

DCYF SPECIALIZED TEEN SITE VISIT TOOL

MAY 2013

Purpose of the Site Visit Tool

This site visit tool was developed by a working group of DCYF staff, grantees, and evaluation consultants to provide a robust, *point-of-service oriented* snapshot of program quality.

Drawing from research that shows that the most important indicator of youth participation and positive outcomes are their daily experiences in youth development programs, this site visit tool is primarily concerned with *what can be observed on site*. Other important sources of data about program quality include youth surveys, CMS reports, programs' own evaluations, and staff and youth interviews.

The tool includes elements common to all youth development programs, as well as grant-specific service quality indicators. Elements have been cross-walked with DCYF Quality Standards and Request for Funding announcements to assure that this tool assesses quality elements already expected of DCYF grantees.

How the Tool will be used

This site visit tool will be used in three ways:

1. To inform individual program's ongoing quality improvement efforts by providing an observationally-based assessment of program quality.
2. To help DCYF Program Officers to support their grantees by providing a common rubric with which to visit youth development programs.
3. To inform ongoing training and technical assistance efforts supported by DCYF.

This tool should not be used to evaluate individual staff members.

→→ What's Inside the Site Visit Tool ←←

Point-of-Service Quality Domains¹

- **Program Environment & Safety** - The program space is safe, clean, and can be adapted for a variety of activities. Youth and staff interact in a friendly, respectful way.
- **Promoting Diversity** - The program space, activities, and norms encourage inclusive attitudes and behaviors among staff and youth.
- **Youth Development** - Activities are designed and implemented with youth engagement in mind. Youth have meaningful input into activities and have multiple opportunities to play leadership roles within the program.
- **Intentional Skill Building** - Most program activities promote youth-skill building by intentionally focusing on a specific skill, promoting successively higher levels of mastery, and allowing youth to present their work or perform for others.

Definitions

- **Activity** - A group, class, or club that is organized by theme and takes place over multiple sessions. Examples may include a Poetry Club within a comprehensive after school program, the Outreach Team for a teen cultural program, or a Job Search workshop in a workforce development program.
- **Session** - An individual meeting or workshop.
- **Component** - An identifiable part of a session, such as check-ins/icebreakers, direct instruction, independent work, team consultations.

If you don't see enough to rate a specific item

Many of the items in the Core Site Visit Tool should be observable during a 90-120 minute visit. Visitors may not see some important elements while on site, however, and should follow up with staff members to gather sufficient information.

- Some items may be more difficult to observe while on site. If you don't see the item to be rated refer to instructions located by the item rating box or in the User's Manual.

¹ These domains are aligned with the *California After-School Program Quality Self Assessment Tool*, available from the California Afterschool Network (www.afterschoolnetwork.org).
DCYF Specialized Teen Site Visit Tool (May 2012)

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Program Name	
Agency Name	
Site Coordinator	
Visitor	
Visit Date	

INTERVIEWS

I. SITE COORDINATOR INTERVIEW

1. a. What do you consider to be the greatest strengths of this program?
- b. What are your main areas for growth?

2. [Depending on items identified in pre-visit review, visitor asks for clarification on two-three items from site's Minimum Quality Assessment or other submitted documentation.]

3. For the activities taking place today, can you tell me more about how they link to both previous and future sessions? How does what we'll see fit in with the goals of the program?

4. How does your program support youth in successively higher levels of leadership?²

5. What opportunities do youth have to present their work, perform for others, or share their successes?

² Response from this interview question can be used as evidence to rate item 5 in the Youth Development section, "All youth have structured opportunities to be in charge of something the group needs or to help others," DCYF Specialized Teen Site Visit Tool (May 2012)

6. What is your program’s capacity to create an emotionally safe environment that addresses the emotional needs that specifically arise among older youth, (e.g. sexuality, experimentation with drugs and alcohol, peer pressure, peer group conflicts, family conflicts, etc.)? (Select the answer that best applies.)

1
The program has few or no formal structures (e.g. staff training, program traditions, group agreements, relationships with other providers) to create a safe space to address the specific emotional needs that arise among older youth.

3
The program has some formal structures to create a safe space for older youth, but additional improvements are needed to assure that the emotional needs that arise among older youth will be met.

5
The program has several formal structures to address older youths’ emotional needs, including ongoing supervision to sustain and support staff training, formal relationship and follow-through with outside agencies, close monitoring of individual and group responses to emotional crises, etc.

