



# QUALITY STANDARDS

OREGON AFTERSCHOOL FOR KIDS

Oregon**ASK**  
STATEWIDE AFTERSCHOOL NETWORK



## **MISSION**

OregonASK (Oregon Afterschool for Kids) is a collaboration of public and private organizations and community members which seek to address common issues and concerns across all out-of school time services—child care, recreation, education and youth development. Our mission is to support, expand and advocate for quality out-of-school time programs and activities for children, youth, and families throughout Oregon.

## **VISION**

The vision is that all Oregon children, youth and families will have access to quality out-of-school time options within their communities. All services will enhance children’s positive development, and future opportunities while keeping them safe from harm. All programs, services and activities will be of high quality and contribute to strong communities and schools.

## **PARTNERS**

Alliance of Y’s  
City of Salem  
Child Care Resource and Referral Network  
Community Colleges and Workforce Development  
Fight Crime Invest in Kids  
Inclusive Child Care Project  
Multnomah County  
SUN School System  
Office of the Governor  
OSU Extension - 4 H Afterschool  
Oregon Alliance for Arts Education  
Oregon Commission on Children and Families  
Oregon Community Education Association  
Oregon Department of Education - USDA  
Oregon Department of Education - 21st CCLC  
Oregon Recreation and Park Association  
Oregon Employment Department-Child Care Division  
Oregon State Library Youth Services  
Oregon Mentors  
Oregon PTA  
Oregon Volunteers!  
PSU - Oregon Center for Career Development in Childhood Care & Education  
Safe Kids - Oregon  
Willamette Education Service District  
Education Northwest  
Northwest Regional Education Service District - Indian Education

Oregon Afterschool for Kids (OregonASK), a collaboration of over 24 organizations representing government agencies, afterschool programs, and statewide associations, has been working together since 2004. We have been climbing the hill. Congratulations to the Oregon Statewide Afterschool Network for the magnificent achievement of climbing this far together.

I would like to express my personal gratitude to the individuals and organizations that have been climbing this hill with me; I am grateful for your support shaping the work of OregonASK. It is a challenging and joyful experience to provide leadership to this collaboration.

Our partner organizations have provided deep, thoughtful conversations, time, resources, and have stayed at the table to build our work together, which, in part, is found in the pages of the following document.

I am now asking all of you to join together to travel on the road to quality afterschool.

Oregon has seen great gains in afterschool over the past five years. Since 2004, the state's afterschool participation rate has risen five percent. Oregon also ranks in the top ten states for average hours per week that children spend in afterschool, with an average of nine hours; and percentage of high need children served with 50 percent of our afterschool participants qualifying for free or reduced lunch. Despite this significant increase in the number of Oregon children attending afterschool programs, today 31 percent of the state's schoolchildren spend their afternoons alone. Another 12 percent are in the care of their brothers or sisters. In addition, the parents of 37 percent of children not already in afterschool say they would enroll their kids in a program if one were available.

Underlying the idea of expanded learning in afterschool is the concept of supporting the whole child. All educators know that children's social-emotional health and physical development are essential to prepare them to be confident, creative, and engaged in lifelong learning. Art, music, and physical education have significant roles to play in helping children explore their creativity and recognize their unique abilities. Opportunities to experience success in these areas can be particularly important for children who may struggle to achieve academically. Yet, in the current climate of demands for accountability tied to test scores, many schools have been forced to forego these subjects and concentrate on the basics of math, science, and reading. Afterschool programs, however, can fill this need by incorporating art, music, and physical recreation into their daily programming. We need intentional alignment from school to afterschool. We need to take care of our children and youth—all the time.

Over the past three years, OregonASK has worked with over 350 afterschool professionals across the field to develop a set of core competencies for the afterschool workforce and quality standards for programs. These documents were created to support the improvement in the quality of afterschool programs. A glossary of terminology has also been developed to clarify future discussions while we build a framework and foundation for funding and systems of support.

