

# The 3 P's of Afterschool

Professionalism, Parent and Family Engagement,  
and Positive Attitude



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Welcome to the 3 P's of Afterschool. In this module you will be leading your staff meeting addressing the topics of professionalism, parent and family engagement, and positive attitude. While this session only scratches the surface on these topics, the Connecticut Network for Children and Youth offers on-site training with one of our expert trainers to come and present on the topic with your staff. For today, take a deep breath and know that the work you are doing with the staff through this module can only help improve the quality of your program. Research shows that programs that invest in professional development opportunities for staff have more positive outcomes for the children, youth and families they serve.

## What's ahead...

In this session we will cover the 3 P's of Afterschool

- Professionalism
- Parent and Family Engagement
- Positive Attitude

Handouts for the session will be:

- Connecticut After School Network Quality Self-Assessment Tool (CT-QSAT)
- Slides
- Related Articles/Resources



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Review what will be covered in the training. “The 3 P’s of Afterschool: Professionalism, Parent and Family Engagement, and Positive Attitude. Each of these has an impact on the quality of the program and services we as afterschool providers deliver. Research has shown that when these three components are in place children thrive, parents are satisfied and invested in the program, and there are less behavioral issues with the children and youth. As part of this training, there are handouts of this presentation as well as excerpts from the CT-QSAT.

## Who Do You Call?

Listen to the scenario and answer the following questions:

- Do you seek out a professional?
- What types of behaviors do you expect from this professional?
- What if they didn't meet your expectations?
- How would that make you feel?

Imagine someone choosing where their child goes afterschool, what experience do you want them to have?



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## P = Professionalism

There is a direct relationship between how staff carry themselves and the level of quality of a program

In this section we will look at:

- What does being an afterschool professional mean?
- What is the CT-QSAT
- What is your role as a direct service staff?
- Risk management and professional ethics



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Note that there is a direct relationship between the level of professionalism of the staff and the impact this has on the quality of a program. This session is broken down into three sections. Each section has a synopsis of what will be covered.

Review with staff the four points in the professionalism section: 1) What does being an afterschool professional mean?, 2) What is the CT-QSAT?, 3) What is your role as a direct service staff?, Addressing risk management and professional ethics.

## WHAT DOES BEING AN AFTER SCHOOL PROFESSIONAL MEAN?

- Having a working knowledge of children's ages and stages
  - Curriculum must be adjusted per age group
    - K - 2nd grade
      - 3 - 5th grade
      - 6th - 8th grade
      - High school level
  - Is what you are trying to accomplish age appropriate?
  - Can the children understand how to do what you are asking?
  - Is it at the right level (not too hard/not too easy)?



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There are certain competencies that after school professionals must have in order to effectively do their job. The first being a working knowledge of children's ages and stages. When implementing curriculum, staff need to be aware of the different age groups of children. These are K - 2nd grade, 3rd - 5th grade, 6th - 8th grade (middle school), and high school level. Use an example at this point of a project (such as building a tower) and how this would vary from a simple lego tower at the K - 2nd level to a more complex tower at the 6th - 8th grade level using newspaper, masking tape, and other materials. Staff need to ask themselves the following questions: Can the children understand how to do what you are asking them to do? Is it age appropriate? Not too hard/not too easy?

## WHAT DOES BEING AN AFTER SCHOOL PROFESSIONAL MEAN?

- Training and Experience with Youth
  - What do you like to do that you can share with the children?
    - What are your hobbies, what did you do when you were younger?
  - What can you learn from the children?
  - Are you using research based activities with the children?
  - What outcomes do you expect when you do an activity with the children?



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Another competency that staff need in working with children is training and experience with youth. This workshop provides valuable tools that staff can use with the children immediately. Have the staff brainstorm on the first two questions using flip chart paper. Leave the last two questions as conceptual points for them to ponder...this sets the stage for further learning or other possible training topics.

## WHAT DOES BEING AN AFTER SCHOOL PROFESSIONAL MEAN?

- You have PASSION for what you do
  - Why do you work with children?
  - Do you want to make a difference in their lives?
  - Is it in your heart that this is what you want to do?
- Do you show the children that you enjoy spending time with them?
- What are some ways you express your passion for what you do?



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The third key competency is Passion. Staff need to be excited about what they are doing. You could use an example of comparing two hypothetical staff (one who sits and is not engaged and there for a paycheck, the other who is excited to see the children and is engaged with them in homework, activities, games, etc). This slide can be developed as a brief discussion or a self-reflection depending on time and the direction you as the facilitator want to take. .

