NEBRASKA

SCHOOL-AGE AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Core Competencies






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Nebraska's
Core Competencies for School-Age and Youth Development Professionals

DEDICATION

Nebraska's Core Competencies for School-age and Youth Development Professionals is dedicated to all adults committed to supporting the learning and development of all children and youth by providing high quality programs, services and experiences.

An Invitation . . .

You are invited and encouraged to use this document as a resource to support and enhance the work of individuals and programs involved in the education and development of children and youth. The Core Competencies for School-Age and Youth Development Professionals are designed to inform professionals and the public alike of the knowledge and skills you want to see in professionals working in licensed child care programs, public and private school before-and-after school programs, faith-based groups, summer youth camps, youth development programs, and juvenile justice programs.

If you work directly with children and youth, the Core Competencies can assist you in planning and tracking your own professional development activities as you build your portfolio of training and experience. The document can guide you in deciding what knowledge and skills you want to focus on for your next training activity or area of study.

Program administrators who supervise staff can use the levels of competencies as a resource to assist in staff evaluation, recognition and support for ongoing learning and continuous program improvement.

For those providing training, whether in-service or formal higher education programs of youth development in 2-year and 4-year higher education institutions, this document identifies the broad range of competencies to be integrated into workshops or coursework and on-site program experiences. You can use the Core Competencies document to assist you in highlighting knowledge and skills addressed in training or youth development preparation programs to strengthen the competence of staff working with school-age children and youth.

You are invited to use this document to plan, think about, and discuss what adults need to know and be able to do to support the learning and development of school-age children and youth. Enjoy…and keep on learning!

Introduction

Core Competencies are:

what **all adults** who work with children and youth need to know, understand and be able to do to support children and youth's development, learning, and success in school and in life. Core Knowledge and Core Competencies provide a broad categorization of knowledge, skills, and attributes that apply across all roles in the school-age and youth development field.

This is the first revision of the Nebraska School-Age and Youth Development Core Competencies. These voluntary core competencies represent the combined efforts of educators and youth development professionals from across Nebraska to define the skills, qualities, and abilities that youth development professionals need to know and be able to do to provide quality out-of-school time services for youth and their families.

In this revised draft, you will find some guiding principles and other background information explaining why these competencies are critical and how they can be used by a variety of audiences to help develop diverse, high quality programs to meet the developmental needs of Nebraska's most important natural resource—our youth.

The bulk of this document, however, is focused on the explanation of the competencies and the qualities that professionals at various stages of their career should possess.

The Program Quality Committee of the Nebraska Community Learning Center Network, now known as Beyond School Bells, a public/private partnership supporting the development of partnerships and policies that create more high quality, sustainable out of school time programs in Nebraska, collaborated with the Nebraska Department of Education's Early Childhood Training Center to oversee this project.

This work builds on and borrows from the efforts of other states, most notably, Kansas and Missouri's Core Competencies for Youth Development Professionals (2006), as well as Nebraska's own Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals (2008).

The Charles Stuart Mott Foundation provided organizational support for this project and helped connect our work to similar work at the national level.

The Nebraska School-Age and Youth Development Leadership Team was convened in 2009 to initiate development of core competencies for school-age and youth development professionals. The School-Age and Youth Development Leadership Team was made up of group leaders, teachers, and professionals working in a variety of school-age and youth development programs across the state. (A full listing of the School-Age and Youth Development Leadership team can be found in Appendix A.)

The Leadership Team met and agreed on a common definition of core competencies, defined guiding principles for the core competencies, designed the initial framework for the essential areas of knowledge and skills needed to work in the school-age and youth development field, and provided guidance on the number of levels needed within Nebraska's Core Competencies for School-Age and Youth Development Professionals.

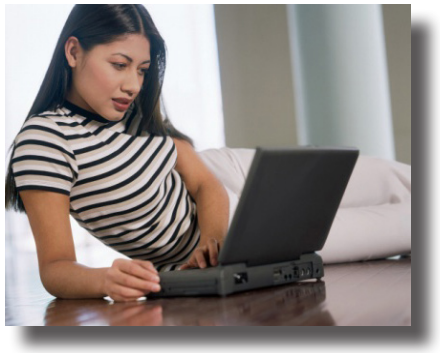
A writing team worked for several months to draft the initial core knowledge competencies, and the Leadership Team reconvened to review the competencies for their usefulness, readability, and inclusiveness. The Leadership team also made recommendations for refining the draft.

Vision for Nebraska's Core Competencies

All children and youth in Nebraska have caregivers, youth development workers, and teachers who are well prepared, knowledgeable, and possess the necessary tools to help the children and youth, with whom they work, reach their full potential.

Nebraska's Core Competencies are based upon these premises:

- Youth require a supportive environment in which to develop.
- Youth development professionals recognize that quality out-of-school time programs help support and bridge the gap between school and home. School-Age programs should also complement, not extend, the school or academic program to provide a balance in children's lives.
- Cultural diversity impacts all areas of practice. Professionals recognize that each family is unique in its structure, values, beliefs, traditions, and interactions. Professionals respect each family's worth and appreciate the richness of diversity that each family brings to the program.



What is Youth Development?

Youth development is a process that all young people go through on the way to adulthood. Youth development is *"…the ongoing growth process in which all youth are engaged in attempting to (1) meet their basic personal and social needs to be safe, feel cared for, be valued, be useful, and (2) to build skills and competencies that allow them to function and contribute in their daily lives." (Youth Development and Resiliency Research: Making Connection to Substance Abuse Prevention, Karen J. Pittman, Raymond O'Brien and Mary Kimball, Academy for Educational Development, February, 1993)*

Youth development, then, is a combination of all of the people, places, supports, opportunities and services that young people need to be happy, healthy and successful. A young person will not be able to feel safe, cared for, valued or useful, unless their family and community provide them with supports and opportunities that they need along the way. Thus, youth development is a process in which family and community must actively participate.

According to the Center for Youth Development and Policy Research, people, programs and institutions that serve youth are engaged in youth development if there is strong evidence of the following practices:

Supports—what is done *with* young people: Motivational, emotional and strategic supports lead to success in life. The supports can take many different forms, but they must be affirming, respectful, and ongoing. The supports are most powerful when they are offered by a variety of people, such as parents, close relatives, community social networks, teachers, youth workers, employers, health providers, and peers who are involved in the lives of young people.

Opportunities—what is done *by* young people: Opportunities provide chances for young people to learn how to act in the world around them, to explore, express, belong, and influence. Opportunities give young people the chance to test ideas and behaviors and to experiment with different roles. It is important to stress that young people, just like adults, learn best through active participation and learning occurs in all types of settings and situations.

Quality services—what is done *for* young people: Services in such areas as education, health, employment, and juvenile justice exhibit (1) relevant instruction and information, (2) challenging opportunities to express oneself, to contribute, to take on new roles, and be part of a group, and (3) supportive adults and peers who provide respect, high standards and expectations, guidance, and affirmation to young people.

