriate practices, group or individual guidance, community service and service learning, working with families, community outreach, and activity planning).

OST 2.02

The Site Director is qualified by:

a. a bachelor's degree in a related field, six months of related experience, and six credits of professional preparation;
b. a bachelor's degree in a related field, one year of related experience, and nine credits of professional preparation;
c. an associate's degree or two years of college in a related field, 18 months of related experience, and six credits of professional preparation; or
d. a recognized state or national school-age care or youth worker credential such as CYC Certification, 18 months of related experience, and six credits of professional preparation.

Interpretation: *The Site Director is responsible for the daily operations of the program, including: (1) supervising personnel; (2) overseeing all program activities; (3) communicating with families; and (4) building relationships with the community.*

Examples: *Related fields can include education, child development, developmental psychology, youth studies, family social sciences, and recreation.*

Credits represent approximately 15 hours of participation in a post-secondary course, and can be earned through college classes, technical vocational classes, or community-based trainings or workshops. Credits of professional preparation may be in child and youth development (i.e. development during middle childhood and adolescence) and other areas related to out-of-school time programming (e.g., health and safety, developmentally-appropriate practices, group or individual guidance, community service and service learning, working with families, community outreach, and activity planning).

OST 2.03

Senior Group Leaders are qualified by:

a. a bachelor's degree in a related field and three months of related experience;
b. a bachelor's degree in an unrelated field, three months of related experience, and six credits of professional preparation;
c. an associate's degree or two years of college in a related field, six months of related experience, and six credits of professional preparation;
d. an associate's degree or two years of college in an unrelated field, one year of related experience, and six credits of professional preparation; or
e. a recognized state or national school-age care or youth worker credential such as CYC Certification, six months of related experience, and six credits of professional preparation.

Interpretation: *Senior Group Leaders are responsible for supervision and guidance of children and youth in the program, including: (1) activity planning and implementation; (2) communicating with families; (3) supervising support staff; and (4) relating to the community.*

Examples: *Related fields can include education, child development, developmental psychology, youth studies, family social sciences, and recreation.*

Credits represent approximately 15 hours of participation in a post-secondary course, and can be earned through college classes, technical vocational classes, or community-based trainings or workshops. Credits of professional preparation may be in child and youth development (i.e. development during middle childhood and adolescence) and other areas related to out-of-school time programming (e.g., health and safety, developmentally-appropriate practices, group or individual guidance, community service and service learning, working with families, community outreach, and activity planning).

OST 2.04

Group Leaders are qualified by:

a. a bachelor's degree in a related field;
b. a bachelor's degree in an unrelated field, three months of related experience, and three credits of professional preparation;
c. an associate's degree or two years of college in a related field, and six months of related experience;
d. an associate's degree or two years of college in an unrelated field, nine months of related experience, and three credits of professional preparation;
e. a recognized state or national school-age care or youth worker credential such as CYC Certification, and six months of related experience; or
f. a high school diploma or GED, 18 months of related experience, and six credits of professional preparation.

Interpretation: *Group Leaders are responsible for supervision and guidance of children and youth in the program under the direction of a Senior Group Leader, including: (1) activity planning and implementation; (2) communicating with families; (3) supervising support staff; and (4) relating to the community.*

Examples: *Related fields can include education, child development, developmental psychology, youth studies, family social sciences, and recreation.*

Credits represent approximately 15 hours of participation in a post-secondary course, and can be earned through college classes, technical vocational classes, or community-based trainings or workshops. Credits of professional preparation may be in child and youth development (i.e. development during middle childhood and adolescence) and other areas related to out-of-school time programming (e.g., health and safety, developmentally-appropriate practices, group or individual guidance, community service and service learning, working with families, community outreach, and activity planning).

OST 2.05

Assistant Group Leaders are at least 16 years old.
Interpretation: *Assistant Group Leaders are responsible for carrying out activities under the direct supervision of a Group Leader.*

OST 2.06

All personnel who work with children and youth are trained on, or demonstrate competency in:

a. understanding child and youth development, including what matters most at different stages of development;
b. building caring, supportive relationships with children and youth;
c. instructing and engaging children and youth with different temperaments, needs, and abilities, including those who may be reluctant or struggling;
d. managing groups effectively;
e. promoting social and emotional development;
f. positive techniques for guiding and managing behavior;
g. collaborating with partners (e.g., with the program host, when applicable); and
h. understanding expectations for professional conduct.

Interpretation: *Training on some of the topics addressed in this standard may not be provided until after personnel have begun work. However, it is also important to note that personnel should never be expected to perform a task or provide a level of care that they are not yet prepared to handle. Accordingly, depending on personnel qualifications and the degree of responsibility personnel are expected to assume upon starting their jobs, it may be appropriate to provide pre-service training on some of the listed topics.*

OST 2.07

Program personnel are trained on, or demonstrate competency in, skills and topics relevant to the program activities offered, including safety and injury prevention related to the activities offered.
Interpretation: *Training may not be provided until after personnel have begun work. However, it is also important to note that personnel should never be expected to perform a task or provide a level of care that they are not yet prepared to handle. Accordingly, depending on personnel qualifications and the degree of responsibility personnel are expected to assume upon starting their jobs, it may be appropriate to provide pre-service training that addresses the expectations of the standard.*

Interpretation: *Personnel who provide academic activities should be trained on, or demonstrate competency in: (1) implementing best practices in programming for the relevant academic areas and grade levels, and (2) understanding state and local academic standards. Organizations may partner with experts or educators from other organizations or entities in an effort to ensure activities are delivered by appropriately trained and qualified providers. For example, an organization striving to improve academic performance might arrange for academic activities to be provided by, or in conjunction with, certified teachers who have both content and grade-level experience. Similarly, an organization might arrange for its staff to be trained by an experienced teacher or curriculum developer.*

Examples: *The types of activities offered may vary. Examples include, but are not limited to: arts education and enrichment, health and wellness, academic enrichment and skill development, preparation for college and career, homework help and tutoring, and mentoring.*

OST 2.08

Employee workloads support the achievement of child and youth outcomes and are regularly reviewed.
Examples: *Factors that may be considered when determining employee workloads include, but are not limited to:*

1. *the qualifications, competencies, and experience of personnel, including the level of supervision needed; and*
2. *the work and time required to accomplish assigned tasks and job responsibilities.*

OST 2.09

In an effort to support and develop personnel, supervisors or other coaches:

a. conduct regular, scheduled observations of personnel using a formalized tool that reflects established program practices;
b. ensure that personnel are oriented to the expectations of the tool, prior to observation;
c. provide opportunities for personnel to conduct self-assessments using the tool; and
d. partner with personnel following observations to discuss strengths and needs, and establish short- and long-term goals for development and improvement.

Interpretation: *The amount of observation conducted will typically take into account the type of programming offered. For example, a program that offers academic instruction may need a higher amount of observation than a program that is solely enrichment-focused.*

Examples: *Individuals who may conduct observations can include supervisors, outside consultants, trainers, or other frontline staff at the organization.*

One way that organizations can support active personnel participation in discussions of strengths, needs, and goals is by providing opportunities for personnel to reflect on their own performance.

OST 2.10

Professional development includes at least:

a. 15 hours of training per year for Assistant Group Leaders;
b. 18 hours of training per year for Group Leaders;
c. 21 hours of training per year for Senior Group Leaders;
d. 24 hours of training per year for Site Directors; and
e. 30 hours of training per year for Program Administrators.

Interpretation: *When a program operates only during the summer months, COA recognizes that personnel may participate in fewer hours of professional development.*

Examples: *Training delivery methods can include, but are not limited to: in-service training, adult education courses, higher education or college courses, distance learning, conference workshops, webinars, and self-paced electronic trainings.*

OST 2.11

Personnel have opportunities to participate in collaborative learning activities that include:

a. group meetings for joint problem-solving and mutual support;
b. information sharing on topics such as child and youth development or parent-child relationships; and
c. opportunities for personnel to plan together.

OST 2.12

Personnel demonstrate that they work well together by:

a. communicating with each other while the program is in session to ensure that the program flows smoothly;
b. meeting outside of program time to plan activities and discuss issues or problems that arise;
c. cooperating with each other;
d. being respectful of each other; and
e. modeling positive adult relationships.

Examples: *There are a number of ways for personnel to show that they work well together. For example, personnel can share work fairly and be flexible about their roles, pitching in to help one another as needed. Personnel can also help to ensure that the*

program flows smoothly by checking in with one another, communicating about their needs in a way that promotes cooperation, responding supportively to non-verbal cues, saving complicated discussions for times when children, youth, and families are not present, and keeping conversations about personal matters brief. Similarly, when problems occur personnel can discuss their differences and try to devise fair solutions, being mindful of their tone and demeanor.

OST 2.13

In an effort to promote quality programming and compensate personnel for their time and energy, the organization provides:

a. the best wages it can afford;
b. benefits, including health insurance and paid leave, for personnel who work full-time;
c. paid time to plan, organize, and set up program activities and events; and
d. paid time to participate in trainings and other professional development activities, including outside trainings and conferences when possible.

Examples: *Organizations may take different steps to ensure implementation of this standard. For example, regarding element (a), an organization might pay all personnel above the minimum hourly wage, take education and experience into account when determining compensation, and offer opportunities for higher pay and/or advancement based on performance and/or length of service. Regarding element (b), organizations might also strive to offer benefits that extend beyond health insurance and paid leaves of absence (e.g., dental insurance, life insurance, disability insurance, retirement benefits, subsidized child care), or provide non-monetary benefits such as flex time, when possible. Regarding element (c), the amount of paid time provided will typically balance the organization's financial considerations with the amount of time needed to plan quality programming and activities. More time will typically be provided if personnel are responsible for developing their own curricula. Regarding element (d), an organization might compensate personnel for the time they spend in training activities by arranging for substitutes and paid time off so that personnel can participate in trainings during the work day, or by paying personnel for the time they spend in training outside of program hours. Organizations can also support professional development by offering tuition reimbursement.*

Conducting additional fundraising efforts and supplementing paid staff with volunteers (including AmeriCorps/VISTA volunteers who receive stipends from other sources) can help organizations make progress toward ensuring they have the funds needed to compensate personnel appropriately.

OST 2.14

The organization:

a. provides volunteers with the orientation, training, and support they need to fulfill their roles and responsibilities;
b. maintains essential information about volunteers, including identifying information and emergency contact information; and
c. recognizes volunteers for their service.

NA: The organization does not use volunteers to provide OST services, or all OST volunteers meet the standards for personnel.

Note: *See OST 15 for additional expectations regarding volunteer mentors.*

OST 2.15 (FP)

When the organization uses occasional or casual volunteers who are not subject to background checks, these volunteers are adequately supervised by personnel and are not left alone with children and youth.
NA: The organization does not use occasional or casual volunteers.

Interpretation: *The organization should consider the nature of volunteers' responsibilities, along with their qualifications, when determining what level of supervision will be adequate.*

Out-of-School Time Services

OST 3: Access and Enrollment

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.

The organization recruits and enrolls eligible children and youth.

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 client participation 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 client records are missing important information; or
- Client participation 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

*	• Recruitment plan and/or description of outreach and recruitment efforts	
*	• Attendance policy	
*	• Procedures for registration and orientation	
*	• Sample registration form	
*	• Policy for enrolling children and youth with special needs	

*	• Procedures for enrolling children and youth with special needs	
*	• File access policy	
*	• File access procedures	
*	• Procedures for file review, including sampling methodology	
*	• Sample of file review form/tool(s)	

Site Visit Evidence

*	• Informational materials made available to the community • Hours of operation • Materials provided upon enrollment, including program handbook • Community resource and referral list • Data from file reviews for the previous year (i.e. the past two reviews)

On-Site Activities

*	• Interviews may include: 1. Program director 2. Relevant personnel 3. Children, youth, and families • Review files of children and youth • Observe how files of children and youth are stored

OST 3.01

The organization develops and implements a recruitment plan that includes:

a. educating the families of prospective program participants about the program's goals, activities, and benefits;
b. addressing potential barriers that might prevent children and youth from participating; and
c. establishing hours of operation and attendance expectations based on community needs, program goals, and the best available evidence of effectiveness.

