



After-School Quality: The Process of Program Improvement Information Sheet

Introduction

Programs participating in Keystone STARS are supported and encouraged to engage in a continuous cycle of quality improvement focused on improved outcomes for children and families.

In an effort to support school-age provider's ability to more deeply understand and implement the steps involved in a team approach to CQI, Pennsylvania is introducing the ***After-School Quality: The Process of Program Improvement*** - a five- step team approach, supported by technical assistance consultants, by which programs examine their program quality and strategies to make change. *After-School Quality* provides concrete steps, process and tools to make the most of sources of evidence and implement a sustainable process for continuous quality improvement. The corner stone of *After-School Quality* is a team approach and it supports the use of any youth program quality assessment tool.

Developed by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST), *After-School Quality* supports program improvement in the context of self-assessment, state quality rating systems and accreditation. In each case, *After-School Quality* is a flexible, effective tool for ensuring that the process of improving program quality comes from a team of people who are invested in and care about the program.

After-School Quality cohorts consist of approximately 30 programs with up to 40 hours of TA per program. Participation requires three Professional Development Institutes with TA's and Program Team Leads. Questions should be directed to Betsy O. Saatman betsaa@berksiu.org or 484-955-5909.

Benefits of Participating in the *After-School Quality* Process

- Increased family involvement, community support, and valuable feedback;
- Provides a way to involve children in program planning;
- Shared leadership;
- Program community and families gain a deeper understanding of quality afterschool programs;
- You will build relationships among staff, families, host and the program community;
- A team building experience;
- Provides a way of communicating what works well to those directly connected to your program and the larger community;
- Opportunity for program staff to reflect on the way they do their work;
- You will have an opportunity to compare the way you work now to Keystone STARS and national standards;
- Identification of program goals for the future;
- Participation in a statewide and national movement to work on program improvement through self-study.

Recruitment of Facilities/ Selection Process

School-age facilities interested in participating in this pilot must commit to the full process and participate in three professional development events. It is estimated that this process will occur for 10-18 months. The exact amount of time will partly depend on the facility's individual team.

Programs from each region will be selected to participate in the ASQ cohort. Applicants will be notified regarding next steps to the ASQ Cohort within 15 days of receiving application.

Afterschool Quality Program Elements	Proposed Model
Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To assist program in understanding and implementing a team approach to continuous quality improvement. • To support facilities in meeting STAR 3 Leadership and Management standard for developing and implementing a Continuous Quality Improvement Plan. • To sustain a CQI process to identify program strengths, areas for improvement, needed resources to inform grant requests.
Eligible Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keystone STARS facilities at STAR 2, 3 or 4 (serving school-age children) with priority to facilities at STAR 2 and 3.
Service Array, Frequency and Duration of consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each facility may receive up to 40 hours of support; minimum of 20 hours each for up to eighteen months. • Technical Assistance will be provided by Regional school-age TA consultants trained by NIOST in the <i>After-School Quality</i> process. • No set minimums for observation/ on-site work, however, the process does outline six team meetings. Facility Team Leader and TA will negotiate supports needed around these meetings. • Sources of evidence will be collected by team members and analyzed to develop action plan. TA will provide supports to facility during this process and check-in regularly on progress. • TA will work with facility to identify any additional resources needed to complete process.
Notable Program Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-day training on the process for both TAs and Team Leads from participating facilities. • Detailed Program Manual – this will be provided to all participating facilities by the PA Key. • Portal of resources to support collection of data (e.g. staff, family, host, child questionnaires, program observation, sample letters, etc.). Each participating program and TA will have access to the portal. Portal access is at no cost for cohort facilities and TA consultants. • Receive <i>After-School Quality</i> program guide. For sample of contents: http://www.niost.org/pdf/ASQ/ASQ_Guide_Sample.pdf

Financial Responsibility

Programs participating in the *After-School Quality* Pilot will be responsible for expenses incurred throughout the process. The professional development will be at no cost with the exception of travel and food expenses, which will be the responsibility of the program. Programs are encouraged to use Keystone STARS supports including professional development and the grants and awards process to address program improvement needs.

SAMPLE Timeline

June/July/Aug	Completion of Application and Readiness Survey Program Selection
Sept-March	Professional Development for facility teams and TAs Survey (pre-) of <i>After-School Program Quality</i> participants
Sept-August	Implementation of 5 Steps defined in <i>After-School Program Quality</i> Survey (post-) of <i>After-School Program Quality</i> participants
Ongoing	Implementation of Closed-Evaluated process (“Sticky”) as action plan closes.

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