Guiding Principles for Nebraska's School-Age and Youth Development Professionals Core Competencies

Principles for Serving Youth and their Families

Nebraska's Core Competencies:

- Reflect and honor the diversity of individuals and ensure that programs operate to promote cultural diversity in staff, children and youth participants, and program content.
- Clarify for families what to look for in school-age and youth development professionals.
- Encourage professionals to support multiple intelligences of youth.
- Reflect strong partnerships with schools, parents and communities.
- Help professionals appreciate each youth as an individual, while promoting successful peer interactions and relationships.
- Encourage staff to develop skills in creating fun and interactive learning within programs.
- Acknowledge the attributes necessary to work in school-age/youth development programs (integrity, trustworthiness, honesty, sense of own future, commitment to lifelong learning).
- Support staff having the knowledge and skills needed to create safe and healthy environments for both youth and adults.
- Inform policymakers on what high quality professionals need to know and the importance of staffing programs with high quality professionals.
- Are relevant to all types of youth development professionals, including 4-H, caregivers, Boy and Girl Scouts, 21st Century Learning Communities, before-and-after school teachers, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA and YWCA, etc.
- Reflect the need for professionals to encourage and support active citizenship in school-age children and youth.

Principles for Professional and Career Development

Nebraska's Core Competencies:

- Guide and inform professional development across all levels and types of school-age and youth development programs.
- Inform staff on which directions of continuing education, or training to pursue to advance their knowledge and skills.
- Clarify for school-age/youth development professionals all the skills and knowledge necessary to be "qualified" to work in the profession.
- Provide incentives (recognition) for staff who improve their knowledge and skills.
- Support career awareness and opportunities for defining coursework and training that can prepare people to work in school-age and youth development programs.
- Recognize that knowledge and skills shift with various positions and responsibilities in the school-age/youth development field.

Reasons why core competencies are critical to the field

- Core competencies define what professionals and volunteers in all types of youth development programs need to know and be able to do to provide quality care and education.
- Core competencies specify the needed knowledge, skills and attributes across all school-age and youth development settings.
- Core competencies support the development of qualified staff serving school-age children and youth in Nebraska.
- Core competencies help youth development and school-age programs and professionals define professional development needs.



- Core competencies define the levels of knowledge and competencies from entry level skills through advanced skills.
- Core competencies allow professionals to evaluate progress from one level to the next through a combination of training, education and self-assessment.
- Core competencies provide guidance for training and professional development of staff, college and university faculty, and curriculum developers, regarding the specific knowledge, skills, and attributes needed by school-age and youth development professionals.
- Core competencies can serve as part of the foundation for Nebraska's school-age and youth development professional development system.

Nebraska's School-Age and Youth Development Professional Core Competencies are Voluntary

The competencies, skills and levels described are voluntary for those working in the school-age and youth development field. Program directors, teachers, before-and-after school programs, family child care home providers, recreation camps, and youth programs are encouraged to use the document as they find helpful.

Ways Core Competencies Can Be Used:

A. Caregivers, youth development workers, teachers, and other practitioners can:

1. self-evaluate their current level of knowledge.
2. identify areas of training/educational needs.
3. determine training/professional development that can meet those needs.
4. identify potential career paths they can pursue.

B. Directors or administrators can:

1. specify levels of training/education for individual jobs.
2. develop job descriptions.
3. assist staff in developing professional development plans.
4. plan educational or training opportunities that will best serve the needs of the staff.
5. provide guidance for a salary scale based upon levels of competency.
6. appraise job performance.

C. Higher Education faculty members can:

1. design courses to ensure students are able to demonstrate mastery of the competencies.
2. coordinate content to facilitate transfer and articulation of college coursework.
3. develop practicum experiences that meet competencies.

D. Trainers or training organizations can:

1. identify the knowledge and skills necessary for professionals.
2. evaluate audiences to determine levels of knowledge and skills.
3. plan relevant training.
4. build evaluation components into training to demonstrate competencies.

Nebraska's School-Age and Youth Development Professional Core Competencies are Voluntary (continued)

E. Career advisors can:

1. assist in developing professional goals and objectives based on needed competencies.
2. locate courses/training for professional growth and development.
3. keep professionals up to date on current credentials and requirements.

F. Parents can:

1. make choices in selecting programs with qualified staff.
2. communicate with elected officials about the importance of high quality care in school-age and youth development programs.

G. Local, state, and national policymakers can:

1. develop and implement policies that support high quality programs.
2. identify and secure adequate resources, in order to enhance professionalism and high quality programs.
3. provide a rationale for the need for adequate resources for school-age care and youth development programs.

H. Statewide professional development systems can:

1. support the development of an integrated professional development system within Nebraska that coordinates across systems and advances youth development.
2. acknowledge and promote professional growth.
3. provide access to competency-based training/education.
4. encourage compensation that is commensurate with training/education.

Some of the Key Objectives Often Found in Positive Youth Development Programs

Promotes Bonding: Bonding is the emotional attachment and commitment a young person makes to social relationships in the family, peer group, school, community, or culture. Positive bonding with an adult is crucial to the development of a capacity for adaptive responses to change, and growth into a healthy and functional adult.

Fosters Resilience: Resilience is an individual's capacity for adapting to change and stressful events in healthy and flexible ways. Resilience is a characteristic of youth who, when exposed to multiple risk factors, show successful responses to challenge, and use this learning to achieve successful outcomes.

Promotes Competencies: The five major competencies that are the focus of positive youth development include social, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and moral.

Social Competence: The range of interpersonal skills that help youth integrate feelings, thinking, and actions in order to achieve specific social and interpersonal goals. These skills include encoding relevant social cues, accurately interpreting those social cues, generating effective solutions to interpersonal problems, realistically anticipating consequences and obstacles to one's actions, and translating social decisions into effective behavior.

Emotional Competence: The ability to identify and respond to feelings and emotional reactions in oneself and others. The five elements of emotional competencies include knowing one's emotions, managing emotions, motivating one-self, recognizing emotions in others, and handling relationships.

Cognitive Competence: There are two forms of cognitive competence. The first form includes the ability to develop and apply self-talk, the reading and interpretation of social cues, using steps for problem solving and decision making, understanding the perspective of others, understanding behavioral norms, a positive attitude toward life, and self awareness. The other form of cognitive competence is related to academic and intellectual achievement. It is the ability to use logic, analytic thinking, and abstract reasoning.

Behavioral Competence: The three dimensions of behavioral competencies include nonverbal communication (through facial expressions, tone of voice, style of dress, gesture or eye contact), verbal communication (making clear requests, responding effectively to criticism, expressing feelings clearly) and taking action (helping others, walking away from negative situations, participating in positive activities).

Moral Competence: The ability to assess and respond to the ethical, affective, or social justice dimensions of a situation. It is described as a respect for rules and a sense of social justice.

Fosters Self-Efficacy: Self-efficacy is the perception that one can achieve desired goals through one's own action.
Fosters Belief in the Future: Belief in the future is the sense of hope and optimism about possible outcomes.
Fosters Clear and Positive Identity: Clear and positive identity is the internal organization of a coherent sense of self.