## WHAT DOES BEING AN AFTER SCHOOL PROFESSIONAL MEAN?

- Awareness of Standards
  - There are multiple resources available to you:
    - Connecticut After School Network Quality Self-Assessment Tool (CT-QSAT)
    - Take a few minutes in a small group and review the "Relationships" section
  - What stands out for you?
  - National AfterSchool Association (NAA) Core Knowledge and Competencies
- Standards allow all program staff to be on the same page as they work with children



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The fourth competency to being an after school professional is awareness of standards. Use an example of something that staff can relate to such as an ipod that shocks you every time you use it with no customer service support or that's just the way it is. Quality standards allow us to deliver the best possible program for the children and families that we serve. Have the staff work in small groups and review the "Relationships" handout, ask them what stands out for them? Is there anything else they notice? There are also the NAA (National AfterSchool Association) Core Knowledge and Competencies that are a tool in the field as well. Be sure to emphasize the point that standards allow ALL staff to be on the same page as they work with children.



## YOUR ROLE AS AN AFTER SCHOOL PROFESSIONAL

- Some important points to remember:
- Parents trust you with their child
  - Parents want their children to learn, grow, and develop friendships in after school programs
- Your role is to provide a SAFE and caring environment
  - Children thrive and learn in these types of environments
  - It is your job to provide them with enrichment opportunities



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Recap some of the major points of the being an after school professional section. 1) Parents trust you with their child...expand on your own program philosophy. 2) your role is to provide a safe and caring environment...again expand with program examples.

## RISK MANAGEMENT AND PROFESSIONALISM

- What is your level of risk and what behaviors put you at risk?
  - Gossip - talking about a parent/ co worker
  - Ramifications - possible dangers
- Legal or employment



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When working closely with people, we tend to get comfortable with them over time. This leads us to engage in behaviors that sometimes cross the professional line. This includes gossiping about co-workers, partners, children, and parents to name a few. This comes with potential legal or employment dangers...consider how they would take what you are saying before you say it. You represent the program both on and off the clock...maintaining professionalism at all times is important to the overall quality and perception of the program.

## P = PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

- Parents often turn to after school programs for a multitude of reasons:
  - Need for after school care while they work
  - They want their child to have social opportunities
  - To give their child an opportunity for physical activities
  
- In this section we will look at:
  - What are the benefits to children when parents are involved after school?
  - Look at how we interact with parents in our programs
  - How we can set the stage for parents to be involved after school



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Note the reasons why parents turn to after school programs for their child. The entire module is broken into three sections, each section has a synopsis of what will be covered. Review with staff the Family and Community Partnerships section of the CT-QSAT: 1) What are the benefits to children when parents are involved after school? 2) Look at how we interact with parents in our programs, 3) How we can set the stage for parents to be involved after school?

## THE BENEFITS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT

- When parents are involved children have perform better academically
  - Research shows that children have higher test scores and better attendance
- When parents are involved the program benefits
  - Parents feel that their children are in a "safe" place
  - When staff has positive relationships with parents they feel empowered like their opinion matters



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There are many benefits to having parents involved in afterschool programs. Research has shown that when parents are involved, children perform better academically and have better attendance. Parents who are involved with their child's after school program feel that their children are in a safe place. The key to effective parent involvement is relationship building. Staff have to intentionally reach out to parents and talk with them not only when their child has a rough day, but also to accent when their child has a good day. It is every staff person's responsibility to reach out to parents, not just the site coordinator, head teacher, or program administrator. Parents should know your name (not just "that staff person over there").

## CHILDREN AND FAMILIES BENEFIT FROM CONNECTIONS

- When parents are involved the family benefits
  - Parents that are involved with their children's activities have more connectivity within the family
  - Parents that are involved reach out to other families
- Parents will come if opportunities are presented
  - After school programs need to intentionally create opportunities for parents to be involved



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Furthermore, it is our responsibility to connect with families. After school programs need to provide opportunities for families to get involved. This could be in the form of family events such as talent shows, dinner theater, or family picnics, as well as forming a parent advisory council or quality improvement team for your site/program. Parents will come if opportunities are presented for them to participate.

## GRAFFITI WALL - INVOLVING FAMILIES

- How do we interact with parents?
- How can we improve our relationship?
- How do our personal opinions effect that relationship?
- A way to engage families could be...



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Have chart paper hung around the room and have staff take 10 minutes to answer the following pre-written questions.

- How do we interact with parents?
- How can we improve our relationship?
- How do our personal opinions effect that relationship?
- A way to engage families could be...

When they are done, have someone read the responses and discuss a few responses with the larger group.

