

NATIONAL AFTERSCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Core Competencies
● For Afterschool
Trainers



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The National AfterSchool Association is dedicated to addressing the need for quality professional development opportunities for afterschool professionals, especially those working directly with children and youth. Quality trainers are a key element in the delivery of effective professional development. The core competencies for afterschool trainers outlined in this document are intended to set a standard of quality for effective trainers or facilitators working with afterschool professionals.



CREATING THE CORE COMPETENCIES FOR AFTERSCHOOL TRAINERS

With support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the National AfterSchool Association (NAA) convened a steering committee and workgroup in order to create these core competencies. The competencies were created through extensive research, a thorough review and the incorporation of feedback from experts in the field. A range of strategies was utilized to surface how both trainers and afterschool professionals identify key components of high quality training.

First, NAA engaged professionals in the afterschool field through surveys, focus groups and interviews with program leaders and supervisors, trainers and technical assistance providers. NAA also conducted comprehensive research of existing trainer competencies, including those developed by the National Staff Development Council, the American Society of Training and Development, the Georgia Early Care and Education Professional Development System and others. The various competencies were cross-referenced and mapped according to essential features or categories represented in each model. Using the input of professionals in the field and results from the research, a list of competencies was developed.

Second, the workgroup, consisting of experienced trainers in the afterschool field and representatives of afterschool training entities, convened twice in Washington, DC, to review the list of competencies. The workgroup determined which competencies were relevant to the training of afterschool staff, and created additional competencies where there were gaps.

Lastly, the updated list of competencies was distributed to a group of afterschool trainers via an online survey instrument. Respondents were asked to rate each competency according to its priority as an essential skill or expertise that a quality trainer must possess. Trainers from a broad variety of organizations rated the competencies and prioritized the categories for the final document.

USING THE CORE COMPETENCIES FOR AFTERSCHOOL TRAINERS

These competencies can be used in several different ways to support the work of individuals or organizations committed to providing quality professional development opportunities for afterschool professionals.

If you are an afterschool supervisor:

- What to look for in a trainer for your direct service staff
- How to evaluate your trainers

If you are a trainer of afterschool professionals:

- As a self-evaluation tool to guide professional development
- For reference when creating trainings

If you are part of a state training system:

- To recognize or approve quality trainers in your state
- To update or expand your current standards for trainers

ABOUT THE CORE COMPETENCIES

The core competencies are organized into nine categories of training features. Below each category are the core competencies for the corresponding category. In addition, there are indicators that outline specific behaviors or actions that an afterschool trainer would demonstrate if in mastery of this indicator.

EXAMPLE

CATEGORY:

PROFESSIONALISM

CORE COMPETENCY:



Demonstrates a responsibility to others

INDICATOR:

- Demonstrates respect and consideration for participants.
- Reaches agreement with client regarding goals, costs, risks, limitations and anticipation of outcomes prior to providing service.

CATEGORY:

TRAINING DESIGN**Exhibits knowledge of effective training design**

- Develops measurable objectives and aligned activities directly linked to program and participant needs.
- Incorporates a variety of training methods and materials appropriate to the content.
- Takes into account how the training will be transferred into practice by afterschool professionals.
- Adjusts scope of content to delivery time to design a realistic learning agenda.
- Integrates and models experiential learning or cooperative activities that can be replicated by the participant as relevant.
- Understands and applies principles of adult learning to training development and design.
- Understands conceptual frameworks for learning styles and applies this knowledge in the design of the training.
- Determines program and participant needs prior to training and develops appropriate training objectives and solutions.
- Demonstrates key content knowledge and designs curriculum to address learning objectives and participant context.
- Understands the stages of mastery of new knowledge or skills, and develops training materials that promote sequential development.

“The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery.”

MARK VAN DOREN, PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING POET

Adheres to professional practices

- Organizes, fully prepares and presents professional materials.
- Maintains poise and professionalism under duress.
- Fairly and accurately represents credentials, qualifications, experience and abilities.
- Exhibits balance between personal and professional life during training process.
- Maintains appropriate demeanor and attire.
- Adheres to the NAA Code of Ethics.

Demonstrates a responsibility to others

- Demonstrates respect and consideration for participants.
- Reaches agreement with client regarding goals, costs, risks, limitations and anticipation of outcomes prior to providing service.
- Maintains confidentiality of participant self-disclosure unless participants may cause harm to themselves or others.
- Uses agency, client or colleague information appropriately.
- Maintains ethical business practices, such as appropriate follow up with clients and avoidance of conflicts of interest.

