Rhode Island Core Knowledge and Core Competencies

for

Afterschool and Youth Development Professionals

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INTRODUCTION

Youth Development refers to the natural process of a young person growing and maturing. Youth development also encompasses the philosophy of working with young people in a manner that is strengths-based. In practice, youth development builds on those strengths to promote positive outcomes for children, youth and their families. *(Hamilton, Hamilton, & Pittman, 2004).*

In order to fulfill Rhode Island's commitment to promoting positive development for Rhode Island's children and youth, professionals in afterschool and youth development settings must have a clearly defined set of skills and knowledge.

What are Core Competencies and How are They Used?

Core competencies refer to the observable skills and dispositions needed by professionals in order to provide high-quality afterschool and youth development programming. Competencies are concrete, observable and achievable, and establish standards of practice that strengthen the profession. *Core knowledge* refers to topics describing the knowledge needed by professionals to effectively work with school age children and youth. Ultimately both core knowledge and core competencies are used to define the content of professional development curricula, set goals and outcomes for training, and design mechanisms for the demonstration and assessment of a practitioner's skills. *(Vermont Northern Lights Career Development Center)*

These core competencies are established as the foundation of Rhode Island's HOPE Initiative. HOPE stands for Harbor of Opportunities for Professional Excellence. The HOPE Initiative is Rhode Island's plan for building its career development system. For more extensive information on the HOPE Initiative, please visit www.childspan.net.

Why are Core Competencies Critical to the Field?

· They define what professionals need to know and be able to do in order to provide high-quality afterschool and youth development programming

· They serve as the foundation for decisions and practices carried out by professionals in the field.

· They establish a set of standards that further professionalize the field

What are the Premises Upon Which the RI Teacher Core Competencies are Based?

· Services for children and families must reflect best practice.

· Afterschool and youth development is a profession based on knowledge and experience.

· All afterschool and youth development professionals need to understand the knowledge base of core competencies.

· There must be ownership of the knowledge base of core competencies.

· Core competencies and career lattice levels can promote a sense of common ground and mutual respect among professionals.

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How are the Core Competencies Organized?

This document is organized by the following domains (or content areas). While these domains are listed separately, there is natural overlap across all areas, and as such the separation of the domains is artificial but necessary in order for this document to be as clear and usable as possible.

1. Family, School and Community Relationships
2. Youth Development, Curriculum, & Program Design
3. Health, Safety & Wellness
4. Professional Growth and Leadership
5. Administrator Competencies

A Brief History of How the Rhode Island Core Competencies for Afterschool and Youth Development Professionals Were Developed

The development of the 2009 *Rhode Island Core Knowledge and Core Competencies for Afterschool and Youth Development Professionals* is founded on a process of grass-roots collaboration. The basis for this document is the June 2003 draft version of the *HOPE Core Competencies and Career Lattice Levels for Early Care and Education, School Age and Youth Care Professionals*. The 2003 draft was created via an extensively collaborative process in which stakeholders who were direct service providers in center-based, family child care and afterschool and youth development as well as state leaders and advocates who work in the field of early care and education and afterschool and youth development. In 2007 a committee of representative stakeholders was convened to revise and update the June 2003 draft. During this process, the group incorporated information from newly developing and ever-evolving initiatives in the state of Rhode Island, as well as references to new developments in national trends in early care and education and afterschool and youth development. For a detailed list of who participated in the two waves of the development of this document, please see the "acknowledgements" section later in this document. For a list of sources that inform this document, please see the "Resources and References" section later in the document.

Professional Dispositions for Afterschool and Youth Development Professionals

The Afterschool and Youth Development field, like other professional fields, has a set of attitudes, beliefs, values, and perspectives, that are collectively called "professional dispositions". These dispositions are highly valued among

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OUR ADAPTATION OF BLOOM'S TAXONOMY

Like many core competency documents across the country, this document uses an interpretation of Bloom's Taxonomy as an organizing device. As the competencies become more complex across the four levels, the language of those competencies changes to reflect deeper and more critical reflection and practice. The beginning competencies focus on the professional's foundational knowledge and understanding in a particular area while the more advanced competencies progress from basic knowledge and understanding to application of that knowledge and eventually to analysis, synthesis and evaluation. At the highest levels of competency, professionals are critically reflecting on their knowledge, solving problems and advocating for change based on their critical reflection.

A professional's competency develops on a continuum as s/he becomes more advanced in the field, as reflected in the graphic below. The reader will note blank sections in some levels across the domains. Since knowledge and competencies are cumulative, it is therefore expected that professionals maintain the skills and knowledge described in all lower levels. To avoid redundancy, repetitions have been left out. Please note that at each level, the ASYD professional is expected to have successfully met the knowledge and competencies described in previous levels.

LEVEL 4: Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation	Can critically reflect on knowledge and application, bringing together the knowledge in new combinations, thinking creatively about the knowledge to solve new problems and work to change policies and practices that are not aligned with best practice.
LEVEL 3: Nuanced Application and some Analysis	Can apply content knowledge and information in increasingly nuanced ways. Begins to compare, contrast, and experiment.
LEVEL 2: Application	Can apply content knowledge and information in the classroom setting.
LEVEL 1: Knowledge & Understanding	Can name, recognize, recall information and understand its content.

