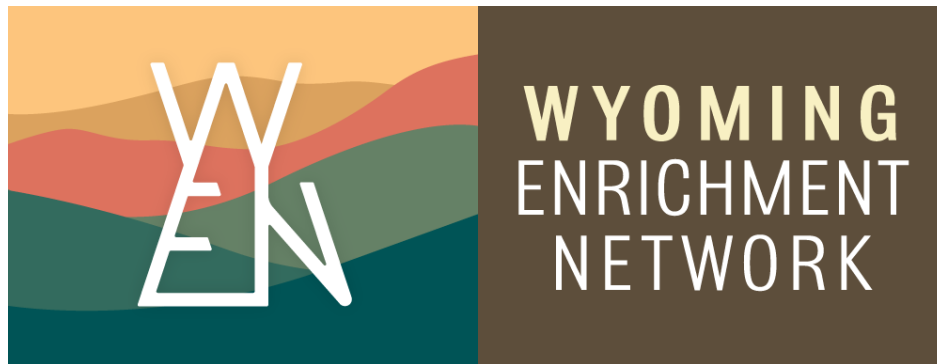




Thrive Beyond the Bell

Program Quality Practices

A Strengths-Based Reflection Tool for Wyoming Out-of-School Time Programs

Adapted from the Wyoming Afterschool Alliance's 2019 Program Quality Practices Self-Assessment

wyoenrichmentnetwork.org

Why We Reflect

The Wyoming Enrichment Network bridges the gap between Wyoming's out-of-school programs and the communities they uplift — fueling them with resources, support, and opportunities that inspire lifelong learning, growth, and connection. This tool carries that same spirit into program self-reflection.

This resource began as the Wyoming Afterschool Alliance's Program Quality Practices Self-Assessment (2019). We've reshaped it to reflect who we are today: a network built on helping people see possibility in the youth they serve, and in themselves.

This is a reflection tool, not a compliance checklist. It's built on the belief that every program — like every young person — has real strengths to build from. Use it to notice what's already working, name where you want to grow, and set a course for continuous quality improvement grounded in your own program's story.

What's Inside

This tool has two parts. Part One, Program Quality Practices, is organized around four Core Pillars as reflected in the Profile of a Graduate — Learn, Work, Contribute, and Thrive — describing what a young person experiences in your program. Part Two, Organizational Capacity Assessment, covers the domains that ask a different question: does the organization itself have what it needs to deliver and sustain that experience? Keeping these separate keeps each one honest — a program can offer a rich, high-quality experience even while the organization behind it is still building capacity, and naming both clearly helps you plan for each on its own terms.

How to Use This Tool

A program leader or team can work through one pillar at a time or the whole tool at once. For each quality practice statement, read the indicators beneath it and mark the box that best reflects where your program stands today, using the scale below. There is no passing score — only a clearer picture of where your program is strong and where it's ready to grow.

Just Getting Started — This is an area of real opportunity. Naming it here is the first step toward growth.

Growing — This practice is emerging and building momentum.

Strong — This practice is consistent and well established.

Thriving — This is a signature strength your program could share with others.

N/A — This practice doesn't apply to your program's model.

Working as a team strengthens this process. Consider giving every staff member time to reflect individually first, then bring the team together to compare notes, build consensus, and choose priorities. At the end of each pillar, use the Reflect & Plan box to name a strength worth celebrating and a next step worth pursuing.

Two Lenses, Four Pillars

Part One is organized around four Core Pillars, chosen because they line up cleanly with two frameworks at once. The Clover Model, a developmental framework created by Dr. Gil G. Noam and Bailey Triggs at The PEAR Institute: Partnerships in Education and Resilience (Harvard Medical School and McLean Hospital), describes four domains young people move through and return to across their whole lives: Active Engagement, Assertiveness, Belonging, and Reflection. The Wyoming Profile of a Graduate, the Wyoming State Board of Education's statewide vision for a Wyoming graduate, organizes its own vision into four pillars: Learn, Work, Contribute, and Thrive, plus seven Key Competencies drawn from them.

