



**The 3 P's of After School Leadership:
Professionalism, Parent Involvement, and Positive Attitude**



Session Title:	The 3 P's of Afterschool Leadership: Professionalism, Parent and Family Engagement, and Positive Attitude
Purpose of session:	To explore the meaning of professionalism as it applies to afterschool staff. The 3 Ps are: 1) Professionalism; 2) Parent and Family Engagement 3) Positive Attitude
Materials Needed:	Easel Paper, Markers
Handouts:	CASN Quality Self-Assessment Tool (CT-QSAT) Are You A Professional Copy of Slide Presentation
Welcome/ Housekeeping	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.

Trainer Tips

Welcomes set the stage for training. Be sure to thank the host agency for providing meeting space and/or refreshments. Sharing housekeeping details such as the location of restrooms and the schedule of activities prevents interruptions during your session. Letting people know when food will be served helps participants to stay focused. Introduce any new participants or guests so all feel comfortable.

Opening Activity

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?

Trainer Tips

1) Reflective questions help participants to internalize the workshop content and make it their own.

2) Trainers should wait for replies to open ended questions. Some participants need to think about their reply for an extra few seconds. New trainers sometimes find it difficult to wait (seconds seem like hours!) and will supply the answers for participants. It is sometimes helpful to practice counting silently to ten while waiting for a reply.

Debrief (1st Activity)

(Distribute Handout: Professionalism Checklist) 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. Research shows the impact 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.

CT-QSAT
Section 1:
Relationships

Share the handout which includes this excerpt from the “Connecticut After School Network Quality Self-Assessment Tool (CT-QSAT) Handout Materials” Explain that these are indicators of high quality practice. Today’s topic will help us to improve our skills in these areas.

Professionalism (Relationships Section) – All staff are professionally qualified to work with children and youth.
 Family Engagement (Family and Community Engagement Section) - Staff and families interact with each other in positive ways and offer opportunities to promote family involvement.
 Positive Attitude (Relationships+) – Staff relate to all children

Lecture – Part 1
(Slide 4 – 10)

What does being a professional in after school mean?

- I. Having a working knowledge of children’s ages and stages
 - a. Curriculum must be adjusted per age group
 - i. K-2nd grade
 - ii. 3-5th grade
 - iii. 6-8th grade
 - iv. High school
 - b. 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.
 - II. Training and experience with children and youth
 - a. Ask what activities participants enjoyed themselves when young that they can share with children.
 - b. Ask participants what they have learned from working with children.
 - c. Ask participants what they would like to learn about how children grow, learn, behave.
 - III. Awareness of Standards: CT-QSAT / NAA Core Knowledge
 - a. Standards give professionals a common language to use when talking about quality programs.
 - b. Having standards helps staff to recognize where they have achieved quality and where they need to focus attention.
 - IV. Research shows that children thrive in a safe and caring environment
 - a. Ask participants to share ways in which the program keeps children physically safe. (examples: environmental check lists, parent sign-in/out lists, staff ratio)
 - b. 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)
- V. Being Responsible
 - a. Risk Management
 - i. Gossip
 - 1. Not Supervising the Children
 - 2. Breaking confidentiality
 - ii. Being alone with a child
 - 1. Never be alone with a child – this protects you, the program, the child
 - 2. Always have 2 staff on site even when the number of children drops below ten.

**Lecture – Part 2
(Slide 11 – 13)**

Parent and Family Engagement

- VI. Parents enrolled their children in afterschool for several reasons:
 - a. Safe care while parents work
 - b. Opportunities for children to socialize
 - c. Opportunities for enrichment
 - d. Opportunities for physical activities (sports, etc)
- VII. Research shows that when parents are involved in the program the level of program quality increases. What are the benefits of parent involvement?
 - a. For children:
 - i. Better attendance,
 - ii. Better behavior
 - iii. Better attitude about school and academic achievement
 - b. For parents:
 - i. Confidence that their child is safe both physically and psychologically
 - ii. They feel personally connected to the program
 - iii. They feel connected to the other families in the program.
 - iv. A positive relationship with staff is empowering for parents. They know that their opinion matters.
 - c. For the program:
 - i. Positive relationships provide support in challenging times (problem issues with children or times when policies must be changed)
 - ii. Better behaved children
 - iii. Positive recognition for the work teachers

-
- are doing with children
 - iv. Marketing to recruit other families
 - d. The **KEY** to these benefits is building positive relationships and it is the **staff's responsibility** to start and maintain these relationships.
 - VIII. 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!)
-

**Group Activity
(Slide 14 - 17)**

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 questions 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.)

