



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

for quality out-of-school time in New Mexico



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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## USING THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**T**he development of the Guiding Principles has been based on our State's array of programs. A commitment was made to develop a flexible set of quality Out-of-School Time guidelines that is designed to foster their utilization by programs of differing focus, setting, community context, size and capacity.

### WHO

### WHY

#### Out-of-School Time Providers and Professionals

Design of new programs  
Program planning  
Foundation for continuous quality Improvement activities such as:

- Goal setting
- Targeting Professional Development
- Self-evaluation

#### Funders and Policy Makers

Advocacy tool to develop policy and funding  
Tool to link funding and accountability to research-based, measurable outcomes

#### Parents and Families

Inform expectations of out-of-school time programs  
Ensure confidence in program quality  
Assist in selecting high-quality programming

#### Schools and Educators

Advance academic achievement through school-linked out-of-school time supports  
Recognize complimentary knowledge resulting in increased collaboration  
Create a framework for career development for out-of-school professionals

To create a pathway that supports planning, which leads to quality program design and implementation. Based on research and best practice in the education and youth development fields, they have the potential to inspire innovation and coordination among adults who support young people.

These Guiding Principles are not about compliance or judgment of programs, but about practices that result in positive outcomes for youth.

# USING THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**T**here are **9 Guiding Principles** along with **Concepts** that represent the key elements that are essential to each principle. The concepts align with quality values and best practice for the subject area and are organized into **themed content** areas.

**Indicators** help to focus programs to assess their status based on their own capacity and priorities. Programs are encouraged to identify and meet more than one indicator within each concept. This snapshot in time, of quality, will provide a basis for developing a plan for building **program capacity** to increase program quality.

- GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1:** Environmental Safety
- GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2:** Health, Nutrition and Physical Activity
- GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3:** Relationships
- GUIDING PRINCIPLE 4:** Family and Community Partnerships
- GUIDING PRINCIPLE 5:** Cultural Relevance
- GUIDING PRINCIPLE 6:** Programming
- GUIDING PRINCIPLE 7:** Administration and Organizational Development
- GUIDING PRINCIPLE 8:** Staffing and Professional Development
- GUIDING PRINCIPLE 9:** Evaluation for Continuous Quality Improvement

The Guiding Principles are voluntary and recommended for use with other research-based assessment tools for program monitoring and self- assessment [i.e., NM-Extended Learning Self-Assessment Tool (ELSA), Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA), and the Quality Assurance System (QAS)]. They are not meant to be achieved all at once, knowing that continuous quality improvement occurs over time. The Guiding Principles are meant instead to be used for multi-year planning.

# DISCOVERING PROGRAM CAPACITY



## Foundational Capacity

Small number of students and staff, single/small number of program elements and themes.

Limited organizational capacity. Limited operational requirements.

**EXAMPLE: Chess club, Service learning club, Girl Scout troupe**



## Comprehensive Capacity

Medium number of students and staff. Programming is somewhat complex with several program elements. Program manager has responsibility for managing and engaging participants.

Medium organizational capacity and operational requirements.

**EXAMPLE: School-based program with multiple activities**



## Organizational Capacity

Many students and staff. Staff are involved in professional development. Many program elements to support overall program goals. High complexity of programming and operational requirements. Organization uses best practices and research to design and modify programming.

**EXAMPLE: Professional Out-of-School Time organization-run program**

## PROGRAM CAPACITY INDICATORS

The Foundational Practice Indicators defines a minimum standard that all programs should meet, regardless of their size or capacity. As well, these indicators focus on elements that staff should be aware of when implementing into their programs.

The Comprehensive Program Indicators defines elements that may generally be seen in medium sized programs which have more capacity than those in the prior grouping. Here, the focus is around more comprehensive strategies for meeting standards at a wider programmatic level, such as staff training.

The Organizational Practice Indicators defines systems at the organizational, programmatic and staff levels that will support and sustain quality over the long term.





# GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1

## Environmental Safety

A quality out-of-school program maintains the physical and emotional safety of the youth while staff supervision protocols are also in place.

Emergency procedures are in place and understood by staff so they can effectively respond to injuries and other health and wellbeing issues.

The physical space is kept clear of any safety hazards and supports a variety of learning activities and needs.



## GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1: Environmental Safety

### Supervision

#### Account for youth at all times

Check-in and check-out system is in place for authorized-only pick-up and sign-out of youth.

Staff account for youth at all times, whether inside, outside, or during transition periods.

#### Maintain acceptable staff- to-student ratio based on best practice

Program provides an adequate staff-to-student ratio to provide optimal supervision for safety and learning experiences for both on and off-site activities.

#### Address risky behaviors through preventative measures and positive discipline structures

Staff is aware of how to identify, manage and report risky behaviors and activities

Program implements and trains on written procedures for check-in and check-out system and accounting for youth.

Supervisors monitor staff compliance with procedures and provide additional coaching as needed.

Staff communicates clearly and regularly with youth, families, and staff about safety rules and check-in/check-out transition processes.

Staff are trained and monitored in identifying, managing and reporting risky behaviors and activities.

Program activities inspire positive behavior, cooperative learning, and positive peer-to-peer interactions.

Supervisors monitor staff compliance with procedures and provide additional coaching as needed.

Staff communicates clearly and regularly with youth, families and staff about the behavior policy.

Organization researches state and national retention policies for their program.

Organization aligns to state and national standards required for the program.

Organization implements a positive behavior policy.

F=Functional

C=Comprehensive

O=Organizational



## GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1: Environmental Safety

# Health & Well Being

### Protect youth from spreading illness and disease

**F** Staff is aware of how to identify when a youth is ill.  
Ill youth are removed from other youth and monitored until they are collected by family.

**C** Program implements procedures to protect youth from communicable disease, including isolation of ill students until families can collect them.  
Staff communicates clearly and regularly with youth, families and staff about the illness procedure.

