



Code of Ethics

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DRAFT NATIONAL AFTERSCHOOL ASSOCIATION DISTRIBUTION FOR PEER REVIEW ONLY

National Afterschool Association Code of Ethics

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When developing this Code of Ethics, both the Ohio and national teams reviewed several Code of Ethics from child serving organizations as well as national membership organizations. A special thanks to the National Association for the Education of Young Children, Concordia University, St Paul, Minnesota, The National Staff Development Counsel and the National Recreation and Parks Association for their progressive work that served as a reference and inspiration.

NAA has taken reasonable measures to develop the Code in a fair, reasonable, open, unbiased, and objective manner, based on currently available data. However, further research or developments may change the current state of knowledge. Neither NAA nor its officers, directors, members, employees, or agents will be liable for any loss, damage, or claim with respect to any liabilities, including direct, special, indirect, or consequential damages incurred in connection with the Code or reliance on the information presented.

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Introduction

The National Afterschool Association (NAA) has provided leadership in fostering the expansion and inclusion of quality afterschool programming across the nation. NAA has stressed the value of afterschool programming for the individual positive growth and development of children ages 5-18. Its members are dedicated to the common cause of assuring that all children and youth ages 5-18, regardless of abilities, have the opportunity to find accessible, quality afterschool programming that meets the positive growth and development needs of the individual child and the family. Members of NAA are encouraged to support the efforts of the association and profession by supporting state affiliate and national activities and participating in continuing education opportunities, certification, and accreditation.

The association has consistently affirmed the importance of well-informed and professionally trained personnel to continually improve the implementation of afterschool programs.

The purpose of the NAA Code of Ethics is to raise awareness of our personal commitment to ethical conduct as we carry out our professional responsibilities, conforming to accepted professional standards of conduct. Our Code of Ethics adheres to the highest standards of integrity and honesty in all public and personal activities to inspire public confidence and trust in the afterschool profession.

This document outlines personal and professional excellence and encourages the professional development of those working in the afterschool field. The highest standards of professional competence, fairness, impartiality, efficiency, effectiveness, and fiscal responsibility are integrated within the sections while avoiding any activity that is in conflict with the performance of job responsibilities.

Above all we will bring **NO harm** to any child. We **will NOT** participate in practices that discriminate against any child by denying benefits, giving special advantages or excluding from program activities on the basis of their race, ethnicity, religion, sex, national origin, language, ability, or the status, behavior, or beliefs of their families.

Preamble

Afterschool professionals provide programming in a variety of settings that offer a wide range of activities and programming for children ages 5- 18. Those who provide services to the afterschool child and youth operate on a central core of beliefs that each child needs to be treated as an individual and deserves caring professionals who provide a safe, nurturing environment. These environments are planned with the child in mind and encourage independence, exploration, a feeling of self-worth and provide activities and events that create opportunities for social-emotional growth, recreational and educational learning. The afterschool professional needs to work in the best interest of the child.

Conceptual Framework

The afterschool code of ethics sets forth a set of professional responsibilities that focus on four sections (1) children, (2) families, (3) colleagues, and (4) community and society. Each section outlines the responsibilities the afterschool professional strives for in building the relationships mentioned above. Following the set of principles outlined in this document are meant to establish a framework that outlines the conduct of the afterschool professional; while using the practices to provide guidance when ethical dilemmas occur. While this document provides a framework and guidance for addressing ethical dilemmas, it is understood that there may be times when the afterschool professional may need to combine the material in this document with sound professional judgment.

Each section outlines the core responsibilities of the afterschool professional and practices for a given relationship. This approach is meant to strengthen and affirm our commitment to the core values of the field of afterschool. Afterschool Professionals that face ethical dilemmas are encouraged to use this Code of Ethics as a guide to resolve conflicts with the best interest of the child in mind while maintaining the core values outlined in this document.

Key Definitions

Afterschool Programming is defined as any organized program provided for children and youth ages 5-18 during a time when they are not in school.

Afterschool Professionals are those individuals who work in any organized program for children and youth ages 5-18 during a time when they are not in school

Core values are ethical behaviors that are rooted in the history of our field and grounded in research and best practices in afterschool programming.