Examples: *Potential barriers may include, but are not limited to, factors related to transportation, fees, and language spoken.*

Information regarding community needs may be obtained through available data or through assessments, surveys, or focus groups conducted by the organization itself.

OST 3.02

Prompt, responsive registration practices:

a. support timely enrollment; and
b. provide placement on a waiting list or referral to appropriate resources when children and youth cannot be served or cannot be served promptly.

OST 3.03

During registration or orientation, children and youth and their families are:

a. informed about program goals and activities;
b. provided with a handbook that details program policies and procedures;

c. offered a tour of the facility; and
d. introduced to staff and program participants.

OST 3.04 (FP)

On an annual basis the organization collects relevant information from children and youth and their families, including:

a. identifying information, including name and date of birth;
b. address;
c. emergency contact information;
d. written parental authorization for emergency care including name of the hospital to be used;
e. relevant health information (e.g., records of up-to-date screenings and immunizations);
f. whether children and youth have any special needs to be accommodated, including needs related to health or mental health;
g. consent forms or permission slips, as needed, including any consent/authorization forms related to health or other special needs, if applicable;
h. authorizations for pick-up, if applicable; and
i. relevant school day data, if applicable.

OST 3.05

The organization enrolls children and youth with special needs, and collaborates with their families and other involved providers to learn about:

a. their strengths and needs; and
b. strategies for meeting their needs and helping them fully participate in the program.

Interpretation: *Organizations are expected to accommodate all children and youth unless: (1) an individual poses a safety threat to him/herself or others, (2) the accommodations needed would result in a fundamental alteration to the program, or (3) the accommodations needed would put an undue financial burden on the organization.*

Examples: *Children and youth may have special needs related to physical, behavioral, medical, emotional, or cognitive conditions. Strategies for meeting needs and facilitating participation can include efforts currently undertaken to address needs (i.e. at home or in school), as well as ideas for additional accommodations. While some organizations may obtain a copy of a child or youth's 504 Plan or Individual Education Program, other organizations may work with the family and school to establish other channels for obtaining information about needs.*

Note: *See OST 6.07, OST 9.07, and OST 18.08 for additional expectations regarding accommodating children and youth with special needs.*

OST 3.06 (FP)

The organization maintains files for all children and youth that:

a. contain relevant information;
b. are specific, factual, and legible;
c. are kept up to date;
d. are signed and dated by authorized personnel, where appropriate; and
e. are maintained and disposed of in a manner that protects privacy and confidentiality.

Interpretation: *Relevant information includes the information specified in OST 3.04 and OST 3.05, as well as information that would not have been available at the time of registration, including accident report forms, attendance records, evidence of ongoing communication with parents or other family members, and payment receipts.*

Examples: *Files and signatures can be paper, electronic, or a combination of paper and electronic.*

OST 3.07 (FP)

Access to confidential files is limited to:

a. children and youth and/or, as appropriate, their parents or legal guardians;
b. personnel authorized to access specific information on a “need-to-know” basis; and
c. auditors, contractors, and licensing or accrediting personnel, consistent with the organization’s confidentiality policy.

OST 3.08

At least twice a year the program:

a. conducts a review of child and youth files to evaluate the presence, clarity, continuity, and completeness of required documents and information, using a uniform tool to ensure consistency; and
b. updates files based on the results of the review, as needed.

Interpretation: *Rather than conducting a review of all files, programs may review a random sample of the files of children and youth. For the purpose of identifying trends and patterns, COA suggests programs use the sampling guidelines included below, based on the number of children and youth served per year. For example, if a program serves 300 children and youth per year, it should review 135 files total per year, across both of the reviews – not 135 files during each of the reviews. Programs may choose a different sampling method as long as a rationale is provided.*

When a program chooses to review only a sample of files it will be especially important to: (1) aggregate and analyze the results in order to determine whether there are any overarching issues that may impact the accuracy and completeness of un-reviewed files; and (2) ensure that all files are updated, as needed. For example, if reviews reveal that many files are lacking emergency contact information, the program should take steps to ensure that emergency contact information is added in to all files, including files that were not part of the sample reviewed.

SAMPLING GUIDELINES FOR FILE REVIEW
Number of Children and Youth Served Per Year.....Sample Size for File Review
1,000 or > … 35% annually
999 – 500 ... 40% annually
499 – 400 …45% annually
399 – 300 … 45% annually
299 – 200 … 47% annually
199 – 100 … 48% annually
99 – 50 … 50% annually
49 – 25...75% annually
Less than 25 … 100% annually

Out-of-School Time Services

OST 4: Building Supportive Relationships Between Program Participants and Adults

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.

Personnel develop positive, caring, and supportive relationships with children and youth.

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 client participation 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 client records are missing important information; or
- Client participation 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

*

• Policy defining appropriate boundaries and unacceptable personnel conduct	

Site Visit Evidence

No Site Visit Evidence

On-Site Activities

*

- Interviews may include:
  1. Program director
  2. Relevant personnel
  3. Children, youth, and families

- Observe personnel interactions with children and youth

OST 4.01

Personnel:

a. actively engage with children and youth in a warm, friendly, and respectful manner that helps them feel welcome, comfortable, and supported; and
b. encourage the development of trust by being consistent and dependable, following through on what they say they will do.

Examples: *Personnel may demonstrate warm, active engagement in a number of ways, such as calling children and youth by name; acknowledging children and youth when they arrive and depart; projecting a tone of welcome and cheer in their voices and gestures; using kind and supportive language; showing interest in what children and youth say and do; spending most of program time interacting with children and youth (including both during activities and when snacks are served); and taking care not to intrude on, interrupt, dismiss, belittle, or distance themselves from children and youth.*

OST 4.02

In an effort to truly get to know children and youth, personnel take the time to:

a. give children and youth individualized attention;
b. check in with children and youth to see how they are doing;
c. ask open-ended questions that encourage children and youth to share information about their lives, cultures, feelings, perspectives, needs, and interests; and
d. pay close attention to what children and youth say and do, making a special effort to learn about their individual interests, abilities, temperaments, learning styles, and needs, including any special needs they may have.

Examples: *The special needs referenced in element (d) of the standard include, but are not limited to, needs related to disabilities or a history of trauma.*

OST 4.03

Personnel support children and youth by:

a. responding to them with interest, acceptance, and appreciation; and
b. responding appropriately to their individual needs, interests, and abilities.

Examples: *Personnel can demonstrate implementation of this standard by, for example, expressing interest in children's and youths' cultures and experiences, encouraging children and youth to pursue their interests, respecting the different ways children and youth express their feelings, assessing a child's or youth's feelings before attempting to solve a problem; comforting children and youth who appear upset or disappointed, accepting a child's or youth's desire to be alone, and modifying actions in ways designed to nurture, include, and engage all children and youth regardless of their ability or temperament.*

OST 4.04

In an effort to ensure personnel maintain clear and appropriate boundaries with children and youth, the organization establishes a policy that:

a. emphasizes that the role of personnel is to be a coach, instructor, and role model rather than a peer or friend;
b. encourages relationships and interactions that serve the needs of children and youth, rather than the needs of personnel;
c. outlines the type of conduct that would be deemed unacceptable; and
d. addresses contact both at and outside of the program, including contact that might occur via telephone or electronic communications and postings.

Out-of-School Time Services

OST 5: Promoting Positive Behaviors and Healthy Peer Relationships

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.

Personnel partner with children and youth to build a nurturing, inclusive community that supports positive behavior and encourages respectful, cooperative interactions.

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 client participation 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 client records are missing important information; or
- Client participation 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

*	• Program schedule/routine	
*	• Program rules and behavioral expectations	

Site Visit Evidence

*	• Program climate assessment tools • Documentation that leaders have sought stakeholder input regarding the program climate • Improvement/corrective action plans regarding program climate, if applicable

On-Site Activities

*

- Interviews may include:
    1. Program director
    2. Relevant personnel
    3. Children, youth, and families

- Observe program space and activities
- Observe interactions of children and youth with peers and personnel

OST 5.01

Program space, materials, and activities are designed to be welcoming to and supportive of all children and youth regardless of their background, race, ethnicity, culture, language, religion, socioeconomic status, gender identity and expression, sexual identity, sexual orientation, disability, or ability.
Examples: *Diversity can be incorporated and embraced throughout all aspects of the program, from the pictures displayed, to the books read, to the games and music played, to the holidays celebrated, to the food served.*

OST 5.02

The organization supports positive behavior by establishing a consistent routine that:

a. is clearly communicated to children, youth, and families;
b. supports achievement of program goals;
c. encourages active participation and engagement;
d. provides stability and predictability;
e. includes time for children and youth to settle in and adjust upon arrival;
f. facilitates smooth transitions and minimizes the need for waiting or rushing; and
g. allows children and youth to meet their physical needs (e.g., for water, food, or the restroom) in a relaxed way.

Interpretation: *Participants should be prepared in advance when changes or exceptions to the daily routine will occur.*

OST 5.03

Children and youth are involved in developing, and helped to understand, rules and behavioral expectations that:

a. establish clear expectations for interactions and behavior;
b. are designed to encourage the development of a safe, caring, respectful, and inclusive environment that supports self-expression and learning; and
c. are appropriate to the ages and developmental levels of program participants, as well as to the goals of the program.

OST 5.04

In an effort to facilitate the development of peer relationships and foster a sense of community, children and youth are provided with opportunities to:

a. socialize with their peers; and
b. participate in structured community-building activities such as introductions, icebreakers, or community circles.

Examples: *Opportunities for socialization may be provided both within and between program activities.*

OST 5.05

In an effort to help children and youth learn to self-regulate their emotions and behavior, personnel:

a. model healthy strategies for expressing and managing emotions;
b. help children and youth learn how to recognize and understand emotions and their causes and effects, including how emotions can influence thoughts and behaviors;
c. help children and youth learn strategies for expressing and managing their emotions in an appropriate and constructive manner;
d. provide opportunities for children and youth to practice handling their emotions in healthy and responsible ways; and
e. offer coaching and guidance to help children and youth appropriately express and manage their emotions, as needed.

Examples: *Opportunities to practice handling and expressing emotions will likely occur within the context of social interactions with peers (as addressed in OST 5.04) and program activities (as addressed in OST 9), as well as within the context of managing interpersonal conflicts and behavior-related challenges, as addressed in OST 6.*

OST 5.06

Personnel support children and youth in developing empathy, openness, and respect for others by:

a. explaining that all people are unique individuals;
b. helping children and youth learn about diversity and difference, including diversity of perspectives, cultures, temperaments, needs, and abilities;
c. modeling inclusiveness and respect for difference;
d. teaching children and youth to be kind and stand up for others; and
e. facilitating opportunities for children and youth to listen to and learn about the experiences, feelings, and perspectives of others.

