

ASYD, PQA & APAS: A Comparison of Tools



High quality afterschool programs have a positive impact on youth outcomes. Quality improvement systems help programs to focus on, get better at, and maintain the settings and experiences that lead to positive youth outcomes. The Georgia Afterschool & Youth Development Quality Standards (ASYD), the Program Quality Assessment (PQA), and the Afterschool Program Assessment System (APAS) are quality improvement systems designed to help youth development programs ensure continued growth and impact. This comparison will help you decide which tool(s) is the best fit for your program and your quality improvement goals.

Overview of the Tools

Georgia Afterschool & Youth Development (ASYD) Quality Standards	Program Quality Assessment (PQA)	Afterschool Program Assessment System (APAS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research-based guidelines that assist programs to facilitate a process of continual improvement and identify areas for professional development• Appropriate for programs that are well-established, serving youth ages 5 through 18, who attend regularly over a long period of time• A team-based self-assessment tool that is designed to measure the quality of youth programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A nationally validated instrument designed to measure the quality of youth programs and identify staff training needs• Youth PQA is appropriate for programs that serve youth in grades 4 through 12; School-age PQA for children in grades K through 6th• A team-based program self-assessment as well as an external assessment through trained evaluators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A comprehensive assessment system to help programs measure and link their program quality and youth outcomes• Appropriate for programs that are well-established, serving youth in grades K through 12, and offer a variety of regular and consistent programming• A team-based program self-assessment with several measurement tools—the Survey of Academic and Youth Outcomes (SAYO) and the Assessment of Program Practices Tool (APT)

How Are the Assessment Systems Used?

Each of the three assessment systems provides multiple uses and benefits. Programs use each of the systems:

- For quality awareness and improvement, facilitating important conversations and goal-setting among staff
- To promote greater consistency in practices across multiple sites
- As a framework for delivering feedback to staff that is concrete and constructive
- To communicate with key stakeholders about the needs of groups of youth
- As a roadmap for staff for building professional competencies
- To identify topics for staff development sessions

Using the Tools Together

There are many similarities between the ASYD, the PQA and APAS tools. These similarities allow the tools to be used together to impact quality improvement and support positive outcomes for youth. All three tools:

- Assess research-based elements of quality for out-of-school time youth programs that can lead to positive youth outcomes
- Utilize observation tools that can lead to the improvement of the quality of staff instruction
- Are intended as non-punitive learning tools that are designed to support a program's continuous quality improvement process

Because of their similarities:

- Tools with similar categories of measurement can be used at the same time. For example, ASYD can be used as a team-based self-assessment while the PQA can be used as an external assessment in order to offer different perspectives.
- Improvements that are demonstrated through use of one assessment system will likely show up in your data when using another system with similar categories of measurement. For example, if you see improvements in your PQA ratings in 'Interactions,' you will likely also see improvements in your ASYD 'Relationships' data. As such, offering professional development in identified growth areas will support improvement across tools.

Key Differences

There are several important features that distinguish the ASYD, PQA and APAS tools. These differences are helpful to note when selecting the tool(s) that will best fit your needs.

- ASYD offers a single tool. The PQA and APAS offer a menu of tools, of which you can implement one tool or several.
- ASYD and APAS are customizable in that you can select from among the categories (i.e., the quality elements or sections) that you want to focus on.
- ASYD, the PQA and APAS assess program quality through observation that evaluates program practices. APAS additionally offers SAYO which measures youth outcomes and program experience measures.
- APAS and the PQA are validated tools. This means that they have been scientifically tested for their ability to produce consistent results.

What Do the Tools Measure?

TOOL	WHAT DOES IT MEASURE	WHAT ARE THE CATEGORIES OF MEASUREMENT?	
Georgia Afterschool & Youth Development Quality Standards			
ASYD Quality Standards	Program Quality Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programming & Youth Development • Linkages with the School Day • Environment & Climate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships • Health & Well-Being • Family & Community Partnerships
	Organization Practices & Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing & Professional Development • Organizational Practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation & Outcomes
Program Quality Assessment			
Form A	Program Quality Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe environment • Supportive environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interaction • Engagement
Form B	Organization Practices & Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth-centered policies and practices • Access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Expectations for Youth and Staff
Social and Emotional Learning PQA	Program Quality Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social and emotional learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Skill-Building • Health and Wellness
Supplemental Instruments	Program Quality Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STEM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts
Afterschool Program Assessment System			
Assessment of Program Practices Tool (Observation & Questionnaire)	Program Quality Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning and Skill Building • Program Organization and Structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive Social Environment
Survey of Academic and Youth Outcomes – Youth	Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Experiences Survey • Engagement and Enjoyment • Choice and Autonomy • Challenge • Perceptions of the Social Environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive Relationships with Staff Member • Responsibility and Leadership • Future Expectations • Sense of Competence
Survey of Academic and Youth Outcomes – Staff & Teachers	Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavior in the Program/Classroom • Initiative • Engagement in Learning • Relations with Adults • Relations with Peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem Solving • Communication Skills • Homework • Academic Performance (SAYO-T only)

How to Access the Tools

ASYD	PQA	APAS
<p>Developed by: A collaborative of public and private entities. ASYD is endorsed or adopted by five of Georgia’s state agencies.</p> <p>Cost: Free download; fee-based training and resources to support implementation</p> <p>Availability and more information: http://www.GeorgiaASYD.org/</p>	<p>Developed by: The Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality</p> <p>Cost: Free download; fee-based training and resources to support implementation</p> <p>Availability and more information: http://www.cypq.org/assessment</p>	<p>Developed by: The National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST)</p> <p>Cost: Free after completing a required fee-based training program for each tool</p> <p>Availability and more information: https://www.niost.org/Tools-Training/measuring-ost-success</p>