Source: Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 591, **Positive Development: Realizing the Potential of Youth (January 2004), pp. 98-124.**

Levels

Nebraska's School-Age and Youth Development Professional Core Competencies are divided into three levels of skills, which build upon each other. Professionals may be at different levels within the core knowledge areas, depending on their background experience and training.

Level	Description
Entry Level	Skills needed by those new to the school-age and youth development field
Intermediate Level	Skills you would expect to see after two to three years of working in the school-age and youth development field
Advanced Level	Reflects a breadth and depth of knowledge about research, best practices, and effective school-age and youth development services.

Core Knowledge and Competency Areas

Nebraska's School-Age and Youth Development Professional Core Competencies are divided into six areas of knowledge and skills. The six areas are:

Core Knowledge Areas	What the core knowledge area includes
A. Growth and Development	Knowledge of physical, cognitive, social and emotional development of youth.
B. Health, Safety, and Nutrition	Ensures that professionals promote healthy eating, safe and active lifestyles, safe materials, facilities, and equipment and compliance with federal and state regulations pertaining to working with youth.
C. Relationships	Builds respectful relationships with youth, families and staff.
D. Learning	Creates a safe and enriching learning environment with an array of opportunities for learning.
E. Professionalism	Demonstrates professional and ethical conduct and a lifelong commitment to learning.
F. Administration	Implements the program in a manner that reflects research-based practices, a commitment to continuous quality improvement, sound financial practices and visionary leadership.

A. Growth and Development Core Knowledge and Competency Area

School-age and youth development professionals understand how youth learn and develop in each of the domains: physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and creative. School-age and youth development professionals understand how youth develop and use language skills and other forms of communication. They know about various factors that influence youth development, and how their development varies from adults across skill levels, behaviors, and individual needs.

Competent school-age and youth development professionals provide inclusive programming for youth of all abilities, including those with special needs, encourage positive youth development, and take into consideration the trends and issues that affect youth.



Growth and Development

A. Growth and Development Core Knowledge and Competency Area		
Entry Level	Intermediate Level	Advanced Level
1.1 Identifies and describes the stages of youth development (physical, cognitive, social, and emotional). 1.2 Recognizes that youth develop along a continuum into adulthood. 1.3 Is aware of the impact transitions can have on youth development. 1.4 Recognizes cultural, social and environmental factors that may affect the development and behavior of youth. 1.5 Recognizes that youth learn and develop through experience. 1.6 Identifies developmental milestones of youth, ages kindergarten through adolescence. 1.7 Responds to the individual needs of each youth, including those with special needs. 1.8 Is aware of how youth learn and communicate with peers and adults. 1.9 Identifies the various ways in which youth learn and adapts the learning environment to meet individual needs of youth.	2.1 Plans and implements activities that foster the physical, cognitive, social and emotional development of youth. 2.2 Applies and integrates current youth development research and best practices into the program. 2.3 Creates opportunities in the program for smooth transitions (i.e., school to home, activity to activity). 2.4 Demonstrates sensitivity to various cultural values, traditions and expectations. 2.5 Encourages youth to perceive life experiences as opportunities for growth and the development of resiliency. 2.6 Observes and documents specific growth and development characteristics. 2.7 Plans and implements program events for youth of all ability levels providing a learning environment that is responsive to all individuals.	3.1 Observes and evaluates physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development, and adjusts activities to meet the individual needs of youth. 3.2 Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies theory and research on youth development to the program design. 3.3 Involves youth, leaders and families in plans for promoting effective transitions and developing self-regulation skills in youth. 3.4 Creates a learning environment that supports the uniqueness of each individual and integrates cultural traditions in the program. 3.5 Creates a learning environment that is age appropriate with opportunities and resources that support the expression of unique learning styles. 3.6 Communicates observations and developmental changes with administrators, staff, and families. 3.7 Observes, documents and adapts the program for inclusive practices.

A. Growth and Development Core Knowledge and Competency Area		
Entry Level	Intermediate Level	Advanced Level
1.10 Recognizes and accepts individual differences, temperaments, and personalities of the youth. 1.11 Engages in a positive relationship with youth in the program. 1.12 Monitors development, behaviors and stress levels with youth in the program. 1.13 Creates positive relationships with the families of youth.	2.8 Provides opportunities for youth to learn effective ways to communicate needs, behaviors, skills, and knowledge to adults. 2.9 Conducts observations and documents unique learning styles and interprets information to support effective environmental design. 2.10 Supports youth in developing an understanding of individual and group roles. 2.11 Models respectful and positive relationships with youth and staff in the program. 2.12 Aware of behavioral change in youth and knows appropriate protocol to seek support. 2.13 Communicates with families on an ongoing basis.	3.8 Observes, documents, and integrates resources that provide youth support for effectively communicating with peers and adults. 3.9 Articulates and responds effectively to various personality and learning styles of youth. 3.10 Creates opportunities for youth to participate in both individual and group activities. 3.11 Provides professional development opportunities for staff to integrate current research, best practices and effective communication in the youth program. 3.12 Recognizes and intervenes when youth show signs of physical or behavioral changes that may indicate stress, illness, or mental health issues. 3.13 Engages families as partners in the care and education of youth.

B. Health, Safety, and Nutrition Core Knowledge and Competency Area

School-age youth development professionals establish and maintain an environment that ensures healthy development, safety, and good nutrition.

School-age youth development professionals encourage youth to be aware of personal hygiene, healthy eating, and the importance of keeping bodies moving and active, including the need for outdoor recreation.

School-age youth development programs must adhere to relevant laws and regulations; furthermore, they must consider the health, growth, and development requirements for each youth within the context of the families' cultural traditions and other special needs or unique physical and health conditions.

School-age youth development professionals should recognize that a youth's physical health, mental health, and safety are the foundations for development and learning.