Ethics is defined as the responsibility to intentionally choose what is right, moral and just in practice and principle.

Family includes all persons whom are responsible for and involved with the child/youth and who the child/youth identifies as having significant impact in their lives..

Principles are fundamental codes of conduct.

Practice is systematically putting the principles into action in afterschool programming by the afterschool professional.

Basic Assumptions

Assumption I – Ethical dilemmas *will occur*.

Assumption II - The manner in which ethical situations are handled directly impacts the individuals involved.

Assumption III – Real life ethical dilemmas are rarely easy. Often the best ethical course of action to take is not obvious. One important value may contradict another. It is our professional responsibility to work with those involved to find the most ethical action to take.

The NAA Code of Ethics sets standards of conduct for the afterschool professional. It was designed as a resource to assist the afterschool professional in understanding the ethical responsibilities inherent in providing afterschool programs for children ages 5-18. The following document has two sections that can be used separately or together. The first document, Statements of Ethical Conduct for Afterschool Professionals is a brief overview expressed in broad statements to guide sound, ethical decision making. These statements provided a framework for the creation of the second document, the NAA Code of Ethics. The NAA Code of Ethics is divided into four sections that outline the ethical responsibilities the afterschool professional has towards children, families, colleagues, and the community. The NAA Code of Ethics is intended to define the principles and practices that guide ethical decision making strategies of afterschool professionals to ensure safe, nurturing environments and positive relationships for children and youth.

Statement of Ethical Conduct for Afterschool Professionals

- Demonstrate the highest standard of individual conduct, personal accountability, trustworthiness, fairness, consideration of the rights of others and the highest principles of good business practices and relationships.
- Understand that each individual (child/youth, family member, colleague, volunteer and community member) is a unique and valuable asset to the afterschool community
- Design our environments and activities based on the knowledge of how children grow and develop.
- Develop programs that strive to build a strong community among children where play is maximized, children and youth are empowered, self esteem and maturity is guided and self discipline is taught and encouraged.
- Provide opportunities that enhance individual uniqueness, positive choice, critical thinking, creativity, curiosity, and a love of learning.
- Appreciate, support, encourage and respect close ties between the child and family.
- Recognize that understanding children is best achieved when supported in the context of family, culture, community and society.
- Understand children and adults achieve their full potential when relationships are based on trust, respect and acceptance
- Communicate openly and clearly with the afterschool community, staff, children, youth, families, hosts, employees and other professionals.
- Uphold basic principals of trust, honesty, integrity, and respect in all professional and business practices.
- Serve as an advocate for children, their families and their teachers in the local community and society.
- Recognize how personal values, opinions and biases can affect professional judgment.
- Be open to new ideas and be willing to learn from the suggestions of others.
- Respect colleagues in afterschool programming and support them in maintaining the NAA Code of Ethics.
- Honor the ideals and principles of the NAA Code of Ethics.

Code of Ethics for the Afterschool Professional

Section I: Ethical Responsibilities to Children and Youth

The school age years are a period of rapid growth and exploration for all children, each child grow and develop at his or her own unique, individualized pace. It is the responsibility of afterschool programs to provide a safe, nurturing and enriching environment where all children can develop their cognitive, physical, emotional, and social competencies to the fullest extent possible.

We dedicate ourselves to these principles-

- P-1.1 Expand our knowledge of children and youth ages 5-18 by staying current with the knowledge related to afterschool programming and demonstrate this knowledge within the afterschool program..
- P-1.2. Allow children/youth to participate in planning the environment and activities that assist in individual growth in social, emotional, physical and cognitive development.
- P-1.3 Appreciate and honor the uniqueness and potential of each child and youth.
- P- 1.4 Support and respect the child's and their families race, ethnicity, gender, ability, religion and socioeconomic status.
- P-1.5 Ensure that each child has opportunities to build positive relationships based on trust, honesty and respect.
- P-1.6 Ensure that each child will have access to the most appropriate programs and resources in the most inclusive environment possible.
- P-1.7 Protect the safety, health and nutrition of each child within the program.
- P 1.8 Ensure that confidentiality is maintained unless the well being of a child is in question.

