

Assessment of Program Practices Tool (APT) by the National Institute on Out of School Time (NIOST)

The **Assessment of Program Practices Tool (APT)** is an observation tool designed to offer a “snap shot” of a program’s quality in areas linked to youth skill outcomes. These ratings are intended to be viewed as a guide for reflection and to provide direction in quality improvement planning.

Each item in the tool is a statement describing a desired practice/behavior. The four-point rating scale is designed to answer the question “how true is it that this statement describes the behavior/practice that I observed?” For each item, a **bolded statement** describes the criteria for a rating of “4”, followed by further explanation. The criteria for a rating of “1” is also included in *italics*. These are examples of what an observer *might* see, not what they *must* see.

Sample Item	Rating
4. When youth behavior is inappropriate, staff use simple reminders to redirect behavior. Staff are always calm and straightforward. (Ex: Let youth know what is inappropriate and remind them of rules and behavioral expectations.) <i>1 = Staff always over-react to youth’s behavior. (Ex: Staff are visibly short-fused: “How many times do I have to tell you not to...?”)</i>	1 2 3 4

Rating Scale

- 1- Not True
- 2- Somewhat True
- 3- Mostly True
- 4- Very True

Domain	Examples of Items Measured
<i>Program Organization and Structure</i> Organization of Activity Nature of Activity Arrival Logistics and Greetings Transitions Schedule and Offering Space Adequacy	Activities begin promptly; sufficient materials and supplies; activity time free from interruptions/distractions Challenging, stimulating; offers youth choice, decision-making; opportunity for youth to work collaboratively Staff greet/converse with youth as they arrive; youth know/follow the arrival routine; activities are available Transitions are smooth, quick; staff communicate what is expected; staff properly address behavior issues Organized; variety of experiences; balance of activities and instructional approaches; balance of group sizes Equipment in good condition; organized, inclusive space that reflects youths’ work; conducive to learning
<i>Supportive Environment</i> Social-Emotional Environment Staff Build Relationships with and Support Youth Staff Positively Guide Behavior Informal Time: Staff Performance* Youth Relations with Adults Youth Relations with Peers	Positive, respectful, supportive staff-staff, staff-youth and youth-youth interactions; conflict resolution Professional conduct; friendly, encouraging, patient interactions; staff listen to and help youth when asked Fair, respectful behavior management; elicit youth attention, cooperation; supervision; allow youth flexibility Staff-youth interactions and conversations; staff intervene during peer conflicts; staff apply rules fairly Youth are cooperative, attentive; youth show interest in staff and seek out positive interactions with staff Positive, cooperative peer interactions; youth enjoy each other’s company; youth listen to each other
<i>Engagement in Activities and Learning</i> Staff Promote Engagement and Stimulate Thinking Youth Participation Informal Time: Youth Engagement and Behavior*	Staff energy, enthusiasm; facilitate discussion and reflection; encourage problem solving, decision-making Youth are busy and engaged; follow rules and behavioral expectations; contribute to and focus on activities Quality of peer interactions: cooperative, respectful, kind; youth follow rules, participate, control behavior

*These two domains correspond to the staff and youth items on the informal program/social time section of the APT. Not all programs have “informal time” and may not be rated in these areas.

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Survey of Academic and Youth Outcomes – Youth Version (SAYO Y) by the National Institute on Out of School Time (NIOST)

The **Survey of Academic and Youth Outcomes – Youth Version (SAYO Y)** is a survey filled out by youth on the following three areas: youth's experience in the out-of-school-time program, youth's sense of competence, and youth's future planning and expectations. There are two versions of the tool: one for Grades 4-8 and one for Grades 9-12. Due to the reading level required, SAYO Y might not be appropriate for children under Grade 4.

Boston After School & Beyond employs the program experience portion of the tool as a retrospective survey that youth fill out at the end of their program. This provides an essential youth perspective on program experiences and quality that complements the APT.

Each item in the tool is a statement or question related to the youth's experience in the program or how they felt the program helped them. Depending on the item, the four-point rating scale is on a range of "No to Yes" or "Don't agree to Agree a lot." For Sample Item 1 shown below, the rating scale is from "No to Yes", and for Sample Item 2 the rating scale is from "Don't agree to Agree a lot."