All of OregonASK's work is dedicated with appreciation to the field of afterschool professionals. These individuals are Oregon's unsung heroes who work with children and youth between the hours of 3-6, during school breaks, and in the summer. The afterschool professional often works long hours, in less than ideal circumstances, and for lower wages. But, they continue to be passionate about this work and give of themselves, keeping our kids safe while supporting working families and inspiring the learning of children and youth. It is our intention that these documents will provide a framework for quality improvement providing understanding, recognition, and future support of the work of these individuals. Oregon's children and youth are the future we need to value - it is time to climb over the hill and travel down the road and for these individuals and programs to receive the recognition and support that they deserve.

Oregon has made great strides because of strategic efforts at the state and local level to create a groundswell of support for quality afterschool programs. But we still have a long distance to go to make certain that all of Oregon's young people have safe places to play, learn, and grow when school is not in session.

Finally, the collaboration of OregonASK was recently designated as the state affiliate for the National Afterschool Association. We exist to support the individuals who work on behalf of Oregon's programs to provide for children and youth in out-of-school time. It is important to maintain forward momentum in order to ensure that the gains that have been made are not eroded during difficult economic times. It is easier when we all work and travel down the road together.

As Always,



Beth A. Unverzagt, Director, OregonASK

As I reflect on the work of the past five years, I am reminded of a quote by Pfeffer in the Six Secrets of Change by Michael Fullan.

"People have built quite successful careers—describing the hill, measuring the hill, walking around the hill, and taking pictures of the hill. And so forth.

Sooner or later, somebody needs to climb the hill."

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all of the individuals who participated in the development, review, and revision of the Core Competencies, including more than 150 professionals. Additionally, we would like to thank the following organizations / programs for contributing their expertise and knowledge as a part of the Program Committee:

**Katie Anderson** - Oregon State Library  
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**Connie Carley** - Oregon Commission on Children and Families  
**Lorine Day-Reynolds** - Inclusive Childcare Project  
**Joan Engeldinger** - 4-H  
**Louise Hamilton** - Resource and Referral  
**Patsy Kohout** - Oregon Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education  
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**Kim McManus** - Oregon Recreation and Park Association  
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We would also like to thank the OregonASK staff who played a central role in developing the content for this document:

**Tammy Marino** - Education and Training Coordinator  
**Kim Fitzimmons** - Communication Coordinator  
**Lynn Kneeland** - Youth Development Coordinator

If you have any questions while using this tool please feel free to contact OregonASK at **[www.oregonask.org](http://www.oregonask.org)** or **503-540-4481**. We would like to acknowledge the following organizations for providing their core knowledge and competencies documents as valuable resources for our work:

**Delaware** – [www.deasa.org](http://www.deasa.org) **Kansas and Missouri** – [www.openinitiative.org](http://www.openinitiative.org) **Ohio** - [www.occrra.org](http://www.occrra.org)  
**Mott Foundation** – [www.afterschoolprofessional.info](http://www.afterschoolprofessional.info)

## **Oregon Afterschool Program Quality Standards**

Welcome! This is the first edition of the Oregon Afterschool Program Quality Standards. This tool is designed to initiate important conversations about what is program quality. To ensure that the children and youth in Oregon thrive and have positive experiences, we need well designed and intentional programs that promote a diverse range of high quality, relevant and engaging activities. This tool provides programs, communities and stakeholders with ways to begin the important discussions about program quality.

### **Research Shows That High Quality Afterschool Programs**

- Have clearly defined and measurable goals that address their community specific needs and interests.
- Implement activities to meet those program goals.
- Incorporate youth development policies and practices in their programs.
- Use data to evaluate their progress.

### **What are Quality Standards?**

Quality Standards and indicators capture the practices that have been demonstrated, through research, to lead to quality programs. Quality programs result in positive outcomes for children and youth in school age programs.

### **The goals for Quality Standards and why they are critical for the field**

- Define what quality afterschool programming looks like.
- Serve as a foundation for decisions and practices in all settings and programs.
- Establish a set of standards that support the professionalization of the child and youth development field.
- Were developed based on documented research.
- Provide an ongoing framework to advance the field and increase the quality of programs offered

## **Who are Quality Standards for?**

Quality standards can apply to programs that work with children and youth in an afterschool setting. Some examples are: 4-H children and youth development program providers, afterschool staff, childcare providers, music and arts instructors, coaches, recreation leaders and school staff.