The two frameworks turned out to describe the same four things from different angles, so we built this tool around that overlap: Learn pairs with Reflection, Work pairs with Active Engagement, Contribute pairs with Belonging, and Thrive pairs with Assertiveness. Out-of-school time is exactly where this gets built — a young person doesn't develop initiative, collaboration, or self-advocacy from a single class period, they build it through repeated, real experience. Each pillar below opens with both connections side by side.



Learn more about the [Clover Model here](#).



You can access the [Wyoming Profile of a Graduate here](#).

Part Two intentionally carries neither connection. Organizational domains describe the conditions that make quality possible, not a young person's direct experience — so they sit outside both frameworks by design.

PART ONE

Program Quality Practices

Four Core Pillars — Learn, Work, Contribute, and Thrive — organize what a young person actually experiences in your program day to day. Each pillar opens with its connection to the Clover Model and Profile of a Graduate, then moves into the specific practices that build it as drawn from the domains of the original Program Quality Practices.

LEARN — Nurturing the Mind

A program that reflects openly on its own practice — setting goals, using real data, welcoming feedback — teaches young people to do the same with their own growth. This pillar is about building that mindset into the program itself.

Clover Connection — Reflection

Reflection is the Clover Model's term for making meaning of experience. Late adolescence is a time where it fully emerges, but the capacity to learn from experience is a need every program — and every person — at any age.

Profile of a Graduate Connection

The Learn pillar calls for a mindset where failure is recognized as an opportunity for growth (Key Competency 6) — precisely what a reflective, growth-minded program models for young people every day.

Reflective Practice and Continuous Growth

formerly Assessment, Planning, and Improvement

Growth-minded programs treat data as a compass rather than a report card. This domain reflects the practices that help a program learn from its own experience and keep getting stronger, together.

A. We set clear, mission-aligned goals.					
What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
Program goals are written, shared, and connected to our mission and design.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Staff know the program's goals and how their work supports them.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Notes — what we're noticing, and why:					

B. We track our progress and use what we learn.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
The program gathers a range of feedback — surveys, focus groups, evaluations — and uses it to inform real decisions about quality and design.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Leadership champions a culture where continuous improvement is welcomed, and assessment results shape training and program adjustments.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>Notes — what we're noticing, and why:</i> 					

C. We grow this work together.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
Staff, volunteers, families, and board members understand and value continuous improvement.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Stakeholders take part in evaluation, receive the results, and help carry improvement plans forward.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>Notes — what we're noticing, and why:</i> 					

A strength we're proud of in this pillar:

A place we're excited to grow:

WORK — Activating the Body

This pillar covers the spaces, activities, and safeguards that let a young person's body and hands lead the way — from a well-designed project to a well-run emergency drill. Engaging the body and protecting it are two sides of the same commitment.

Clover Connection — Active Engagement

Active Engagement is the Clover Model's term for physically connecting with the world. Every young person, regardless of physical ability, builds mental and emotional strength through their body. It is especially important early (ages 0–5) and stays present for life.

Profile of a Graduate Connection

Hands-on, real-world learning builds directly toward the Work pillar (Key Competencies 1, 2, 7) — and it only works if young people are safe, healthy, and well while they take it on.

Environments and Experiences that Spark Learning

formerly Physical Environment, Curriculum, and Program Activities

Wyoming's young people deserve spaces and experiences that invite them to move, build, create, and explore. This domain reflects the environments and activities that spark curiosity and give young people a genuine reason to be excited about being there.

