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Indiana Afterschool Standards and Specialty Standards

A Guide for High-Quality Programs Serving Youth in Out-of-School Time

Social & Cognitive Well-Being

INDIANA Afterschool NETWORK

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The following list of contributors were integral to the development of these standards and we extend our sincere appreciation.

Sophie Barnes, Harvard Graduate School of Education, EASEL Lab

Dr. Stephanie Jones, Harvard Graduate School of Education, EASEL Lab

The Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning, a division of the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration

Indiana Department of Education

Indiana Afterschool Network Provider Council

Allyson White

Amos Norman

Angie Liston

Beth Bowling

Binti Shah

Chantell Davis

Christy Berger

Cosette Crist

Debbie Gries

Dre Knox

Emily Dills

Gabriel Clark

Irene Szakonyi

Israel Shasanmi

Javier Barrera Cervantes

Katie Lehman

Krystal Robinson

Lian Sang

Tara Bishop

Tyler Regnier

IN Afterschool Standards and Specialty Standards

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Indiana Afterschool Standards is to outline the path and steps that lead to high-quality youth programs that take place outside the school day. The afterschool standards are based on national research and best practices in the youth development and education fields.

The IN Afterschool Standards and Specialty Standards are voluntary statewide standards that may serve as:

- A framework of clear expectations for all stakeholders.
- A guide to inform statewide decision-making, for example, professional development focus areas, funding support, and advocacy.
- A guide for program providers to assess their own program site and organizations to help determine what they are doing well and what needs improvement.
- A guide for families and youth to identify high-quality programming.
- A guide for school principals and district superintendents to reinforce and advance educational priorities.

STRUCTURE

1. Category

- Priority areas that help organize all standards
- Answers: What topics are needed for assessing program quality?

2. Standards

- Broad researched-based best practices in high-quality out-of-school programs
- Answers: What do we need to do?

3. Indicators

- Specific and detailed descriptions of the standard or best practice in high-quality out-of-school programs
- Answers: How do we do that?

4. Standards-based Practices

- Evidence that can be observed in a high-quality out-of-school program
- Answers: What does it look, sound, and feel like?

The Rating Scale

The Indiana Quality Program Self-Assessment Tool uses the following rating scale to help you and your team assess the degree to which each quality indicator is evident in the program. The definitions outlined below are to help guide the reviewers' understanding of the numeric ratings.

4 = Excellent/ Exceeds Standard

EXCEEDS STANDARD means that the program is exceptional or outstanding in this area because it implements nearly all or all of the Standards-Based Practices for this indicator. The relevant Standards-Based Practices are demonstrated in clearly observable ways.

3 = Good/Meets Standards

MEETS STANDARD means that the program executes many of the Standards-Based Practices. The rater can generate examples of how and when the program executes these specific practices. This is an area the program executes well.

2 = Some Progress Made/Approaching Standard

APPROACHING STANDARD means that the program is working toward executing Standards-Based Practices, but is currently only implementing a few of them. The program may benefit from targeted assistance in order to implement more of the Standards-Based Practices.

1 = Must Address and Improve/Standard Not Met

STANDARD NOT MET means that the program is not currently implementing any of the Standards-Based Practices and requires significant support in this area. There is a need for significant support to get on track to address this indicator.

NA = Don't Know/Not Applicable

This rating indicates that the program is not familiar enough with this indicator to rate performance or is just not sure how to rate it at this time. This rating could also mean that the indicator simply does not apply to the site or program.

PURPOSE

Indiana Quality Program Self-Assessment (INQPSA) is an online strengths-based self-assessment tool that enables youth programs to rate their performance based on the Indiana Afterschool Standards and Specialty Standards.

FUNCTION

- Choose which standards you want to assess.
- Rate how well your program meets each standard.
- Start the assessment and complete over time.
- Use online or print stakeholder surveys.
- Generate automated reports for organization and/or program site(s).
- Generate an automated action plan.
- Track your program results over time and compare progress.

BENEFITS

The INQPSA can help OST programs:

1. Identify and understand the factors that support or inhibit top performance.
2. Use data to drive decisions.
3. Take action and make positive changes.
4. Continue to grow, learn, and improve.
5. Maximize positive impact for staff, youth, families, and community partners.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Online System Functionality

- 2 Self-Assessments
  - Indiana Afterschool Standards
  - Specialty Standards
    - College & Career Readiness
    - Healthy Eating and Physical Activity
    - STEM
    - Literacy
    - Summer Learning
    - Family Engagement
    - Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
    - Social & Cognitive Well-Being
- 4 Stakeholder Surveys and more to come!
  - Family, Youth, Community Partner, and Staff
- Multiple Automated Reports
  - Program Site & Organization Aggregate
  - Comparison Reports
- Program Quality Improvement Action Plan

RECOGNITION OF PLEDGE TO QUALITY

Each program site and/or organization that successfully completes the Indiana Quality Program Self-Assessment (INQPSA) will receive:

1. Indiana Afterschool Quality Leader Digital Badge
2. Specialty Standards Badges, as applicable, which serve to recognize some learning or accomplishment. This is not a credential—it is a symbol of accomplishment that can be used for communicating or marketing quality efforts. These special badges communicate that your program/organization has aligned your practices and programs to the IN Afterschool Standards or Specialty Standards.

PLEDGE TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

At the core of high-quality programs is the ability to effectively serve diverse children and youth. As such, the Indiana Quality Program Self-Assessment (INQPSA) includes elements to assess and help programs reflect on their ability to create environments where all children/youth and families feel valued and welcomed. For a deeper dive into assessing diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in your program, please refer to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Specialty Standards.

TO GET STARTED: https://myian.indianaafterschool.org

RATIONALE FOR OST SOCIAL & COGNITIVE WELL-BEING STANDARDS

Social and cognitive well-being (SCWB) skills help children and youth identify and express emotions, direct their thoughts, feelings, and actions in service of goals, interact and communicate effectively with peers and adults, and cultivate positive relationships. These skills and others are important to many areas of development, including learning, health, and well-being (Jagers et al., 2019; Jones & Kahn, 2017; Moffitt et al., 2011).