**O** Organization provides for, or negotiates separate space for, ill youth in a comfortable and supervised room or partitioned off space until picked-up.  
Organization researches local and state policy on handling communicable diseases.

### Promote hygiene precautions and practices

Hygiene supplies are available.  
Youth are encouraged to wash their hands, cover their coughs and disinfect areas.

Program prominently posts hygiene best practice instructions.  
Staff instructs and models hygiene best practices.  
Program provides families with written information about hygiene best practices.

### First aid and CPR are made available

First Aid kits are available.  
First Aid procedures are accessible.

Staff is provided with training opportunities to receive First Aid certification, including CPR.  
Program provides at least one person on site who is First Aid and CPR certified.

Organization requires all staff are certified in First Aid and CPR.  
Organization implements a policy for blood-borne pathogen universal precautions.  
Organization trains staff annually on blood-borne pathogen universal precautions (OSHA).

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O=Organizational





## GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1: Environmental Safety

# Emergencies

### Communicate and document emergencies and accidents appropriately

Youth medical conditions and emergency contacts are documented during registration.

Youth medical conditions and emergency contacts are readily available during program hours.

Families are told of any medical incident.

### Establish a site-specific emergency management plan in which First Aid and CPR are made available

Site-specific emergency management plan is available and complied with.

### Practice emergency responses

Staff is aware of how to respond to evacuation, shelter-in-place and lockdown responses.

Youth are instructed in both evacuation and shelter-in-place responses.

Staff assists handicapped students.

### Secure emergency supplies and equipment

Staff are trained annually on the location and use of the supplies and equipment.

Staff are trained annually on the location of emergency supplies and equipment and their use.

Program implements written policy procedures for communicating accidents and emergencies to families and emergency personnel.

Staff are trained and monitored in identifying, managing and reporting the emergency.

Documentation exists showing staff have reviewed the plan and agree to comply with the plan.

Staff are trained on the plan and can identify their roles in an emergency.

Staff communicates clearly and regularly with youth, families and staff about the site-specific emergency management plan, including the evacuation routes and parent pick-up procedures.

Program provides periodic fire and emergency drills.

Documentation is kept confirming that drills are conducted correctly and timely.

Documentation is kept confirming staff training.

Organization annually reviews and updates a site-specific emergency management plan that is relevant to OST program locations, personnel (review and induction) and management structure.

Documentation is kept confirming staff training and agreement to comply with the plan.

Organization implements an emergency response drill schedule and policy that requires drills are conducted for staff and youth in a variety of settings.

Organization reviews each drill performance and makes corrections.

Staff knows the location of emergency supplies and equipment.

Organization implements and inspects emergency supplies and equipment.

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## GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1: Environmental Safety

# Program Space

### Provide safe and appropriate indoor and outdoor spaces

F

Indoor and outdoor spaces, when available, are clean and meet or exceed safety codes.

Staff inspects indoor and outdoor spaces to see that they are free of observable safety hazards.

C

Ample and dedicated space is available for small group activities, large play areas, reading and reflection and open conversation.

Program implements procedures for periodic safety checks and appropriate maintenance of outdoor space and equipment.

O

Organization provides and secures outdoor space and equipment that are appropriate and safe for the ages and abilities of youth.

Documentation is kept confirming that safety checks are conducted and remedies are made.

Organization provides and secures resources to create separate activity spaces.

### Manage environmental hazards appropriately

Staff is aware and takes action regarding any potential hazards.

Staff are trained and monitored in identifying, managing and reporting the environmental hazard.

Staff communicates clearly and regularly with youth, families and staff about the environmental hazards policy.

Program implements procedures for products that may pose an environmental hazard.

Organization implements a policy for handling environmental hazards.

Appropriate local environmental agency contact information is current.

Documentation is kept confirming what is stored and that scheduled checks occur to ascertain inventory is current and remains safe.

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O=Organizational



**N**utritious snacks and meals are consistently provided to meet the hunger needs of the youth served.

Physical activity is intentionally incorporated into daily programming to encourage movement.

The culture of the youth, families and communities served is reflected in programming.

# GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2

Health, Nutrition & Physical Activity



## GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2: Health, Nutrition & Physical Activity

### Nutrition & Hunger

#### Provide healthy and adequate food and beverage to youth

Youth have access to healthy and adequate food and beverages.

Youth have access to drinking water.

#### Address food restrictions appropriately

Youth food restrictions, including allergies, are documented during registration.

#### Prepare and store food properly

Food and beverage storage and preparation meet or exceed local health and safety codes.

Staff is trained in food storage and preparation that meet or exceed local health and safety codes.

#### Promote good nutrition practices

Staff models good nutrition practices within the program.

Program provides a nutritious snack and regularly publishes a menu.

Program plans and implements activities that allow youth opportunities to select and prepare food and beverages served in the program, using preparation as a teachable moment, while following food safety handling.

Youth food restrictions, including allergies, and emergency contacts are readily available during program hours.

Program provides food and beverage alternatives to address allergies and food restrictions.

Written procedures for food storage and preparation are posted.

Appropriate equipment and supplies are available to support procedures.

Nutrition information is available for youth.

Programming includes a nutrition education component.

Nutrition activities and materials provided meet the needs, interests, abilities and talents of youth.

Organization successfully meets the federal and state requirements to reimburse food service.

Organization provides resources needed to involve youth and families in planning with staff for healthy and appropriate food and beverage alternatives that are needed, including an education component.

Organization retains logs as required for food preparation and storage.

Organization promotes nutrition as an organizational value that is demonstrated through programming and in written materials.

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## GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2: Health, Nutrition & Physical Activity

### Physical Activity

#### Provide opportunities for physical activity

Youth have access to opportunities for movement.  
Staff models and encourages participation in physical activities.

#### Address physical activity restrictions appropriately

Youth physical activity restrictions are documented during registration.  
Youth physical activity restrictions are readily available during program hours.

