New York State
Afterschool Program Accreditation
Program Accreditation

- Program accreditation is the ultimate indication of program quality.

- It also provides afterschool professionals with performance indicators, benchmarks of quality - to guide program planning, implementation and evaluation.
About Accreditation

- Accreditation standards are of a higher quality than the NYS SACC Regulations.
- Collective knowledge of the field
- Research-proven
- Innovative and promising practices

- Standards are aligned with other tools
  - QSA
  - YPQA
  - SACERS
Why Accreditation?

- Framework for existing quality improvement
- Provides a context for professional development planning
- Measurably strengthens afterschool programs and services
- Serves as a foundation for improved outcomes for children and youth
- Fosters a better trained workforce
High quality afterschool programs have strong positive effects on children’s academic, social, and emotional lives, especially for at-risk youth.
Key Features of the Model

- Affordable ($1400 - $1800)
- Streamlined, yet rigorous
- Rooted in collective wisdom of field
- Recognizes state SACC regulations as baseline of quality
- Builds on existing quality improvement efforts
- Promotes value of accreditation coach
- Developed and administered by professional peers
- Emphasizes the value of self-study
- Validity and reliability through field test
The New York State Afterschool Program Accreditation Program Practices Self-Study Tool is comprised of 26 quality standards that represent effective practices in afterschool programming.

The standards are grouped into 6 distinct foundation areas that include safety, health and nutrition; indoor space and environment; outdoor environment; programming and activities; supporting and inspiring learning; and relationships.

These standards are defined by program performance indicators that are observable in nature. A program’s performance in areas that are predominantly administrative and therefore non-observable will be determined by pre-visit and on-site documentation review.
Quality Standards

Safety, Health and Nutrition
A quality program promotes the safety, health and nutrition of all participants.

Quality Standard 1 The inside and outside environments are clean and safe from any observable hazards.

Quality Standard 2 Systems are in place to ensure the safety of all children, especially as they move from one place to another.

Quality Standard 3 The staff supervises participants according to their ages, abilities and needs.

Quality Standard 4 The staff uses safe and healthy practices.

Quality Standard 5 The staff is responsive to the individual health needs of each participant.

Indoor Space and Environment
A quality program provides a safe physical space for all participants.

Quality Standard 6 There is enough room for all program activities and all participants.

Outdoor Environment
A quality program provides regular access to a safe outdoor space for all participants.

Quality Standard 7 Every participant has an opportunity to regularly play outdoors during program time, weather permitting.

Quality Standard 8 Participants have access to a variety of developmentally appropriate outdoor equipment and games for both active and quiet play.

Quality Standard 9 Available outdoor equipment is suitable for the sizes and abilities of all participants.

Programming and Activities
A quality program provides a rich array of activities and opportunities that support the physical, social, and cognitive growth and development of all participants.

Quality Standard 10 Staff plan, organize and provide programming and materials that meet the developmental needs of all participants.

Quality Standard 11 All participants are regularly engaged and encouraged to participate in a wide variety of activities.

Quality Standard 12 Staff actively promotes youth-led activities.

Quality Standard 13 There are sufficient materials to support program activities.

Quality Standard 14 The staff involves participants in activities that help them learn positive social values.

Quality Standard 15 The staff actively promotes cultural awareness, understanding and diversity.

Quality Standard 16 There are regularly scheduled times for creative arts and dramatic play.

Supporting and Inspiring Learning
A quality program is academically responsive and provides activities that are aligned with and enrich learning standards and curricula.

Quality Standard 17 The staff encourages participants to be in charge of their own learning.

Quality Standard 18 The program actively supports participants’ academic development by providing a rich array of learning and enrichment activities.

Relationships
A quality program develops, nurtures and maintains positive relationships and interactions among staff, participants, families and communities.

Quality Standard 19 Staff members respond appropriately to the individual needs of participants.

Quality Standard 20 Staff members are actively and positively engaged with participants.

Quality Standard 21 Staff members treat all participants fairly and equitably.

Quality Standard 22 Staff members use positive techniques to guide the behavior of participants.

Quality Standard 23 Staff members promote respect and positive social interaction among the participants.

Quality Standard 24 Staff members encourage participants to make choices and to become more responsible.

Quality Standard 25 Staff members work well together to meet the needs of participants.

Quality Standard 26 The staff and families interact with each other in positive ways; including social and educational events and frequent, regular communications.
Self-Study Process

- Designed to lead practitioners through an examination of their program and a quality improvement plan as a first step toward achieving accreditation.
- Programs are encouraged to engage both staff and stakeholders in the self-study process.
- The self-study team must rate and discuss the program’s performance on each standard by using the scale of 0 (unmet) to 2 (met) for each indicator.
- For those indicators that the self-study team gives itself a less than satisfactory score, a plan for improvement must be created (a template is provided). It is the responsibility of all staff and stakeholders to work to meet the goals set in the plan for improvement. Your accreditation coach will be available to support you as you conduct the self-study and implement the plan for improvement.
- To attain accreditation, programs are expected to achieve level 2 on all of the performance indicators within each of the twenty-six quality standards at the time of the accreditation endorsement visit.
Seven Steps to Accreditation

- **Step One:** The interested program reviews the accreditation process and secures a trained Accreditation Coach

- **Step Two:** Program representative completes the accreditation application, including self-study tool and pre-visit administrative review and submits the completed documentation to Network for Youth Success

- **Step Three:** Within 30 business days of receipt, Network for Youth Success reviews the documentation to ensure completeness and assigns an Accreditation Endorser
Step Four: The assigned Accreditation Endorser contacts the program representative within 5 business days to schedule a visit within the following 30 days.

Step Five: The endorsement visit is completed within 30 business days.

Step Six: Within 3 business days of the visit, the Accreditation Endorser submits the completed paperwork to AfterSchool Works! New York along with a recommendation for accreditation or deferment.

Step Seven: Within 45 business days of receiving documentation, the New York State Afterschool Program Accreditation Review Board assesses the paperwork, makes the final accreditation determination and notifies the program of the decision.
Roles

- Coach
- Endorser
- The Network
NYS Network for Youth Success
Contact Information

www.networkforyouthsuccess.org

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