A. Our space invites safe, developmentally rich exploration.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
The space is clean, safe, and organized, giving young people the confidence to explore freely.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Areas flex to support active play, quiet focus, creative work, and shared meals — and welcome youth of every ability.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Materials are accessible, developmentally appropriate, and reflect the interests and cultures of the young people who use them.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Notes — what we're noticing, and why:

B. Young people help shape the space and the activities in it.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
Young people help arrange, personalize, and put materials away with real independence.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Displays and materials celebrate a wide range of identities and steer clear of stereotypes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Notes — what we're noticing, and why:

C. Activities are intentional, engaging, and build real skills.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
Activities align with the program's mission and give young people a genuine reason to be curious.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Staff know each young person's needs, learning style, and abilities, and shape activities accordingly.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Programming builds 21st-century skills and real-world experience — through project-based learning, field trips, or service learning — with a clear progression from introduction to mastery.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Notes — what we're noticing, and why:

D. Movement and physical activity are a daily part of the program.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
Daily recreation, sports, or fitness activities welcome young people of every ability, indoors or out.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The program follows healthy eating and physical activity best practices (e.g., NAA HEPA Standards).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

D. Movement and physical activity are a daily part of the program.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
<i>Notes — what we're noticing, and why:</i>					

Safety, Health, and Wellness

Trust is the foundation every other domain rests on. This domain reflects the systems that keep young people, families, and staff safe, healthy, and prepared.

A. Clear systems and trained staff keep everyone safe.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
Written policies guide safety reporting, staff-to-youth ratios, and safe pick-up, entry, and exit procedures.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Staff are trained in CPR, first aid, and relevant health and safety codes, and know how to report hazards.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Current participant, family contact, and medical information is accessible, and participant confidentiality is protected.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>Notes — what we're noticing, and why:</i>					

B. Health, nutrition, and wellness practices support everyone in the program.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
The program tracks individual health needs and adjusts activities, meals, and medication practices accordingly.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Healthy, nutritious food is served, with allergy information posted and young people involved in food routines when possible.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Young people showing signs of illness are cared for separately, with families notified as appropriate.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B. Health, nutrition, and wellness practices support everyone in the program.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
<i>Notes — what we're noticing, and why:</i>					

C. Everyone knows what to do in an emergency.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
Clear procedures exist for fire, natural disaster, and lockdown situations, and are practiced through regular drills.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Emergency and closure plans, and a fast family-communication procedure, are shared at enrollment and kept current.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>Notes — what we're noticing, and why:</i>					

A strength we're proud of in this pillar:

A place we're excited to grow:

CONTRIBUTE — Connecting the Heart

The relationships young people build with peers and staff, and the relationships a program builds with families and community, feed the same muscle: showing up for other people. This pillar covers both.

Clover Connection — Belonging

Belonging is the Clover Model's term for building strong relationships with peers and adults. It's central to our earliest attachments and then becomes very important again in early adolescence, when the opinions of peers take on primary importance.

Profile of a Graduate Connection

Strong relationships and real community partnership build the interpersonal, collaborative, and civic capacity at the center of the Contribute pillar (Key Competency 5).

Relationships and Belonging

formerly Relationships

Every young person deserves to know, without question, that they belong. This domain reflects the relationships — peer to peer, staff to youth, staff to staff — that build a program's sense of community.

A. Young people build supportive, respectful relationships with each other.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
Staff model and encourage collaboration, teamwork, and positive communication among peers.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Staff teach and celebrate respect for individual differences.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Notes — what we're noticing, and why:

B. Program professionals see, know, and warmly connect with each young person.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
Staff notice and respond to each young person's abilities, interests, temperament, and culture.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Staff and volunteers greet young people and families warmly, and build trusting relationships over time.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The program builds on each young person's unique interests, talents, and skills.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B. Program professionals see, know, and warmly connect with each young person.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
<i>Notes — what we're noticing, and why:</i>					

C. Young people experience emotional safety and belong to a real community.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
Staff foster physical, social, and emotional security for every participant.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Young people help shape guidelines that keep the space respectful and free from bias.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Young people have real opportunities to express, share, and celebrate their identity and culture.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>Notes — what we're noticing, and why:</i>					

D. Program professionals use positive approaches to guide behavior and relationships.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
Expectations are built cooperatively with young people and held consistently.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Staff help young people build social problem-solving skills and work through conflict themselves whenever possible.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Staff model the same cooperation, empathy, and respect with each other that they hope to see in young people.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>Notes — what we're noticing, and why:</i>					

Family and Community Partnership

formerly Families and Communities

A young person's growth is a shared project across an entire community. This domain reflects how a program builds real partnership with families and the wider community — the same bridge-building at the heart of WYEN's own mission.