We will support these principles by implementing these practices:

1. Plan environments that foster the social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs of all children/youth while allowing for independence and creativity by creating a playful, friendly, empowering program space that celebrates the gifts and talents of the children/youth.
2. Provide a wide variety of age and developmentally appropriate activities and interactions to encourage a love of learning through curiosity.
3. Provide a structure using guidelines and procedures that clearly communicate boundaries and expectations through the use of positive guidance methods encouraging and supporting cooperative solutions.
4. Create a balance within the daily activities that is responsive to the children's abilities, interest, talents, cultures, feelings and temperament.
5. Maintain confidentiality of information related to the child unless the child is at risk, well being is at question or when it is permissible to release the information to agencies or individuals. When necessary accurate information will be released to the appropriate individual or agency
6. Report all instances of all forms of suspected child abuse as outlined by the laws of the individual state/municipality.
7. Advocate for policies, procedures and laws that promote quality afterschool programming.
8. Establish child centered practices that will support the development of skills of self-discipline and self control.
9. Ensure that the children's ideas, interests and needs guide the curriculum
10. Allow curriculum and staff to support children/youth as they grow and evolve in the program by encouraging their role and purpose to change as they mature
11. Provide opportunities for children to become socially and emotionally competent..

Section II: Ethical Responsibilities to Families

Families are the primary influence in the lives of children. As afterschool professionals we have a responsibility to work in partnership with family members. Building relationships through these partnerships will support the growth and development of each child/youth. Recognizing that all children grow and develop within the context of their family, the community and their culture will allow for opportunities for success for each child by enhancing the child's development.

We dedicate ourselves to these principles:

- P-2.1 Develop positive relationships with the families served that is based on mutual trust.
- P-2.2 Appreciate, accept and respect each family's uniqueness of culture, language, customs, beliefs, and ethnicity.
- P-2.3 Recognize the parent's right to make decisions for their children and respect different childrearing value systems.
- P-2.4 Share information with families that help them to understand the child's growth and the value of developmentally appropriate afterschool programming.
- P-2.5 Provide opportunities for parents to interact with program staff, other families and providing information about community resources and professional services to improve their understanding of their children and improve their skills as parents.

We will support these principles by implementing these practices:

1. Welcome all families into your afterschool programming.
2. Communicate to families the program philosophy, policies, procedures and personnel qualifications.
3. Focus on the strengths and assets of each family unit by encouraging family involvement in our programs.
4. Involve families in significant decisions affecting their child(ren).
5. Provide community resources to benefit families.
6. Communicate with families about accidents involving their child(ren), of risks such as exposures to contagious diseases that may result in infection, and occurrences that might result in emotional stress.
7. Communicate with integrity, honesty and respect to build a trusting, positive relationship with families.
8. Develop written policies for the protection of confidentiality and the disclosure of children's records.
9. Maintain confidentiality of information related to the child unless the child is at risk, well being is at question or when it may be permissible to release the information to agencies or individuals. When necessary, information will be released to the appropriate individual or agency.
10. Help family members in conflict by working openly, sharing our observations of the child, and helping all parties involved make informed decisions. Refrain from becoming an advocate for one party, while working within any existing legal order

Section III: Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues

Based on our core values of honesty, integrity, trust and respect, our primary responsibility is to create a caring cooperative workplace. Within this environment professional satisfaction is valued, human diversity is respected, and positive relationships are modeled. The same attitudes and behaviors that support a child's growth and development are equally as important with co-workers, employers, and employees. Although it is understood that throughout a career in the afterschool field professionals may have different roles and responsibilities, the commitment to ethical conduct remains constant. This code is designed to outline the responsibilities of the afterschool professionals to their Co-worker, Employee and Employer.

