

# Core Competencies for Supervisors of Youth Work Professionals

- 1** Adopts a systematic approach to ensure that all staff consistently embrace positive child and youth development practices.
- 2** Ability to ensure a safe, inclusive, welcoming, and respectful program environment.
- 3** Ability to manage program staff and promote professional growth and development.
- 4** Ability to implement and develop the program to achieve desired outcomes.
- 5** Ability to create and manage systems for effective program operation.
- 6** Ability build and sustain collaborative relationships with multiple stakeholders.
- 7** Ability to lead and manage change.
- 8** Ability to advocate on behalf of the program, its participants and staff.



## Definition:

Youth work professionals are individuals who work with or on behalf of youth to facilitate their personal, social and educational development to enable them to gain voice, influence and place in society as they make the transition from dependence to independence. Three assumptions help define the workforce:

- Youth work professionals are employed primarily in non-compulsory educational and developmental settings;
- Youth work professionals work with young people primarily between ages 6 and 18; and
- Youth work professionals, like social workers or nurses, can be employed by a variety of systems and settings.

The complete list of core competencies and indicators are available at:

[www.nyc.gov/dycd](http://www.nyc.gov/dycd)

*These competencies are designed to be used as a tool to guide the professional development of the youth work professional NOT as a barrier for entry into the field.*

## Core Competencies for Supervisors of Youth Work Professionals

### Introduction

The New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), in collaboration with the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST) and funded by the Wallace Foundation, is pleased to introduce Core Competencies for Supervisors of Youth Work Professionals, designed to raise the capacity of youth-serving organizations and staff to serve their participants more effectively.

### *Overarching Guiding Principles*

The following critical principles are incorporated in all the core competencies:

- *Embracing positive child and youth development principles and practices.<sup>1</sup>*
- *Adopting the principle of continuous program quality improvement.*
- *Understanding and communicating to staff the mission, policies and practices of the program and organization.*
- *Respecting and valuing the cultures and traditions of participants, their families and their communities and program staff.*

---

1. <sup>1</sup> These include building on youth strengths rather than focusing on youth deficits; setting and maintaining high expectations; understanding the centrality of and fostering positive relationships with peers and adults; providing age-appropriate and challenging programming; engaging participants as partners, not just as consumers of services; promoting positive identity formation and helping young people to fully develop their potential; and appreciating the range of abilities and diverse needs of children and youth. See [www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/downloads/pdf/core\\_competencies\\_for\\_yw\\_professionals.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/downloads/pdf/core_competencies_for_yw_professionals.pdf)

## **Core Competencies for Supervisors of Youth Work Professionals**

1. Adopts a systematic approach to ensure that all staff consistently embrace positive child and youth development practices.
2. Ability to ensure a safe, inclusive, welcoming and respectful program environment
3. Ability to manage program staff and promote professional growth and development
4. Ability to implement and develop the program to achieve desired outcomes
5. Ability to create and manage systems for effective program operation
6. Ability to build and sustain collaborative relationships with multiple stakeholders
7. Ability to lead and manage change
8. Ability to advocate on behalf of the program, its participants and staff

## **Indicators for Core Competencies of Supervisors of Youth Work Professionals**

- 1. Adopts a systematic approach to ensure that all staff consistently embrace positive child and youth development practices.**
  - a. Demonstrates knowledge of and effectively communicates the principles and practices of positive child and youth development to staff under his/her supervision.
  - b. Models best practices and helps staff effectively implement positive child and youth development approaches.
  - c. Provides regular supervision and feedback to ensure that staff adhere to positive child and youth development principles and adopt best practices.
  - d. Intervenes where staff are not complying with child and youth development standards.
- 2. Ability to ensure a safe, inclusive, welcoming and respectful program environment.**
  - a. *Ensures physical safety:* understands licensing, safety and reporting requirements; recognizes and reports unsafe conditions and procedures, and takes step restore safety, as necessary; understands and communicates to staff relevant organizational policies, including risk management; creates and distributes up-to-date written guidelines and provides appropriate training and supervision.
  - b. *Promotes inclusive and welcoming environment:* fosters positive relationships by teaching and modeling behaviors that make staff and participants feel physically and emotionally safe and welcome; recognizes and responds to signs that staff or participants feel excluded; addresses bullying and teasing, disruptive behavior and conflict; maintains a sense of order.
  - c. *Combats bias and discrimination:* encourages staff to foster respect for diversity by examining their assumptions and stereotypes and those of participants; helps staff create lessons/activities that cultivate bonding between and among staff and participants.
  - d. *Recognizes possible issues facing program participants and staff:* is alert to, and teaches staff to be alert to, signs of problems such as dating violence, gang activity, sexual abuse, substance abuse and mental health issues; addresses, and teaches staff to address, any behaviors that exclude some participants through discussions with appropriate stakeholders.

