

TOOLS & RESOURCES FOR AFTERSCHOOL PROFESSIONALS



STEP AHEAD RECOGNITION SYSTEM (STARS)

STARS is a statewide quality recognition system for afterschool and early education programs. STARS participation is recommended to demonstrate a program's commitment to quality and improvement. It also provides opportunities for program support like training and coaching. Achieving a STARS level shows a program is striving beyond licensing regulations toward higher quality standards, professional practices, and a commitment to continuous quality improvement (CQI) through CQI plan implementation.

Parents and caregivers often seek out programs with specific STARS levels when looking for care for their children.

Learn more: bit.ly/VTSTARS



PROGRAM QUALITY ASSESSMENT TOOLS (PQA)

PQAs are tools to assess and improve the quality of a program's practices and curriculum implementation. Data collected informs the program's Continuous Quality Improvement plan (CQI). An unscored PQA assessment visit by Vermont Afterschool is required to create a CQI plan and participate in STARS.

Other uses for the PQA are self-assessment, coaching, observation-feedback, identifying pre- and in-service training, research, and dissemination of the effectiveness of program practices.

Assessments help identify areas for growth, improve staff competence, and improve outcomes.

Learn more: forumfyi.org/weikartcenter/assessments/



AFTERSCHOOL CORE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS & COMPETENCIES (CKSC)

Developed by the NAA, the CKSC is a framework that describes the knowledge, skills, and competencies individuals need to provide high-quality out of school time programming, support the learning and development of children and youth, and advance equity. It should be used to assess current skills and knowledge and identify gaps that exist in order to create annual goals for improvement as a part of the IPDP process.

It provides a reference of necessary skills to progress as a professional in an afterschool professional role.

Learn more: bit.ly/CKSCGuidelines



SYSTEM FOR PROGRAM ACCESS TO RESOURCES FOR QUALITY SUPPORTS (SPARQS)

SPARQS is a new statewide initiative to support programs in creating a culture of quality by providing access to quality coaching and support services, program assessment visits for STARS, guidance on creating a CQI plan, and administration and support for Vermont's Early Childhood Networks.

SPARQS provides an outside resource that can speak to quality and help programs improve quality through coaching.

Learn more: vermontafterschool.org/program-assessment/



AFTERSCHOOL LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

Vermont has a mandatory set of regulations for all licensed afterschool programs. These regulations define developmentally appropriate care, education, protection, and supervision designed to ensure wholesome growth and educational experience for children in care. A state licensing representative will conduct an unannounced visit to your program once a year to ensure all requirements are being met.

Child Care Financial Assistance Program reimbursement for child care services provided to eligible families is limited to child care providers who are licensed, registered, or legally exempt with the State of Vermont.

Learn more: bit.ly/ASPGuidance

VERMONT GUIDELINES FOR AFTERSCHOOL, SUMMER & YOUTH PROGRAMS

This resource provides evidence-based quality practices for staff and directors in third-space programs, providing specific benchmarks for achieving positive youth outcomes across nine different areas. The Guidelines support program administrators, staff, parents/caregivers, children, and youth in understanding what best practices looks like for all afterschool, summer, and youth programs in Vermont.

If you often wonder what your program can do to improve outcomes and experiences for youth beyond the mandatory evaluations and practices or you struggle with determining where to start, what to do, and how to measure success, this resource is for you.

Learn more: vermontafterschool.org/professionals-program-resources

