

BUILDING THE SKILLS OF AFTER-SCHOOL STAFF

A Tool Kit

PREPARED BY POLICY STUDIES ASSOCIATES, INC.



In 1998, The After-School Corporation (TASC) launched an initiative to improve the quantity and quality of after-school programs for students in the public schools of New York City and state. Through grants to nonprofit organizations that sponsor school-based projects, the TASC After-School Program now serves students in kindergarten through twelfth grade at more than 100 sites.

To help new projects benefit from the experiences of their predecessors, TASC produces a series of Resource Briefs and Tool Kits—publications that share promising ideas, practices, and materials collected from individual TASC-supported sites. We hope that this Tool Kit helps your planning, program improvement, and further exploration into the world of after-school services. Feel free to copy, adapt, and supplement its contents to meet your own needs. For more information on Resource Briefs and Tool Kits, contact TASC at (212) 547-6950 or www.tascorp.org.

Contents

1. Worksheet for Identifying Staff Training Needs and Resources

Use this tool to plot out staffing strengths and gaps in each area of your program and to think about ways to improve training and supervision. Make copies for any partners who participate in staffing decisions, and solicit their comments as you fill in the boxes.

2. Topics for On-Site Staff Development

Use this list to select training options that are relevant to your staff's interests and concerns.

3. Checklist for Reviewing the Performance of Staff Interns

You can adapt this tool for supervision of many types of after-school staff.

4. Form for Evaluating Staff Performance

This form allows supervisors to rate staff members' performance in a variety of job areas.

5. Ideas for Involving Staff as Learners and Problems Solvers

Use this list to stimulate discussion among your planning partners.

6. Sources of Information on After-School Staff Development

This resource list includes organizations, websites, and publications.



Worksheet for Identifying Staff Training Needs and Resources

Program Area	Type of Activity	Are Staff's Current Skills Sufficient?	Which Staff Need More Training?	What More Could We Do to Train Staff?	Who Could Help Us?
SAMPLE ROW:					
<i>Academic Assistance</i>	<i>Homework help</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Group leaders, volunteers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>(1) Have mentors model techniques for classroom management and use of time</i> <i>(2) Schedule bi-weekly staff meetings to discuss issues & solutions</i> <i>(3) Talk with teachers who assigned homework to better coordinate efforts</i> <i>(4) Locate research on providing homework help</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>(1) Principal</i> <i>(2) Teachers from the school day</i> <i>(3) Education specialist from our sponsoring organization</i> <i>(4) PASE or other private vendor of staff training</i> <i>(5) Other TASC projects with strong services in this area</i>
Academic Assistance	Homework help				
	Literacy tutoring or enrichment				
	Math/science tutoring or enrichment				
	Standardized test preparation				
	Interdisciplinary, project-based learning				

Program Area	Type of Activity	Are Staff's Current Skills Sufficient?	Which Staff Need More Training?	What More Could We Do to Train Staff?	Who Could Help Us?
Academic Assistance	Other _____ _____				
Social / Emotional Growth	Physical activities targeting the development of young children or adolescents				
	Conflict resolution				
	Counseling for drug/alcohol abuse				
	Health services or referrals				
	Other _____ _____				

Program Area	Type of Activity	Are Staff's Current Skills Sufficient?	Which Staff Need More Training?	What More Could We Do to Train Staff?	Who Could Help Us?
Youth Development	Cultural awareness activities				
	Leadership development				
	Problem solving and decision making				
	Intergenerational activities				
	Learning through community service				
	Other _____ _____				
Program Operations	Scheduling				

Program Area	Type of Activity	Are Staff's Current Skills Sufficient?	Which Staff Need More Training?	What More Could We Do to Train Staff?	Who Could Help Us?
Program Operations	Attendance and dismissal				
	Student grouping and seating arrangements				
	Time management and classroom management				
	Interactions between students and staff				
	Partnering with the school				
	Partnering with the community				
	Parent involvement				
	Other _____ _____				



Topics for On-Site Staff Development

During their first two years of operation, TASC projects found the following topics especially useful for staff development.

Training Topics for Staff who Work With Students

- Effective methods for managing students' behavior
- How to know when to refer a student to a social worker or other professional
- Student grouping patterns that make the homework period productive
- How to provide individualized homework assistance to all students who need it during the allotted time period
- Non-disruptive, productive activities for students who finish their homework early
- Ways to foster bonds between students and adults
- Efficient methods for conducting attendance checks and dismissal

Training Topics for Staff who Manage and Administer the Program

- Scheduling solutions that appeal to students but also minimize conflicts with the host school
- Ways to promote teamwork among after-school staff and between staff from the after-school and regular school programs
- Establishing and maintaining communication with the school principal
- Obtaining and storing supplies



Checklist for Reviewing the Performance of Staff Interns

Many after-school projects supplement highly trained staff with high school or college interns. At the TASC project operated by Friends of Family Academy at P.S. 241, college interns who serve on staff have performance reviews twice a year. The site coordinator and assistant director together complete a written evaluation of each intern, and a BOE-certified teacher does the same. Each intern also completes a self-evaluation. This checklist is adapted from that review process.