## **Ways Quality Standards can be used**

1. Assess the quality of the program through self assessment and determine areas to work on for quality improvement.
2. Identify specific areas of need for future professional development training and education.
3. Help families and communities understand the expectations of after school professionals and programs.
4. Assist higher education and training institutions in coordinating and designing course content.
5. Develop and implement federal, state and local policies that will enhance the professionalism of the field.
6. Create a framework for schools, communities and programs to determine what a quality program looks like and how it can have positive results for children and youth.

## **History**

Development of the quality standards began in the spring of 2007. The professional development committee collected data, research and other successful state models from across the nation. Then, they reviewed the materials, highlighted the best materials and information and began the process of creating the first draft.

Next the draft was reviewed by over 150 afterschool professionals in forums and focus groups. This review group was made up of: 4-H youth development, childcare providers, family childcare, faith-based and community-based providers, parks and recreation, education and OregonASK partners.

Changes were made in response to their feedback and the first edition was adopted for Oregon in June 2010.

## Human and Community Relationships

A quality program fosters relationships by developing them intentionally and carefully. Relationships build the positive foundation for healthy social and emotional development.

### **A-1 Quality programs develop, nurture and maintain positive relationships and interactions among staff, participants, parents and community.**

- Staff respects and communicates with one another and models positive adult relationships.
- Staff interacts with families in a comfortable and welcoming manner.
- Staff communicates with families concerning the well being of the children and youth.
- Staff partner with schools and other agencies when appropriate (ie: ESD, Mental Health etc).
- Staff interacts and responds appropriately to the individual needs of the children and youth.
- Staff uses positive guidance techniques with children and youth.
- Staff creates an environment where children and youth feel emotionally safe and are able to receive support from a caring adult if needed.

### **A-2 Quality programs provide opportunities for children and youth to actively participate in positive relationship development.**

- Children and youth are treated with respect.
- Children and youth are encouraged to interact with each other in positive ways.
- Children and youth are encouraged to make appropriate choices and be responsible for their actions.

### **A-3 Quality programs establish strong partnerships with families and communities to fully support children and youth.**

- Program utilizes school and community resources.
- Program provides families with information about community resources.
- Program provides opportunities for interactions with families, school and community members.
- Program has policies to ensure family involvement and communication.

## Health, Safety and Security

A quality program focuses on the health, safety and security of the children and youth; ensuring that children, youth and families feel comfortable and safe within the program structure.

### **B-1 Quality programs have policies and procedures that promote the health and well being of staff, families, children and youth.**

- Provides a stimulating and welcoming environment that safeguards the health and safety of children and youth.
- Program provides healthy snacks/meals.
- Program has procedures that ensure the sanitation of the environment.
- Program has practices that prevent the spread of illness.
- Program promotes healthy development with a balance of active and quiet activities.

### **B-2 Quality programs have procedures that ensures the safety and well being of staff, families, children and youth.**

- Program has procedures in place for emergency drills and safety plans.
- Maintains accurate and accessible records of children and youth.
- Internet safety procedures are in place if appropriate.
- Staff is trained in First aid and CPR and safety equipment is accessible.
- Program has procedures for recognizing and reporting abuse and neglect.
- Staff supervises children appropriately according to their abilities, ages and needs.
- Program has policies to address safety issues both on and off-site.

### **B-3 Quality programs have policies and procedures that ensure the security of staff, families, children and youth.**

- Program develops and manages arrival, dismissal and pick-up procedures.
- Program has security procedures for both on and off-site.
- Systems are in place to track participant's movements from one location to another.
- Staff supervises children and youth at all times.

## Program Management

A quality program has a vision/mission and a plan for increasing capacity that supports continuing growth.

### **C-1 Quality programs have a defined infrastructure that supports intentional planning and ensures smooth program operations.**

- Program has a system for the collection of attendance data.
- Program has clear participant behavioral and performance expectations.
- Program maintains all required documents.
- Program has complete enrollment information on all children and youth.
- Program has necessary licenses and complies with all government mandates.
- Program maintains an accurate activity schedule.
- Program has a formal mission statement and program goals.
- Program involves staff, community, families and children and youth in appropriate decision making and program planning.
- Program has a system for program evaluation that includes all stakeholders.

