

ELEMENT 5

Programming & 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.

A QUALITY PROGRAM:

1. *Provides activities that reflect the mission and goals of the program.
2. Uses a program design and schedule that address the needs of the whole child, including physical, social and emotional, and academic needs of all participants.
3. *Features activities that are developmentally appropriate for the age and skill level of the participants and allow participants to develop new skills during the program year.
4. *Offers project-based, experiential activities that promote creativity, reflect the interests of participants, and provide opportunities for skill development and application of knowledge.
5. Regularly elicits feedback from participants to determine enrichment offerings.
6. *Offers a blend of high-quality academic support, including tutoring, study hall, and/or homework help as appropriate to the program as well as enrichment opportunities in arts, recreation, and health.
7. *Includes activities that reflect the languages and cultures of the participants and families.
8. Integrates opportunities for responsible decision-making and the development of social and emotional skills.
9. Provides reasonable accommodations and special materials as necessary for all participants during the program and at special events.
10. Employs varied instructional strategies.
11. Provides regular opportunities to be outdoors, including field trips off site.
12. Provides supports as participants transition across age groups, school grades, and/or school day to afterschool.
13. Offers activities that develop global competencies in participants, build 21st century skills, and prepare them for college, career, and citizenship.
14. *Uses intentional programming, lesson plans, and curriculum.
15. Uses a program schedule that limits participant wait time and disruption between activities and when transitioning from one space to another.
16. Ensures that supplies are organized, maintained, accessible, and set up prior to activities.
17. Maintains current and accurate activity schedule with room assignments that is accessible to participants, staff, and families.

| PERFORMANCE LEVEL | | | | PLAN TO IMPROVE | | |
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NOTES:

Programming & 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.

A quality program provides participants with guidance and emotional support; staff take a genuine interest in participants and their academic, social, physical, and emotional development. Staff use strategies that are geared toward encouraging participants to push beyond their present level of competency. The activities are well-organized and age-appropriate, provide exposure to new ideas, and offer opportunities to learn and build new skills, problem solve, and build community.

Programming & Activities, Indicator 1

*Provides activities that reflect the mission and goals of the program.

Performance Level 1

Activities are selected based on materials, staff members' interests, and space available. Activities are not sequential and don't build off one another to reach deeper learning goals. Participants do not choose a theme for further exploration.

Performance Level 2

Activities that reflect the program mission are prioritized. Staff select a programmatic theme to reinforce the mission and some participant enrichment activities are tied to the theme. Some activities are offered that do not reflect the program mission/theme.

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. Programmatic themes related to the mission are chosen by participants. Most participant enrichment activities build off the programmatic theme.

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 explain the mission to participants and offer rationale and the connectedness of the mission to the program activities. Participants have the opportunity to give feedback on the relationship between the program mission and activities regularly throughout the year. Participants create programmatic themes related to the mission to link enrichment offerings with their interests and creativity.

Programming & Activities, Indicator 2

Uses a program design and schedule that address the needs of the whole child, including physical, social and emotional, and academic needs of all participants.

Performance Level 1

The program focuses exclusively on one or two aspects of participants' needs, such as academic or physical. Activities are narrow in scope and not engaging to participants. Activities are not appropriate to support participants' active growth and development. There are some days when participants spend almost all of the time sitting at a desk. Activities rely on worksheets or silent learning with little peer interaction.

Performance Level 2

The program includes several aspects of participants' 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 supports youth strengths and needs, including physical, social and emotional, and academic 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

Program schedule supports varied opportunities for participants to engage in physical, social and emotional learning, and academic pursuits. The program focuses on all aspects of participants' strengths and needs. The program is designed in consideration of all participants' 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 participants, and participant assessments assist staff and participants with determining if participant needs are met.

Programming & Activities, Indicator 3

*Features activities that are developmentally appropriate for the age and skill level of the participants and allow 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. Participants are not challenged to learn new things. There is little to 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 demonstrate little knowledge 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 & Activities, Indicator 4

*Offers project-based, experiential activities that promote creativity, reflect the interests of participants, and provide opportunities for skill development and application of knowledge.

