

Implementing the Georgia Afterschool & Youth Development Quality Standards: Tips, Strategies & Questions to Consider



GEORGIA AFTERSCHOOL & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Selecting Your Self-Assessment Team



Team Leader:

- **Select one person** to coordinate the assessment and serve as team leader.
- Site Director or Program Supervisor may be a natural fit for the job...but a staff member, volunteer, parent, or other stakeholder may be better suited for team leader.
- Consider if someone outside your program would be necessary **to ensure objectivity**.

Team Members:

- Be sure to include **a variety of stakeholders** on the assessment team to include different perspectives of the program.
- The team should **consist of 3-5 members** and could include: parents, volunteers, school staff, site directors, front line staff, partner organizations, or external evaluators.

Remember: Every team will look different – do what **makes sense** for your program!

Preparing Your Team



Once the team members and team leader are selected, meet with **all members** to provide each member with the self-assessment tool, review it, and prepare for the observation.

During this step, make sure to:

- **Determine** which Quality Elements will be assessed.
- **Decide** the frequency of assessment.
- **Explain** how the information you collect will be compiled, shared, and used.

Remember: With everyone on the same page, change and growth will be **more effective and meaningful**.

Which Quality Elements Should Be Assessed?



While it is great to assess all nine Quality Elements, it may not be the best place for your program to start. It is better to complete **a thorough assessment of some Quality Elements** than stretch your team thin by assessing all Quality Elements. Focus on the Quality Elements that are **most critical** to your program's growth.

Remember: You do not need to assess **all Quality Elements**, but you must complete **all standards** within each Quality Element you select.

When Should We Assess and How Often?



Questions to Consider:

When will you conduct the assessment? Will it be over a day, week or month? Consider time investments, holidays and ideal program days.

How often will your program complete the self-assessment? Will it be done yearly? Quarterly? At some other interval? Note that it is recommended that the assessment be administered at least once annually.

Your team's goals will help determine when you want to implement the assessment:

- Assess at the **beginning of the program year** if you want a baseline measure.
- Assess your program **mid-year** if you want to see what's going well and identify potential areas for improvement or check on progress since your baseline measure.
- Assess at the **end of the program year** if you want to identify areas of improvement for next year.

Remember: Stick to your timeline once it's been created. The assessment is **most effective** when you measure how your program changes over time!

Observation Best Practices



The entire self-assessment team should:

- Observe the program **together**.
- Observe the typical program day.
- Spend **at least** 20 minutes observing each age group and program area.

Each team member should:

- **Independently** use the rating scale to generate one rating for **each standard and Quality Element**.
- Recognize any bias you may have.
- Be a **“fly on the wall”** and don't interrupt normal activities.

Remember: Take lots of notes, pictures, and videos to describe what you saw and to support your group's discussion later.

Coming to Consensus



Team members should meet **immediately** following the assessment to come to a consensus and ensure no details of the observation are forgotten. Discuss each individual rating, and explore any different views in order to agree on a single rating as a team. Remember that each rating for a standard or Quality Element must be a **whole number**.

Consider:

- What would the **'perfect'** practice look like to you?
- Did my team member see something different than I did?
- Do we all understand the rating system in the same way?
- Are we letting our perceptions of the program **cloud our judgment**?

Remember: Ratings are based on observations and are decided upon **through discussion**, not a vote or average!

Moving Forward



Within a few days of reaching a consensus, the team should **meet again** to discuss the results and come up with a plan to **continue to improve quality** particularly in weaker areas.

Consider:

- Which Quality Elements are our program's strengths? Which are our program's weaknesses?
- Which standards **rated the highest and lowest** in each Quality Element? What does our program do [or not do] to accomplish this?
- Are there standards that rated higher or lower than expected? Why?

Think through any potential short, intermediate, and long-term changes:

- Are there any **'easy wins'**?
- Does this information suggest the need for **additional training, resources, or planning**?
- What is the timeline for these next steps? Who will be involved? Write it down!

Remember: The self-assessment supports a process of **continuous quality improvement** that can make a real impact on the lives of the children and youth you serve!



To learn more about the Georgia Afterschool & Youth Development Standards please visit www.georgiaasyd.org.

To learn more about afterschool in Georgia please visit www.afterschoolga.org.



GEORGIA STATEWIDE AFTERSCHOOL NETWORK