SCWB Standards for Indiana: Introducing the Framework:

The framework underlying Indiana's OST SCWB Standards includes three domains of skills (social, cognitive, emotional) as well as Mindsets. These domains come out of conversations with OST staff and directors in Indiana, a careful analysis of both research and practice, and a review of the literature that links SCWB skills to positive child outcomes (Jones & Bouffard, 2012). We briefly define the domains below:

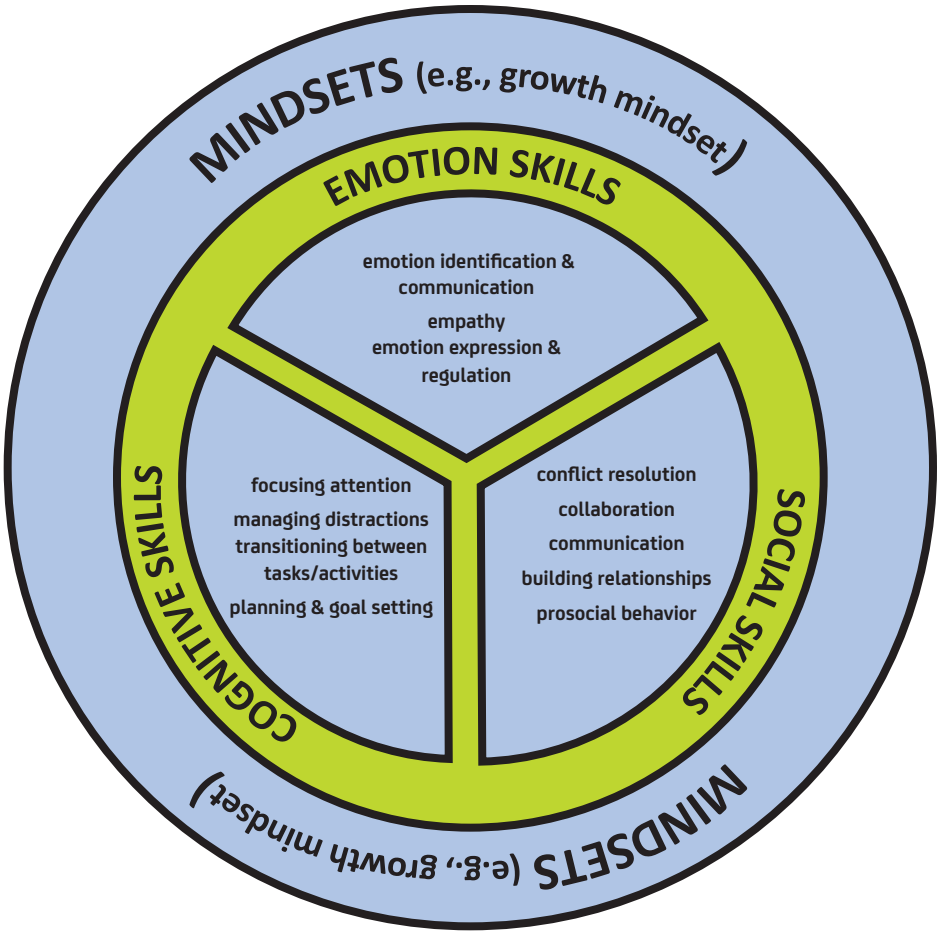
Social Skills: Social skills support children and youth to accurately interpret other people's behavior, navigate social situations, and interact positively with peers and adults. Skills in this domain are required to communicate effectively, work collaboratively, solve social problems, build positive relationships, and coexist peacefully with others. Importantly, social skills build on emotional knowledge and processes; children must learn to recognize, express, and regulate their emotions before they can be expected to interact with others who are engaged in the same set of processes.

Cognitive Skills: In the most general sense, cognitive skills direct behavior toward the attainment of a goal. Children use cognitive skills whenever faced with tasks that require resisting distractions and concentrating, inhibiting dominant or familiar responses in favor of a more appropriate one (e.g., raise their hand rather than blurt out the answer), switching between tasks, planning, problem solving, and making conscious choices among alternatives (Best & Miller, 2010; Center on the Developing Child, 2011; Jones et al., 2016). Cognitive skills are foundational for the emotion and social skill areas described below. For example, children and youth must deploy cognitive skills to stop and think before acting in emotionally charged situations, which is in turn necessary for maintaining positive relationships and resolving conflicts peacefully.

Emotion Skills: Emotion skills help children recognize, express, and control their emotions as well as understand and empathize with others. Skills in this domain allow children to recognize how different situations make them feel, process and address those feelings in healthy and prosocial ways, and consequently gain control over their behavioral responses in emotionally charged situations. They also enable children to understand how different situations make others feel and respond accordingly. Consequently, emotion skills are often fundamental to positive social interactions and critical to building relationships with peers and adults; without the ability to recognize and regulate one's emotions or engage in empathy and perspective-taking, it becomes very difficult to interact positively with others.

Mindsets: Mindsets refer to the ways children and youth view and understand themselves and the world around them. These views influence how children and youth interpret and respond to events and interactions throughout their day and how they perceive themselves and their abilities, such as their ideas about who they are and their ability to learn and grow (i.e., growth mindset). Children and youth develop mindsets through the interactions, norms, supports, and experiences in their environments.

Mindsets surround the social, cognitive, and emotion skill domains because they can guide a person's behavior and actions based on the knowledge, skills, and dispositions they have. Mindsets impact how young people see themselves, others, and their own circumstances as well as influence how they interpret and approach challenges. For example, when a child feels good about themselves, sure of their place in the world, and confident in their ability to learn, grow, and overcome obstacles, it becomes easier to cope with challenges and build positive relationships.



Framework for Indiana OST SCWB Standards; Adapted from Aspen Institute National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development. (2019). *From a Nation at Risk to a Nation at Hope.* The Aspen Institute.

Retrieved from https://www.aspeninstitute.org/programs/national-commission-on-social-emotional-and-academic-development/ncsead-our-work/ (p. 16).

