

CHAPTER 7



Staff Recruitment and Professional Development

STAFF RECRUITMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This Chapter covers the following Core Competencies:

- 19/8s: Strives for self-improvement
- 20: Communicates effectively with other staff, stakeholders, and parents
- 4s: Ability to successfully manage program staff
- 5s: Ability to recruit high-quality staff and volunteers
- 6s: Ability to engage, and support afterschool staff in implementing program activities to achieve program goals
- 9s: Ability to promote and the professional growth and development of program staff

Overview

A Solid Investment

Can you imagine running an afterschool program without staff? We don't need to tell you how important they are to the program. Spending a lot of time recruiting a solid staff (*See: How To Recruit an Effective and Appropriate Staff*) is as important as keeping your high-quality staff members on board.

The first step is to recruit the best staff you can.

Once the appropriate staff are hired, the challenge is to keep them engaged and excited. One way is to show them how essential they are by **encouraging them to attend monthly professional growth and training opportunities**. It's a no-risk investment with plenty of reward.

WARNING! Incorporating staff development into a program schedule may lead to:

- Improved performance by staff.
- Higher staff retention rates.

- Staff who feel valued because they *are* valued.

Staff Development and the Afterschool Program

It's true: staff who feel valued tend to work better, stay longer, and be happier on the job. So what staff development opportunities can be provided?

- **Large group trainings**—For school-based programs, early release days and district staff development days are often good times to provide large trainings. For community-based programs, it may be easier to meet before or after program hours during a regular week. Topics can include behavior management, youth development, and academic support and integration.
- **Individual coaching or mentoring**—Sometimes large group trainings are not applicable or appropriate for all staff. One-on-one meetings are perfect ways to help new staff get oriented or help staff who are struggling in a certain area.
- **Peer networking**—Oftentimes, staff just need time to talk and share ideas with each other. Networking provides opportunities to ask questions in an informal, friendly environment.

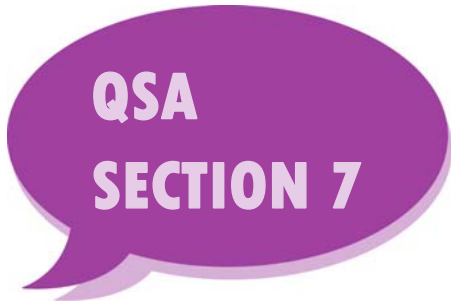
Keep in Mind...

- Staff development should emphasize both **personal and professional growth**, which allows staff to increase skills specific to their needs. They will acquire lifelong skills as well as those that are directly relevant to their work.
- **Staff development should be a core component of afterschool calendaring.** Include specific staff development opportunities into staff calendars throughout the year. We recommend monthly.

More on Staff Retention

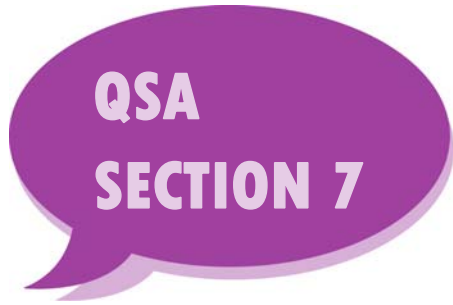
Another way to retain quality staff is by providing them with opportunities to work as a team and to take on leadership roles. This may include having a staff member serve as the point person for an upcoming event, allowing staff to make decisions about the program, (e.g. what activities will be offered), or rotating the role of meeting facilitator so that all members have a chance to lead staff meetings.

Finally, don't forget to **always show your appreciation** for all of the hard work your staff puts in! Send positive notes, remember birthdays, provide treats at meetings, and celebrate accomplishments!