A. Families are genuine, informed partners.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
The program builds ongoing, responsive family-engagement strategies and communicates accomplishments and concerns in a timely, respectful way.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Families are kept informed through multiple channels, and hours, affordability, and communication reflect real family needs — including the languages families speak.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>Notes — what we're noticing, and why:</i>					

B. The program is culturally responsive by design.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
The program commits — in writing, training, and daily practice — to learning about, valuing, and respecting the backgrounds of the young people and families it serves.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Programming reflects the cultures, languages, and beliefs represented in the community and welcomes family input on program planning.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>Notes — what we're noticing, and why:</i>					

C. The program partners intentionally with schools and the wider community.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
The program builds ongoing partnerships with schools to align curriculum, share information, and coordinate professional development.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

C. The program partners intentionally with schools and the wider community.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
Staff connect young people and families to community resources, and young people build connection to their broader community through service and real-world experience.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Notes — what we're noticing, and why:

A strength we're proud of in this pillar:

A place we're excited to grow:

A program that hands young people real decisions, real leadership, and real ownership over their own experience is building exactly the self-directed capacity this pillar is named for.

Clover Connection — Assertiveness

Assertiveness is the Clover Model's term for agency, self-efficacy, and voice. It often emerges in middle childhood and continues to shape identity, leadership, and self-direction throughout adolescence.

Profile of a Graduate Connection

Voice, choice, and leadership build the self-awareness, initiative, and follow-through the Thrive pillar names directly (Key Competencies 6, 7) — self-advocacy, goal-setting, and ownership of one's own growth.

Youth Voice, Choice, and Leadership

formerly Child and Youth Engagement

Young people are capable leaders and decision-makers today, not simply leaders-in-waiting. This domain reflects how a program invites youth voice, agency, and initiative into everyday practice.

A. Young people help shape and lead program activities.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
Staff invite every young person, regardless of ability, to offer ideas, take initiative, and take on leadership roles that shape program content.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Young people take part in real decision-making, not just token input.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Notes — what we're noticing, and why:

B. Young people are supported in making choices, solving problems, and taking initiative.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
Staff use approaches that build independent thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills, and model good decision-making.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Staff attribute success to effort, practice, and persistence, helping young people see growth as something they build.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B. Young people are supported in making choices, solving problems, and taking initiative.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
Young people choose from a wide variety of activities, and programming flexes to include everyone.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>Notes — what we're noticing, and why:</i> 					

C. Young people's accomplishments are recognized and celebrated.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
Staff offer frequent, specific, informal recognition.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Young people have real chances to display or formally present their work — performances, showcases, readings.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>Notes — what we're noticing, and why:</i> 					

A strength we're proud of in this pillar:

A place we're excited to grow:

PART TWO

Organizational Capacity Assessment

These two domains step back from the young person's direct experience to ask a different question: does the organization itself have what it needs to deliver and sustain that experience over time? Leadership, financial stewardship, and staff support don't show up in a young person's day, but they make everything in Part One possible.

Treat this section as a separate, honest look at organizational health — useful for board planning, staff supervision, and funder conversations — rather than a measure of program quality itself. A program can be genuinely strong in Part One while an organization is still building capacity in Part Two, and naming that difference clearly is more useful than blending the two together. That's also why this section carries no Clover Model or Profile of a Graduate connections: those frameworks describe a young person's development, not an organization's.

Organizational Domain A Leadership, Vision, and Sustainability

formerly Leadership and Administration

Strong programs are built to last. This domain reflects the leadership, financial stewardship, and long-range planning that let a program keep showing up for young people year after year.