Performance Level 1

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

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 participants. While some creative activities are incorporated into the program, they are offered to only some participants or on an irregular basis.

Performance Level 3

The program offers academic and experiential learning activities. Both academic and non-academic topics are approached using youth-centered, project-based, and experiential activities. Participants are encouraged to participate in new projects that assist them to build new skills and enhance existing skills. Participants 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. Participants help to choose projects and activities, as well as the ways in which they will be offered. Participant assessments and input assist in the development and selection of skills to build, enhance, and maintain. Participants 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 participant 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 & Activities, Indicator 5

Regularly elicits feedback from participants to determine enrichment offerings.

Performance Level 1

No attempt is made to involve participants in formal or informal mechanisms to contribute to program design within a given year.

Performance Level 2

Limited opportunities exist for participants to participate in program design. These opportunities are often informal and not consistent. If feedback is gathered (via surveys, focus groups, etc.) results are not shared with participants, and few changes to enrichment offerings are made.

Performance Level 3

Program utilizes both formal (surveys, focus groups, youth councils, etc.) and informal conversations to allow participants to shape enrichment offerings. Results are shared with participants, and some changes are made to program offerings.

Performance Level 4

Youth participation is embedded in program design. Staff utilize formal and informal mechanisms to engage participants in enrichment development, including ongoing surveys, focus groups, and planning committees. Most activities are designed with participant input and participant feedback. Participants are valued, trained, supported, and regularly recognized as leaders within the program.

Programming & Activities, Indicator 6

*Offers a blend of high-quality academic support, including tutoring, study hall, and/or homework help as appropriate to the program as well as enrichment opportunities in arts, recreation, and health.

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 academic activities such as science projects. The program provides academic support when participants ask for assistance. Staff do not receive sufficient training to provide appropriate academic support to participants.

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 receive ongoing training on best practices in supporting the academic and cognitive development of participants.

Performance Level 4

The program provides regularly scheduled academic support, including tutoring and/or 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. The program is supported by a certified teacher. Staff members receive ongoing training on best practices in supporting the academic and cognitive development of participants and selecting developmentally appropriate activities that support statewide learning standards.

Programming & Activities, Indicator 7

*Includes activities that reflect the languages and cultures of the participants and families.

Performance Level 1

Activities are mostly planned without consideration for the language and culture of the participants. Special events are scheduled without consideration of major religious/cultural holidays.

Performance Level 2

Activities are sometimes 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 usually planned with consideration for the language and culture of the participants. Participants 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 engage or find an alternative.

Performance Level 4

Activities are always planned with consideration for the language and culture of the participants. Participants are not excluded from the program because of barriers related to language or culture. The participants' languages and cultures are often highlighted through activities, allowing participants to express themselves throughout the year. Staff members are trained cultural competencies and program accordingly.

Programming & Activities, Indicator 8

Integrates opportunities for responsible decision-making and the development of social and emotional skills.

Performance Level 1

Little to no leadership opportunities or areas of responsibility exist for participants. Staff members make all decisions about the program, such as what activities are offered, the types of snacks served, and when participants interact with one another. Participants are told what they are doing and are never allowed to make their own choices. Therefore, they do not develop skills in making responsible decisions through the program. Staff members do not ask for feedback from participants. No opportunity for participant voice exists. There is no explicit social and emotional learning strategy.

Performance Level 2

Staff members are not prepared to lead discussions and facilitate activities with a social and emotional learning focus, such as daily check-ins on mood, community circles, discussions of current events, etc. Staff members make most decisions for participants, but occasionally ask a few participants to speak or lead an activity. Participants make basic choices, such as which snack to choose or which chair to sit in. The site has a social and emotional learning framework, but it is not widely adopted.

