

# **STUDY OF PROMISING AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

## **Observation Manual for Site Verification Visits**

**Policy Studies Associates, Inc.  
Wisconsin Center for Education Research**

**Revised  
Spring 2005**



## VISITING PROGRAM SITES IN WINTER/SPRING 2005

Visits to the Study of Promising After-school Programs will be conducted in late Winter and early Spring 2005 by PSA and WCER study teams. There are two purposes of this visit: (1) to verify the overall program quality through observations of program activities; and (2) to provide program directors and school personnel with information about survey procedures that will be used in this final semester of data collection. Some sites might also require a second visit in late Spring, during the survey period, to assist in administering surveys, but this will be a decision made on the individual program site level.

The preferred time frame for site visits is February or March, and visits should be completed well before the Spring break in schools. The site visit should precede distribution of Family Surveys, which should also occur BEFORE schools' spring breaks. So, in part, the site visit is partly designed to plan a process for distributing and returning Family Surveys in a timely manner.

A separate protocol, the **QUICK GUIDE TO SURVEY ADMINISTRATION**, details procedures for administering and returning the five surveys (Family, Staff, Student, Staff Reports, and Teacher Reports) that will be administered in the spring.

### Conducting Observations

At least six observations should be conducted during one or two afternoons, depending on the time needed to observe a range of activities. To the extent possible, these observations should capture the range of program activities that youth in the targeted grades typically experience (sports, academic, homework, arts, etc.) as participants in the after-school program.

Four will be completed in conjunction with the program observations:

1. **Activity Context Coding:** 1 Coding form for each activity observed; see Appendix A
2. **Activity Description:** 1 description for each activity observed; see Appendix B
3. **Activity Promising Practices Rating Form:** 1 form that rates each observed integrates for the promising practices defined by the study, Appendix C;
4. **Program Quality Verification Rating and Overall Program Quality Summary** Appendix D

### Coding the Activity Context (Appendix A)

The **Activity Context Coding** form is the cover sheet for each 15-minute observation period. For each observed activity, observers capture information about the type of activity, the knowledge and skill areas addressed; space and materials used; numbers of adults and youth participants; and grade levels of activity participants.

As the activity observation begins, the observer should complete all the information requested at the top of the form:

- **Program Name & ID:** The ID number designated for the program being observed
- **Observation Date:** the date that the observation is conducted
- **Activity #:** the number of the particular observation being coded. The first activity observed at a given program is #1; the second activity observed at that program is #2; and so on, through #6. If activities are observed on the second day of the program, the observation should follow the first day's activity numbers consecutively; that is, do not start numbering with 1 on the second day. Also, if there are two observers, observers should simply assign numbers consecutively as they begin their observations, e.g., Observer #1 conducts observation 1,2,3 and Observer #2 conducts observation #4,5,6.
- **Total Minutes Observed**
- **Observer Initials U ID:** the site visitor's initials and his/her assigned ID number

When the observation begins, record the **Start time**. At this point, the observer can begin to code items on the Activity Context Coding form. Some indicators may be coded immediately, whereas others likely cannot be coded until later in the 15-minute period or at its conclusion. The general rule is that indicators will be coded when the information that is needed to understand the context becomes clear to the observer. At the conclusion of the activity, record the **End time** and the **Total Minutes Observed**.

If an activity concludes before the end of the 15-minute observation period, stop the observation, record the end time and the total minutes observed, along with any other outstanding information such as number of staff and students at the end, and proceed to the next activity.

The definitions that are to be used in scoring the items on this form are located in Appendix E, the **Activity Context Coding Definitions**.

## **Activity Descriptions (Appendix B)**

Observers should complete a brief description of each activity on this form. This description will supplement the Context Coding with a richer explanation of what is occurring in each observed activity. Please complete the identifying information at the top of the page, including the Site ID, site visitor initials and ID code, and, observation date. Begin each activity description with a brief description and the Activity Type, as was recorded on the Context Coding Form. In each description, address the following themes:

- What are youth doing?
- What kinds of materials are used?
- What kinds of instructional processes are used?
- What, if any, special skills does the activity's leader(s) have that supports the

- instruction involved in the activity h/she is conducting?
- What is the overall affective tone?
  - To what extent are youth engaged?
  - Describe observed promising practices as appropriate and raise concerns about quality, if there are any.

