



A Program Assessment System

offered exclusively by
The National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST)
at the Wellesley Centers for Women



What are the benefits of APAS?

- * Helps programs align quality improvement efforts with desired youth outcomes
- * Offers flexibility - the tools can be used together or separately
- * Designed for afterschool programs and 21st CCLCs; currently used in extended learning classrooms, summer programs, and park & recreation settings.
- * Research-based, scientifically field-tested tools
- * Based on a menu approach: select only those outcomes that fit best with program's design and goals
- * Affordable and user-friendly format
- * Provides detailed data to create an action plan for improvement

What is APAS?

APAS is an integrated, comprehensive, and flexible **assessment system** to help programs measure and link their **program quality** and youth **outcomes**.

APAS includes several measurement tools—the Survey of Academic and Youth Outcomes (**SAYO**) and the Assessment of Program Practices Tool (**APT**).

- **SAYO-Staff & Teacher** – survey completed by staff and teachers about youth. Measures changes in youth skills and outcomes linked with long-term healthy development and educational success (see *page 2*)
- **SAYO-Youth** – survey completed by youth. Provides an essential youth perspective on program experiences, sense of competence, and their future plans (see *page 2*)
- **APT-Observation & Questionnaire** – helps programs examine important aspects of program quality linked to the SAYO Outcomes (see *page 3*)

Is APAS right for my program?

APAS tools work best when used by:

- Programs that serve youth in Grades K through 12
- Well-established programs. It may not be suitable for start-up programs (< 1 year), those experiencing high staff turnover, facility changes and/or major shifts in program focus
- Programs that offer a variety of regular/consistent programming. It may not be appropriate for specialized/limited programs (like karate class 2/hrs wk), or those focused exclusively on academic tutoring
- Programs where youth attend at least 100 hours across a full school year or intensive session such as day camp
- Programs with at least 25 youth that attend on a regular basis. It may not be suitable for drop-in type programs

The Survey of Academic and Youth Outcomes

Staff and Teacher Survey

The **SAYO-S & T** uses brief pre-participation and post-participation outcome surveys to collect data about youth from regular education teachers and afterschool staff. The **SAYO-S & T** are based on a menu approach in which programs collect data on outcomes that are most aligned with their goals for the young people they serve.

SAYO-S & T Outcome Areas

- Behavior in the Program/Classroom
- Initiative
- Engagement in Learning
- Relations with Adults
- Relations with Peers
- Problem Solving
- Communication Skills
- Homework
- Academic Performance (SAYO-T only)

Each outcome area is measured by asking teachers and staff to respond to four to seven questions related to observable youth behaviors. These items have been extensively tested and found to work as a single scale that effectively captures the outcome being measured. Teacher and/or staff responses to these surveys can be completed for all participating youth or for a sample of youth in a program. Surveys are completed on paper or online.

Youth Survey

The **SAYO-Y** uses brief pre-participation and post-participation program quality and youth outcomes surveys to collect data about youth from youth. Research suggests that certain youth experiences and outcomes are critical to youths' future success. In line with this research, the **SAYO-Y** is comprised of three surveys:

What Does SAYO-Y Measure?

- **The Program Experiences Survey (PE):** Measures youths' program experiences in six key quality areas:
 - Engagement and Enjoyment
 - Choice and Autonomy
 - Challenge
 - Perceptions of the Social Environment
 - Supportive Relationships with Staff Member
 - Responsibility and Leadership
- **Future Expectations (FE):** Measures youths' future planning, expectations, aspirations and college planning
- **The Sense of Competence Scales (SC):** Measures youths' sense of competence in Reading, Writing, Math, Science, and getting along with others.

The **SAYO-Y** surveys are based on a menu approach and completed online. The **SAYO-Y** is designed for programs serving children from 4th grade through high school.

The Assessment of Program Practices Tool

The **APT** is a quality assessment tool designed to help programs strengthen practices that research suggests are linked to SAYO outcome areas. The APT includes two tools: The **APT Observation Tool (APT-O)**, which focuses on observable program practices; and the **APT Program Questionnaire (APT-Q)**, a self-assessment tool which examines those aspects of program quality that occur “behind the scenes,” such as program planning and connections with schools and parents. APT-O is completed on paper followed by a review with the APT Anchors to guide final ratings.

What does the APT Measure?

Learning and Skill Building

- Staff/Programming Stimulates Engagement and Thinking
- Quality of Activities
- Targeted Academic Skill Building/Activities
- Youth are Positively Engaged in Program/Skill Building
- Staff/Program Supports Individualized Needs & Interests
- Opportunities for Responsibility, Autonomy & Leadership

Program Organization and Structure

- Positive Behavior Guidance
- Space is Conducive to Learning
- Varied/Flexible Approaches/Programming
- High Program and Activity Organization
- Connections with Schools
- Program Supports Staff

Supportive Social Environment:

- Welcoming & Inclusive Environment
- Supportive Staff-Youth Relationships
- Positive Peer Relations
- Connections with Families

Programs that use **APAS** will gain information on how their participants have changed and what gains, if any, they have made over the course of the year. However, as is true with all similar program evaluation research, the results cannot necessarily be attributed to program participation. We encourage those using the **APAS** to collect additional data on youth which may enable their programs to better understand the ways in which it may be contributing to outcomes. It should be noted that **APAS** was designed primarily as a program assessment tool which can help programs track changes in youth linked to participation. **APAS should not be used as an individual youth diagnostic tool.**

**Request a free Introduction to APAS
recorded webinar at niost@wellesley.edu**

APAS was developed by:
 National Institute on
Out-of-School Time
at the Wellesley Centers for Women

With generous funding from:



Background & Development

The **APAS** tools have been extensively piloted and scientifically tested beginning with the statewide Massachusetts Afterschool Research Study (MARS) in 2004. Reliability and validity testing continues today through funding from WT Grant Foundation and MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Today **SAYO** and **APT** are being used by over 600 afterschool and youth programs in 33 states and Canada. We continue to update and develop the APAS family of tools. Recent additions include the revised APT-O and SAYO-S tools, the APAS Online Guide, APT Anchors, and APT-O for high school.

I want to use APAS, how do I proceed?

Step 1: Contact a NIOST representative to determine the appropriate training needed for your program(s) for the full APAS system or its components:

- * SAYO-S & T
- * SAYO-Y
- * APT-O & Q

Step 2: Attend either an APAS training at our annual Summer Seminars, hire a NIOST trainer(s) to conduct (any of the above) trainings at your venue, or take an online tutorial.

Important: NIOST encourages 2 people per site/program to complete training.

Step 3: You're ready to get started!

For more information on APAS visit
www.niost.org
Phone: 781-283-2547
E-Mail: NIOST@wellesley.edu

How is the APAS system is being used?

- * By program administrators and multi-level teams as a comprehensive, self-assessment of program practices
- * By agencies and national organizations to promote greater consistency in practices across multiple sites or networks
- * By cities and states focusing on developing positive youth outcomes
- * By supervisors and site directors to pinpoint topics for staff development sessions and as a guide for delivering feedback to staff that is concrete and constructive
- * By program directors using staff and teacher perspectives in SAYO -S & T and youth perspectives in SAYO-Y to aid in program planning
- * By practitioners communicating with schools about the needs of groups of youth
- * By Early Educators building QRIS systems for OST

APAS FAQs

Q. How much do the APAS tools cost?

There is no cost for the tools, however training is required for *each program site*.

Q. What are the training options?

Trainings options are flexible; both in-person and online. Contact NIOST for details.

Q. Who collects and analyzes the data?

Data collection and analysis can be done by the program site administrator, an evaluator or you can contract with NIOST methodologists.

Q. Can I use APAS in my summer program?

Yes, APAS is being used in summer programs and is being tested in extended day settings.

Q. What if I need help getting started?

Coaching is available for programs new to APAS. In addition, you can contract with NIOST for targeted technical assistance and consulting to help you get from pilot phase to full roll-out. This could be useful for programs looking to expand the use of APAS across many sites.