



ACTNOW!
Afterschool for Children and Teens

Illinois Afterschool Pledge to Quality

ACT NOW AND THE QUALITY STANDARDS

Afterschool for Children and Teens Now (ACT Now) is a statewide coalition that advocates for quality and affordable afterschool programs. We work with a wide variety of out-of-school programs (park district, 4-H, child care, school-based, community-based programs, and more) to make sure they have the resources they need to be successful.

In partnership with afterschool leaders around the state, ACT Now developed the Illinois Statewide Afterschool Quality Standards in May 2016 to provide a common definition of program quality and help programs improve youth outcomes. The Quality Standards represent best practices that research demonstrates lead to quality programs and positive outcomes for youth. The Standards address key areas such as safety, health and nutrition, administration, youth development, and family and community partnerships. ACT Now created the Standards to help programs self-assess to identify areas of strength and areas for improvement, engage in conversations about quality, and promote continuous quality improvement.

The Illinois Quality Program Self-Assessment (IL-QPSA) is a free online tool to help programs come together as a team to assess on the Standards.

ONLINE INFRASTRUCTURE

The online tool contains the following components:

- Illinois Statewide Afterschool Quality Standards & Resource Guide
- Self-Assessment
- Multiple automated reports
 - > Program site & organization aggregate reports
 - > Comparison reports
- Program Quality Improvement Action Plan
- Surveys for parents, youth, community partners, and staff

turn the page for details about taking THE PLEDGE

THE PLEDGE TO QUALITY AND STEPS TO TAKE IT

The Pledge to Quality provides programs an opportunity to state publicly that they are committed to program quality and continuous improvement. Providers that take the pledge commit to the following:



- **SIGN UP** for the ACT NOW newsletter
- **ADD** your program to the ACT NOW afterschool map and database
- **REVIEW** the Illinois Statewide Afterschool Quality Standards
- **SIGN UP** for the IL-QPSA
- **SELF-ASSESS** the top ten quality standards with your program team—we recommend both program directors and site coordinators participate in this process
 - > **Participate** in three 45-minute webinars
 - > **Create** an action plan for improvement

Once you sign up for the IL-QPSA tool, you can participate in our free quality improvement cohort. As part of the quality improvement cohort, you will learn how to build your self-assessment team(s), collect and analyze data, and form an action plan for improvement. After you complete these steps, you will receive a certificate of quality.

BENEFITS TO TAKING THE PLEDGE

As an ACT Now member committed to continuous quality improvement, you will receive a variety of resources that will benefit your program and the young people and families you serve:

- A free **weekly newsletter** with policy updates, trainings and webinars, funding opportunities, opportunities for youth, and more
- Inclusion the **Afterschool Map and Database**, a heat map of the entire state that allows you to find programs to collaborate with, helps determine areas of need in your community, and helps community members find your program
- **Technical assistance and professional development** in using the Standards and IL-QPSA, including in-person trainings on the Standards, webinars to walk you through the assessment process, and one-on-one coaching
- Opportunities to **network and collaborate** with other providers in the field about quality improvement best practices
- **Recognition** as a program committed to quality improvement and positive youth development to policymakers and funders throughout Illinois
- **Poster** for your program demonstrating your pledge and commitment to quality and a **certificate** after you complete the quality improvement process

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www.actnowillinois.org
312.877.0725

Network Lead, Susan Stanton
stantons@metrofamily