Record any concerns that might arise about the quality of the implementation here, and register concerns about activity quality in the Activity Promising Practices Ratings (Appendix C).

## Promising Practices Ratings (Appendices C and D)

Observers should make running records notes during each observed activity and, immediately after each observation, record promising practices ratings for each observed activity on the Activity Promising Practices Rating form, Appendix C. Rate the practices observed on a 1–4 scale, using the rating guidelines below. The practices are:

- 4 = **highly characteristic**. The construct is highly evident. Exemplars are observed more than one time, and for more than one student. The program is viewed as “the very definition of” the construct.
- 3 = **somewhat characteristic**. There is good evidence that the construct is present, but it is not pervasive.
- 2 = **somewhat uncharacteristic**. The construct was not characteristic of the program; exemplars were observed infrequently or with only one staff or student.
- 1 = **highly uncharacteristic**. Little or no evidence of the construct is observed.

Use combined activity ratings will then comprise the data for completing the final **Program Quality Verification Rating**, Appendix D. Appendices E and F provide operational definitions of these categories and exemplars of the promising practices of interest. Observers should use these definitions, combined with clinical judgment, when rating each promising practice and the overall program. Remember that ratings may incorporate both what was and what **was not** observed. The absence of examples of exemplars within an observation may push a rating from a 3 to a 2, for example.

After all a site’s observations are completed, observers should use their notes and ratings to create an *integrated* rating of observed (1) *promising practices* and (2) *overall program quality*, using Appendix D, the **Program Quality Verification Form**. First, using the data recorded in the three previous observations forms (Appendices A, B, and C) give the program an overall rating for each of the promising practices of interest to the study.

After the ratings of the promising practices have been made, observers should explore their notes together and record an assessment of the programs overall quality on a 1, 2, or 3

scale. REMEMBER: The rationale behind the Overall Program Quality rating should be evident from the details provided in the justification narrative in Form D, and in the activity narrative (Form B). Overall program quality should be rated according to the following definitions:

**1 = Low Program Quality.** The program has serious problems and does not meet quality standards as defined by the study's theory of change (TOC).

**2= Moderate Program Quality:** Based on observed activities and interactions, the quality of this site is uneven and can best be described as of moderate quality, according to the study's TOC.

**3= High Program Quality:** Based on observed activities and interactions, this program incorporates the promising practices defined by the study's TOC and, overall, most activities and interactions were of high quality.

Before leaving the observation sites, review all observation forms to determine that they:

- Include accurate identifying information and observation times
- Are completely filled out (all codes are entered; all narratives are completed)
- Include ratings for **both** the (1) the Promising Practices and the Overall Program (Form D)

## Operational Definitions and Exemplars

APPENDICES E and F provide researchers with complete operational definitions and examples of the research-based promising practices that observers should be looking for as they observe activities and interactions among program staff, students, and others at the program site. Observers should feel free to discuss with members of the study team any questions they have about the decision rules for determining ratings of specific practices. If an observer is uncertain about a judgment, he or she should record the details of the observation descriptively and confer with the other site visitor while on site, or if the observer is on site along, he or she should come back to team colleagues to discuss making a final rating in a disputed area.

## Completing Data Collection/Submitting to the Data Center

Observers do not need to submit their raw notes or their initial activity ratings (Appendix C), but they should keep these notes together with other data collection notes and final copies of the Appendices A, B, and D. All ratings and descriptions should be completed within three weeks of returning from the site visit and submitted to Connie Showalter at the WCER Data Center.