Examples: *Personnel can facilitate opportunities for program participants to listen to and learn from one another by engaging children and youth in explicit discussions, as well as by encouraging children and youth to interact with their peers, including those who may be perceived as "different" (e.g., children and youth with special needs, children and youth with different personalities or temperaments, or children and youth who speak a different language). In addition to learning about the experiences, feelings, and perspectives of peers and personnel, the organization can also facilitate opportunities for children and youth to learn about the experiences of others by providing resources that illustrate different perspectives and cultures, or inviting guests with different backgrounds or experiences to visit.*

OST 5.07

Personnel use modeling, instruction, practice, and coaching to help children and youth develop interpersonal skills and knowledge that facilitate appropriate interactions and collaboration, including:

a. treating others with fairness and respect;
b. understanding social norms and cues;
c. demonstrating an awareness of different perspectives and cultures;
d. listening actively and deeply, without interrupting;
e. effectively conveying their points of view; and
f. resolving conflicts and disagreements.

OST 5.08

Program and organizational leaders demonstrate a commitment to establishing a positive climate that allows all children and youth to feel socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually safe and supported.
Interpretation: *Leaders can demonstrate that they are committed to establishing a positive climate by: (1) proactively establishing and communicating values that underlie a positive climate and are sensitive to the cultures of program participants; (2) identifying and implementing practices that support those values and foster the development of a positive climate; (3) seeking the input of children, youth, and families regarding the climate that exists at the program; and (4) implementing improvement/corrective action plans to address any problems or negative elements.*

Examples: *According to the National School Climate Center (NSCC), factors that contribute to a positive school climate include: (1) respect for diversity; (2) rules and norms that are clearly communicated and consistently enforced; (3) a sense of safety, including physical, social, and emotional safety; (4) supportive and caring relationships with adults; (5) supportive relationships with peers; (6) encouragement for the development of social and emotional learning; (7) supportive teaching practices; (8) a sense of connection with the school; and (9) an adequate physical environment, including both facilities and resources.*

Note: *Please note that practices that support the development of a positive program climate are included throughout OST. For example, see OST 4 regarding the importance of building supportive relationships between children and youth and adults, OST 5.01 through OST 5.07 regarding the importance of establishing a respectful and inclusive culture that encourages positive behaviors and interactions, OST 6 regarding the importance of employing positive approaches to guiding behavior, OST 7 regarding the importance of involving and meeting the needs of program participants' families, OST 9 regarding the importance of ensuring children and youth are engaged in activities that support learning and positive development, and OST 16, OST 17, and OST 18 regarding the program environment.*

Out-of-School Time Services

OST 6: Positive Approaches to Guiding Behavior

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.

Personnel use positive techniques to guide and manage behavior.

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 client participation 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 client records are missing important information; or
- Client participation 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 guiding and managing behavior	

Site Visit Evidence

No Site Visit Evidence

On-Site Activities

*

- Interviews may include:
  1. Program director
  2. Relevant personnel
  3. Children, youth, and families
- Observe program interactions and activities
- Review files of children and youth

OST 6.01

Personnel observe children and youth and their behaviors, and support and encourage positive choices and behavior by:

a. maintaining high expectations for children and youth;
b. recognizing and reinforcing positive behavior; and
c. providing individualized guidance and support to encourage engagement and help prevent problems, as needed.

Note: *See OST 4 and OST 9 for more information regarding the importance of using a variety of strategies to ensure that all children and youth are appropriately and sufficiently engaged in the program.*

OST 6.02

When concerning behaviors or conflicts arise, personnel determine:

a. when children and youth can be left alone or quickly redirected;
b. when children and youth can be encouraged to resolve situations on their own; and
c. when it is necessary to intervene.

Interpretation: *When children and youth experience conflicts personnel should typically encourage them to try to resolve the situation on their own, and step in only as needed. However, personnel should also take care to ensure that the situation is resolved effectively. It is also important to note that children and youth should never be encouraged to find a mutually-agreeable solution on their own if there is a power imbalance between them, as addressed in OST 6.06.*

OST 6.03

When it is necessary to intervene in a situation, personnel:

a. remain calm and patient;
b. refrain from publicly criticizing children and youth, to the extent possible;
c. acknowledge the feelings of children and youth;
d. help children and youth cool down, as needed;
e. speak with children and youth to learn their perspectives regarding what caused the situation; and
f. consider whether there are any underlying causes or circumstances that may have triggered or contributed to the situation.

OST 6.04

In an effort to prevent future incidents and maintain a positive program climate, responses to concerning behavior include:

a. viewing incidents as learning opportunities that can help improve how children and youth behave and relate to others;
b. helping children and youth reflect upon why the incident occurred, the impact of their actions, what they can do differently next time, and what support is needed to make that change;
c. helping children and youth take responsibility for their actions in ways that are respectful, appropriate to age and developmental level, and related to the behavior in question;
d. helping children and youth repair their relationships with their peers and the program community;
e. considering and addressing the needs and circumstances of all involved, including balancing accountability for actions with an understanding of the factors and underlying causes that may have contributed to those actions; and
f. avoiding the use of exclusionary or overly-punitive consequences (e.g., suspension), to the extent possible.

Examples: *While some organizations will have pre-determined consequences for specific behaviors, it may be more appropriate to individualize consequences based on the specific needs and circumstances of children and youth, and to involve children and youth in determining consequences designed to help youth take responsibility for their actions and repair any harm that occurred. For example, a youth who has vandalized the restroom might meet with the custodian to learn about the extent and costs of the damage done, and to assist with needed repairs.*

OST 6.05

In an effort to meet the needs of children and youth with a history of trauma, personnel:

a. are able to recognize when a child or youth may have experienced trauma;
b. understand the impact of trauma, including the impact trauma can have on child learning and behavior; and
c. balance accountability for actions with an understanding of the way past trauma may have contributed to those actions.

Note: *Organizations can also support children and youth with a history of trauma by facilitating access to needed services, as addressed in OST 7.04.*

OST 6.06 (FP)

Personnel are able to recognize when a child or youth may be experiencing bullying, and:

a. intervene immediately and appropriately with those involved (i.e., the bully, the victim, and any bystanders);
b. document the incident(s), following clear procedures regarding when a situation should be reported to school-day personnel or other applicable authorities;
c. follow up individually with the involved children and youth to make sure the bullying does not continue and address both the causes and any negative effects of the bullying; and
d. collaborate with families, other program personnel, and other relevant partners to monitor the situation and address any issues and effects.

Examples: *Bullying can be physically and psychologically harmful, and may take different forms - from physical assaults, to rumor spreading and social exclusion, to mean-spirited teasing, jokes, or name calling (e.g., racist or sexist jokes, or mocking someone's abilities). It is also important to remember that bullying can occur both in-person and electronically (e.g., via social media).*

OST 6.07

When children and youth have special behavioral needs, personnel provide additional support and individualized interventions, as needed.

Interpretation: *All possible accommodations and interventions should be exhausted before it is decided that a particular child or youth is not appropriate for the program. As noted in OST 3.05, organizations are expected to accommodate all children and youth unless: (1) an individual poses a safety threat to him/herself or others, (2) the accommodations needed would result in a fundamental alteration to the program, or (3) the accommodations needed would put an undue financial burden on the organization. If an enrolled child or youth is unable to be successful in the program, personnel should: (1) initiate a conversation with both the child or youth and his/her family, and (2) make every effort to ensure that the family obtains information about programs and services that may be more appropriate for the child or youth.*

Examples: *Appropriate responses may vary, depending on the child or youth and the situation. In some cases it may make sense to partner with children, families, and other involved providers to develop behavior management plans that include specific strategies for supporting behavior based on individual needs and circumstances.*

Out-of-School Time Services

OST 7: Family Connections

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.

Personnel build relationships with family members that increase the ability of both the organization and family to support children and youth.

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 client participation 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 client records are missing important information; or
- Client participation 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 family contact and engagement

Site Visit Evidence

*

- Samples of information provided to families, from the previous 12 months (re: program activities and events, along with ways to support the learning and development of their children)
- Handbook for families
- Documentation of collaboration with families (e.g., call logs, homework logs, notations in files of children and youth, etc.)

On-Site Activities

*

- Interviews may include:
    1. Program director

2. Relevant personnel
3. Children, youth, and families

- Review files of children and youth
- Observe interactions between personnel and families

OST 7.01

Family members are helped to feel welcome and comfortable.
Examples: *Strategies for helping family members feel welcome and comfortable include, but are not limited to: greeting family members by name; using friendly voices, expressions, and gestures; showing interest in family members' lives; and being relaxed rather than abrupt.*

OST 7.02

Personnel are responsive to families' contacts and requests, and engage in regular two-way communication with families, both in-writing and in-person, to:

a. discuss the program's goals, activities, and events;
b. learn and share information regarding the needs and progress of children and youth;
c. offer guidance regarding ways families can support the learning and development of their children; and
d. facilitate connections between families and school-day staff, when appropriate.

Examples: *Mechanisms for engaging families can include newsletters, e-mails, texts, meetings, and informal interactions.*

Guidance regarding the ways families can support the learning and development of their children will often be tailored to the program's goals. For example, a program striving to promote academic achievement might provide guidance regarding ways to support academic success, and a program striving to promote healthy eating and exercise might educate families on healthy food choices and ways to encourage physical activity at home.

OST 7.03

Family members are:

a. provided with opportunities to become appropriately engaged with the program; and
b. encouraged to provide input and feedback about the program.

Interpretation: *While it is important to provide opportunities for families to engage with the program, personnel should also recognize that families who are unable or unwilling to participate in activities or events at the program can still support the learning and development of their children in other ways. This points to the importance of offering families guidance regarding the variety of ways families can support the learning and development of their children, as referenced in OST 7.02.*

Examples: *Opportunities for engagement may vary based upon both the nature and goals of the program and the ages of program participants. For example, while organizations serving younger children may encourage family members to volunteer in the classroom, chaperone field trips, or share their skills and cultural traditions, it may be more appropriate for organizations serving older youth to involve family members by inviting them to milestone events and seeking their collaboration on an ongoing basis.*

OST 7.04

Families are provided with information about resources and services needed to address issues that pose barriers to children's learning and development.
Interpretation: *Some organizations may implement this standard by connecting families with another resource, such as a school counselor, who is responsible for connecting children and families with needed supports.*

Examples: *Needed resources and services may include, but are not limited to: child care subsidies; food pantries or programs; medical or dental services; mental health services, including any services needed to promote recovery from trauma; housing or employment assistance; adult education classes; parent education classes; and financial management assistance.*

Out-of-School Time Services

OST 8: Community Relationships and Partnerships

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.

Connections with other community organizations, institutions, and members help the organization support and engage children and youth.

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 client participation 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 client records are missing important information; or
- Client participation 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

No Self Study Evidence

Site Visit Evidence

*

- List of community organizations, institutions, and resources (including both current and potential partners)
- Documentation of collaboration efforts, including collaboration with school personnel if applicable (e.g., meeting minutes, correspondence, agreements, contracts, etc.)
- Documentation of activities that connect children and youth with the community (e.g., in activity plans)

On-Site Activities

*

- Interviews may include:
    1. Program director
    2. Relevant personnel
    3. Children, youth, and families

4. Program host, if applicable and possible

- Observe interactions between personnel and program host, where applicable and possible

OST 8.01

The organization develops and maintains a list of community organizations and institutions to identify the potential for collaboration and partnerships consistent with the program's goals and areas of focus.
Examples: *Relevant community organizations and institutions may include, but are not limited to: schools; libraries; parks; community centers; recreation and athletic services and facilities; cultural institutions (e.g., museums or theatres); community colleges and universities; local businesses; faith-based institutions; and other out-of-school time programs.*

OST 8.02

The organization establishes partnerships that enable it to sustain and enhance programming by facilitating access to resources that include:

a. needed space, transportation, equipment, supplies, and funding, including sources of subsidy that can help make the program affordable;
b. experts with specialized content knowledge relevant to programming and activities;
c. opportunities for staff training and professional development;
d. opportunities to recruit potential personnel and volunteers; and
e. opportunities to recruit prospective program participants.