OST as an Ideal Setting for Social and Cognitive Growth and Development

OST settings are unique places to cultivate SCWB skills as they provide opportunities for youth to develop positive relationships with adult mentors, try new things in a supportive environment, and develop a sense of confidence and competence. SCWB skills improve when children and youth have opportunities to practice these skills across settings (i.e., school, home, afterschool) and research also suggests that OST programs are most successful when they address the needs of the whole child (Durlak et al., 2010; Durlak & Weissberg, 2013).

In their review of 68 afterschool programs that sought to promote social, cognitive, and emotion skills, Durlak et al. (2010) found that afterschool programs working to promote these skills were generally effective in improving skill development, particularly in terms of the feelings, attitudes, behaviors, and school performance of their participants. Their review also found that programs using evidence-based skill training approaches (e.g., evidence-based curricula or strategies) were the most effective across these areas. Specifically, programs were most effective when they conformed to the SAFE approach; meaning they: included **s**equenced activities to teach skills, **a**ctively engaged students in learning skills, **f**ocused time on skill development, and **e**xplicitly targeted these skills.

Common Characteristics of High-Quality OST and SCWB Programming

High-Quality OST and SCWB programming share several characteristics that highlight the potential for integration. They share a commitment to (1) considering the needs of the whole child, (2) partnering across contexts (community, family, school), (3) providing a safe and positive environment for children, youth, and adults, (4) supporting the development of high-quality relationships between children, youth, and adults, (5) ensuring that programming is developmentally appropriate, relevant and engaging, and (6) providing scaffolded, supportive opportunities for skill-building.

Standards Development Process

Standards were developed by (1) consulting decades of research on child and youth SCWB skills, (2) drawing on The EASEL Lab's significant experience collaborating with stakeholders in OST settings, and (3) interviews with OST directors and staff across Indiana to gain insight into the context of OST and SCWB in the state. Interviewees represented various program types (e.g., 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLCs) and organizations such as the YMCA), geographic locations (rural, suburban, and urban settings), age groups (early childhood through 12th grade), and youth composition (racial/ethnic, socio-economic, etc.). The same interviewees as well as Indiana Afterschool Network, the Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning, and IDOE staff then reviewed the draft standards and provided detailed feedback about the standards and accompanying materials. Feedback was incorporated and a final set of standards were created.

CORE PRINCIPLES

The core principles below represent foundational beliefs and ideas underlying the standards. These principles are woven into Indiana's OST SCWB Standards and provide additional context for engaging with the standards.

Note: Several of these principles align with the Guiding Principles included in the Indiana Core Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood, School-Age and Youth Professionals.

1. SCWB skills grow, and are fostered, in rich and supportive relationships and settings (see OST Ecosystem below). Learning environments that are safe, secure, enriching, and characterized by positive relationships are more likely to promote skill development and buffer against the effects of stress and trauma (Osher et al., 2020; Simmons et al., 2018). At the core of OST settings are strong, stable, safe relationships. The structure and goals of OST settings, including the ability to cultivate relationships over time and staff commitment and skills, create opportunities to develop deep, enduring relationships – for OST staff to become "safe people" in the lives of children and youth in a way that is unique to the OST setting.

2. The SCWB skills of staff is critical. It is difficult for OST staff and educators to model and teach these skills to children if they themselves do not understand, believe in, or possess them. It is important to provide adults with adequate motivation and opportunities to develop and practice their own SCWB skills, and to align relevant programming and content with the culture, needs, goals, and comfort-level of the adults delivering it (Jones & Kahn, 2017). Providing sufficient professional development and support is especially important in OST settings when adults must make the most of their limited time with children and youth.

3. Cultural responsiveness is an essential component of effective SCWB practice. Children and youth come from a wide range of family backgrounds and bring different beliefs, values, approaches, and cultural traditions. Taking the time to understand the context and communities of children and youth enable OST staff to work alongside families without judgment, assume that all parties are doing the best with the information and beliefs they possess, create solutions together, and incorporate relevant cultural traditions when possible. Culturally responsive and sensitive SCWB programming reflects and honors the diverse identities, experiences, and perspectives of the children and youth being served (Castro-Olivo, 2014; Gay, 2018).

4. SCWB practice incorporates many of the key principles of trauma-informed and trauma-sensitive learning environments. Approaches to SCWB target many of the fundamental skills impacted by stress and trauma as well as foster healthy relationships and welcoming, safe spaces, both of which are central components of a trauma-sensitive learning environment (Cole et al., 2005; Chafouleas et al., 2019; McInerney & McKlindon, 2014). However, while these programs certainly overlap with the general principles and aims of trauma-informed practice and have the potential to support the creation of trauma-sensitive learning environments overall, few are intentionally designed to be trauma-informed themselves.

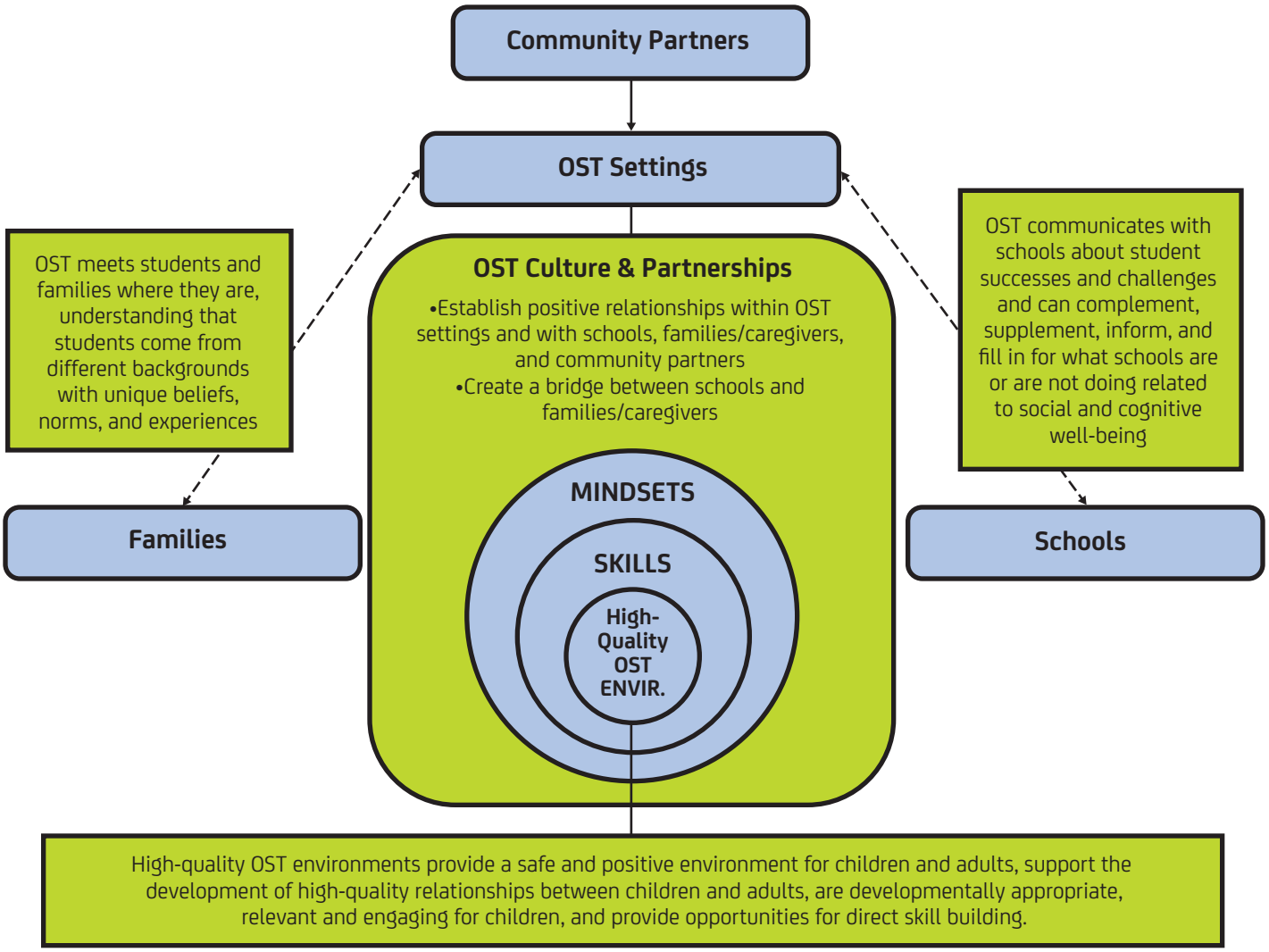
5. SCWB approaches are most effective when they respond to the needs, strengths, and challenges of a setting. High-quality implementation will not look the same across all programs. Rather, it requires ongoing assessment, evaluation, and adaptation to ensure that programming aligns with the needs, interests, and experiences of the children and youth being served.

6. Each standard represents a target or goal for any particular child to work towards. How close a child is to reaching the target, or how far beyond it they are, is often age dependent. And importantly, we don't expect children and youth to learn or develop skills on their own. Learning something new often begins with a great deal of support that decreases as children and youth acquire the skill. The process of learning and practicing with adult support continues as children and youth acquire more complex or sophisticated skills and tasks – a process that continues as individuals transition into adulthood (see introductory text in the Program Focus standard section for a discussion of how skills present differently in different age groups and developmental stages).

7. Relatedly, **SCWB skills emerge at certain stages of development and grow, change, and build upon each other over time**. For example, foundational emotion skills such as the ability to recognize and communicate emotions and to manage difficult emotions in healthy ways set the stage for children to be able to communicate with peers and adults and to build trusting relationships. For this reason, some of these standards are likely more or less relevant than others for a particular setting based on many factors including the age and developmental stage of children and youth (see introductory text in the Program Focus standard section for a discussion of how skills present differently in different age groups and developmental stages).

THE OST ECOSYSTEM

These standards exist as part of a larger OST Ecosystem that also includes community organizations, schools, and families/caregivers. OST settings have dynamic, long-standing, bi-directional relationships with families/caregivers and with schools. These relationships and the high-quality culture and partnerships in OST create the conditions for high-quality OST environments that can support children's SCWB skills.



OST SOCIAL & COGNITIVE WELL-BEING STANDARDS

The Indiana OST SCWB Standards are organized into four categories:

- Program Culture and Environment
- Program Focus
- Staff Development and Expectations
- Data Collection and Impact

Each category includes the following sections:

- **Standard**
  - -Broad researched-based best practices in high-quality out-of-school programs.
  - -**Answers:** What do we need to do?
- **Indicator**
  - -Specific and detailed descriptions of the standard or best practice in high-quality out-of-school programs.
  - -**Answers:** How do we do that?
- **Standards-based Practices**
  - -Evidence that can be observed in high-quality out-of-school programs.
  - -**Answers:** What does it look, sound, and feel like?

The ideal next step in this work is to connect the Standards-based practices to specific and clear strategies staff can use to implement/enact the practice.

The Rating Scale

The Indiana Quality Program Self-Assessment Tool uses the following rating scale to help you and your team assess the degree to which each quality indicator is evident in the program. The definitions outlined below are to help guide the reviewers' understanding of the numeric ratings.

Rating	4	3	2	1	NA
Scale Description	**Exceeds Standards**	**Meets Standard**	**Approaching Standard**	**Standard Not Met**	**Don't Know/ Not Applicable**
Program might say:	*"We are a leader in this."*	*"We demonstrate this in observable ways."*	*"We could use some support here."*	*"We need significant support in this."*	*"We're not sure." or "This doesn't pertain to our program."*

CATEGORY: PROGRAM CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

STANDARD 1: Learning environments are safe, secure, enriching, and characterized by positive relationships.

INDICATOR	STANDARDS-BASED PRACTICES
1a. Program staff create safe, inviting environments that support children's SCWB skills.	•Program staff are warm, welcoming, and affirming. •Program staff work to create environments that are physically and emotionally safe. •Programs provide opportunities for youth to practice skills. •Program staff capitalize on "teachable moments."
1b. Program staff invest in relationship building with youth.	•Staff take an active interest in youth's interests, goals, and lives. •Staff listen actively to youth concerns. •Staff create spaces where youth feel comfortable sharing. •Staff make youth feel accepted.

STANDARD 2: Approaches to skill-building are developmentally appropriate, supportive, and engaging.

INDICATOR	STANDARDS-BASED PRACTICES
2a. Staff ensure that programming is developmentally appropriate, relevant, and engaging.	•Staff receive training and education about SCWB skills and behaviors and how they emerge, grow, and change with development. •Staff adapt activities to meet the skill levels and developmental stages of youth.
2b. Programs provide scaffolded, supportive opportunities for SCWB skill-building.	•Program staff model SCWB skills during activities and interactions with youth. •Program staff offer individualized support as needed and pull back as youth deploy skills with increasing independence.

STANDARD 3: Programs are equitable, culturally responsive, trauma-sensitive, and socially just to ensure that approaches to SCWB are delivered in ways that welcome and benefit all youth.

INDICATOR	STANDARDS-BASED PRACTICES
3a. Programs provide resources for staff on the topics of equity, trauma-sensitive practices, inclusion, and cultural responsiveness.	•Programs encourage staff to learn about youth backgrounds. •Programs provide staff with relevant training and resources to engage with youth of various backgrounds to ensure all are supported and feel welcome and safe in the environment. •Programs provide education for staff about topics of equity, trauma-sensitive practices, inclusion, and cultural responsiveness.
3b. Programs and staff are supportive and affirming of all youth.	•Staff affirm diverse identities. •Staff foster positive identity development. •Staff incorporate youth cultural values, practices, and assets into programming, when possible. •Staff provide opportunities for youth agency and voice.
3c. Programs use accessible materials that promote cultural diversity and inclusion.	•Programs and staff use stories and materials that are representative of the range of different backgrounds and cultures of youth in their setting. •Programs offer staff guidance about creating or adapting visual supports to help all youth access knowledge. •Programs translate youth and community materials into all relevant languages.

(CATEGORY: PROGRAM CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT CONT'D.)

STANDARD 4: Programs build positive relationships with families/caregivers and with schools to support youth SCWB skills.

INDICATOR	STANDARDS-BASED PRACTICES
4a. Programs communicate and collaborate with schools about relevant programming in OST settings and youth SCWB successes and areas for growth.	•Programs gather information about youth SCWB skills and behavior during the school day. •Programs collect information about relevant programming, interventions, and approaches used in schools. •Programs share information with schools about relevant programming, interventions, and approaches used in the OST setting. •Programs use information from schools to work with youth.
4b. Programs provide opportunities for families/ caregivers to engage with relevant SCWB skill-building approaches.	•Programs seek input and engagement from families/caregivers about perceptions of SCWB, youth needs, and approaches for cultivating these skills at home, if applicable. •Programs provide opportunities for families/caregivers to learn about relevant initiatives and approaches. •Programs provide families/caregivers with resources (e.g., handouts, workshops) to support youth to practice relevant skills at home.
4c. Staff form ongoing relationships with families/ caregivers.	•Staff spend time learning about the backgrounds and communities of youth and their families/caregivers. •Staff recognize that youth and their families/caregivers bring different values, approaches, and cultural traditions. •Staff strive to create solutions with families/caregivers.

CATEGORY: PROGRAM FOCUS

Program Focus has a slightly different structure than the other categories. Each standard has two indicators in separate columns. The indicator in the first column, Indicator (Youth), is framed as what youth can do to demonstrate the skills and behaviors described in the standard. The second column, Indicator (Program/Staff), covers the same skills/behaviors and indicates what programs/staff can do to create an environment that allows these skills and behaviors to be built, supported, and/or exhibited. The Standards-based Youth Behaviors/Mindsets and Program/Staff Supports column describes observable examples of relevant youth behaviors/mindsets and concrete program/staff supports. Recognizing what SCWB skills look like in youth behavior can support programs and staff to identify and plan relevant activities and to evaluate their efforts.

The Youth Indicators and Standards-based Youth Behaviors/Mindsets will present differently in different age groups and developmental stages. In some cases we've noted that an indicator is particularly relevant for a certain age group. For example, Standard 5 is most relevant for younger children (e.g., K-2nd grade). It focuses on paying attention and managing distractions, critical tasks of the early school years that are foundational for other, more complex skills. In other cases, skills are less variable across development, but the way children and youth use and display these skills will differ.

For example, both 1st graders and 12th graders can set goals, but the goals will likely vary in their complexity, content, and the amount of adult support needed (see 5c). As another example, a younger child might be able to identify and describe others' emotions while an older child (e.g., 6th-8th grader) might also be able to ask questions about their emotional state and use an appropriate tone that matches the other person's emotion (e.g., empathetic, calm, encouraging).

(CATEGORY: PROGRAM FOCUS CONT'D.)

STANDARD 5:

Staff provide opportunities for youth to practice cognitive regulation skills, including using attention and behavior to work towards goals.

INDICATOR (YOUTH)	INDICATOR (PROGRAM/STAFF)	STANDARDS-BASED YOUTH BEHAVIORS/MINDSETS AND PROGRAM/STAFF SUPPORTS
5a. Youth can use self-regulation strategies to pay attention to activities and tasks at hand and manage distractions (this is emerging for K-2nd grade, but the use of strategies is relevant across the entire age span).	Programs provide opportunities for youth to develop and practice strategies to maintain attention, listen actively, and manage distractions.	**Youth Behaviors:** •Youth can ignore outside sounds and distractions when engaged in a task. •Youth are able to focus attention on a task or activity without constant reminders. •Youth develop and use self-regulation and attention strategies with decreasing levels of adult support (e.g., self-talk to stay focused, facing the speaker, moving to a quieter location, taking a break). **Program/Staff Supports:** •Staff provide youth with reminders to engage in on-task behavior and ignore distractions, as needed. •Staff create environments that support youth to complete the task or activity (e.g., configure room to minimize distractions). •Staff support youth to develop strategies to maintain attention and manage distractions. •Staff model self-regulation and attention strategies (self-talk to stay focused, facing the speaker, moving to a quieter location, taking a break).
5b. Youth can transition to new parts of the day, tasks, and activities with increasing ease (e.g., from school to afterschool, from one activity to another) over time (this is emerging for K-2nd grade, but these skills are relevant across the entire age span).	Programs provide youth with strategies and supports to transition from one part of the day, task, or activity to another with decreasing adult support over time.	**Youth Behaviors:** •Youth are able to transition smoothly from the school day to the OST setting. •Youth are able to refocus after taking a break (e.g., after snack). •Youth can move quickly and effectively from one space or activity to another. **Program/Staff Supports:** •Staff provide time and space for check-in and decompressing when transitioning to the OST setting after school. •Staff use strategies or signals to support transitions (e.g., songs, two-minute warnings). •Staff establish consistent, transparent schedules and transition routines.
5c. Youth can set, plan, and monitor progress towards short- and long-term goals with decreasing levels of adult prompting and support over time (most relevant for 6th-12th grades, but younger children are also learning about goal setting).	Staff provide opportunities for youth to set and monitor progress towards short- and long-term goals with decreasing levels of adult prompting and support over time.	**Youth Behaviors:** •Youth can set short- and long-term goals. •Youth can develop realistic plans to achieve their goals. •Youth can monitor progress towards goals. •Youth can recognize potential consequences of decisions and how those consequences can affect goal attainment. **Program/Staff Supports:** •Staff and youth work together to set specific, achievable, and relevant goals. •Staff and youth develop plans to achieve youth goals and jointly monitor progress. •Staff work with youth to recognize potential consequences of decisions and how those consequences can affect goal attainment. •Staff support youth to adjust or re-set goals, as needed. •Staff provide youth with the opportunity to independently set goals and communicate them with peers and adults.

(CATEGORY: PROGRAM FOCUS CONT'D.)

STANDARD 6: Programs provide opportunities for youth to develop and practice social skills, including interacting collaboratively with others and resolving conflicts.

INDICATOR (YOUTH)	INDICATOR (PROGRAM/STAFF)	STANDARDS-BASED YOUTH BEHAVIORS/MINDSETS AND PROGRAM/STAFF SUPPORTS
6a. Youth can face and address conflicts appropriately and constructively, and respectfully generate solutions to conflicts.	Staff support youth to resolve conflict and use these situations as learning experiences.	**Youth Behaviors:** •Youth can understand the difference between effective vs. ineffective conflict resolution strategies (e.g., compromising vs. fighting). •Youth can understand their own role in conflicts. •Youth can generate and evaluate possible responses to conflict and their consequences. •Youth can identify effective and ineffective outcomes to conflict (e.g., whether the problem is resolved, whether all voices are heard, etc.). **Program/Staff Supports:** •Staff approach interactions and issues between children as opportunities for learning. •Staff remain calm when facilitating youth communication. •Staff support youth to generate and evaluate possible solutions. •Staff provide youth with agency to decide how a problem should be solved. •Staff support youth to use techniques to cope with conflict (e.g., taking a deep breath, taking a break).
6b. Youth can work collaboratively with peers (i.e., in groups) to achieve a goal.	Staff provide opportunities for youth to work collaboratively in various groupings to achieve a goal.	**Youth Behaviors:** •Youth can effectively communicate ideas and information to peers. •Youth participate actively in peer groups. •Youth listen to other group members. •Youth demonstrate leadership and allow others to lead. •Youth understand how their actions can affect others in the group. **Program/Staff Supports:** •Staff scaffold peer interactions and communication, as needed. •Staff support youth to understand and navigate group dynamics and successful participation in groups.
6c. Youth are able to communicate what's on their mind clearly and with confidence.	Staff create opportunities for youth to share their thoughts, values, feelings, and preferences.	**Youth Behaviors:** •Youth can clearly, calmly, and diplomatically state values and preferences (e.g., are assertive in ways appropriate to the situation). **Program/Staff Supports:** •Staff listen actively to youth feelings, ideas, challenges, and requests for help. •Staff provide youth with feedback to improve their communication skills.
6d. Youth can articulate triggers prior to emotional or behavioral outbursts and can ask for help when needed.	Staff create supportive environments that enable youth to communicate and ask for help when needed.	**Youth Behaviors:** •Youth know how, when, and who to ask for help/assistance. •Youth seek help when needed. **Program/Staff Supports:** •Staff ensure that youth know how, when, and who to ask for help. •Staff are receptive and supportive of youth asking for help/assistance.

(CATEGORY: PROGRAM FOCUS / STANDARD 6 CONT'D.)

INDICATOR (YOUTH)	INDICATOR (PROGRAM/STAFF)	STANDARDS-BASED YOUTH BEHAVIORS/MINDSETS AND PROGRAM/STAFF SUPPORTS
6e. Youth build relationships by acting respectfully and kindly towards peers, staff, and other trusted adults.	Staff provide opportunities for relationship building.	**Youth Behaviors:** •Youth understand the actions and behaviors that foster friendship and positive relationships. •Youth act respectfully and kindly towards others. •Youth are inclusive of others. •Youth assist peers and adults. **Program/Staff Supports:** •Staff support youth to understand the actions and behaviors that foster friendship (i.e., what a friend is and how to make and sustain them). •Staff model and encourage inclusivity. •Staff create opportunities for youth to engage with their peers.

STANDARD 7: Programs provide opportunities for youth to develop and practice emotion skills, including identifying, processing, and communicating emotions in healthy and effective ways.

INDICATOR (YOUTH)	INDICATOR (PROGRAM/STAFF)	STANDARDS-BASED YOUTH BEHAVIORS/MINDSETS AND PROGRAM/STAFF SUPPORTS
7a. Youth identify and communicate emotions effectively (this is emerging for K-2nd grade, but these skills are relevant across the entire age span).	Staff support youth to communicate emotions effectively.	**Youth Behaviors:** •Youth can identify their own emotions. •Youth can identify the intensity of their emotions/feelings. •Youth can use emotion vocabulary appropriate to the situation and of varying intensity (e.g., I felt angry vs. I felt furious). •Youth express emotions to others in effective ways (e.g., using "I messages"). **Program/Staff Supports:** •Staff consistently identify children's emotional experiences. •Staff engage with youth in activities about emotions (e.g., defining or describing emotions, practicing "I Messages," naming emotions in books). •Staff tell youth about their own emotional experiences.
7b. Youth can recognize emotional triggers, understand how problems, challenges, and situations can make them feel, and how to effectively express and regulate emotions.	Staff provide opportunities for youth to understand links between situations and emotions, express emotions in setting-appropriate ways, and to develop strategies to regulate emotions when needed.	**Youth Behaviors:** •Youth can increasingly monitor and predict their emotions. •Youth can increasingly recognize emotional triggers. •Youth understand what constitutes appropriate vs. inappropriate expressions of emotion in the OST setting and expresses oneself appropriately. •Youth understand the relationship between situation and emotion (e.g., accurately identifies the emotion a particular situation would elicit). •Youth use effective regulatory strategies when upset (e.g., self-talk, deep breaths, walking away). **Program/Staff Supports:** •Staff communicate to youth that anger and negative emotions are normal parts of life, but how one handles them is important. •Staff acknowledge and validate the emotional experiences of youth by providing support when children express themselves. •Staff support youth to develop and practice emotion regulation strategies. •Staff model ways to calm down. •Staff respond positively or join in when children express joy or excitement.

(CATEGORY: PROGRAM FOCUS / STANDARD 7 CONT'D.)

INDICATOR (YOUTH)	INDICATOR (PROGRAM/STAFF)	STANDARDS-BASED YOUTH BEHAVIORS/MINDSETS AND PROGRAM/STAFF SUPPORTS
7c. Youth can understand and respond to others' emotions, needs, and perspectives and understand how emotions can affect others.	Program staff support youth to understand and respond to how their emotions affect others using interpersonal interactions as opportunities for learning.	**Youth Behaviors:** •Youth can identify and acknowledge the experiences and feelings of others. •Youth can acknowledge how others' feelings, thoughts, and points of view differ from their own. •Youth can understand and acknowledge how their actions affect others. **Program/Staff Supports:** •Staff draw attention to peers' emotional experiences and/or thoughts by asking youth to consider how others are feeling (could also include book characters or historical figures). •Staff provide opportunities for youth to think about how their actions affect others and how they would feel in a similar situation. •Staff explain the interpersonal consequences of actions.

STANDARD 8: Programs support youth to hold attitudes, perspectives, and/or mindsets that are helpful and productive.

INDICATOR (YOUTH)	INDICATOR (PROGRAM/STAFF)	STANDARDS-BASED YOUTH BEHAVIORS/MINDSETS AND PROGRAM/STAFF SUPPORTS
8a. Youth have a positive view of themselves and their abilities.	Staff support youth to develop positive views of themselves and their abilities.	**Youth Behavior/ Mindsets:** •Youth can identify their strengths and what makes them special or unique. •Youth understand their own self-worth. •Youth feel good about or proud of themselves after accomplishing a task. •Youth can identify their own interests and preferences. **Program/Staff Supports:** •Staff provide opportunities for youth to reflect on their unique strengths. •Staff celebrate the big and small "wins" or successes of youth.
8b. Youth are willing to explore and try new tasks, activities, or challenges even if something is hard and/or takes time and effort and despite the possibility of failure.	Programs provide opportunities for youth to try new tasks, activities, and challenges of varying difficulty.	**Youth Behaviors/Mindsets:** •Youth understand that abilities can be developed and improved with time and practice. •Youth express confidence in themselves and their ability to improve or succeed. •Youth are willing to engage in new and challenging tasks. •Youth view challenges as things that one can take on and overcome with time and effort. **Program/Staff Supports:** •Staff frame new tasks, activities, or challenges as opportunities for learning and growth. •Staff support youth to develop and practice confidence building strategies (e.g., positive self-talk, power stance).

STANDARD 9: Programs support youth to be productive, inclusive members of the community.

INDICATOR (YOUTH)	INDICATOR (PROGRAM/STAFF)	STANDARDS-BASED YOUTH BEHAVIORS/MINDSETS AND PROGRAM/STAFF SUPPORTS
9a. Youth appreciate their community and prioritize making it a better place.	Programs cultivate inclusive communities and support youth to engage in communities they find meaningful.	**Youth Behaviors/Mindsets:** •Youth are aware of and work to correct unfairness in their schools, communities, and/or the world. •Youth understand their connection and responsibility to their communities (e.g., family, classroom, OST setting). •Youth strive to make their community and/or world a better place and can identify ways to do so (e.g., through community service). **Program/Staff Supports:** •Staff strive to make all youth feel like valued community members. •Staff share opportunities and ideas about improving communities.
9b. Youth accept, respect, and celebrate others, including those who are different, recognizing that we can (and must) co-exist.	Programs are inclusive and staff accept, respect, and celebrate all youth.	**Youth Behaviors/Mindsets:** •Youth recognize it is important to accept differences in others and ultimately to celebrate and appreciate diversity. •Youth understand and respect the intrinsic worth and rights of all people. •Youth avoid acting on stereotypes and pre-conceived notions about others. •Youth understand the importance of treating others with respect. **Program/Staff Supports:** •Staff provide opportunities for youth to interact with a variety of people from diverse backgrounds. •Staff include and find opportunities to celebrate all youth.

CATEGORY: STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND EXPECTATIONS

STANDARD 10: Programs provide adults with adequate motivation and opportunities to advance their knowledge of SCWB and to develop and practice their own SCWB skills.

INDICATOR	STANDARDS-BASED PRACTICES
10a. Programs provide staff with relevant professional development (training, coaching, etc.).	•Programs use data (see Standard 12) to develop, identify, and select professional development topics and approaches. •Staff receive training in evidence-based approaches to cultivating SCWB skills that align with their teaching styles and comfort-levels.
10b. Programs provide staff with the knowledge and training to support youth SCWB skill development.	•Staff recognize that youth improve with opportunities to practice and that adults should provide decreasing levels of adult prompting and support over time. •Staff consistently model SCWB skills in interactions with youth.

(CATEGORY: STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND EXPECTATIONS / STANDARD 10 CONT'D.)

