Minnesota Afterschool Accreditation Program (MAAP)

Informational Guide

Minnesota Afterschool Accreditation Program
2610 University Ave. W., Suite 425
St. Paul, MN 55114
maap@mnaeye-mnsaca.org
651-646-8689
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The Minnesota Afterschool Accreditation Program (MAAP), sponsored by the Minnesota School-Age Care Alliance (MnSACA), reflects the collective wisdom from the afterschool/youth development field and years of research about what makes a high-quality afterschool program. MAAP has been aligned with numerous national and statewide quality tools and standards.

About the Minnesota School-Age Care Alliance
The Minnesota School-Age Care Alliance (MnSACA) is a member-driven organization serving afterschool professionals throughout the state of Minnesota. MnSACA was founded in 1986 by a group of school-age child care directors with the mission of promoting the growth and development of high-quality school-age child care programs in the state of Minnesota.

MnSACA provides information, training, program improvement, and support to professionals in order to build high-performing, sustainable programs that meet the needs of youth and their families. We are the Minnesota state affiliate of the National AfterSchool Association (NAA), which also informs, educates and engages the afterschool workforce.

Our efforts are predicated on the belief that highly-skilled staff results in improved program quality, which increases positive outcomes for youth. This belief is supported by a great deal of research, including the Massachusetts After-School Research Study, a study of afterschool programs serving elementary and middle school youth from ten communities across Massachusetts, which found that the single most important factor in determining program quality is a well-trained, prepared, and stable workforce. Youth served by skilled staff are more likely to stay enrolled, and therefore more likely to reap the documented benefits that come with being part of an afterschool program, such as higher rates of homework completion, increased social skills, and an enthusiasm for learning.

Our association includes practitioners, policy makers, researchers, and administrators representing all public, private, faith-based, school-based, community-based, and family child care sectors. Our members work in a variety of settings that serve school-age youth such as 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA’s, 4H, Parks and Recreation Departments, and other before school, after school and summer programs.

About Afterschool Programs
Afterschool programs play a critical role in keeping Minnesota’s youth safe, helping working families and supporting learning. Yet a lack of uniformity in quality persists.

High-quality afterschool programs can have strong positive outcomes on youth’s academic, social, and emotional lives. Recent reviews of evaluations on well-run and effective afterschool programs showed that participation in quality afterschool programs improved youth feelings of self-confidence, self-esteem, attitude towards school, school grades, and achievement test scores. Conversely, the impact of low-performing, low-quality programs on youth are far-reaching and involve social, physical, emotional and academic developmental risks.

About Accreditation
Program accreditation is the ultimate indication of program quality. It provides afterschool professionals with performance indicators and benchmarks of quality to guide program planning, implementation and evaluation. Accreditation also serves to guide families in making more informed choices about afterschool for their children. Moreover, the accreditation process supports a team approach to program improvement and fosters a competent, caring and qualified staff.

A quality program is one that is reflective, willing to improve, change and grow, and dedicated to supporting its participants to succeed. Becoming accredited is about both the outcome — the ‘accreditation’ — and the process of improvement experienced by the program team. All programs serving school-age youth are eligible to enroll in the Minnesota Afterschool Accreditation Program (MAAP), provided the program has been open and in operation for at least one year. Accreditation endorsements are in effect for three years, pending completion of an annual report and provided high-quality programming is maintained.
An Overview of the MAAP Foundation Areas

Many factors contribute to creating and maintaining a high-quality afterschool program. MAAP takes into consideration best practices in all areas of youth development and what it looks like to run a high-quality program.

The Foundation Areas are broad categories of program work. A high-quality afterschool program is well-rounded in its best practice, placing equal value in each Foundation Area to ensure quality across all program aspects.

**Foundation Area I: Administration**

**Effective administrative policies and practices support transparency and openness, which creates a setting in which program quality and positive youth development are most likely to occur and be sustained.**

- The program complies with applicable regulations.
- The program has operational procedures that ensure it functions smoothly and is sustainable.
- The program has policies and procedures that provide for the hiring, development, and supervision of staff members.
- The program has policies and procedures that support positive youth development.
- The program has policies and procedures that support the development of positive relationships with families.

**Foundation Area II: Wellness**

**Program policies and practices ensure the physical safety and security of youth, support the health and nutritional wellness of youth, and promote the growth of self-care skills.**

- Staff members implement practices that proactively protect the health of youth participants.
- Staff members implement practices that protect youth from hazards.
- The program plans and implements healthy food service that meets the nutritional needs of youth.
- Staff members ensure that youth are safely supervised at all times.
- Youth are safely supervised during field trips or events/activities that represent a higher-than-typical risk.

**Foundation Area III: Activities**

**Program activities nurture youth in all areas of development, cultivate positive learning outcomes, and encourage engagement by focusing on youth interests and experiences and providing opportunities for youth choice and youth leadership.**

- Staff plan, organize and provide a wide variety of activities that address all domains of development and meet the developmental needs of all youth.
- Staff plan for and provide activities that are youth-led and choice-based.
- Staff plan, organize and provide activities that are hands-on, experiential and project-based.
- Staff plan, organize and implement an appropriate daily schedule of activities.
- Staff plan, organize and implement activities that promote awareness and acceptance of similarities and differences.

**Foundation Area IV: Relationships**

**Relationships are developed among staff members, youth, families, and the community to support the positive academic, physical, social, emotional, and behavioral development of youth.**

- Staff members form positive relationships with youth that support social and emotional development.
- Staff members use positive and appropriate guidance and supervision to support healthy youth development and to build relationships with and among youth.
- Staff members develop relationships with youth that support cognitive development and learning.
- Youth are encouraged to form positive peer relationships.
- Staff members work together as a team.
- Staff members and families interact in positive ways and form relationships that benefit youth.
• Staff members work cooperatively with school or site personnel to benefit youth.
• Staff members build partnerships with community members/organizations.

**Foundation Area V: Environment**

Program environments are the foundation for the youth participants’ experience, therefore are safe and accessible, reflect the youth and the community, and promote youth development across domains.

• The indoor environment supports youth development.
• Equipment and materials in the indoor and outdoor environments support youth development.
• The environment includes spaces that are designed for specific purposes.
• The outdoor environment supports youth development.

Within each Foundation Area is a set of Indicators of Quality that represent actionable and effective practices in afterschool programming. A program’s ability to meet these Indicators determines the outcome of their accreditation decision, but also allows them an opportunity to build on existing quality improvement efforts.
MAAP Process & Timelines

ENROLLMENT IN MAAP
The program enters the MAAP system by completing and submitting the MAAP Enrollment Form along with an enrollment fee. Once the Enrollment in MAAP fee is received by MnSACA, the designated program contact will receive an email confirmation and instructions for electronic access to all MAAP self-study tools and resources.

SELF-STUDY AND PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT
The program selects an accreditation coach if desired, and recruits a team of individuals (e.g., program staff, school administrators, parents, youth participants, etc.) who have an interest in the success of the program to form a Stakeholder Team. The Stakeholder Team works together to develop a strategy for gathering feedback from families, staff, youth and the Host/Governing Body using surveys or other platforms, as well as scheduling observations of program practices using the MAAP Self-Study Tool. Using the information gathered from surveys and observations, the Stakeholder Team creates a program improvement plan.

The program improvement plan acts as a road map to guide a program’s work toward meeting set goals and achieve accreditation. Stakeholder Team members track the status of each of the improvement plan items throughout the Self-Study and Program Improvement stage. Once all improvement plan items have been completed, the team may decide to conduct additional observations and/or gather new feedback from families, staff, youth or the Host/Governing Body to assess whether all identified goals of the self-study process have been met.

VALIDATION VISIT APPLICATION
Program leaders complete and submit the Validation Visit Application. On this application, the program chooses their visit window and provides detailed information about the structure of their program. Information is used to successfully set up the validation visit.

VISIT PREPARATION
Program leaders compile all paperwork documentation and evidence and submit as Pre-Visit Documentation to MnSACA. This is documentation that Validators have access to and can review prior to the visit in order to take advantage of time onsite for observing program practices and relationships. Program leaders compile additional paperwork documentation and evidence for the Validator to review onsite during the visit.

MnSACA assigns a MAAP Validator to conduct the visit. The program will be allowed to select up to three blackout dates during the window of validation visits, and will be contacted by their Validator at least two weeks prior to their visit date to prepare the visit schedule.

DECISION
Following the validation visit, the Validator’s observation notes and reports are forwarded by MnSACA to a Review Panel, along with their recommendation about whether the program should be accredited. The Review Panel issues a final decision to accredit or defer. If the program is accredited, a certificate is issued and the accreditation endorsement is valid for up to three years. If the program is deferred, it submits a new Validation Visit Application and deferral fee, receiving another validation visit during one of the next two visit cycles (choice is up to the program). The deferral process gives a program additional time to address the areas in which it has not yet demonstrated a sufficiently high level of quality, and allows a second opportunity to meet the accreditation Indicators and to become accredited. If the program still does not demonstrate a sufficiently high level of quality after the second validation visit, they are denied accreditation, and must start the process from the beginning (including resubmitting all accreditation forms and fees).

