

## Elements of High Quality Programs & Effective Practice

High quality programs are...

### RESPONSIVE

- Program staff work well together to be RESPONSIVE to the unique needs of the children and youth in their program
  - Staff cooperate and communicate openly with one another
  - Staff respond to one another and the children with respect and acceptance
  - Staff serve as positive adult role models
- Staff protect and enhance the health of children and youth
  - Systems are in place to protect children and youth from harm
  - Program environment is safe
  - Program serves nutritious foods and drinks that RESPOND to the needs of children and youth
- Program is REPONSIVE to the needs of children, youth and families in their community
  - Program makes itself affordable to all families by using all possible community resources and sources of subsidy
  - Program's hours of operation are based on families' needs
  - Program serves as a link or liaison between families and community resources by providing information about services and resources to RESPOND to the distinct needs of children and their families

### RICH

- Program's indoor environment is resource RICH and encourages children and youth to take initiative and explore their interests and natural curiosities
  - Indoor space reflects the work and interests of the children
  - Program environment is RICH in diversity and reflects the backgrounds and cultures of the children and their families
  - Program provides a wide range of materials that support the "whole child"- including their physical, social, emotional and academic development
- Program's outdoor play area promotes physical activity and encourages children and youth to be independent and creative
  - Children participate in play and/or organized physical activity outdoors daily
  - Outdoor space is suitable for a wide variety of activities

- Activities are planned that encourage life long physical fitness
- Program's curriculum is RICH in planned, posted activities that support the development of the "whole child"
  - Activities are intentional and are intended to contribute to the children's development
  - Academic development is encouraged daily through the creative *infusion* of reading, science and math into fun activities and dedicated homework space
  - The individual interests of the children are the starting-point for most activities
  - Curriculum includes regular activities that celebrate the values of different cultures and the broad diversity of human experience

## RELEVANT

- Program supports staff to make their work experience positive through RELEVANT professional development and resources
  - Staff receive ample training in areas RELEVANT to their learning/professional development needs and the needs of the children and families in their program
  - Program has a plan in place to offer the best possible wages, benefits and working conditions in an effort to reduce staff turnover
  - Staff are given paid preparation time and sufficient time to discuss their own concerns regarding the program
- Program ensures its RELEVANCE to children, youth and their families by embracing youth participation and engagement as a core value
  - The voices of children and youth are listened to and heard!
  - Staff ask children to share their ideas for planning so that activities will reflect children's interests
  - Program provides leadership roles and opportunities for children and youth and involve children in decision making processes
- Program and staff engage families in RELEVANT ways and encourage their participation in all aspects of programming
  - Program has good two way communication and builds trust with families
  - Program continually asks for feedback from families and involves them in decision making processes
  - Program recruits family members to be volunteers and organizes volunteering opportunities
- Program partners with schools of children served to connect and make afterschool learning RELEVANT to school day community & curriculum
  - Program staff and classroom teachers schedule regular meetings to discuss learning goals and the individual needs of students who may be struggling academically and /or socially
  - Afterschool program and school share training opportunities