



**Assessing Parent Engagement in Afterschool Programs: A Tool for Learning and Improvement**

**National PTA Family-School Partnership Standard 1: Welcoming All Families**

**National Afterschool Association Accreditation Standards:**

**Key 7 - Staff and Families Interact with Each Other in Positive Ways**

- A. *Staff make families feel welcome and comfortable.*
- B. *Staff and families treat each other with respect.*
- C. *Staff share the languages and cultures of the families they serve, and the communities they live in.*
- D. *Staff and families work together to make arrivals and departures between home and child care go smoothly.*

**Key 23 - Support Families' Involvement in the Program**

- A. *There is a policy that allows family members to visit any time throughout the day.*

**Key 36 - Program Policies & Procedures are Responsive to Needs of Children, Youth, & Families in the Community**

- C. *The program's hours of operation are based on families' needs.*
- D. *It is program's policy to enroll all children with special needs.*

| Questions for Consideration   | What Are You Doing Now? | How Can You Be More Effective? |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Do you help your families feel welcome and comfortable visiting the program at any time with anyone?  |                         |                                |
| Has program staff developed personal relationships with the families?   |                         |                                |
| Do families of all backgrounds seem to be involved and connected? How can you include more families who haven't participated regularly in the past? |                         |                                |
| Is there a pattern that shows you which families may be getting left out? Why is this?  |                         |                                |
| Are events and programs open to the whole family and offered at convenient times and places?  |                         |                                |
| Do staff job descriptions include family engagement as one of their responsibilities?   |                         |                                |
| Does program staff receive professional development on how to better engage and work with all families?   |                         |                                |
| Are there many ways for families to volunteer (during program and non-program hours)?   |                         |                                |
| Do policies and programs reflect and respect the diversity of needs reflected by your families?   |                         |                                |



**National PTA Family-School Partnership Standard 2: Communicating Effectively**

**National Afterschool Association Accreditation Standards:**

**Key 23 - Support Families' Involvement in the Program**

- B. Staff offer orientation sessions for new families.*
- C. Staff keep families informed about the program.*

**Key 24 – Staff, Families, & Schools Share Important Information to Support the Well-being of Children and Youth**

- A. Program policies require that staff and family members communicate about the child's well-being.*

**Key 36 - Program Policies & Procedures are Responsive to Needs of Children, Youth, & Families in the Community**

- A. A written mission statement sets forth the program's philosophy and goals.*

| <b>Questions for Consideration</b>   | <b>What Are You Doing Now?</b> | <b>How Can You Be More Effective?</b> |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| What steps can you take to find out more information about the children in your program? How can you communicate that information to family members? |                                |                                       |
| Is personal and positive contact made with each family in the program a few times a year?  |                                |                                       |
| Does your mission statement clearly reflect your program's philosophy and goals? Is it shared and easily understood by your families?                |                                |                                       |
| Do you offer many different ways to communicate with families every day?   |                                |                                       |
| Is it easy for families of children in your program to build connections and communicate with each other?  |                                |                                       |
| Do you survey your families at least once a year to see what is on their minds?  |                                |                                       |
| Are the program director and other staff easily accessible to any parent?  |                                |                                       |
| Are all communications delivered in family-friendly terms that are easily understood by all families?  |                                |                                       |
| Does staff regularly speak with parents during drop off and/or pick up from the program?   |                                |                                       |



**National PTA Family-School Partnership Standard 3: Supporting Student Success**

**National Afterschool Association Accreditation Standards:**

**Key 23 - Support Families' Involvement in the Program**

*C. Staff and families share information about how to support children's development.*

| Questions for Consideration   | What Are You Doing Now? | How Can You Be More Effective? |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Are parents informed about what their child is learning in the afterschool program?   |                         |                                |
| Are parents informed about the various skills and talents that their child exhibits in the afterschool program?                       |                         |                                |
| Are parents informed about the skills that their child needs to strengthen?   |                         |                                |
| Are parents informed of how to strengthen learning and development of their child at home?  |                         |                                |
| Do you provide families with activities they can do at home with their child to strengthen or reinforce skills?                       |                         |                                |
| Do you hold various types of family events and activities to engage parents with the program?   |                         |                                |
| Do you hold a balance of educational and family fun events to establish trust with families and build relationships?                  |                         |                                |
| Do you work collaboratively with families to teach them how to further help their child?  |                         |                                |
| Do families share with you the activities they do at home to increase student learning and extracurricular skills?                    |                         |                                |
| Are families invited to observe and participate in afterschool programs and events?   |                         |                                |
| Do you set aside regular times throughout the year to meet with families one on one to discuss their child's progress in the program? |                         |                                |



