

## Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools® A Research-Based Model Setting High Standards for All Children

The **Children's Defense Fund's** Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a ***Healthy Start***, a ***Head Start***, a ***Fair Start***, a ***Safe Start***, and a ***Moral Start*** in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities. Through its program design, the *CDF Freedom Schools* model promotes every child's right to these five starts. According to the *National After-School Association's Standards for Quality School-Age Care*<sup>1</sup> the following **6 Categories** and **36 Keys of Quality** provide a baseline of quality and the reassurance that programs are committed to providing each child with a unique growing and learning experience. CDF is committed to these quality assurance standards.

### **Category: Human Relationships**

**Key 1:** Staff relate to all children and youth in positive ways

**Key 2:** Staff respond appropriately to the individual needs of children and youth

**Key 3:** Staff encourage children and youth to make choices and to become more responsible

**Key 4:** Staff interact with children and youth to help them learn

**Key 5:** Staff use positive techniques to guide the behavior of children and youth

**Key 6:** Children and youth generally interact with one another in positive ways

**Key 7:** Staff and families interact with each other in positive ways

**Key 8:** Staff work together to meet the needs of children and youth.

### **Category: Indoor Environment**

**Key 9:** The program's use of indoor space meets the needs of children and youth

**Key 10:** The indoor space allows children and youth to take initiative and explore their interests

### **Category: Outdoor Environment**

**Key 11:** The outdoor play area meets the needs of children and youth, and the equipment allows them to be independent and creative.

### **Category: Activities**

**Key 12:** The daily schedule is flexible, and it offers enough security, independence, and stimulation to meet the needs of all children and youth.

**Key 13:** Children and youth can choose from a wide variety of activities

**Key 14:** Activities reflect the mission of the program and promote the development of all the children and youth in the program

**Key 15:** There are sufficient materials to support program activities

### **Category: Safety, Health, and Nutrition**

**Key 16:** The safety and security of children and youth are protected

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<sup>1</sup> The **National After-School Association**, formerly the National School-Age Care Alliance, is dedicated to the development, education, and care of children and youth during their out-of-school hours.

**Key 17:** The program provides an environment that protects and enhances the health of children and youth

**Key 18:** The program staff try to protect and enhance the health of children and youth

**Key 19:** Children and youth are carefully supervised to maintain safety<sup>2</sup>

**Key 20:** The program serves food and drinks that meet the needs of children and youth

**Category: Administration**

**Key 21:** Staff/child ratio and group sizes permit the staff to meet the needs of children and youth

**Key 22:** Children and youth are supervised at all times

**Key 23:** Staff support families' involvement in the program

**Key 24:** Staff, families, and schools share important information to support the well-being of children and youth

**Key 25:** The program builds links to the community

**Key 26:** The program's indoor space meets the needs of staff

**Key 27:** The outdoor space is large enough to meet the needs of children, youth, and staff

**Key 28:** Staff, children, and youth work together to plan and implement suitable activities, which are consistent with the program's philosophy

**Key 29:** Program policies and procedures are in place to protect the safety of the children and youth

**Key 30:** Program policies exist to protect and enhance the health of all children and youth

**Key 31:** All staff are professionally qualified to work with children and youth

**Key 32:** Staff (paid, volunteer, and substitute) are given an orientation to the job before working with children and youth

**Key 33:** The training needs of staff are assessed, and training is relevant to the responsibilities of each job.

**Key 34:** Staff receive appropriate support to make their work experience positive

**Key 35:** The administration provides sound management of the program

**Key 36:** Program policies and procedures are responsive to the needs of children, youth and families in the community.

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