

San Francisco's Afterschool for All Core Competencies for Afterschool Staff: Self-Assessment Tool

What are Core Competencies?

Core competencies are the abilities of staff to apply specific knowledge and skills to their professional practice that are likely to produce positive participant outcomes. Several communities have adopted a set of core competencies for afterschool staff to:

Need for Identifying Core Competencies

- Help afterschool workers name the skills they develop and identify skills they can work toward developing
- Encourage employers to recruit, hire and promote staff based on mastery of competencies which will increase the field's professionalization efforts and development of career ladders
- Align workforce development, professional development and technical assistance efforts around a central set of competencies

Ultimately, all of the above actions will result in improving the quality of afterschool programs and therefore the positive outcomes for youth participants.

Why Core Competencies?

Not only will core competencies help you in your current afterschool position to do the best possible job working with children and youth, many of the skills and knowledge outlined below are transferable to careers in many other fields. Mastering the competencies and learning how to discuss how you use them in your everyday practice will help you to make your next upward career move, either in the field of afterschool or whatever you choose to do next.

What San Francisco Afterschool for All?

The San Francisco Afterschool for All effort aims to create a citywide afterschool system that addresses challenges and fosters collaboration so that the goal of providing "afterschool for all" elementary and middle school children is realized. Guiding the Afterschool for All Initiative is the Afterschool for All Advisory Council, composed of representatives of the school district, city departments, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, funders and parents. In fall 2009, the Afterschool for All Advisory Council created a workgroup to identify core competencies of afterschool staff as part of its overall efforts to increase collaboration and efficiently utilize resources to enhance afterschool program quality.

Assess yourself

This tool is designed to help you reflect on your own development of the identified core competencies.

Go through the grid below and ask yourself how well you meet each of the competencies. Mark a 😊 if you feel that you meet the competency and can explain why it is important. Circle the indicators that you have exhibited and/or write in examples of other ways you have demonstrated your mastery of the competency. Mark a 😊 if you have met some of the indicators of the competency but still need to work on fully developing your skills and ability to master the competency. Circle the indicators you have met and/or write in other examples. Mark a 😐 if you have not met the indicators or do not understand why the competency is important. Use the comment section to fill in any thoughts, questions or ideas you have about meeting that competency, or any training or professional development topics you think you could benefit from.

Please use this tool to reflect on your own development and to think about how to enhance your skills and abilities. Keeping track of your growing skills and knowledge should help you both in your current afterschool position and for thinking about any other future career moves.

This tool includes:

- Competencies for line staff
- Competencies for supervisors

Core Competencies for Afterschool Line Staff

Below the competencies are listed with examples of indicators of staff meeting those competencies. The competencies with “BASELINE” have been recommended as baseline competencies. The other competencies are recommended for staff who have mastered the baseline competencies.

Policy and Procedures

Competency 1:	Ensures for the health and safety of participants BASELINE				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepares the program space to be free of foreseeable hazards • Intervenes when potentially unsafe situations occur • Can perform basic first aid • Is aware of participants’ health and medical needs as appropriate, and adjusts activities as needed 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 				

Competency 2:	Follows safety and emergency procedures BASELINE				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can summarize legal responsibilities for reporting requirements for reporting child abuse or when a person may do harm to him or herself or another • Understands when it is appropriate to inform and involve supervisor • Can implement key aspects of site safety plan • Knows health and safety procedures and can share them with other staff, youth, and families 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 				

Competency 3:	Maintains accurate program records and follows reporting procedures BASELINE				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeps accurate program attendance • Follows procedure for reporting incidents, as required by the program policies (e.g., accidents, criminal activity, serious violation of program rules, etc.) 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 				

Program Goals and Content

Competency 4:	Deliberately designs and conducts activities that are focused on program goals BASELINE				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulates program goals and how individual activities support them • Develops lesson plans that state the purpose of the activity as it relates to program goals • Designs and/or adopts existing materials appropriate for background and experience of participants 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 				

Competency 5:	Supports a program environment that is learner-centered BASELINE				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducts age-appropriate activities and recognizes when an activity is inappropriate and makes necessary adjustments • Conducts activities that are motivating, challenging and engaging • Conducts activities that allow participants to explore their personal interests and learn about their everyday world • Conducts activities that are “hands-on” and project-based • Conducts activities that promote inquiry • Assists participants in the use of technology to demonstrate their knowledge and express their points of view • Accepts mistakes as opportunities for new learning • Engages participants in assessing their own growth and programs • Celebrates the accomplishments of individuals and the larger group • Assesses participants’ progress towards intentional learning objectives 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 				

Competency 6:	Ability to connect and relate to youth BASELINE				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a sincere desire to work with children and youth • Is comfortable with participants and knows who needs extra attention or support • Presents self in a way that feels approachable to youth • Uses knowledge of youth culture to connect with youth in an appropriate way 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 				

Competency 7:	Promotes a sense of physical and emotional safety BASELINE				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes positive behavior and discourages inappropriate behavior that can affect the feeling of safety • Enforces program rules fairly and consistently • Teaches and models conflict resolution techniques • Ability to use good classroom management techniques • Intervenes promptly, appropriately and effectively when bullying or teasing happens. 				

Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 				
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Competency 8:	Supports positive relationships between staff and program participants BASELINE				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates knowledge of what is going on in participants' lives, neighborhoods and schools. • Gives full attention to participants when they are speaking. • When an individual participant is having a problem, staff pay attention and try to assist. • Communicates high expectations for youth and supports youth as they strive for excellence • Articulates and maintains appropriate boundaries (such as roles, responsibilities, relationships and confidentiality) with youth • Works effectively with high-needs populations • Deals with challenging behavior and to discipline effectively when needed in an age-appropriate manner • Respects appropriate boundaries and confidentiality. 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 				

Competency 9:	Supports positive relationships between participants BASELINE				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaches participants conflict resolution and negotiation strategies and gives opportunities to practice these skills • Incorporates team-building activities • Has knowledge and skills for designing an environment that promotes co-operative learning 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 				

Competency 10:	Conducts activities that expand the participants' knowledge and understanding of their own immediate community and the larger global community				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses community resources to expand participants' knowledge and understanding of their home and larger community • Provides opportunities for participants to interact with community leaders • Encourages community members to share their knowledge and talents with program participants • Provides opportunities for participants in activities to contribute positively to their immediate and/or larger global community 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 				

Competency 11:	Promotes the meaningful engagement and leadership of the participants				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses strong facilitation skills to encourage everyone’s participation • Engages participants in decision-making and leadership opportunities • Engages participants in opportunities to provide service to others and improve the community • Assigns youth program jobs and responsibilities, such as menu planning and language arts activity development. • Designs activities that involve youth and gives them opportunities to develop competence and learn independent living skills. 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 				

Competency 12:	Incorporates activities to promote physical health				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes an attitude and environment that embraces wellness • Incorporates moderate to vigorous physical activity (e.g. sports, games, and exercise) • Conducts activities to expand knowledge and understanding of good nutrition and healthy behavior • Conducts activities that promote healthy choices and the avoidance of risky behaviors • Participates in physical activities to model an active lifestyle for youth participants • Emphasizes character-building components of physical activities (i.e. playing by the rules, treating opponents with respect, learning from mistakes) • Conducts physical activities that are physically and emotionally safe • Provides healthy and nutritious snacks that meet participants' dietary needs • Encourages youth to drink water • Models healthy eating habits by consuming healthy food and drinks during program hours and encourages youth to do the same 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 				

Competency 13:	Incorporates academic content and skill development that contributes to participants' school success and helps address the achievement gap				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates with schools to identify the materials and activities that program staff can offer to complement what happens during the school day • Communicates with schools to share information regarding the learning and social needs of participants, effective strategies, and updates regarding participants' progress • Conducts academic activities that are linked to topics in the curriculum frameworks • Demonstrates awareness of local and state curriculum frameworks • Conducts academic activities that incorporate a variety of age-appropriate instructional strategies to help youth build and master key academic skills and content • Conducts activities that promote effective organizational and study skills • Provides support to help participants effectively complete their schoolwork • Assists participants in the use of the Internet as a research tool • Assists participants in the use of technology to demonstrate their knowledge • Communicates frequently with administrators and faculty to ensure alignment of program activities to the school's learning goals and curricula • Uses information about participants' academic and behavioral progress in school to tailor activities (e.g. assessment results, attendance, language fluency, needed accommodations, grades, and homework completion rates) • Works with youth who need intensive academic support individually or in small groups • Incorporates state content standards 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 				

Competency 14:	Ability to design and deliver project-based learning				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is scope and sequence to activities • There is a culminating event • Activities promote mastery of in a skill area • Core skills are practiced and developed • Activities promote critical thinking and self-reflection 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 				

Professionalism

Competency 15:	Demonstrates positive work and team ethic BASELINE				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has experience and interest in working with youth • Has knowledge and skill in the program’s content areas • Supports colleagues and shares in staff duties • Is punctual and dependable • Participates in required meetings • Dresses appropriately • Respects physical program space, equipment and supplies • Works collaboratively with peers, shares program-related information and shares in collective tasks • Takes initiative to correct immediate problems • gives and receives constructive feedback 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 				