OST 8.03

The organization partners with school-day personnel to:

a. ensure that programming and activities complement, extend, and expand school day learning;
b. learn about the strengths, needs, and progress of children and youth;
c. communicate information about children and youth's performance and progress at the program; and
d. design a schedule that complements and extends the school-day routine, to the extent possible and appropriate.

NA: The organization does not run a program designed to collaborate with a school.

Interpretation: *While implementation of this standard may be especially critical when an organization partners with a school to offer academic programming and/or homework help, building relationships with school-day personnel can be beneficial for all types of programs. If an organization finds it challenging to establish partnerships with school-day personnel, it may make sense to consider building relationships with appropriate staff at the district level. This may be especially relevant when an organization serves students who attend different schools.*

OST 8.04

Children and youth are provided with opportunities to get to know, become involved with, and contribute to their communities.
Examples: *Children and youth may contribute to the community through activities such as community service or service learning. Some organizations may also strive to remain aware of, and encourage children and youth to attend, outside opportunities and events related to programming and areas of interest. In some cases implementation of this standard may overlap with some aspects of OST 8.02, regarding utilization of community resources. For example, recruiting and matching children with volunteer mentors will simultaneously foster children's connection to the community.*

Out-of-School Time Services

OST 9: Programming and Activities

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.

Program activities and instruction are designed to help children and youth explore interests, build skills, and experience success.
Note: *Different types of activities will be offered depending on the goals of the program and the ages and interests of program participants, but the expectations addressed in this core concept will typically apply regardless of the type of programming provided. See OST 10 through OST 15 for more information regarding expectations for specific types of activities. When programming does not fall within a category addressed in those core concepts, it will be covered only by the generally-applicable standards included in this core concept.*

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 client participation 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 client records are missing important information; or
- Client participation 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

*	• Sample programming/activity plans for each type of activity offered	
*	• Policy for serving children and youth with special needs	
*	• Procedures for serving children and youth with special needs	
*	• Policy regarding the use of technology	

Site Visit Evidence

*

- Curricula for previous six months
- Programming/activity plans for previous six months
- Daily schedules for past month
- Documentation demonstrating that children and youth have been involved in developing/evaluating activities and initiatives
- Training curricula and/or information on internet safety provided to children, youth, and personnel, if applicable

On-Site Activities

*

- Interviews may include:
    1. Program director
    2. Relevant personnel
    3. Children, youth, and families

- Review files of children and youth (e.g., regarding accommodations for special needs, and permission slips)
- Observe program site and activities

OST 9.01

Children and youth are engaged in activities that are:

a. designed to build specific skills and foster the development of positive interests;
b. based on a curriculum that matches program goals; and
c. guided by plans that address both the substance and logistics of activities (including learning goals, preparation, timing and transitions, materials, outcomes to look for, and strategies for accommodating the needs of children and youth with differing skills and abilities).

Interpretation: *Organizations have the flexibility to determine the type and nature of the curricula they use, and are not required to utilize commercially-developed curricula. However, if staff are responsible for developing the curricula they should have the expertise and paid time they need to do so, as per OST 2.*

Examples: *The skills to be developed will typically relate to both activity content (e.g., arts, health, literacy) and the interdisciplinary skills that are relevant across content areas, such as skills related to critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. Out-of-school time programs offer an excellent opportunity to help children and youth develop these "21st century skills" that are so crucial to meeting the demands and challenges of today's world. It is also important to note that helping children and youth learn to regulate their emotions and behavior, empathize with others, and strengthen their interpersonal skills, as addressed in OST 5, will underlie and support their ability to develop these skills.*

OST 9.02

Personnel provide formal or informal instruction that:

a. helps children and youth understand the goals to be accomplished;
b. includes models for children and youth to emulate; and
c. clearly conveys information and directions related to the activity, including the time available for different tasks and any specific steps to be followed, as applicable.

Interpretation: *When youth are the drivers of a project this standard may be implemented through a collaborative process that involves personnel and youth working together as partners.*

Examples: *Children and youth may need models related to both content topics and social-emotional skills, but the type of modeling provided may vary based upon the nature of the activities offered. For example, if youth are engaged in building a robot they might benefit from seeing: (1) the specific technology-related skills needed to build different components of the robot; (2) examples of both robot components and a completed robot; and (3) the self-regulatory skills that enable one to persist through challenging work. In contrast, personnel moderating a different type of activity might model different ways to use specific tools and how to cope with frustrations, but might not provide an example of a finished product so as not to constrain imagination and originality. In addition to conveying directions orally, it may often make sense for personnel to also write down instructions so that children and youth can remember what to do.*

OST 9.03

Programming is designed to meet the developmental needs of the children and youth the program is designed to serve.

Interpretation: *Please note that this standard is intended to address the developmental needs of the general population the program is designed to serve (e.g., kindergarteners, middle schoolers, high schoolers), as opposed to the specific needs of individual children and youth. While the practices addressed in this core concept are important for children and youth of all ages, it is also important to consider the ages/developmental needs of children and youth when implementing these practices.*

Examples: *Programming can be designed to meet the developmental needs of older youth by, for example, providing opportunities to: (1) have extended interactions with peers, as addressed in OST 5.04 and OST 9.11; (2) make increasingly meaningful choices, as addressed in OST 9.10 and OST 9.17; (3) develop leadership skills, as addressed in OST 9.10; (4) engage in increasingly complex forms of critical thinking and problem solving, as addressed in OST 9.08; (5) provide input regarding program design and implementation, as addressed in OST 9.17; and (6) gain exposure to the new ideas, people, and places that can help them explore their identities and possibilities for the future, as addressed in OST 9.04 and OST 9.15. Older youth may also be better served by programs offering an in-depth focus on a specific area of interest, rather than programs that provide a variety of different activity options (such as those more common for younger children).*

OST 9.04

The organization provides activities that:

a. engage children and youth in active learning experiences that facilitate learning by doing;
b. reflect and support the interests, experiences, and cultures of children and youth;
c. offer exposure to new ideas, people, and places;
d. encourage creativity and innovation; and
e. build upon one another to facilitate a step-by-step approach to learning, when possible.

Interpretation: *Regarding element (e) of the standard, COA recognizes that it can be challenging to provide activities that build on each other in a sequential manner if daily attendance is not required. Accordingly, organizations that permit sporadic attendance should provide stand-alone activities, but ensure that the activities are thematically connected so that children and youth are exposed to related concepts over time.*

OST 9.05

Activities allow sufficient time for both guided and individual practice and skill building, and personnel:

a. have high expectations regarding what children and youth can accomplish;
b. emphasize that learning is a process;
c. encourage children and youth to try new skills and activities and persist through difficulties;
d. reframe “failure” as an opportunity for learning and improvement; and
e. emphasize that success is the result of hard work rather than innate ability.

OST 9.06

Balancing respect for children and youth’s autonomy with the need to provide adequate support, personnel:

a. utilize questioning techniques designed to encourage independent thinking and dialogue;
b. check in to assess understanding, needs, and progress and monitor the level of difficulty presented;
c. provide balanced and realistic feedback designed to promote improvement;
d. offer encouragement, assistance, and coaching to support and extend participation and learning, as needed and without taking control; and
e. vary the approaches used to engage and support children and youth based on their differing personalities, temperaments, learning styles, needs, and abilities.

Examples: *Personnel may provide support while respecting autonomy by, for example, asking open-ended questions designed to prompt deeper thinking; showing children and youth how and where to find answers to their questions; demonstrating how complex skills can be broken into smaller steps; and offering suggestions when children and youth face problems they cannot solve by themselves. Personnel may also use a variety of strategies to accommodate diverse needs and abilities, such as substituting equipment if children have difficulty with motor skills.*

OST 9.07

When children and youth have special needs, the organization:

a. makes reasonable, respectful accommodations to help them fully participate in the program;
b. encourages collaboration among personnel, families, and other involved providers to promote consistency in meeting needs; and
c. ensures they are grouped with peers of the same age range, even if their documented developmental level is different from their chronological age.

Interpretation: *Organizations must make reasonable accommodations to their policies, procedures, and practices to support the participation of children and youth with disabilities. Accordingly, when children and youth have special needs organizations should: (1) partner with parents and other involved providers; (2) develop plans for accommodating needs; (3) implement identified accommodations; and (4) adjust plans and accommodations, as needed.*

Examples: *Appropriate accommodations can include, for example, modifying the physical environment, training personnel to meet needs, or partnering with specialists who can provide guidance or assist children with certain activities.*

Note: *See OST 6 for more information about responding to special behavioral needs, and OST 18 for more information about responding to special health needs.*

OST 9.08

Activities provide opportunities for children and youth to:

a. think deeply about different topics;
b. synthesize and analyze information;
c. discover patterns and relationships; and
d. solve problems.

OST 9.09

Activities provide opportunities for children and youth to:

a. communicate their thoughts and ideas; and
b. contribute to dialogue and discussion.

Examples: *While it is important that children and youth learn to share their ideas and contribute to discussions, some children (i.e. introverted children) may find it harder than others to speak up, and may benefit if personnel employ different strategies to help them. For example, when facilitating a group discussion personnel might give children time to process and compose their thoughts before asking them to share, rather than posing a question and then calling on the children who immediately raise their hands to respond. Personnel might also provide opportunities for children to share their thoughts and ideas in writing rather than orally.*

OST 9.10

Children and youth have opportunities to:

a. make meaningful choices and decisions; and
b. assume an appropriate level of responsibility and leadership.

Examples: *What constitutes a "meaningful choice" and "an appropriate level of responsibility and leadership" may vary based on the ages and developmental levels of children and youth. Meaningful choice for younger children may include having opportunities to choose among different activities, including selecting what they will do, how they will do it, and with whom. In contrast, older youth may participate in more focused programming and make choices and decisions within the context of one particular activity or project (e.g., deciding the focus of a project, deciding topics within a subject area, deciding group roles, or deciding how to present results). Similarly, while younger children may be responsible for fulfilling daily jobs (e.g., passing out materials, cleaning up activities, or serving food), older youth may assume more significant responsibilities, such as organizing or leading activities.*

The needs of individual children and youth may also be relevant to consider. For example, an introverted child might be hesitant to take on a leadership role just for the sake of being a leader, but might be motivated to do so in order to accomplish a goal he is passionate about, and a child with a disability might be able to lead an activity for 15 minutes, but then need a five minute break.

OST 9.11

Children and youth have opportunities to work together to achieve shared goals, and personnel facilitate successful collaboration by:

a. helping children and youth develop skills that support cooperative work;
b. considering age, developmental level, and skill level when creating groups;
c. establishing expectations for group norms and participation;
d. utilizing collaborative learning structures designed to help all children and youth engage, participate, and learn, regardless of their temperaments, needs, or abilities;
e. monitoring group activity, and providing feedback and assistance as needed; and
f. encouraging group members to reflect on group functioning.

Examples: *Skills needed to facilitate cooperative work include the interpersonal skills addressed in OST 5.07, including treating others with equity and respect; understanding social norms and cues; listening actively and deeply, without interrupting; effectively conveying one's point of view; and resolving conflicts and disagreements. Helping youth to develop empathy and self-regulatory skills, as addressed in OST 5.05 and OST 5.06, can also support their ability to collaborate successfully with others.*

OST 9.12

Children and youth have opportunities to participate in ongoing activities or projects that:

a. involve multiple steps and take place over time;
b. include an in-depth focus on a particular topic or issue;
c. enable children and youth to take an active role in setting goals, developing and implementing plans to achieve those goals, and modifying plans and goals, as needed; and
d. culminate in a presentation or celebration that highlights the accomplishments of children and youth.