HOW CAN THE CORE COMPETENCIES BE USED?

INTENDED USER	POSSIBLE USES
Afterschool and Youth Development Staff	• Help teachers focus on critical areas of professional development • Help teachers recognize own areas of exceptional skill and expertise • Help teachers with the creation and implementation of their own personalized professional development plans
Program Directors	• Help program director articulate job expectations including performance-based job descriptions and evaluation processes • Support program director with hiring staff • Help program director with own professional development • Guide prospective and current staff in their own professional growth
Families (consumers of early care and education, afterschool and youth development programming)	• Help families identify best practices to assist in the selection of high-quality programming for their children
Trainers, instructors, and higher education	• Assist with the creation of curricula for college courses and professional development opportunities offered in the community.
State and local agencies	• Serve as an advocacy tool for designing programming and for guiding policy makers

members of the Afterschool and Youth Development field, and are personal attributes that cut across all domains of the core competencies. The *Rhode Island Core Knowledge and Core Competencies for Afterschool and Youth Development Professionals* document was significantly informed by these dispositions.

· **Attitude:** Enjoys working with children and youth

· **Family:** Appreciates and supports the unique and vital role of family in their children's lives

· **Diversity:** Values and celebrates the diversity found among children, youth and their families and in the world around them, and understands that diversity impacts all areas of practice

· **School:** Values and supports the vital role school plays in the development of children and youth

· **Self-reflection:** Reflects on the personal beliefs and values that influence her/his own attitudes and practices

· **Character:** Responds to challenges and changes with flexibility, perseverance and cooperation

· **Creativity:** Values and promotes imagination and creativity

· **Lifelong learning:** Values ongoing professional development and continually seeks ways to increase one's knowledge and skills. Models the love of lifelong learning to colleagues, children, youth and families.

These dispositions are highly valued among members of the Afterschool and Youth Development field, and are personal attributes that cut across all domains of the core competencies.

Directions: Use this worksheet to find your current professional level associated with the Core Competencies for Rhode Island Afterschool and Youth Development (ASYD) Professionals

Enter Points from each section in box

I. FORMAL EDUCATION

A. Degree/Completion:

1) Enter points for highest degree attained:
   (High School or GED) = 20 points;
   (AA/AS) = 30 points;
   (BA/BS) = 60 points;
   (MA, MS, M.Ed., Ph.D., Ed. D.) = 80 points

B. Area of Study:

1) Enter the appropriate points for each of the following degrees you hold that are specifically related to Child/Youth Development:
   (AA/AS) = 10 points;
   (BA/BS) = 20 points;
   (MA, MS, M.Ed., Ph.D., Ed. D.) = 30 points

II. CREDENTIALS

1) Enter the appropriate points for each of the following credentials you hold. Please indicate which credentials you have by checking the box to the right of the item:

☐ CDA = 15 points

☐ YDA = 15 points

☐ RI or other state Teacher Assistant Certification = 15 points

☐ Certificate in Early Childhood Education from CCRI or equivalent certificate = 15 points

☐ RIDE or other state Teaching Certificate (which certifies you as a teacher in a public K-12 school setting) = 30 points

III. TRAINING

1) Enter total number of field-related training and professional development hours in which you have participated over the past 10 years. Divide by 30 =

2) Enter total number PDCs and CEUs. Divide by 1.5 =

3) Enter total number of credits received at an accredited college that were not part of a degree program. (If you are currently in a degree program, but do not yet have your degree, you may count those credits.) Multiply by 0.5 =

IV. EXPERIENCE

1) Enter number of years worked in field. Multiply by 4 =

2) Enter number of years worked in the field in direct service (i.e., directly working with children and youth) =

TOTAL POINTS:
ADD ALL POINTS TOGETHER TO DETERMINE YOUR FINAL LEVEL:

Afterschool and Youth Development Professional Level I (1-50 points)

Afterschool and Youth Development Professional Level 2 (50-100 points)

Afterschool and Youth Development Professional Level 3 (100-150 points)

Afterschool and Youth Development Professional Level 4 (150+ points)

Core Competency Domains

Core Competency Domain 1:
FAMILY, SCHOOL, AND COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

Afterschool and youth development professionals must understand that in addition to participating in afterschool and youth development programming, children and youth inhabit and learn across a continuum of settings including in their homes with family, in schools and other learning environments during the school day, as well as in a multitude of additional settings in the community. Afterschool and youth development professionals must consider the whole ecology of children and youth's lives and build on relationships across settings to promote optimal development for children, youth and families.