Health, Safety, and Nutrition

B. Health, Safety, and Nutrition Core Knowledge and Competency Area		
Entry Level	Intermediate Level	Advanced Level
1.1 Recognizes and follows Nebraska State Law requiring the reporting of suspected child abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. 1.2 Is aware of the policies and procedures necessary to maintain a safe environment; to prevent and reduce the incidence of illnesses and injuries; and when applicable, to meet licensing safety standards. 1.3 Identifies the policies and procedures of the program that are designed to promote good physical health, and social and emotional health among youth. 1.4 Understands relevant public health standards and USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) nutritional guidelines. 1.5 Is aware of the safety/health issues of youth with special needs. 1.6 Recognizes age-appropriate supervision and intervention using the defined procedures to create emotionally and physically safe environments. 1.7 Is aware of warning signs and procedures for reporting suspicions of possible physical or social/ emotional health issues in youth (e.g., illness, depression, stress, drug abuse, teen pregnancy, etc.).	2.1 Implements programs, policies, and procedures for recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect. 2.2 Provides a safe environment to prevent and reduce the incidence of illnesses and injuries, and where applicable, meets licensing safety standards. 2.3 Monitors implementation of the program to ensure that it promotes good physical, social and emotional health among youth. 2.4 Ensures that program operates according to relevant public health standards and USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) nutritional guidelines. 2.5 Plans and responds to safety/health issues of youth with special needs. 2.6 Provides age-appropriate supervision and intervention using guidelines and procedures to create emotionally and physically safe environments. 2.7 Implements appropriate procedures to provide short-term crisis management related to health and social and emotional issues (e.g., illness, infection, depression, stress, drug abuse, teen pregnancy, etc.).	3.1 Develops strategies and program activities that address prevention of child abuse by staff and or families who have youth in the program. 3.2 Assesses safety practices and modifies accordingly to prevent and reduce the incidence of illnesses and injuries, and where applicable, to meet licensing safety standards. 3.3 Develops policies and procedures that encourage good health and nutrition practices and monitors compliance with those procedures. 3.4 Develops policies and procedures to ensure the program meets relevant public health standards and USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) nutritional guidelines and assesses program compliance. 3.5 Makes modifications to the program to better accommodate the safety/health issues of youth with special needs. 3.6 Develops and assesses implementation of policies and procedures with staff and youth to ensure that safe practices occur both indoors and outdoors. 3.7 Develops appropriate procedures to provide short-term crisis management related to health and social emotional issues (e.g. illness, infection, depression, stress, drug abuse, teen pregnancy, etc.).

B. Health, Safety, and Nutrition Core Knowledge and Competency Area		
Entry Level	Intermediate Level	Advanced Level
1.8 Implements guidelines and procedures to refer youth in crisis to appropriate resources. 1.9 Is aware of the program's established emergency plans and procedures. 1.10 Implements program policies and procedures on releasing youth to authorized persons. 1.11 Follows procedures for admitting and monitoring unauthorized visitors to program site. 1.12 Has CPR/first aid certification or can readily identify the person in the program who has a current certification in CPR/First Aid. (Family child care home provider must have CPR/first aid.) 1.13 Models a healthy lifestyle and encourages youth and families to maintain physically active lifestyles with good nutrition practices. 1.14 Follows instructions from supervisor for proper giving of and applying of medications to youth, including the required documentation. 1.15 Examines indoor and outdoor environments to ensure they are healthy and safe for youth.	2.8 Utilizes guidelines and procedures to refer participants in crisis to appropriate resources. 2.9 Implements emergency plans according to established policies and procedures. 2.10 Clarifies and ensures that policies for pick up and drop off of youth are regularly followed. 2.11 Ensures program procedures for admitting and monitoring unauthorized visitors to the program are followed. 2.12 Maintains certification in CPR, and takes a lead role as a first responder in CPR and first aid. 2.13 Uses spaces, materials, and routines as resources to create a healthy and safe environment that encourage a healthy lifestyle. 2.14 Maintains appropriate documentation for the dispensing of medications to youth by authorized personnel. 2.15 Supervises and engages youth to be part of maintaining a safe environment both indoors and outdoors.	3.8 Plans, implements, documents and reviews (as needed) established emergency plans and procedures. 3.9 Establishes and monitors compliance with guidelines for pick up and drop off of youth. 3.10 Establishes and monitors compliance with guidelines for admitting and monitoring unauthorized visitors to program site. 3.11 Maintains certification in CPR and first aid and ensures that staff is current on certification. 3.12 Observes, documents and implements healthy and safe environments that encourage a healthy lifestyle. 3.13 Develops and follows policies and procedures regarding the proper dispensing of medication and the required documentation process. 3.14 Engages community partners, families, administrators and youth in the development of educational experiences that support healthy and safe environments.

C. Relationships Core Knowledge and Competency Area

School-age and youth development professionals establish supportive relationships with youth and guide them in both individual and group roles.

School-age and youth development professionals work collaboratively with families and agencies/ organizations to meet the needs of youth and to encourage the community's involvement with youth development.

School-age and youth development professionals value their unique relationships with youth, families, and communities. They also share information and resources with youth and their families that support their well-being.

School-age and youth development professionals listen in a non-judgmental way, interact in respectful ways, and exhibit concern for the well-being of others and interest in the feelings and experiences of others.



Relationships

C. Relationships Core Knowledge and Competency Area		
Entry Level	Intermediate Level	Advanced Level
1.1 Listens to youth and serves as a sounding board to their thoughts and ideas.	2.1 Encourages listening skills among all youth.	3.1 Uses listening skills with parents and staff for program growth and improvement.
1.2 Seeks to understand the values, motivations, and attitudes of youth.	2.2 Helps youth clarify and express their values and challenges their development of values in a way that helps them further articulate them.	3.2 Shares current research findings with other staff as it relates to values development in youth, motivating youth and youth leadership development.
1.3 Recognizes the principles that promote cooperative learning.	2.3 Creates opportunities for youth to participate in planning, and assists youth in assuming leadership roles.	3.3 Ensures that all youth are actively participating and enjoying their experiences.
1.4 Assists youth in their efforts to communicate with others, express feelings, and attempts to get along with others.	2.4 Develops program components that promote communication skills in youth, improve impulse control, and ensure appropriate expression of feelings.	3.4 Ensures that program components address communication skills and social and emotional development in youth is effective.
1.5 Encourages youth to actively participate in the program by sharing ideas, accomplishments, and interests. Has an understanding of the assets that can benefit youth in the program.	2.5 Views youth as a resource and appreciates that they have the capacity to make contributions when they receive support and opportunities to develop these skills.	3.5 Encourages staff to use innovative activities to engage youth who are “hard to reach.”
1.6 Communicates appropriately, respectfully, and often with youth, parents and other staff.	2.6 Interacts with and relates to youth in ways that support asset building.	3.6 Communicates current theories and research findings on asset building in youth development.
1.7 Understand conflict resolution and negotiation strategies.	2.7 Incorporates positive individual conversations with youth throughout the day and communicates information to the family about development.	3.7 Monitors all staff communication to ensure that it is done in a positive and culturally sensitive manner.
1.8 Establishes a meaningful relationship with youth, and treats all youth fairly.		3.8 Resolves conflicts in a positive manner, providing opportunities for growth with youth, staff, and with administrators.