NA: The organization does not require regular attendance and thus cannot engage children and youth in ongoing activities or projects.

Examples: *The length of projects may vary, especially based on the ages and developmental levels of participating children and youth. Older youth will typically be able to engage in projects that are longer and more complex. Children and youth will ideally also play a role in deciding the focus of projects, though this may vary based on their ages and developmental levels, as well as the nature and design of the program.*

OST 9.13

Children and youth have opportunities to participate in projects or activities that are designed to encourage civic engagement and foster a generosity of spirit.

Examples: *Implementation of this standard may overlap with OST 8.04, regarding opportunities for children and youth to become involved with their communities (e.g., through community service or service learning projects). However, organizations can also foster civic engagement and generosity of spirit in other ways. For example, an organization might expand students' understanding of civic engagement and citizenship through social studies, and might foster a generosity of spirit by supporting children and youth in reflecting upon how they treat others.*

OST 9.14

The organization maximizes opportunities to integrate content across topics and activity types.

Examples: *Some organizations may run programs that are explicitly designed to integrate content across topics and activity types. For example, programs utilizing a STEAM approach will integrate the arts into science, technology, engineering, and math, and STREAM programs will integrate reading into science, technology, engineering, arts, and math. Other organizations might implement this standard by, for example, establishing overarching themes that encompass the variety of activities provided, developing essential questions that are relevant across activity types, or conducting curriculum mapping to identify areas where there are opportunities to connect and integrate activity content.*

OST 9.15

Personnel support children and youth in processing and reflecting on their learning and progress by:

a. providing intentional opportunities for them to express and evaluate their thoughts and feelings about their learning and experiences at the program;
b. encouraging them to assess their own strengths and progress and set goals for improvement;
c. helping them make connections between their learning and experiences at the program and outside knowledge, interests, experiences, and goals; and
d. providing input and perspective to help them interpret and reevaluate their experiences, as needed.

Examples: *It may be valuable to provide opportunities for both individual and group processing and reflection.*

OST 9.16

Individual and group progress and accomplishments are recognized and celebrated both:

a. on an ongoing basis, throughout the course of children and youth’s involvement with the program; and
b. through opportunities to showcase the completed work and achievements of children and youth.

Examples: *Ongoing recognition may occur within the context of the feedback and processing addressed in OST 9.05 and OST 9.15.*

OST 9.17

In order to ensure that programming reflects the needs and interests of program participants, children and youth are encouraged to share their thoughts and ideas regarding program activities, and are involved in developing and evaluating activities and initiatives.
Examples: *The extent and nature of children and youths' involvement may vary based on their ages and developmental levels. For example, while an organization serving younger children may informally assess their needs and interests, older children and youth may complete surveys and/or sit on planning committees. Older youth may also be able to play a larger role in determining the focus of projects and activities.*

The needs of individual children and youth may also be relevant to consider when seeking input and involvement. For example, quiet or introverted children may be hesitant to share their thoughts without having time to prepare them, or may be more comfortable sharing their ideas privately or in writing. Similarly, children with disabilities or other special needs may require particular accommodations in order to effectively share their ideas and participate in planning or evaluating activities.

OST 9.18

The organization develops and implements a policy regarding the use of technology that:

a. addresses both program and personal devices;
b. balances concerns regarding the importance of limiting “screen time” with any program goals that are dependent upon the use of technology (e.g., STEM programming);
c. ensures safety measures are in place when internet access is offered, including safety training and controls that block access to inappropriate content; and
d. takes into account any policies or procedures regarding technology usage that are in place at the program’s host, if applicable.

Note: *As noted in OST 18.04, screen time that is not academic or educational in nature should typically be limited to 30 minutes per day.*

OST 9.19 (FP)

When children and youth have opportunities to go on field trips or participate in high-risk activities, the organization obtains written, signed permission slips from their parents or legal guardians.

Out-of-School Time Services

OST 10: Programming and Activities: Arts Education and Enrichment

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.

Children and youth participate in visual or performing arts activities designed to help them build new skills and increase their understanding and appreciation of the arts.
NA: Arts programming is not a core element of the programs run by the organization.

Note: *Please note that the more general expectations included in OST 9 also apply to the activities addressed in this core concept.*

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 client participation 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 client records are missing important information; or
- Client participation 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

No Self Study Evidence

Site Visit Evidence

*
- Curricula for previous six months
- Programming/activity plans for previous six months
- Daily schedules for past month

On-Site Activities

*
- Interviews may include:

1. Program director
2. Relevant personnel
3. Children, youth, and families

- Observe program activities

OST 10.01

Programming is focused on at least one of the following major arts disciplines:

a. visual arts;
b. dance;
c. music; and/or
d. theatre.

Examples: *Some programs may find it helpful to partner with local organizations and providers to improve programming and access specialized resources. Examples of relevant arts organizations include, but are not limited to: museums, theatres and theatre troupes, arts education organizations, school arts and music educators, and local businesses such as dance studios or music halls.*

OST 10.02

Children and youth are:

a. helped to develop an understanding of concepts and history relevant to the arts discipline of focus; and
b. engaged in projects that enable them to develop and hone skills relevant to the artistic process.

OST 10.03

Children and youth are encouraged to:

a. be creative;
b. express themselves through their art; and
c. communicate the ideas and feelings that underlie their work.

OST 10.04

In an effort to help children and youth develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of the arts, the organization:

a. arranges for children and youth to view performances or exhibits related to the program's area of focus; and
b. provides opportunities for children and youth to reflect on the experience and discuss their impressions.

Interpretation: *Organizations that are unable to facilitate visits to other venues can still provide opportunities for children to experience and think critically about art, for example, by discussing a recorded concert or paintings in a book.*

Examples: *Children and youth may experience the arts through activities such as visiting a museum, attending a musical or cultural performance, or meeting with a local artist.*

OST 10.05

Children and youth have opportunities to learn about careers and options for higher education related to the arts.

Out-of-School Time Services

OST 11: Programming and Activities: Health and Wellness

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.

Activities designed to promote health and wellness enable children and youth to:

a. make healthy food choices;
b. develop their fitness and athletic abilities;
c. improve mental and emotional wellness; and/or
d. avoid adverse health outcomes (e.g., substance use, teen pregnancy).

NA: Health and wellness programming is not a core element of the programs run by the organization.

Note: *Please note that the more general expectations included in OST 9 also apply to the activities addressed in this core concept.*

Note: *See OST 18 for health-related expectations that apply to all organizations seeking accreditation. Please note that when opportunities for physical activity are limited to unstructured free play, organizations will be covered by OST 18.03 instead of the standards addressing physical fitness in this core concept.*

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 client participation 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 client records are missing important information; or
- Client participation 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 protective sports equipment	

Site Visit Evidence

*

- Curricula for previous six months
- Programming/activity plans for previous six months
- Daily schedules for past month

On-Site Activities

*

- Interviews may include:
    1. Program director
    2. Relevant personnel
    3. Children, youth, and families

- Observe program activities
- Observe protective sports equipment, if applicable

OST 11.01

Children and youth are helped to understand the importance and benefits of a healthy lifestyle, and are provided with information and support designed to promote well-being, and encourage positive choices, outside program time.
Examples: *The focus of content may vary based on program goals. For example, while one program may focus primarily on food or exercise, another may focus more on stress reduction or body image, and another may focus on preventing negative behaviors such as substance use or unprotected sex.*

OST 11.02

Organizations that run programs designed to engage children and youth in activities related to food or cooking:

a. offer programming that is centered around nutritious foods;
b. help children and youth understand the nutritional content of the food; and
c. ensure that activities do not advance the agenda or priorities of a particular food industry.

NA: The organization does not provide activities related to food or cooking.

Examples: *Children and youth may engage with food in different ways based on the nature of the activity offered. For example, while one program might engage children and youth in purchasing and preparing healthy foods, another might provide the opportunity to grow and harvest a particular crop.*

OST 11.03

Organizations that run programs designed to engage children and youth in sports or fitness activities:

a. offer structured activities designed to support the development of muscles, flexibility, balance, or other physical skills; and
b. ensure children and youth are engaged in physical activity for a significant proportion of the activity session.

NA: The organization does not provide sports or fitness activities.

Examples: *Sports and fitness activities can include, but are not limited to, aerobics, martial arts, weight lifting, dance, yoga, and practice and/or games for competitive or non-competitive sports.*

OST 11.04

Sports and fitness activities are designed to:

a. recognize effort and maximize play or activity time for all children and youth, regardless of ability; and
b. promote positive sportsmanship.

NA: The organization does not provide sports or fitness activities.

OST 11.05 (FP)

Appropriate protective sports equipment is used that:

a. meets minimum safety requirements;
b. accommodates heavy usage;

c. is appropriate to the ages and capabilities of participants; and
d. is maintained in a safe, hygienic manner.

NA: The organization does not offer activities that require protective sports equipment.

Examples: *Protective sports equipment includes, but is not limited to, helmets, shin guards, pads, floor mats, etc.*

Out-of-School Time Services

OST 12: Programming and Activities: Academic Enrichment and Skill Development

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.

Children and youth participate in academic activities designed to encourage interest and success in school.
NA: Academic programming is not a core element of the programs run by the organization.

Note: *Please note that the more general expectations included in OST 9 also apply to the activities addressed in this core concept.*

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 client participation 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 client records are missing important information; or
- Client participation 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

No Self Study Evidence

Site Visit Evidence

*

- Curricula for previous six months
- Programming/activity plans for previous six months
- Daily schedules for past month
- Documentation of collaboration with school personnel, if applicable

On-Site Activities

*
- Interviews may include:
    1. Program director
    2. Relevant personnel
    3. Children, youth, and families

- Observe program activities
- Review files of children and youth

OST 12.01

Academic activities include a focus on at least one of the following areas:

a. literacy and language arts;
b. social studies, including civic/global literacy;
c. math;
d. science;
e. engineering;
f. technology; and/or
g. media and information.

Examples: *Some organizations may provide instruction designed to help students improve basic skills in particular subjects, while others may provide enrichment activities focused on building specific skills or increasing exposure to certain fields. For example, an organization might engage students in social studies through projects designed to increase civic engagement, or an organization might engage students in math through activities designed to encourage financial literacy. Some organizations may offer activities that cut across different academic areas, or that integrate the arts into academic areas (e.g., STEAM or STREAM activities), and others may use academic content areas primarily as a vehicle for developing the interdisciplinary skills that are relevant across both academic and other content areas, such as "21st century skills" related to critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity.*

OST 12.02

The organization supports academic engagement and learning by:

a. designing activities that complement, extend, and expand school-day learning;
b. enabling children and youth to learn through active engagement with relevant academic concepts and materials;
c. incorporating real-world applications that make learning meaningful and help children and youth see how academic content relates to their lives and the world;
d. drawing connections between program areas of focus and other academic content areas;
e. helping children and youth understand how their experiences and learning at the program connect to content covered at school; and
f. ensuring personnel understand best practices in programming for the relevant academic areas and grade levels.

OST 12.03

When programming is designed to promote interest and build skills in reading and language arts, activities enable program participants to:

a. access a variety of text sources and types;
b. make choices regarding what they wish to read;
c. engage in independent reading;
d. take part in read alouds;
e. participate in discussions that encourage analysis and reflection; and
f. engage in writing exercises that include opportunities to formulate and develop ideas.

NA: The organization does not provide activities related to literacy and language arts.