Program plans and implements activities that allow youth opportunities to select and participate in a variety of physical activities, using the activity as a teachable moment.

Program provides physical activity alternatives to meet the capacity of all youth.

Activities and equipment provided meet youth needs, interests and abilities, including restrictions and talents of youth.

Organization promotes physical activities as an organizational value that is demonstrated through programming and in written materials.

Organization provides resources needed to involve youth and families in planning with staff for appropriate physical activity alternatives that are needed, including an education component.

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# GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3

## Relationships

A quality out-of-school program incorporates positive youth development principles to inspire cooperation, respect and other indicators of effective relationships between youth participants and program staff.

A quality program consistently communicates and reinforces expectations.

Youth feel welcome and supported as the program addresses their interests, abilities, talents and learning styles.

Practices are targeted towards encouraging positive behavior, building confidence, and engaging youth as partners in the program.

Staff composition and relationships among staff and with youth reflect sensitivity to diversity and gender equality.

In a quality program, staff is expected to demonstrate commitment to children, youth, families, and communities through a high level of ethical conduct and positive interaction.



## GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3: Relationships

# Supportive Learning

### Use learning reflection

**F** Youth acknowledge and reflect on what they have learned and their progress within the out-of-school time program regularly.

**C** Activities include opportunities for reflection and promote critical thinking and problem solving skills.

**O** Organizational practice incorporates experiential and reflective learning for staff as well as youth.

### Address youth interests, abilities, talents and learning styles

Staff recognizes and responds appropriately to different learning styles and the range of youth abilities.

Program activities reflect varying learning approaches and materials to meet the different learning styles of youth.

Provides opportunities for college, career readiness, vocational preparation and workforce development.

Staff are trained on learning styles.  
Supervisors monitor staff compliance with supporting different learning styles and provide coaching as needed.

### Coordinate in-school and out-of-school time learning goals

Student school-day learning goals are embedded in activities.

Staff and classroom teacher's work together to coordinate grade-level expectations into out-of-school time activities.

Organization strives to maintain a working partnership with schools.



## GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3: Relationships

# Youth, Leadership & Voice

### Engage the input of youth

Youth are encouraged to express their ideas and opinions regarding activities.

Staff helps youth develop communication and advocacy skills through frequent conversations.

### Strengthen youth leadership skills

Staff encourages participants to take on leadership roles.

Program incorporates the ideas of youth into activities.

Staff acknowledges youth for providing their input.

Programming supports youth initiative and ownership.

Organization implements a policy for youth input into program design, and provides opportunities for youth to serve on decision-making boards.

Supervisors monitor staff compliance with supporting youth input into program design and provide coaching as needed.

Staff are trained to strengthen confidence of youth.

Ongoing leadership opportunities are cultivated to link youth to other organizations and community efforts.

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# GUIDING PRINCIPLE 4

## Family & Community Partnerships

A quality out-of-school program actively engages families and fosters meaningful collaboration between families, program staff, the school, and the broader community.

Quality programs acknowledge community culture by aligning program philosophy and practices with that of the community.

Quality programs seek to increase the effectiveness of family members in navigating the school system and working with school staff to support school goals and student achievement.

The program connects to needed community resources and, in turn, helps participants and families connect to the array of supports that exist in the community.



## GUIDING PRINCIPLE 4: Family & Community Partnerships

# Family Engagement

### Create a respectful environment that is welcoming to families

Staff creates a welcoming and comfortable place for all families.  
Staff is approachable and communicates to families that they are welcome to visit.

### Engage family input and participation

Families are invited to contribute their expertise and talents to program support and activities.  
Program provides an avenue for feedback that includes identifying their child's interests, abilities, and talents.

Program structure allows for parents to observe activities unannounced.  
Families receive information and educational resources on a regular basis. Programming supports youth initiative and ownership.

Feedback from families is acknowledged and addressed.

Organization has written policy that promotes and implements family engagement and communicates clearly and regularly with youth, families, and staff about the policy.

A centralized place for program and community information sharing is provided.

Organization recruits program staff from within the community to best reflect the identified cultures and languages of families.

Organization supports staff and families joining together to communicate and work with the schools.

Families are offered opportunities to serve in organization leadership roles.

Organization implements a family engagement outreach plan that dedicates financial and staff resources.





## GUIDING PRINCIPLE 4: Family & Community Partnerships

# Family Support

### Provide a family friendly program schedule

Hours of operation take into consideration the working hours of families.

### Provide families with tools to support student learning

Staff communicates the link between program activities and learning and social goals.

### Connect families to services and supports

Staff provides information about community resources to meet the needs of families.

F

Program planning, program events and celebrations occur when families can reasonably attend.

Program supports families in navigating the school system.

Program provides tools to families to support student learning.

C

Organization provides a program calendar and schedule that is disseminated to families to support connection between program and family schedules.

Organization dedicates staff and financial resources to provided workshops for families on how they can support student learning.

Organization dedicates resources to support families in connecting to family services and supports, which may include a directory of services and supports in the community.

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## GUIDING PRINCIPLE 4: Family & Community Partnerships

### Community Partnerships

#### Cultivate community-based supports

A list of community resources is maintained. The staff draw from these resources to expand program offerings.

#### Link program activities to existing community events

Staff and youth participate in community events, festivals and cultural activities.

#### Acknowledge community-based organizational support

Staff formally thanks supporters in person or through a written thank you.

F

Local community-based organizations and businesses are consistently invited to program events.

Program seeks opportunities to showcase youth activities at community events.

Program engages youth in designing and implementing activities that result in a public recognition of community support.

C

Organization implements a partnership development plan that identifies and engages community-based organizations and businesses on a regular basis.

Resources for inclusive practices/support that the organization cannot provide.

Organization implements a partnership development plan that identifies opportunities to link program activities to community events and identifies community service options for youth.

Organization provides resources to publicly or formally recognize organizations that have provided significant support to the program and its families.