We dedicate ourselves to these principles:

- P-3.1 Establish and maintain relationships based on honesty, respect, integrity, trust, and cooperation with other afterschool professionals.
- P-3.2 Implement high quality services that carry out the mission of the program.
- P-3.3 Assist the program in providing the highest quality of programming and services for the children and their families through ongoing program evaluation, information sharing and identified program improvement.
- P-3.4 Advance success of all employees through evaluation, mentoring and appropriate meaningful professional growth opportunities.
- P-3.5 Resolve issues of disagreement in a professional manner
- P3.6 Maintain a stable workforce for those that work on behalf of children and youth, through equitable compensation (salary, benefits, working conditions, and schedules)
- P-3.7 Work collaboratively and cooperatively with co-workers.
- P-3.8 Support and encourage co-workers and colleagues in meeting individual needs for professional growth and development
- P-3.9 Promote policies, procedures and working conditions that encourage mutual respect, competence, well being and positive relationships among staff members.
- P-3.10 Maintain a professional demeanor.
- P-3.11 Recognize the importance of professionalism in communication and behavior.

We will support these principles by implementing these practices:

1. Establish a fair, respectful and non-threatening evaluation process that is based on relevant employee performance as it relates to the work responsibilities for children, youth and program.
2. Develop and maintain comprehensive written personnel policies and procedures. These policies shall be reviewed by and made available to all staff members.
3. Address the need for programmatic or policy changes through appropriate and established procedures.
4. Speak and act on behalf of the organization only when authorized.
5. Take appropriate action in the event of a violation of the laws and regulations designed to protect children and youth in your community.
6. Hiring and promotions will be based solely on a person's record of accomplishment and ability to carry out the responsibilities of the position. Participation in discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, national origin, culture, disability, or sexual preference is strictly forbidden.
7. Address issues of concern or disagreement with co-workers in a dignified, honest and respectful manner.
8. Share information and resources to support quality afterschool programming.
9. Provide a workplace that is safe, nurturing and emotionally supportive.

Section IV: Ethical Responsibilities to Community and Society

Our responsibility to the community is to provide high quality programming, staffed with educated and responsive individuals who have an understanding of the abilities and developmental needs of children and youth. Our responsibility to society is to encourage and support the socialization of the children and youth by providing opportunities to develop leadership and communication skills that will enable them to get their needs met in a socially acceptable way. In addition, hiring staff that understand the growth and development and meet the needs of the children/youth, the afterschool program and the organization is intentional to maintain quality service for the children and families within the community. Finally, our responsibility extends to engaging in, and facilitating collaborations and cooperative agreements that will enhance programming, educate others about the need and benefits of afterschool programming and advocate for the welfare and protection of all children/youth

We dedicate ourselves to these principles:

- P-4.1 Provide the community with high-quality (age and individually appropriate, culturally and socially sensitive) afterschool programming.
- P-4.2 Provide access to afterschool programming that promotes the well-being of every child and youth by facilitating positive development through age and developmentally appropriate practices.
- P-4.3 Work cooperatively with child serving agencies and organizations to share the responsibility for the care and education of children, and become a collective voice for the rights and welfare of all children/youth.
- P- 4.4 Develop positive relationships that work collaboratively to maximize resources and programming available to children and youth.
- P-4.5 Educate and inform others as to the vital role of afterschool programming in the lives of children and the community at large.
- P-4.6 Support the development of policies and laws that promote the well being of children, youth and families.
- P-4.7 Further the professional development of the field of afterschool programming.
- P-4.8 Promote the afterschool field's commitment to realizing its core values as reflected in this Code.

We will support these principles by implementing these practices:

1. Provide professional and accessible afterschool programming that will enhance the community's ability to raise and support healthy children.
2. Establish and/or participate in community organizations that further the development of afterschool programming and professionals.
3. Recommend for employment only those who are competent and qualified
4. Learn how the legislative process works in order to advocate for children, youth, and families.
5. Create an learning environment that encourages facilitates and supports ongoing professional development.
6. Become familiar with and implement laws and regulations within your state that serve to protect the children and youth in our program.
7. Create interpersonal and public opportunities to support programs that are advancing and developing children and the afterschool field. Take responsibility to observe, monitor and evaluate programs that fall short of this mission.

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