

Out-of-School-Time (OST)

Four Components of Quality OST Programming

JWB has identified Four Components of high-Quality OST Programming designed to actively engage youth, families, and the broader community. These components aim to foster positive youth development and support academic achievement.

According to Florida Afterschool Inc., research indicates that participation in high-quality afterschool programs is associated with improved school-day attendance, enhanced academic performance, and a reduced likelihood of engaging in risky behaviors. These programs create supportive environments where children and youth feel connected and engaged, parents have confidence in their children's safety and well-being, and families develop a strong sense of pride and ownership in the program.

Quality Component	Condition	Requirement
Strong Organizational Infrastructure	Low Staff to Youth Ratio	1:15 for school aged; 1:25 for middle school
	Well-Trained & Supervised Staff	The program fosters a supportive work environment in which staff members feel respected, valued, and empowered, while also receiving appropriate supervision. It has clearly defined roles, policies, and procedures to guide operations. Furthermore, it ensures that all positions are filled by individuals with appropriate education and experience, and it provides opportunities for ongoing professional development.
	Inclusive Environment	Program staff engage with youth through respectful and supportive communication, fostering an environment where all individuals feel safe, valued, and included. They model constructive and encouraging interactions with one another, exemplifying healthy relationship dynamics. Additionally, staff actively promote peer-to-peer connections by encouraging youth to develop and maintain positive relationships with their peers.
	Licensed/Legal Exempt	The program provides a healthy & safe environment for youth. Policies and procedures ensure that the program is adhering to federal, state, and local guidelines. Facilities, equipment, and

		materials meet state and local licensing and/or substantial compliance requirements.
Engagement	Regular Programming	Year-round programming is available four to five days per week, for two to three hours per day for before and/or after-school care. During summer and school breaks, full-day programming, both of which are offered in accordance with licensing requirements
	Partnerships	The program cultivates strong, sustained relationships with families and the broader community through consistent, multi-channel communication, culturally responsive engagement, and inclusive planning practices. It actively solicits input from youth and families, adapts policies to reflect community needs, and prioritizes accessibility and affordability. Through strategic partnerships and ongoing needs assessments, the program ensures its services remain responsive, relevant, and impactful within the community
Intentional Grade Level Programming	Lesson Plans	Providing planned and creative lesson plans is essential for after-school care providers to ensure that programming is engaging, purposeful, and developmentally appropriate. Structured activities support academic reinforcement, social-emotional growth, and skill-building in a safe and stimulating environment. Creative planning also allows for diverse learning experiences that cater to various interests and learning styles, helping students stay motivated and connected. Ultimately, well-designed lessons contribute to a high-quality program that enriches students' out-of-school time and supports their overall development
	Curriculum	The program offers evidence-informed curriculum that includes a wide range of activities designed to foster youth development across multiple domains, while also reinforcing concepts from the school day. Its structure is shaped by the interests, needs, and learning preferences of the youth.
	Clear Outcomes	The program has defined, result-based Performance Measures.
	Quality Improvement	The program is committed to continuous quality improvement by completing performance and program assessments, and participant, family and staff surveys.

Broad Enrichment Opportunities	Participant Voice	Youth have the most success when the adults around them listen to their ideas and encourage them to pursue new interests. The program implements Youth Councils or other avenues to receive input and feedback from youth.
	Real Life Learning	The program provides relevant & meaningful learning opportunities.
	Exposure Trips	The program provides real-world experiences beyond the classroom, helping them connect what they learn to everyday life.
	Hands-on Learning	Hands-on learning actively engages students in the learning process through direct experience and practical application. This approach enhances understanding, retention, and critical thinking by allowing students to explore concepts in a tangible and meaningful way. It also supports diverse learning styles, fosters creativity, and encourages collaboration and problem-solving.