TOPIC	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES				
Professionalism/ Ethics	• Maintains confidentiality.			
Role of Family	• Recognizes, respects and supports the role of family as central to the development of children and youth.	• Invites family members to play an active role in their children's education.	• Shares knowledge of typical child/youth development with families and seeks relevant information from families.	• Partners with families in addressing developmental and behavioral needs of children/youth including children with special needs and exceptional learners. • Encourages family participation in community advocacy, groups, boards, and school organizations.
Communication and Outreach to Families	• Initiates and maintains open, friendly, and cooperative relationships with families and communicates with them on a regular basis within the program's structure. • Communicates with families about program goals and objectives.	• Establishes frequent contact with families via a variety of approaches and in language that is accessible to all families. • Welcomes family members to participate in program activities.	• Plans and conducts family engagement activities. • Outreaches to families to participate in program activities.	• Creates and facilitates opportunities for the development of social and support networks among families. • Creates opportunities for family and children/youth to be actively involved in program and policy development.
Diversity of Families	• Has knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of families.	• Respects and supports cultural differences and diverse family structures, using inclusive language that is respectful of all family types.	• Strives to ensure that family and community diversity and cultures are reflected in all aspects of the program.	• Makes program adjustments based on cultural and structural differences of families.
Family Support	• Has knowledge of the cultural context of the community and how it affects families.	• Shares information with families pertaining to family stress, legal rights and special needs.	• Recognizes the community as a resource for families and creates a reference list of those resources.	• Provides families with referrals to community resources when appropriate. • Develops relationships with community partners and engages with them on behalf of families.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNITIES

Program and Community Partnerships	• Recognizes the community as a resource for services, activities, and volunteers.			• Collaborates with community partners to enhance the program.
Community as Family Support	• Recognizes the community as a resource for families.	• Values and uses community resources that support and assist children, youth and their families.	• Develops relationships with community partners and helps families identify community resources specific to their needs and makes referrals.	
Volunteers	• Works cooperatively and appropriately with volunteers and partners.	• Supervises and assesses volunteers as appropriate.	• Implements and supports volunteer programs, as needed.	
Advocacy			• Promotes public awareness about family and youth development.	• Represents the afterschool and youth development field in collaborative community endeavors. • Advocates for quality afterschool and youth development programming for all families to community and political leaders.
School Relationships (Non-school-based Programs)			• Participates on Children's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team as appropriate.	• Makes effort to engage with school personnel and implement programmatic connections to the school day.
School Relationships (School-based Programs)	• Recognizes the importance of connecting with school personnel.	• Makes efforts to engage with school personnel.	• Cooperates with school day teachers regarding students' academic and behavioral needs.	• Develops relationship with school leadership and facilitates connections to the school day.

Afterschool and youth development professionals must consider the whole ecology of children and youth's lives and build on relationships across settings to promote optimal development for children, youth and families.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, CURRICULUM, AND PROGRAM DESIGN

Youth development refers to the natural process of a young person growing and maturing. *Youth development* also encompasses the philosophy of with working with young people in a manner that is strengths- based. In practice, *youth development* builds on those strengths, or personal and social assets, to promote positive outcomes for children, youth and their families. (Hamilton, Hamilton, & Pittman, 2004). Personal and social assets are encompassed in positive physical development, intellectual development, psychological and emotional development, and social development. *(National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2002).*

TOPIC	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
General Knowledge of Stages of Youth Development	• Is aware of basic stages of youth development.	• Can describe specific physical, cognitive, social, and emotional stages of youth development and understands the ways in which those stages impact their needs and participation in the program. • Is aware of youth development frameworks pertaining to positive youth outcomes (e.g., 40 Developmental Assets, Positive Youth Development).	• Integrates information on growth, development, and learning styles of individuals and applies it to youth in group settings.	• Applies current youth development research and theory across all curricular areas to ensure positive youth outcomes.
Individual Differences	• Values different personalities in youth. • Understands that each young person develops differently and at his or her own pace.	• Recognizes differences in personalities and development in youth and the ways in which those differences impact their needs and participation in the program. • Interacts with youth in individual ways.	• Comprehends theory and research related to temperaments and learning styles and recognizes these characteristics in the youth/ young people with whom they work. • Identifies the various ways in which youth learn and adapts experiences to the individual/group needs of youth.	• Promotes appreciation of different personalities and learning styles among other staff and youth.
The Importance of Experiential Learning	• Recognizes that youth learn best through fun, engaging, hands-on experiences.	• Implements fun, engaging hands-on experiences in some areas of the curriculum. Recognizes that these experiences should apply across all areas of development (e.g., cognitive, social/ emotional) and all aspects of the curriculum.	• Implements fun, engaging, hands-on experiences across all areas of development and aspects of programming.	
Guided Practice		• Recognizes that youth learn best through guided practice.	• Provides activities that involve youth in engaging with (creating, combining, or reforming) materials or ideas through guided practice. *(RIPQA self-assessment tool, 2007 p. 14)*	

Diversity	• Recognizes that cultural and environmental factors (e.g. ethnicity, family structure/home environment, socio-economic status) affect behavior and development.	• Reacts to incidents of bias.	• Responds to broader diversity issues – creates a caring environment.	• Creates a proactive environment and experiences that value, affirm, and respect cultural/linguistic diversity.
Meeting the Needs of All Youth	• Responds to the individual needs of youth, including those with special needs.	• Identifies the risk factors, delays, or disabilities that may indicate a need for special services or program adaptations.	• Employs practices that support an inclusive philosophy. • Utilizes appropriate resources and makes program adaptations for youth with special needs.	
Choice		• Recognizes the importance of providing choice in process and content to children and youth.	• Provides some adult-directed process and content choices.	• Consistently provides multiple opportunities for process and content choices. These opportunities are youth-initiated and youth-directed.
Reflection		• Recognizes the importance of providing youth with opportunities to reflect on what they are doing or have done.	• Provides informal opportunities for children and youth to communicate about what they are doing or have done.	• Provides structured opportunities for children and youth to communicate about what they are doing or have done.
Open-Ended Questions	• Understands the importance of using open-ended questions.	• Uses open-ended questions in one or more content areas.	• Regularly uses open-ended questions across all content areas.	
Leadership		• Recognizes the importance of providing children and youth with leadership opportunities (e.g., lead a group or mentor an individual).	• Intentionally provides leadership opportunities for some children and youth.	• Intentionally provides leadership opportunities for all children and youth.
Setting Goals and Making Plans		• Recognizes that youth are capable of making their own plans.	• Provides youth with multiple opportunities to set short-term and long-term goals and make plans.	• Intentionally facilitates youth planning by introducing multiple possible strategies.
Conflict Resolution		• Is aware of youth-centered procedures for solving conflicts.	• Uses youth-centered procedures for solving these conflicts.	• Continually reflects on own skills for helping youth solve conflicts. Discusses possible strategies with competent peers.