Competency 16:	Adequately informs, shares information, and collaborates with important adults and participants BASELINE				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates to important adults (i.e. parents, caregivers, school and program staff) about individual participant’s strengths, successes, and achievements • Understands and applies guidelines of confidentiality regarding knowledge of participants. • Looks for opportunities for involving families in activities • Fosters good relations between afterschool and school staff through positive interactions (exchanging welcomes, greeting by name, stopping to chat, etc.) • Communicates information about the program, staff, and how the program can support children’s social and academic growth • Encourages parents and caregivers to visit the program to participate in activities, or share their thoughts about the program through informal or formal conversations or other means of communication • Learns the names of all parents and caregivers and greets them personally Supports and empowers parents and caregivers to play an active role in supporting their children’s education 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 				

Competency 17:	Advocates for the participants' needs, providing referral information when appropriate BASELINE				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilizes good judgment in making decisions when a supervisor needs to be involved in referrals to program participants or their families. 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 				

Competency 18:	Respects and honors cultural and human diversity. BASELINE				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotes acceptance of and respect for diversity among participants (cultural, religious, gender, appearance, etc.) Affirms and respects each participant's culture, religion, home language and family values in all verbal and non-verbal exchanges Uses materials that reflect the language, art, music, stories, and games from various cultural traditions Provides opportunities for youth to explore, share, and celebrate their heritage and culture with others Intervenes to explicitly address negative stereotyping and discriminatory statements or practices when they occur Makes reasonable accommodations to serve youth with learning differences, such as breaking activities into smaller parts, working in smaller groups, and providing extra time to complete tasks Can describe own biases and interaction between own cultural values and the cultural values of others Can describe own limitations in understanding and responding to cultural and human differences and seeks assistance when needed Accesses and critically evaluates resources that advance cultural understandings and appreciation of human diversity 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 				

Competency 19:	Strives for self-improvement				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly attends professional workshops, trainings, and conferences to increase competency • Reflects on and evaluates own performance to identify needs for professional growth • Works to apply new learning to everyday work practices • Is open to new ideas and learning opportunities • Is actively expanding personal knowledge and educational opportunities • Ability to use the Internet as a research tool to access field knowledge and locate appropriate resources • Identifies barriers to own professional success and ability to access help 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 				

Competency 20:	Communicates effectively with other staff, stakeholders, parents and participants				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protects and appreciates the need for confidentiality when appropriate • Participates in program, staff and team meetings • Ability to use email to communicate with program staff and stakeholders 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 				

Competency 21:	Ability to effectively support English learners				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes language development by integrating opportunities to speak, listen, read, and write into all activities in a way that supports English language learners • Provides opportunities for English language learners to identify with and use their home language • Plans for and includes both verbal and non-verbal demonstrations of skills with children and youth who may be English language learners using a variety of methods • Responds to English language learners' behavior with understanding of their possible meanings, e.g. tries to comfort children and find causes for and solutions to their problems • Responds to English language learners' attempts at language by extending their words without correcting them (e.g. if the child says "doggy," say "Yes, the little black dog is wagging his tail") • Designs curriculum consistent with current theories of language use and acquisition, including English as a second language • Provides or links youth and their families to outside resources 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 				

Core Competencies for Afterschool Supervisors

Below the competencies are listed with examples of indicators of staff meeting those competencies. The last row in each table also indicates which element of the Quality Self Assessment (QSA) tool relates to the competency. The competencies with “BASELINE” have been recommended as baseline competencies. The other competencies are recommended for staff who have mastered the baseline competencies.

In addition to the baseline competencies detailed below, supervisors should meet all of the competencies listed under “line staff.”

Policy and Procedures

Competency: 1s	Maintains accurate program records and follows reporting procedures BASELINE				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeps accurate program attendance Follows procedure for reporting incidents, as required by the program policies (e.g., accidents, criminal activity, serious violation of program rules, etc.) 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 				

Competency: 2s	Ability to establish and implement effective administrative policies and procedures, as appropriate BASELINE				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruits, hires and supports staff according to well defined policies and practices that support program goals • Has a working knowledge of the program’s funding sources an associated reporting requirements • Conforms activities to funder-mandated content standards and hours of operations • Submits required attendance, evaluation, and expenditure reports accurately and on time 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 				

Competency: 3s	Ability to establish and implement effective financial policies and procedures, as appropriate BASELINE				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produces and manages annual budgets for program or projects that assure that resources are allocated to meet goals and objectives • Accesses resources in a timely way and are able to allocate resources to meet program needs • Continuously monitors expenditures and cash flow and takes immediate action to address potential problems • Actively pursues new sources of funding and in-kind resources to enhance program sustainability • Completes relevant paperwork related to in-kind resources, such as SFUSD snack forms, Summer Lunch Program paperwork, in-kind donation receipts, etc. • Can address and change systematic problems as they arise. 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 				

