The 3 P’s of After School Leadership:

- **Professionalism**
- **Parent Involvement, and**
- **Positive Attitude**

To explore the meaning of professionalism as it applies to afterschool staff. The 3Ps are 1) Professionalism; 2) Parent Involvement 3) Positive Attitude

Perform introductions, state the session topic, how long it will last, when/if refreshments will be served, and the location of restrooms. Thank the host.
Ask participants to think about one or all of the following scenarios.
1) You become ill and need to visit a physician.
2) You want to purchase a home and need to obtain a lawyer for title search and to represent you at the closing with the sellers and bank.
3) You are taking a college course in the area of your major concentration.

Questions:
Do you seek out a professional?
What types of behaviors do you expect from this professional? (possible examples: expert knowledge, trustworthy, confidential, professional attire, reliable (show up on time or be present when needed), trustworthy, etc).
Would it be professional if your attorney showed up late at your closing? Or your doctor would not answer your questions? Or your teacher gave obviously inaccurate information? This is unprofessional behavior and it will cause you to lose confidence in their ability to meet your needs. You will take your business elsewhere.
Now think about being a parent and selecting someone to take care of your child. What characteristics do you want this person to exhibit?

(Distribute Handout: Are You a Professional) Afterschool is a profession with professional standards and expectations. Ask participants to share what some of these expectations include.
Our field is a growing one. More and more research is showing how great the impact of afterschool programming can have on the children who attend regularly. We need professional leaders in the schools and for the profession of afterschool.

This workshop will explore the characteristics of professionalism, parent involvement, and positive attitude. These three items have a great impact on program quality and services. Research shows that when these three components are in place children thrive, parents are satisfied with the program, and there are less behavior problems with the children.
Share the handout which includes this excerpt from “Best Practices for Connecticut After School Programs.” Explain that these are indicators of high quality practice. Today’s topic will help us to improve our skills in these areas.

Professionalism – Standard #31: All staff are professionally qualified to work with children and youth.  
Parents - Standard # 8: Staff and families interact with each other in positive ways and offer opportunities to promote family involvement.  
Positive Attitude – Standard #1: Staff relate to all children and youth in positive ways.
What does being a professional in after school mean?  
Having a working knowledge of children’s ages and stages
Curriculum must be adjusted per age group
  K-2nd grade
  3-5th grade
  6-8th grade
  High school
Use “bubbles” or “building a tower” as an example. Ask participants how they would do this activity with 1st graders and then with 5th graders.
What types of games did you like to play?

Being a professional includes:
- Training and experience with children and youth
  - Ask what activities participants enjoyed themselves when young that they can share with children.
  - Ask participants what they have learned from working with children.
  - Ask participants what they would like to learn about how children grow, learn, behave.

Awareness of Standards: CT After School Network Best Practice Guidelines (refer to the handout).
- Standards give professionals a common language to use when talking about quality programs.
- Having standards helps staff to recognize where they have achieved quality and where they need to focus attention.
• Research shows that children thrive in a safe and caring environment. What do we do that helps to keep children safe?

Being a professional includes:

Research shows that children thrive in a safe and caring environment
Ask participants to share ways in which the program keeps children physically safe. (examples: environmental check lists, parent sign-in/out lists, staff ratio)
Ask participants to share ways in which the program keeps children psychologically safe (examples: children feel personally welcomed, that it is safe to participate without humiliation, no bullying permitted)

Being Responsible
Risk Management
Gossip
Not Supervising the Children
Breaking confidentiality

Being alone with a child
Never be alone with a child – this protects you, the program, the child
Always have 2 staff on site even when the number of children drops below ten.
Parent Involvement

Parents enrolled their children in afterschool for several reasons:
- Safe care while parents work
- Opportunities for children to socialize
- Opportunities for enrichment
- Opportunities for physical activities (sports, etc)

Research shows that when parents are involved in the program the level of program quality increases. What are the benefits of parent involvement?

For children:
- Better attendance,
- Better behavior
- Better attitude about school and academic achievement

For parents:
- Confidence that their child is safe both physically and psychologically
- They feel personally connected to the program
- They feel connected to the other families in the program.
- A positive relationship with staff is empowering for parents. They know that their opinion matters.