CREATING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Activity Session Schedule	• Follows a schedule.	• Creates and implements a program schedule planned and paced for children and youth that allows flexibility for practitioners.		
Lesson Plans	• Understands that lesson plans are the blueprint for implementing curriculum and follows an activity plan.		• Develops and uses lesson plans.	• Intentionally incorporates youth development principles and practice into the development and implementation of lesson plans.
Balanced Activities			• Provides activities that are balanced between concrete experiences involving materials, people, and projects with abstract concepts such as lectures, diagrams, and formulas. *(from RIPQA)*	
Materials	• Has materials prepped and ready for use at beginning of activity.	• Selects materials appropriate to the developmental levels of all youth. • Uses materials that demonstrate acceptance of race, gender, culture, family, language, and special needs.		
Physical Space/ Environment	• Understands that the physical space/environment can impact teaching and learning.	• Considers the physical space/environment when developing curriculum.	• Reflects on the physical space/environment and adjusts curriculum accordingly to maximize learning.	
National Content Standards Rhode Island GLEs and GSEs	• Knows national core content standards, Rhode Island Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) and Grade Span Expectations (GSEs) exist.		• Integrates learning standards into curriculum in at least one content area (e.g., in content area most closely aligned to the activity).	• Integrates learning standards into curriculum in multiple content areas, e.g., Science, Math, Art, etc. and partners with local school district to support national and local learning standards.
Promoting Communication Skills	• Models good listening and verbal skills including the use of proper grammar. • Stimulates conversation with and between youth.	• Encourages youth to use appropriate verbal and nonverbal means of communicating thoughts and feelings.	• Offers programming opportunities for youth to learn effective communication skills. • Provides youth with opportunities to talk about (or otherwise communicate) what they are doing and what they are thinking about to others. *(from RIPQA)* • Adapts communication activities for youth with special needs.	• Incorporates communication skills into all curricular areas (e.g. recreation and fitness, academic support, life skills, personal growth and development).

Promoting Social and Emotional Development	• Treats youth as individuals with their own strengths and needs.	• Helps youth feel valued as members of a group. • Models recognition and expression of feelings. • Helps youth learn to communicate and get along with others. • Emphasizes cooperation in games and activities.	• Provides a curriculum that emphasizes social skills and relationships, including friendships. • Guides youth in expressing their feelings and asserting themselves in positive ways. • Adapts social activities for youth with special needs. • Plans and incorporates social activities into all curricular areas (e.g. recreation and fitness, academic support, life skills, personal growth and development).	
Creativity	• Recognizes the value of process as well as the product, and emphasizes the process of creating.	• Engages children and youth in curriculum activities that promote creativity.	• Emphasize the importance of the balance between process and product during activities. • Develops curriculum that allows creativity and integrates creativity across all curricular areas. • Values creativity as necessary to the development of the individual.	• Integrates creative activities into all curricular areas.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Rhode Island Department of Education Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) and Grade Span Expectations (GSEs)
http://www.ride.ri.gov/Instruction/gle.aspx

LESSON PLANS:

The Educator's Reference Desk: Write a Lesson Plan Guide
http://www.eduref.org/Virtual/Lessons/Guide.shtml

Activity Plan Templates:
Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development
http://4h.uwex.edu/afterschool/curriculum/documents/Createownactivitytemplate2.pdf

Lesson Plan Template: National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning
http://www.sedl.org/afterschool/toolkits/pdf/sedl_lesson_template.pdf

Core Competency Domain 3:
HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELLNESS

Afterschool and youth development (ASYD) professionals have a responsibility to provide an environment that is healthy and safe and also need to be competent in preparing for and handling emergencies. Additionally, ASYD professionals must facilitate program experiences that promote children and youth's overall wellness.

TOPIC	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
Regulations	• Follows regulations or policies regarding health and safety, including emergency, illness, and injury procedures (OSHA, blood-borne pathogens). • Follows program policies and procedures on releasing children and youth. • Completes basic first-aid and CPR certification. • Uses emergency supplies and equipment as needed. • Follows universal safety precautions related to illness and injury procedures. • Practices and carries out emergency plans and drills (e.g. fire, weather-related, and lockdown). • Follows supervision and ratio requirements or policies. • Understands responsibility as mandated reporter for child abuse and neglect.			
Environmental Safety	• Maintains and ensures safety in all areas, both indoors and outdoors. • Selects safe materials and equipment. • Actively supervises and interacts with youth. • Practices safe food handling, follows general sanitation practices, and maintains sanitary environments.			