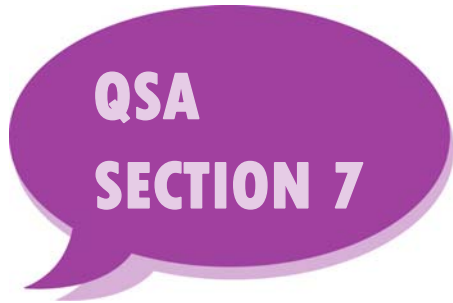
In our program we strive for self-improvement

In our Program we...	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators
<p>Strive for self-improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Staff don't attend trainings or professional development offerings <input type="checkbox"/> Staff are not motivated to learn (leave a learning event mid-way, text during meetings) <input type="checkbox"/> Staff resist new ideas/changes <input type="checkbox"/> Staff become aware of problems once there is a negative impact on the program or project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Staff regularly attends professional workshops, trainings, and conferences to increase competency <input type="checkbox"/> Staff apply new learning to everyday work practices <input type="checkbox"/> Staff are open to new ideas and learning opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Staff ask for feedback or input from supervisors or co-workers about their performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Staff actively expand knowledge through reading, networking, trainings, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Staff can identify and resolve challenges before they have a negative impact on the program <input type="checkbox"/> Staff come up with 1-3 solutions to problems they see and check in with peers/supervisor for input <input type="checkbox"/> Staff reflects on and evaluates own performance to identify needs for professional growth



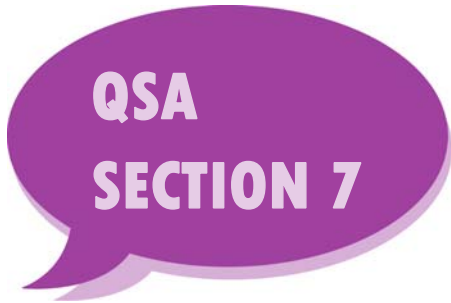
In our program we have strong organizational skills and are able to recruit high-quality staff and volunteers

In our Program we...	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators
Have strong organizational skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Staff do not demonstrate professional skills (come late to meetings, don't respond to email) <input type="checkbox"/> Staff are disorganized, with materials misplaced or missing <input type="checkbox"/> Staff don't ask for help when they need it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Staff are able to use technology for basic communication and organization (email, calendar) <input type="checkbox"/> Staff have a file management system for project notes, action items and deliverables <input type="checkbox"/> Staff take notes in meetings and follows up on tasks in a timely fashion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Staff use a range of technology to stay organized and efficient <input type="checkbox"/> Staff regularly reorganizes workspace to proactively de-clutter <input type="checkbox"/> Staff have a range of organizational systems to organize and track information
Are able to recruit high-quality staff and volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Staff are hired using an ad-hoc interview process or no process at all <input type="checkbox"/> Management hires staff who are missing critical skill sets or abilities to do a high quality job (conflict mediation, curriculum development) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Job description competencies are used to hire staff. <input type="checkbox"/> New hires are placed on a 90 day probation period to ensure they are a good fit for the organization. <input type="checkbox"/> Staff are diverse and reflect the racial, ethnic, linguistic, gender, family, and community characteristics of participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> An orientation is given to new staff that reviews policies and procedures <input type="checkbox"/> Management meets with staff regularly to discuss new learning opportunities as a strategy for retention



In our program supervisors engage and support afterschool staff in implementing program activities to achieve program goals

In our Program...	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators
<p>Supervisors engage, and support afterschool staff in implementing program activities to achieve program goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisors do not know what staff are doing on a day-to-day basis <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisors provide instructions or feedback without offering clear strategies for what to do <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisors set an expectation then change their mind about what they want with little or no explanation to staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisors provide staff with needed materials, supplies and preparation time <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisors use staff meetings to explore instructional strategies or reflect on the program <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisors demonstrate new skills to staff when giving instructions or providing feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisors communicate high expectations for staff and program participants <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisors provide coaching and mentorship to staff, as appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisors lead effective meetings and trainings on select content that models the approach and specific activities and practices staff are expected to use with program participants



In our program we promote the growth and development of staff

In our Program we...	Low Quality Indicators	Approaching Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators
<p>Promote the growth and development of staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Staff are unclear about supervisors' expectations of high-quality performance <input type="checkbox"/> Supervision happens in an ad-hoc process (no standard supervision sessions exist) <input type="checkbox"/> Feedback is not constructive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisors set realistic goals with staff and review them annually <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisors schedule and maintain regular 1:1 supervision sessions with staff <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisors regularly acknowledge staff for successes, and positive efforts <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisors observe staff in action monthly and share feedback in a constructive and respectful manner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisors set realistic goals with staff and reviews/updates goals quarterly in a formal performance review <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisors continually seek opportunities and resources that allow self and staff to meet personal and professional growth goals <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisors work with staff to assess the effectiveness of professional development activities and how they might be improved



Support new staff.