For the program:
- Positive relationships provide support in challenging times (problem issues with children or times when policies must be changed)
- Better behaved children
- Positive recognition for the work teachers are doing with children
- Marketing to recruit other families

The KEY to these benefits is building positive relationships and it is the staff’s responsibility to start and maintain these relationships. Parents trust that teachers employed in an afterschool program know what they are doing. (You got this job so you must know what you are doing!)
Graffiti Walls

Graffiti Wall
Post sheets of easel paper on the wall (separate these as much as possible). Each paper will have one of the following questions:

1. What types of events will engage families?
2. List collaborative partners you could work with.
3. What are barriers that prevent parent involvement? How can we overcome these?

Divide participants into groups (either by counting off 1, 2, 3 or by any method you think will work best with the size of the group).
Assign each group to address one question.
Every 5 minutes rotate the groups so that everyone has an opportunity to work on each question.
When participants return to their seats review each question’s responses.
(If this activity has generated a good bit of enthusiasm it might be wise to follow up by selecting one of the ideas generated by this activity to implement right away. Ask for volunteers to lead the activity.)
Positive Attitude
   Passion for the work
      Ask participants “Why do you work with children?”
         The paycheck?
            Because you want to make a difference?
      Ask participants for examples of teachers showing their passion for
      working with children
   The Attitude we bring to work
      Ask participants to list the effects on children when staff show a
      positive attitude
      Ask participants to list the effects on children when staff show a
      negative attitude
      Ask participants to list how a negative attitude affects co-workers
      Ask participants to list how a negative attitude affects the overall
      culture of the program
   Steps we can take to show our passion:
      Be aware of our own personal biases and how these affect our work
      with children
      Be good communicators (with children, families, co-workers) – it is the
      cornerstone of a quality program
      Avoid making assumptions – about the children, their parenting skills,
      our co-workers
      Be aware of how our personal attitude affects the bigger picture of the program and
      its level of quality
How do we show our professionalism and our positive attitude while working with children and families?

Positive Attitude Role Play
Divide participants into small groups and ask that each prepare a short skit to act out in front of the others. Their goal is to present each situation in a professional manner that demonstrates a positive attitude or they may choose to show how the situation might look to graphically demonstrate the effects of a lack of professionalism and positive attitude. Here are some sample situations (but you may permit participants to create their own):

- A child is disrespectful to you. You need to address both the child and his/her parent.
- A staff member sits on the sidelines during a game and does not participate. You have personally had a bad day and need some time to cool down.

After the skits are presented ask participants to raise their hands to vote for “positive actions” or “negative actions.”

Allow approximately 10 minutes for groups to develop skits.

Debrief:
Ask participants:
What was the hardest part of developing or acting out your skit?
Did the actors representing staff communicate clearly?
This is often what causes conflicts. What are some things we can do about it?
Were the actors representing staff behaving respectfully?

Maintaining a commitment to the 3P’s of Leadership: Professionalism, Parent Involvement, and Positive Attitude takes: practice and vigilance.
It is easy to say: “Let somebody else do it.” “It’s not my job.” “I am busy right now.”
But if our goal is to make our program one that is recognized for its high quality then we need to make a daily commitment to the 3 P’s.
The Bottom Line for After School Professionals:

We provide a Professional Service delivered with a Positive Attitude that includes Parents as partners.

The Bottom Line:
Practice the 3P’s:
  Professionalism
  Parent Involvement
  Positive Attitude
Remember why parents chose this program: they wanted a professional to care for their child.
It is your job to provide a safe and caring environment
The research shows that both children and families thrive when they are involved in high quality programs that emphasis these characteristics.
Return to handout: Are You a Professional? The final line reads “The first step to making yourself a professional is to decide you ARE a professional.” Are you a professional?
For more information about the 3Ps visit the CT After School Network website at www.ctafterschoolnetwork.org.

The children are counting on you!

Thank participants for sharing and distribute evaluation forms at this time.