Evidence

Rating

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 |

7. How well does your program connect youth with the community outside the doors of the program, including subject-matter experts or potential employers? (Select the answer that best applies)

1
Program does not include opportunities to connect to the community, subject-matter experts or potential employers.

3
Program includes sporadic opportunities to connect with the outside community or subject-matter experts, but opportunities are not formalized into program design.

5
Program intentionally connects youth with the outside community, including subject-matter experts or potential employers.

Evidence

Rating

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 |

8. How well developed is your program's curriculum? (Select the answer that best applies)

1

Program does not do curriculum planning, does not have staff trained in curriculum planning, or does not apply it consistently, and recognizes that they could use additional support or technical assistance in this area.

3

Program does curriculum planning, and staff are trained in curriculum development, but does not use an evidence-based curriculum or does not evaluate curricula against standards.

5

Program uses evidence-based curricula consistently throughout the program, ensures that staff are well-trained, evaluates curricula against standards, and perceives this as a program strength.

Evidence

Rating

1

2

3

4

5

9. How do youths' interests and preferences influence the activities offered?

1

Youth do not have the opportunity to express their preferences and interests OR staff members do not listen to youths' suggestions.

3

Youth have informal opportunities to share their preferences and interests; staff listen to youths' suggestions.

5

Youth have structured opportunities to share their preferences and interests; youth input is the primary guide when developing activities.

Evidence

Rating

1

2

3

4

5

10. (6-12) In what ways does your program encourage and celebrate youth expressions of culture, sexual identity, religion, and individuality.

<p>1</p> <p><i>Efforts to encourage and celebrate youth expressions of culture, sexual identity, religion and individuality are not built into program; staff receive no training in cultural competency.</i></p>	<p>3</p> <p><i>Staff makes deliberate efforts to encourage and celebrate youth expressions of culture, sexual identity, religion, and individuality, but efforts are limited and informal or staff receive no cultural competency training.</i></p>	<p>5</p> <p><i>Staff have deliberately built in ways to encourage and celebrate youth expressions of culture, sexual identity, religion, and individuality or staff have received cultural competency training.</i></p>
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<p>Evidence</p>	Rating	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	5

11. Are there any unusual circumstances today that I should be aware of during my visit? (e.g. staff absences, recent events, and venue changes)

OBSERVATION

II. PROGRAM OPERATIONS

1. Number of youth present:
2. Number of staff present:
3. What activities are rated on this form?
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)

III. PROGRAM ENVIRONMENT & SAFETY

The program space is safe, clean, and can be adapted for a variety of activities. Youth and staff interact in a friendly, respectful way.

1. There is enough space for the activities offered during the observation.		
1 <i>The program space is crowded. There is not room to move around comfortably.</i>	3 <i>Some program spaces are crowded, while others are not.</i>	5 <i>None of the program spaces are crowded. Youth and staff can move around comfortably.</i>
Evidence		Rating
		<input type="checkbox"/> 1
		<input type="checkbox"/> 2
		<input type="checkbox"/> 3
		<input type="checkbox"/> 4
		<input type="checkbox"/> 5
2. The program space is free of physical hazards. (Space(s) include any areas that youth access regularly when participating in program activities)		
1 <i>There are major hazards such as wet floors or exposed electrical wires or unlit entrance/exit.</i>	3 <i>There are minor safety hazards such as paper or other program materials on the floor, broken furniture or other minor environmental concerns.</i>	5 <i>There are no safety issues or hazards.</i>
Evidence		Rating <i>If there is an observed physical hazard that put youth at risk of injury, rate a 1 and elevate to grants director immediately.</i>
		<input type="checkbox"/> 1
		<input type="checkbox"/> 2
		<input type="checkbox"/> 3
		<input type="checkbox"/> 4
		<input type="checkbox"/> 5

3. Staff use effective strategies to focus youths' attention.
(e.g. hands up, call and response chants, Quiet Coyote)

1
Staff does not use group focus strategies OR strategies used are not effective.

3
Staff use group focus strategies with mixed success at getting youths' attention.

5
Staff use effective group focus strategies.

Evidence

Rating
If youth are engaged during session, rate 5

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 |

4. Interactions between staff and youth are predominately positive.

1
Staff and youth are predominately negative with one another, using dismissive or sarcastic tones of voice, rolling their eyes, sighing loudly, etc.

3
Staff and youth interact with one another in a generally positive fashion, (e.g. speaking in warm tones, making eye contact, smiling) but sometimes interact negatively.

5
Nearly all interactions among staff and youth are positive, characterized by warm tones of voice, frequent eye contact, and smiles. Few to no negative interactions are observed.