# **Appendices**

**Spring 2005**

## Appendix A: Activity Context Coding: Spring 2005

Program I.D.:	Date:	Activity #:	Start time:	Total Minutes Observed:	Observer Initials & ID:				
			End time:						
<b>A. ACTIVITY TYPE</b>			<b>B. KNOWLEDGE/SKILL AREAS</b>		<b>E. TOTAL ADULTS/STAFF</b>		# Start	# End	
1. Homework assistance			1. Interpersonal		1. Number of adults				
2. Tutoring			2. Physical/athletic		2. Number of teens				
3. Study skills/test preparation			3. Artistic						
4. Reading/language arts enrichment			4. Math/numeracy						
5. Math/science enrichment			5. Reading/language arts		<b>F. GRADE LEVELS</b>				
6. Recreational reading/ listening to story/book			6. Problem-solving/ decision-making		K	1	2		
7. Computer skill-building			7. Other Academic		3	4	5		
8. Computer games			8. Other		6	7	8		
9. Sports: competitive and non-competitive games; tournaments			9. None						
10. Sports: practice/drills/skill-building			<b>C. TYPE OF SPACE</b>		Other:				
11. Fitness/exercise class (including martial arts)			1. Classroom		<b>G. NUMBER OF YOUTH</b>		# Start	# End	
12. Arts and/or crafts			2. Specialized studio/lab		1. Total number of youth				
13. Performing arts rehearsal/ instruction			3. Games/club room		2. Number of boys				
14. Cultural awareness clubs/projects			4. Gym		3. Number of girls				
15. Board/table/card games or puzzles			5. Auditorium						
16. Health/well-being			6. Cafeteria						
17. Service/civic (in community or program)			7. Library						
18. Snack			8. Computer room						
19. Arrival/dismissal			9. Outside playground/field						
20. Other			10. Other						
			<b>D. MATERIALS USED</b>						
			1. Computers		7. Musical instruments				
			2. Art supplies		8. Games				
			3. Sports equipment		9. Electronic media				
			4. Trade, reference, research books		10. Other				
			5. Text books and workbooks		11. None				
			6. Writing materials						

## Appendix B: Activity Descriptions

- What are youth doing?
- What kinds of materials are used?
- What kinds of instructional processes are used?
- Who is leading the activity? What, if any special skills to lead the activity do they have?
- What is the overall affective tone?
- To what extent are youth engaged?
- Describe observed promising practices as appropriate and raise concerns about quality, if there are any.

Activity 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity Type (from the Coding Context form): \_\_\_\_\_

Activity 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity Type (from the Coding Context form): \_\_\_\_\_

Activity 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity Type (from the Coding Context form): \_\_\_\_\_

## Activity Descriptions (continued)

Activity 4: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity Type (from the Coding Context form): \_\_\_\_\_

Activity 5: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity Type (from the Coding Context form): \_\_\_\_\_

Activity 6: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity Type (from the Coding Context form): \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C Observer Notes

<b>PROMISING PRACTICES</b> <b>ACTIVITIES RATINGS</b> Spring 2005
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OBSERVER ID						
PROGRAM ID						
DATE						
PROMISING PRACTICES	Activity 1	Activity 2	Activity 3	Activity 4	Activity 5	Activity 6
Supportive Relations with Adult						
Supportive Relations with Peers						
Level of Engagement						
Opportunities for Cognitive Growth						
Appropriate Structure						
Over-control						
Chaos						
Mastery Orientation						

## Appendix D

### Observer Quality Verification Rating

**Overall Program  
Quality Rating**

**PROMISING PRACTICES  
RATING SYSTEM  
Spring 2005  
FINAL**

OBSERVER ID		
PROGRAM ID		
DATE		
PROMISING PRACTICES	Rating	JUSTIFICATION/NOTES
Supportive Relations with Adult		
Supportive Relations with Peers		
Level of Engagement		
Opportunities for Cognitive Growth		
Appropriate Structure		
Over-control		
Chaos		
Mastery Orientation		