Sample Item	1	2	3	4
1. Is there an adult here who is interested in what you think about things?	No	Mostly No	Mostly Yes	Yes
2. Coming here has helped me to try harder in school.	Don't Agree	Agree a little	Mostly agree	Agree a lot

Domain	Examples of Items Measured
Supportive Environment Helps Youth Socially Supportive Social Environment Supportive Adults Present Teamwork* Self-Regulation*	Program helps youth feel good about him/herself, find out what they are good at, and make new friends Youth interactions: friendly, respectful, listen to each other; does teasing occur; has friends in the program Adults are interested in youth's thoughts, talk to them, help with problems; youth respects, listens to adults Learned about compromise, sharing responsibility, patience, and feedback; learned emotions impact others Learned that emotions impact performance; became better at handling stress and managing emotions
Engagement in Activities and Learning Youth Enjoy and Feel Engaged Youth Feel Challenged Helps Youth Academically Opportunities for Leadership and Responsibility Youth Have Choice and Autonomy Problem Solving*	Youth likes coming to the program and has fun; isn't bored at the program; can find things they like to do Learns new things; feels challenged in a good way; does new things Program helps youth get homework done; helps them try harder and do better in school Youth gets to help plan and lead activities; is in charge of things and helps make decisions; helps community Youth can suggest ideas for activities; choose which activities they do and with whom; can spend time alone Observed how others solve problems, developed plans to solve problems, used imagination to problem solve
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Survey of Academic and Youth Outcomes – Teacher/Staff Version (SAYO T/S) by the National Institute on Out of School Time (NIOST)

The **Survey of Academic and Youth Outcomes – Teacher/Staff Version (SAYO T/S)** uses brief pre- and post-participation outcome surveys to collect data about youth from regular education teachers (SAYO T) and afterschool staff (SAYO S). The survey is based on a menu approach in which programs collect data on the social-emotional and academic outcomes that are most aligned with their goals for the youth that they serve.

Each outcome area is measured by asking teachers and staff to respond to four to seven questions related to observable youth behaviors. These items have been extensively tested and found to work as a single scale that effectively captures the outcome being measured. Teacher and/or staff responses to these surveys can be completed for all participating youth or for a sample of youth in a program. The pre-post design allows student skill growth to be measured.

With the exception of the academic performance outcomes, each item in the tool is a statement describing a desired practice/behavior. The five-point rating scale asks teachers/staff to answer the question “How often does this student do the described behavior?” Sample questions are shown in the box below.

Please indicate how often this student:	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
1. Shows consideration for peers.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Makes own effort to begin assignment before asking for assistance.	1	2	3	4	5

The academic performance outcomes are only included on the SAYO T. For these, teachers are asked to rate the student’s performance in relation to grade level standards in each subject area. This four-point scale (1-4) classifies a student’s performance as poor (significantly below grade level standards), needs improvement (somewhat below grade level standards), satisfactory (at grade level standards), or very good (above grade level standards).

Outcomes	Examples of Items Measured
<i>Social-emotional Skills</i> Self-Regulation Communication Skills Relations with Adults Relations with Peers Perseverance Critical Thinking Problem Solving Leadership	Works well independently; controls behavior; maintains focus on task; is self-reflective, thinks/plans ahead Asks and answers questions; contributes relevant ideas and information effectively; speaks loudly and clearly Shows respect and acknowledges praise; seeks appropriate assistance and support Gets along with other students; shows consideration; forms friendships Sets goals and prioritizes tasks; persists on task even when experiencing difficulty Analyzes relationships between ideas; considers other perspectives; identifies biases; explains conclusions Supports statements with evidence; identifies, describes and generates multiple solutions to problems Seeks out learning; offers new ideas; motivates others and understand social situations; organized
<i>Academic</i> Homework Academic Performance	Completeness, neatness, organization, accuracy, application of concepts and skills Significantly below, somewhat below, at or above grade level standards for the subject area.