Evidence

Rating

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 |

Program Environment & Safety: Areas of Strength

Program Environment & Safety: Opportunities for Improvement

IV. PROMOTING DIVERSITY³

The program space, activities, and norms encourage inclusive attitudes and behaviors among staff and youth.

1. Activities are designed to deliberately mix youth to encourage youth to interact with peers from a variety of social groups.		
1 <i>Youth self-select into groups or activities OR youth are always in the same homogenous group.</i>	3 <i>Youth occasionally interact with a variety of peers OR such interactions are unstructured (e.g. talking in line while picking up snacks, sitting in a common space with minimal interaction).</i>	5 <i>Program activities provide intentional opportunities for youth to interact with a variety of peers (e.g. different clique, cross-age groups, partnering with peers of a different race or genders).</i>
Evidence		Rating <i>Rate "3" if not observed.</i>
		<input type="checkbox"/> 1
		<input type="checkbox"/> 2
		<input type="checkbox"/> 3
		<input type="checkbox"/> 4
		<input type="checkbox"/> 5
2. The program space, materials and content reflect the diversity of youth served.		
1 <i>The program space has no decorations/displays and very few materials (e.g. books, posters, CDs) that reflect youth served.</i>	3 <i>The program space has some decorations/displays and a limited number of materials (e.g. books, posters, CDs) that reflect youth served.</i>	5 <i>Nearly all of the program decorations and displays reflect a range of people and identity groups. Many materials reflect youth served.</i>
Evidence		Rating <i>Rate only for materials if space cannot be modified.</i>
		<input type="checkbox"/> 1
		<input type="checkbox"/> 2
		<input type="checkbox"/> 3
		<input type="checkbox"/> 4
		<input type="checkbox"/> 5

³ This section contains the observable aspects of the Promoting Diversity, Access, Inclusion program quality domain.
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3. Staff members model inclusive, tolerant, attitudes and behaviors.

<p>1</p> <p><i>Staff members do not counter others' derogatory or prejudicial language in the presence of youth.</i></p>	<p>3</p> <p><i>Staff members sometimes counter others' prejudicial language or behavior.</i></p>	<p>5</p> <p><i>Staff actively encourage tolerance and acceptance of others.</i></p>
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Evidence

Rating	
<i>Skip if no conflict observed.</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Skip
<input type="checkbox"/>	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	2
<input type="checkbox"/>	3
<input type="checkbox"/>	4
<input type="checkbox"/>	5

Promoting Diversity: Areas of Strength

Promoting Diversity: Opportunities for Improvement

V. YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Activities are designed and implemented with youth engagement in mind. Youth have meaningful input into activities and have multiple opportunities to play leadership roles within the program.

Supportive Environment

1. Staff address negative behaviors calmly and respectfully.			
<p>1</p> <p><i>Staff members rarely address negative behaviors OR address behaviors in an authoritarian manner by belittling or humiliating youth.</i></p>	<p>3</p> <p><i>Staff members address some, but not all negative behaviors. Staff usually react calmly and respectfully to negative behaviors they do address.</i></p>	<p>5</p> <p><i>Staff members address all negative behaviors in a calm, respectful way. Youth are not belittled or humiliated when they behave negatively.</i></p>	
<p>Evidence</p>		<p>Rating</p> <p><i>Rate "3" if not observed.</i></p>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	1
		<input type="checkbox"/>	2
		<input type="checkbox"/>	3
		<input type="checkbox"/>	4
		<input type="checkbox"/>	5
2. Staff members encourage and support youth as they build skills.			
<p>1</p> <p><i>Staff do not challenge youth to take risks, and/or staff critique, or correct students that make mistakes in trying out new skills without explanation (e.g. 'That's wrong').</i></p>	<p>3</p> <p><i>Staff challenge some youth to take risks and/or staff critique, correct, or punish students that make mistakes with explanation ('That's incorrect because...').</i></p>	<p>5</p> <p><i>Staff challenge all youth to take risks, and staff support and encourage youth to accept mistakes as opportunities for new learning and encourage youth to continue to improve on their skills.</i></p>	
<p>Evidence</p>		<p>Rating</p>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	1
		<input type="checkbox"/>	2
		<input type="checkbox"/>	3
		<input type="checkbox"/>	4
		<input type="checkbox"/>	5