Supporting Health Needs of Youth	• Practices, models, and assists children and youth in appropriate hygiene techniques including hand washing. • Responds to children and youth's injuries and fear of injuries, documents and notifies appropriate program personnel and/or families as appropriate while ensuring the comfort and care of other youth. • Observes youth daily for signs of illness and possible signs of abuse and neglect. • Promotes good health and provides an environment that contributes to the prevention of illness. • Follows procedures for administration of medicine and approved medical treatments, including related documentation. • Implements procedures for safe field trips. • Promotes and assesses sanitary environments, both indoors and outdoors.	• Seeks information on and demonstrates good practices for youth with typical and special healthcare needs. • Plans and guides self-help activities. (e.g. how to calm down when angry, how to cope with stress.) • Recognizes the natural curiosity of youth in human development and responds respectfully.	• Talks with and provides resource information to youth and families about healthy bodies, healthy lifestyles, and a healthy environment. • Helps youth, families, staff, and others recognize and report abuse and neglect. • Identifies and responds appropriately to the effects of stress and trauma on youth and assesses their resiliency.	• Plans and implements activities that teach youth techniques to deal with stress and develop resiliency. • Designs and implements curriculum activities that emphasize healthy bodies and minds, healthy lifestyles, and a healthy environment. • Works with health care professionals in the community to identify health issues or concerns and meet the needs of youth.
Nutrition and Physical Activity	• Has knowledge of nutrition and encourages healthy eating habits in children and youth. • Recognizes potential hazards associated with meal/snack time and identifies and responds to nutritional issues, including food allergies. • Is aware of the need for children and youth to have regular physical activity.	• Provides healthy meals (if applicable) and snacks in a pleasant environment. • Communicates with youth and families about their nutritional and physical fitness needs and preferences. • Plans and guides activities related to nutrition and cooking experiences with youth.	• Models healthy nutrition and wellness behaviors in one's conduct. • Integrates activities related to nutrition and physical fitness into curricular areas as appropriate. • Involves children/youth in planning activities related to nutrition and physical fitness.	• Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories, research, and policies relevant to nutrition and physical fitness. • Integrates standards-based nutrition and physical fitness curricula into curricular areas as appropriate.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

US Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
http://www.osha.gov/

US Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Care Food Program
http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Care/

US Department of Health and Human Services Dietary Guidelines for Americans
http://www.health.gov/DietaryGuidelines/dga2005/document/

Core Competency Domain 4:
PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND LEADERSHIP

Youth development is a profession. Members of this profession must hold themselves to the highest standards. All afterschool and youth development professionals must understand that there is a context within which their profession originates. That context is a history and a core base of knowledge documented in research that serve as a foundation for the profession. This knowledge must be used in all aspects of professional involvement with children, youth, families and colleagues.

There are also certain expectations for behavior. That behavior is evidenced in the everyday actions of the professional as he/she implements strategies in a program. It is grounded in a professional code of ethics. Diversity of culture, language, gender, ability, age, thought and programs can be found in all aspects of our society. Professionals in this field must be sensitive to and knowledgeable about diversity.

In order for professionals to be knowledgeable, they must participate in ongoing professional development. This includes participating in a wide variety of learning experiences as well as being supported or mentored by others in the field. As professionals advance in their careers, they should become trainers and mentors of others. Every professional must have skills of advocacy. Advocacy skills include the ability to speak out on behalf of children, youth, families and the field.

TOPIC	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
ETHICAL STANDARDS AND PROFESSIONAL GUIDELINES				
Professional Behavior	• Conducts self in professional manner consistent with professional and ethical guidelines of the afterschool and youth development field. (See end of domain for additional resources.) Examples include: • Maintains appropriate and professional appearance. • Employs professional work habits such as dependability and time management.			• Promotes a professional working environment that supports those working with children, youth, and families.
Ethics	• Knows and abides by code of ethics of the afterschool and youth development field. (See end of domain for additional resources). • For example, maintains confidentiality, impartiality, and professional boundaries.	• Recognizes potentially unethical practices. • Practices and promotes the ethical responsibilities of the afterschool and youth development field.		• Teaches fellow professionals how to use the code of ethics to articulate professional values.
Problem-solving Skills	• Recognizes the importance of solving problems that arise within the context of the ASYD program.	• Uses effective problem-solving skills and actively commits to problem-solving.	• Participates in group problem-solving of program issues.	• Initiates and mediates group problem-solving.
ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, REFLECTIVE PRACTICE AND LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY				
Personal Philosophy		• Has an emerging awareness of a personal educational philosophy.	• Articulates a personal philosophy of education based on knowledge of child/youth growth and development and best practices.	• Revises personal philosophy of education based on research and trends in the field of afterschool and youth development.