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Introduction to the Survey of Academic and Youth Outcomes (SAYO Teacher Survey)

What is the SAYO T?

The Survey of Academic and Youth Outcomes or SAYO uses brief pre and post surveys to collect information about youth participation and experiences in afterschool programs. The SAYO T helps out-of-school time programs:

1. Measure and track changes in selected youth outcomes.
2. Gain useful information for improving the design and quality of the program.
3. Increase their focus on selected youth outcome areas.

What does the SAYO T measure?

SAYO outcomes are the stepping stones that help youth develop the skills, attitudes, and behaviors that will help them be successful in school, work, and life. Research suggests that youth who possess key social-emotional skills and behaviors – such as strong communication and problem solving skills, positive behavior, and the ability to get along with peers – are more likely to experience success in school, work, and life. Findings from a Massachusetts study found that staff and teacher ratings of youth's intermediary skills and behaviors (as measured by the SAYO) were associated with teacher ratings of youth's academic progress. This suggests that the SAYO captures the key skills and behaviors youth may need to be successful.

What does the SAYO T not do?

The SAYO T alone cannot *prove* that your program is *responsible* for positive youth outcomes. The SAYO T demonstrates changes in youth and can help explore the possible reasons for these changes. OST programs are among many factors that influence the development and wellbeing of youth. Parenting, school experiences, peers, and broader societal factors all impact youth development on a daily basis. In order to scientifically prove that an OST program is the reason for SAYO T changes, one would need to collect SAYO T data from a comparison group of youth who did not attend the program.

Determining Who Will Complete the SAYO T

Important notes to keep in mind:

1. The SAYO T should be completed by **an adult who knows the child well**.
2. Programs should strive to have the **same** individual or team complete both pre and post SAYO T's on individual youth. This will allow your program to more accurately capture changes that may have occurred over the course of the program. **Pick a staff member/teacher who you expect will still be with the program at the end of the program.**

Individual Staff/Teacher Ratings

For some programs there is a logical staff person who should be asked to complete a child's SAYO T. For example, a team leader or activity specialist. For other programs there is not one staff member that knows a child best. In these cases, programs may decide to complete SAYO T's as a team.

Overview of Measurement Tools

Team Ratings

Many OST programs have found benefits to completing SAYO T surveys as a team, for instance, having the opportunity to discuss the needs of individual youth. However, please note that completing SAYO T's as a team may require more time than individual ratings. Programs wishing to complete SAYO T's as a team have two options:

1. OST staff members gather as a team to discuss the individual child. As a group, the team assigns ratings that reflect the consensus opinion of all present.

-OR-

2. OST staff members each complete SAYO T ratings independently – without discussing the child or their ratings with others ahead of time. Next, staff gather to share their independent ratings in a team meeting. At this point, teams create an average SAYO T rating for the child that reflects the consensus of the team.

Before you rate youth using the SAYO T, be sure that...

1. You have known the youth for a great enough period of time.
2. You are familiar with the SAYO T sections you will be using.
3. You have recently spent time observing the youth you will be rating.
4. You assign honest and accurate ratings. This means that:
 - You assign ratings based on typical behavior patterns of the youth you are observing.
 - Don't let uncommon events, cultural biases, or your own strong positive or negative feelings about a youth influence your ratings.
 - You assign ratings that accurately reflect the youth's behavior.
 - Be sure not to inflate or deflate ratings.

Assigning Honest and Accurate Ratings

Assign ratings that reflect actual and typical behavior for that youth. Adults making SAYO T ratings should try not to let uncommon events, cultural biases, or their own strong positive or negative feelings about a young person influence their ratings. Everyone's behavior normally fluctuates. We all have good and bad days. However, people also tend to have patterns in their behavior. For example, an outgoing youth may have a day when they are quiet, but typically they are talkative and enthusiastic. The SAYO T asks you to report on the typical patterns you see in youth's behavior.