3. Staff are attentive to all youth throughout the session.		
<p>1</p> <p><i>Staff members are primarily inattentive to the group (e.g. leaving the room frequently for calls or conversations, reading a magazine, etc.).</i></p>	<p>3</p> <p><i>Staff members interact with some, but not all youth (e.g. sitting with one group only, talking with just a few kids).</i></p>	<p>5</p> <p><i>Staff members are involved with all youth throughout the session (e.g. circulating among groups, talking with all youth who have a question or comment).</i></p>
<p>Evidence</p>		Rating
		<input type="checkbox"/> 1
		<input type="checkbox"/> 2
		<input type="checkbox"/> 3
		<input type="checkbox"/> 4
		<input type="checkbox"/> 5
4. Sessions incorporate multiple grouping strategies.		
<p>1</p> <p><i>Sessions do not show a blend of large group, small group, and individualized instruction.</i></p>	<p>3</p> <p><i>Sessions incorporate a few different grouping strategies, though most sessions take place in one group size. Groups' purpose may not be clear.</i></p>	<p>5</p> <p><i>Sessions incorporate a variety of group sizes, and group size is clearly linked to a purpose.</i></p>
<p>Evidence</p>		Rating <i>Rate 1 if not observed.</i>
		<input type="checkbox"/> 1
		<input type="checkbox"/> 2
		<input type="checkbox"/> 3
		<input type="checkbox"/> 4
		<input type="checkbox"/> 5

5. All youth have structured opportunities to be in charge of something the group needs or to help others.			
<p>1</p> <p><i>Youth have no structured opportunities to practice leadership skills (e.g. being in charge of something the group needs, showing a peer how to do something, leading a simple activity).</i></p>	<p>3</p> <p><i>Leadership roles available to youth are primarily oriented toward assisting staff (e.g. passing out materials, leading a line). Youth have limited autonomy in choosing roles.</i></p>	<p>5</p> <p><i>There are a variety of leadership roles available to youth, ranging from assisting staff to helping other students to leading simple activities.</i></p>	
Evidence		Rating	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	1
		<input type="checkbox"/>	2
		<input type="checkbox"/>	3
		<input type="checkbox"/>	4
		<input type="checkbox"/>	5

Engagement

6. Youth are engaged in the program session.			
<p>1</p> <p><i>Youth appear unmotivated to participate: they rarely respond to questions and do not engage with the activity or task. Staff frequently remind youth to stay on task OR allow many youth to sit idle.</i></p>	<p>3</p> <p><i>More than half of youth appear motivated to participate: most respond to questions and engage with the activity or task. Staff provide occasional reminders to stay focused; the majority of youth participate throughout.</i></p>	<p>5</p> <p><i>Nearly every youth appears motivated to participate. Staff provide few or no reminders to stay on task; nearly every youth participates throughout the session.</i></p>	
Evidence		Rating	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	1
		<input type="checkbox"/>	2
		<input type="checkbox"/>	3
		<input type="checkbox"/>	4
		<input type="checkbox"/>	5

7. Most of youths' time is spent actively while in the program.			
<p>1</p> <p><i>Youth spend a quarter or more of their time during the session waiting or watching (e.g. waiting for materials to be prepared, watching others do something, or waiting turns).</i></p>	<p>3</p> <p><i>Youth occasionally spend their time waiting or watching (e.g. 5-10 minutes at a time).</i></p>	<p>5</p> <p><i>Youth spend little to none of their time waiting or watching, and nearly all of their time actively (e.g. reading, writing, practicing, playing).</i></p>	
<p>Evidence</p>		Rating	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	1
		<input type="checkbox"/>	2
		<input type="checkbox"/>	3
		<input type="checkbox"/>	4
		<input type="checkbox"/>	5
8. Program activities balance structure and freedom.			
<p>1</p> <p><i>The program is highly structured, with little room for independent thinking, planning, and activity OR the program has no discernable structure and feels chaotic.</i></p>	<p>3</p> <p><i>The program provides for some structure and some independence, but at times youth receive inadequate direction and appear undirected or lost.</i></p>	<p>5</p> <p><i>Youth are able to direct their own work and think independently, but there are clear expectations and enough direction and support to ensure growth, learning, and meaningful skill development.</i></p>	
<p>Evidence</p>		Rating	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	1
		<input type="checkbox"/>	2
		<input type="checkbox"/>	3
		<input type="checkbox"/>	4
		<input type="checkbox"/>	5

Youth Development: Areas of Strength

Youth Development: Opportunities for Improvement

VI. INTENTIONAL SKILL BUILDING

Most program activities⁴ promote skill building by intentionally focusing on a specific skill, promoting successively higher levels of mastery, and allowing youth to present their work or perform for others.