Demonstrates a responsibility to the profession

- Establishes and maintains professional credibility including updating and improving knowledge and skills.
- Expands knowledge of children and youth ages 5-18 by staying current with the knowledge related to afterschool programming and demonstrates this knowledge within the afterschool program.
- Knows the laws regarding copyright and plagiarism, and knows how to fully and accurately cite sources for materials.
- Incorporates current information about laws, state mandates and field practice changes into training.

CATEGORY:

FACILITATION SKILLS**Exhibits effective facilitation skills**

- Stimulates and sustains learner motivation and engagement by adapting activities or inserting breaks or energizers as needed.
- Facilitates experiential activities, adapting processes as needed to promote participation through active learning techniques.
- Identifies and responds to non-verbal cues from participants.
- Continually assesses and manages group dynamics to ensure group issues, energy or concerns are addressed.
- Utilizes strategies such as effective questioning and active listening to engage participants in constructive dialogue.
- Facilitates activities or processes effectively, including pace and organization.
- Demonstrates a range of effective grouping strategies to support both individual engagement and group participation.
- Creates an environment in which feedback is given and received freely.
- Uses reflective listening and clarification to encourage group involvement and determine the level of understanding and agreement.
- Effectively co-facilitates with other trainers or afterschool professionals (when applicable).
- Effectively documents the participant input by accurately recording comments and ideas, using various techniques such as flip charts and recorders in small groups.
- Invites the group members to clarify, negotiate and adhere to agreements or ground rules for the training session.

CATEGORY:

DELIVERY METHODS



Utilizes effective delivery methods

- Integrates time to practice, reflect, share, provide feedback and discuss application and transfer.
- Balances interaction with information or content.
- Utilizes diverse training models to address various learning styles and preferences, such as small group work, role-plays, hands-on activities, simulated debates, case studies, lectures and PowerPoint presentations.
- Adapts training to participants' knowledge and expectations.
- Models effective strategies for working with children, staff, parents, administrators, community members and other stakeholders.
- Facilitates experiential activities to promote participation through active learning techniques.
- Is flexible regarding changes in timing, audience, location, set-up and materials.
- Provides resources and contact information for follow-up.
- Demonstrates proficiency in knowledge and use of technology and media.

“I never teach my pupils; I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN, TEACHER AND NOBEL PRIZE-WINNING PHYSICIST

CATEGORY:

PRESENTATION SKILLS**Demonstrates effective presentation skills**

- Provides clear directions and checks for comprehension.
- Relates effectively with individuals and groups.
- Utilizes strategies to keep the group focused, on task and within established timeframes, while remaining responsive to group needs and concerns.
- Uses effective transitions to link content, activities and learning objectives.
- Repeats comments or questions to insure all participants hear and understand, when appropriate.
- Maintains attention with presence, including physical expression, eye contact and vocal variety.
- Maintains poise and self-control in all situations, and models appropriate behavior.
- Speaks clearly and varies volume and tone.
- Uses summarization, bridging and segues to help preserve continuity.

“The teacher if he is indeed wise does not bid you to enter the house of wisdom but leads you to the threshold of your mind.”

KAHLIL GILBRAN, LEBANESE SYMBOLIST POET AND PAINTER

CATEGORY:

TRANSFER OF TRAINING



Promotes transfer of knowledge and skills to participants

- Helps participants translate training knowledge and skills to their program context.
- Works with participants to effectively identify, discuss and problem-solve regarding barriers to transfer.
- Understands principles and utilizes strategies to support transfer of training.
- Identifies resources and strategies to help with transfer after the training.
- Utilizes techniques or activities for transferring training to application on the job such as practice sessions, job aids, action planning or follow up support.
- Understands the role of the agency or supervisor in supporting transfer.
- Understands how organizational alignment, structures, policies, initiatives and culture can impact transfer of training.
- Identifies what is needed to solicit institutional or organizational support for training transfer.
- Identifies what is needed to cultivate or structure collegial support for training transfer.

CATEGORY:

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**Creates a physical environment which:**

- Includes necessary tools, equipment and materials.
- Is physically comfortable.
- Effectively accommodates the training method.
- Includes amenities promised to participants.
- Can be easily modified as the need arises.

**Creates an intellectual environment which:**

- Provides ample opportunities for dialogue, exploration, reflection and problem solving.
- Respects and incorporates the participants' experience and ideas.
- Encourages mental engagement and stimulation.
- Approaches learning as a process versus product.
- Recognizes and employs strategies that accommodate different intellectual abilities and capacities.

**Creates an emotional environment which:**

- Cultivates mutual respect and builds rapport among the trainer and participants.
- Is safe for sharing ideas, participating and resolving conflict.
- Uses activities to establish a positive group climate and promote engagement and teamwork.
- Is sensitive to and accommodates physical, cultural, experiential and other types of differences.
- Establishes and maintains interpersonal norms, agreements or protocols.