OST 12.04

When programming is designed to help children and youth develop and deepen interests, skills, and understanding related to science, technology, engineering, or math, program participants have opportunities to:

a. ask questions and define problems;
b. plan and carry out investigations;
c. analyze and interpret data;
d. develop and use models;
e. construct explanations and design solutions;

f. engage in argument from evidence;
g. use mathematical and computational thinking; and/or
h. obtain, evaluate, and communicate information.

NA: The organization does not provide activities related to STEM disciplines.

Examples: *Organizations may focus on different STEM domains. Domains include:*

1. *physical science;*
2. *life science;*
3. *earth and space science; and*
4. *engineering, technology, and/or other applications of math and science.*

Concepts relevant across these domains include:

1. *patterns;*
2. *cause and effect;*
3. *scale, proportion, and quantity;*
4. *systems and system models;*
5. *energy and matter;*
6. *structure and function; and*
7. *stability and change.*

OST 12.05

When programming is designed to focus on social studies, children and youth participate in activities that:

a. are centered around the study of cultures and societies, civics, economics, and/or geography;
b. enable children and youth to consider and explore multiple perspectives related to the topics in question;
c. highlight connections between the past, present, and future; and
d. encourage a commitment to citizenship and social responsibility.

NA: The organization does not provide activities related to social studies.

Examples: *Areas of focus can include, for example, the cultures and geographies of other nations, or the local community, history, or culture.*

OST 12.06

Children and youth have opportunities to learn about and explore community institutions, careers, and options for higher education related to the academic areas of focus.
Interpretation: *When organizations serve older youth who are closer to embarking on a career path it will be especially important for youth to gain an understanding of professions that relate to the academic area of focus, as well as to obtain a better sense of the steps necessary to prepare for the career.*

OST 12.07

When children and youth are engaged in service learning, projects are designed to:

a. infuse community service with academic content and learning;
b. respond to a real need in the community;
c. enable children and youth to play an active role in identifying a need, developing and implementing a plan of action, evaluating progress towards goals, and modifying plans and goals, as needed;
d. encourage group work and collaborative learning; and
e. culminate in a presentation or celebration that highlights the contribution to the community.

NA: The organization does not offer opportunities for service learning.

Note: *Organizations should also ensure that opportunities for reflection, as addressed in OST 9.15, are incorporated both throughout the duration of the project and upon completion.*

OST 12.08

Children and youth are helped to navigate transitions between grades and schools, when applicable.
Examples: *Personnel might provide assistance by helping children and youth understand the structure and expectations of different grades and schools; arranging or accompanying children and youth on visits to new schools or classrooms; facilitating communication with school staff; encouraging parental involvement in the process; providing assistance with school applications;*

and/or offering summer programming that promotes readiness for the next school year. Organizations can also help youth during transitions simply by serving as a stable, familiar place that youth can count on as they cope with changes in other parts of their lives.

OST 12.09

Organizations seeking to improve academic performance ensure that children and youth spend sufficient time on academics to support achievement of this goal.
NA: The organization does not run programs that explicitly seek to improve academic performance.

Interpretation: *The amount of time that should be devoted to academic content will likely vary based upon program duration. For example, while a program that operates during the school year might offer programming in a given subject two or three times per week, some experts recommend that shorter-term summer programs provide academic content at least three hours per day, five days per week, for five to six weeks.*

Examples: *In addition to dedicating a sufficient amount of program time to academics, additional strategies for ensuring children and youth spend sufficient time on academics can include: (1) creating schedules that protect instructional time; (2) ensuring teachers understand how much time they are supposed to devote to academics; and (3) encouraging regular attendance.*

Out-of-School Time Services

OST 13: Programming and Activities: Homework Help and/or Tutoring

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.

Children and youth receive support that enables them to complete their homework and succeed in school.
NA: Homework help and/or tutoring is not a core element of the programs run by the organization.

Note: *Organizations that provide only homework help will complete OST 13.01 through OST 13.03. Organizations that provide only tutoring will complete OST 13.03 and OST 13.04.*

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 client participation 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 client records are missing important information; or
- Client participation 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

No Self Study Evidence

Site Visit Evidence

*
- Daily schedules for past month
- Documentation of collaboration among teachers, parents, and program personnel, if applicable
- Qualifications of tutors, if applicable

On-Site Activities

*
- Interviews may include:

1. Program director
2. Relevant personnel
3. Children, youth, and families

- Observe program activities
- Review files of children and youth

OST 13.01

Personnel collaborate with school day staff to develop a system for facilitating communication among teachers, parents, and program personnel regarding:

a. homework assignments given;
b. materials needed to complete assignments;
c. the amount of time expected to be spent on homework; and
d. the ongoing progress and needs of children and youth.

NA: The organization does not offer homework help.

Interpretation: *COA recognizes that it may be challenging for organizations to establish systems for communicating with school-day staff regarding homework, especially when organizations serve students who attend different schools. However, organizations are expected to demonstrate that they have at least made an effort to facilitate communication with school staff.*

Examples: *Some organizations and schools may have children and youth maintain Homework Planners to record their daily assignments. These planners can also be used as tools to help children and youth prioritize their assignments, manage their time, and assess their progress.*

OST 13.02

Personnel play an active role during homework time by:

a. checking in with children and youth to make sure they understand their assignments;
b. modeling a positive attitude towards homework;
c. encouraging children and youth to do their best;
d. assisting children and youth who need help; and
e. monitoring homework quality and completion.

NA: The organization does not offer homework help.

Note: *When extensive one-on-one assistance is necessary a child may be in need of tutoring, as addressed in OST 13.04.*

OST 13.03

Children and youth are helped to develop organizational and study skills that support school success, including skills related to:

a. organizing materials;
b. managing time, including setting goals and making plans for accomplishing work;
c. accessing needed information and resources;
d. reviewing materials and taking notes, including skimming, active reading, and summarizing;
e. preparing for and taking tests; and
f. evaluating their own work and progress.

Examples: *One way for children and youth to learn and practice the organizational and study skills referenced in the standard is through the completion of homework.*

OST 13.04

Children and youth in need of extra help are connected with tutors who:

a. provide special assistance and instruction in specific subject areas; and
b. are knowledgeable about both the subject area in question and strategies for helping students.

NA: The organization does not offer tutoring.

Out-of-School Time Services

OST 14: Programming and Activities: College and Career Readiness

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.

Youth receive support and assistance that prepare them to enter and succeed in college and the workforce.
NA: College and career preparation is not a core element of the programs run by the organization.

Note: *Please note that the more general expectations included in OST 9 also apply to the activities addressed in this core concept.*

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 client participation 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 client records are missing important information; or
- Client participation 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

No Self Study Evidence

Site Visit Evidence

*
- Curricula for previous six months
- Programming/activity plans for previous six months
- Daily schedules for past month

On-Site Activities

*
- Interviews may include:
    1. Program director

2. Relevant personnel
3. Youth and families

- Observe program activities
- Review files of youth

OST 14.01

The organization motivates youth for success by:

a. helping them examine and discover their individual strengths, interests, values, and aspirations;
b. explaining the potential impact that higher education and career readiness can have on life outcomes;
c. providing opportunities to learn about different options and paths related to higher education and employment; and
d. helping them understand the steps involved in pursuing a particular path, including how instruction and activities at school or the program can contribute to progress toward goals.

Examples: *The focus and breadth of content may vary across organizations. For example, organizations may strive to expose youth to a wide range of careers across fields, or be more specifically focused on a particular discipline (e.g., STEM). Similarly, organizations may invite guest speakers, take youth on field trips to visit workplaces or college campuses, or arrange mentorships and internships for youth.*

OST 14.02

Youth are helped to gain a better understanding of college and workplace norms, cultures, and expectations.

OST 14.03

The organization helps youth develop and practice the soft skills that can help them enter and succeed in college and the workforce, including skills related to:

a. managing time;
b. setting goals and making plans;
c. accessing needed information and resources;
d. solving problems;
e. thinking critically;
f. making decisions; and
g. evaluating their own work and progress.

OST 14.04

Youth interested in higher education are helped to:

a. identify institutions that meet their needs and interests;
b. take steps that may increase their chances for admission; and
c. complete the application process.

Examples: *Youth may need assistance with many aspects of the application process, including, but not limited to: meeting deadlines; taking the SATs; gathering recommendations; and obtaining financial aid or scholarships.*

OST 14.05

Youth have opportunities to participate in activities that allow them to develop and practice technical skills in particular fields.
NA: The organization does not offer opportunities to develop and practice technical skills in particular fields.

Examples: *Opportunities to develop and practice technical skills may be provided either on-site (e.g., through project-based activities such as those addressed in OST 9) or off-site (e.g., through arrangements such as internships, apprenticeships, or job-shadowing opportunities).*

OST 14.06

Youth receive the assistance and social support they need to navigate the transition to college or the workforce.
Interpretation: *While practices addressed throughout both this core concept and OST as a whole are intended to prepare youth for success in college and career (e.g., by promoting social-emotional development, academic advancement, and knowledge of college and career opportunities), this standard is intended to address the support provided during the transitional period when youth actually enter college or the workforce.*

Examples: *In addition to providing support during the initial transition to college or the workforce, some organizations may even provide ongoing support in an effort to help youth persevere through obstacles and accomplish their goals.*

Out-of-School Time Services

OST 15: Programming and Activities: Mentoring

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.

Organizations provide the screening, training, monitoring, and support needed to facilitate successful mentoring relationships.
NA: The organization does not offer mentoring as part of its OST program.

Note: *While most of the organizations implementing this core concept will likely run on-site mentoring programs, the standards can also apply to organizations that allow mentors and mentees to meet off-site.*

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 client participation 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 client records are missing important information; or
- Client participation 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

*	• Expectations regarding mentoring	
*	• Procedures for screening mentors	
*	• Procedures for orientation and training for mentors	
*	• Table of contents of mentor orientation and training curricula	

* • Procedures for matching	
* • Procedures for monitoring and supporting matches	
* • Procedures for closing matches	

Site Visit Evidence

* • Daily schedules for past month • Mentor orientation and training curricula • Documentation tracking mentor completion of required trainings • Materials provided to children, youth, and families explaining the mentoring initiative

On-Site Activities

* • Interviews may include: 1. Program director 2. Relevant personnel 3. Mentors 4. Children, youth, and families • Observe program activities • Review files of children and youth • Review mentor files

OST 15.01

The mentoring initiative:

a. is designed to help children and youth build strong, supportive relationships with positive role models;
b. is focused on promoting the growth, development, and empowerment of children and youth; and
c. establishes clear expectations regarding how frequently mentors and mentees should meet, and the minimum length of time mentors should commit to the program.

Examples: *Although expectations can vary based on program type, many organizations ask mentors to agree in writing to meet with mentees at least one hour per week, or for several hours once or twice a month, for at least a year (i.e. school or calendar year, depending on program type and schedule).*

OST 15.02 (FP)

The mentor screening process is completed before a prospective mentor serves children and youth in any capacity, and includes:

a. a written application;
b. a face-to-face interview; and
c. reference checks, including both personal and professional references, when possible.

Note: *As addressed in HR 2.03, the organization should also conduct fingerprint-based state and federal criminal history record checks, child abuse and neglect registry checks, and sex offender registry checks. If mentors have opportunities to transport mentees the organization should also review their driving records, as referenced in ASE 4.02.*

OST 15.03

In order to determine a prospective mentor's suitability, the mentor screening process includes an assessment of:

a. whether the prospective mentor's personal qualities will facilitate the development of a trust-based relationship centered on the mentee; and
b. whether the prospective mentor has the time and availability needed to establish and maintain a strong mentoring relationship.