Assign ratings that are an accurate reflection of the youth's behavior. Inflating ratings (assigning a rating that is higher than it should be) will make it more difficult to determine whether youth have improved in their skills and behaviors over the course of the year. It is also important to note that deflating ratings (assigning a score that is lower than it should be) will not provide your program with useful data. *Inflating and deflating ratings are a violation of ethical research practices.* If ratings have been found to be inaccurately assigned, this will undermine confidence in your SAYO T findings.

Communication is the Key to Successful Data Collection

Teachers and staff are vital members of your evaluation team. It is important to communicate early and often with your OST staff about your SAYO T evaluation plans. Many programs have found that gaining the support of staff, teachers, and site coordinators prior to distributing the SAYO T survey is **key** to obtaining complete, accurate, and timely data.

Staff and teachers will want to understand:

- **Why** you are collecting SAYO T data,
- **How** to assign ratings, and
- **When and how** they should return their survey.

Communicating this information in person and in a letter is a critical first step. When you distribute surveys, include a “cover letter” with your surveys explaining the purpose of the SAYO T evaluation, what is expected of staff and teachers, instructions and deadlines for returning and/or completing surveys online, and how this survey information will help the youth you serve. Be sure to thank staff and teachers for completing SAYO T surveys.

Holistic Student Assessment (HSA) by the PEAR Institute

The **Holistic Student Assessment (HSA)*** is an early-detection self-report tool for program planning that provides a profile of a student's social-emotional strengths and challenges. Each of the constructs measured (listed and defined below) is standardized by gender and grade-level and converted to a standard deviation score (Z-score). If a student scores one or more standard deviations (SD) in either direction from the norm for their gender and grade-level, they are assigned a strength or challenge depending on the direction of that construct. Based on their number of strengths and challenges, students are assigned to a tier of low, moderate or high social-emotional support need. Data can be reported at individual, classroom, program, school and district levels.

Construct	Definition	Sample Question
<i>Resiliencies</i>		
Action Orientation	Engagement in physical and hands-on activities.	I like being active and moving my body.
Emotional Control	Self-regulation of distress; management of anger.	I react to things so quickly I get in trouble.
Assertiveness	Confidence in putting oneself forward; standing up for what one believes.	I stand up for things that matter to me.
Trust	Perception of other people as helpful and trustworthy.	People will help someone who is in trouble.
Empathy	Recognition of other's feelings and experiences.	I like to help people with their problems.
Reflection	Inner thought process, self-awareness; responsive toward societal issues.	I try to understand the world I live in.
Optimism	Enthusiasm for and hopefulness about one's life.	I am happy with the choices I make in my life.
<i>Relationships</i>		
Relationships with Peers	Positive, supportive social connections with friends and classmates.	I have friends who care about me.
Relationships with Adults	Positive connections and attitudes toward interactions with adults.	There are adults I look up to and admire.
Teamwork	Collaborating and communicating with others towards a shared goal.	Teamwork is important to bring together different ideas.
<i>Learning & School Engagement</i>		
Learning Interest	Desire to learn and acquire new knowledge.	I am curious about new ideas.
Critical Thinking	Examination of information, exploration of ideas, independent thought.	I like to figure out how things work.
Perseverance	Persistence in work and problem solving despite obstacles.	When I try to accomplish something, I achieve it.
Academic Motivation	Incentive to succeed in school.	I will get good grades on school exams.
School Bonding	Positive personal connections and the sense of belonging in one's school.	I feel like people understand me at my school.
Growth Mindset	Belief that one's success can be developed through effort.	People can get smarter if they work hard.

Holistic Student Assessment Retrospective (HSA-R) by the Program in Education, Afterschool & Resiliency

The **Holistic Student Assessment Retrospective (HSA-R)*** measures the same constructs as the HSA. It is administered to students at the end of their programming and asks them to think about a variety of statements in relation to their participation in the program. This allows students to self-report their growth in social-emotional skills. Some sample HSA-R questions are listed below.

<i>Because of my summer program...</i>	<i>Much less now</i>		<i>About the same</i>			<i>Much more now</i>	
I like to learn new things	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I see someone being bullied, I feel sorry for them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
If I fail to solve a problem, I try again until I find the solution.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I like to figure out how things work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There is at least one adult I can talk to about my problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7