Trainer Tips

Easel paper activities are a common technique to get participants engaged with both the question to be answered as well as encouraging discussion with colleagues. This technique recognizes that participants come with a wealth of knowledge to share. The presenter does not have to be the source of all knowledge.

**Lecture - Part 3
(Slide 18 – 20)**

Positive Attitude

- IX. Passion for the work
 - a. Ask participants “Why do you work with children?”
 - i. The paycheck?
 - ii. Because you want to make a difference?
 - b. Ask participants for examples of teachers showing their passion for working with children
 - X. The Attitude we bring to work
 - a. Ask participants to list the effects on children when staff show a positive attitude
 - b. Ask participants to list the effects on children when staff show a negative attitude
 - c. Ask participants to list how a negative attitude
-

-
- affects co-workers
- d. Ask participants to list how a negative attitude affects the overall culture of the program
- XI. Steps we can take to show our passion:
- a. Be aware of our own personal biases and how these affect our work with children
 - b. Be good communicators (with children, families, co-workers) – it is the cornerstone of a quality program
 - c. Avoid making assumptions – about the children, their parenting skills, our co-workers
 - d. Be aware of how our personal attitude affects the bigger picture of the program and its level of quality
-

**Group Activity
(Slide 21)**

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):

1. A child is disrespectful to you. You need to address both the child and his/her parent
2. A staff member sits on the sidelines during a game and does not participate.
3. 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.”

*** This activity may take 10 minutes for participants to develop a skit and longer to perform, evaluate, and debrief. Be mindful of time when including this activity.*

Presenter Tips

- 1) *Role playing activities are helpful for participants to practice using the new knowledge. Practice in a safe environment will encourage participants to use the new knowledge in the work with children.*
 - 2) *Some participants love to role play and some do not. Be encouraging but if someone truly does not want to participate you must allow them to sit out. Ask that they be a coach or director to the active participants. This will encourage a team approach to the activity.*
-

Debrief:

Ask participants:

1. What was the hardest part of developing or acting out your skit?
 2. Did the actors representing staff communicate clearly?
-

This is often what causes conflicts. What are some things we can do about it?

3. Were the actors representing staff behaving respectfully?

Maintaining a commitment to the 3P's of Leadership: Professionalism, Parent Involvement, and Positive Attitude takes:

1. practice
2. 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.

**Conclusion:
(Slide 22 – 23)**

The Bottom Line:

1. Practice the 3P's:
 - a. Professionalism
 - b. Parent and Family Engagement
 - c. Positive Attitude
2. Remember why parents chose this program: they wanted a professional to care for their child.
3. It is your job to provide a safe and caring environment
4. The research shows that both children and families thrive when they are involved in high quality programs that emphasize these characteristics.
5. Return to handout: Professionalism Checklist.
6. The first step to making yourself a professional is to decide you ARE a professional. Are you a professional?

For More Info go:

CT After School Network at www.ctafterschoolnetwork.org

Best Practice Guidelines for Connecticut After School Programs

Professionalism:

31. All staff are professionally qualified to work with children and youth. (See Appendix E for specific guidelines):

- a. Staff meet the requirements for experience with children and youth in after school settings.
- e. The program makes efforts to hire staff professionally qualified to work with families, children and youth.
 - Job descriptions include family, community and school engagement as part of responsibilities.
 - Program employs staff who are responsible to engage families such as a parent liaison.

Parents and Families:

8. Staff and families interact with each other in positive ways and offer opportunities to promote family involvement:

- a. Staff make families feel welcome and comfortable.
- b. Staff and families treat each other with respect.
- c. Staff are sensitive to the cultures and languages of families and communities they live in.
 - Staff encourage families to share their skills, hobbies or family traditions.
- d. Staff collaborate with community agencies to meet the needs of each family.
 - Staff maintain a list of services that address the needs of children, youth and families, and share services and community resources to enhance family well-being.
- e. Staff and families work together to plan and implement activities for social interaction that are responsive to the needs and interests of the families served.