Program Philosophy	• Is aware of the program's philosophy and goals.	• Supports the program's philosophy and goals.	• Articulates the program's philosophy and goals.	• Analyzes, evaluates and applies current theory on afterschool and youth development programming to program philosophy and goals. • Analyzes the intersection of one's personal philosophy of education and the program's philosophy and advocates for program changes when necessary.
Commitment to Professional Development	• Meets minimum regulation requirements for ongoing professional development. • Values own professional growth. • Participates in opportunities for professional growth and development. • Is aware of professional resources and seeks out knowledge to improve practice. • Participates in activities or projects sponsored by professional associations and other boards, task forces, or committees related to afterschool and youth development.	• Accepts advice and feedback to improve practice and sets professional goals with guidance. • Applies knowledge of best practices and uses professional resources to improve practice. • Maintains membership in afterschool and youth development professional associations.	• Understands and can articulate that building personal and professional competence benefits self, program, and children, youth, and families. • Works toward credentials, degrees and/or program accreditation. • Evaluates own performance and develops and carries out an individualized professional development plan. • Actively participates in professional associations and/or other boards, task forces, or committees related to afterschool and youth development.	• Evaluates current trends in the afterschool and youth development field and revises own practices as appropriate.
Leadership and Advocacy			• Understands that national, state, and local legislation and public policy affect children, youth, families, programs and the afterschool and youth development profession.	• Advocates for the implementation of current research and policies relevant to child, youth, and family development.
Promoting Positive Youth Development	• Articulates that positive youth development experiences are important.	• Demonstrates support for the youth development field.	• Promotes best practices in youth development to families, administrators, colleagues, and the community (e.g. advocates for youth-adult partnerships as an intrinsic element of positive youth development, or creates opportunities for and supports youth serving in leadership roles).	• Serves as a spokesperson to the community and media about youth development.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

National Afterschool Association code of ethics is available at http://naaweb.yourmembership.com/resource/resmgr/naacodeofethicsjan09.pdf
See National Afterschool Association's link for advocacy at http://naaweb.yourmembership.com/?page=policyactioncenter

National Association for the Education of Young Children code of ethics is available at http://www.naeyc.org/about/positions/pseth98.asp

Rhode Island Afterschool Plus Alliance: www.afterschoolri.org

Core Competency Domain 5:
ADMINISTRATOR COMPETENCIES

Program directors and administrators often wear the hat of a front-line youth development worker, an educational leader, and an administrator. The following competencies were developed with the intention that administrators who work with children and youth must possess all of the core competencies required of front-line practitioners as well as these additional competencies associated with educational leaders and administrators.

This Administrator domain is different from the other domains within this document in that the competencies are not developed across levels, but rather are stated as single items. Professionals using these competencies should work from the premise that all professional competencies develop over time. There are some competencies a professional might possess at the onset of one's career on which one might be working to strengthen, while there are some competencies that are all but non-existent and need to be developed, strengthened and maintained. Program directors and administrators should consider these competencies as the range of knowledge and skills that one should develop on an ongoing basis over the span of one's career.

Future steps in developing the afterschool and youth development administrator competencies should include the development of administrator competencies that progress developmentally across levels.

FISCAL MANAGEMENT, PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION, AND PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

Program directors and administrators need to be able to manage administrative and financial aspects of the program. The items below are examples of the types of tasks which program directors and administrators must be capable of performing.

- Develops and monitors an annual budget.
- Develops fiscal policies and procedures.
- Prepares financial reports and documents.
- Manages cash accounts and cash flow.
- Conducts fundraising.
- Develops, monitors and updates mission statement and program philosophy.
- Develops, monitors and updates family contracts.
- Uses technology and communication systems to support program.
- Establishes and maintains effective relations with contractors, vendors, and regulatory agencies.
- Employs effective grant writing.
- Appropriately utilizes reimbursement programs, such as the Federal Child and Adult Care Food Program.
- Develops and updates staff compensation structure.

- Develops and updates program fee structure.
- Maintains and manages financial records.
- Identifies appropriate financial resources and opportunities.
- Develops, monitors and updates long-term, strategic plan for program (including financial plan).
- Develops and updates staff handbook and takes steps to ensure that staff are aware of and comply with its content and policies.
- Develops and updates program handbook for children, youth, and families.
- Complies with all legal requirements.
- Maintains and coordinates appropriate insurance policies.
- Develops effective communication, education, and involvement for boards and management whenever applicable.
- Engages in ongoing evaluation to track the effectiveness of program activities.
- Uses program data to guide staff and others in program improvement.

STAFF MANAGEMENT

Program directors and administrators need the skills associated with managing and mentoring the staff under their supervision. The following items are examples of the types of staff management tasks which directors and administrators must be capable of performing.

- Recruits and selects qualified staff.

- Designs effective job descriptions for all positions.

- Implements a professional development program for staff including individualized professional development plans for individual staff, ongoing in-service professional development opportunities, and new employee orientation.

- Provides staff with effective supervision, feedback, guidance, coaching, and mentoring. This includes regularly observing staff in action and sharing constructive feedback.

- Maintains and implements a system for staff evaluation.

- Complies with all laws and regulations applicable to personnel.

- Develops personnel policies that are reviewed and revised periodically.

- Utilizes team building strategies to include staff in program development and delivery.

- Promotes a professional working environment that supports those working with children, youth, and families.

- Promotes a work culture that fosters staff initiative in solving problems and resolving conflict.

FAMILY, SCHOOL, AND COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

Program directors and administrators provide leadership in terms of fostering and maintaining positive relationships with family, schools, and the community. As such, in addition to the front-line practitioner competencies, directors and administrators must use their role to serve as effective communicators, bridge builders, and advocates. All administrators must display the following competencies.