- ❑ **Recruit qualified staff** by developing partnerships with local institutions of higher education, teacher credential programs, and other youth focused education programs and initiatives.
- ❑ **Allocate funds** from the afterschool budget for staff orientations and meetings.
- ❑ **Use early release days** and district staff development days for these activities. You may also consider **closing the program early** or for the day to provide staff development (don't forget to get approval from your executive director, Site Administrator and District Coordinator as required first).
- ❑ **Provide** time for mini or individual **weekly check-in or staff meetings** before or after the program.

Increase staff development opportunities.

- ❑ **Plan ahead** by incorporating staff development into your afterschool calendar every month. Make time for professional development, staff meetings, and trainings for all staff (program leaders, consultants, volunteers, and identified regular day staff).
- ❑ **Utilize community based organizations** to provide staff development and trainings. **Contact free (or reduced cost) training** resources for program staff. (See "*How to Support and Retain Your Afterschool Staff*" for a list of resources)
- ❑ **Acknowledge staff successes** by scheduling staff recognition time and community building.

- ❑ **Encourage new or struggling line staff to observe** teaching practices and develop relationships with school-day teachers or more experienced staff members.

Prioritize staff retention and promotion.

- ❑ **Create a peer observation and feedback loop.** This allows staff to support one another formally. Allocate time for staff to observe one another informally and provide feedback on successes and opportunities.
- ❑ **Capitalize on staff talents,** leadership, and enthusiasm by inviting them to participate in creating a vision, serving as a coach to new staff, or representing the program in public venues.
- ❑ **Incorporate line staff into program planning.** Give them the opportunity to take ownership of the program and grow as planners and instructors.
- ❑ Give additional feedback via one-on-one **mid-year staff evaluations.** Give feedback on strengths and challenges, and create an individual growth plan for each.



Recruit an Effective and Appropriate Staff

1. Assess and identify your program's needs

- Are you looking for staff with a particular skill (bilingual, artist, math teacher, etc.)?
- Do you need someone to work with a particular age group?
- Have you checked in with the program's Leadership Team to elicit their suggestions?

2. Create a job description

- Once the needs have been identified, ensure that the job description fits the needs.
- It is okay to modify an existing job description to ensure you find quality staff.
- Consider including the Core Competencies that you wish staff to possess in your job description. See the ELC Core Competencies toolkit at <http://sfelc.org/publications-and-tools/core-competencies/>

3. Post the job description

- Use local job boards to make sure you find the best person.
- Ask other afterschool programs where they normally post positions.
- In many communities, Craigslist (www.craigslist.org) and Opportunity Knocks (www.opportunityknocks.org) are popular websites for non-profit job listings.

4. Create the interview process

- Decide who will participate in the interview process. Members of the program's leadership team? Youth from the program?
- Identify key questions to ask during the interview process. Ensure that these questions align with the skills and strengths you are seeking to find in a new hire.
- Invite the candidates to a "try-out." Oftentimes, a candidate may perform differently in front of a group of youth than he or she did in front of adults. A try-out will give you a sense of how the candidate

manages a class and interacts with youth.

- Don't forget to check references.

5. Offer the position

- Once the Leadership Team has identified its first choice, offer the position to the candidate. If the candidate accepts, move on to the next step: the orientation process.

What Should I Have in My Toolbox?

- An up-to-date, specific job description to post for potential staff.
- Job announcement flyers that can be personalized for the audience you are targeting.
- A list of great places to recruit staff (www.craigslist.org, www.opportunityknocks.org, local college career opportunity board, local newspapers).
- Determine what the interview process will be ahead of time. Will candidates be interviewed a second time? Who will perform the interviewing? Will youth have a chance to meet with the candidate?
- Blank copies of interview questions to give to the interview team, so all candidates will be asked the same questions (See Tools: Sample Interview Questions).