Working with the Lead Teacher	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement
1. Is the intern helpful to the lead teacher?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Does he or she follow the teacher's lead in disciplining children?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Does the intern treat children fairly and consistently?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Is he or she patient with children?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Does he or she provide a good role model?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Does the intern maintain a positive attitude in the classroom?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Professionalism	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement
1. Does the intern show up to work every day and arrive on time?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Does he or she treat co-workers with respect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Does he or she use appropriate conflict-resolution methods with students?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Selection and Supervision of Activities	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement
1. Are the chosen activities appropriate for the students being served?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Do the activities actively engage children?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Does the intern manage the classroom well during activities and maintain composure at critical times?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Does he or she reach out to students as individuals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Contributions to the After-School Program	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement
1. Does the intern come to meetings prepared to participate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Does he or she contribute to staff discussions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Does he or she demonstrate an eagerness to learn, and actively seek advice?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Does the intern foster a sense of camaraderie among colleagues?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

Describe the intern's greatest strengths and weaknesses: _____

Ideas for improving the intern's skills and knowledge: _____

Form for Evaluating Staff Performance

Supervisors of Henry Street Settlement's after-school project at P.S. 110 rate staff members on their overall job performance and on their performance in specific job areas. The tool that follows was adapted from the form used at Henry Street's project.

Staff Member's Name _____ Position Held by Staff _____

Period Covered by Performance Evaluation _____ Date of Evaluation _____

Evaluator's Name and Title _____

Rating Scale

- 1 = Excellent performance, exceeds requirements
- 2 = Good performance, meets requirements
- 3 = Satisfactory performance, meets minimum requirements
- 4 = Unsatisfactory performance, needs improvement

Instructions: Circle the appropriate performance level (1-4) for each item.

Overall Job Performance and Review (for group leaders/aides)

Performance Level

Comments

	1	2	3	4	
Monitors group of 20 students during program hours					
Assists students with daily completion of homework					
Assesses progress of students in the program					
Attends scheduled meetings and training sessions					
Provides a positive example for students					
Behaves professionally at all times					

Overall Job Performance and Review (for staff specialists)

	1	2	3	4	
Develops curriculum for elementary-school aged students					
Implements age-appropriate curriculum					
Assesses progress of students in the program					
Attends scheduled meetings and training sessions					
Provides a positive example for students					
Behaves professionally at all times					

Professionalism	Performance Level				Comments
Complies with program policy on staff attendance	1	2	3	4	
Handles arrivals and departures according to policy	1	2	3	4	
Follows through on assignments	1	2	3	4	
Demonstrates a genuine desire to collaborate with school and after-school staff and students	1	2	3	4	
Follows procedures outlined in handbook, memos, and meetings	1	2	3	4	
Takes initiative in job responsibilities	1	2	3	4	
Class Management (for group leaders and aides)					
Uses explicit, consistent class organization practices during homework help and club activities	1	2	3	4	
Helps specialists manage groups during scheduled activities	1	2	3	4	
Practices consistent, appropriate class management during snacks	1	2	3	4	
Escorts students to and from activities in an orderly manner	1	2	3	4	
Maintains program schedule for snacks, scheduled activities, and dismissal	1	2	3	4	
Homework Help (for group leaders and aides)					
Helps all students complete homework	1	2	3	4	
Fosters a comfortable atmosphere in which students can thrive	1	2	3	4	
Documents students' progress regularly	1	2	3	4	
Interpersonal Skills					
Treats colleagues and students fairly, honestly, respectfully, and with dignity.	1	2	3	4	
Works collaboratively and constructively with others.	1	2	3	4	
Communicates in writing clearly and concisely.	1	2	3	4	
Communicates verbally clearly and concisely.	1	2	3	4	



Ideas for Involving Staff as Learners and Problem Solvers

Mentoring and Shadowing

- Pair certified teachers on the after-school staff with less-experienced colleagues. On a weekly or monthly basis, have the staff work together on an activity. The experienced teacher should alternate between modeling good skills and observing his protégé's actions.
- Identify staff from your sponsoring organization who can serve as mentors in their area of expertise. Schedule regular opportunities for them to visit the program — both during the program period and for staff meetings.
- Have after-school staff shadow classroom teachers during the school day.

Information Sharing and Trouble Shooting

- Use role playing to demonstrate good ways of solving problems.
- At each staff meeting, have a different staff member lead a discussion of a common concern.
- Have staff write up their best solutions and collect them in a notebook for new staff to read.

Follow-Up and Constructive Criticism

- At regular intervals, have the site coordinator and lead instructors observe each staff member working with students. Meet with staff individually after the observation to share comments and suggestions.
- Periodically, complete performance reviews for each staff member. Have the staff member write a self-evaluation and have his or her supervisor fill out a separate evaluation. Schedule time to meet and compare reports.

Sources of Information on After-School Staff Development

National Institute on Out-of-School-Time (NIOST). NIOST, at the Center for Research on Women at Wellesley College, offers training for school-age care directors, staff, and school administrators. In partnership with **Teaching Strategies, Inc.**, NIOST provides training on “Developing Competent After-School Staff.” Visit www.wellesley.edu.

National School-Age Care Alliance (NSACA). This membership organization supports professionals who provide out-of-school programs for school-age children and youth and promotes quality standards. Visit www.nsaca.org.

National Staff Development Council (NSDC). Founded in 1969, NSDC is the largest nonprofit professional association dedicated to staff development and school improvement. Visit www.nsdc.org.

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL). NCREL offers a *Toolkit for Schools and Districts* based on the National Awards Program for Model Professional Development. Visit www.ncrel.org for more information.

School-Age NOTES. The **National Resource Organization on School-Age Care** develops resources and technical assistance relevant to out-of-school programs for children and youth. Visit www.schoolagenotes.com

SkyLight Training and Publishing. This company focuses on the continuing education needs of K-12 teachers and school administrators. Its professional development programs and resources emphasize best practices in all major academic disciplines. Visit www.skylightedu.com.



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Halpern, R. (1999). After-school programs for low-income children: Promise and challenges. *The Future of Children* (9)..

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Killion, J. (1999). *What works in the middle: Results-based staff development*. Oxford, OH: NSDC.

National Association of Elementary School Principals. (1999). *After-school programs and the K-8 principal: Standards for quality school-age child care. Revised edition*. Alexandria, VA: Author.

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