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# GUIDING PRINCIPLE 5

## Cultural Relevance

A quality out-of-school program appropriately reflects the diverse backgrounds, identities, and ways of learning of all youth in the program.

Culturally responsive practices connect program activities to the broad experience of youth, thereby supporting a link between lessons learned at home and in the community to intended program outcomes.

Achieving a culturally responsive environment requires the engagement of family and community members as experts and advisors in program planning and delivery.



## GUIDING PRINCIPLE 5: Cultural Relevance

# Supportive Practices

### Create a respectful environment that is welcoming to families

Program activities respect youth cultural backgrounds and identities.

F

Activities reflect background, identities and cultural ways and norms of youth.

Staff learn about youth culture, language and learning styles from family and community members.

Program displays reflect the diversity of youth.

C

Organization implements policy that requires activities honoring diversity will be included in programming and special events.

Organization ensures there is a process for communicating to non-English speaking families.

Efforts are made to provide staff with cultural competency training.

Organization seeks to hire a diverse staff reflective of the youth participation.

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# GUIDING PRINCIPLE 6

## Programming

**A** quality program is both structured and flexible.

The program inspires active and life-long learning through project-based activities that address developmental learning, academic progress, and future orientation to the real world.

A range of well supplied activities allow for choice and contribution by youth.

A quality program is well planned by staff with stakeholders so that activities are relevant, linked to the school day, engaging and varied.

The culture of the youth, families and communities served is reflected in programming.





## GUIDING PRINCIPLE 6: Programming

# Program Structure

### Include youth with special needs

Activities are accessible to students with special needs.

Accommodations are made to support participation of students with special needs.

### Support youth choice and needs

Youth have choice with some activities.

### Align activities to program mission

Activities reflect the mission/philosophy of the program.

### Support older youth skill building and career orientation

Older youth are encouraged to participate.

Older youth are engaged as volunteers.

Program design for older youth connects new learning and skill-building to service learning and career pathways.

Staff talk with families of special needs students on how to better include them within the program structure

Program seeks expertise of school-day personnel who interact with the student.

The range of activities is designed based on youth academic need, interests, abilities, and talents.

Staff help youth make informed and responsible activity choices.

Staff explains how the program activities align with the mission/philosophy.

Organization implements a policy for inclusion of youth with special needs.

Organization collects demographic data of the community to assess possible gaps in service for special needs youth, such as needs related to outreach and barriers to participation, and recruits youth based on this assessment.

Organization implements policies that support youth choice.

Staff is monitored for supporting youth-informed and responsible choices; coaching is provided as needed.

Organization implements a formal written mission that informs all aspects of the program.

Organization implements a policy that supports older youth engagement.

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## GUIDING PRINCIPLE 6: Programming

# Materials & Supplies

### Provide and maintain sufficient program supplies

Adequate materials and supplies are provided and have a specific storage place.

F

A system is in place for check-in/check-out process to avoid loss and neglect of supplies and materials.  
Program materials are selected to meet youth's age range, learning styles, interests, abilities, and talents.

C

Organization maintains an inventory system that provides appropriate supplies and equipment.  
Organization researches and secures a variety of evidence-based materials as part of its inventory.  
Program monitors the effectiveness of the materials used and makes changes as needed.

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## GUIDING PRINCIPLE 6: Programming

# School Day Linkages

### Link out-of-school activities to the school day curriculum

Activities are different from school-day activities, but complement school day learning.

### Engage school day teachers and administrative support

Staff encourages awareness of and input in out-of-school activities.

F

Program reviews school day curriculum to identify and increase links with program activities.

Staff uses school achievement data as available to inform activity design.

C

Program administers surveys to gather school day personnel input.

Staff is in regular communication with school day teachers.

O

Organization forms a partnership with schools to facilitate regular conversations that support linking school day and out-of-school learning practices and outcomes.

Out-of-school program staff is included in school meetings and discussions that monitor student academic progress and behavior.

Organization engages the input and/or advisement of school leaders as appropriate.

Organization arranges for shared Professional Development opportunities that link school day and out-of-school time learning practices.



# GUIDING PRINCIPLE 7

## Administration & Organizational Development

A quality out-of-school program has effective administrative practices, detailed organizational processes, sound financial management, mission marketing, resource development, policy development, and strategic planning.

The program encourages its administrators to monitor for effectiveness and efficiency throughout its organizational structure, while also building the capacity of the organization to support collaboration and advocacy among stakeholders.

The program provides outreach to community and school partners and consistently informs its stakeholders of its operations, policies, and funding priorities.



## GUIDING PRINCIPLE 7: Administration & Organizational Development

# Operations & Management

### Provide program management and oversight

Program manager is identified and an oversight process is in place.

### Develop a recordkeeping system

Basic recordkeeping is utilized by staff.

### Share established program policies

Program uses a policy guide for program operations and management.

F

Program managers are trained to follow protocols, align program vision / mission to program delivery and work.

Management oversees the recruitment and retention of program staff.

Records are kept in accordance with program requirements, following program and confidentiality protocols.

Program policies are reviewed and refined on a consistent basis by management and staff.

C

Organization adheres to state laws and regulations for program delivery.  
Organization implements continuous quality improvement processes, aiming for improvement in all areas of the program.

Organization maintains a recordkeeping system that can be shared with partnering organizations for data sharing.

Program policies are made available to community stakeholders.

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## GUIDING PRINCIPLE 7: Administration & Organizational Development

# Sustainability & Resource Development

### Develop school-linked resources

Staff communicates with school administration on resource needs.

F

School administration helps secure or identify resources that secure continued school-linked out-of-school activities.

C

Organization implements agreements that identify roles and responsibilities of a collaborative partnership between the school and out-of-school program.  
Organization looks at existing and potential leverage opportunities and develops a tracking system.

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## GUIDING PRINCIPLE 7: Administration & Organizational Development

# Communication & Marketing

### Market the program

An informational flyer or brochure exists that includes a description of the program, key personnel and contact information.

F

Staff and management seek opportunities to convey basic program information, including the schedule, location, scope of activities, philosophy, etc.

C

Organization provides resources for the development of a website, use of social media and marketing materials.

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## GUIDING PRINCIPLE 7: Administration & Organizational Development

# Financial Management

### Be fiscally responsible

A basic fiscal management system tracks income and expenses.

F

Management follows identified best practice fiscal processes and procedures.

C

Organization conducts regular budget reviews.

The bookkeeping system used supplies a systems-generated accounting report capable of meeting the requirements of funders.

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# GUIDING PRINCIPLE 8

## Staffing & Professional Development

A quality out-of-school program attracts and employs staff equipped with knowledge of positive youth development strategies, academic enrichment, classroom management, and community engagement.

Quality programs reach beyond mandatory training requirements to provide staff with additional tools, professional practice, coaching, and an environment of cooperation and learning.

In a quality program, staff is expected to demonstrate commitment to contributing to a professional working environment through a high level of ethical conduct and positive interaction.



## GUIDING PRINCIPLE 8: Staffing & Professional Development

### Staff Qualifications

#### Secure staff that possess knowledge of working with youth

Staff has experience in working with youth, ideally in an out-of-school program environment.

#### Provide background checks

Staff and volunteers receive a background check clearance prior to working with youth.

F

C

Staff is trained in best practices related to working with youth.  
Program administrators surveys to gather school day personnel input.

O

Organization offers staff opportunities to keep up with the professional standards and innovations in working with youth.  
Supervisors monitor staff compliance with the professional standards required to work with youth and provide additional coaching as needed.

Organization implements policy that requires background checks for all staff.

Background check clearance documentation is maintained for all staff and volunteers.





## GUIDING PRINCIPLE 8: Staffing & Professional Development

### Orientation

#### Orient staff to essential program elements

Program staff are provided with an orientation to the program.

#### Support staff in understanding its roles and responsibilities

Each staff member understands his or her scope of work, including responsibilities to the program, its youth and family members.

#### Support staff in understanding program policies and procedures

Procedures and expectations are clearly and consistently communicated to staff and volunteers.

F

Staff receives a handbook that is reviewed annually, using staff input.

Documentation is kept confirming staff training and agreement to comply with the handbook.

Formal written job descriptions are developed and provided for each program position.

Staff annually confirms its review and knowledge of program policies, procedures and expectations.

C

Organization implements a policy that requires all new staff to receive an orientation.

Organization annually reviews the staff handbook for legal compliance with state law.

Organization supports all staff members in understanding their roles and how they interrelate with other program roles and responsibilities.

Organization provides staff opportunities to make recommendations to the program policies, procedures and expectations based on field experience.

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## GUIDING PRINCIPLE 8: Staffing & Professional Development

# Professional Development

### Support staff in understanding and demonstrating core competencies

Professional development is provided to all staff.

F

Staff is aware of the National Afterschool Alliance Core Competencies.

There is a written plan for on-going professional development for each staff member, including the director.

C

Organization dedicates resources to provide professional development to staff.

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## GUIDING PRINCIPLE 8: Staffing & Professional Development

### Staff Relationships

#### Build a cohesive team encouraging positive communication

Staff works as a team, building on individual strengths and demonstrating cooperation.

Staff relationships are professional and do not interfere with caring for and interacting with youth.

F

C

Staff is trained in team building and encouraged to demonstrate positive team interaction.

Supervisors monitor staff compliance with positive inter-staff relationships and provide additional coaching as needed.

Program incorporates structured opportunities for staff to reflect on and plan effective communication practices.

O

Organization conducts regular staff retreats to deepen cooperation and respect.



## GUIDING PRINCIPLE 8: Staffing & Professional Development

### Retention Indicators

#### Provide equitable compensation

F

Staff is offered the best possible wages and working conditions in an effort to reduce staff turnover.

#### Establish a positive, rewarding work environment

Staff experiences a safe, respectful, and rewarding work environment.

#### Supervise staff through effective and positive practices

Staff receives on-going supervision and feedback throughout the program year.

C

If staff is paid, program pays for planning or prep time.

Staff and volunteers receive recognition for their contribution to the program.

Staff is evaluated annually.  
Supervisors are trained in staff supervision.

O

If program has paid staff, full-time staff receive equitable wages, benefits and health insurance.

Organization provides a structure and a process for staff to express concerns and make recommendations.  
Management is responsive to staff concerns and recommendations.

Organization implements an annual needs assessment with all staff to identify professional development needs; organization provides resources to the meet the needs.  
Organization implements a policy for regular staff reviews that assesses knowledge of supervisory role (if appropriate) and quality of team contribution.  
Exit interviews with all staff members who terminate are conducted and the feedback is addressed by management.

F=Functional

C=Comprehensive

O=Organizational



# GUIDING PRINCIPLE 9

## Evaluation for Continuous Quality Improvement

A quality out-of-school program has a clearly defined mission with aligned goals and specific outcomes.

Programs align their mission and goals with those of the school and community that they serve.

The program establishes a continuous, internal evaluation process to assess the efficacy of their progress towards program goals.

Through various methods and measures such as focus groups, surveys, observation, self-monitoring, student and program assessments, etc., programs gather information from youth, families, teachers, school administrators, staff, volunteers, and community stakeholders to make improvements.





## GUIDING PRINCIPLE 9: Evaluation for Continuous Quality Improvement

### Continuous Quality Improvement

#### Align program mission, goals and objectives with needs assessments and surveys

Program goals and objectives are defined and measured.

#### Collect data for continuous improvement

A record is kept of youth participation and retention levels. (Registration, attendance, etc.)

#### Collect stories that exemplify quality practice

Staff shares success stories on a regular basis amongst themselves and with families they serve.

#### Use and share self-assessment data for program improvement

Staff participates in a self-assessment of the program.

F

Program mission, goals and objectives align with the identified needs of participants.

Regular participant needs assessments and surveys are conducted.

Program identifies and sustains data collection processes.

Program regularly collects and measures data from program goals and objectives.

Program has a process in place to collect and archive success stories.

Stories connected to data snapshots are posted/distributed to showcase program and youth accomplishments on a regular basis.

Staff adopts a self-assessment tool that is used to assess overall program effectiveness.

Program utilizes self-assessment to develop and implement a continuous quality improvement action plan. Program documents evidence of best or promising practice in program materials and shares them with staff and stakeholders.

C

Organization collaborates with community stakeholders on the development of program assessments and participant surveys.

Organization uses program data to build the case for investment in the program. Data is shared with stakeholders.

Organization uses success stories to promote the program with stakeholders, policymakers, funders and the greater community.

Organization implements a policy for regular assessment through a written Continuous Quality Improvement Plan.

Organization invests fiscal and staff resources for an assessment and continuous quality improvement process.

O

# CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

## ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Augments and reinforces classroom learning methods

Staff informed and supported by classroom teachers

Academic Support includes homework help, tutoring, study skills development and more

For some programs, Academic Support includes:

- preparing for standardized tests
- student mastery assessments, supported by education content specialists

Research has shown that Academic Support inclusion:

- builds reading and math competency and study skills
- decreases disciplinary action
- ensures on-time promotion
- improves homework completion
- sustains engagement in learning
- improves attitudes and beliefs toward school, positive learning behavior and higher school attendance

Many programs tie classroom learning concepts to the out-of-school time curriculum through Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) activities that can be attached to the arts, cultural programming, civic engagement and other skill-building activities

## LIFE SKILLS SUPPORT

Addresses young people's social and developmental needs with a focus on improving social skills, self-esteem, initiative and leadership skills

Harvard Graduate School of Education research has shown that program participation is associated with:

- decreased behavioral problems
- improved social and communication skills
- better relationships with peers and teachers
- increased self-confidence, self-esteem and self-efficiency
- lower levels of depression and anxiety
- development of initiative
- improved feelings and attitudes toward self and school

Non-academic learning activities are those that are experiential, fun, informed by youth, and support mastery of skills for school and life

Research-based methods:

- inspire creative expression through the arts, cooking clubs and gardening clubs, as examples
- build socio-emotional skills, such as problem solving, anger management and empathy
- help young people understand issues facing the community and the world through service learning opportunities and project learning or "real world" experiential activities

# CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

## ASSET / ASSET ORIENTATION

The critical factors and benchmarks for young people's growth and development

Grounded in extensive research in youth development, resilience and prevention

Represent the relationships, opportunities, and personal qualities that young people need to avoid risks and to thrive

Focuses all activities and ways of thinking on assets instead of the deficits of participants, families, schools and communities

## BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Established rules and behavioral expectations are clearly communicated to all youth and families

Natural and logical consequences, positive reinforcements, praise, time out, earned privileges and other behavior management techniques help maintain a safe, predictable, and orderly program

## BEST AND PROMISING PRACTICES

A continuum of practices and programs based on guidelines, standards and research proven to lead to effective outcomes for youth and programs

Qualitative data supports implementation, but no extensive quantitative data to support it

Best practices have been reviewed and substantiated through research

# CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

## CAPACITY

A conceptual approach to program and/or organizational development

Focuses on understanding the resources, priorities, and obstacles that support or inhibit the realization of developmental goals, results or outcomes

## CAPACITY BUILDING

A process of identifying the needs and priorities of the program and/or organization

Drives a planning process to strengthen procedures, programming, skills, and competency

Increases ability of the program and/or organization to meet goals and outcomes

## CARING ADULT

Adult who models and fosters interpersonal skills that contribute to child-centered practices

Practices include:

- active listening, showing genuine concern and positive regard for the youth in the program
- building trust and affirming relationships
- having an asset orientation (as opposed to deficit orientation)
- positive guidance techniques

Caring adults build on youth's strengths and communicate these strengths to others.

# CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

## COMMUNICATION TOOLS

An effective communications strategy will include a set of tools that will advance the program's message and engage identified target audiences

Tools can include the internet, social media, publications and other print materials, public service broadcasts, radio spots, videos, media relations, spokespersons, events, and presentations

Selected tools will depend on the organization / program's strategic goals, the profile of the target audience, and the budget

Consistency of message and style is paramount, which often times is guided by an established brand

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Members of a community participating in the decisions and actions that help to shape their community

(Fraser Basin Council, 2003)

The process of engaging community members and groups in collaboratively addressing issues of mutual importance and concern

Often leads to community development activities that involve a shared responsibility among community members

Intentionally takes into account diverse community assets, capacities, and needs

## CORE COMPETENCIES

Define what professionals / staff need to know in order to deliver and promote quality school-age / out-of-school time activities and interactions

Serve as the foundation for decisions and practices carried out by out-of-school time and youth development professionals in a variety of settings



# CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

## CULTURE

A set of practices and beliefs associated with a particular group

Many think of culture as race and ethnicity

We define culture broadly to include all characteristics of human description, including age, gender, geography, ancestry, language, history, sexual orientation, faith and physical ability, as well as occupation and affiliations

An organization, school community, or program may have its own culture; in out-of-school time programs, you may observe this if you interact with a variety of sites and organizations

## CULTURAL COMPETENCY

Culturally competent programs

Respect participant, family, staff and community cultural norms, language, abilities, and learning styles

Include activities that are fully inclusive of all youth backgrounds, using a curriculum that supports and values diverse perspectives, histories and community practices

## DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE

Program methods and goals that respond to ages, developmental stages, and individual differences of children and youth

Activities reflect appropriate behavioral and academic expectations for children and youth of various ages and developmental levels

Activities are modified based on the responses of youth

Differences are assessed, and lessons accommodated to varying developmental levels