**Appendix E**  
**ACTIVITY CONTEXT CODING DEFINITIONS**  
**Spring 2005**

<b>FOCUS</b>	
<b>ACTIVITY TYPE: Mark <u>all</u> relevant activity types that occur during the observation period.</b>	
Homework help	Youth work on homework assignments. If youth participate in academic activities that are not homework, <u>do not</u> mark this category.
Test preparation/study skills	Instruction and activities designed expressly to prepare students for standardized achievement tests or to teach them study skills. Activities may include practicing different types of test questions, or taking practice tests.
Tutoring	Youth work individually or in small groups with a tutor, who helps them work on a particular skill such as reading, math, or English language skills.
Reading/language arts enrichment	Enriched supplementary instructional content in either reading/language arts or math/science that goes beyond homework, develops broad-based conceptual/cognitive learning. It may or may not be directly related to school content/assignments, but is not a homework assignment.
Math/science enrichment	
Recreational reading/listening to story/book	Reading or listening to a story or book not assigned for homework; reading to accomplish a goal (e.g. functional literacy skills, reading a play for pleasure/practice, etc.)
Computer skill-building	This category refers to activities involving <u>learning to use the computer</u> , NOT to the use of the computer to complete home work, to build academic skills, or to search the web (unless instruction focuses on <i>teaching</i> youth to use the web).
Computer games	Youth play games on the computer. They are not learning to use the computer, or using the computer to complete homework, practice test-taking skills, practice academic skills, or for an academic enrichment activity.
Sports—competitive or non-competitive games; tournaments	Supervised or non-supervised games using athletic skill, indoors or outdoors.
Sports—practice/drills/skill-building	Preparation and training in a sport.
Fitness/exercise class (including martial arts)	Activities targeting general physical fitness/strength, including aerobics, martial arts, weight lifting, yoga.

Arts and/or crafts	Visual arts-based activities (painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, videography) and crafts (knitting, pottery).
Performing arts rehearsal/instruction (including dance/music/drama)	Lessons, practices/rehearsals, recreational performances or performance arts that are for the purpose of self-expression. This area includes hip-hop, step, drill team. It does NOT include fitness-oriented types of movement.
Board/table/card games or puzzles	These may include games of luck, strategy games, jigsaw puzzles, puzzle games; board games (e.g., chess, Monopoly), table games (e.g., pool, air hockey), card games (e.g., Hearts, Crazy 8s).
Health/well-being	Health education, conflict resolution, life skills education activities.
Service/civic (in community or program)	Planning or assisting with projects that support the quality of community life or foster program-school or community-school linkages.
Snack	Eating or preparing for snack.
Arrival/dismissal	Youth are arriving/gathering at the beginning of the program for attendance; youth are gathering for dismissal/departure.
Cultural awareness clubs/projects	Activities/projects that develop cultural, religious, or ethnic awareness, understanding, or identity.
Other	Describe here content areas/activities observed that cannot be categorized or grouped above.

**KNOWLEDGE/SKILL AREAS:** Mark these knowledge/skill areas when instruction/skill development are intentional. This can include presentations/lectures on a substantive topic or practice of specific skills, but does not include informal “pick-up” activities initiated by youth for “fun.” These areas should be marked only when there is evidence that the knowledge/skill development is focused and intentional. Either students or staff may initiate/lead the activity.

**NOTE:** If a homework activity is observed, circulate to determine which subjects the students are working on, and be sure to indicate each subject in the Knowledge/Skills area of the form.

Interpersonal	Negotiation, conflict resolution, and/or other communication skills. <u>Do not</u> mark for purely social interactions.
Physical/athletic	Physical skills related to sports, fitness, or physical games (including martial arts, yoga, step, cheerleading, gymnastics, etc.)
Artistic	Artistic skills, working in any medium (visual, musical, dance, dramatic, photographic, video, etc.)
Math/numeracy	Mathematics learning, computational skill development/practice
Reading/language arts	Reading, writing, literacy skill development/practice
Problem-solving/decision making	Developing skills in making practical decisions or solving practical or conceptual problems. E.g., life-skills decision making around healthy choices; or planning a project or performance (deciding music, parts, actions).
Other Academic	Academic activities other than math or reading, such as science, social studies, geography, ecology, history skills development/practice
Other	Check this category AND DESCRIBE here specific other types of skills not listed above (e.g., research, critical thinking,).
None	Check if no discernable skill-building is occurring during the activity. Describe what is happening to support this conclusion.

