

Collaborative for
Advancing Healthy Experiences
in Out-of-School Time



Assessment to Action

Five steps for implementing the National
AfterSchool Association's Healthy Eating
and Physical Activity (HEPA) Standards 2.0
for Out-of-School Time (OST).



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Overview

The *Assessment to Action Guide* is designed to support OST professionals with implementing the [National AfterSchool Association's \(NAA\) HEPA Standards 2.0](#). The guide walks through five steps to help you gather a team to assist with this work, take stock of what you are already doing well, prioritize focus areas, and break your plan into actionable steps. All the while building sustainability for your efforts so that your valuable work continues to have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of the youth, families, and staff you serve.

Figure 1. Moving from Assessment to Action



Keep in mind that not all the HEPA Standards apply to all OST programs. The availability of resources, control over certain programmatic features, and conditions of your physical spaces may influence which standards are appropriate for you to adopt. *The Assessment to Action Workbook* provided at the end of this guide is intended to both support you as you work through each step, keeping these considerations in mind, and to help prioritize which standards to work towards adopting.

PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability planning is an ongoing process and should be integrated into all aspects of assessment, planning, and implementation. Building capacity for sustainability involves creating structures and processes which allow your program to effectively leverage partnerships and resources to be able to continue to implement evidence-based policies and activities—all of which are core components of high-quality programming.

GO FURTHER →

The University of Kansas Community Tool Box is a comprehensive virtual collection of resources that can help with everything from assessing community needs and resources, engaging stakeholders, and action planning. Check out their [resources for sustainability](#).

As you move forward, remember that every small step you take contributes to lasting change for the youth, families, and staff you serve. By building strong teams, engaging partners, and following the strategies in this guide, you are laying the foundation for healthier, more vibrant communities.

The work you are doing matters—it not only supports young people in making healthier choices today, but also equips them with the habits and confidence they will carry into the future. **Stay encouraged, celebrate your progress along the way, and know that your commitment to wellness is creating a ripple effect of positive impact that extends far beyond your program walls.**



Step 1: Build your team

Even if you already have a dedicated team, it can be helpful to ensure that you have the right partners involved to make your successful implementation of the HEPA Standards a reality.

Building a broadly representative team creates feedback loops which can help you spot potential challenges and adjust plans early on. Engaging partners fosters buy-in and helps them understand the “why” behind your efforts. It also lets them contribute to decision-making and increases their willingness to commit resources or enact policy changes—strengthening implementation and building long-term sustainability.

Consider engaging:

- **Those directly impacted by your services such as youth, families, and direct service staff.**
- **Representation from underserved populations in your community.** Try connecting with your local school district and local or state department of health for data on this. They may be especially helpful in identifying risk and protective factors that influence the health of youth and families in your community.
- **Those who can help you collect, organize, and interpret your findings and share your results.** Local colleges and universities can be a great source of technical expertise for this type of work, but you may also find there's someone already connected to your work who has these skills.
- **Partners who have shared or similar goals.** Working together can help you leverage resources and expertise. For example, you could invite someone from another community-based organization who shares the goal of improving health outcomes for youth.

GO FURTHER →

Learn more about how OST can increase protective factors in this brief from the Afterschool Alliance, [Afterschool: Fostering Protective Factors that Can Last a Lifetime](#) and by watching CAHE-OST's webinar, [Promoting Lifelong Benefits for Youth Through Out-of-School Time](#).

IDENTIFY COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Using a tool, such as the [Mapping Community Partners Worksheet](#), can help you identify potential partners that have shared audiences (e.g. youth) and shared goals (e.g. working towards a thriving community).

Once you have mapped the partners that make up your community, the next step is to identify which partners you need for this specific effort. The [Identifying Needs and Partners Worksheet](#) walks you through this, starting by identifying the “need” and then helping you to identify the right partners to invite into your efforts.

***Tip:** You may find it helpful to revisit this tool as you move through the steps in this guide as new or changing needs emerge.