Performance Level 3

Staff members give participants authentic opportunities to make decisions about the program, such as which activities should be offered in the program or which to choose to attend. Staff members support, recognize, and reward participants for making responsible decisions. Staff members are trained in a social and emotional learning framework and value reflection and dialogue. Staff members are beginning to create a youth leadership team to provide input and feedback and assist with developing a positive program culture. A majority of the staff members are able to support participants as they complete tasks on their own or do learner-centered projects. Constructive feedback is provided to challenge participants to move beyond their current comfort level. Participants can often choose from a variety of leadership roles and opportunities in the program. Peer mediation is incorporated into the program's code of conduct.

Performance Level 4

Staff members give participants authentic opportunities to make decisions about the program. Staff members formally teach, model, support, recognize, and reward participants for making responsible decisions. Participants have ample opportunities to build social and emotional skills through ongoing supportive conversations with adults and peers. Program offers structured time for youth councils, community circles, and/or restorative justice, and uses frameworks for positive interactions and social and emotional skill development. Participants are given sentence starters to acknowledge personal feeling and resolve conflict. Participants' surveys reflect that the participants feel valued/respected in the learning community. An adult and youth leadership team plans, implements, and assesses all aspects of the afterschool program. Participants receive extensive leadership training and have meaningful voices, roles, and participation. Participants 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 participants 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 participants. 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. Peer mediation is incorporated into the program's code of conduct.

Programming & Activities, Indicator 9

Provides reasonable accommodations and special materials as necessary for all participants during the program and at special events.

Performance Level 1

The program is unable to provide most accommodations for youth with diverse abilities and therefore excludes enrollment for some youth. Program leaders may direct families to other programs in the community to meet the needs of their children.

Performance Level 2

The program provides some accommodations for participants with diverse abilities by providing alternative activities when a participant's level of ability creates a barrier to participation. Some youth are excluded from participating 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 participants with diverse abilities by providing additional materials, resources, and supports that allow all participants to participate in all activities. Staff provide the appropriate accommodations for all participants to participate in special events, such as field trips, where accommodations are provided as well.

Performance Level 4

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

Programming & Activities, Indicator 10

Employs varied instructional strategies.

Performance Level 1

Staff do not use diverse instructional strategies and 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

Staff use some diverse instructional strategies (e.g. hook, direct instruction, coaching, modeling, analysis, cooperative learning, stations, etc.).

Performance Level 3

Staff use diverse instructional 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

Staff use diverse instructional 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 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 & Activities, Indicator 11

Provides regular opportunities to be outdoors, including field trips off site.

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, participants 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 participants to spend time outside on an ad hoc basis depending on the program schedule. Participants 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 participants to spend time outside on a regular basis each week. 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 participants to spend time outside on a regular basis each day. Participants 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 participants can walk to and from the program with adult supervision instead of taking a bus or car.

Programming & Activities, Indicator 12

Provides supports as participants transition across age groups, school grades, and/or school day to afterschool.

Performance Level 1

The program does not provide support for participants to transition across age groups, school grades, and/or school day to afterschool. A few participants receive this type of support by individual staff members, but most do not.

Performance Level 2

The program intentionally provides some support to participants to transition across age groups, school grades, and/or school day to afterschool, but it is not a core piece of program practice. 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 intentionally provides supports to participants and caregivers to transition across age groups, school grades, and school day to afterschool, Staff members are asked to support participants in this way, and training on transitions

is provided at staff orientation. Program routines and rituals at the beginning of the program help participants move seamlessly from school to afterschool. At the end of each year, the program works with schools to prepare participants for graduating into a new grade or 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 participants to transition across age groups, 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, including clear routines and rituals 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 & Activities, Indicator 13

Offers activities that develop global competencies in participants, build 21st century skills, and prepare them for college, career, and citizenship.

Performance Level 1

The program focuses primarily on keeping participants safe and engaged after school, and does not focus on preparing participants 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 participants 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 participants are exposed to these staff members and activities.

Performance Level 3

The program considers preparing participants for college, career, and citizenship to be a goal, and offers activities that are designed to help participants 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 participants are exposed to these staff members and activities. Participants 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 participants for college, career, and citizenship to be a goal, and offers activities that are designed to help participants develop global competencies and 21st century skills. 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 participants are exposed to these staff members and activities. Participants 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. Participants are exposed to a variety of career paths and understand the experiences and skills needed to attain them.

