

Spotlight on the Standards

Afterschool Quality
Standards

Standard 3: Youth Participation, Learning, and Engagement



Effective games are a great way to link content review in out-of-school time with low-stakes competition and can provide an engaging, collaborative learning experience. Well-planned games have also been shown to improve students' attitudes toward learning and boost academic scores. Games can even be used as a classroom management technique that helps students move through transitions and classroom routines more effortlessly. Check out these articles to get ideas for educational games that will make learning and skills review fun!

Click on the article titles to read more!



The Surprisingly Positive Effect of Drama Games on Classroom Management
Young children are more likely to remember school routines around things such as lining up if guided play is involved.
by Jocelyn Greene

Movement-Based Games that Help Students with Spelling

Games that combine spelling with physical activity can make it easier for young students to learn new words.
by Jocelyn Greene

Using Games to Help Improve Students' Phonics Skills

Young readers benefit from learning through play, and teachers can introduce familiar games to help support students' literacy growth.
by Dian Smith



5 Rich Math Activities that Elementary School Teachers Can Use Anytime

These games take less than 10 minutes and help students improve their skills while having fun.
by Kristin Raia

5 Vocabulary Games that Build Content Knowledge

Engaging games support student understanding of subject-specific vocabulary and help ensure retention of content knowledge.
by Hannah Bradley

Building Relationships and Behavioral Skills



Meeting Students' Needs for Emotional Support

by Zi Jia Ng

A new survey finds that a large percentage of students don't feel that they have an adult to turn to at school when they're troubled.

At every age, students benefit from a hand to hold, an ear to listen, and a heart to understand them. This article outlines strategies educators can use to bolster students' mental health and provide support whenever it is needed.

Read the full article



Health and Wellness

Host a Health and Wellness Fair for Youth and Families

from Action for Healthy Kids

Action for Healthy Kids is a national nonprofit dedicated to making schools healthier places where kids thrive. Their resources offer helpful tips for planning and implementing a fun health and wellness fair that will engage children, families, and community partners.

Read the full article

Additional Health and Wellness Fair Resources from Action for Healthy Kids:

[Blog Post: How to Host a Health Fair: 7 Strategies for Success](#)

[How to Host a Health Fair](#)

[Fun and Fitness Family Events Guide](#)

STEM Activities



Science-Themed Crafts are NOT STEM Challenges

by Kerry Tracy

It makes perfect sense that teachers - and everyone else - would be confused about



what constitutes a STEM Challenge vs. a craft. There are a LOT of mislabeled activities floating around on the Internet - so, so many! Some are crafts, some are hands-on activities, and some are actual challenges.

Just because it is a hands-on activity and it involves a science topic, that just doesn't make it a STEM Challenge.

How can you know you've got the real deal? Here are five questions you can use to evaluate hands-on science activities:

1. Is there an open-ended problem here for kids to solve?
2. Are at least two elements of STEM integrated?
3. Is there a challenge involved?
4. Could you see students doing multiple iterations of this activity to improve their designs? Would there be a way to make the design perform better, be more efficient or effective?
5. In order to complete the activity, do students engage in the 4 Cs of Engineering - collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and creativity?

The answer to all five of these questions should be YES if it is a STEM Challenge.

[Read the full article](#)

[Free Webinar: Secrets to Successful STEM Challenges: Fun, Not Fluff!](#)



Staff Support



The Benefits of One-on-One Meetings Between Administrators and Teachers

by Matthew Ebert

Regular informal conversations allow school leaders and teachers to connect on a personal level, building relationships that benefit the whole school.

If you are an afterschool program leader, child care center director, school administrator, or other educational leader, you can use the tips in this article to start implementing regular, authentic conversations with your teachers so that you can take care of your adults in the way that you ask them to take care of their students.

[Read the full article](#)

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- If applying for more than \$10,000, complete the online application (see website).

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