I have a tight budget, what is this going to cost me?

- Posting an ad on www.craigslist.org: free in the "non-profit" job section if you set up an account and provide your tax ID number (\$75 if the description is placed under "education" or another heading).
- Posting an ad on www.opportunityknocks.org: \$100.
- Look through resumes posted on www.craigslist.org time consuming, but free.
- Flyer for local college(s) in the education department, parks and recreation department, or other relevant area: very inexpensive and effective.
- Ask around. Tell people you know that your program is hiring—tell day school staff and any community-based organization you work with. Word of mouth is very effective and free!



Sample Interview Questions

For more examples, see the ELC Core Competency toolkit at <http://sfelc.org/>

NAME:	
QUESTIONS:	NOTES:
Please tell us briefly about yourself and why you are interested in working with us.	
Please discuss your previous job or experiences related to this position.	
What is something you would like to learn from this work experience?	
What do you consider to be 3 of your strengths and 3 weaknesses?	
SCENARIOS:	
Our tutorial sessions have guidelines that participants must follow: respect others, no profanity, keep a low noise level in the classroom. On one occasion, a participant begins to act disruptively and takes the paper of another participant. Things begin to get out of control. What would you do to bring the situation under control?	Look for: Classroom management, discipline, boundaries
You have begun working individually with a participant on his social studies homework. During the session, the youth becomes extremely frustrated with his homework. When you try to focus him on his work, he tells you that he can't do it and puts his head on his desk and begins to cry. How would handle this situation?	Look for: Tutoring skills, awareness of other issues possible (e.g. learning issues)
You have been tardy to work several times in the past two weeks. Your supervisor approaches you about your tardiness. What would you do in this situation?	Look for: Communication with supervisor
FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:	
What are your strongest academic subjects?	
Do you have any hobbies or special talents that would enhance our program?	
Finger Printing / TB Testing	

Adapted from the Richmond District Neighborhood Center/Presidio Middle School Afterschool Program



Orient New Afterschool Staff

1. Provide a formal orientation.

Before throwing a new staff member into the busy life of the afterschool program, provide him or her with a reasonable amount of orientation. This orientation might address the following questions:

- What is the program’s philosophy? Vision? Mission?
- What are the expectations for job performance?
- What is the program’s behavior management system?
- How do they get paid? What are they responsible for submitting?
- What do they do if they’re sick?
- What are the emergency procedures?
- What are the work hours & schedule for all programs?

2. Pair the new staff member with a veteran staff member.

No matter how much information is provided up-front, new staff will inevitably have questions as they begin their work. To help with these questions, the orientation process might also include assigning them a buddy. This existing staff person will help them navigate their new environment.

3. Hold regular staff meetings.

One of the best ways to ensure all staff are on the same page is to have regular staff meetings. Meetings provide opportunities for program staff to discuss and examine the program, to align activities, and to ask questions about any current issues.

4. Provide opportunities for professional development.

Use the ELC Core Competencies to survey the new staff about their capacities in a range of areas. Do they know about behavior management? Do they understand youth development? Once you better understand their needs, you can match the new staff with appropriate professional development or a peer mentor to support them in areas with which they do not have as much experience.

5. Hold a 30-day check-in.

Make sure to do a follow-up check-in with all new staff 30 days after they are hired. This time allows them

to bring up any questions or concerns that they may have—and allows you to do the same. The check-in is also a good way to make sure that all program staff are focused in the same direction.

What Should I Have in My Toolbox?

- A copy of your program’s mission & philosophy.
- A staff manual that describes policies & procedures for absences, paychecks, dress, etc.
- Copies of all relevant personnel forms to review with staff (e.g., timesheet, benefits).
- Program schedule
- Emergency procedures
- CalSAC, DCYF, and ExCEL websites to access trainings: www.calsac.org, www.dcyf.org, www.healthiersf.org/excelafterschool



I have a tight budget, what is this going to cost me?