INDICATOR	STANDARDS-BASED PRACTICES
10c. Programs provide staff with opportunities to build and practice their own SCWB skills.	•Programs invest in adult self-awareness, knowledge, and skills by providing training and resources that encourage adults to build their own SCWB skills.
10d. Programs provide staff with ongoing opportunities to share challenges and desired areas for professional development.	•All staff have opportunities to share their SCWB -related professional development needs, anonymously if desired.

STANDARD 11:

Programs re-examine existing curricula and activities to identify explicit and implicit SCWB skill-building opportunities.

INDICATOR	STANDARDS-BASED PRACTICES
11a. Programs review existing initiatives, programs, and curricula to identify SCWB skill-building components.	•Staff compile and review existing initiatives, programs, and curricula. •Staff identify any initiatives, programs, and curricula with explicit SCWB skill-building components.
11b. Programs provide staff with time to reflect on and identify specific SCWB practices and activities.	•Staff review all program activities to make judgments about which provide opportunities to cultivate specific SCWB skills. •Staff think about other specific instances when each SCWB skill could be addressed.

CATEGORY: DATA COLLECTION AND IMPACT

STANDARD 12:

Programs use data to make decisions about SCWB skills and/or areas of focus, activities, and programming.

INDICATOR	STANDARDS-BASED PRACTICES
12a. Programs identify existing data/ data collection tools to inform SCWB decision-making.	•Programs identify community stakeholders who will provide input on areas of SCWB focus. •Programs review existing data collected to determine what can inform SCWB decision-making (e.g., youth goal setting/performance data, information shared from schools, disciplinary data, IAN Self-Assessment tool (INQPSA), data collected for reporting to IAN or other state agencies) •Programs adopt or develop new tools to learn from staff and community stakeholders. Examples of questions are on pp. 16-28 of this document.

(CATEGORY: DATA COLLECTION AND IMPACT / STANDARD 12 CONT'D.)

INDICATOR	STANDARDS-BASED PRACTICES
12b. Data about youth needs, strengths, and areas for growth are gathered at regular intervals from multiple parties (e.g., staff, community members).	•Programs develop a protocol or system for collecting relevant data (e.g., 3 times per year via surveys and staff interviews) and sharing information and findings back with stakeholders. •Programs regularly evaluate their own needs and capacity.
12c. Programs continuously review all relevant sources of data collected to make decisions about SCWB programming and/or areas of focus.	•Decisions about SCWB programming are made in partnership with multiple stakeholders, including families. •Staff strengths along with youth goals and needs are central to decision-making. •Staff have opportunities to review data and share feedback and ideas about SCWB programming and areas of focus. •Programs factor in their own needs and capacity when selecting a SCWB approach. •Programs consider alignment and fit with existing programs, curricula, or initiatives. •Programs make decisions using evidence from their own programs and other sources (e.g., research).

STANDARD 13:

Programs use data to set reasonable, realistic goals, and to track progress towards achieving those goals.

INDICATOR	STANDARDS-BASED PRACTICES
13a. Programs gather community input to inform SCWB goal setting priorities.	•Programs identify relevant stakeholders (e.g., staff) to provide input. •Programs provide opportunities for relevant stakeholders to contribute to conversations about setting specific SCWB goals and interim targets. •Programs develop a protocol for setting SCWB goals.
13b. Programs set reasonable SCWB goals based on setting-specific opportunities, challenges, and staff and youth skills and areas for growth.	•Programs ensure that goals are realistic, measurable, and connected to stakeholder input. •Programs consider setting both short- and long-term goals. •Programs consider setting goals at various levels: program-level goals (e.g., beginning a set of SCWB practices), professional development goals (e.g., staff have specific opportunities to learn about the development of SCWB skills), and youth-level goals (e.g., improvement in specific skills or behaviors).

(CATEGORY: DATA COLLECTION AND IMPACT / STANDARD 13 CONT'D.)

INDICATOR	STANDARDS-BASED PRACTICES
13c. Programs regularly monitor progress towards goals and adjust as needed.	•Programs identify concrete ways to measure progress towards goals. •Programs develop a protocol for evaluating progress towards goals (how often, who is involved). •Programs adjust goals or plans to achieve goals as needed. •Programs provide opportunities for staff to reflect on progress towards SCWB goals. •Programs are transparent with families and community members about progress towards SCWB goals.

GLOSSARY

Behavior – An observable action from an individual or group.

Cognitive Skills – The mental processes required to focus, plan, and control behavioral responses in service of a goal.

Cultural Responsiveness – Ensuring that practices are relevant, supportive, and beneficial for students of all backgrounds and identities by incorporating students' histories, heritages, cultures, and lived experiences (Gay, 2018).

Emotion Skills – Skills that help children recognize, express, and manage their emotions as well as understand and empathize with others.

Mindsets – A set of underlying beliefs that influence how a person views and understands themselves and the world around them.

Related Skills – Skills that are similar and may share a degree of overlap with one another, but are not the same, such as emotion management and self-regulation.

Scaffolding – A teaching technique in which adults provide less and less support as youth develop and gain competence in certain skills and/or situations.

Social Skills – A set of skills that support children and youth to work collaboratively, solve social problems, build positive relationships, and coexist peacefully with others.

Stakeholder – Any person with an interest in the success of a person, group, or cause.

Wellbeing – The overall quality of someone's life across a number of areas including physical and mental health, safety, and relationships.

There is significant overlap between the OST SCWB Standards and (1) **Indiana's Employability Skills Standards**, in particular the Social and Emotional Skills (regulation, connection, and collaboration) section and (2) the Student Wellbeing (sense of self, self-regulation, conflict resolution, and building relationships) and the Approaches to Play and Learning (flexible thinking, attentiveness and persistence, and social interactions) sections of **Indiana's Early Learning Standards**.

For more information about the array of skills linked to children's well-being, please explore the following resources:

- Skills for Success: Developing Social and Emotional Competencies in Out-of-School-Time Programs
- Navigating SEL from the Inside Out Preschool & Elementary and Middle & High School guides
- Explore SEL
- The Evidence Base for How We Learn: Supporting Students' Social, Emotional, and Academic Development
- From a Nation at Risk to a Nation at Hope
- CASEL: What Does the Research Say?

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NOTES