Staff Support and Program Management

Competency: 4s	Ability to successfully manage program staff BASELINE				Comments
<p>Example Indicators:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly communicates verbally and in writing the job expectations for frontline staff and how they are linked to the program’s goals • Provides staff with on-going support and direction to assist them in successfully completing their job responsibilities • Creates a positive environment in which the professional development of staff is supported, staff is acknowledged for successes, and feedback is positively delivered and received • Regularly observes staff in action and shares feedback in a constructive and respectful manner • Utilizes a standardized performance review process that includes assessment of individual staff members, shares formal performance review assessments with individual staff members, incorporates staff member’s self-assessment using the same standards or matrix, and identifies areas for development and how this will be accomplished • Effectively addresses disciplinary issues • Oversees and encourages training and other capacity-building efforts 				
<p>Other indicators?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 				

Competency: 5s	Ability to recruit high-quality staff and volunteers BASELINE				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruits and hires staff based on their experience and interest in working with youth and their knowledge and skill in the program’s content areas Strives to recruit a diverse group of staff who reflect the racial, ethnic, linguistic, gender, family, and community characteristics of participants Fully orients new staff into the program, including to policies and procedures that affect youth safety or that are required by funders 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 				

Competency: 6s	Ability to engage, and support afterschool staff in implementing program activities to achieve program goals BASELINE				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides staff with needed materials, supplies and preparation time Communicates high expectations for staff and program participants Provides coaching and mentorship to staff, as appropriate Leads effective meetings and trainings on select content that models the approach and specific activities and practices staff are expected to use with program participants 				
Other indicators?					

Competency: 7s	Ability to connect and relate to youth BASELINE				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is familiar with participants and is aware of who needs extra attention or support • Presents self in a way that feels approachable to youth • Demonstrates knowledge of general trends in participants' lives, neighborhoods and schools • Gives full attention to participants when they are addressing the supervisor • Uses knowledge of youth culture to connect with youth in an appropriate way 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 				

Competency: 8s	Strives for self-improvement				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly attends professional workshops, trainings, and conferences to increase competency • Reflects on and evaluates own performance to identify needs for professional growth • Works to apply new learning to everyday work practices • Is open to new ideas and learning opportunities • Is actively expanding personal knowledge and educational opportunities • Ability to use the Internet as a research tool to access field knowledge and locate appropriate resources • Identifies barriers to own professional success and ability to access help 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 				

Competency: 9s	Ability to promote the professional growth and development of program staff				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works together with afterschool staff to develop individual and group learning goals related to the core competencies, and a professional development plan to achieve these goals • Implements the professional development plan and supports the learning goals that will advance the skills of all staff • Provides useful informal and formal feedback to staff related to professional development goals and activities • Continually seeks opportunities and resources that allow self and staff to meet personal and professional growth goals • Works with staff to assess the effectiveness of professional development activities and how they might be improved 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 				

Community and Collaboration

Competency: 10s	Advocates for the participants' needs, providing referral information when appropriate BASELINE				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can name key organizations in the community where participants can be referred for special needs (depression, substance abuse, etc.) or know who to go to for help 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 				

Competency: 11s	Ability to support long-term sustainability through collaborative relationships and fundraising BASELINE				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborates with partners to meet the goals of the program, such as fundraising, administrative support, inclusion of children with special needs or disabilities, and expanding activity options for youth and families • Effectively recruits, engages, and supports community partnerships • Provides regular, genuine opportunities for collaborative partners to provide feedback about the program • Establishes policies and procedures that allow for the effective engagement of partners 				

Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 				
Competency:12s	Has a working knowledge of and abilities to use resources within the broader community	😊	🙂	😬	Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finds the resources to expand the array of opportunities within the program • Enlists the involvement of multiple stakeholders (e.g., parents, community leaders, school leaders, etc.) in program design, implementation and evaluation 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 				

Program Design and Improvement

Competency: 13s	Ability to design program activities that support program goals and incorporate needs and interests of program participants, their families and the broader community BASELINE				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulates the link between specific activities and program goals • Articulates a clear scope and sequence of activities that will contribute to the achievement of program goals • Regularly gathers information and feedback from program participants and other stakeholders as to their needs and interests • Can readily demonstrate ways in which the needs and interests of key stakeholders have been incorporated 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 				

Competency: 14s	Ability to articulate within the organization and to external stakeholders the program's mission and goals, and how program activities align to them.				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates awareness of program mission and goals • Communicates program goals and mission and cites examples of how program activities align to them formally and informally with senior management and line-staff, as well as parents, teachers and other stakeholders 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 				

Competency: 15s	Ability to gather and review data and conduct evaluations for timely program improvement				Comments
Example Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses tools to assess the effectiveness of program activities and program impact • Uses program data to guide staff and others in program improvement • Leads regular staff meetings to review program progress, needs and issues 				
Other indicators?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 				