

# The New York State School-Age Care Credential Competency Standards for Afterschool Professionals



Modeled after the U.S. Army School-Age Credential and introduced in the Fall of 1999, the New York State School-Age Care Credential was developed by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, Cornell University and the New York State School-Age Care Coalition-now AfterSchool Works! New York. In 2002, AfterSchool Works! New York became the sole credentialing agency in New York State and has since awarded the credential to over 500 afterschool professionals.

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## The Competent Afterschool Professional

The choice to work with school-age children is one of the most important career decisions that one can make.

A school-age or afterschool professional is a special person in the lives of children as they master skills, develop friendships, grow in independence, and move to new levels of thinking and understanding about themselves and the world.

The number of children in afterschool programs has multiplied in recent years. Families place great trust in the staff of these programs for it is the daily performance of the afterschool professional that determines the quality of the children's before and after school experience. The New York State School-Age Care Credential Competency Standards support quality afterschool programs for school-age children by providing standards for training, evaluation and recognition of afterschool professionals based on their ability to meet the unique needs of this age group.

The competent afterschool professional is a person who:

- Meets the specific needs of children.
- Nurtures children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development in partnership with parents, families, and other adults.
- Conducts him or herself in a professional and ethical manner.

And, while demonstrating skills and knowledge, competent afterschool professionals must also demonstrate personal qualities such as integrity, flexibility and an effective communication style with school-age children and their families. The competency standards are divided into 14 skill areas which describe the major tasks that a front line afterschool professional must be able to do to meet the competency standards. Each skill area is further explained by a list of numbered competencies that describe behavior that demonstrates the professional is acting in a competent way. Detailed descriptors of behaviors or indicators can be found in chapter two of the New York State School-Age Care Credential Manual available at [www.afterschoolworksny.org](http://www.afterschoolworksny.org).

The New York State School-Age Care Credential competency standards were developed to evaluate a candidate's performance with children and families during the school-age care credentialing process. However, they can also be used to articulate the roles and responsibilities of afterschool professionals, guide performance evaluations and inform professional development efforts.



## Competency Standards for Afterschool Professionals At-A-Glance

### 1. SKILL AREA: PROFESSIONALISM

#### Competency Standards

- 1-1 Demonstrates knowledge of regulations and National AfterSchool Association standards
- 1-2 Views self as professional in current work with children
- 1-3 Has and is continually developing competencies in child development, programming, communication skills and other topics related to children
- 1-4 Sets professional development goals that lead to continuous improvement

### 2. SKILL AREA: CHILD DEVELOPMENT KNOWLEDGE

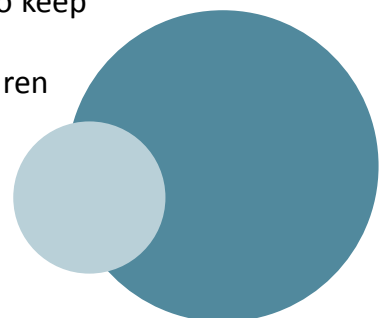
#### Competency Standards

- 2-1 Uses systematic, objective observations to anticipate individual children's needs as well as the needs their developmental stage might predict
- 2-2 Demonstrates reasonable expectations for what children of various developmental stages are able to do physically, emotionally, socially, cognitively, and creatively
- 2-3 Plans, organizes, and provides programming that meets the developmental needs of children
- 2-4 Includes children of all ability levels, including those with special needs

### 3. SKILL AREA: SAFETY

#### Competency Standards

- 3-1 Follows the New York State School-Age Child Care safety regulations as well as program policies and procedures designed to keep children safe
- 3-2 Actively works to prevent injuries and harm to children
- 3-3 Prepares to act quickly if an accident or injury should occur
- 3-4 Responds quickly and calmly in the event of an emergency





#### **4. SKILL AREA: HEALTH**

##### Competency Standards

- 4-1 Follows the New York State School-Age Child Care regulations that address health, sanitation, and food handling practices
- 4-2 Models and teaches habits that promote good health and nutrition
- 4-3 Maintains and makes accessible supplies that help children practice healthy habits
- 4-4 Acts to detect and prevent child maltreatment
- 4-5 Maintains a high standard of cleanliness and sanitation practices
- 4-6 Is prepared to deal with medical emergencies or illness

#### **5. SKILL AREA: SELF**

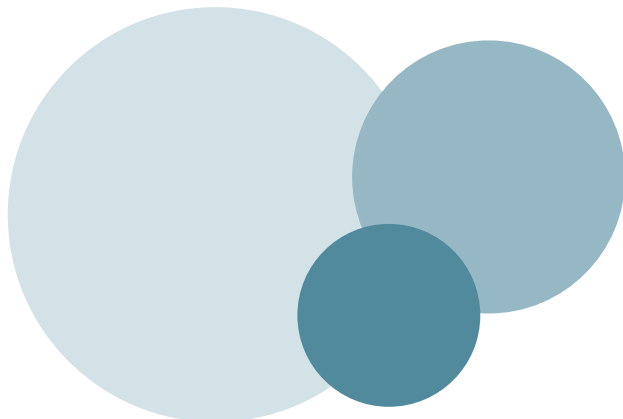
##### Competency Standards

- 5-1 Respects the individuality of children
- 5-2 Helps children identify, plan, and pursue their own interests and talents
- 5-3 Helps children learn about and appreciate a variety of cultures and ethnic groups, including their own
- 5-4 Provides opportunities for children to experience success and encourages them to see and acknowledge their own progress and successes
- 5-5 Encourages children to solve their own problems, intervening only when it seems they cannot find a solution or when someone might get hurt
- 5-6 Involves children in activities that help them learn positive social values

