

# NSACA

The National School-Age Care Alliance

## PROGRAM STANDARDS

Acknowledged and Adopted by Mt. Lebanon Extended Day Program (MLEDP).

The NSACA Standards listed below describe the program practices that lead to stimulating, safe and supportive programs for young people ages 5 to 14 for their out-of-school time care. These standards at a summary glance give an overview of the 20 keys to quality.

Annual Staff Performance Evaluations are based on performing these keys to quality.

Copies of the complete publication: "NSACA Standards for Quality School-Age Care" are available in the MLEDP office for your review.

### Human Relationships

1. Staff relate to all children and youth in positive ways.
  - a) Staff treat children with respect and listen to what they say.
  - b) Staff make children feel welcome and comfortable.
  - c) Staff respond to children with acceptance and appreciation.
  - d) Staff are engaged with children.
2. Staff respond appropriately to the individual needs of children and youth.
  - a) Staff know that each child has special interests and talents.
  - b) Staff recognize the range of children's abilities.
  - c) Staff can relate to a child's culture and home language.
  - d) Staff respond to the range of children's feelings and temperaments.
3. Staff encourage children and youth to make choices and to become more responsible.
  - a) Staff offer assistance in away that supports a child's initiative.
  - b) Staff assist children without taking control, and they encourage children to take leadership roles.
  - c) Staff give children many chances to choose what they will do, how they will do it, and with whom.
  - d) Staff help children make informed and responsible choices.
4. Staff interact with children and youth to help them learn.
  - a) Staff ask questions that encourage children to think for themselves.
  - b) Staff share skills and resources to help children gain information and solve problems.
  - c) Staff vary the approaches they use to help children learn.
  - d) Staff help children use language skills through frequent conversations.
5. Staff use positive techniques to guide the behavior of children and youth.
  - a) Staff give attention children when they cooperate, share care for materials, or join in activities.
  - b) Staff set appropriate limits for children.
  - c) Staff use no harsh discipline methods.
  - d) Staff encourage children to resolve their own conflicts. Staff members step in only if needed to discuss the issues and work out a solution.
6. Children and youth generally interact with one another in positive ways.
  - a) Children appear relaxed and involved with each other.
  - b) Children show respect for each other.
  - c) Children usually cooperate and work well together.
  - d) When problems occur, children often try to discuss their differences and work out a solutions.

7. Staff and families interact with each other in positive ways.
  - a) Staff make families feel welcome and comfortable.
  - b) Staff and families treat each other with respect.
  - c) Staff share the languages and cultures of the families they serve, and the communities they live in.
  - d) Staff and families work together to make arrivals and departures between home and childcare go smoothly.
  
8. Staff work well together to meet the needs of children and youth.
  - a) Staff communicate with each other while the program is in session to ensure that the program flows smoothly.
  - b) Staff are cooperative with each other.
  - c) Staff are respectful of each other.
  - d) Staff provide role models of positive adult relationships.

### **Indoor Environment**

9. The program's indoor space meets the needs of children and youth.
  - a) There is enough room for all program activities.
  - b) The space is arranged well for a range of activities: physical games and sports, creative arts, dramatic play, quiet games, enrichment offerings, eating, and socializing.
  - c) The space is arranged so that various activities can go on at the same time without much disruption.
  - d) There is adequate and convenient storage space for equipment, materials and personal possessions of children and staff. (This is sometimes challenging for MLEDP)
  
10. The indoor space allows children and youth to take initiative and explore their interests.
  - a) Children can get materials out and put them away by themselves with ease.
  - b) Children can arrange materials and equipment to suit their activities.
  - c) The indoor space reflects the work and interests of the children.
  - d) The space arrangements allow children to relax.

### **Outdoor Environment**

11. The outdoor play area meets the needs of children and youth, and the equipment allows them to be independent and creative. (MLEDP must meet DPW requirements to use outdoor playground equipment)
  - a) Each child has a chance to play outdoors for at least 30 minutes out of every three-hour block of time at the program.
  - b) Children can use a variety of outdoor equipment and games for both active and quiet play.
  - c) Permanent playground equipment is suitable for the sizes and abilities of all children.
  - d) The outdoor space is suitable for a wide variety of activities.

### **Activities**

12. The daily schedule is flexible, and it offers enough security, independence, and stimulation to meet the needs of all children and youth.
  - a) The routine provides stability without being rigid.
  - b) Children meet their physical needs in a relaxed way.
  - c) Individual children move smoothly from one activity to another, usually at their own pace.
  - d) When it is necessary for children to move as a group, the transition is smooth.

13. Children and youth can choose from a wide variety of activities.
  - a) There are regular opportunities for active, physical play.
  - b) There are regular opportunities for creative arts and dramatic play.
  - c) There are regular opportunities for quiet activities and socializing.
  - d) Children have a chance to join in enrichment activities that promote basic skills and higher-level thinking.
14. Activities reflect the mission of the program and promote the development of all the children and youth in the program.
  - a) Activities are in line with the styles, abilities, and interests of the individuals in the program.
  - b) Activities are well suited to the age range of children in the program.
  - c) Activities reflect the languages and cultures of the families served.
  - d) Activities reflect and support the program's mission.
15. There are sufficient materials to support program activities.
  - a) Materials are complete and in good repair.
  - b) here are enough materials for the number of children in the program.
  - c) Materials are developmentally appropriate for the age range of the children in the program.

### **Safety, Health, & Nutrition**

16. The safety and security of children and youth are protected.
  - a) There are no observable safety hazards in the program space.
  - b) Systems are in place to protect the children from harm, especially when they move from one place to another or use the restroom.a
  - c) Equipment for active play is safe.
  - d) A system is in place to keep unauthorized people from taking children from the program.
17. The program provides an environment that protects and enhances the health of children and youth.
  - a) The indoor and outdoor facilities are clean.
  - b) There are no observable health hazards in the indoor or outdoor space.
  - c) There are adequate supplies and facilities for hand-washing.
  - d) The heat, ventilation, noise level, and light in the indoor space are comfortable.
18. The program staff try to protect and enhance the health of children and youth.
  - a) Staff are responsive to the individual health needs of the children.
  - b) Staff protect children form communicable disease by separating children who become ill during the program.
  - c) Staff protect children from potential hazards such as the following: caustic or toxic art materials and cleaning agents, medications, and hot liquids; overexposure to heat or cold.
  - d) Staff and children wash hands frequently, especially after using the toilet or before preparing food.
19. Children and youth are carefully supervised to maintain safety.
  - a) Staff note when children arrive, when they leave, and with whom they leave.
  - b) Staff know where the children are and what they are doing.
  - c) Staff supervise children appropriately according to children's ages, abilities, and needs.
  - d) Staff closely supervise activities that are potentially harmful.
20. The program serves foods and drinks that meet the needs of children and youth.
  - a) The program serves healthy foods.
  - b) Drinking water is readily available at all times.
  - c) The amount and type of food offered is appropriate for the ages and sizes of children
  - d) Snacks and meals are timed appropriately for children