

KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCIES FOR AFTERSCHOOL PROFESSIONALS

Knowledge Area: Child & Youth Development

Afterschool professionals have an understanding of how children and youth develop physically, cognitively, socially, and emotionally, as well as how children improve and use language skills and other forms of communication. In addition, professionals need to know about various factors that influence child development, and how individual children's development varies.

COMPETENCY INDICATORS	INDICATORS			
A. How Children & Youth Develop	New	Emerging	Solid	N/A
1. Describes principles of growth and development.				
2. Identifies and defines developmental domains: physical, cognitive, social, emotional.				
3. Identifies developmental milestones of children, kindergarten through adolescence.				
4. Recognizes how children are different from adults in learning, behavior, abilities, and needs.				
5. Recognizes the impact of biological and environmental influences on a child's development.				
6. Recognizes the importance of observing and documenting children and youth development, begins to keep anecdotal records, and communicates with others about the observations.				
7. Identifies major theories and theorists of child and youth development.				
8. Recognizes the crucial role of asset building in child/youth development.				
9. Recognizes when to seek the help of others in understanding and addressing children/youth's individual special needs.				
10. Identifies resources for acquiring information about identified special needs.				
11. Conducts, documents, and interprets observations, as needed.				

	INDICATORS			
B. Influences on Child & Youth Development	New	Emerging	Solid	N/A
1. Describes the importance of transitions in child/youth development				
2. Describes the importance of seeing the child/youth in the context of his/her family and culture, including the community.				
3. Describes the importance of youths' interactions and relationships with peers and adults.				
4. Recognizes physical or behavior changes that may indicate the presence of stress in children's/youth's lives.				
5. Identifies the impact of youth and child/youth health on their behavior and ability to interact and learn.				
6. Describes factors influencing resiliency in children and youth.				
7. Uses preventative strategies that influence and optimize healthy development..				
8. Understands how society influences development (for example, poverty, trauma, homelessness, violence, and social biases) and affects the needs of individual children.				
9. Analyzes the role of media in child and youth development and behavior.				

COMPETENCY INDICATORS	INDICATORS			
C. Individual Variance	New	Emerging	Solid	N/A
1. Recognizes that children and youth have different temperaments, needs, rates of development, and learning styles.				
2. Recognizes that stress resulting from trauma, abuse, neglect, poverty, and other factors such as current events impacts children's development and behavior in individual ways.				
3. Recognizes the special needs of children and youth.				
4. Recognizes physical or behavior changes that may indicate the presence of stress.				
5. Identifies temperament and individual differences in children/youth and their impact on development and behavior.				
6. Identifies and discusses issues in child development arising from individual differences.				
7. Employs a variety of strategies to help youth cope with stress, conflict, and other developmental challenges.				
8. Develops strategies to support each youth's individual assets, needs, and interests.				

Knowledge Area: Families and Communities

Afterschool professionals understand that children and youth are members of a family and a community. Afterschool professionals work respectfully in partnership with families and communities. They value the diversity of and their unique relationships with children and youth, families, and communities. They also share information and resources with children and youth and their families that support their well-being.

COMPETENCY INDICATORS	INDICATORS				
	Relationships	New	Emerging	Solid	N/A
1. Acknowledges the importance of building strong relationships with families.					
2. Maintains professional boundaries with families.					
3. Identifies assets and challenges of individuals and families.					
4. Supports and values families as active decision-makers and educators.					
5. Involves children/youth and families in planning and implementing learning experiences.					
6. Facilitates opportunities to increase parents' knowledge about child/youth behavior and development.					
7. Facilitates opportunities for families to interact with one another and the greater community.					

COMPETENCY INDICATORS	INDICATORS				
	Communication	New	Emerging	Solid	N/A
1. Identifies different types of communication (verbal, non-verbal).					
2. Uses "release of information" protocol appropriately.					
3. Utilizes a variety of strategies with families that encourage feedback and evaluation.					
4. Understands a variety of communication techniques, including conflict resolution and active listening and selects appropriate methods to support and build trusting relationships with families and youth.					
5. Integrates children's home cultures and languages into the program.					

COMPETENCY INDICATORS	INDICATORS			
Community Involvement and Resources	New	Emerging	Solid	N/A
1. Identifies resources that support children and families.				
2. Identifies state and national resources that support children and families.				
3. Assists families to make their own referrals and requests for services.				
4. Collaborates with community service providers to ensure access to services for children and families.				

Knowledge Area: Curriculum and Learning Environment

Afterschool professionals understand that learning occurs through the combination of interactions, structures and experiences in children’s and youth’s daily lives. They create a balanced program that promotes life skills and enhances cognitive, social, emotional and physical development. A variety of strategies are needed to match children’s and youth’s interests and unique approaches to learning.