OST 15.04
Mentors receive orientation and training that address:

a. the philosophy of both the program and its mentoring component;
b. the responsibilities of the mentor to the organization and the mentee;
c. the responsibilities of the organization to the mentor;
d. relationship development, including the importance of building trust;
e. establishing appropriate boundaries and setting limits;
f. child and youth development, including any special strengths and needs of the population served;
g. diversity and cultural awareness; and
h. realistic expectations for the relationship.

Interpretation: *At least two hours of in-person, pre-match training should be provided.*

OST 15.05
The organization considers the characteristics of mentors and mentees when making matches.
Examples: *Characteristics that may be relevant to consider when making matches include language spoken, interests, age, gender identity and expression, background, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual identity, sexual orientation, special needs, personality and temperament, strengths, and/or the expressed preferences of the mentor, mentee, and the mentee's parent or guardian. Logistical issues, such as availability to meet at the same time, can also be relevant to consider.*

OST 15.06 (FP)
Mentors, mentees, and mentees' parents or legal guardians provide written, informed consent to:

a. the proposed match; and
b. the rules and requirements of the mentoring initiative.

OST 15.07
In an effort to facilitate the development of a successful mentoring relationship, the organization:

a. arranges, and ensures personnel are available during, the initial match meeting; and
b. ensures that mentoring meetings are frequent enough, and continue long enough, to meet the objectives of the relationship.

OST 15.08 (FP)
Personnel monitor the appropriateness and effectiveness of the match by checking in with mentors, mentees, and mentees' parents or legal guardians at least:

a. bi-weekly, during the first month of mentoring; and
b. once a month, thereafter.

Interpretation: *Personnel should use these check-ins to learn about the activities that occurred during match meetings, the quality of the mentoring relationship, and the impact of the mentoring relationship on both the mentee and mentor, as well as to make sure that the mentoring relationship does not present any safety issues. More frequent monitoring will likely be necessary if a match is considered to be in jeopardy of premature closing. Organizations that have trouble obtaining input from parents or legal guardians may seek input from other involved adults, such as teachers or other school-day personnel.*

OST 15.09
The organization maintains a record of the date, duration, and activities completed at each mentoring meeting.

OST 15.10
Personnel:

a. regularly assess matches to determine if they should be continued or closed; and
b. provide ongoing support and assistance to facilitate relationship development and address challenges, as needed.

Examples: *In addition to regular feedback and support from personnel, ongoing assistance can include access to resources such as specialized publications, experienced mentors, or additional training opportunities.*

OST 15.11
When it is necessary to close a match, personnel:

a. ensure that the relationship ends in a planned, constructive manner;
b. meet with mentors to discuss the reasons for, and their feelings about, the closure of the match;
c. meet with mentees and their families to discuss the reasons for, and their feelings about, the closure of the match;
d. review rules regarding post-closure contact with all parties, including mentors, mentees, and the families of mentees; and
e. offer the possibility of re-matching, as appropriate.

Interpretation: *Closure procedures should also address situations where one party (i.e. the mentor, mentee, or family of the mentee) is unwilling or unable to engage in the closure process. While it may be hard for some organizations to engage family members, it will be especially important to involve the mentee's family if the match is determined to be unsuitable or inappropriate, as opposed to when a match is designed to end at a specific time (e.g., at the end of the school year).*

Examples: *It may be necessary to close a match for a variety of reasons including, for example, if the mentor or mentee relocates, if the match is determined to be unsuitable or inappropriate, or if the match is designed to end at a specific time, such as when the school year ends.*

Out-of-School Time Services

OST 16: Indoor Environment and Materials

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.

The indoor environment and materials meet the needs of children and youth and support program goals.

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 client participation 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 client records are missing important information; or
- Client participation 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

No Self Study Evidence

Site Visit Evidence

No Site Visit Evidence

On-Site Activities

*

- Interviews may include:
    1. Program director
    2. Relevant personnel
    3. Children, youth, and families

- Observe indoor facility and materials

OST 16.01

There is enough room in the indoor space for program activities, and the space is arranged to:

a. accommodate the activities offered;
b. minimize crowding and disruptions, including when multiple activities go on at the same time;
c. promote socialization and interactivity among participants; and
d. accommodate children and youth who wish to rest or be alone.

Interpretation: *The amount of space needed will vary depending on the type of activities offered. For example, there should be approximately 35 to 45 square feet per child/youth for small group enrichment activities such as woodworking, arts and crafts, or science experiments; approximately 25 to 35 square feet per child/youth for quiet activities such as homework, reading, or club meetings; and approximately 75 to 100 square feet per child/youth when indoor space is used for active play (e.g., dance, aerobics, or basketball).*

Examples: *Space can be arranged to accommodate the activities offered with minimal disruption by, for example, facilitating activities that require water for clean-up near the sink; separating active play from quiet activities (e.g., children and youth doing homework should not be distracted by loud music); and designating pathways that allow children and youth to move from one place to another without disturbing ongoing activities.*

OST 16.02

Furniture is:

a. in good condition;
b. appropriate to the ages and sizes of children and youth; and
c. sufficient to accommodate the number of children and youth.

OST 16.03

Visual displays:

a. support the goals of the program;
b. feature work created by program participants (e.g., artwork); and
c. incorporate items of interest to program participants, including items selected or arranged by children and youth.

Interpretation: *COA recognizes that it may be difficult for organizations to implement this standard if they share another organization or agency's space.*

OST 16.04

Supplies and equipment are:

a. suited to the activities offered and the goals of the program;
b. designed to support and encourage creativity;
c. in good condition;
d. sufficient for the number of children and youth in the program; and
e. appropriate to the ages and developmental levels of program participants, including for children and youth with differing levels of skill and ability.

Interpretation: *When children are required to share materials or equipment (e.g., a computer or microscope) there should be a system in place to minimize wait time and facilitate orderly access for all.*

OST 16.05

There is adequate and convenient storage space for equipment, materials, and personal possessions of children, youth, and personnel.

Examples: *An organization can demonstrate implementation of this standard by, for example: ensuring materials used frequently and works-in-progress are readily accessible to children and youth; storing bulk materials and things not currently in use in other places; and making sure that personnel rarely have to carry heavy equipment or large amounts of materials long distances (or providing portable equipment on wheels when it is necessary to do so.)*

Out-of-School Time Services

OST 17: Outdoor Environment and Materials

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.

The outdoor environment and materials meet the needs of children and youth and support program goals.
Note: *Organizations that do not have their own outdoor space may demonstrate that they access other outdoor spaces (e.g., neighborhood parks or school playgrounds) to implement these standards. If there is no access to an outdoor space, or if the activities offered do not require outdoor space, the organization should request an NA.*

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 client participation 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 client records are missing important information; or
- Client participation 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

No Self Study Evidence

Site Visit Evidence

No Site Visit Evidence

On-Site Activities

*

- Interviews may include:
  1. Program director
  2. Relevant personnel
  3. Children, youth, and families

- Observe outdoor facility and materials

OST 17.01

The outdoor space is large enough to accommodate the number of children and youth served, and suitable for the type of activities offered.
Interpretation: *If the outdoor space is small, the time children and youth spend outdoors should be staggered so that they are not crowded during outdoor activities.*

Examples: *The characteristics of the outdoor space may vary based on the nature of the program and the type of activities offered. For example, an organization offering basketball should have access to a basketball court, an organization offering tennis should have access to a tennis court, and an organization offering walking or running groups should have access to sufficient space for children to engage in walking or running. Organizations that serve younger children and offer a variety of activity options will ideally provide access to an open area where children can run, jump, and play; a large field area for structured sports activities such as kickball; a hard surface for basketball, rollerblading, and bike riding; and a protected area for quiet play and socializing.*

OST 17.02

Supplies and equipment for outdoor activities are:

a. suited to the activities offered and the goals of the program;
b. in good condition;
c. sufficient for the number of children and youth in the program; and
d. appropriate to the ages and developmental levels of program participants, including for children and youth with differing levels of skill and ability.

Interpretation: *When children are required to share supplies and equipment there should be a system in place to minimize wait time and facilitate orderly access for all.*

OST 17.03

There is adequate and convenient storage space for outdoor supplies and equipment.
Examples: *An organization can demonstrate implementation of this standard by, for example: ensuring children and youth can access outdoor supplies and equipment on their own, and with ease; storing supplies and equipment close to the activity space, or moving them near the activity space during program time; and making sure that personnel rarely have to carry heavy equipment or large quantities of supplies long distances (or providing portable equipment on wheels when it is necessary to do so).*

OST 17.04

Permanent playground equipment is suitable for the ages, sizes, and abilities of children and youth.
NA: The organization does not use permanent playground equipment.

Out-of-School Time Services

OST 18: Health and Safety

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.

The organization protects and promotes the health and safety of children and youth.
Note: *While the health-related aspects of this core concept are largely focused on practices pertaining to physical health, COA does recognize the interconnectedness of physical and mental well-being, as well as the importance of focusing on the overall wellness of children and youth. Accordingly, it is important to note that other practices that contribute to overall wellness are included within other core concept standards. For example, OST 5 addresses the importance of social and emotional learning, including helping children and youth understand and manage their emotions; OST 4 and OST 5 address the importance of developing caring relationships with adults and peers; and OST 4 and OST 9 address the importance of providing the opportunities and support that can help children and youth build skills and develop a positive self-concept.*

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 client participation 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 client records are missing important information; or
- Client participation 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

*	• Policy and/or procedures regarding screen time	
*	• Procedures for ensuring personnel are prepared to meet the health/mental health needs of individual children and youth	
*	• Procedures for cleaning and sanitation, including expectations for hand washing	

*	• Procedures for notifying families that their children may have been exposed to an infectious disease	
*	• Procedures for reporting, responding to, and recording health problems and injuries	
*	• Smoking policy	

Site Visit Evidence

*	• Menus for the previous six months • Daily schedules for the previous month • Information provided to families regarding health promotion and the types of food/drink that may be brought to the program • Attendance guidelines that address when sick children and youth should not come to the program • Accident, injury, and illness reports • CPR and first aid certifications

On-Site Activities

*	• Interviews may include: 1. Program director 2. Relevant personnel 3. Children, youth, and families • Review files of children and youth • Observe facility • Observe snack and/or meal time • Observe program interactions and activities

OST 18.01

The organization promotes healthy eating and good nutrition by:

a. serving unsweetened beverages such as water or plain milk;
b. serving a variety of healthful and minimally-processed foods that do not contain artificial ingredients, unhealthy fats, added sugars, or high levels of sodium (e.g., fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, beans, and lean meats);
c. making an effort to ensure that celebrations for birthdays, holidays, and other special events include healthy options; and
d. considering the preferences and input of children and youth when deciding what foods to offer, to the extent possible and appropriate.

OST 18.02

Personnel:

a. make drinking water readily available at all times, including when children and youth are outdoors or on field trips;
b. encourage children and youth to drink more water in hot weather;
c. provide snacks and meals at appropriate times;
d. provide children and youth with enough time to eat;
e. offer amounts of food that are appropriate for the ages and sizes of children and youth; and
f. support children's and youth's need to self-regulate the amount they eat.

OST 18.03

The organization supports and encourages the physical fitness of children and youth by:

a. designing the activity schedule so that children and youth do not sit for more than one hour at a time, and incorporating short physical activity breaks into sedentary activities and transition times; and

b. providing opportunities for children and youth to engage in physical activity for at least 30 to 60 minutes per day.

