



Out-of-school time programs must be tailored to the specific needs of children 6-12 years of age, their families and their communities. Children, parents, caregivers and social service providers must work together throughout the planning process, and on an on-going basis, to create inclusive and holistic programs that meet the diverse needs of their communities.

The Middle Years Matter Coalition, following the High Five principles of healthy child development considers the following as core components of a high quality, exemplary out of school time program:

Organizational Structure & Staffing

- Strong management and solid organization structure that is accountable to the children, and their families
- Full-time, year-round, paid coordinator
- Meets the requirements of the Personal Health Information Protection Act
- Provides an environment that follows the Ontario Health and Safety Act
- Well-trained and experienced staff that reflects the diversity of the community
- Continual strength based training for staff and on-going performance reviews
- High adult-to-child ratios (maximum 1:15) ensuring adequate supervision

Program Development

- Activities that are culturally appropriate and meet the needs of diverse communities
- Accessible, discrimination-free, barrier free and affordable to all families
- Children with special needs must be accommodated
- Daily healthy snacks
- Homework help and tutoring
- Developmentally appropriate physical activities including sports
- Developmentally appropriate visual and performing arts
- Age appropriate social skill development opportunities
- Opportunities to develop meaningful relationships with peers and mentors
- Leadership development opportunities
- Intergenerational opportunities
- Addressing larger social issues such community safety, bullying, gang violence, drugs
- On-going program evaluation

Community Linkages

- Effective partnerships with all community stakeholders to create a shared vision for all children
- Development of an integrated service approach that links school personnel with out-of-school program staff
- Connecting families with each other beyond out of school programs therefore fostering social supports
- Civic engagement opportunities for parents and community volunteers

Canadian References:

Excellence in Action- A Guide to Best Practices in After School Services, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada; RBC Stay in School Project; High Five; The Offord Centre of Child Studies; *Building a Community Architecture for Early Childhood Learning and Care*-YWCA Canada

American References:

The National School-Age Care Alliance; The After School Corporation; The Early Childhood Initiative Foundation