- Currently existing copies of your policies & procedures manual: free.
- Incentives for new staff and veteran staff “buddies”—e.g., food, flex time: low-cost.
- Trainings from CalSAC, DCYF, ExCEL: free.
- Share or trade training opportunities with other local agencies: free or low-cost.



New Staff Orientation Sample Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Where?	On-Site	On-Site	On-Site	On-Site	On-Site
What & When?	<p>Orientation to Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome Ice Breaker Introduction to key program personnel Overview of staff manual <p>BREAK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HR – paperwork Team Building Reflections 	<p>Youth Development/ Assets Training</p>	<p>Program Planning – Work with staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with staff to create an Afterschool Program Plan and schedule. Who does what? When do activities take place? 	<p>Activity Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What activities will staff offer? What special skills do staff have? 	<p>Planning Day Site Visit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange for new staff to follow veteran staff for a day.
Supplies/ Materials/ Resources Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Snack Staff Manuals HR Paperwork 		Action Planning Tool		



Support and Retain Your Afterschool Staff

1. Keep expectations clear.

- Right from the start, let staff know exactly what is expected of them. Make sure expectations are conducive with their job descriptions and are expressed in both a verbal and written format.
- Set the bar high with what is expected—and then follow through. If staff are not meeting the expectations, make sure to let them know right away. Don't let problems sit stagnant. No one knows how to get better (or that improvement is needed) if feedback isn't provided.

2. Facilitate staff buy-in to the program.

- Staff feel more connected to the program when they help plan and make choices; when they feel more connected, they put more effort into all the aspects of the program.
- Hold staff accountable for their actions. Make sure there are procedures in place to accentuate the importance of their presence in the program. Hold them accountable for being prepared and on time.
- As staff continue to work and grow in the program, make sure to challenge them with more responsibility. Most staff will feel more interested in their jobs if they have more opportunities for learning.
- Giving staff new and exciting opportunities also can come with new titles, like "assistant director, curriculum manager, and recreation leader." Get creative; even if a raise doesn't follow the new title, most staff will still enjoy the extra attention.

3. Communicate, communicate, communicate.

- Keep the lines of communication open and incorporate different methods of communicating to staff. This includes constructive criticism, praises, or even just day-to-day announcements—use verbal, written, and kinesthetic methods.
- Ask staff what their needs are. Are there trainings that they need? Do they have suggestions for any area of the program that can be improved upon? Their input is very valuable.

4. Let them know they are appreciated.

- Get together for staff potlucks or dinners outside of the program so staff can have the chance to mingle in a neutral environment.
- Celebrate staff birthdays.
- Take pictures of the groups with whom they work. Post the pictures on bulletin boards, display them in the office, or make appreciation cards with them.

What Should I Have in My Toolbox?

- A staff survey to find out individual likes, needs, and goals—allowing you to personalize staff rewards and trainings (See Tools).
- A list of organizations that provide free or reduced-cost professional development workshops (See Tools).
- California School Aged Care Consortium, DCYF, and ExCEL are good places to start - www.calsac.org, www.dcyf.org, www.healthiersf.org/excelafterschool



I have a tight budget, what is this going to cost me?

- Staff "pick-me-ups" can be cost-effective or extravagant. Either way someone's day will be made!
- A short personal note highlighting a positive aspect of an individual accomplishment in program: \$0.
- Home-baked treats are always appreciated: brownie mix \$3, scone mix from Trader Joe's \$4.
- Emergen'C, vitamins, Halls Defense Drops—keep them healthy: \$4-\$15.
- Matching t-shirts, sweatshirts, headbands, wristbands always help bond the team. Make 'em cheap or spend some loot: \$5-\$35+ each.
- Ask for donations! Be creative, from movies to books to clothes.



Sample Questionnaire for Staff Pick-Me-Ups

Staff always forget they have filled this out and wonder how, in the busy schedule of a program director, you remember that their favorite drink is a Wild Cherry Pepsi or their favorite salty snack is jalapeno flavored rice puffs.

