

## Texas Standards for High Quality Afterschool, Summer and Expanded Learning Programs Assessment Tool

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### **Instructions**

Thank you for using this assessment tool designed to accompany the [\*Texas Standards for High Quality Afterschool, Summer and Expanded Learning Programs\*](#). This tool can be used by any stakeholder, including staff, Project Directors, and/or foundations who support expanded learning. This tool has been designed to facilitate conversation about the elements of quality within the program as well as conversation about areas of programming that may need improvement. The Texas Standards for High Quality Afterschool, Summer and Expanded Learning Programs represent the highest level of quality possible. To learn more about the development of the standards, visit [www.txpost.org](http://www.txpost.org).

### **Before beginning an assessment process, it's important to:**

1. **Communicate and demonstrate transparency about the value of assessment and the process you are planning to use.** Indicators listed in this tool can be observed through program observation, but also through conversation with program staff as well as reviewing documentation provided by the program. For many programs, there may be multiple sets of assessment observations potentially using different tools. If the Project Director is using it to design next year's program, make sure to communicate that purpose with all staff. If all staff are asked to complete it, make sure they understand why- is it the beginning of a new continuous quality improvement process or has a funder requested this information? Will the scores and comments be used to design professional development workshops? Some funders may choose to have programs complete this tool as a part of the grant application, or use it as a means of assessment. If so, they will provide additional guidance on how the tool will factor into their funding decisions. This is not a tool designed for assessment of individual staff members.
2. **Ensure a quality observation.** Because some indicators in this tool are designed to assess elements of quality at the point of service during a program, ensure that your observation(s) allow for adequate time to observe facilitated activities. For example, snack time may be a time to observe Relationships and Interactions (Section 6), but not Programming and Activities (Section 3). Additionally, ensure that adequate time is allotted for observation. A twenty-minute observation will usually not provide enough time to comment on multiple sections within the tool. This tool can easily be broken down into sections to observe different activities or groups on different days. Please use the tool as it works best for your organization.
3. **Understand that 'Not Applicable' is an option that can be used as appropriate.** Although not applicable is listed for all indicators, it should be used when an item is truly not applicable. Expanded learning programs vary widely, and if the indicator does not align with the model beginning observed, it should be not be assessed. For example, if your program is a one on one mentoring program, section 6.2 on youth to youth interactions will not apply. As an assessor if an indicator is not observed- why was it not observed- due to the nature of the activity? Was the observation too short? If the indicators are not applicable to the program in general, then N/A should be checked. For example, if you are observing a Robotics program, whose mission is to increase understanding of

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Robotics, then Indicator 4.2.d (*The program offers opportunities for participants to increase global awareness.*) may not be applicable, but it may if youth are preparing for a global competition and discussing the different cultures of competing teams. You know the program and its design- you be the judge.

4. **Use program staff as a resource.** Completing this assessment can be a collaborative process. The data collected from this assessment process can lead to valuable conversations with staff members about program quality and clarify focus on specific areas of improvement. If you are a program director using the tool as a part of continuous quality improvement, comparing observation notes and scores is a good way to define components of quality in your program and identify areas that may need improvement and develop an action plan.
5. **Some of the indicators refer to the point of service while others relate to the administration of the program.** The tool is a comprehensive assessment of program quality, for some indicators, a conversation with the Program Director or other staff member and review of documents will provide the information required to assess and assign a score. For other indicators, an observation is required. The assessment is organized to follow the flow of the Standards document. Based on the type of data the observer will collect, you may use several data collection methods to complete each section. Included in each section description are the data collection methods, this will allow you to organize your assessment process and observation.
6. **Use this as ONE tool in the process of continuous quality improvement.** There are multiple assessment tools available and this can be one of the tools you use as you build and cultivate a high quality afterschool, summer or expanded learning program.

#### **Scoring:**

The assessment tool uses a rating system of 1-4 to assess the degree to which each indicator is demonstrated during the observation of the program. If indicators are not evident during the observation, they may be given a 1 or a Not Applicable depending on the program's environment and context.

- 1- The program is just beginning to work in this area and there is a lot of room for improvement, or the indicator was not observed but is a part of the program design. The program did not demonstrate quality in this area during the observation.
- 2- The program may be working on this indicator, but there is room for improvement on the path to high quality. There is some evidence that the standard is understood, but additional work can and should be done to implement the indicator in a way that improves quality in this area.
- 3- The program has achieved a high level of proficiency in this area and the observer is able to note concrete practices that demonstrate quality. The program is good at this practice and with some additional work would be exceptional.

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- 4- The program is exceptional at demonstrating quality to meet this indicator and is working consistently to implement high quality practices. The program can serve as an exemplar for other programs for this indicator.

**Not Applicable (N/A)** - The program does not practice this indicator and/or the indicator does not apply to the program. The Not applicable (N/A) indicator does not indicate that the indicator was simply not observed. This is particularly applicable to Standards 7.1-7.3. If the indicator does not apply to the program, it can be noted during the observation or through conversations with staff or review of program/agency documents. If you are unsure about the use of non-applicable, ensure you understand the model that the program is using, such as mentoring or single purpose (i.e. specific curriculum focused on life skill development). This will help you understand if the model is being implemented with fidelity which can assist in understanding what indicators apply.

The data collected from this assessment should be used as part of a continuous quality improvement process and guide conversation on how to improve quality within a program. Programs are welcome to use the tool to develop a comprehensive rubric that aligns with each indicator. See the example below:

***Standard 3.2: The program implements activities with fidelity and best practices in youth development and instruction.***

***Indicator d. The program includes structured activities and experiences that promote youth leadership, such as group facilitation or mentoring youth.***

- 1- *No observation of structured activities, observation included only free play, and/or experiences that were not aligned with promotion of leadership and support of youth.*
- 2- *Evidence of minimal structured activities, for example, board games available for use by youth. Activities not designed to promote youth leadership, or support of youth.*
- 3- *Evidence of structured activities, games, centers, opportunities for youth to organize and demonstration leadership. Activities may be inconsistent or observer may note gaps in implementation.*
- 4- *An exemplar program, activities consistently provide opportunities for youth to demonstrate leadership, youth are observed leading activities or small groups. Structured activities engage youth consistently and the observer can observe differentiated activities.*