C. Relationships Core Knowledge and Competency Area		
Entry Level	Intermediate Level	Advanced Level
1.9 Models good social skills and promotes positive peer relationships among youth. 1.10 Affirms and respects the differences and diversity between youth (culture, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and socioeconomic) and promotes the feeling of acceptance. 1.11 Maintains an open and cooperative relationship with each family and is responsive to the family's concerns and interests. 1.12 Provides appropriate information to families on their son's/daughter's involvement in the program. 1.13 Looks for ways youth can feel a part of the larger community. 1.14 Understands the community the program serves, including the ethnic composition, economic structure, geography, risk factors, and assets of the families and of the community. 1.15 Maintains healthy working relationships with other youth serving organizations in the community.	2.8 Demonstrates positive interactions and conflict resolution skills, and models those skills for youth. 2.9 Consistently expresses high expectations for youth. 2.10 Uses intentional strategies to foster positive peer to peer relationships. 2.11 Strives to ensure that family and community diversity and cultures are reflected in all aspects of the program. 2.12 Partners with families in addressing issues/concerns. 2.13 Values families as active decision makers and builds on families' strengths. 2.14 Works to develop community partnerships to expand or enhance resources for youth and families. 2.15 Places a high value on inclusion and representation from the community and sees the program benefiting when multiple and diverse voices participate in program development. 2.16 Participates in collaborative work with other youth serving organizations in the community.	3.9 Instills a sense of independence and initiative in youth throughout their time in the program. 3.10 Fosters healthy relationships with youth and encourages the same among peers through strength-based building activities. 3.11 Recognizes differences in children (culturally, academically, socially, etc.) and embrace the differences, encourages acknowledgement of the differences, and promotes acceptance of the differences. 3.12 Communicates effectively with families to establish goals for youth participating in the program, cooperatively establishing strategies that the family can support. 3.13 Openly encourages family involvement in planning program activities and events. 3.14 Encourages youth to participate in community awareness and community service activities. 3.15 Recognizes gaps in available community resources and strives to help families gain these resources. 3.16 Provides leadership in collaborative work with other youth serving organizations.

Since 1989 the Search Institute ® has been studying assets in the lives of young people. They have developed 40 developmental assets that have been found to help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible. The more developmental assets a youth has, the more likely they are to avoid high risk situations.

The Search Institute has defined external assets and internal assets. External assets include the supportive relationships or activities in which youth regularly participate. Internal assets are the motivations, values, characteristics, and sense of identities that youth have developed.

Some of the External Assets are:

* Family Support
* Service to Others
* Creative Activities

Some of the Internal Assets are:

* Reading for Pleasure
* School Engagement
* Integrity
* Responsibility
* Positive View of Personal Future

For more information on the 40 Developmental Assets go to
http://www.search-institute.org/assets/

D. Learning Core Knowledge and Competency Area

School-age and youth development professionals establish an environment that provides learning experiences that meet each youth's needs, capabilities, and interests. School-age and youth development professionals understand that learning occurs through a combination of interactions, structures, and experiences in youth's daily lives.

School-age and youth development professionals plan and implement a variety of strategies to match youth's interests and unique approaches to learning.

School-age and youth development professionals initiate, sustain and nurture group interactions and relationships through completion of an ongoing project or activity. Professionals teach and model problem solving and conflict negotiation and guide group behavior in an age-appropriate manner.



D. Learning Core Knowledge and Competency Area Focus: Social and Emotional Development		
Entry Level	Intermediate Level	Advanced Level
1.1 Is aware of resources and standards for youth development and learning programs. 1.2 Recognizes there is research regarding youth development and learning. 1.3 Is aware of the need to expose youth to diverse cultural and ethnic experiences. 1.4 Recognizes the importance of youth input in creating a learning environment. 1.5 Recognizes the importance of both indoor and outdoor learning experiences. 1.6 Recognizes the effects of the learning environment on behaviors, interactions, and curriculum. 1.7 Is aware of learning opportunities in the community and with community partners. 1.8 Recognizes the importance of identifying the individual special needs of youth and of making adaptations in the learning environment to support youth needs.	2.1 Applies and implements best and promising practices based upon local, state and national standards. 2.2 Articulates and applies theories and research related to youth development. 2.3 Incorporates opportunities and supports for youth to explore a variety of diverse cultural and ethnic experiences. 2.4 Offer youth learning experiences that provide opportunities for constructive creative expression. 2.5 Offers a variety of learning experiences that includes both indoor and outdoor opportunities to learn and develop. 2.6 Designs the learning environment in ways that will promote positive behaviors and cooperative interactions. 2.7 Provides learning opportunities in the community with the assistance of families and community partners.	3.1 Analyzes program components to ensure that they incorporate best practices and meet state and national standards. 3.2 Promotes and educates others regarding research on youth development and learning. 3.3 Incorporates and models multiple learning theories and strategies in the implementation of learning experiences. 3.4 Reviews learning experiences offered in the program and determines if there is sufficient variety to interest all youth in the program. 3.5 Ensures that the learning environment, both indoor and outdoor, is safe and offers a variety of learning experiences. 3.6 Assesses the learning environment and youth outcomes through data collection to ensure that it promotes positive interactions and growth for youth.

D. Learning Core Knowledge and Competency Area		
Focus: Social and Emotional Development		
Entry Level	Intermediate Level	Advanced Level
1.9 Follows a daily schedule. 1.10 Is aware of 21st century skills (teamwork, technology, living in a global society). 1.11 Identifies the need for both active and quiet, individual and group activities. 1.12 Is aware of the importance that learning includes all areas: recreation/ fitness, academic support, life skills, personal growth and development, and technology. 1.13 Describes the importance of providing written feedback to parents of youth regarding their participation and progress in the program.	2.8 Designs adaptations in the learning environment for youth special needs to ensure they can actively participate in all learning activities. 2.9 Maintains a predictable schedule that can be flexible, based upon the needs of youth. 2.10 Develops learning experiences that promote 21st century skills. 2.11 Creates a learning environment that provides space for both active and quiet, individual, and group activities. 2.12 Designs learning so that it incorporates recreation/fitness, life skills development, academic support, and appropriate use of technology. 2.13 Provides regular written feedback to parents about their youth's involvement and participation in the program.	3.7 Shares and collaborates regularly with community partners to enhance learning opportunities. 3.8 Assesses the learning environment to determine if it is responsive to the needs of all youth participating in the program. 3.9 Analyzes the schedule to ensure that there is a balance of scheduled and unscheduled activities. 3.10 Assesses the program learning experiences to ensure that they are appropriately promoting 21st century skills. 3.11 Assesses the program's materials, technologies, activities, and strategies to determine the impact of all program components. 3.12 Ensures that resources are available to support a variety of learning experiences including recreation/ fitness, life skills development, academic support and appropriate use of technology. 3.13 Creates opportunities for youth and families to provide written feedback on ways to improve the quality of the program.

E. Professionalism Core Knowledge and Competency Area

School-age and youth development professionals serve youth in a professional manner and participate in the community as a representative of the school-age and youth development field.

School-age and youth development professionals maintain a code of ethical conduct, articulate a vision of high quality school-age and youth development services, and promote lifelong learning and professional development across the field.

School-age and youth development professionals work corroboratively in teams and independently by accepting and delegating responsibility.