#### **6. SKILL AREA: GUIDANCE**

##### Competency Standards

- 6-1 Creates an environment of respect where it is not acceptable to hurt anyone
- 6-2 Guides children's behavior in a positive manner
- 6-3 Uses positive problem solving and problem prevention methods
- 6-4 Follows a daily schedule that allows children freedom within structure
- 6-5 Helps children develop and practice positive conflict management skills
- 6-6 Communicates discipline policies clearly



## **7. SKILL AREA: OUT-OF-SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS**

### Competency Standards

- 7-1 Separates interest areas so that simultaneous activities of different natures can occur
- 7-2 Provides space in which children can enjoy quiet and privacy
- 7-3 Provides space for children to engage in active play
- 7-4 Establishes schedules and routines that give children freedom within structure
- 7-5 Creates a systematic storage plan and area
- 7-6 Demonstrates an ability to articulate and advocate for positive spaces for children

## **8. SKILL AREA: CREATIVE**

### Competency Standards

- 8-1 Models and offers enthusiastic leadership for creative thinking and projects
- 8-2 Creates an environment that encourages children's creativity
- 8-3 Provides sufficient time in the daily schedule for children to make plans and carry them out
- 8-4 Introduces new, creative processes, ideas, and activities to children
- 8-5 Encourages children to develop their creative abilities



## **9. SKILL AREA: PHYSICAL**

### Competency Standards

- 9-1 Provides a variety of materials, equipment, and activities
- 9-2 Provides space and time for children to engage in active play every day
- 9-3 Provides leadership and enthusiasm that encourages children's physical activity
- 9-4 Provides developmentally appropriate activities
- 9-5 Ensures that children take breaks from vigorous activity and drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration



## **10. SKILL AREA: COGNITIVE**

### Competency Standards

- 10-1 Creates an environment where learning means fun
- 10-2 Encourages children to be in charge of their own learning
- 10-3 Encourages children to develop their inter- and intra-personal intelligences
- 10-4 Taps into children's desire to explore adult skills to make and produce things
- 10-5 Helps children develop their language skills
- 10-6 Balances children's academic needs with their need to relax, learn new skills, get exercise, and develop social skills
- 10-7 Helps children develop curiosity about science and the natural world
- 10-8 Exposes children to experiences involving new information, ideas, and concepts

## **11. SKILL AREA: COMMUNICATION**

### Competency Standards

- 11-1 Models positive communication skills in interactions with other staff members, parents, families and children
- 11-2 Provides materials that encourage language development activities
- 11-3 Builds opportunities for children to develop and use communication skills in all program activities, not just those specifically related to reading, writing, and speaking
- 11-4 Asks open-ended questions to encourage children to think and express their ideas
- 11-5 Observes children's nonverbal cues and uses these cues to ask questions about their ideas and feelings
- 11-6 Introduces complex communication skills such as assertiveness, conflict resolution, and refusal skills as children develop and demonstrate a grasp of more basic skills



## **12. SKILL AREA: SOCIAL POSITIVE CLASSROOM COMMUNITY**

### Competency Standards

- 12-1 Models positive ways to interact with people of all ages
- 12-2 Employs observation skills to understand the social needs of each child
- 12-3 Helps children develop and practice the skills to get along with others

## **13. SKILL AREA: FAMILIES**

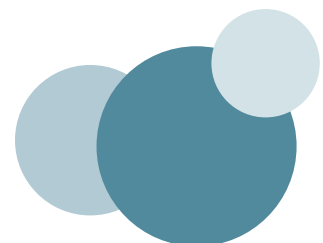
### Competency Standards

- 13-1 Demonstrates an understanding of the importance of relationships with children's parents and families as they are the primary caretakers of their child and the most important individuals in a child's life
- 13-2 Develops a system of regular communication with parents and families
- 13-3 Provides information on the program and program activities as they relate to the developmental stages of children
- 13-4 Encourages parent/family involvement in working with children in the program

## **14. SKILL AREA: OPERATIONAL PROGRAM MANAGEMENT**

### Competency Standards

- 14-1 Engages parents and families in developing program for children
- 14-2 Works with staff to ensure program excellence
- 14-3 Develops a responsive, high-quality program
- 14-4 Demonstrates understanding of program policies
- 14-5 Manages business operations



## **The Membership Association for Afterschool Professionals in New York State**

Serving practitioners, policy makers, researchers, and administrators representing all public, private, faith-based, school-based and community-based sectors. Our members work in school age child care programs, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA's, 4H, Parks and Recreation Departments, and other before school, after school and summer programs.



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