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM STAFF FACT SHEET
Name:
Nickname:
Birthday:
Favorite Color:
Favorite Snack:
Favorite Fast Food:
Favorite Magazine:
Favorite Bands:
Favorite Drink (non-alcoholic):
Favorite Store:
Favorite Music or Books (pick one, not both!):



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Training Resources

For free afterschool staff training curriculums, visit www.healthiersf.org/ExCELafterschool/Resources/training.php or <http://afatacog.wordpress.com/coordinator-learning-circles/starting-with-self-a-collaboratively-developed-curriculum-by-afatac-learning-circles/>

The following organizations have resources for programs and offer support for afterschool staff.

Afterschool Alliance

The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit organization dedicated to raising awareness of the importance of afterschool programs and advocating for quality, affordable programs for all children. It is supported by a group of public, private and nonprofit organizations that share the Alliance's vision of ensuring that all children have access to afterschool programs by 2010. Every fall, the Afterschool Alliance spearheads Lights On! Afterschool to raise awareness about afterschool programs www.afterschoolalliance.org

ASAP Connect

ASAPconnect links out-of-school-time programs and assistance providers so you can partner more effectively, expand capabilities and improve program quality. Assistance providers can set up a profile in the ASAP Directory to promote your services and connect with thousands of California after school programs. You can share knowledge about promising practices, connect with new partners, plus get professional training and support to advance learning and improve quality of service. After school program staff can use our ASAP Directory to find relevant, up-to-date information about effective training, mentoring, coaching and consulting. Searches can be custom-tailored to your specific program improvement needs. www.afterschoolconnect.org

California AfterSchool Network

The mission of the California AfterSchool Network is to ensure high quality afterschool programs. The Partnership achieves its mission by working collaboratively with stakeholders across the state to build effective,

sustainable programs and to provide a policy voice for local programs. Created in 1999, this public-private partnership includes the California Department of Education, the Foundation Consortium and the Governor's Office of the Secretary for Education. www.afterschoolnetwork.org

California After School Resource Center

The California After School Resource Center (CASRC) supports quality after school programming throughout the state through its comprehensive Web site, access to our circulating library of research-based instructional materials, trainings, and other supportive services and resources to providers to promote literacy and mathematics skills, as well as safe learning environments for youth in kindergarten through grade twelve. <http://www.californiaafterschool.org/index>

California Department of Education (CDE)

The mission of the California Department of Education is to provide leadership, assistance, oversight, and resources so that every Californian has access to an education that meets world-class standards. Working with our partners, we will create a dynamic, world-class education system that equips all students with the knowledge and skills to excel in college and careers, and excel as parents and citizens. www.cde.ca.gov

California Health Kids Resource Center

A FREE lending library that offers Nutrition Literacy Education Materials, Professional Developments and more. www.californiahealthykids.org/index

California School Age Consortium (CaSAC)

CaSAC provides afterschool programs and professionals with the training and support they need to deliver high quality, affordable programming for kids. Through our statewide network of members and chapters, we aim to mobilize the afterschool workforce and mobilize the field around our common vision. *"Our vision is that afterschool and school-age care programs will be a public priority throughout California. Through our leadership, afterschool professionals and programs will be valued — like teachers and schools — as an essential service supported by government, business, and community resources."* www.calsac.org

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Training Resources *...continued*

CompassPoint

CompassPoint Nonprofit Services is a nonprofit training, consulting and research organization with offices in San Francisco and Silicon Valley. Through a broad range of services, we provide nonprofits with the management tools, concepts and strategies necessary to shape change in their communities. The mission of CompassPoint Nonprofit Services is to increase the effectiveness and impact of people working and volunteering in the nonprofit sector. www.compasspoint.org

Department of Children, Youth, and their Families (DCYF)

One of the few city departments in the country dedicated exclusively to young people, DCYF enhances the lives and futures of San Francisco's children and youth through innovative partnerships with parents and youth, community organizations, city departments, schools, funders and the private sector.