COMPETENCY INDICATORS	INDICATORS			
Interactions	New	Emerging	Solid	N/A
1. Builds positive, respectful, and trusting interactions with children and youth.				
2. Supervises children and youth using positive and age appropriate guidance strategies.				
3. Encourages and supports children and youth to actively participate in a variety of activities.				
4. Acknowledges feelings and emotional expression.				
5. Responds to children and youth in ways that demonstrate understanding of their individual needs, abilities and interests.				
6. Promotes positive relationships among children and youth and helps all children and youth feel accepted in the group.				
7. Models empathy and mutual respect toward others.				
8. Guides children and youth to resolve conflicts and solve problems.				
9. Provides individual, large and small group activities.				
10. Provides child/youth directed and staff-directed activities.				

COMPETENCY INDICATORS	INDICATORS			
Curriculum and Enrichment	New	Emerging	Solid	N/A
1. Demonstrates awareness of best and promising practices for state and nationally recognized standards.				
2. Chooses activities that are appropriate for the cognitive, social, emotional and physical developmental level of the children and youth.				
3. Observes and integrates children's and youth's interests when planning learning opportunities.				
4. Recognizes the opportunities for learning in all program choices.				
5. Recognizes the importance for children and youth to develop new skills				
6. Selects activities that promote literacy.				
7. Encourages the development of children's and youth's creative expression by offering programs in the arts.				

COMPETENCY INDICATORS	INDICATORS			
Assessment	New	Emerging	Solid	N/A
1. Provides written feedback about children and youth's participation and progress.				
2. Develops a plan for tracking children's and youth's participation and progress and communicates conclusions with families and staff, as needed.				
3. Responds to the individual special needs of children and youth.				
4. Identifies and documents eligibility guidelines and referral processes for identified special needs and services.				

Knowledge Area: Healthy and Safe Environments

Afterschool professionals use practices that protect children’s and youth’s health, safety, and development. This includes having knowledge of good nutrition, the importance of regular physical activity, personal decision-making, and relationship-building.

COMPETENCY INDICATORS	INDICATORS			
Healthy Environments and Health Needs	New	Emerging	Solid	N/A
1. Summarizes and follows applicable health and safety licensing regulations.				
2. Identifies and follows procedures to avoid the spread of infectious illnesses.				
3. Responds to injuries and other health issues using appropriate documentation, communication, and treatment protocols.				
4. Identifies and implements sanitation procedures.				
5. Identifies, documents, and reports suspected emotional and physical abuse or neglect immediately.				
6. Identifies and encourages self-care activities, such as good hygiene and stress management to foster healthy development.				
7. Observes the overall health status of children or youth, and notes changes, concerns, or problems.				
8. Identifies local health care professionals, health services, and health resources available to children, youth, and their families.				
9. Develops and implements policies regarding exclusion and readmission of sick children and youth.				

COMPETENCY INDICATORS	INDICATORS			
Safe Environments	New	Emerging	Solid	N/A
1. Adapts the indoor and outdoor environments to maximize the safety and independence of all children/youth.				
2. Selects and maintains indoor and outdoor equipment and materials.				
3. Identifies potential safety hazards and acts to prevent and/or remove them.				
4. Teaches simple safety precautions and rules to children/youth and enforces them consistently.				
5. Conducts periodic safety assessments of the program environment and makes recommendations for appropriate modifications.				
6. Follows emergency evacuation policies and procedures.				
7. Considers safety and preparedness issues when planning all on and off-site programs.				
8. Develops protocols and emergency evacuation policies for on and off site programs.				

COMPETENCY INDICATORS	INDICATORS			
Nutrition & Physical Activity	New	Emerging	Solid	N/A
1. Follows applicable regulations to ensure proper nutrition, food preparation and service.				
2. Recognizes and avoids health hazards in meals and snacks (choking, allergens, burns).				
3. Provides meals and snacks for children or youth with special dietary needs as instructed.				
4. Provides meals and snacks that are appropriately portioned.				
5. Teaches children and youth about healthy food choices.				
6. Involves children and youth in menu planning and snack preparation.				
7. Models good health, nutrition and hygiene habits for children and youth.				
8. Provides time and space for active play and/or regular aerobic activity.				
9. Informs families about appropriate clothing for program activities.				
10. Recognizes the long-term health risks of extended periods of screen media and other passive activities.				
11. Communicates with children/youth and families about good nutrition and hygiene habits.				
12. Plans and evaluates menus to ensure nutrition and cultural dietary preferences.				