Professionalism

E. Professionalism Core Knowledge and Competency Area		
Entry Level	Intermediate Level	Advanced Level
1.1 Enjoys working with youth, displays a positive attitude, is impartial, and treats each young person with respect. 1.2 Is receptive to constructive feedback from others in order to improve practices. 1.3 Uses appropriate language at all times. 1.4 Identifies professional resources for learning. 1.5 Recognizes one's limitations and skills and seeks help when needed. 1.6 Recognizes professional ethics of the youth development field. 1.7 Behaves in a professional manner by keeping appropriate boundaries. 1.8 Has dependable work habits, dresses appropriately, arrives on time, completes activities as planned and uses time wisely.	2.1 Creates a positive, healthy atmosphere that respects the diversity of all youth. 2.2 Utilizes feedback from others to improve program practices. 2.3 Recognizes and intervenes when staff need to improve their language and demeanor when working with youth. 2.4 Evaluates own performance and sets professional development goals to improve knowledge and skills in the school-age and youth development field. 2.5 Recognizes and takes steps to reduce personal stress and burnout. 2.6 Recognizes professional behavior in others and incorporates that behavior into practice. 2.7 Models appropriate ways of interacting with youth to ensure that appropriate boundaries are maintained.	3.1 Assesses the involvement of youth in the program to ensure that all youth are respected and actively engaged in the program. 3.2 Regularly gathers feedback from others to improve program practices. 3.3 Models and teaches staff appropriate ways of speaking with youth, staff, and parents in challenging situations. 3.4 Reflects on their own teaching and learning practices and improves knowledge by interacting with staff, attending trainings, taking classes and/or reading school-age and youth development journals, books, and research. 3.5 Observes staff interactions and competencies and offers support and resources to strengthen competencies. 3.6 Provides leadership in promoting ethical practice across school-age and youth development services and the education field. 3.7 Ensures that all staff interact with youth appropriately.

E. Professionalism Core Knowledge and Competency Area		
Entry Level	Intermediate Level	Advanced Level
1.9 Maintains positive working relationships with co-workers and other team members in the program. 1.10 Shows professional work habits by keeping spoken and written information confidential. 1.11 Participates actively in training opportunities. 1.12 Develops an awareness of professional organizations in the school-age and youth development field. 1.13 Reports any unusual circumstances or situations, along with parent concerns to a supervisor (i.e. bullying, parent complaint).	2.8 Interacts with staff and youth on a daily basis, building a sense of community among them. 2.9 Encourages all staff to participate in program decision making. 2.10 Clearly understands what information is to be kept confidential regarding youth, families, and co-workers. 2.11 Utilizes professional development opportunities to improve the level of performance, both for personal and professional growth and to better serve youth and families. 2.12 Regularly participates in professional organizations that represent the school-age and youth development field.	3.8 Assesses the professionalism and quality of the program to ensure that consistent professional practices are followed. 3.9 Assesses the ability of staff to work well as a team and provides professional development opportunities that strengthen their teamwork skills. 3.10 Adheres to and communicates policies that define what information about youth and families is to be kept.

F. Administration Core Knowledge and Competency Area



School-age and youth development professionals establish, implement, and evaluate school-age and youth development programs.

School-age and youth development professionals ensure that youth and families receive high quality, developmentally appropriate services. They implement sound administrative practices regarding budgeting, personnel policies, and evaluation of program quality.

School-age and youth development professionals actively consult with youth to encourage their contributions to program planning and to promote youth leadership within the program.

F. Administration Core Knowledge and Competency Area		
Entry Level	Intermediate Level	Advanced Level
1.1 Knows and understands the program's purpose, mission, policies, standards, and all procedures. 1.2 Understands the documentation procedures of the program. 1.3 Respects confidentiality of co-workers, families, and children. 1.4 Understands budgetary structures and policies and procedures of the program, follows policies regarding purchases, fee structures, and process of payments or funds as it applies to the program. 1.5 Uses time and materials; efficiently recognizing budgetary limitations. 1.6 Assists in gathering information for evaluation of program and youth. 1.7 Works with others to problem solve issues that are not working well in the program. 1.8 Is aware of the program policies and procedures to engage families. 1.9 Makes suggestions on ways the program can better serve youth.	2.1 Implements daily practices that reflect the program's philosophy. 2.2 Organizes, plans, keeps records, and communicates effectively. 2.3 Respects confidentiality at all levels of communication. 2.4 Follows applicable business and financial regulations and policies and completes required documentation. 2.5 Provides input into the development of a budget and operates within a budget. 2.6 Implements all aspects of program evaluation and quality improvement as defined by the program leadership. 2.7 Models effective problem solving and conflict negotiation skills with youth and families. 2.8 Plans family orientations and activities.	3.1 Assumes a leadership role in program operations and provides visionary direction for the program. 3.2 Assures the proper documentation is maintained which meets federal, state, and local regulations and professional standards. 3.3 Develops and implements program policies and procedures regarding confidentiality. 3.4 Assures that proper record keeping regarding the budget, expenses, revenue is maintained, and all paperwork is in order according to policies and procedures. 3.5 Develops a budget that reflects the program's goals and philosophy, maintains the budget, and develops the program's fiscal policies and procedures. 3.6 Analyzes the results of the program evaluation to determine where quality improvements can be made and to better understand the strengths and limitations of the program. 3.7 Regularly uses problem-solving skills to determine how to better deliver high quality services and resolve conflict and tension within the program and among staff.

F. Administration Core Knowledge and Competency Area		
Entry Level	Intermediate Level	Advanced Level
1.10 Notifies supervisor if there is equipment in the program that is unsafe or that presents a possible hazard to youth. 1.11 Is aware of the operational standards of the program. 1.12 Is aware of program promotion within the community	2.9 Regularly provides input on ways the program can be improved to better serve youth. 2.10 Removes any program equipment that might be unsafe or a possible hazard, and notifies leadership of the equipment hazard and removal. 2.11 Reinforces operational standards of the program. 2.12 Provides input into the marketing and promotion of the program.	3.8 Supports community and family collaboration by planning family and community education programs. 3.9 Designs and implements continuous program improvement processes which support ongoing needs of youth and families. 3.10 Ensures the program has equipment in good repair, and the necessary materials and supplies required for the program. 3.11 Communicates effectively about the program's budget, both revenue and expenses, and the organizations financial status. 3.12 Develops a marketing plan for the program. 3.13 Creates and implements a sustainability plan which may include seeking additional funding opportunities. 3.14 Interprets program's goals structure and needs to outside funders in order to provide financial sustainability to the program. 3.15 Recruits, screens, trains, supervise, and evaluates staff and volunteers.

Glossary of Terms

Accommodations: Changes in the program materials and experiences to accommodate a child's particular needs.

Adaptive Equipment: Equipment suitable to meet requirements for conditions a person might need, either temporarily or for a significant portion of his/her life.

After school: The collective range of supervised settings for age appropriate activities and programs that school-age children, approximately ages 5-18, engage in during their out-of-school-time.

Assets: Traits, characteristics or social supports that help young people grow up healthy, caring and responsible.

Asset Building: A term referring to skill building with youth to become resilient, make healthy choices, and develop social competence.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation: A procedure designed to restore normal breathing after cardiac arrest that includes a mouth-to-mouth method of respiration.

Collaboration: Working together to achieve mutually agreed-upon outcomes in response to the needs and concerns of families and children.

Competency: The knowledge, skills, or attributes necessary to perform effectively.

Confidentiality: Ensuring the information on children, youth or other adults who work in the program is only available to those who need the information to do their work.

Development: The process of physical, cognitive, and social/emotional growth that happens throughout one's lifetime.