Mapping Community Partners Example



Identifying Needs and Partners Example

What data, skills, or resources do we need?	Who has access/can give permission?	How do their mission and goals align with ours?	What's in it for them?	Who can make this connection?
Local demographic data	Jennifer Smith leads our County Public Health	Their goal of creating a “safe and healthy community” aligns with our goals	Our work increases the health of youth and families in our community and can help them reach their goals	Mark Fox is on a school committee with Jennifer Smith and can invite her to our next meeting
Someone to help build buy-in with the direct service staff	Marcus Murphy loves doing outdoor games with the youth in our program and the other staff get excited about his ideas	Marcus is invested in helping the youth in our program form healthy habits	Getting buy in from staff to increase the amount of physical activity that is built into our program policies and schedules would make planning and staffing easier in the long run	Lisa Walker is the program supervisor and can ask Marcus to join our planning team at their next meeting

Step 2: Complete the HEPA Self-Assessment Tool

Assessing what you are already doing well and identifying where you want to focus your efforts are both key to ensuring that you are implementing effective strategies and making the best use of your time and resources.

As a team, begin by reviewing and learning more about the HEPA Standards:

- [HEPA Standards 2.0, National AfterSchool Association](#)
The HEPA Standards provide practical, comprehensive guidance for OST programs seeking to improve health outcomes for youth and staff. They translate nutrition and physical activity science into actions that OST programs can take, like offering healthy foods and beverages, and creating opportunities for physical activity. The standards also address program and organizational policy and implementation, including staff training, social supports, and environmental supports.
- [From Assessment to Action with the HEPA Standards, CAHE-OST Training Short](#)
Kaityn Falk, District Wellness Manager with Erie Public Schools, shares how her district is putting the HEPA Standards into action. She emphasizes the importance of creating intentional programming that blends student voice and choice with structured, active learning to help every child thrive—inside and outside the classroom.



Complete the [HEPA Self-Assessment Tool, from the National AfterSchool Association](#) as a team. This will help you identify areas of strength and determine action steps that will lead to improvement. Additional data related to the needs of the specific populations you serve may also be gathered and reviewed at this point. This can help you decide what strategies are the best fit for implementation at your program, at this time.

Then complete the [Self-Assessment Reflections Worksheet](#) which will help your team to start to identify the strategies they you would like to implement.



Self-Assessment Reflection Example

What are you already doing well? How can you celebrate and build on this?	In the content area of food and nutrition, most of our self-ratings fell in the 2–3 range (partially or fully implementing). All our food and beverages meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (standard CQ1), and we serve only water (standard CQ5). Our staff regularly models these behaviors as well. We also realized that we are doing better than we thought related to staff development around nutrition as this has also been a focus for our school district. When we reviewed the list of trainings our staff attended last year, we were surprised to find that many of them had attended offerings not only by our program, but also by the school district. We want to recognize program staff at our next training for their efforts and are going to ask them for ideas on how they would like to celebrate this.
Where do you see areas for improvement?	We noted more “1” ratings in the content areas of physical activity. Even though we have outdoor space, staff often do not utilize it due to youth not all having weather appropriate clothes. Staff have also said that they feel like they don’t have enough ideas for outdoor activities that would be easy to implement, so they often let the kids just play inside the gym. They also noted that there are several groups of children who tend to sit and chat or play non-physical activities during this time (such as card games). We also reflected that we could do more through our communication channels with families to share ideas and resources for healthy foods and physical activities. Additionally, while we offer fruit frequently, we do not often offer vegetables and see this as an area we could improve by expanding the variety and frequency of vegetable offerings.

Step 3: Identify and prioritize standards

Working through the *Prioritize Standards Worksheet* can help you narrow your focus and decide on which standards would work best for implementation at this time.

With your planning team, select a few standards you want to consider for implementation and write each of those across the top of the worksheet.

Next, work through the questions related to needed resources, capacity, and fit for each one. As you consider sustainability, identify how likely it is that you can sustain a potential standard and use this information as part of decision making.

After going through each standard and their considerations, choose what standards you will address first. It’s a good idea to consider balancing some “low-hanging fruit” that would give you some early wins (building buy-in and momentum) with goals that may stretch your project more but have a longer-term impact. Once you have decided which standards to focus on, use the last row of this worksheet to identify which ones you plan to implement.

GO FURTHER →

The [Alliance for a Healthier Generation’s Healthy Out-of-School Time Roadmaps](#) introduce the NAA HEPA Standards’ content areas and what each prioritizes. They also include tips for taking action and additional resources to explore.

