2015-2016 Guide for Facilitating *The Utah Afterschool Program Quality Assessment and Improvement Tool*

I. Overview of the *Quality Tool*

The goal of the Utah Afterschool Program Quality Assessment and Improvement Tool (*Quality Tool*) is to assist afterschool programs at any stage of development, appraise their progress in four quality areas, and to promote relevant training and other strategies for ongoing program improvement. The *Quality Tool* is to be utilized in conjunction with the Plan for Improvement to assess goals set at the beginning of the current school year. The *Quality Tool* has been developed by a statewide committee comprised of diverse afterschool providers and is supported by the Utah Afterschool Network, the Department of Workforce Services Office of Child Care, and the Utah State Office of Education.

The *Quality Tool* outlines standards in four areas and is applicable to all types of afterschool and community school programs serving youth of all ages. It may be used in conjunction with other formal and informal evaluation methods to help programs identify strengths and needs, and inform continuous improvement efforts and plans.

The *Quality Tool* is a living document that reflects ongoing stakeholder feedback and the latest research in the out-of-school time field.

II. *Quality Tool* Format

The *Quality Tool* is organized into four essential areas of an effective afterschool program including: *1) Be Safe 2) Develop Meaningful Relationships 3) Learn New Skills and 4) Administration*. The areas are formatted as follows:

- Domains, Major Standards, Indicators and Descriptions: Each area consists of **Domains** (categories within each area), **Major Standards** (quality outcomes), **Indicators** (defining elements for each Major Standard) and **Descriptions** (observational examples of indicators).

- Indicator Response Options: Programs will assess how well their program addresses each part of the indicator using the response options provided. The Quality Tool includes two types of response options:
  1) **Yes/No** (*Be Safe* area only) and 2) **5-Point Likert Scale**

1. **Yes/No** Response Option Example

B. YOUTH HEALTH AND SAFETY *DOMAIN*

MAJOR STANDARD **B-1.** *Policies and procedures are implemented to ensure the health and safety of all youth.*			
INDICATORS	**YES**	**NO**	**OBSERVATIONAL NARRATIVE**
6) Youth with communicable diseases are not permitted in the program and participant parents/guardians are notified in writing of any possibility of exposure. Description • Communicable diseases policies/procedures are outlined in the parent and staff handbooks. • Policies/procedures include guidelines regarding separating youth who become ill during program hours from other participants.			

2. **Likert Scale** Response Option Example

A. STAFF AND YOUTH RELATIONSHIPS *DOMAIN*

MAJOR STANDARD **A-1.** *Staff and youth know, respect and support each other.*	*Select how well your program addresses each of the indicators*					
INDICATORS	**NOT AT ALL**	**SLIGHTLY WELL**	**MODERATELY WELL**	**VERY WELL**	**EXTREMELY WELL**	**OBSERVATIONAL NARRATIVE**
1) Staff promote a respectful and welcoming environment for all youth. Description • All youth are greeted by name. • Staff engage youth in friendly conversation.						
2) Staff facilitate and participate in all program activities with youth. Description • Staff actively and consistently interact with youth. • Staff are on task and attentive to youth and program needs.						

- <u>Observational Narrative:</u> This section provides space to document explanation and comments related to the identified response.

III. *Quality Tool* Assessment Process

Program quality is an ongoing process involving reflection and thoughtful assessment that cannot be accomplished
by one person alone. Rather, it is best achieved through continuous practice that includes staff, parents, youth and community partners/stakeholders throughout the year. Suggested guidelines for implementing the *Quality Tool* at your program are outlined below:

A. Getting Ready for the *Quality Tool* Assessment Process
As a best practice we recommend using a team approach when facilitating the *Quality Tool* Assessment Process. Creating an environment that actively promotes continuous improvement will enable the Program Review Team to learn and work together to support the program's mission and goals.

1. Select a Program Review Team (3-5 individuals) comprised of the following

stakeholders (use the **Program Review Team worksheet** to list team members):
- Program Staff
- School Day Teachers
- School Administration (i.e. principal)
- Community//Business Partners
- Parents/Guardians
- Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
- Youth/Participants

2. Schedule a meeting with the Program Review Team to introduce the *Quality Tool* and become familiar with the content and format.
- Introduce and/or review the *Quality Tool* and previously submitted *Plan for Improvement* with the Program Review Team.
- Assign Team members an area of the *Quality Tool* that is most relevant to their expertise and knowledge. For example, parents may be interested in *Develop Meaningful Relationships*, while teachers may focus on *Learn New Skills.*
- Develop a logistics plan for assessment observations to ensure that each Program Review Team member has a chance to see a variety of program offerings.
  - Provide copies of previously submitted *Plan for Improvement* for consideration throughout the assessment process.
- Schedule time for a follow-up meeting to discuss the assessment responses.

B. Conducting the Assessment
Provide Program Review Team members a copy of their assigned area(s) of the *Quality Tool*.

1. Direct each Program Review Team member to complete his/her assigned area(s) in accordance with the agreed upon schedule. Each assessor should understand the following instructions when completing responses:
- Select a response option based on how well the program is addressing each indicator.
- Provide explanation and comments to support the identified response for each indicator.
- Offer an appropriate explanation in writing if indicators do not seem to fit the program.

2. Collect a copy of each Program Review Team member's completed assessment and notes for review.

C. Following Up
Conduct a follow up meeting with the Program Review Team to discuss the assessment responses, then compile the information into one complete cumulative assessment.

1. Review and discuss assessment findings with the Program Review Team. Provide copies of the completed assessments and observation notes.

- Discuss discrepancies and come to a group consensus to consolidate responses/findings.

   2. Prioritize Indicators where improvement is needed.
- Update the *Plan for Improvement* that was completed in the fall of 2015 with progress on previously established goals and where improvement is needed. Develop improvement strategies and identify relevant training and other needed resources.

3. Send each Program Review Team member and OST Specialist a copy of the updated *Plan for Improvement* outlining specific responsibilities, resources and any additional information. Follow up with members, as needed, to ensure that assigned responsibilities are met by the planned completion date.

IV. Online Data Collection

Follow directions below to enter the *Quality Tool* Assessment responses into Qualitrics. The *Quality Tool* will be open February 1, 2016 and close March 4, 2016.

1. Go to www.utahafterschool.org
2. Click Program Resources
3. Select *Quality Tool* Assessment
4. Follow web-prompts for *Quality Tool* Submission
5. Log-In using UAN username and password

Be prepared to enter the following information during your online submission:

1. Quality Tool Program Information

2. Quality Tool Assessment responses.

Note: If prepared with needed documents and information, submitting *Quality Tool* Assessment results should take one to two hours. UAN recommends completing the assessment in one sitting.

When all data has been entered, you have the option to print a summary of the data you entered or save the data as an Adobe PDF file after you hit the **Submit** button.

All data provided will only be used for the purpose of tracking information linked to your program. No identifying or individual program information will be shared outside of the UAN Office and our partners without permission from program administration.

If you have any questions regarding the *Quality Tool* implementation process or would like to schedule technical assistance, please contact the Utah Afterschool Network at **801-359-2722** or [info@utahafterschool.org.](mailto:info@utahafterschool.org)