

Youth Development Checklist



Directions: Read the following list of youth development principles and practices and then indicate how well you think your program is addressing each one. When you have finished, review your checkmarks to determine the areas that appear strong and the areas that could be improved. This checklist can be completed and reviewed individually or discussed as a group.

Youth Development Checklist

	Yes	In Process	No
Warm and Welcoming Environment			
Procedures are in place to ensure young people’s safety (e.g., emergencies, security).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adult supervision is provided at all times.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency and contact information is available for all youth.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Healthy snacks are offered daily.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The program’s hours of operation are based on families’ schedules.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cultural and linguistic differences are respected.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The program or activity has a name that youth can identify.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth are respected for their individuality.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programs are available for all youth who want to participate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support for Positive Behavior			
Youth understand the expectations of the program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff members regularly offer sincere praise with specific comments and feedback for positive behavior.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth participate in setting program or activity rules.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rules are clear, consistent, and fair.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rules address cooperating, sharing, caring for materials, participation, behavior strategies, and conflict resolution.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	In Process	No
Youth and staff members define and implement strategies for resolving conflicts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When conflicts arise, they are minimized and resolved quickly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Program expectations are communicated to families regularly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supportive Relationships and Opportunities to Belong			
Staff members engage youth and consistently call each person by his or her name.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff members intentionally build and promote relationships characterized by warmth, respect, honesty, and caring.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff members respond to youth with respect, acceptance, and appreciation; they listen to what youth have to say.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff members are cooperative and respectful; they model positive adult relationships.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The program offers a mix of one-on-one interactions and small- and large-group activities on a weekly basis.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth are involved in the community, and community members are involved in the program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities allow all youth to interact in a variety of ways.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programs meaningfully involve families, schools, and the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participation for long periods of time is encouraged.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff members emphasize belonging and membership.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities for Youth Choice, Decision-Making, Leadership, and Reflection			
Youth are given choices of a wide variety of activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth are given choices within activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth have authentic leadership opportunities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth are encouraged to take on meaningful challenges.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth can articulate their goals and their progress toward achieving those goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth and staff members are given frequent opportunities to reflect on activities and learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth have opportunities to showcase their work, learning, growth, and development.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Opportunities for Learning and Skill Development			
Activities build on the strengths of youth in the program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	In Process	No
Activities are age/development appropriate and align with the styles, abilities, and interests of youth in the program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities reflect the local context/culture of the program and participants.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities intentionally build on school day learning and expand learning opportunities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities are targeted at skill development.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities are active and employ hands-on approaches to learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities promote basic skills, higher order thinking, exploration, and practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coaching and feedback strategies are implemented to build skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Checklist Results

Were you surprised by your checklist results? What areas appear strong? What areas could use improvement?

Source: American Institutes for Research. (2014). *Beyond the bell: A toolkit for creating effective afterschool and expanded learning programs* (4th ed.). Washington, D.C.: Author.