- Reviews the effectiveness of family engagement activities and family advisory groups and recommends changes as needed.

- Develops and updates program handbook for children, youth, and families.

- Develops relationships with community partners and engages with them on behalf of families.

- Engages community and political leaders to advocate for high-quality afterschool and youth development programming for all families.

- Applies research on experiential learning when working with families, colleagues, and children/youth, and oversees staff's application of this competency.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, CURRICULUM, AND PROGRAM DESIGN

Program directors and administrators should act as leaders and mentors to the staff they oversee in terms of their knowledge and competence concerning youth development, curriculum and program design. In addition to the competencies expected of front-line practitioners, exemplary directors and administrators must have the following competencies.

- Articulates, analyzes, and evaluates current research on guided practice. Supports staff's ability to use guided practice.

- Comprehends, communicates and has in-depth knowledge of the environmental influences that affect learning and development across all age groups.

- Analyzes, evaluates and applies current theory, research, and policy related to diversity and anti-bias in afterschool and youth development programs.

- Ensures that program's mission and philosophy reflect an appropriate understanding of child and youth growth and development as well as respect for diversity.

- Ensures that program policies and practices reflect an inclusive philosophy.

- Articulates, analyzes, and evaluates current research on conflict resolution and assists staff in gaining skills with facilitating youth-centered conflict resolution practices.

- Oversees development and implementation of a program schedule that is planned and paced for children and youth and allows for flexibility for practitioners.

- Oversees development and implementation of program-wide curriculum.

- Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories and research related to positive youth development.

- Advocates for policies and practices that promote the development of youth communication skills.

- Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and/or applies current theories and research related to promoting social and emotional development.

- Articulates, analyzes, evaluates and/or applies current theories and research related to promoting creative experiences.

- Communicates to the staff the importance of integrating creative activities into all curricular areas.

- Demonstrates respect for creativity through documentation and exhibition (e.g., displaying, publishing, creating portfolios).

HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELLNESS

While front-line staff have a responsibility of carrying out the policies and procedures related to the health, safety, and wellness of the children and youth who participate in programming, program directors and administrators have the ultimate responsibility for creating, monitoring, and enforcing that best practices in this area are followed. Directors and administrators create and maintain the tone of importance surrounding health, safety, and wellness, and as such, they must possess the following abilities.

- Works with health care professionals in the community to identify health issues or concerns and meet the needs of youth.

- Uses *Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)* requirements (if applicable) and *US Department of Health and Human Services Dietary Guidelines for Americans* to develop policies for providing healthy foods to children and youth in the program.

- Designs and utilizes facility space to meet program needs and the comfort and convenience of all participants.

- Monitors facility and grounds to ensure health and safety of occupants.

- Establishes system for food service in compliance with all regulations.

- Establishes policies and procedures for purchase, utilization, inventory, and replacement of supplies, materials and equipment.

- Develops and monitors security systems to safeguard assets.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND LEADERSHIP

Program directors and administrators are responsible for promoting the professional growth and development of program staff. As such, they must possess the following competencies.

- Advocates for the implementation of current research and policies relevant to child, youth, and family development.

- Revises own educational and administrative practices according to research.

- Advocates for youth and families.

- Analyzes ethical dilemmas and determines appropriate course of action.

- Mentors staff in using the ethical code of conduct for afterschool and youth development professionals to help them articulate their own professional values

- Initiates and mediates group problem-solving.

- Examines own work, sources of professional knowledge, and the youth development field.

- Explores models of professional development and evaluates/assesses opportunities to promote others' professional growth.

- Designs staff development opportunities with colleagues.

- Shares knowledge at local, state, regional, and national conferences.

- Understands the change process and develops practices to support professional growth.

- Uses knowledge to shape practices and policies that positively influence the afterschool and youth development profession.

- Investigates and works toward one's own professional certification and program accreditation.

- Evaluates and applies current research and trends presented in professional resources.

- Serves as a spokesperson to the community and media about youth development.

- Develops and carries out an advocacy plan.

- Provides a work culture that fosters staff initiative in solving problems and resolving conflicts.

- Holds a leadership position in professional associations and/or other boards, task forces, or committees related to the afterschool and youth development field.

- Advocates for youth-adult partnerships.

- Advocates for accessible, affordable, safe, and high-quality programs for children and youth.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

The James Irvine Foundation
http://www.irvine.org/assets/pdf/pubs/evaluation/afterSchoolToolkit.pdf

The National Center for Quality Afterschool
http://www.sedl.org/afterschool/

US Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Care Food Program
http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Care/

US Department of Health and Human Services Dietary Guidelines for Americans
http://www.health.gov/DietaryGuidelines/dga2005/document/

Additional Resources

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RECORD

Suggestions for using this form:

After participating in a professional development activity or training/education session, transfer the pertinent information to your Professional Development Record. Update this record and retain your certificates to document annual training hours. During the year, plan to target training/education sessions across different core competency domains.