Diversity: Recognizing and valuing differences: Includes the belief that each family has its own structure, roles, values, beliefs, and coping styles. Respect for and acceptance of this diversity is a cornerstone of high-quality, family-centered programs.

Developmentally Appropriate: Learning environment and teaching strategies that are based on theories and research about the growth and development of children and youth.

Inclusion: The practice in which all youth, with a range of abilities and disabilities, participate together and are regarded as equal members of the program.

Individual Education Plan: A plan for a youth with delayed skills or disabilities that is created by the youth, family and a team of professionals (school staff, psychologist, etc.). The purpose of the plan is to define goals for improving the student's knowledge and skills.

Internal assets: Internal assets identify those characteristics and behaviors that reflect positive internal growth and development of children and youth. These assets are about positive values and identities, social competencies, and commitment to learning.

Nutrition: A diet that provides an adequate amount of carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, proteins, minerals and water, but does not exceed the number of calories required for the body's energy needs this must take into account individual age and ethnic/cultural dietary differences.

Positive Communication: Displaying a positive attitude, encouraging others, using a positive tone when speaking to others, demonstrating openness to hearing from others, and listening to their response.

Professional Ethics: Rules of conduct and values used in a professional setting and guidelines for responsible behavior by a profession.

Program purpose/mission: A purpose or mission outlines the program's basic goals and/or reason for existence. The purpose or mission statement should be clear to participants, families, staff, and the community.

School-Age: youth between five and ten years of age.

Youth: Young adults between eleven and eighteen years of age.

Youth development framework/approach: A positive youth development approach builds upon the youth's assets and strengths rather than focusing on his/her problems, obstacles, or risk taking behavior. A positive youth development framework includes opportunities for youth to develop self-confidence, practice leadership skills, and to improve in a variety of ways.

Appendix A
School-Age and Youth Development Core Competencies Leadership Team

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Appendix B

Nebraska Professional Development Plan for School Age and Youth Development Professionals

Name:

Current Position:

Date Professional Development Plan Developed:

1. Where would you like to see yourself in the school-age and youth development field in the next year, the next three years, and the next five years? What would you like to be doing professionally?

   1 year-

   3 years-

   5 years-

2. What resources do you have to help you accomplish this?

3. Who do you consider to be your mentor or advisory in the school-age and youth development field?

Core Competencies Self-Assessment Summary Worksheet

Using the Nebraska Core Competencies for School Age and Youth Development Professionals indicate the specific core competencies that you regularly demonstrate and what specific core competencies that you would like to improve.

Core Knowledge Area	**List specific skills you demonstrate regularly and specific skills you want to improve.**		
A. Child Growth and Development			
My current strengths in this core knowledge area are:			
Areas where I would like to improve my knowledge and skills are:			
My best estimate of my current level of skill in this core knowledge area is:	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
B. Health, Safety and Nutrition			
My current strengths in this core knowledge area are:			
Areas where I would like to improve my knowledge and skills are:			
My best estimate of my current level of skill in this core knowledge area is:	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3

Core Knowledge Area	**List specific skills you demonstrate regularly and specific skills you want to improve.**		
C. Relationships			
My current strengths in this core knowledge area are:			
Areas where I would like to improve my knowledge and skills are:			
My best estimate of my current level of skill in this core knowledge area is:	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
D. Learning			
My current strengths in this core knowledge area are:			
Areas where I would like to improve my knowledge and skills are:			
My best estimate of my current level of skill in this core knowledge area is:	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
E. Professionalism			
My current strengths in this core knowledge area are:			
Areas where I would like to improve my knowledge and skills are:			
My best estimate of my current level of skill in this core knowledge area is:	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3

Core Knowledge Area	**List specific skills you demonstrate regularly and specific skills you want to improve.**		
F. Administration			
My current strengths in this core knowledge area are:			
Areas where I would like to improve my knowledge and skills are:			
My best estimate of my current level of skill in this core knowledge area is:	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3

The priority core competency skills I want to focus on developing are:

People who can help me develop these skills are:

Resources that I can use to develop these skills are:

Professional development opportunities that can help me develop these skills are:

Appendix C

Competency Skill Area: Child Growth and Development
Self-Assessment
Nebraska Core Competencies for School-Age and Youth Development Professionals

Scale for Evaluating Skills
0= Never/Rarely uses this skill
1=Occasionally uses this skill
2=Regularly uses this skill

Skill Area: Child Growth and Development	0	1	2
LEVEL 1			
1.1 Identifies and describes the stages of youth development (physical, cognitive, social and emotional).			
1.2 Recognizes how youth are different from adults in how they learn; skill level; behaviors and individual needs.			
1.3 Aware of the impact transitions can have on youth development.			
1.4 Recognizes cultural, social and environmental factors that may affect the development and behavior of youth.			
1.5 Recognizes that youth learn and develop through experience.			
1.6 Identifies developmental milestones of youth ages kindergarten through adolescence.			
1.7 Responds to the individual needs of each youth, including those with special needs.			
1.8 Describes how youth learn and communicate with peers and adults.			
1.9 Identifies the various ways in which youth learn and adapts the learning environment to meet individual needs of youth.			
1.10 Recognizes and accepts individual differences, temperaments and personalities of youth.			
1.11 Models a respectful and positive relationship with each individual in the program.			
1.12 Monitor development, behaviors and stress levels with youth in the program.			
1.13 Create positive relationships with the families of youth.			
LEVEL 2			
2.1 Implements activities that foster the physical, cognitive, social and emotional development of youth.			
2.2 Applies and integrates current youth development research and best practices into the program.			
2.3 Creates opportunities in the program for smooth transition from home to the program; activity to activity; and event to event.			

Skill Area: Child Growth and Development	0	1	2
2.4 Demonstrates sensitivity to various cultural values, traditions and expectations.			
2.5 Encourages youth to perceive life experiences as opportunities for growth and the development of resiliency.			
2.6 Observes and documents specific growth and development characteristics.			
2.7 Plans and implements program events for youth of all ability levels providing a learning environment that is responsive to all individuals			
2.8 Provides opportunities for youth to learn effective ways to communicate needs, behaviors, skills, and knowledge to adults.			
2.9 Conducts observations and documents unique learning styles and interprets information to support effective environmental design.			
2.10 Supports youth in developing an understanding of their role as an individual and as a member of a group.			
2.11 Provide professional development opportunities for staff to integrate current research, best practices and effective communication in the youth program.			
2.12 Recognizes and intervenes when youth show signs of physical or behavioral changes that may indicate stress, illness or mental health issues.			
2.13 Engages families as partners in the care and education of youth.			
Level 3			
3.1 Observes and evaluates physical, social, emotional and cognitive development and adjusts activities to meet the individual needs of youth.			
3.2 Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies theories and research on youth development in the environment.			
3.3 Involves youth, leaders and families in plans for effective transitions and self-regulation.			
3.4. Creates a learning environment that supports the uniqueness of each individual and integrates cultural traditions in the program.			
3.5 Creates a learning environment that is age appropriate with opportunities and resources that support the expression of unique learning styles.			
3.6 Communicates observations and developmental changes with administrators, staff and families.			
3.7 Observes, documents and adapts the program for inclusive practices.			
3.8 Observes, documents and adapts the program for inclusive practices.			
Skill Area: Child Growth and Development	0	1	2
3.9 Articulates and responds effectively to various personality and learning styles of youth.			
3.10 Provides resources and opportunities for coaching and mentoring.			
3.11 Applies research, best practices and effective communication techniques in daily contact with youth in the program.			
3.12 Provides resources and designs appropriate intervention strategies with youth who may be at risk and their family.			
3.13 Provide resources, support and coaching for families of youth involved in the program.			