1. Each session is focused on a specific skill, concept, or content area.			
<p>1</p> <p><i>Sessions are not clearly focused on a specific skill or content area.</i></p>	<p>3</p> <p><i>Sessions are focused on a specific skill or content area. Session components are somewhat related toward the learning target, but are not clearly linked (e.g. an icebreaker with no substantive relationship to the learning target).</i></p>	<p>5</p> <p><i>Sessions are focused on a specific skill or content area. Session components are closely linked to the learning target.</i></p>	
<p>Evidence</p>		<p>Rating</p>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>1</p>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>2</p>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>3</p>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>4</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>5</p>		
2. Active learning principles are incorporated into activities.			
<p>1</p> <p><i>Sessions are lecture only. No materials are provided for a hands-on component that allows youth to engage in in-depth investigations with objects, materials, events, and ideas.</i></p>	<p>3</p> <p><i>Materials are provided for hands-on investigation, but there are no clear links to abstract concepts.</i></p>	<p>5</p> <p><i>Sessions are a mix of hands-on investigation with objects, materials, and adult directed instruction, linking hands-on investigation with abstract concepts.</i></p>	
<p>Evidence</p>		<p>Rating</p> <p><i>Rate 1 if program does not have enrichment activities.</i></p>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>1</p>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>2</p>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>3</p>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>4</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>5</p>		

⁴ Does not include purely recreational activities, informal program times, or transition times.
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3. Sessions build on one another over the course of the activity.					
<p>1</p> <p><i>Sessions do not build on one another and no links are made between past, present, and future sessions within the course of the activity.</i></p>	<p>3</p> <p><i>Some sessions build on one another and some links are made between past, present, and future sessions within the course of the activity.</i></p>	<p>5</p> <p><i>Sessions build on one another and explicit links are made between past, present, and future sessions within the course of the activity.</i></p>			
Evidence		Rating			
		<input type="checkbox"/>	1		
		<input type="checkbox"/>	2		
		<input type="checkbox"/>	3		
		<input type="checkbox"/>	4		
Evidence		<input type="checkbox"/>	5		
		4. Sessions incorporate de-briefs ⁵ and checks for understanding.			
		<p>1</p> <p><i>There are no de-briefing opportunities or checks for understanding used in the session.</i></p>	<p>3</p> <p><i>Some de-briefing techniques and checks for understanding are used.</i></p>	<p>5</p> <p><i>De-briefing and checks for understanding are used throughout the session.</i></p>	
		Evidence		Rating	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	2				
<input type="checkbox"/>	3				
<input type="checkbox"/>	4				
Evidence		<input type="checkbox"/>	5		

⁵ Debriefing is any intentional and structured periods during the session where youth are given opportunities to talk about what they have learned or what they have been doing.
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5. Youth have the opportunity to build critical thinking skills.			
<p>1</p> <p><i>Staff are not observed to encourage critical thinking by asking open-ended questions.</i></p>	<p>3</p> <p><i>Staff sometimes ask open-ended questions and encourage youth to extend upon their answers and to draw conclusions.</i></p>	<p>5</p> <p><i>Staff regularly ask open-ended questions and encourage youth to extend upon their answers and to draw conclusions.</i></p>	
Evidence		Rating	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	1
		<input type="checkbox"/>	2
		<input type="checkbox"/>	3
		<input type="checkbox"/>	4
		<input type="checkbox"/>	5
6. Program intentionally links the development of skills to their application to high school, college, labor market, or life as an adult.			
<p>1</p> <p><i>Skill-development opportunities do not appear to lead to skills relevant and applicable to high school, college, labor market, or life as an adult.</i></p>	<p>3</p> <p><i>Skill-development opportunities appear somewhat relevant to high school, college, labor market, or life as an adult.</i></p>	<p>5</p> <p><i>There are ample opportunities widely accessible to all participants throughout the day that intentionally allow youth to develop skills relevant and applicable to high school, college, labor market, or life as an adult.</i></p>	
Evidence		Rating	
		<i>Rate "1" if not observed.</i>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	1
		<input type="checkbox"/>	2
		<input type="checkbox"/>	3
		<input type="checkbox"/>	4
<input type="checkbox"/>	5		

Intentional Skill Building: Areas of Strength

Intentional Skill Building: Opportunities for Improvement

AREAS OF STRENGTH & OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT OVERALL

Areas of Strength

Opportunities for Improvement