<http://www.dcyf.org/index.aspx?page=27>

ExCEL After School Programs (SFUSD)

The ExCEL After School Programs mission is to create and sustain "safe havens" at public schools where students and community members can access expanded learning opportunities and integrated education, health, social service, and cultural programs in the out-of-school hours. www.healthiersf.org/ExCELAfterschool

Learning in Afterschool & Summer Project

The Learning in Afterschool & Summer Project (LIA) is an effort by afterschool advocates and leaders to unify the field of afterschool and focus the movement on promoting young people's learning. This means offering opportunities not found at home or in school and applying our most recent knowledge on learning to our afterschool practices <http://www.learninginafterschool.org/>

National Institute of Out of School Time (NIOST)

The Mission of NIOST is to ensure that all children, youth, and families have access to high quality programs, activities, and opportunities during non-school hours. NIOST believes that these experiences are essential to the healthy development of children and youth, who then can become effective and capable members of society. Their work bridges the worlds of research and practice. www.niost.org

National Youth Development Information Center

National Youth Development Information Center is a one-stop website for youth workers with interest in any and all of the following areas: funding, programming, research, policy, job and training opportunities. NYDIC also provides current news to the youth development field and has one of the largest online libraries, providing practice-related information at low-cost or no cost. NYDIC provides constant opportunities for practitioners to share knowledge and experience, enabling them to build the best practice in the field of youth development. NYDIC is an initiative of the National Collaboration for Youth. <http://sparkaction.org/topic/after-school-youth-development>



Coach Your Staff to Success

Once your program has a solid foundation of group professional development opportunities, it is critical to add individual coaching as well. Individual coaching allows the afterschool program coordinator to ensure that each team member has a fulfilling work experience, addresses unique needs, and builds on existing strengths.

1. Include staff in the process.

- Have each staff member determine an area to work on during the individual coaching (see Tools).

2. Understand each staff member's learning style.

- Some staff retain more information by reading it, hearing it, or being an active participant in what is to be learned. Learn each person's style and what works best for them. Try to give group announcements both in writing and verbally, and make sure trainings are interactive.
- Just like learning styles, people communicate differently. Some staff just want to get to the point of the information, some want all the history behind a decision, and some will want to help brainstorm an even bigger idea.

3. Know when to lead and when to manage.

- Determine when it is best to simply tell an individual what needs to be done—and when to give that individual an opportunity to make decisions.
- Learn when to let staff members fail and learn from their mistakes. For example, if a staff member is planning a game that might not work out, let them continue with the plan as long as the participants are safe. In that way, they can see what might be improved next time. If they keep repeating the same mistakes, pull them aside and give them suggestions on what to do differently, or model the behavior for them.

4. Be consistent.

- Follow through with individual staff, so that their individual goals and your program goals will both be achieved.

What Should I Have in My Toolbox?

- Coaching Session Template (See Tools).
- Knowledge of different learning and communication styles.
- Flexibility. If it doesn't work the first time, try again, or change the approach.
- Follow-through. Be prepared to give staff extended support with their goals and objectives.
- A good ear to listen. Sometimes staff may not want all the answers, but someone to just listen to their concerns or ideas.



I have a tight budget, what is this going to cost me?

- The biggest cost in coaching staff is the your time.
- Training opportunities for you - the program coordinator - on mentoring, leadership, and communication: cost varies.



Coaching Session Template

DATE:	COACH:	STAFF:
CHECK-IN: 10 MINUTES		
This time can be used to build your relationship with the staff member, and get to know each other professionally and personally.		
UPDATES: 5 MINUTES		
During this time, you can provide him/her with an overview of program status, and updates on program events and school interaction.		
ACCOMPLISHMENTS: 10 MINUTES		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spend some time talking to the staff member about what you think is working well. • Ask them to talk about areas of their job they are proud of. 		
CHALLENGES: 5 MINUTES		
Brainstorm with the staff member to list five challenges he/she is struggling with.		
PROBLEM-SOLVE THE CHALLENGES: 30 MINUTES		
<p>Select no more than two challenges to problem solve.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue: Describe the challenge in detail. What is the source of the challenge? • Goal: What does the staff member want to work on? • Reality: What's getting in the way? • Options: What resources are available to help him/her address the challenge (school or agency staff, websites, handouts, training, etc.)? How can you provide further support (resources, trainings, etc.)? 		
NEXT STEPS: 10 MINUTES		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine and commit to the next steps. • What will the staff do to address the challenge? 		