School-Age and Youth Development Core Competency Self Assessment Worksheet

A. Child Growth and Development

Level 1	Column A **Importance for Current Job** Low Average High	Column B **Current Competency Level** Low Average High	Column C **Best Ways to Strengthen Competency** Experience Training Supervision Coaching
1.1 Identifies and describes the stages of youth development (physical, cognitive, social and emotional).	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3 4
1.2 Recognizes how youth are different from adults in how they learn; skill level; behaviors and individual needs.	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3 4
1.3 Aware of the impact transitions can have on youth development.	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3 4
1.4 Recognizes cultural, social and environmental factors that may affect the development and behavior of youth.	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3 4
1.5 Recognizes that youth learn and develop through experience.	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3 4
1.6 Identifies developmental milestones of youth ages kindergarten through adolescence.	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3 4
	Importance for Current Job Low Average High	**Current Competency Level** Low Average High	**Best Ways to Strengthen Competency** Experience Training Supervision Coaching
1.7 Responds to the individual needs of each youth, including those with special needs.	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3 4
1.8 Describes how youth learn and communicate with peers and adults.	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3 4

1.9 Identifies the various ways in which youth learn and adapts the learning environment to meet individual needs of youth.	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3 4
1.10 Recognizes and accepts individual differences, temperaments and personalities of youth.	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3 4
1.11 Models a respectful and positive relationship with each individual in the program.	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3 4
1.12 Monitor development, behaviors and stress levels with youth in the program.	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3 4
1.13 Create positive relationships with the families of youth.	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3 4

Level 2	Importance for Current Job			Current Competency Level			Best Ways to Strengthen Competency			
	Low	Average	High	Low	Average	High	Experience	Training	Supervision	Coaching
2.1 Implements activities that foster the physical, cognitive, social and emotional development of youth.	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
2.2 Applies and integrates current youth development research and best practices into the program.	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
2.3 Creates opportunities in the program for smooth transition from home to the program; activity to activity; and event to event.	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
2.4 Demonstrates sensitivity to various cultural values, traditions and expectations.	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
2.5 Encourages youth to perceive life experiences as opportunities for growth and the development of resiliency.	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
2.6 Observes and documents specific growth and development characteristics.	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	4

	Importance for Current Job			Current Competency Level			Best Ways to Strengthen Competency			
	Low	Average	High	Low	Average	High	Experience	Training	Supervision	Coaching
2.7 Plans and implements program events for youth of all ability levels providing a learning environment that is responsive to all individuals	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
2.8 Provides opportunities for youth to learn effective ways to communicate needs, behaviors, skills, and knowledge to adults.	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
2.9 Conducts observations and documents unique learning styles and interprets information to support effective environmental design.	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
2.10 Supports youth in developing an understanding of their role as an individual and as a member of a group.	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
2.11 Provide professional development opportunities for staff to integrate current research, best practices and effective communication in the youth program.	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	4

	Importance for Current Job			Current Competency Level			Best Ways to Strengthen Competency			
	Low	Average	High	Low	Average	High	Experience	Training	Supervision	Coaching
2.12 Recognizes and intervenes when youth show signs of physical or behavioral changes that may indicate stress, illness or mental health issues.	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
2.13 Engages families as partners in the care and education of youth.	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
Level 3										
3.1 Observes and evaluates physical, social, emotional and cognitive development and adjusts activities to meet the individual needs of youth.	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
3.2 Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies theories and research on youth development in the environment.	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
3.3 Involves youth, leaders and families in plans for effective transitions and self-regulation.	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	4

	Importance for Current Job			Current Competency Level			Best Ways to Strengthen Competency			
	Low	Average	High	Low	Average	High	Experience	Training	Supervision	Coaching
3.4. Creates a learning environment that supports the uniqueness of each individual and integrates cultural traditions in the program.	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
3.5 Creates a learning environment that is age appropriate with opportunities and resources that support the expression of unique learning styles.	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
3.6 Communicates observations and developmental changes with administrators, staff and families.	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
3.7 Observes, documents and adapts the program for inclusive practices.	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
3.8 Observes, documents and adapts the program for inclusive practices.	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
3.9 Articulates and responds effectively to various personality and learning styles of youth.	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
3.10 Provides resources and opportunities for coaching and mentoring.	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
	Importance for Current Job			**Current Competency Level**			**Best Ways to Strengthen Competency**			
	Low	Average	High	Low	Average	High	Experience	Training	Supervision	Coaching
3.11 Applies research, best practices and effective communication techniques in daily contact with youth in the program.	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	4

3.12 Provides resources and designs appropriate intervention strategies with youth who may be at risk and their family.	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
3.13 Provide resources, support and coaching for families of youth involved in the program.	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	4

Resources

- 21st Century Community Learning Centers Non-regulatory Guidance
  http://www2.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/guidance2003.pdf

- Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services
  Title 391-Children's Services Licensing
  http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/reg_t391.aspx

- Nebraska 21st Century Community Learning Centers Evaluation Guidebook
  http://www.education.ne.gov/21stcclc/ProgramEvaluation/ProgramEvaluationHomepage.html

- Observations for Quality After School Programming developed by Lisa St Clair, Ed.D.,
  Munroe-Meyer Institute, University of Nebraska Medical Center

- Partnership for 21st Century Skills
  http://www.p21.org

- Resources and Promising Practices for 21st Century Community Learning Centers
  http://www.education.ne.gov/21stcclc/Afterschool/Research.html

- Helpful Resources for Starting an Afterschool Program
  http://www.education.ne.gov/Afterschool/Index.html

- Core Knowledge and Competencies for AfterSchool and Youth Development Professionals
  National AfterSchool Association
  http://naaweb.org/images/pdf/NAA_Final_Print.pdf

- 40 Developmental Assets; Search Institute®
  http://www.search-institute.org/assets/

- Nebraska Department of Education Academic Standards
  http://www.education.ne.gov/AcademicStandards/index.html

- US Department of Agriculture Nutrition Information
  http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/nutrition.htm

- Wagner, Tony (2008). The Global Achievement Gap: Why Even Our Best Schools Don't Teach the New Survival Skills Our Children Need—And What We Can Do About It.
  Perseus Books Publishing Group, New York.

- Alliance for a Healthier Generation
  Out-of-School Time
  https://www.healthiergeneration.org/take_action/out-of-school_time/

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