Prioritize Standards Example

Standards	Standard 1: ES2: Has adequate types and amounts of equipment for games, activities, and sports that support best practices in the CQ Standards.	Standard 2: CQ13: Offer daily outdoor physical activity.	Standard 3: SS8: Includes family engagement components as part of nutrition education, enrichment, and physical activities.	Standard 4: CQ2: Include a fruit or vegetable at every snack or meal.
Capacity and Resources Do you have the needed resources to implement this? If not, what would you need to do to have needed resources? Is it feasible in the timeframe you have to implement?	We have funding for new sports equipment. We would need expertise on appropriate adaptive equipment for some participants.	We have space for outdoor activities. We could create a digital library with activity ideas. We have the expertise and time for this. Staff need ideas and training to implement outdoor activities. We think this is feasible.	We currently do family engagement but not focused on nutrition and physical activities. We would need more ideas for resources to share and engagement activities.	We do not have funding for this. We could explore partnerships and funding sources, such as the local community foundation and school district. It will take some time to build these relationships.
Fit Would implementation of this be a good fit for your program, those you serve, and the community? Would you need to make any adaptations for all participants to benefit?	This is a good fit with our program mission. We would need to make sure we have planned adaptations for youth with physical disabilities. We can consult with youth, parents, and school staff as part of our planning process.	Many families in our area lack safe outdoor spaces to play and this would provide that for participating youth.	This is a good fit as we prioritize family engagement and input.	This fits well with what we are already doing—serving snacks daily. We can seek input on fruits and vegetables that are familiar to our youth and include new foods to try. We would need to have a plan for youth who have health conditions related to food (e.g. food allergies). We think this is something we can do reasonably.
Sustainability How much time, capacity, and resources would be needed to sustain this standard? Do you think that you could reasonably sustain this standard?	This feels likely to be sustained as the initial purchasing of equipment would be the biggest expense and we have funds to cover this. We will need to budget for replacing items over time.	Once set up, a digital library of free activities would not take a lot of staff time or resources to keep maintained and updated.	This would require staff time and training to implement. Once we invested in training, we do feel this would be sustainable.	We are unsure if we could sustain this. We could try sharing stories with funders to demonstrate success and leverage additional funding.
Select the standards that you plan to implement				

Step 4: Brainstorm implementation challenges and action steps to take

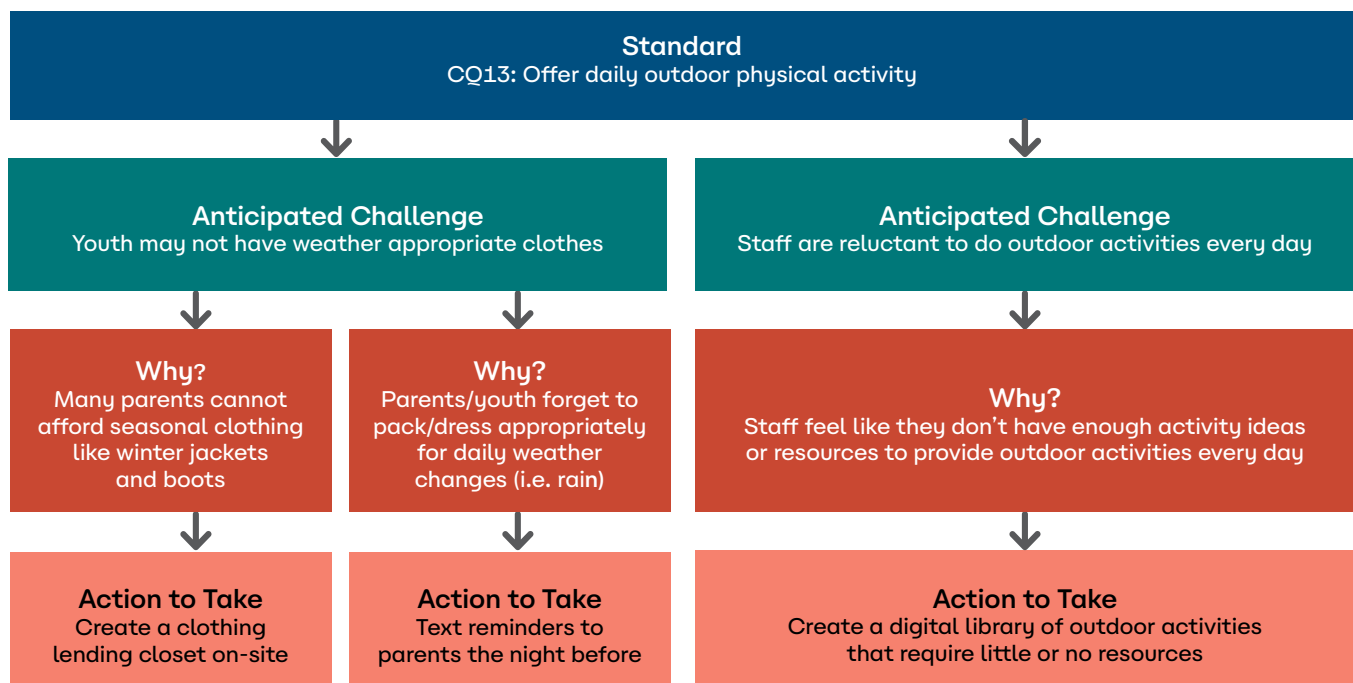
At this point you have decided which standards you want to focus on. Before you create a plan and start putting them into action, it is helpful to anticipate challenges to implementation and brainstorm action steps you can take.