**National PTA Family-School Partnership Standard 4: Speaking Up For Every Child**

**National Afterschool Association Accreditation Standards:**

**Key 25 – The Program Builds Links to the Community**

*A. Staff provide information about community resources to meet the needs of children and their families.*

| <b>Questions for Consideration</b>   | <b>What Are You Doing Now?</b> | <b>How Can You Be More Effective?</b> |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Are children and families aware of the resources in the community that can help meet their needs?  |                                |                                       |
| Do you work with parents to help them develop skills to advocate for themselves and their children?  |                                |                                       |
| Do parents understand where to go and the appropriate way to handle a situation if a problem needs to be resolved?   |                                |                                       |
| Are parents offered opportunities to learn how to make the best choices for their children’s education?  |                                |                                       |
| Are parents educated on how to help their child set goals and plans for the future?  |                                |                                       |
| Does your program offer services to support families such as parenting workshops, GED classes, counseling services, or food assistance? If not, do you assist families in locating and obtaining these services? |                                |                                       |
| Is your afterschool program considered a community? In other words, do the families support one another and all children in the program? If not, what can you do to create a community culture?                  |                                |                                       |



**National PTA Family-School Partnership Standard 5: Sharing Power**

**National Afterschool Association Accreditation Standards:**

**Key 23 - Support Families' Involvement in the Program**

*D. Staff encourage families to give input and to get involved in program events.*

**Key 24 – Staff, Families, & Schools Share Important Information to Support the Well-being of Children and Youth**

*B. Staff, families, and schools work together as a team to set goals for each child; work with outside specialists when necessary.*

| Questions for Consideration   | What Are You Doing Now? | How Can You Be More Effective? |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| What opportunities are provided to families to give program feedback?   |                         |                                |
| Are parents provided opportunities for leadership/decision making roles within the program?   |                         |                                |
| Do you involve parents in focus groups or advisory councils to solicit input for the program <b>and</b> act on some of your parents' suggestions? |                         |                                |
| Do you allow parents to have a say or vote in decisions that affect or touch their child in the program?  |                         |                                |
| Are parents involved in developing the afterschool program curriculum?  |                         |                                |
| Are parents involved in developing particular afterschool programs and events?  |                         |                                |
| Are parents involved in the setting of goals for their child in afterschool programs (along with any other partners such as the school)?          |                         |                                |
| Do you use already involved parents to encourage the participation of other parents in program events?  |                         |                                |



**National PTA Family-School Partnership Standard 6: Collaborating with the Community**

**National Afterschool Association Accreditation Standards:**

**Key 24 – Staff, Families, and Schools Share Important Information to Support the Well-Being of Children and Youth**

*D. Staff and families join together to communicate and work with the schools.*

**Key 25 – The Program Builds Links to the Community**

*B. The program develops a list of community resources. The staff draw from these resources to expand program offerings.*

*C. The staff plan activities to help children get to know the larger community.*

*D. The program offers community service options, especially for older children.*

**Key 36 - Program Policies & Procedures are Responsive to Needs of Children, Youth, & Families in the Community**

*B. The program makes itself affordable to all families by using all possible community resources and sources of subsidy.*

| Questions for Consideration  | What Are You Doing Now? | How Can You Be More Effective? |
|--|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| What policies do you have in place for contacting schools? Where are these policies documented?  |                         |                                |
| Is your program’s curriculum tied to the Georgia Performance Standards?  |                         |                                |
| Do you collaborate with the school on family engagement programs and events?   |                         |                                |
| Are afterschool staff liaisons for parents between the school and your program?  |                         |                                |
| Do you work with families and the schools to address student academics and social skills?  |                         |                                |
| Is your program affordable to all families?  |                         |                                |
| Does your program partner with schools and other organizations in the community to boost family engagement?  |                         |                                |
| Do you partner with other organizations and service agencies to bring resources and/or programming into your events or facility for the benefit of all families? |                         |                                |
| How can you expand what you offer beyond the walls of your program?  |                         |                                |
| Do you have service learning and/or internships for students through community collaborations with organizations?  |                         |                                |



## References

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