ANNUAL REPORT/SUSTAINING QUALITY
Throughout the entire three-year accreditation endorsement, program leadership and the Stakeholder Team are responsible for overseeing the site’s continual compliance with the MAAP Indicators of Quality. Programs are expected to adopt a continuous improvement mindset which includes gathering feedback from family, staff, youth and Host/Governing Body, and conducting program observations and assessments at least annually. A plan for continuous program improvement is then developed and implemented based on information gathered from feedback, observations and assessments. Annual reports are required each year to demonstrate that the program is still working on continuous quality improvements. Interim visits could be conducted during the program’s accreditation term to ensure ongoing compliance with MAAP.
There are two enrollment periods in MAAP each year, and several timeline options for receiving a validation visit so that each program can customize their accreditation journey.

SEPTEMBER ENROLLMENT TIMELINE

1. Current Spring
   - Pre-Visit Documentation
     Due March 15
   - Validation Visits
     April-May
   - Decisions to Programs
     By August 31
   - Accreditation Term Begins
     September 1

2. Current Winter
   - Validation Visit Application
     Due September 15
   - Pre-Visit Documentation
     Due October 15
   - Validation Visits
     November-December
   - Decisions to Programs
     By February 28
   - Accreditation Term Begins
     March 1

3. Next Spring
   - Validation Visit Application
     Due February 15
   - Pre-Visit Documentation
     Due March 15
   - Validation Visits
     April-May
   - Decisions to Programs
     By August 31
   - Accreditation Term Begins
     September 1
MARCH ENROLLMENT TIMELINE

**Enrollment in MAAP**
*form & fee*
**Due March 31**

**Self-Study & Program Improvement**
*Self-Study Fee*
**Due April 30**

**Validation Visit Application**
*form & fee*
**Due September 15**

**3 Visit Options**
1. Current Winter
2. Next Spring
3. Next Winter

**1. Current Winter**

Pre-Visit Documentation
**Due October 15**

Validation Visits
*November-December*

Decisions to Programs
**By February 28**

Accreditation Term Begins
**March 1**

**2. Next Spring**

Validation Visit Application
**Due February 15**

Pre-Visit Documentation
**Due March 15**

Validation Visits
*April-May*

Decisions to Programs
**By August 31**

Accreditation Term Begins
**September 1**

**3. Next Winter**

Validation Visit Application
**Due September 15**

Pre-Visit Documentation
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*November-December*

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**By February 28**

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Enrollment in MAAP
*form & fee*
**Due March 31**

Self-Study & Program Improvement
*Self-Study Fee*
**Due April 30**

Validation Visit Application
*form & fee*
**Due September 15**

**3 Visit Options**
1. Current Winter
2. Next Spring
3. Next Winter
MAAP Fees

MAAP FEES COVER

Access to MAAP Tools, Templates and Resources
Communities of Practice
Networking Platform
Technical Assistance
Discount to Select MnSACA Trainings
Validation Visit & Decision
Certificate of Accreditation

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<tr>
<th>Program Size</th>
<th>Enrollment in MAAP</th>
<th>Self-Study</th>
<th>Validation Visit Application</th>
<th>Annual Report (each year throughout endorsement)</th>
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<tr>
<td>10-60 youth enrolled</td>
<td>$150</td>
<td>$800</td>
<td>$800</td>
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<tr>
<td>61-120 youth enrolled</td>
<td>$200</td>
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<tr>
<td>121-240 youth enrolled</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>$1,100</td>
<td>$1,100</td>
<td>$150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>241+ youth enrolled</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td>$1,300</td>
<td>$1,300</td>
<td>$150</td>
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Currently, the Minnesota Department of Human Services refunds accredited programs 50% of all accreditation fees!

- All MAAP paperwork must be received by due date or $50 late fee will apply.
- Payment at each stage due in full before advancing; additional charges will apply for late payments.
- Programs wishing to pay fees in advance should contact MnSACA at maap@mnaeyc-mnsaca.org.
- No refunds will be given once a program is enrolled.
- A paid enrollment fee is valid two years from date of enrollment.
- Programs can pay all fees online with credit card or access an invoice to submit with payment by check.
- Checks should be made payable to the Minnesota School-Age Care Alliance and sent to:
  
  MnAEYC-MnSACA  
  2610 University Ave. W.  
  Suite 425  
  St. Paul, MN 55114

The MAAP fees listed above do not cover:

- Any late fees, visit change fees, deferral fees, verification visit fees, etc. incurred by the program
- Support from an accreditation coach
- Any materials or items needed to make quality improvements at the program
- Other trainings or events provided by MnAEYC-MnSACA