



Youth Program Quality Assessment (PQA)

Sample Items



III. Interaction

III-L. Youth have opportunities to develop a sense of belonging.

Note: **Structured** refers to the quality of being intentional, planned, and/or named; it does not refer to informal conversation.

Indicators If you do not observe an indicator, ask the corresponding follow-up questions.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>1 Youth have no opportunities to get to know each other (beyond self-selected pairs or small cliques).</p> | <p>3 Youth have informal opportunities to get to know each other (e.g., youth engage in informal conversations before, during, or after session).</p> | <p>5 Youth have structured opportunities to get to know each other (e.g., there are team-building activities, introductions, personal updates, welcomes of new group members, icebreakers, and a variety of groupings for activities).</p> |
| <p>1 Youth exhibit predominantly exclusive relationships, limited to a few individuals or a small clique within the program offering.</p> | <p>3 Relationships to others in the group are not fully inclusive, but youth know and use one another's names.</p> | <p>5 Youth exhibit predominately inclusive relationships with all in the program offering, including newcomers.</p> |
| <p>1 Youth do not identify with the program offering (e.g., many youth complain about or express dislike of the program offering or activities).</p> | <p>3 Youth do not strongly identify with the program offering but do not complain or express dislike.</p> | <p>5 Youth strongly identify with the program offering (e.g., hold one another to established guidelines, use ownership language, such as "our program," engage in shared traditions such as shared jokes, songs, gestures).</p> |
| <p>1 The activities provide no opportunities to acknowledge the achievements, work, or contributions of youth.</p> | <p>3 The activities provide opportunities to acknowledge the achievements, work, or contributions of some youth, but opportunities are unscheduled or impromptu.</p> | <p>5 The activities include structured opportunities (e.g., group presentations, sharing times, recognition celebrations, exhibitions, performances) to publicly acknowledge the achievements, work, or contributions of at least some youth.</p> |

Supporting Evidence/Anecdotes

How do youth get to know each other? Are there any games or activities designed for this?
n/o = 1

n/o = 1

n/o = 1

Sum ÷ number of indicators scored = Item Score III-L

IV. Engagement

IV-R. Youth have opportunities to reflect.

Note: (a) **Reflect** means to review, summarize, and/or evaluate recent events or activities. **Reflections** are usually expressed by talking with others and/or in writing, for example, a journal or report. (b) **Structured** refers to the quality of being intentional, planned, and/or named; it does not refer to informal conversation.

Indicators If you do not observe an indicator, ask the corresponding follow-up questions.

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p>1 No youth are engaged in an intentional process of reflecting on what they are doing or have done.</p> | <p>3 Some youth are engaged in an intentional process of reflecting on what they are doing or have done.</p> | <p>5 All youth are engaged in an intentional process of reflecting on what they are doing or have done (e.g., writing in journals; reviewing minutes; sharing progress, accomplishments, or feelings about the experience).</p> |
| <p>1 Some or all youth are not given the opportunity to reflect on their activities.</p> | <p>3 All youth are given the opportunity to reflect on their activities in at least one way.</p> | <p>5 All youth are given the opportunity to reflect on their activities in 2 or more ways (e.g., writing, role playing, using media or technology, drawing).</p> |
| <p>1 No youth have structured opportunities to make presentations to the whole group.</p> | <p>3 Some youth have structured opportunities to make presentations to the whole group.</p> | <p>5 In the course of the program offering, all youth have structured opportunities to make presentations to the whole group.</p> |
| <p>1 Staff dismiss feedback from youth who initiate it, or youth have no opportunities to provide feedback on the activities.</p> | <p>3 Staff are receptive to feedback initiated by youth on the activities but do not solicit it.</p> | <p>5 Staff initiate structured opportunities for youth to give feedback on the activities (e.g., staff ask feedback questions, provide session evaluations).</p> |

Supporting Evidence/Anecdotes

<input type="checkbox"/>	n/o = 1
↓	
<input type="checkbox"/>	In what ways do the youth reflect on activities?
↓	
<input type="checkbox"/>	In the course of the program offering, do youth make presentations?
↓	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do the youth provide feedback about the program offering?
↓	
Sum <input type="checkbox"/>	÷ <input type="checkbox"/> number of indicators scored = <input type="checkbox"/> Item Score IV-R

V. Youth Centered Policies and Practices

V-C. Youth have an influence on the setting and activities in the organization.

Indicators

1 No youth are involved in decision making about the design and use of the physical environment.

3 Youth are consulted about the design and use of the physical environment.

5 Youth and adults share the responsibility for decisions about the design and use of the physical environment (e.g., they make plans for furniture arrangement, determine design additions and displays relevant to youth activities).

Record any additional information here.

1 Youth are not asked for input when determining program schedules.

3 Youth are asked for input about potential program offerings, but they have no other involvement in determining program schedules.

5 Youth and adults share the responsibility in determining program schedules and program offerings.

1 There are few or no youth involved in facilitating or leading sessions or activities for peers or younger youth.

3 Youth assist adults in facilitating or leading sessions or activities for peers or younger youth.

5 Youth take charge of (with appropriate support from adults) and facilitate or lead (not just assist) sessions or activities for peers or younger youth.

Sum ÷ number of indicators scored = Item Score V-C



Item Summary Older Youth • Grades 4-12

FORM A—PROGRAM OFFERING ITEMS

I. Safe Environment

- A. Psychological and emotional safety is promoted.
- B. The physical environment is safe and free of health hazards.
- C. Appropriate emergency procedures and supplies are present.
- D. Program space and furniture accommodate the activities offered.
- E. Healthy food and drinks are provided.

II. Supportive Environment

- F. Staff provide a welcoming atmosphere.
- G. Session flow is planned, presented, and paced for youth.
- H. Activities support active engagement.
- I. Staff support youth in building new skills.
- J. Staff support youth with encouragement.
- K. Staff use youth-centered approaches to reframe conflict.

III. Interaction

- L. Youth have opportunities to develop a sense of belonging.
- M. Youth have opportunities to participate in small groups.
- N. Youth have opportunities to act as group facilitators and mentors.
- O. Youth have opportunities to partner with adults.

IV. Engagement

- P. Youth have opportunities to set goals and make plans.
- Q. Youth have opportunities to make choices based on their interests.
- R. Youth have opportunities to reflect.

FORM B—ORGANIZATION ITEMS

V. Youth Centered Policies and Practices

- A. Staff qualifications support a positive youth development focus.
- B. Program offerings tap youth interests and build multiple skills.
- C. Youth have an influence on the setting and activities in the organization.
- D. Youth have an influence on the structure and policy of the organization.

VI. High Expectations for Youth and Staff

- E. Organization promotes staff development.
- F. Organization promotes supportive social norms.
- G. Organization promotes high expectations for young people.
- H. Organization is committed to ongoing program improvement.

VII. Access

- I. Staff availability and longevity with the organization support youth-staff relationships.
- J. Schedules are in effect.
- K. Barriers to participation are addressed.
- L. Organization communicates with families, other organizations, and schools.