



NYSAN PROGRAM QUALITY SELF-ASSESSMENT (QSA) TOOL, 2ND EDITION QUALITY INDICATOR DEFINITIONS

ELEMENT 5: PROGRAMMING AND ACTIVITIES

A quality program provides a well-rounded variety of activities and opportunities that support the physical, social, and cognitive growth and development of all participants.

Programming and Activities, Indicator 1

*Provides activities that reflect the mission of the program.

Performance Level 1

Activities are selected based on materials, staff members' interests, and space available.

Performance Level 2

Activities that reflect the program mission are prioritized, but some activities that do not reflect the program mission are offered.

Performance Level 3

The program mission serves as the foundation for all activities selected. Activity and lesson plans include explanations of how the activity supports the program mission.

Performance Level 4

The program mission serves as the foundation for all activities developed and selected. Activity and lesson plans include explanations detailing how the activity supports the program mission. Staff members are encouraged to explain the mission to youth participants and offer rationale and the connectedness of the mission to the program activities. Youth have the opportunity to give feedback on the relationship between the program mission and activities regularly throughout the year.

Programming and Activities, Indicator 2

Addresses academic, physical, social, and emotional needs of all participants.

Performance Level 1

The program focuses exclusively on one or two aspects of youth needs, such as academic or physical. Activities are narrow in scope and address only one or two youth needs.

Performance Level 2

The program includes several aspects of youth needs but is not designed to fully address all of them. Some participants are disengaged in the program because it does not address their individual needs.

Performance Level 3

The program focuses on all aspects of youth strengths and needs, including academic, physical, social, and emotional needs. The program is designed in consideration of the whole child and incorporating a variety of sequential activities and teaching styles into the schedule each day. Participants are engaged in the program because it uses differentiated methods and personalized activities that build on their strengths to meet their individual needs.

Performance Level 4

The program focuses on all aspects of youth strengths and needs, including academic, physical, social, and emotional needs. The program is designed in consideration of all youth needs, and always incorporates a variety of sequential activities and teaching styles. Participants are engaged in the program because it is personalized, based on strengths, and uses differentiated methods and activities to meet their individual needs. In addition, activity plans require staff members to indicate how they meet the different needs of youth participating in the activity and youth assessments assist staff and youth with determining if youth needs are met.

Programming and Activities, Indicator 3

*Features activities that are commensurate with the age and skill level of the participants and enable participants to develop new skills during the program year.

Performance Level 1

Activities are not selected based on the age and skill level of the participants. There is no evidence that participants develop new skills during the program year.

Performance Level 2

Activities are selected with some consideration of the age and skill level of the participants. Staff members are unaware of youth developmental stages. There is some anecdotal evidence that participants develop new skills during the program year.

Performance Level 3

Activities are selected based on the age and skill level of the participants. Staff members consider youth developmental stages when planning activities. There is some research-based and anecdotal evidence that participants develop new skills during the program year. Participants can often select from a number of activities that expose them to new concepts and skill-building opportunities.

Performance Level 4

Participants are broken into small activity groups so activities can be selected and tailored based on the age and skill level of each participant. Staff members consider youth developmental stages when planning activities and monitor participants' development across stages. There is significant research-based and anecdotal evidence that participants develop new skills during the program year. Participants can always select from a number of activities that expose them to new concepts and skill-building opportunities.

Programming and Activities, Indicator 4

*Offers project-based, experiential activities that promote creativity and development of participant self-expression.

Performance Level 1

The program exclusively offers academic activities, such as homework help and math drills, or adult-led activities with no experiential learning opportunities for youth.

Performance Level 2

The program primarily offers academic activities such as homework help and math drills. Non-academic activities are primarily adult-led with few project-based or experiential learning opportunities for youth. While some creative activities are incorporated into the program, they are offered to only some youth or on an irregular basis.

Performance Level 3

The program offers some academic and some experiential learning activities. Both academic and non-academic topics are approached using youth-centered, project-based, and experiential activities. Youth are encouraged to participate in new projects that assist them to build new skills and enhance existing skills. Youth are encouraged to give feedback on projects and activities.

Performance Level 4

The program offers academic and non-academic, youth-centered, project-based, and experiential activities. Youth help to choose projects and activities, as well as the way in which they will be offered. Youth assessments and input assist in the development and selection of skills to build, enhance and maintain. Youth are encouraged to share feedback with staff members regarding how projects and activities built upon and enhanced their strengths and skills and helped them to achieve their goals. Staff members use youth feedback to inform activity planning. Staff members are trained on using teaching methods and youth development strategies that foster engagement, leadership, personal, social, and academic skill development as well as creativity and self-expression.