Interpretation: *When programming is not designed to include 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity (i.e. due to the type of activity offered), the organization should be prepared to explain why this is the case. If a program operates for a relatively brief period of time each day (e.g., for an hour or two), it may not be possible to engage children and youth in a full 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity, but at least 20 percent of program time should be set aside for physical activity (i.e. 12 minutes of a one-hour program).*

Examples: *The type of physical activity offered may vary depending on the nature of the program and the ages, abilities, and interests of participating children and youth. For example, while an organization serving younger children might offer unstructured free play on the playground, an organization serving older youth might facilitate a variety of structured activities, from dance classes, to competitive intramural sports, to walking groups.*

OST 18.04

The organization creates an environment that supports and encourages healthy eating and physical activity by ensuring:

a. personnel model healthy eating and physical activity while on the job;
b. posters, displays, and other program materials convey positive messages about healthy eating and physical activity;
c. food and physical activity are not offered or withheld as a reward or punishment;
d. screen time is limited; and
e. there is adequate access to the facilities needed to support healthy eating and physical activity (e.g., kitchen, storage, and recreational facilities).

Interpretation: *Regarding element (d), screen time that is not academic or educational should typically be limited to 30 minutes per day, and children and youth should not be permitted to watch television or movies except on special occasions. When children or youth are exercising along with a video or DVD that provides physical activity instruction (e.g., an aerobics DVD), the time does not count towards the daily screen time limits.*

Note: *See OST 9.18 for more information regarding screen time and the use of technology.*

OST 18.05

Children and youth are helped to understand the importance of developing healthy habits that support both physical and mental wellness.
Examples: *Topics can include:*

1. *obtaining adequate sleep, nutrition, and exercise;*
2. *devising healthy strategies for coping with stress; and*
3. *developing reasonable expectations for one's self.*

Organizations may also explain how habits and routines in these areas may work together to impact both physical and mental well-being. It may also be relevant to convey how these topics tie into a program's areas of focus. For example, an organization that emphasizes academic readiness might make a concerted effort to help children and youth understand how eating healthfully, and obtaining sufficient sleep, can support readiness to learn.

OST 18.06

In an effort to support children and youth in developing and maintaining healthy habits, the organization provides families with information regarding:

a. the importance of a healthy lifestyle, including ways to encourage healthy habits at home; and
b. the types of food that may be brought to the program, considering factors related to both nutritional content and food allergies.

Examples: *Information may be provided in a variety of ways, from communications at family events to materials sent home. As referenced in OST 18.05, it may be especially relevant to provide information about how health and wellness ties into a program's areas of focus.*

OST 18.07

Children and youth have frequent, regular opportunities to participate in outdoor activities, weather permitting.
Interpretation: *Children and youth should ideally have a chance to be outdoors for at least 30 minutes out of every three-hour block of time at the program.*

Note: *When programming is not designed to include outdoor activities, the organization should request an NA.*

OST 18.08 (FP)

When children and youth have particular health or mental health needs, the organization:

a. specifies the role it will play in meeting those needs; and
b. ensures that personnel are informed about children and youths' needs and prepared to carry out any related responsibilities.

Examples: *Relevant health and mental health needs can include, but are not limited to, needs related to diet, allergies, asthma, physical limitations, medication needs, and a history of trauma.*

OST 18.09 (FP)

There are adequate supplies and facilities for hand washing and personnel, children, and youth are encouraged to wash hands frequently, especially before preparing food or after using the bathroom.
Interpretation: *COA recognizes that in some situations, such as field trips or outdoor activities, hand washing supplies and facilities (e.g., running water, soap) may not be available. When that is the case, hand sanitizer may be an appropriate alternative.*

Examples: *The organization can demonstrate implementation of this standard by filling soap dispensers regularly, ensuring there are sanitary methods for drying hands (e.g., disposable paper towels or electric dryers that turn on and off automatically), and posting signs or pictures that show proper hand washing techniques and emphasize the importance of hand washing.*

OST 18.10 (FP)

To protect children and youth from accidents, injuries, and illnesses, the organization ensures:

a. families are provided with attendance guidelines that address when sick children and youth should not come to the program;
b. procedures address when families should be notified that their children may have been exposed to an infectious disease;
c. health problems and injuries are promptly documented, and proper health precautions are followed when supervising children and youth who are ill or injured;
d. parents or legal guardians are notified when health or safety issues arise; and
e. an automated external defibrillator (AED) is maintained in a well-marked, accessible location proximate to the areas where sports/fitness areas are held, as appropriate.

Interpretation: *Please note that element (e) applies only when an organization provides sports/fitness activities as covered in OST 11. Further, while COA strongly recommends that all organizations providing sports/fitness activities maintain an AED in order to ensure proper emergency response to sudden cardiac arrest, an organization that does not maintain an AED can still demonstrate satisfactory implementation of the standard overall as long as the organization does not operate in a state that requires access to an AED. It is also important to note that: (1) personnel should be trained on how to use an AED, as per ASE 6.03; and (2) any AED in operation should be maintained according to the manufacturer's specification and regularly inspected, as per ASE 4.01.*

OST 18.11 (FP)

There is at least one person on duty and available at all times persons served are present, including on field trips away from the program site,who has completed training in basic first aid and age-appropriate CPR in the previous two years that included an in-person, hands-on CPR skills assessment conducted by a certified CPR instructor.

Interpretation: *An organization should consider adult-child/youth ratios, the type of activities offered, and the distance between activities when determining the number of persons who will be certified. When some children will attend a field trip while others will remain on site, more than one person will need to be certified in order to meet the expectations of the standard. While not required by the standard, COA recommends that organizations strive to have all OST personnel certified.*

OST 18.12 (FP)

Smoking is prohibited anywhere on the premises, including outside entrances, outdoor play areas, and program vehicles.

Out-of-School Time Services

OST 19: Supervision

Purpose

Children and youth who participate in Out-of-School Time programs gain the personal, social, emotional, and educational assets needed to support healthy development, increase well-being, and facilitate a successful transition through childhood and adolescence, and into adulthood.

The organization ensures the safety of children and youth by providing sufficient and appropriate supervision at all times, including on field trips away from the program site.

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 client participation 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 client records are missing important information; or
- Client participation 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

*	• Program ratio	
*	• Procedures for providing adequate supervision, including for coverage during breaks, absences, emergencies, etc.	
*	• Policy governing one-on-one interactions between personnel and children/youth	
*	• Procedures governing one-on-one interactions between personnel and children/youth	
*	• Procedures for arrivals and dismissals	

Site Visit Evidence

*

- Staffing chart for the previous six months
- Attendance records showing daily totals and weekly averages

On-Site Activities

*

- Interviews may include:
    1. Program director
    2. Relevant personnel
    3. Children, youth, and families

- Observe supervision at different times of day and during different activities
- Observe arrivals and dismissals
- Review files of children and youth

OST 19.01 (FP)

The ratio of personnel to children and youth in the program is based on the ages and abilities of children and youth, and is:

a. between 1:10 and 1:15 when all children and youth are age six and older; and
b. between 1:8 and 1:12 when the program includes children under age six.

Interpretation: *This standard is intended to address the ratio of personnel to children and youth in a program as a whole, rather than for a particular room or group of children and youth. In other words, a program with 60 participants age six and over would need at least four staff members to meet the program ratio specified in the standard. However, the organization would not need to ensure that there was at least one adult present in every group of 15 children and youth. For example, while one adult might be supervising a group of 19 youth doing line dancing, another adult might be helping a group of 11 youth with their homework.*

To be included in the program ratio, staff must be present with, and directly supervising, children and youth. It is also important to note that the ratio must be maintained at all times – if certain staff will periodically leave the organization (e.g., to pick up more children), they should not be counted in the ratio. Non-teaching staff (e.g., front desk staff, custodians, food service personnel, and bus drivers) should also not be counted in the ratio. Volunteers should not be included in this ratio unless they meet personnel qualifications and have a regular, ongoing role at the program.

It may be appropriate for there to be more personnel, and higher ratios of personnel to children and youth, when personnel work with children and youth with special needs, or with groups that consist entirely of kindergarteners.

OST 19.02 (FP)

Personnel plan for and provide different levels of supervision according to:

a. the type, complexity, and level of risk or difficulty of activities; and
b. the ages, abilities, developmental levels, and needs of children and youth.

Interpretation: *Ratios of personnel to children/youth should be higher when projects involve potentially dangerous activities or equipment (e.g., cooking, carpentry, leatherworking, swimming, gymnastics, biking, sledding, or skating), or when children and youth are learning a new or difficult skill. In some cases it may be necessary for personnel who supervise potentially risky activities to receive specialized training, as determined by industry safety standards. Extra adults should also be present on field trips that are difficult to supervise (e.g., trips to amusement parks, beaches, ski areas, or campgrounds). Ratios should not typically exceed 1:25, for any type of activity.*

Similarly, group sizes should typically be smaller when projects involve potentially dangerous activities or equipment, or when children and youth are learning a new or difficult skill. Groups may be larger for activities such as sports, art, reading, or board games, but should not typically exceed 30 children/youth, except for activities such as outdoor play, performances, or assemblies (as long as adequate supervision is provided).

OST 19.03 (FP)

The organization implements a supervision system that:

a. enables personnel to know where children and youth are, and what they are doing, at all times;
b. allows personnel to see and/or hear all the children and youth they are supervising;
c. includes special provisions for monitoring children and youth who have permission to be out of sight;
d. protects younger children when they move from place to place or use the restroom;
e. enables children and youth to access help at all times; and
f. makes communication possible between different areas within the program site.

Examples: *Organizations can use low barriers between designated spaces to promote visibility, and install convex mirrors to supplement line-of-sight supervision.*

Systems for supervision, and the level of supervision provided, may vary based on the developmental stages and needs of the children and youth served. For example, organizations serving younger children might monitor which children are in the restroom, and how long they have been there, by having children put a clothespin by their name and set an egg timer when they leave the room. Conversely, the level of supervision should also respect older youths' need for independence. Accordingly, an organization serving older youth might develop a policy allowing more independence that is worked out with youth, their families, and personnel.

OST 19.04 (FP)

The organization ensures safety during arrivals and dismissals by:

a. working with parents or other appropriate family members to obtain instructions for arrival and dismissal, including when children and youth are supposed to arrive and how, and with whom, they are allowed to depart;
b. establishing a system for monitoring when children and youth arrive, when they leave, and with whom they leave;
c. developing a system to keep unauthorized people from taking children and youth;
d. establishing protocols for families or schools to contact the organization if children and youth will be arriving late, leaving early, or absent;
e. developing procedures that address how to respond if a child or youth is not picked up in a timely manner at dismissal; and
f. contacting a responsible adult listed on the emergency form, or the school, if questions arise.

NA: The organization only serves older youth who can come and go independently.

OST 19.05 (FP)

There is a plan to provide adequate staff coverage:

a. when personnel are absent (i.e. due to illness, personal reasons, or professional development);
b. when personnel leave the room to take a break or retrieve supplies; and
c. when emergencies or special circumstances arise during program time.

Interpretation: *Even if one staff member is sufficient to meet the program ratio specified in OST 19.01, a second adult should be on hand to assist in case an emergency or special circumstance arises.*

Examples: *Emergencies or special circumstances include situations where a child becomes ill, requires separation from the group, needs special supervision or care, or has an emergency, as well as situations where a staff member becomes ill or has an emergency. The organization can support implementation of this standard by keeping an up-to-date list of adults who are qualified to serve as substitutes.*

OST 19.06 (FP)

One-on-one interactions between personnel and children and youth are in public areas visible by at least one other adult.
Interpretation: *It is acceptable for a staff member to be alone with a child or youth during brief periods of transition (e.g., while escorting a child from the cafeteria to the computer lab), as long as their whereabouts are communicated to other personnel.*