

What Constitutes a Quality After-school Program?

- **Flexibility with Structure**
 - ✓ **Established schedule**
 - ✓ **Opportunities to choose**
 - ✓ **Registration and Attendance**

- **Safe Environment**
 - ✓ **Use a variety of building and ground space**
 - ✓ **Adult supervision**
 - ✓ **Attentive to safety, health, and nutrition issues**

- **Variety of Activities**
 - ✓ **Address academic, social, emotional, recreational needs**
 - ✓ **Structured and unstructured activities**
 - ✓ **Activities varied and age appropriate - choices**
 - ✓ **Project-based, skill building activities**

- **Intentional Links to the School Day**
 - ✓ **Expand and enrich – not duplicate – school activities**
 - ✓ **Communicate with administration, guidance, teachers**
 - ✓ **Balance connection to & independence from school day**

- **Well Prepared Staff**
 - ✓ **Committed and caring**
 - ✓ **Positive role models**
 - ✓ **Staff who connect with youth**
 - ✓ **Professional development opportunities**

- **Development of Social/Life Skills**
 - ✓ **Evidence-based prevention programs**
 - ✓ **Collaborative learning, peer tutoring, character education**
 - ✓ **Culturally relevant and diverse programs**

- **Family and Community Involvement**
 - ✓ **Effective partnerships among family, community, & school**
 - ✓ **Involvement in design and implementation**
 - ✓ **Family focused activities**
 - ✓ **Service learning/Community service**

- **Outcomes and Evaluation**
 - ✓ **Drives program quality**
 - ✓ **Accountability**

- **Youth Involvement**
 - ✓ **Involved in program design**
 - ✓ **Build sense of ownership**
 - ✓ **Develop responsibility**

These quality elements were adapted from a number of sources including: National Institute on Out-of-School Time, Policy Studies Associates, Inc, and Harvard Family Research Foundation.

Shared characteristics of high-performing after-school programs...

- **A broad array of enrichment opportunities.**
- **Opportunities for skill building and mastery.**
- **Intentional relationship-building.**
- **A strong, experienced leader/manager supported by a trained and supervised staff.**
- **The administrative, fiscal, and professional-development support of the sponsoring organization.**

From: Policy Studies Associates, *Shared Features of High-Performing After-School Programs*