<b>Type of space</b>	<b>Classroom</b>	<b>Specialized studio/lab</b>	Check the <b>one</b> location in this category that <b>best</b> applies to the setting in which the activity takes place. If “other” is marked, specify the type of space used.
	<b>Games/club room</b>	<b>Gym</b>	
	<b>Auditorium</b>		
	<b>Cafeteria</b>		
	<b>Library</b>		
	<b>Computer lab</b>		
	<b>Outside playground/field</b>		
	<b>Other</b>		
<b>Materials used</b>	<b>Computers</b>	<b>Electronic media</b>	Check <b>all</b> the types of technology used during each observation segment. More than one box may be checked in each observation.
	<b>Art supplies</b>	<b>Text and work books</b>	
	<b>Sports equipment</b>		
	<b>Trade/reference/research books</b>		
	<b>Writing materials</b>		
	<b>Musical instruments</b>		
	<b>Games</b>		
	<b>Other</b>	<b>None</b>	
<b>Total adults/staff</b>	<b>Adults</b>		At the <b>start</b> of the observation period and again at the <b>end</b> of the 15-minute observation, count and RECORD the NUMBER of adults and the number (if any) of teen staff in the room.
	<b>Teen staff</b>		
<b>Grade levels observed (Check all that apply)</b>	Circle all the grades that are represented in the classroom or activity space. More than one category can be checked, if appropriate. You may use prior knowledge about what grade levels are supposed to be in the room if it is difficult to determine on sight, or check with staff later and circle based on their response.		
<b>Total number of youth (girls and boys)</b>	At the <b>start</b> of the observation period and again at the <b>end</b> of the 15-minute observation, count the total number of youth, the number of girls, and the number of boys observed. If in doubt about gender, make an educated guess rather than disrupt the class. Check tally of boys and girls against total number of youth.		

**Appendix F**  
**PROMISING PRACTICES EXEMPLARS**  
**Spring 2005**

The exemplars on the following pages were obtained from *Features of Positive Developmental Settings* in Eccles & Gootman (2002), several observation instruments (SACERS, NSACA, Study of After-School Care qualitative ratings, PSA's TASC observation, Wellesley ASQ), the Theory of Change (Table 1) and the Activity Observation Instrument (AOI) definitions.

## SUPPORTIVE RELATIONS WITH ADULTS

High	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Staff communicate high expectations and positive norms for student behavior and mastery                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Acknowledge students' efforts, accomplishments, and progress</li> <li>○ Notice when students are having difficulty-- provide encouragement and alternatives</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Staff do not acknowledge students                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Do not acknowledge accomplishments, progress, or effort</li> <li>○ Ignore youth who are bored, wandering, or inactive</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Staff use positive behavior management techniques to resolve behavior problems (or no evidence of behavior issues)                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Set age-appropriate limits for students</li> <li>○ Communicate expectations and intervene constructively and calmly to address disruptive behavior by redirecting students and/or explaining why the behavior is unacceptable</li> <li>○ Aware of, and address, teasing, bullying, or other conflicts between students</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Staff do not use positive behavior management techniques                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Evidence of yelling, shaming, or disparagement of youth</li> <li>○ Correct students publicly in a way that embarrasses or belittles them</li> <li>○ Ignore behavior issues of conflicts</li> <li>○ Use harsh or rough punishment</li> <li>○ Are sarcastic</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Staff respond to children in a warm, supportive manner                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use a positive tone of voice—and offer encouragement such as “You’re doing great” or “That’s great”</li> <li>○ Offer specific suggestions to youth for improving skills and performance, providing examples of what they like about the work in progress</li> <li>○ Offer encouragement to students who are frustrated</li> <li>○ Are relaxed and cheerful</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Staff are flat or negative                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Appear bored, tired, or distant</li> <li>○ Show disrespect for students</li> <li>○ Disapprove or criticize</li> <li>○ Use negative voice when speaking</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Staff-child conversations are frequent and reciprocal                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Respond to students' initiation of dialogue, comments or questions by showing interest and extending conversation, asking questions</li> <li>○ Initiate conversations with students</li> <li>○ Look at students when they are speaking</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Staff –student interactions are infrequent or one-sided                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Do not converse or interact with students</li> <li>○ Do not assist students</li> <li>○ Are directive</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Staff are engaged with children                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Pay attention and show interest in what youth are doing or how they are working together</li> <li>○ Participate in activities without being intrusive</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Not engaged with students</li> <li>○ Intrusive, impose own agenda</li> </ul>
<b>Rating indicators:</b>	
1 = negative exemplars are evident – where staff are intrusive, bored or distant, yell at or embarrass students 2 = negative exemplars are not evident but neither are the majority of positive exemplars 3 = some indicators of supportive relationships with adults 4 = evidence of many positive indicators, students are clearly comfortable initiating interactions with staff	