## SETTING THE STAGE

- What types of events will engage families?
- Are there any collaborative partners you could work with? (Family Resource Centers, others?)
- Is it easy for a parent to participate? (Child Care issues, dinner, work?)



Using chart paper, have the group brainstorm on these questions ... What types of events will engage families?

Are there any collaborative partners you could work with? (Family Resource Centers, others?)

Is it easy for a parent to participate? (Child Care issues, dinner, work?) - what are some barriers that prevent families from participating?

## CREATE A FAMILY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY

- Based on the "Family and Community Partnerships" handout from the CT-QSAT, develop an activity that will engage families
- Parent workshop, family night, advisory role, be creative
- Chart your idea and select a spokesperson for your group



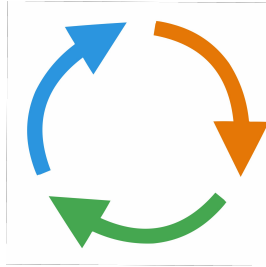
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Review CT-QSAT Section 2: Family and Community Partnerships and the Zooming In page on indicator 3, create a family engagement opportunity in small groups report back and present to the larger group (20 min)



## THE RELATIONSHIP BUILDING CYCLE

- Relationships with families is cyclical
- When families feel valued they are more likely to be involved
- Positive relationships with families are paramount to the success of your program



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Building relationships with families is cyclical. Parents want to feel welcomed, once that is accomplished they feel that this is a "safe place" for their children, they want opportunities to get involved and attend events, through this they meet other parents and feel supported and empowered. Giving them opportunities to make a contribution or suggestion for the program is an important part of this relationship building

## P = POSITIVE ATTITUDE

- It is often said that attitude is everything, bringing a positive attitude to work sets the stage for the experiences that children have in our program
- Take a minute and think about what type of attitude you bring to work



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Ask participants to reflect on the attitude they bring to work,

Then using chart paper, ask them to reflect on what type of attitudes would help build children up / likewise what type of attitudes would produce a negative effect on the program

Prompt with the following questions:

Did something happen during the day that may affect your attitude?  
How does your attitude affect your co-workers

## WHAT WE DON'T SAY...

- What biases do we bring to work with us?
- What are some assumptions that we make about children or their parents?
- How does this affect the culture of the program?
- Does this impact your attitude?



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Go through each question with the staff, have them discuss the biases and assumptions they may make, and the impact it has on the culture and attitude of the staff/children in the program. (Chart responses)

## COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONSHIPS

- How do you communicate your feelings to others?
  - The most important part of working with other people is communication
  
- Do you...
  - Tell others how you feel in a professional way?
  - Are you reflective "I feel...when you..."
  - Are you modeling a positive attitude for the children to follow?

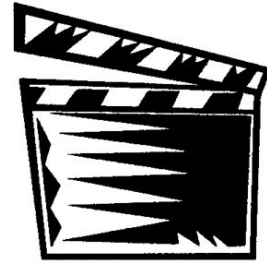


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Communication is the cornerstone of a professionally run, engaging program. When communication is not happening between staff, the children can sense the tension. The most important part of working with other people is communication. With a show of hands, how many of you a) tell others how you feel in a professional way? B) are reflective using "I feel" statements, and model positive behavior for the children? (Poll staff and tell them that effective communication is something that needs to be practiced) Give a personal or program experience with positive communication and have staff come up with examples of not so good communication.

## TIME TO ACT THE PART: POSITIVE COMMUNICATION ROLE PLAYING

- Get with a partner and practice talking about how you feel when
  - A staff member sits on the sidelines during a gym game and does not participate
  - A child is being disrespectful to you
  - You had a bad day and need some time away



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Give the staff 10 minutes to develop a skit to act out in front of the others. They can be in groups of 2 or 3. The key learning concept is to have them practice using their feelings and developing communication skills in a professional manner.

After they present the skits ask reflective questions such as:

Were you reflective?

Did you communicate what you needed clearly and respectfully?

## THE BOTTOM LINE

- Practice the 3 P's of After School
  - Professionalism
  - Parent involvement
  - Positive Attitude
- Parents trust you with their child
- Your role is to provide a SAFE and caring environment
- Children and families thrive when they are involved in your program and you have a positive attitude with them



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Give a brief overview of the 3 components covered in this module.

Reinforce the idea that parents trust you with their child

Reinforce the idea that the staff role is to provide a safe caring environment

Reinforce the notion that children and families thrive when they are involved in your program and you have a positive attitude with them

## Questions



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Be sure to thank them for what they do everyday.