You have already started to identify some of these as you worked through the [Prioritize Standards Worksheet](#). For each standard you have selected, work through the [Anticipating Challenges Worksheet](#). This will help you to identify steps you can take in your action planning and implementation to overcome these potential challenges.

As you move to the action planning step, you may consider testing the actions you identify on a small scale at first. For example, you could pilot new action items by starting with just one program site, with a small group, or on certain days of the week. After testing an action item for an agreed upon period, meet with your team and consider the following:

1. Is the change working? Do we want to keep doing it?
2. Do we want to make changes and test it again?
3. Should we try something else instead?

Anticipating Challenges Example



Step 5: Create an action plan

Now that you have laid all the supporting foundation and groundwork, it's time to create an action plan to guide the successful implementation of the standards you have chosen.

Creating an action plan helps you:

- Break your work into smaller, manageable steps
- Identify who will lead each step
- Monitor your timeline
- Gauge if your work is having the intended impact

The more specific you can be in your plan, the more likely you are to achieve the results that you want. Use the *Action Plan Worksheet* to develop your plan and revisit it regularly to make changes as needed, and don't forget to celebrate your accomplishments!

CREATE A SMART GOAL

Stating your goal keeps you focused on the bigger picture of what you want to accomplish. It is like a north star that lets you keep checking that your strategies and steps are pointing you in the direction you want to go.

CREATE ACTION STEPS

Now is the time to think of all the actions you will need to take to successfully implement each standard you have chosen. Are there materials you will need to acquire? Is there training or professional development needed before this standard can be implemented? Will you need to make policy changes? Include already identified actions to take for addressing anticipated challenges and building capacity and sustainability.

Next, identify needed resources, timeline, and person responsible for leading each step and measures. Being as specific as possible with these items will make it easier to keep implementation moving and track your progress.

GO FURTHER →

The Out-of-School Nutrition and Physical Activity Initiative (OSNAP) is an evidence-based initiative that helps out-of-school time programs improve practices and policies. Their [Fast Maps](#) can help you identify action steps for reaching healthy eating and physical activity standards.



Figure 2. Creating SMART Goals

A SMART goal is one that is:

Specific

Clearly defined

Measurable

Tells what will be measured and how

Ambitious

Enough change to make significant progress

Realistic

Can reasonably be accomplished with available time/capacity

Time-bound

Includes a clear timeframe

Action Plan Example

What is your SMART goal?

By June 2026, 80% of youth in the afterschool program will participate in at least 100 minutes of outdoor activity per week. Staff will track participation through logs, and the program will offer fun, age-appropriate activities (e.g., sports, dance, fitness challenges) to ensure accessibility, engagement, and the development of lifelong healthy habits.

What standard are you implementing to help you reach your goal?

CQ13: Offer daily outdoor physical activity.

ES2: Has adequate types and amounts of equipment for games, activities, and sports that support best practices in the CQ Standards.

Action Steps <i>What action steps are needed? Be sure to include the steps you have identified for addressing challenges and that will help you continue to build capacity and sustainability.</i>	Resources <i>What resources are needed (consider human, fiscal, and community resources)?</i>	Timeline <i>When will this step be complete by?</i>	Person Responsible <i>Keep in mind that this person may not be the one to carry out all the work but who will be responsible for ensuring that this step is completed.</i>	Measure <i>How will you know this step is completed?</i>	Notes <i>Use this space for any additional notes on progress, barriers and needed next steps.</i>
Secure a partner(s) to donate clothing and shoes	Financial support via donations Items needed in a variety of sizes: sneakers boots jackets gloves and hats	September 29	Angie will start by reaching out to local second-hand clothing store Richard will reach out to a local service club for financial donation	Signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with partner organization stating what they will donate, how we will recognize them Donation is received by program fiscal person	
Create a digital library of resources for outdoor activities that require little or no preparation or supplies	Ideas from staff, youth, and families	October 31	Kate will review activity ideas and resources and put them on our program platform for staff to access	Digital resource library created Number of new game/activity ideas generated	



Assessment to Action Workbook

This workbook is designed to support you as you work through each step of the Assessment to Action Guide as a team.

Duplicate worksheets as needed and make this your own. The form fields in this PDF are fillable so you can complete, save, and print your work.

Step 1: Build your team

WORKSHEET

1.1 List the members of your assessment to action team here. Add to this list as you add new partners.

Assessment to Action Team Membership List

Name	Role/Organization	Contact Info

1.2 Identify existing resources and partners in your community.

Mapping Community Partners



Ideas to Help You Brainstorm

Health

- Clinic
- Fire department
- Health department
- Hospital
- Mobile health unit

Education

- Afterschool organization or network
- Childcare center
- College or university
- Homeschool program
- Private or public school

Service

- 4H or Boys & Girls Club
- American Legion
- Charity
- Faith-based (church, temple, etc.)
- Food pantry

Community

- Artisan or artist
- Chef
- Concert venue or music group
- Farmers market
- Lake or other body of water

Businesses

- Airport
- Bakery
- Bank
- Construction company
- Factory or plant

Government

- Agriculture department
- City council
- County commissioner
- Fish and wildlife department
- School board

1.3 Identify the areas where you anticipate needing additional resources and partners.

Identifying Needs and Partners

What data, skills, or resources do we need?	Who has access/can give permission?	How do their mission and goals align with ours?	What’s in it for them?	Who can make this connection?
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Step 2: Complete the HEPA Self-Assessment Tool

2.1 Complete the [HEPA Self-Assessment Tool](#), from the National AfterSchool Association.

2.2 Identify successes and areas for growth.

Self-Assessment Reflection

Looking at the HEPA self-assessment summary, and any additional data you have reviewed:

What are we already doing well? How can we celebrate and build on this?	
Where do we see areas for improvement?	

Step 3: Identify and prioritize standards

WORKSHEET

3.1 Looking at the areas you have identified for improvement in the previous step, which 3-5 standards do you believe will have an impact if implemented?

Write each of those standards in across the top of the worksheet and then work through the questions to help your team determine which standards you want to prioritize implementing. Then determine which standards you want to move forward with implementing (we recommend choosing 1-3 standards) and write those in at the bottom of the worksheet.

Prioritize Standards

Standard	Standard 1:	Standard 2:	Standard 3:	Standard 4:
Capacity and Resources Do you have the needed resources to implement this? If not, what would you need to do to have needed resources? Is it feasible in the timeframe you have to implement?				
Fit Would implementation of this be a good fit for your program, those you serve, and the community? Would you need to make any adaptations for all participants to benefit?				
Sustainability How much time, capacity, and resources would be needed to sustain this standard? Do you think that you could reasonably sustain this standard?				
Select the standards that you plan to implement				

Step 4: Brainstorm implementation challenges and action steps to take

WORKSHEET

4.1 For each of the standards you plan to implement, complete the following worksheet to identify potential challenges and anticipated action steps you can take to address them. These action steps will be incorporated into your action plan in Step 5.

Anticipating Challenges

Standard: List the standard you plan to implement.

Anticipated challenges: Brainstorm potential challenges to implementation.

Why?: Explain why you think these challenges are happening. You may want to ask “Why?” more than once, to drill down to the root cause. The more you can get to the “why” the more likely you are to come up with an action step to successfully address the challenge.

Actions to take: List an action step you can incorporate in your action plan to address this challenge. These actions will become “action steps” in your action plan.

Standard			
Anticipated Challenge		Anticipated Challenge	
Why?	Why?	Why?	Why?
Action to Take	Action to Take	Action to Take	Action to Take

Step 5: Create an action plan

WORKSHEET

5.1 Now it is time to bring this all together by completing an action plan.

Action Plan

What is your SMART goal?

What standards are you implementing to help reach your goal?

Action Steps	Resources	Timeline	Person Responsible	Measure	Notes
<i>What action steps are needed? Be sure to include the steps you have identified for addressing challenges and that will help you continue to build capacity and sustainability.</i>	<i>What resources are needed (consider human, fiscal, and community resources).</i>	<i>When will this step be complete by?</i>	<i>Keep in mind that this person may not be the one to carry out all the work but who will be responsible for ensuring that this step is completed.</i>	<i>How will you know this step is completed?</i>	<i>Use this space for any additional notes on progress, barriers and needed next steps.</i>

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