DOMAIN 1: FAMILY, SCHOOL & COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

Date	Professional Development Session Title	Instructor/Organization	Level	Hours	Certificate

DOMAIN 2: YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, CURRICULUM, & PROGRAM DESIGN

Date	Professional Development Session Title	Instructor/Organization	Level	Hours	Certificate

DOMAIN 3: HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLNESS

Date	Professional Development Session Title	Instructor/Organization	Level	Hours	Certificate

DOMAIN 4: PROFESSIONAL GROWTH & LEADERSHIP

Date	Professional Development Session Title	Instructor/Organization	Level	Hours	Certificate

DOMAIN 5: ADMINISTRATOR COMPETENCIES

Date	Professional Development Session Title	Instructor/Organization	Level	Hours	Certificate

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Administrators: afterschool and youth professionals who may work directly with children, youth, and families, but whose primary obligation is to supervise staff and oversee the administration of programs.

Afterschool: before school, after school, school vacations/holidays and summer.

Afterschool Programming: any organized program provided for children and youth ages 5-18 during a time when they are not in school.

Afterschool and Youth Development Professionals: those individuals who work in any organized program for children and youth ages 5-18 during a time when they are not in school.

Advocacy: the pursuit of influencing public-policy and resource-allocation decisions within the political, economic, and social systems with the intention of positively affecting children and families' lives. Advocacy in the afterschool and youth development field could be as simple as speaking about the importance of positive youth development in order to educate others or as complex as formally organizing efforts to influence afterschool and youth development legislation on the local or national level.

Bloom's Taxonomy: This taxonomical structure provides an easily recognizable and consistent framework for describing the development of knowledge and competencies across professional levels. Traditionally, Bloom's Taxonomy defines six levels of cognitive mastery. The six original levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, hierarchical in nature, begin with Knowledge, and progress to Understanding, Application, Analysis, Synthesis, and finally Evaluation. *The Rhode Island Core Knowledge and Core Competencies for Afterschool and Youth Development Professionals* document uses an adaptation of Bloom's taxonomy, containing four hierarchical levels to define the desired competencies for each of the professional levels within the document. In our adaptation, we collapsed Knowledge and Understanding into the first level, Application in Level 2, Analysis in Level 3, and finally the document combines the more advanced skills of Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation in Level 4.

Confidentiality: respecting and protecting the privacy of information related to the children, youth, families and colleagues in the program.

Ethics is defined as the responsibility to intentionally choose what is right, moral and just in practice and in principle.

Ethical Dilemma: A moral conflict that involves determining appropriate conduct when an individual faces conflicting professional values and responsibilities.

Family includes all persons whom are responsible for and involved with the child/youth and who the child/youth identifies as having significant impact in their lives.

Front-line workers: those Afterschool and Youth Development Professionals who work directly with children, youth, and families.

Guided practice: An educational opportunity whereby the educator, expert, or "more competent other" presents a skill to children and youth and provides them with an opportunity to independently practice that skill with guidance. The educator progressively and appropriately removes himself/herself from the leading role, observing the students' mastery, providing feedback on any mistakes, and allowing the young people to gain the skills and confidence in the performing the task at hand.

Impartiality: Being free from bias or favoritism; demonstrating equitable and fair practice.

Professional boundaries: afterschool and youth development workers must maintain appropriate ethical, physical, and psychological boundaries with colleagues, children, youth, and families. Because children and youth are in a vulnerable position due to power differentials, it is imperative that staff maintain these ethical, physical (including sexual) and psychological boundaries with program participants. This includes keeping a balance between the caring and supportive relationship with young people and keeping an appropriate professional distance. As the definition and understanding of professional boundaries is often not clear, and when working with staff and children, youth, and families, the boundaries are often blurred, programs should maintain ongoing staff professional development opportunities on this topic.

Youth development: the natural process of a young person growing and maturing. Youth development also encompasses the philosophy of with working with young people in a manner that is strengths-based. In practice, youth development builds on those strengths, or personal and social assets, to promote positive outcomes for children, youth and their families. (Hamilton, Hamilton, & Pittman, 2004). Personal and social assets are encompassed in positive physical, intellectual, psychological, vocational, emotional, moral, social and ethical development. (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2002; Building Resiliency, pp. 11-14, National Assembly, 1994; and Position Statement on Accountability and Evaluation in Youth Development Organizations, p. 1, National Collaboration for Youth, 1996)

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

RESOURCES

BrightStars:
Rhode Island's quality rating and improvement system
http://www.brightstars.org/

CHILDSPAN:
Rhode Island's Child Development and Education
Training System
http://www.childspan.net/

National Afterschool Association:
http://naaweb.yourmembership.com/Default.asp?

Providence Afterschool Alliance (PASA):
Working to expand and improve the quality of after
school opportunities for the youth of Providence
http://www.mypasa.org/

Rhode Island Afterschool Alliance (RIASPA):
Expanding and supporting high-quality afterschool
programming so that Rhode Island's children are safe,
supervised, and prepared to lead productive lives
http://www.afterschoolri.org/matriarch/default.asp

Rhode Department of Education:
http://www.ride.ri.gov/

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Hamilton, S. F., Hamilton, M. A. & Pittman, K. (2004). "Principles for Youth Development." In: Hamilton, S. F. & Hamilton, M. A. (Eds). *The Youth Development Handbook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Vermont Northern Lights Career Development Center. (2005). *Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals*.

Youth RIPQA: Rhode Island Program Quality Assessment Tool (2007). Contact Elizabeth Devaney at edevaney@mypasa.org or (401) 490-9599 x103

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