### **C-2 Quality programs provide positive working conditions for staff and appropriate supervision, support and feedback.**

- Administration has systems and procedures in place to communicate regularly with staff.
- Administration has a rational salary structure and appropriate benefits for program staff.
- Administration recruits, hires and retains program staff who reflects the diversity and culture of the community in which the program operates.
- Administration has sufficient staff to maintain required staff/participant ratios.
- Administration ensures that all staff are professionally qualified to work with children and youth.
- Administration ensures that staff have received a comprehensive orientation and are trained on program procedures.
- Administration provides periodic performance feedback.

**C-3 Quality programs are supported by sound fiscal management with adequate financial and material resources.**

- Program has a budget and fiscal tracking system.
- Administration develops strategic sustainability plan.
- Program has an effective marketing strategy.

## Diversity and Inclusion

A quality program respects and supports the diversity of the children, youth and families. A quality program seeks opportunities to be a part of the larger community and to embrace the strengths of all of the participants.

### **D-1 Quality programs have policies in place that ensure the inclusion of children and youth regardless of developmental needs or cultural background.**

- Program has program related materials that are culturally sensitive and anti-bias.
- Program policies are inclusive of services to all populations.
- Families participate in creating program's policy.

### **D-2 Quality programs promote opportunities for acceptance, celebration and inclusion of all families, children and youth in the program.**

- Program is sensitive to the culture and language of families and participants.
- Program provides opportunities for children and youth to express their ideas, concerns and opinions.
- Program demonstrates sensitivity to cultural and individual values in family systems.
- Program space is accessible to all children and youth.

## Professional Development

A quality program has staff that have both the academic and experiential knowledge that is needed to successfully do their job. Ongoing recruitment and development plans ensure that staff has the required credentials and knowledge to meet the needs of the children and youth in their programs.

### **E-1 Quality programs have policies that promote and support ongoing staff professional development.**

- Program has a written plan for staff development with on and off-site training opportunities.
- Program complies with applicable state training regulations.
- Staff is encouraged to become members of a professional development organization.
- Administration provides staff with training relevant to their job.
- Supervisors and administrators receive training in program management and staff supervision.

## Environment and Curriculum

A quality program provides a wide range of activities and experiences that support all stages of physical, social and cognitive growth and development.

### **F-1 Quality programs support staff efforts to plan and implement intentional program activities.**

- Staff is provided with adequate resources and time for planning.
- Staff supports the program and individual goals.
- Staff has adequate space to implement planned activities.
- If linked to a school, Program has a plan to address the school's key academic goals in partnerships with teachers and families.

### **F-2 Quality afterschool programs provide an environment and curriculum for children and youth that supports their physical, social and cognitive growth.**

- Program offers activities that are developmentally appropriate and support a broad range of skill, enrichment, recreational and academic development.
- Program has access to program space that allows for a wide variety of activities with equipment that is appropriate for the age of the participants.
- Program provides ongoing assessment of the progress of program, children and youth's goals.

### **F-3 Quality programs provide an environment and curriculum that engages children and youth.**

- Children and youth who speak English as a second language are given opportunities to participate in culturally relevant activities.
- Children and youth are encouraged to take ownership of the program space.
- Children and youth have opportunities to participate in quiet and active activities each day.
- Children and youth are given opportunities to problem solve and negotiate difficult situations with peers.

## Research Resources

SEDL [www.sedl.org/afterschool](http://www.sedl.org/afterschool)

Program Quality Self Assessment Tool: Planning for Ongoing Program Improvement. (2005)

New York State Afterschool Network.

Shared Features of High Performing Afterschool Programs: A Follow-Up to the TASC Evaluation, Birmingham, Pecham, Russell, Mielke. (2005) Policy Study Association Inc.

The Quality of School-Age Child Care in After School Settings, Little, Priscilla. (2007) Harvard Family Research Project.

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Focus on Families!

How to Build and Support Family Centered Practices in After School, Kakli, Kreider, Little, Buck, Coffey. (2006) United Way of Massachusetts Bay, Harvard Family Research Project and Build the Out-of School Time Network.



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