## SUPPORTIVE RELATIONS WITH PEERS

High	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Peer interactions have a positive affective tone                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Tones of voice and body language are friendly and positive</li> <li>○ Have conversations that are either social or task-oriented</li> <li>○ Listen to each other</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Peer interactions are negative                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Pick on, or belittle, each other</li> <li>○ Harass, intimidate, or threaten each other</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Students interact well together                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Play or work well together</li> <li>○ Share materials and space</li> <li>○ Help, and accept help, from one another</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Students do not work well together                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Argue over materials</li> <li>○ Exclude one another from activities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Students appear relaxed and involved with each other                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Students speak to one another respectfully</li> <li>○ Try to make each other feel welcome (e.g., smile at each other)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Students seem withdrawn or fearful</li> <li>○ Show disrespect for each other</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Students negotiate solutions in conflict situations with peers                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Make compromises with each other</li> <li>○ Jointly work out how to approach an activity or situation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

### Rating indicators:

- 1 = students do not work well together; may harass, intimidate or threaten each other
- 2 = students are not negative with each other or do not hassle each other, but have few positive interactions
- 3 = some indicators of supportive peer relations
- 4 = evidence of many positive indicators, no evidence of negative indicators

### LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT (in intended experiences)

High	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Students appear engaged, focused, and interested in their activities                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Engaged in the focal activity and/or using free time appropriately</li> <li>○ Appear to be interested in the activity</li> <li>○ Follow staff directions in an agreeable manner</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Students appear bored or distracted                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ignore staff who are talking to them</li> <li>○ ‘Pretend’ to listen</li> <li>○ Wander aimlessly</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Markers of engagement are appropriate to activity (e.g., intense concentration witnessed during computer activity, high levels of affect during sports activities; can be in solitary or group activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Markers of engagement inappropriate to activity (e.g., picking flowers while playing a sporting activity)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Students contribute to discussions                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Discuss back and forth and offer comments</li> <li>○ Ask ‘on-task’ questions</li> <li>○ Are comfortable initiating conversation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Do not participate in discussions</li> <li>○ Do not ask questions</li> </ul>

#### Rating indicators:

- 1 = most students are not engaged appropriately, may appear bored
- 2 = students are participating in activities but do not appear to be concentrating or affectively involved
- 3 = students are focused on activities with some evidence of affect involvement or sustained concentration
- 4 = students are concentrating on activities, focused, interacting pleasantly when appropriate, and are affectively involved in the activity

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR COGNITIVE GROWTH (development of cognitive skills including memory and planning skills) NOTE: Homework “counts” only if staff are actively assisting or teaching students.**