NMOST intent is for providers to ensure the delivery of adaptations and accommodations based on developmental levels of their youth

## DISGUISED OR COVERT LEARNING

Indirect learning of various types

Intentionally embedded into engaging and enjoyable out-of-school time activities

# CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

## DIVERSITY

A fully-inclusive program

Strategies are in place to eliminate stereotyping and discrimination

Program activities respect and respond to multiple learning styles, cultural traditions, family and community practices, diverse perspectives and values, and individual physical and mental abilities

## EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

### (Project-Based Learning)

A series of activities with  
a sustained focus over  
time that results in a  
performance, a product,  
or a service-learning  
project

An out-of-school time program is an excellent setting for this type of accomplishment

Generally, involves group effort that can occur beyond the walls of the out-of-school time program space into the community for research, internships, and showcase presentations

Has clear learning goals that often embrace academic, social, and meta-cognitive dimensions simultaneously

Youth receive and provide feedback as projects are developed, often including reflection and review from peers, program staff, community members, and families

Experiential learning can also ensure that literacy and numeracy are essential elements of an integrated learning strategy that links fun and serious effort to a self-awareness on the part of youth as being capable learners

## FAMILY

Defined differently for  
individual children and  
youth

Staff and administration need to be aware of the diverse family arrangements represented in their program

Families may include:

- children and adults living in the home
- adults who are responsible for the care and well-being of the child
- parents who may not live in the same household as the child
- the child's legal guardian

# CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Shared responsibility in which schools, other community agencies and organizations are committed to reaching out to engage families in meaningful ways, and in which families are committed to actively supporting their children's learning and development

(Dr. Heather Weiss, Harvard Family Research Project, 2009)

## LEARNING

The act of acquiring new information or modifying existing knowledge

## LEARNING STYLES

A set of factors, behaviors, and attitudes that facilitate learning for an individual in a given situation

Engagement is continuous across a child's life

Entails enduring commitment, but changing parent roles, as children mature into young adulthood

Cuts across and reinforces learning in the multiple settings where children learn:

- home
- prekindergarten programs
- school
- out-of-school time programs
- faith-based institutions
- community

Impacts skills, competencies, and behavior

Can be based on any part of holistic development (social-emotional, physical, intellectual, etc.)

All experiences impact learning and can occur:

- in any setting or context
- consciously or without conscious awareness

To have the most impact on learning, out-of-school time programs must be intentional about the strategies used

Take into account the way that individuals gain knowledge and their unique approach to learning based on their strengths and preferences

Influence the ways that students learn and how adults support learning, and guide how the two interact

Have "contextual" variables given that learners bring who they are from their context to all learning environments

Each learner has distinct and consistent preferred ways of perceiving, organizing, and retaining information

# CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

## MARKETING

A set of organizational processes for creating, communicating and delivering a message of value to customers

Promotes buy-in and sustainability of programming

## NATIONALLY AND LOCALLY INFORMED

Familiarity with and application of state and national standards

Review and utilization of state and national standards. Examples include:

- National After School Association
- Commission On Accreditation

The process of adopting relevant standards through statewide input processes

## YOUTH

Program youth (students)

School-age children enrolled in out-of-school time programs

## POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Focuses on young people's strengths to ensure their success

Commitment to the following promises:

- Caring adults
- Safe places
- Healthy development
- Effective education
- Opportunities to help others through volunteer service activities

# CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

## QUALITY GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Conditions for quality programs

Purposely describes the conditions of quality for the program, its youth, and all stakeholders in a specific category

## QUALITY INDICATOR

Specific measure that quantifies the attainment of a quality guiding principle

Grouped by foundational practice indicators, comprehensive program indicators, and organizational indicators in this document

## QUALITY CONCEPT

One of several necessary key elements that support a quality guiding principle

Concepts can be used to identify the common theme across indicator types

## RISKY BEHAVIORS

Behaviors that put an individual's health or safety at risk

Regarding children, risky behaviors typically include, but are not limited to:

- alcohol
- tobacco and drug use
- sexual behaviors
- bullying
- injury to self or others



# CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

## SCHOOL-AGE CARE

Structured and generally licensed care for children provided outside of normal school hours

Includes a range of organized, age-appropriate, structured programs, clubs, and activities for school-age children and youth:

- within supervised environments
- during times that they are not in school

## SERVICE LEARNING

A teaching and learning strategy

Youth are engaged in addressing real world issues, problems and needs in their school and community through:

- research
- reflection
- either direct service / volunteerism or advocacy

## SELF-ASSESSMENT ALIGNMENT

Assessment tools

New Mexico has adopted the Elev8 Extended Learning Self-Assessment (ELSA) Tool, which includes:

- 10 elements of quality
- action plan tools and ideas
- professional development planning tool

NMOST intends to develop additional tools that support staff core competencies

## VOLUNTEERS

Non-paid employees

Participate in carrying out the activities and goals of the program or organization

## Principle 1: Environmental Safety

- National Center for Environmental Health <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/>
- World Health Organization-Environmental Safety Information [http://www.who.int/school\\_youth\\_health/media/en/physical\\_sch\\_environment.pdf](http://www.who.int/school_youth_health/media/en/physical_sch_environment.pdf)
- Attendance Works: Tools for Afterschool Providers <http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/tools-for-afterschool-providers/>
- Disaster Prevention Kits and Tips for OST Programs <https://www.ready.gov/kids/maps>
- CPR Certification <http://www.redcross.org/take-a-class/cpr>
- Suicide Prevention Resources-New Mexico <http://www.sprc.org/states/new-mexico>
- NMPED. (2016). Safe Schools Plans in New Mexico <http://ped.state.nm.us/sfsb/safeschools/>