Programming & Activities, Indicator 14

*Uses intentional programming, lesson plans, and curriculum.

Performance Level 1

The program does not utilize lesson plans, curricula, or outlines to guide program activities. Activities display little planning or preparedness from staff.

Performance Level 2

Program utilizes some lesson plans, curricula, or outlines to guide program activities. Activities display some planning, preparedness from staff, and include some learning objectives.

Performance Level 3

Program usually utilizes lesson plans, curricula, or outlines to guide program activities. Activities display planning, preparedness from staff, and include clear learning objectives. Lesson plans are sequential and provide opportunities for participants to develop skills.

Performance Level 4

Program utilizes lesson plans, evidence-based curricula, or outlines to guide program activities. Activities display planning, preparedness from staff, and include clear learning objectives. A certified teacher or curriculum coach reviews lesson plans to ensure that they are sequential and provide opportunities for participants to develop skills.

Programming & Activities, Indicator 15

Uses a program schedule that limits participant wait time and disruption between activities and when transitioning from one space to another.

Performance Level 1

No clear routines or practices are included in transitions. Staff members do not attempt to limit waiting, causing excessive downtime and limited participant engagement.

Performance Level 2

Program demonstrates some clear routines or practices during transitions. Staff members attempt to limit wait time.

Performance Level 3

Program usually demonstrates clear routines or practices during transitions. Staff members have practices in place to limit wait time and engage participants during transitions.

Performance Level 4

Program consistently demonstrates clear routines or practices during transitions. Staff members have practices in place to limit wait time, utilize transitions to reinforce group norms, and provide seamless programming.

Programming & Activities, Indicator 16

Ensures that supplies are organized, maintained, accessible, and set up prior to activities.

Performance Level 1

Supplies are not regularly maintained or ordered. Staff members often run out of what they need for activities. Supplies are kept in a number of areas, making it difficult to know where things are. Supplies are sometimes locked up in areas where staff members do not have access.

Performance Level 2

Supplies are ordered throughout the year, but no formal inventory method is established. Therefore, the program often ends up with too much or too few of each item. Supplies are kept in a number of accessible areas, but staff members generally can find what they need.

Performance Level 3

A supplies inventory check is conducted several times throughout the year and supplies are ordered as needed. Staff members have the supplies they need for each activity. Supplies are organized by activity type in specific areas and are always accessible to all staff members.

Performance Level 4

A supplies list is maintained as items are used, so staff members are aware as soon as an order needs to be placed. A formal inventory check is done several times throughout the year to ensure all items have been ordered, and that they are accessible and organized by activity type. Staff members use program plans to determine what supplies they will need ahead of time, and prepare supplies in advance for each day.

Programming & Activities, Indicator 17

Maintains current and accurate activity schedule with room assignments that is accessible to participants, staff, and families.

Performance Level 1

The program does not have a written activity schedule or the schedule changes daily. Participants have to ask where activities are each day. Staff members cannot easily direct participants to activities. Participants are not able to plan their participation in activities before the program starts. Families need the help of a staff member to locate their child.

Performance Level 2

The program has a written activity schedule with room assignments, but it is not always accurate. Participants occasionally get lost going to activity locations. Staff members can usually direct participants to activities, but sometimes have to refer them to the site director. Families need the help of a staff member to locate their child.

Performance Level 3

The program has a written activity schedule with room assignments, which is updated daily. Participants are always able to find activity locations. Staff members can always direct participants to activities. Participants are able to plan participation in program activities before the program starts. There is rarely confusion about which activities are taking place and where they are being held. Families are able to access the activity schedule to locate their child.

Performance Level 4

The program has a written activity schedule with room assignments, which is updated daily. The schedule includes a brief description of the activity and which staff member is responsible. Staff members can always direct participants to activities. Participants are always able to find activity locations and know which staff member to ask if they have questions. Participants are able to plan activities in advance. Families are able to access the activity schedule to locate their child.