

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

The Utah Afterschool Network (UAN) has built upon the thinking and experience of providers, researchers and professionals in Utah and around the country to spearhead the development of statewide quality standards and the Quality Tool assessment process presented in this guide.

I. Overview of the *Quality Tool*

The goal of the Utah Afterschool Program Quality Assessment and Improvement Tool (*Quality Tool*) is to assist after-school 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* has been developed by a statewide committee comprised of diverse after-school providers and is supported by the Utah Afterschool Network, Department of Workforce Services Office of Work and Family Life, the Utah State Office of Education, and Salt Lake County.

The *Quality Tool* outlines standards in four areas (*Be Safe, Develop Meaningful Relationships, Learn New Skills and Administration*) and is applicable to all types of after-school and community school settings serving children and/or teens (i.e. schools, community-based organizations, recreational/government and private providers). It may be used in concert 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 after-school field. Your ongoing input will continue to make the *Quality Tool* relevant and user-friendly and will inform future revisions.

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*. **All four areas are formatted as follows and descriptions are provided for each section.**

A. STAFF HEALTH AND SAFETY (DOMAIN)

A-1 All staff are professionally qualified to work with youth. (MAJOR STANDARD)	Observations / Rationale	Performance Level			
INDICATORS		1	2	3	4
<p>1) All staff meet minimum age requirements and position qualifications. Level 3 Description</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff who are responsible for the direct supervision of youth are 18 years of age or older and meet position qualifications of the hiring organization. • All staff under the age of 18 work under the direct physical supervision of staff 18 years of age or older. <p>Resource Links Staff Handbook Sample Policy Parent Handbook Sample Information</p>		Standard Not Met	Some Progress Made	Meets Standard	Exceeds Standard

- Domains, Major Standards, Indicators: Each area consists of Domains (categories within each area), Major Standards (quality outcomes) and Indicators (descriptive elements for each Major Standard).
- Performance Levels: Using the Performance Level rating system found on the right side of the *Quality Tool*, programs assess the progress level in each Major Standard as defined by the Indicators. Organizations are expected to work toward a **Level 3** (Meets Standards) in all Indicators. The four Performance Levels include:

- Level 1** **Standard Not Met/Must Address and Improve**
Not observed; needs significant support in this area
- Level 2** **Some Progress Made**
Seldom observed; could use additional focused assistance in this area
- Level 3** **Meets Standard**
Frequently observed; demonstrates achievement in this area
- Level 4** **Exceeds Standard**
Consistently observed; is prepared to help/work with others in this area

- Level 3 Descriptions: Performance Level 3 Descriptions (Meets Standard) are provided for each Indicator in all four areas of the *Quality Tool*.
- Observations /Rationale: This section provides space to document justification and comments related to the program’s identified performance level rating.
- Resource Links: Resource Links, including sample policies, documents, handbooks, and reference to Utah law, are provided for each Indicator in all four areas of the *Quality Tool*.
- Plan for Improvement: A Plan for Improvement section following each of the four areas provides space to outline program improvement strategies, including: specific indicators where improvement is needed, timeline/date to be completed, implementation strategies, individual(s) responsible, available resources and assistance needed. (See example below.)

Indicator	Timeline/Date to be completed	Strategies	Responsibilities	Resources	Assistance Needed
A. 1-8	January 30, 2012	Contact Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) or School District Student Services to schedule a training. Implement training with staff.	Site Coordinator	DCFS School District	Coordinate with UAN Afterschool Specialist to identify appropriate training organization.

III. Implementing the *Quality Tool*

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. Suggested guidelines for implementing the *Quality Tool* at your site are outlined below:

A. Getting Ready for the Assessment Process

It is recommended that programs use a team approach when facilitating the *Quality Tool* self-assessment process. Creating an environment that actively promotes continuous improvement will enable the Site Review Team to learn and work together to support the program's mission and goals.

1. Select a Site Review Team (3-5 individuals) comprised of the following stakeholders:
 - Program Coordinators/Staff
 - Parents/Guardians/PTA
 - Principals/School Administrators
 - Teachers
 - Students
 - Community Members/Business Partners
2. Schedule a meeting with the Site Review Team to introduce the *Quality Tool* and become familiar with its content and format.
 - Introduce Team to *Quality Tool*.
 - Assign Team members an area of the *Quality Tool* that is most relevant to their area of expertise and knowledge. For example, parents may be interested in *Develop Meaningful Relationships*, while teachers may focus on *Learn New Skills*.
 - Discuss logistics for implementing the *Quality Tool*.
 - Schedule observation times that allow for each Site Review Team member to see a variety of program offerings.
 - Set up time for a follow-up meeting.

B. Administering the *Quality Tool*

Provide Site Review Team members a copy of their assigned area(s) of the *Quality Tool*. Each program site will administer and complete all four areas of the *Quality Tool* based on the observation schedule decided upon.

1. Complete scheduled observations and written assessments for each *Quality Tool* area.
 - Direct each Site Review Team member to complete his/her assigned area(s).
 - Rate each Indicator 1-4 based on observable indications of quality. Utilize Performance Level 3 descriptions as a guide.
 - Provide written justification to support the performance level rating selected for each Indicator in the Observation/Rationale section. If any Indicators do not seem to fit your program, offer an appropriate explanation.
2. Collect a copy of each Site Review Team member's completed assessment for review.

C. Following Up

Meet with the Site Review Team to discuss self-assessment results, identify specific Indicators where improvement is needed and complete one cumulative assessment.

1. Review assessment findings with the Site Review Team. Provide copies of all completed assessments with areas of discrepancy highlighted.
 - Discuss discrepancies, come to group consensus and consolidate findings.
 - Discuss strengths and areas where improvement is needed.
2. Prioritize Indicators where improvement is needed.
 - Utilize the Plan for Improvement section following each area to address Indicators where improvement is needed. Develop improvement strategies and identify relevant training and other needed resources.
 - Determine timeline and identify individuals responsible for the actions outlined in the Plan for Improvement.
3. Send each Site Review Team member a copy of the agreed-upon 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 completion date.

IV. Online Data Collection

Assessment and feedback information will be entered on-line for each program site through the UAN Website (www.utahafterschool.org). For example, if your organization provides programming at five different sites, you will enter five separate assessments (one per site).

The online data entry process is comprised of four sections: 1) Instructions for Data Entry; 2) Program and Contact Information; 3) The Four Quality Areas; and 4) Feedback on the Assessment Process. It is important that all sections be completed.

Specific instructions on how to input your site assessment and feedback results are outlined in the Instructions for Data Entry section. The first step is to register with the UAN website as follows:

1. Go to www.utahafterschool.org
2. Create an account by clicking 'register' in the left-hand column.
3. Once you have created an account, sign in with the user name and password you created.
4. Go to the *Quality Tool* page, scroll to the bottom, and click on the online data entry system. Follow instructions.
5. Once you have completed your data entry, you will receive an email with the data you entered; the data will also be available through your account settings on the UAN website.

Please note that all data provided will only be used for the purpose of tracking information linked to your site. Neither your mailing address nor any other individual site information will be shared outside of the UAN Quality Committee. The UAN Quality Committee will analyze the assessment and feedback results to identify training and technical assistance needs and to inform future *Quality Tool* revisions.

If you have any questions regarding the *Quality Tool* implementation process or would like to schedule technical assistance or training, please call the Utah Afterschool Network at

(801) 359-2722.

Thank you participating in this important statewide quality initiative!