High	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Activities promote thinking and understanding at higher levels of complexity, integration or meaning                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Engaged in writing a story, poem, or piece of non-fiction</li> <li>○ Reading a book, magazine, poem or newspaper (or are being read to by someone else)</li> <li>○ Practicing or learning math skills</li> <li>○ Opportunities for student involvement through inquiry, experimentation, problem-solving and discussion</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Students are not engaged in activities that promote skill development or higher-level thinking                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No expansion of topic through use of experimentation, analysis, or synthesis</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Staff ask students “why, how, what if” questions that require complex answers (not factual, rote, or yes/no)                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ask thought-provoking questions, add complexity to tasks</li> <li>○ Ask youth questions that require extended responses</li> <li>○ Ask youth to explain their answers, respond to counter arguments and attempt to answer their own questions</li> <li>○ Engage in reciprocal discussion in which they take students’ ideas seriously</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Staff do not question students                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Do not ask questions that require complex answers</li> <li>○ Do not challenge students to explain answers or position</li> <li>○ Staff only want/expect brief, correct response</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Staff provide instruction                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Review information, explain how to do something</li> <li>○ Youth listen attentively to instruction (or instructional video)</li> <li>○ Instruction may include a series of simple question-answer exchanges with youth involving brief factual answers</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ No instructional conversation between staff and students</li> <li>◆ Staff give incomplete, confusing or incorrect answers to youth questions                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ For example, in homework or activity assistance they provide the wrong answer or misleading information</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Activity requires students to identify and solve problems                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Gather and/or synthesize information in order to complete a task or make a decision</li> <li>○ The information gathering and processing should have a purpose defined by either the youth or the staff (e.g., internet searches to advance, plan a project or trip)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Students do not participate in problem-solving activities                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Activities require short answers or involve not problem-solving</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ All information needed to complete a task or activity is provided by the staff</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Activity requires students to plan, synthesize ideas, or use information to accomplish a goal or make a decision                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The activity requires youth to develop a plan or think ahead several steps and anticipate others’ responses (e.g., chess)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Students do not participate in planning or decision making</li> </ul>

**Rating indicators:**

- 1 = little or no opportunity for cognitive growth
- 2 = opportunities occur primarily in the context of homework; use of other activities for cognitive growth is limited; staff ask few or no questions requiring complex answers; few or no problem-solving activities
- 3 = some opportunities within some activities
- 4 = variety of opportunities and staff are highly effective in facilitating students’ learning experiences; many opportunities for planning, synthesis, problem solving

## APPROPRIATE STRUCTURE (activities are implemented effectively)

High	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Transitions are orderly and efficient                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Transition times are minimal, students do not need to wait a long time for an activity to start</li> <li>○ Activity area is prepared and ready when youth arrive</li> <li>○ Materials are accessible and efficiently dispersed to youth</li> <li>○ Materials are in a condition that allows them to be used as required (e.g., sports equipment is functional, games have all required pieces, computers work)</li> <li>○ There are enough materials to allow youth to participate simultaneously in activities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Transitions are chaotic                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Long waits between activities</li> <li>○ Materials are not functional or not available in necessary quantities</li> <li>○ Staff are not prepared for the activity</li> <li>○ Students may not know where they are supposed to go or be</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Instructions for activities are clear and appropriate                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Staff understand and are prepared to support students in the activity</li> <li>○ Explain reasons for rules and structure of the activity</li> <li>○ Instructions are easily understandable and easy to follow</li> <li>○ Students understand and follow instructions</li> <li>○ Students understand their responsibilities</li> <li>○ Students know what is expected of them</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Instructions are unclear and not easily followed</li> <li>○ Students may not know what they are supposed to be doing</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Staff members support each other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Staff members work at cross-purposes or give conflicting information</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ There are <b>no</b> obvious safety hazards (e.g., the area is not too cluttered, there are no dangerous or broken materials around)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Activity area is cluttered and materials are broken</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ External distractions are minimized</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Distractions outside the observed activity interfere with students' participation/experience</li> </ul>

### Rating indicators:

- 1 = staff are unprepared; poor materials; long transitions; environment is unsafe
- 2 = a few indicators of appropriate structure
- 3 = some indicators of appropriate structure
- 4 = staff support each other; activities run smoothly; staff are well prepared; students have a clear understanding of rules; transitions are smooth

## OVER-CONTROL

High	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Staff are highly over-controlling                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Little or no student talk or involvement</li> <li>○ Spontaneity and creativity are not encouraged</li> <li>○ Activities are staff-directed</li> <li>○ Little time for free choice</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Activities and interactions structured in such a way that levels of staff control are appropriate                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Staff respond to youth who ask for assistance</li> <li>○ Students are not over-controlled</li> <li>○ Staff demonstrate respect for students' autonomy and responsibility</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Students do not have opportunities for making choices                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Do not select own activities</li> <li>○ Do not have choices within activities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Students have opportunities for making choices                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Help to determine the direction of activities</li> <li>○ Have choices within the activity</li> <li>○ Make suggestions about how to carry out activities or tasks</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ Have some choice about who they work with</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Staff <b>impose</b> solutions to interpersonal problems/conflicts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Staff help youth develop their own solutions and compromises</li> </ul>