Programming and Activities, Indicator 5

*Offers high quality academic support, including tutoring and/or homework help.

Performance Level 1

The program only includes non-academic activities such as creative arts and/or sports and recreation.

Performance Level 2

The program includes mostly non-academic activities such as creative arts or sports and recreation, but occasionally includes scholastic activities such as science projects. The program provides academic support when participants ask for assistance. Some staff members have the skills or information necessary to provide academic support to participants, but are not trained in this area.

Performance Level 3

The program provides academic support on a regular schedule, including tutoring and homework help. The program schedule includes both academic and non-academic activities, including a variety of activities related to history, art, science, math and technology, languages, and sports and recreation. Staff members must show the ability to support academic learning before they are hired by providing sample lesson plans or demonstrating knowledge of teaching methods. Staff members receive ongoing training on best practices in supporting the academic and cognitive development of youth.

Performance Level 4

The program provides daily, regularly scheduled academic support, including tutoring and homework help. The program schedule includes both academic and non-academic activities, including a variety of activities related to history, art, science, math, and technology, languages, and sports and recreation. Staff members must show the ability to support academic learning before they are hired by providing sample lesson plans or demonstrating knowledge of teaching methods. At least one certified teacher is on staff at all times. Staff members receive ongoing training on best practices in supporting the academic and cognitive development of youth, and selecting developmentally -appropriate activities that support statewide learning standards.

Programming and Activities, Indicator 6

*Offers enrichment opportunities in core academic areas as well as in the arts, technology, recreation, and health.

Performance Level 1

The program exclusively offers single activities, such as soccer or painting, which do not directly enrich participants' academic development.

Performance Level 2

The program offers one or two types of enrichment activities that are not sequential. While these activities may enrich participants' academic and personal development, they do not address a variety of enrichment areas. Youth who are not interested in the topic being offered seem disengaged.

Performance Level 3

The program offers many types of activities that enrich participants' academic and personal development in a variety of areas, including core academics, arts, technology, recreation, and health. Several types of enrichment activities are offered each day and over time to appeal to all participants. Therefore, youth are almost always able to choose an activity that appeals to them.

Performance Level 4

The program offers many types of activities that enrich participants' academic and personal development in a variety of areas, including core academics, arts, technology, recreation, and health. The site director maintains curricula and other resources at the program site to enable staff to effectively lead activities. Several types of enrichment activities are sequenced over time and offered each day to appeal to all participants and build related knowledge and skills. Therefore, youth are almost always able to choose an activity that appeals to them and learn and grow as a result of participation. Staff members are asked to encourage youth to try many types of activities to ensure they are exposed to a variety of enrichment areas.

Programming and Activities, Indicator 7

*Includes activities that take into account the language and culture of the participants.

Performance Level 1

Activities are mostly planned without consideration for the language and culture of the participants.

Performance Level 2

Activities are often planned with consideration for the language and culture of the participants. If a participant cannot be engaged in an activity because of a barrier related to language or culture, no alternative is provided.

Performance Level 3

Activities are always planned with consideration for the language and culture of the participants. Because youth can choose their activity, they almost never feel excluded from the program because of a barrier related to language or culture. If a participant feels uncomfortable with an activity, staff members are available to help the participant find an alternative.

Performance Level 4

Activities are always planned with consideration for the language and culture of the participants. Because youth can choose their activity, they never feel excluded from the program because of barriers related to language or culture. The participants' languages and cultures are often highlighted through activities, therefore allowing participants to showcase themselves throughout the year. Staff members are trained in cultural sensitivity and take it into account from program planning through execution.

Programming and Activities, Indicator 8

*Establishes and follows a schedule that is known to all staff, participants, and their families.

Performance Level 1

The activity schedule changes daily and is not posted anywhere for staff, participants, and families to view. Participants are not able to plan their participation in activities before the program starts. There is sometimes confusion about which activities are taking place and where they are being held. Occasional double booking occurs.

Performance Level 2

The activity schedule changes daily and is posted for staff to view. Participants do not see the schedule and are not able to plan their participation in activities before the program starts. Families often need the help of a staff member to locate their child. There is sometimes confusion about which activities are taking place and where they are being held.

Performance Level 3

The activity schedule changes daily and is posted for staff, participants, and families to view each day. Participants are able to plan their participation in activities before the program starts. Families can find their child without the help of a staff member. There is rarely confusion about which activities are taking place and where they are being held.

Performance Level 4

The activity schedule changes daily and a weekly schedule is posted for staff, participants, and families to view at the start of each week. Participants are able to plan their participation in activities for the entire week, and know in advance if activities will span across multiple days. Families can find their child without the help of a staff member. Staff members and youth are aware of which activities are taking place and where they are being held.