Positive Attitude

1. Staff relate to all children and youth in positive ways:

- a. Staff treat children and youth with respect and listen to what they say.
 - Staff encourage children and youth by using supportive language and showing appreciation of their efforts and accomplishments.
 - Staff take children and youth's comments seriously.
- b. Staff make children and youth feel welcome and comfortable.
 - Staff project a welcoming tone in their voices and gestures.
 - Staff stay calm in all situations. They handle conflicts in ways that reduce fear or disruption.
- c. Staff respond to children and youth with acceptance and appreciation.
 - Staff are kind and fair to all children and youth.
 - Staff include all interested children and youth in activities and events.
 - Games and sports are open to all regardless of their athletic skill.
- d. Staff are engaged with children and youth.
 - Staff are energetic, enthusiastic and upbeat.
 - Staff talk and play with the children and youth.
 - Staff show interest in what the children and youth say and do.
 - When youth speak, staff listen actively, attentively and patiently.

(This list is edited for use in the "3P's of Leadership: Professionalism, Parents, and Positive Attitude" workshop. To see the complete standard visit the CT Afterschool Network at www.ctafterschoolnetwork.org.)

Are You a Professional?

How you look, talk, write, act and work determine whether you are a professional or an amateur. Society does not emphasize the importance of professionalism, so people tend to believe that amateur work is normal. Many businesses accept less-than-good results. Schools graduate students who cannot read. You can miss 15% of the driving-test answers and still get a driver license. "Just getting by" is an attitude many people accept. But it is the attitude of amateurs.

"Don't ever do anything as though you were an amateur. Anything you do, do it as a Professional to Professional standards. Never let it be said of you that you lived an amateur life". — L. Ron Hubbard

- A professional learns every aspect of the job. An amateur skips the learning process whenever possible.
- A professional carefully discovers what is needed and wanted. An amateur assumes what others need and want.
- A professional looks, speaks and dresses like a professional. An amateur is sloppy in appearance and speech.
- A professional keeps his or her work area clean and orderly. An amateur has a messy, confused or dirty work area.
- A professional is focused and clear-headed. An amateur is confused and distracted.
- A professional does not let mistakes slide by. An amateur ignores or hides mistakes.
- A professional jumps into difficult assignments. An amateur tries to get out of difficult work.
- A professional completes projects as soon as possible. An amateur is surrounded by unfinished work piled on top of unfinished work.
- A professional remains level-headed and optimistic. An amateur gets upset and assumes the worst.
- A professional faces up to other people's upsets and problems. An amateur avoids others' problems.
- A professional uses higher emotional tones: Enthusiasm, cheerfulness, interest, contentment. An amateur uses lower emotional tones: anger, hostility, resentment, fear, victim.
- A professional persists until the objective is achieved. An amateur gives up at the first opportunity.
- A professional produces more than expected. An amateur produces just enough to get by.
- A professional earns high pay. An amateur earns low pay and feels it's unfair.
- A professional has a promising future. An amateur has an uncertain future.
- The first step to making yourself a professional is to decide you ARE a professional.

Are you a professional?

<http://www.tipsforsuccess.org/professionalism.htm>

Connecticut After School Network

Making the Connections for After School

We are very interested in receiving feedback from people who are using this Soup Starter session. Please complete the following evaluation form and return to CT After School Network, 12 Melrose Avenue, Branford CT 06405. Thank you!

Workshop Title: **The 3 P's of After School Leadership: Professionalism, Parent Involvement, and Positive Attitude**

Location: _____

Date: _____

Leader: _____

	Not at all	A bit	Some	More often	Very Much
What this content relevant and useful for your work?	1	2	3	4	5
Participatory opportunities were built into the session. Did you find these opportunities to be meaningful and helpful to understanding the topic?	1	2	3	4	5
Did this session hold your interest?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you want to learn more about this topic?	1	2	3	4	5
How likely are you to use this information in your work?	1	2	3	4	5
How would you rate the overall quality of this workshop?	1	2	3	4	5

Please share any additional comments that will help the CT After School Network improve the quality of this workshop. Thank you!

Are there other topics that you would like to learn about? Please share your suggestions here: