

QSM

Overview

The Quality Support Monitoring (QSM™) Tool offers after school directors, program staff, and external evaluators a simple-to-use, research-based approach to assess after school program quality. In addition, the tool provides information that can be used to make mid-program adjustments, evaluate after school program staff, assess the impact of training and support activities, and promote self-assessment. Most importantly, the QSM data serves as the foundation for a cycle of continuous program improvement.

The QSM Tool includes 50 indicators that describe program characteristics shown to relate to program quality. These indicators are presented in an order that is based on three program phases: Planning and Designing (18 indicators), Implementing and Delivering (31 indicators), and Refining and Sustaining (one indicator). Following the program quality indicators, the QSM features five professionalism indicators to assist with staff evaluation. Finally, a set of curriculum-specific quality indicators for programs using the LitART Literacy Partnership curriculum is provided. Objective criteria are included for each indicator to help users make valid and reliable ratings of after school program practices.

Typically, the evaluation team collects data QSM data through observations, surveys, interviews, and record reviews. Using these techniques, the evaluator determines the extent to which each quality indicator has been met. Program staff also use QSM indicators for staff observations and feedback, as well as self-assessment.

55 Indicators

1. Identifying Needs
2. Setting a Vision and Mission
3. Developing Goals
4. Seeking Funding and Making a Budget
5. Identifying Partners
6. Establishing a Scope of Service
7. Planning Curriculum and Learning
8. Planning Additional Services
9. Planning for Family Involvement
10. Defining a Schedule
11. Arranging Facilities
12. Planning Materials and Supplies
13. Establishing Policies and Procedures
14. Developing a Communication Plan
15. Developing a Timeline or Work Plan
16. Developing a Professional Development Plan
17. Creating a Staffing Plan
18. Developing an Evaluation Plan
19. Recruiting and Hiring Staff
20. Providing Professional Development
21. Recruiting and Enrolling Students
22. Identifying Needs of Participating Students and Families
23. Communicating and Coordinating
24. Collecting Data
25. Managing Program Activities

26. Delivering Effective Learning Experiences
27. Developing Relationships
28. Establishing Routines
29. Minimizing Transitions
30. Engaging Learners
31. Participating Actively
32. Giving Effective Instructions
33. Using Appropriate Student Groupings
34. Preparing Follow-Up Experiences
35. Organizing the Environment
36. Minimizing Disruptions
37. Questioning Effectively
38. Demonstrating Flexibility
39. Understanding Curriculum and Learning Strategies
40. Reflecting on Practices
41. Supporting Reading Development
42. Supporting Writing Development
43. Supporting Oral Language Development
44. Supporting Mathematical Development
45. Supporting Social-Emotional Development
46. Supporting Physical Development
47. Supporting Homework Completion
48. Providing Enrichment Experiences
49. Promoting Family Involvement
50. Conducting the Program Evaluation

This part of the Evaluation notebook describes the QSM indicators and descriptors. While each of the instruments includes specific instructions on how to use the instrument, it is highly recommended that the staff conducting the evaluation and data collection activities attend the QSM training session prior to using the QSM Tool and instruments.

QSM Process

The following describes the process for using the QSM Tool for program evaluation.

1. Collect data using each of the data collection tools. Review records to collect additional detail. The timing of the data collection will depend upon the program's evaluation plan.
2. Using the collected data and the site summary worksheet, rate each program site against the quality indicators. Use one set of worksheets per site.
3. Summarize all site information on the program summary worksheet. Analyze the data to determine the overall program rating.

QSM Indicators and Descriptors

Each QSM indicators has three parts: (1) general topic area; (2) program quality indicator; and (3) assessment criteria.

First, the general topic area is shown in bold lettering. For example, Identifying Needs is the first indicator. Second, the program quality indicator is written as a short statement describing the nature of high quality programs with respect to the topic area. For example, "The after school program fulfills a clearly defined need" is the program quality indicator for Identifying Needs.

Third, assessment criteria are provided to clarify the meaning and intent of the program quality indicator. These are listed in a bulleted list below the program quality indicator.

Planning and Designing Indicators

1. Identifying Needs

The after school program addresses a clearly defined need.

- Student and family needs are identified
- Program addresses community needs; program does not duplicate existing efforts

2. Setting a Vision and Mission

The after school program has a clearly defined vision, which includes statements of mission, philosophy and basic approach.

- Program has developed a mission as a public statement of what will be accomplished
- Program has articulated a philosophy that describes staff members' beliefs and values of the after school program
- Program has established a basic program approach that reflects its mission and philosophy

3. Developing Goals

The after school program has established clear goals.

- Goals reflect the program's vision, including its mission, philosophy, and basic approach
- Goals are SMART (specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic, and time-sensitive)
- Goals describe desired short-term and long-range outcomes
- Goals are understood by staff, parents, and students
- Goals are regularly referred to and reviewed by program staff for relevancy

Identify Needs and Goals

1. Identifying Needs

2. Setting a Vision and Mission

3. Developing Goals

4. Seeking Funding and Making a Budget

5. Identifying Partners

Activities and Services

- 6. Establishing a Scope of Service
- 7. Planning Curriculum and Learning
- 8. Planning Additional Services
- 9. Planning for Family Involvement

Planning and Designing Indicators

4. Seeking Funding/Making a Budget

The after school program creates a realistic budget and secures a stable source of funding.

- Budget reflects stated program priorities
- Program funding is derived from multiple sources

5. Identifying Partners

The after school program has identified key program partners.

- A diverse array of partners are involved in the after school program
- Partners contribute value to the program
- Partners are involved in program planning

6. Establishing a Scope of Services

The after school program clearly defines the level and type of services to be provided.

- Scope of services is appropriate to budget
- Scope of services is aligned with program goals
- Scope of services accounts for partner contributions
- Scope of services includes curriculum and learning experiences, and other family and student support services

7. Planning Curriculum and Learning Experiences

The after school program plans curriculum and learning experiences that promote student engagement.

- Selection of curriculum is based on established quality criteria
- Learning experiences are customized to the needs of program participants

Planning and Designing Indicators

8. Planning Additional Services

The after school program clearly outlines what supplemental student and family services will be provided.

- Additional services meet identified participant needs
- Additional services account for partner contributions

9. Planning for Family Involvement

The after school program develops a plan for the meaningful involvement of families in the program.

- The plan responds to identified family needs and barriers to family involvement
- The plan suggests a diverse array of family involvement activities, including ways families can support their children’s learning at home
- The plan includes strategies for communicating with families

10. Defining a Schedule

The after school program follows a schedule that promotes student success.

- Schedule is sensible based on program goals, community needs, and other factors
- Schedule includes a varied array of learning experiences
- Schedule allows for “high-dosage” services

Logistics

10. Defining a Schedule

11. Arranging Facilities

12. Planning Materials and Supplies

13. Establishing Policies and Procedures

Planning and Designing Indicators

11. Arranging Facilities

The after school program identifies and optimizes a facility to meet its needs.

- Facilities are optimized to effectively operate the after school program
- The program has access to technology, the gymnasium, library, and other school services
- Staff can display or post student work, program announcements, and information for parents
- Program use of facilities coordinates with other uses
- Facilities and activities accommodate and are accessible to students who wish to participate

12. Selecting Materials and Supplies

The after school program selects high-quality materials and supplies.

- Materials and supplies support program effectiveness
- Purchased materials and supplies have a direct impact on student learning
- Materials and supplies are borrowed, shared, and/or ordered at a discount when possible to minimize cost

13. Establishing Policies and Procedures

The after school program has effective policies and procedures.

- Program has a Policies and Procedures Manual that addresses recurring issues in key areas, such as health, safety, and legal matters, and where staff flexibility may result in reduced program quality
- The Policies and Procedures Manual is modified to include new policies and procedures as needed
- Staff know and follow policies and procedures

Planning and Designing Indicators

14. Developing a Communication Plan

The after school program has an effective plan for communication.

- The program has a plan for communicating with students' families
- The program has a plan for communicating with the regular school program and/or other host facility
- The program has a plan for communicating with collaborative partners
- The program has a plan for communicating with the funding agency
- There is a plan for communication among after school program staff

15. Developing a Timeline or Work Plan

The after school program maintains a realistic project timeline and work plan.

- Project timeline or work plan reflects local program situation and activities
- Program staff follow the timeline or work plan, modifying it as needed

16. Developing a Training Plan

The after school program develops a comprehensive training plan

- Training is relevant to the after school setting
- Training combines presentations with activities, such as small group or hands-on experiences
- Training includes nontraditional strategies, such as self-assessments, peer collaboration, observations, facilitated problem solving sessions, site visits and demonstrations
- Training addresses staff issues and questions
- Staff provide feedback on the strengths of trainings and areas for improvement

Supplemental Plans

14. Developing a Communication Plan

15. Developing a Timeline or Work Plan

16. Developing a Professional Development Plan

17. Creating a Staffing Plan

18. Developing an Evaluation Plan

Planning and Designing Indicators

17. Creating a Staffing Plan

The after school program has created a thoughtful staffing plan.

- The staffing plan meets program needs for implementation of the program delivery model
- The staffing plan reflects budget priorities and constraints
- The staffing plan clearly describes the different staff roles and responsibilities
- Job descriptions are used in hiring and performance reviews

18. Developing an Evaluation Plan

The after school program has a well-developed evaluation plan.

- The evaluation plan includes evaluation questions that focus on program implementation and outcomes
- The evaluation plan includes a description of data collection activities
- The evaluation plan designates who is responsible for evaluation activities and when these activities will be completed
- The evaluation plan describes how data will be managed, analyzed, and reported
- The evaluation plan supports a cycle of continuous improvement