### Rating indicators:

- 1 = level of staff control is appropriate to the activity; students are free to make choices
- 2 = level of staff control is appropriate to the activity; students may have some opportunities for choice, but not many; most activities are staff-directed
- 3 = staff are somewhat controlling
- 4 = staff are highly controlling; activities are staff-directed, students do not have opportunities for choice

## CHAOS

<b>High</b>	<b>Low</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Students are engaged in inappropriate, and often disruptive or rude behavior                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Are out of control during transitions, activities, or free time</li> <li>○ Students misbehave</li> <li>○ Students ignore the sanctioned activity</li> <li>○ Students misuse materials</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Students are engaged in a productive level of functional talk and movement that are part of the activity                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ There is <b>no</b> evidence of disorder, students out of control, or extreme disorganization</li> <li>○ Moderate levels of noise, talking, and movement</li> <li>○ Talking, noise, and movement not disruptive or distracting to other students</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Moderate or heavy amounts of ineffectual control tactics                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Staff allow situation to get out of hand before intervening</li> <li>○ Staff control techniques are unsuccessful</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Staff control techniques are effective                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Aware of all situations in the room</li> <li>○ Distracted youth are redirected or refocused</li> <li>○ Intervene when appropriate and necessary</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>Rating indicators:</b>
<p>1= no evidence of disorder or chaos</p> <p>2 = students are engaged in productive level of talk; may be some brief instances of disruptive noise or talking; staff control techniques are effective</p> <p>3 = some evidence of chaos</p> <p>4 = students are out of control throughout observation; youth are not redirected; staff control techniques are ineffective</p>

## MASTERY ORIENTATION

NOTE: The program offers sustained activities and opportunities for practice and skill development. In these activities, the students work toward a culminating project or event. This encourages goal setting, reflection and self-evaluation.

High	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Students work on skill-building projects                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Engaged in activity that builds to a product or event designed to showcase their work/skills (art show, drama production, recital, service project)</li> <li>○ Activity may not build to specific event, but a new skill is learned and built upon (e.g., karate, dance class, music lessons)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Activities do not build skills                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Do not require perseverance and sustained attention</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Activities challenge students intellectually, creatively, and/or physically in developmentally appropriate ways, without being so difficult that they discourage participation                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Involve a graded progression of skills, accommodating multiple skill levels, and allowing students to successfully participate at their own level</li> <li>○ Appropriate for students' skill levels—not so difficult that they have trouble participating successfully and not so easy that students master skills quickly and become bored</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Activities do not challenge students                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Activities are not set up to meet individual skill levels</li> <li>○ Activities are too easy or too difficult</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Staff encourage students to try new activities                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Encourage completion and mastery of activities and tasks by providing assistance and encouragement</li> <li>○ Clearly focused on instruction/helping kids learn something new or a new skill</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Staff do not encourage students                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Do not provide assistance when needed</li> <li>○ Do not encourage students to challenge themselves</li> <li>○ Do not encourage students to try new activities</li> <li>○ Criticize youth work without offering appropriate guidance</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Staff demonstrate or model concepts or skills                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Explain, provide information, coach, direct instruction necessary for students' progress</li> <li>○ Explain specific steps to follow in completing activity/tasks, beyond giving simple instructions to actually <b>showing</b> how to do something (demonstrating a dance step, drawing technique, working through a problem) or giving examples in response to questions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Staff do not offer appropriate instruction and feedback</li> </ul>

### Rating indicators:

1 = no evidence of skill building or mastery orientation  
 2 = a few activities focus on skill building or mastery, although not in an optimal way; staff may demonstrate some concepts or skills; activities may offer challenge to some, but not all, students  
 3 = some activities encourage skill building or mastery  
 4 = many activities encourage skill building or mastery; staff demonstrate and explain techniques, directions, etc.; staff encourage students to try new activities, skills