### **3. Ability to manage program staff and promote professional growth and development.**

- a. Effectively communicates, verbally and in writing, the job expectations and how they are linked to program goals, and provides orientation for new staff.
- b. Is accessible and provides on-going support and direction to help staff successfully carry out their responsibilities, including their participation in program decision-making.
- c. Observes staff performance, conducts regular, standardized assessments, provides constructive feedback, and creates a structure for staff self-assessment and reflection relating to core competencies and job performance.
- d. Uses every opportunity to teach staff to use formal and informal feedback to improve performance, promote professional development, and raise program quality.
- e. Continuously challenges and supports staff to innovate and raise standards.
- f. Teaches staff to be proactive in addressing issues to prevent problems from escalating.
- g. Models appropriate behavior with staff and participants.
- h. Helps staff develop goals for professional growth (including college education) and implement a plan to achieve these goals.
- i. Seeks resources such as trainings and workshops that promote professional growth of supervisors and other staff.

### **4. Ability to implement and develop the program to achieve desired outcomes.**

- a. Articulates program goals and organizational mission and guides staff in designing intentional, sequenced, structured activities (including project-based activities linked by themes) that contribute to achievement of desired outcomes.
- b. Requires staff to submit activity plans for review and provides constructive feedback.
- c. Helps staff implement curricula with fidelity.
- d. Creates mechanisms to ensure feedback from youth is regularly collected and incorporated into program design.
- e. Promotes project-based activities that encourage participants to be questioning, help develop good study skills, and promote problem-solving approaches through a range of instructional methods.
- f. Continuously challenges and supports staff to innovate and raise standards.

### **5. Ability to create and manage systems for effective program operation.**

- a. Maintains up-to-date manuals reflecting agency policies, site rules and regulations, and funder requirements.
- b. Implements strategic fiscal management including appropriate allocation of funds, a balanced budget, and budget modifications where necessary.
- c. Maintains personnel and participant files that are complete and up-to-date.
- d. Establishes data collection systems, ensures timely data entry, and uses data to manage and develop the program.
- e. Develops and maintains effective systems for communication among multiple stakeholders.
- f. Assesses staffing needs, develops job descriptions, and hires appropriate staff.

## **6. Ability to build and sustain collaborative relationships with multiple stakeholders.**

- a. Identifies internal (e.g. other units within the organization) and external (e.g. schools, social services agencies) stakeholder institutions to enhance program effectiveness.
- b. Interacts constructively with individual stakeholders such as staff, participants, families, school personnel, to achieve program goals.
- c. Establishes systems and protocols for ongoing communication, including dissemination of relevant information and receipt of formal and informal feedback.
- d. Negotiates to secure resources for the program and its participants, e.g., work opportunities, health services, space, while offering partners reciprocal benefits.

## **7. Ability to lead and manage change.**

- a. Builds trusting relationships to motivate staff and foster team spirit and shared values.
- b. Regularly reviews internal data and keeps abreast of emerging research to promote evidence-based planning and decision-making.
- c. Cultivates an environment that promotes discussion of new ideas for program development based on internal and external data.
- d. Articulates a clear vision for the program and its future.
- e. Anticipates and plans for change and responds effectively to a changing environment including changes in personnel, participant needs, and funder demands and priorities.

## **8. Ability to advocate on behalf of the program, its participants and staff**

- a. Understands and can articulate funding and other critical issues affecting the program and its participants.
- b. Identifies and can communicate, orally and in writing, with key players, including elected representatives, at local, state, and national levels.
- c. Advocates on behalf of individual participants and their families with local government departments and regulatory agencies.
- d. Participates with others to advance the fields of child, youth and community development including attending conferences.
- e. Advocates on behalf of junior staff with senior organizational leaders.

## **Organizations that Participated in the Development of the Core Competencies for Supervisors of Youth Work Professionals**

- Big Brothers, Big Sisters of New York City
- Center for After School Excellence
- Center for Youth Research Foundation - Medgar Evers College
- Child Care, Inc.
- Child Center of New York
- Children's Aid Society
- Cornell University Cooperative Extension – NYC Programs
- Department of Extended Learning Time, After School, and Services (DELTAS)
- Development Without Limits
- Good Shepherd Services
- Groundwork, Inc.
- Harlem RBI
- JFK Jr. Institute for Worker Education – City University of New York
- National Institute on Out of School Time (NIOST)
- Neighborhood Improvement Association
- NYC Department of Youth and Community Development
- Office of the Mayor – City of New York
- Partnership for Afterschool Education (PASE)
- Police Athletic League - NYC
- Queens Community House
- Ramapo for Children
- SCO/Center for Family Life
- SCO/Family Dynamics
- The After School Corporation (TASC)
- The Wallace Foundation
- Woodside on the Move
- Workforce Professionals Training Institute
- York College – City University of New York
- Youth Development Institute (YDI)