Programming and Activities, Indicator 9

Provides a range of opportunities in which participants' work can be showcased.

Performance Level 1

Participants' work is not showcased at the program site.

Performance Level 2

Participants' work is showcased irregularly at the program site. Participants can bring their projects to a staff member to have it placed on display. Depending on the staff members and activities being offered, occasional performances are held.

Performance Level 3

Participants' work is showcased regularly at the program site throughout the year. Every participant who completes a project is encouraged to leave it at the site on display for several weeks before bringing it home. Each year, staff members organize a performance in which participants can dance, sing, or showcase another talent. Families are invited to watch these performances.

Performance Level 4

Participants' work is showcased regularly at the program site throughout the year. Every participant is encouraged to complete a project which can be displayed on site; every participant has their work on display year-round. Each year, staff members organize a performance in which every participant contributes. Participants have the option to dance, sing, showcase another talent, or work "behind the scenes." Families and other community members are invited to watch these performances.

Programming and Activities, Indicator 10

Integrates opportunities for the development of personal responsibility, self-direction, and leadership throughout the program.

Performance Level 1

Staff members schedule participants' activities with no leadership opportunities or areas of responsibility for youth. Staff members make decisions and solve issues for youth as they arise.

Performance Level 2

Staff members decide upon and schedule most activities with youth providing input on an occasional and informal basis. Staff members make most decisions for youth, but occasionally ask a few youth to speak or lead an activity.

Performance Level 3

Staff members are beginning to create a youth leadership team to provide input and feedback and assist with activity selection. A majority of the staff members are able to support youth as they complete tasks on their own or do learner-centered projects. Constructive feedback is provided to challenge youth to move beyond their current level of competency. Participants can often choose from a variety of leadership roles and opportunities in the program.

Performance Level 4

An adult and youth leadership team plans, implements, and assesses all aspects of the afterschool program. Youth receive extensive leadership training and have meaningful voices, roles, and participation. Youth feel ownership of the program and know that they play a significant role in their success and the success of the program. All activities and projects encourage youth to discover their strengths and set and achieve personal goals with support from peers and the staff. Staff members refrain from taking over challenging tasks, but rather use questioning, coaching, and other effective strategies to build the capacity of youth. Verbal and public recognitions and celebrations are provided to encourage and acknowledge self-direction and success. Participants can always choose from a variety of leadership opportunities in the program.

Programming and Activities, Indicator 11

Provides reasonable accommodations and special materials as necessary for youth with disabilities during the program and at special events.

Performance Level 1

The program is unable to provide most accommodations for youth with disabilities, and therefore does not include some youth. Program leaders may direct families to other programs in the community to meet the needs of their child.

Performance Level 2

The program provides some accommodations for youth with disabilities by providing alternative activities when a participant's level of ability creates a barrier to participation. Youth with disabilities are sometimes unable to participate in special events, such as field trips, where special accommodations are not provided.

Performance Level 3

The program provides a wide range of accommodations for youth with disabilities by providing special materials, resources, and supports that allow all youth to participate in all activities. Youth with disabilities are always able to participate in special events, such as field trips, where special accommodations are provided as well.

Performance Level 4

The program provides a wide range of accommodations for youth with disabilities by providing special materials, resources, and supports that allow all youth to participate in all activities. Several staff members are trained in inclusive techniques and they ensure that all youth are comfortable and engaged, regardless of their level of ability. Youth with disabilities are always able to participate in special events, such as field trips, where special accommodations are provided as well.

Programming and Activities, Indicator 12

Employs a variety of grouping strategies, for both structured and unstructured activities, including individual, small group, and large group.

Performance Level 1

Most or all of the program activities are implemented using the same grouping strategy (e.g. individual work, small group activities, or large group activities).

Performance Level 2

Most of the program activities are implemented using the same grouping strategy, with some slight variation (e.g. activities are mostly done in small groups, while homework is done individually and sports are done in large groups).

Performance Level 3

Program activities use varied grouping strategies, with all types of activities (e.g. homework, enrichment, snacks, sports, arts, etc.) being offered in individual, small group, and large group settings. Each staff member tries to rotate the type of grouping strategies they use.

Performance Level 4

Program activities use varied grouping strategies, with all types of activities (e.g. homework, enrichment, snacks, sports, arts, etc.) being offered in individual, small group, and large group settings. Staff members work together to rotate the types of grouping strategies used across the program, and ensure that all participants are exposed to a variety of activities in individual, small group, and large group settings.

Programming and Activities, Indicator 13

Provides regular opportunities to be outdoors.

Performance Level 1

The program does not have access to safe space outdoors and rarely or never goes on field trips or uses other community space. Therefore, youth rarely have an opportunity to be outdoors.

Performance Level 2

The program has access to safe space outdoors (or shares safe community spaces) and allows youth to spend time outside on an ad hoc basis depending on the program schedule. Youth may not have regular opportunities to be outdoors. Time spent outdoors is often for unstructured play or sports.

Performance Level 3

The program has access to safe space outdoors (or shares safe community spaces) and allows youth to spend time outside on a regular basis each week. Youth always have regular opportunities to be outdoors. Time spent outdoors is used for unstructured play, sports, and community exploration (e.g. nature activities, visiting community resources, etc.).

Performance Level 4

The program has access to safe space outdoors (or shares safe community spaces) and allows youth to spend time outside on a regular basis each day. Youth always have regular opportunities to be outdoors. Time spent outdoors is used for unstructured play, sports, and community exploration (e.g. nature activities, visiting community resources, etc.). The program supports a walking transportation system where youth can walk to and from the program with adult supervision instead of taking a bus or car.

Programming and Activities, Indicator 14

Provides supports as children and youth transition across age groups and school grades, and school day to afterschool.

Performance Level 1

The program does not consider supporting children and youth to transition across age groups and school grades and/or school day to afterschool to be one of its objectives. A few participants receive this type of support by individual staff members, but most do not.

Performance Level 2

The program considers supporting children and youth to transition across age groups and school grades and/or school day to afterschool to be one of its objectives, but it is not a core piece of work. Staff members are asked to support participants in this way, but this is not included in staff training or assessments, and is generally not a priority. Some participants receive this type of support by individual staff members, while others do not.

Performance Level 3

The program considers supporting children and youth to transition across age groups and school grades and school day to afterschool to be one of its objectives and a core piece of work. Staff members are asked to support participants in this way, and training on transitions is provided at staff orientation. Some staff use special techniques at the beginning of the program to help participants move seamlessly from school to afterschool. At the end of each year, the program works with schools to prepare participants who are graduating into a new school (e.g. guest lectures from teachers, field trips to local schools, etc.). All participants receive this type of support.

Performance Level 4

The program considers supporting children and youth to transition across age groups and school grades and school day to afterschool to be one of its objectives and a core piece of work. Staff members are asked to support participants in this way, and training on transitions is provided at staff orientation and during professional development opportunities throughout the school year. All staff use special techniques at the beginning of the program to help participants move seamlessly from school to afterschool. During the spring and summer, the program works with schools to prepare participants for promotion to the next grade or graduation to a new school (e.g. guest lectures from teachers, field trips to local schools, etc.). All participants receive this type of support.

Programming and Activities, Indicator 15

Offers activities that develop global competencies in youth, build 21st century skills (e.g. digital literacy, cross-cultural skills, innovative thinking, etc.), and prepare them for college, career, and citizenship.

Performance Level 1

The program focuses primarily on keeping youth safe and engaged afterschool, and does not focus on preparing youth for college, career, and citizenship. Some activities may develop global competencies and 21st century skills, but they are not intentionally designed to do so or evaluated.

Performance Level 2

The program considers preparing youth for college, career, and citizenship to be a goal, but does not offer activities specifically tied to this goal. Some activities may develop global competencies and 21st century skills, but they are not intentionally designed to do so or evaluated. Some staff members try to help participants build cultural competence, world knowledge, digital literacy, and other key skills, but not all youth are exposed to these staff members and activities.

Performance Level 3

The program considers preparing youth for college, career, and citizenship to be a goal, and offers activities that are designed to help youth develop global competencies and 21st century skills. Several staff members try to help participants build cultural competence, world knowledge, digital literacy, and other key skills, and all youth are exposed to these staff members and activities. Youth have regular opportunities to work with peers of different cultures and backgrounds, to learn about world news and events, and to use technology and media.

Performance Level 4

The program considers preparing youth for college, career, and citizenship to be a goal, and offers activities that are designed to help youth develop global competencies and 21st century skills, and evaluations review how well the program is meeting this goal. The program policies and structure are designed to foster this type of development. Many or all staff members try to help participants build cultural competence, world knowledge, digital literacy, and other key skills, and all youth are exposed to these staff members and activities. Youth have regular opportunities to work with peers and adults of different cultures and backgrounds, to learn about world news and events, and to use technology and media. Youth are exposed to a variety of career paths and understand the experiences and skills needed to attain them.

*Indicator is critical to program start-up.