A. Fiscal management supports the program's mission and its future.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
Leadership develops and follows an annual budget, uses sound accounting practices, and directs funding toward program goals.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The program pursues financial and in-kind community support to strengthen long-term sustainability.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Notes — what we're noticing, and why:

B. Decisions are shaped by the people they affect, guided by a clear vision.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
The program's mission and strategic plan are clear, responsive to community needs, and shaped with input from staff, young people, families, and community.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B. Decisions are shaped by the people they affect, guided by a clear vision.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
The organization has a strong structure — including a communication process and a plan for staff recruitment, retention, and support — and advocates for the program publicly.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>Notes — what we're noticing, and why:</i> 					

C. Policies and practices welcome every young person.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
The building meets, or has a clear plan to meet, ADA accessibility standards.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The program tracks relevant needs, removes barriers through reasonable modification, and provides thoughtful accommodations — training, adjusted ratios, community partnerships — for every young person's participation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>Notes — what we're noticing, and why:</i> 					

A strength we're proud of in this domain:

A place we're excited to grow:

Organizational Domain B Professional Growth and Support

formerly Professional Development

A program can only be as strong as the people who show up for young people every day. This domain reflects how a program invests in, equips, and supports the adults doing this work.

A. Staff are well matched to the young people they serve.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
A consistent hiring process — including reference checks, interviews, and required background clearances — confirms staff have the qualities and qualifications for their role.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The program actively recruits staff who reflect the community served, aligned with the NAA Core Knowledge and Competencies.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Notes — what we're noticing, and why:

B. Every staff member has a real professional development plan.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
Individual development plans are created and reviewed annually, addressing programmatic strategies, youth development, and health and safety.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Staff receive formal evaluation at least twice a year, informal feedback, and access to training, conferences, and credentialing support.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Notes — what we're noticing, and why:

C. New and current staff receive genuine welcome and ongoing support.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
New staff review a written job description and program policies, and are introduced to relevant field resources.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

C. New and current staff receive genuine welcome and ongoing support.

What this might look like	Just Getting Started	Growing	Strong	Thriving	N/A
Staff receive continuous supervision, feedback, and reflective practice time, and regular meetings keep the team connected.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Compensation, benefits, and working conditions reflect the program's real commitment to its people.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>Notes — what we're noticing, and why:</i>					

A strength we're proud of in this domain:

A place we're excited to grow:

From Reflection to Action

Quality improvement is a practice, not a one-time event. Once your team has worked through both parts of this tool, come back together to look across everything you noticed. Keeping Program Quality and Organizational Capacity as separate conversations helps each get the honest attention it deserves.

Part One — Program Quality Priorities

Which pillars hold your program's clearest strengths, and which one or two will you focus on growing next?

Strengths we want to protect and build on

Priorities, next steps, and who owns them

Part Two — Organizational Capacity Priorities

Where is the organization itself strong, and where does it need investment to keep supporting great programming?

Strengths, priorities, next steps, and who owns them

Other Considerations

- ☐ Is your team familiar with the NAA Core Knowledge and Competencies?
- ☐ Does your program currently use a formal quality assessment tool?
- ☐ Has any staff member earned the Afterschool and Youth Development Credential?



Acknowledgments

This tool adapts the Wyoming Afterschool Alliance's 2019 Program Quality Practices Self-Assessment, originally developed by a core team led by Linda Barton, Director of the Wyoming Afterschool Alliance, and Elizabeth Starr of the National Institute on Out of School Time, with contributions from program leaders across Wyoming and drawing on quality standards from states and communities across the country.

Developmental framework language throughout draws on the Clover Model, a Developmental Process Theory created by Gil G. Noam, Ed.D., Dr. Habil, Bailey Triggs, M.S., from Partnerships in Education and Resilience (PEAR), an organization incubated at Harvard Medical School and McLean Hospital, formerly The PEAR Institute. Learn more at pearinc.org.

Part One's pillar and competency language draws on the Wyoming Profile of a Graduate, developed by the Wyoming State Board of Education in collaboration with residents, educators, families, and employers across the state. Learn more at wyboardofeducation.org/32154_1.

The Wyoming Enrichment Network strengthens the people, programs, and partnerships that help young people explore their interests, develop new skills, and find meaningful paths to adulthood. Learn more at wyoenrichmentnetwork.org.