## Principle 2: Health, Nutrition, and Physical Activity

- Center for Disease Control-Physical Activity Resources [www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity](http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity)
- Center for Disease Control-Nutrition Resources [www.cdc.gov/nutrition](http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition)
- Afterschool Alliance Nutrition and Physical Activity Resources for OST Programs <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/Issue-Healthy-Eating-Physical-Activity.cfm>
- NMPED. (2016). Student Nutrition website <http://ped.state.nm.us/nutrition/index.html>

## Principle 3: Relationships

- Jordan, C. (2014). Building Supportive Relationships in Afterschool. SEDL. [http://www.sedl.org/insights/2-1/building\\_supportive\\_relationships\\_in\\_afterschool.pdf](http://www.sedl.org/insights/2-1/building_supportive_relationships_in_afterschool.pdf)
- Schamper, A. Collaboration Between Afterschool Practitioners and In-School Teachers. Voices from the Field <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ980208.pdf>
- Positive Youth Development <http://youth.gov/youth-topics/positive-youth-development>
- Office of Adolescent Health. Positive Youth Development Resources [http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/resources-and-publications/publications/positive\\_youth\\_development.html](http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/resources-and-publications/publications/positive_youth_development.html)

# RESOURCES

## Principle 4: Family and Community Partnerships

- Family Science Night. Sandia National Labs [http://www.sandia.gov/about/community/education\\_programs/family\\_science\\_night.html](http://www.sandia.gov/about/community/education_programs/family_science_night.html)
- Family Literacy Night [http://www.sedl.org/afterschool/toolkits/literacy/pr\\_family\\_literacy.html](http://www.sedl.org/afterschool/toolkits/literacy/pr_family_literacy.html)
- NMPED. Working Together: School-Family-Community Partnerships: A Toolkit for New Mexico School Communities <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/Parents/familyToolkit.html>
- Weiss and Lopez. (2015). Working Together: School-Family-Community Partnerships: A Toolkit for New Mexico School Communities. Harvard Family Research Project [http://www.hfrp.org/var/hfrp/storage/fckeditor/File/Family%20Engagement%20in%20Anywhere%20Anytime%20Learning\\_HarvardFamilyResProj.pdf](http://www.hfrp.org/var/hfrp/storage/fckeditor/File/Family%20Engagement%20in%20Anywhere%20Anytime%20Learning_HarvardFamilyResProj.pdf)
- NMPED. (2017). Resources for Building School, Family, and Community Partnerships <http://ped.state.nm.us/Parents/index.html>

## Principle 5: Cultural Relevance

- Native American Access to Engineering. (2013) <http://www.aboriginalaccess.ca/news-and-events/news/new-book-i-m-a-chemical-engineer>
- SACNAS (Society for Advancing Chicanos and Native Americans in Science) (2015) <https://sacnas.org/>
- Afterschool Alliance. (2013). The Importance of Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs in African-American and Latino Communities. [http://afterschoolalliance.org/issue\\_briefs/issue\\_African-American-Latino-Communities\\_59.pdf](http://afterschoolalliance.org/issue_briefs/issue_African-American-Latino-Communities_59.pdf)
- NMPED. (2017). Indian Education Department website [http://ped.state.nm.us/ped/IED\\_index.html](http://ped.state.nm.us/ped/IED_index.html)

## Principle 6: Programming

- Afterschool Alliance. (2013). The Importance of Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs in African-American and Latino Communities. [http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/issue\\_briefs/issue\\_African-American-Latino-Communities\\_59.pdf](http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/issue_briefs/issue_African-American-Latino-Communities_59.pdf)
- Scholastic. (2016). Teaching Children With Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: Instructional Strategies and Practices <http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/10-common-challenges-and-best-practices-teaching-students-adhd>
- Afterschool Alliance. (2014). Afterschool Supporting Students with Disabilities and Other Special Needs [http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/issue\\_briefs/issue\\_disabilities\\_64.pdf](http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/issue_briefs/issue_disabilities_64.pdf)

## Principle 6: Programming (cont'd)

- Sloan, D. "Reflection Activities". University of South Florida <http://www.usf.edu/engagement/documents/s-l-reflection-activities.pdf>
- Deschenes, S. et al. (2010). Engaging Older Youth: Program and City-level Strategies to Support Sustained Participation in Out-of-School Time. Harvard Family Research Project <http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/publications-resources/engaging-older-youth-program-and-city-level-strategies-to-support-sustained-participation-in-out-of-school-time>
- NMPED. (2017). Future Ready Schools [http://ped.state.nm.us/ped/FutureReadySchoolsNM\\_state.html](http://ped.state.nm.us/ped/FutureReadySchoolsNM_state.html)

## Principle 7: Administration and Organizational Development

- Attendance Works. Tools for Afterschool Providers <http://www.attendanceworks.org/tools/tools-for-afterschool-providers/>
- The After School Corporation (2012). TASC Expanded Schools Toolkit <http://www.expandinglearning.org>
- NMOST (2013). 110 Marketing Tools [www.nmost.org](http://www.nmost.org)
- The Finance Project. (2009). Follow the Money: A Tool for Mapping Funds for OST Initiatives <http://www.afterschoolnetwork.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/followthemoney.pdf>
- NMPED. (2016). Fiscal Grants Management website <http://ped.state.nm.us/ped/FiscalGrantsMgmtIndex.html>

## Principle 8: Staffing and Professional Development

- Afterschool Training Tool Kit. SEDL National Center For Quality Afterschool <http://www.sedl.org/afterschool/toolkits/>
- Beyond the Bell. (2015). American Institute for Research <http://www.beyondthebell.org/>
- NMPED. (2016). 21st Century Learning Center Team Member Handbook template and rubric <http://ped.state.nm.us/21C/index.html>

## Principle 9: Evaluation for Continuous Quality Improvement

- NY State Afterschool Network, NMOST, and Urban 4-H Bernalillo County. Elev8 NM Extended Learning Self-Assessment Toolkit [www.nmost.org](http://www.nmost.org)
- NMOST. (2016). Guiding Principles for Quality OST Programming [www.nmost.org](http://www.nmost.org)
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