Ensures equity and diversity are considered in training sessions

- Models an approach to cross-cultural encounters characterized by an open mind, a willingness to learn from each other, mutual respect, objectivity and rational critique.
- Can create a training environment that values and encourages the expression of cross-cultural content and constructive dialogue about it.
- Understands how his/her own cultural background affects values, attitudes and beliefs, and incorporates strategies to moderate an “ethnocentric” perspective that may affect his/her ability to relate to trainees from different cultural groups.
- Understands, articulates and promotes open discussion of diversity and inclusion in the training environment and can constructively deal with expressions of prejudice and discrimination during the training.
- Identifies when cultural misunderstandings may be contributing to interpersonal conflict in the training, and uses a variety of strategies to explore and resolve conflicts.
- Facilitates and stimulates discussion of emotionally-charged topics and issues during the training, and monitors and manages the emotional level of the group to maintain a safe, objective and comfortable training environment.
- Values and integrates diversity into the delivery of training including incorporating content, examples and resources that enhance trainees’ understanding of and comfort with cultural issues.

“Diversity is the one true thing we all have in common. Celebrate it every day.”

ANONYMOUS

CATEGORY:

EVALUATION**Utilizes evaluation as part of the training process**

- Uses evaluation information and feedback to improve training during and after the event.
- Models evaluation strategies that participants can use in their own programs.
- Establishes and considers measurement of objectives prior to training.
- Collects appropriate data for: satisfaction or reaction, learning/acquisition of knowledge and skills, and participants' use of new knowledge and skills.
- Understands the usages and importance of evaluation.
- Assesses acquisition of knowledge and skill at completion of training and recommends additional activities to promote skill development.
- Understands four different levels of evaluation: learning/acquisition of knowledge and skills, results or impact, participants' use of new knowledge and skills, and satisfaction or reaction.
- Designs and utilizes different methods and formats to evaluate training.

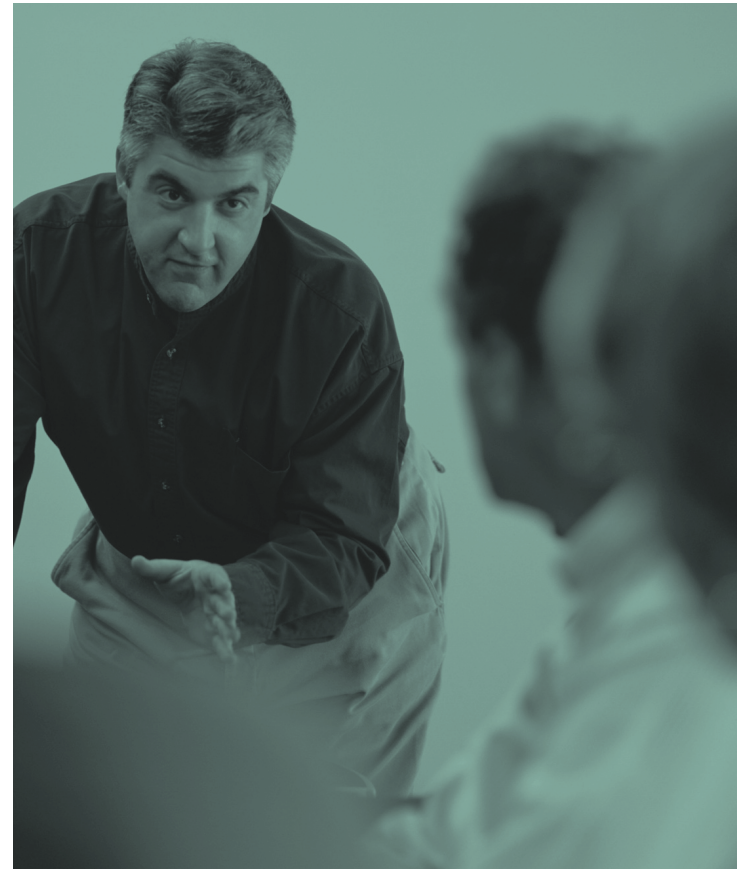
“The only kind of learning which significantly influences behavior is self-discovered or self-appropriated learning - truth that has been assimilated in experience.”

CARL ROGERS, NOBEL PRIZE-NOMINATED PSYCHOLOGIST

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Visit “Professional Development” at www.naaweb.org for access to resources that can help you provide quality professional development opportunities for afterschool professionals. These resources include:

- Trainer Profile
- Trainer Self-Assessment Tool
- Trainer Observation Form
- Training Plan Template
- Participant Feedback Template



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A photograph of two men in business attire sitting at a desk, looking at a laptop. The man on the left is pointing at the screen, and the man on the right is looking at the screen. The image is overlaid with a teal color filter.

NATIONAL

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ASSOCIATION

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