Help Staff Stay Organized

One way to help your staff be more effective with the youth they are serving is by helping them stay organized. Creating systems for your staff to use will also ensure that they are not becoming overly stressed out trying to find attendance sheets, looking for materials for a project, or knowing when staff meetings are happening. With a few simple strategies, you can greatly reduce the amount of stress staff are feeling so that they can spend their energy focusing on the more important things – like providing awesome programming for participants!

1. Model Organization

Create folders or boxes for each blank form you would like to make available, and for each completed form you need to collect from staff. Keep the folders in an area easier accessible to staff. Some folders you may want to create include:

Program Forms:

- Attendance sheets
- Field Trip Forms
- Emergency Contact Information Forms/Health Forms
- Participant Applications

Human Resource Forms:

- Request for time off forms
- Vacation request forms
- Injury report forms

2. Provide Key Information in a Timely Manner

Provide program calendars at least a month in advance. Items to consider including on the calendar are:

- Staff meeting dates
- Due dates (lesson plans due, field trip forms due, participant surveys due)
- Special program activities (field trips, family events, site visits)

3. Be Clear and Consistent on Systems and Protocols

If you require staff to turn in lesson plans, make sure everyone knows how to use the template when they are due by, and where they are to be put. If you expect staff to turn in paperwork by a certain date, follow up immediately with staff who miss the deadline. If staff see that you are serious about the systems you have set in place, they are much more likely to follow them. If you become lenient, they will as well.

What Should I Have in My Toolbox?

- Clearly labeled folders for forms
- Plenty of copies for forms
- Monthly program calendars



I have a tight budget, what is this going to cost me?

- File Folders – About \$7 for 100 at Office Depot
- File Holder – About \$20 at Office Depot



Conduct Effective Staff Evaluations

Receiving a work evaluation can be very stressful for both staff and supervisor, but it doesn't have to be! With the proper framing and tools the process can be a painless and effective way to help staff improve their practice and show off their growth.

1. Be Prepared

- Gather your evaluation forms at the beginning of each year and make any edits before program starts
- Walk your staff through the evaluation process and forms as soon as they are hired, at the beginning of each year, or whenever there are changes to the forms or process
- Provide staff with a calendar that outlines when their evaluation will take place so they can plan accordingly
- If staff are being asked to do self-evaluations, provide them with plenty of lead time to complete the forms (at least a month)

2. Be Clear

- Let your staff know what the intent of your evaluation process is (e.g., to improve staff performance, inform raise decisions, determine future employment) so they know what the outcomes of their evaluation may be
- Explain to staff what, exactly, you will be evaluating by giving them copies of the forms you will be using and allowing time for them to ask questions
- Schedule at least an hour to meet with staff individually to review evaluations

3. Be Open and Honest

- Providing everyone with a perfect evaluation because you don't want to upset anyone does not help improve your program. It can also feel

patronizing to staff. Be honest. Everyone has areas that need improvement

- You have probably heard of the “sandwich” technique for providing feedback. Make sure to point out areas of strength (everyone has them!) before and after providing constructive criticism
- Consider giving your staff a form to evaluate your performance as a supervisor. Be receptive and reflective when reviewing their feedback

4. Provide Follow-up

- In your evaluation meeting, create an action plan with each staff member that includes areas for them to work on, suggested trainings, etc. See the ELC Core Competencies toolkit for templates at <http://sfelc.org/publications-and-tools/core-competencies/>
- Check in periodically with staff to see how they are progressing with their follow-up plan
- If there are any areas that it seems the whole staff could use improvement in, schedule group trainings or professional development activities to address those gaps

What Should I Have in My Toolbox?

- Staff evaluation and follow up forms. See <http://sfelc.org/> for examples and templates.
- Schedule for staff evaluations



I have a tight budget, what is this going to cost me?

- Nothing but your time and the cost of raises