P-CASP: *a phased CASP self-assessment*

A facilitated self-assessment is a powerful way to begin a program improvement process; it combines the in-depth program knowledge of staff with the objective expertise of an experienced facilitator. Facilitated self-assessment builds buy-in from program staff by asking them to drive the process and make key decisions. The facilitator is the navigator- ensuring the conversations stay on course and reflect what is known in the broader field. The P-CASP is an important first step to diagnosing program quality and prioritizing improvements. The P-CASP is designed to initiate conversation among program staff and between program staff and the facilitator about the program's quality and to match detail about the program's perceived strengths and weaknesses with the quality rating scale within the tool. At the end of the facilitated self- assessment process, programs will have agreed on scores of 1-4 for each indicator and will have an aligned program improvement plan that reflects the program's priorities for organizational improvement *this* year.   The program improvement plan reflects progress toward this indicator:

INDICATOR	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Organizational Improvement Goals	Program has no goals or goals so vague as to not be useful in evaluation.	Program has very broad goals that are not specific, measurable, realistic or time limited. Goals reflect general organizational efficiency, but are not clearly linked to the strategic plan.	Program has goals for organizational improvement, but some of them may be difficult to measure and/or unrealistic. Organizational improvement goals align with the strategic plan.	Program sets at least two specific, measurable, realistic, time-limited goals for organizational improvement each year that align with the strategic plan.

The indicators in this self assessment are drawn from the Comprehensive Assessment of Summer Programs, a set of 80 research-based indicators of program quality. The selected indicators have been identified as critical levers to improving summer program quality and therefore, priority areas for technical assistance and program improvement. When conducting a full external assessment with the CASP (including staff interview and observation), technical assistance providers or assessors will provide feedback on a broader set of indicators than is reflected in the self assessment. This broader feedback, and any additional quality assessment data that is available, should also be factored into the program improvement planning process when possible.

In general, the indicators are intended to reflect a hierarchy of program quality - with the indicators in Phases One and Two seen as most foundational to program quality and those in Phases Three and Four being appropriate for programs that have already achieved high quality in Phases One and Two.   The rating scale is designed to help programs make honest, objective ratings. Here is a simple way to communicate the rating scale levels to program staff:

1- "We haven't started to work on this yet" (BASIC)
2- "We could use some improvement in this area" (EMERGING)
3- "We have a good foundation in this area, but could use some additional focus to take it to the next level of quality" (PROFICIENT)
4- "We are exemplary in this area and are a model for other summer programs" (EXEMPLARY)

Ways to use the P-CASP:

- Individual Survey to Discussion: Complete survey independently, tally results and discuss as a group.
- Small Group Survey to Discussion: Complete the survey in small groups and have each group report or record their scores to be tallied. Discuss as a group to come to consensus.
- Consensus Based Survey: Walk through each indicator as a group and come to real-time consensus on the scores.

Start the self assessment process by completing the Phase One and Phase Two portions of the survey with a program. With any method you use to conduct the survey, be sure to document evidence from staff to back up their scores. Use the Notes field, chart paper or Post-It notes to gather evidence. This will be important to the consensus-making process in the event staff disagree on an indicator score.

 Once program staff has agreed upon scores for each indicator, assess the scores to determine the sections they seem to need the most improvement in. If they score high in both Phase One and Two and provide adequate evidence to back up their scores, then proceed to Phase Three on the survey. Once you have reached a section where a program agrees they need technical assistance, guide them through a process to prioritize improvements for *this* year. It is not necessary for all improvements to come from the same Phase of the survey. Focus on the earliest phases first without skipping indicators because they are foundational, although you should be sure that all indicators in the same domain in previous phases are scored at least with a "3" before proceeding to the next phase. Use your judgment based on the scope of each desired improvement to limit or extend the number of improvements they decide to take on in one year. Typically, a program should take on between 2-5 improvements in one year. In some cases, multiple indicators can be grouped together into one improvement goal or area. Trying to implement too many improvements at once becomes overwhelming and often results in no improvements being made.

Having identified the indicators in which they'd like to make improvements, program staff will need to brainstorm and decide on specific strategies and steps for improvement. For example, if the program is consistently assessed as a 1 in the indicator "Staff Collaborative Planning," program staff will identify an organizational improvement goal of "Engage site coordinators and line staff in planning." They will then discuss and agree on the steps for bringing staff into the planning process, and identify the technical assistance needed to move those steps forward. These decisions are documented in the Program Improvement Plan which serves as the workplan for implementing improvements.

Program Improvement Plan

Organizational Improvement Goal *Quality Indicator*	Next Steps	Timeline/Task	Assessment Strategy	Who is accountable?	Who else is involved?

Sample Program Improvement Plan

Organizational Improvement Goal *Quality Indicator*	Next Steps	Timeline/Task	Assessment Strategy *(how will you know if the program improved?)*	Who is accountable?	Who else is involved?
Set at least two specific, measurable, realistic, time-limited goals for youth outcomes each session that align with the mission and the needs of youth served. *Youth Outcome Goals*	• Talk to key stakeholders • Use results to write goals • Work with staff to develop objectives for each goal	- December - January	1. Aligned evaluation strategy 2. Measurable outcomes from beginning to end of summer	Program Director	Site Coordinators Teachers
Create a spirit of community and pride among all young people through: daily shared traditions, cheers, competitions, team designations and awards for positive actions or attitudes. *Program Spirit*	• Gather youth input on spirit activity design that fosters pride and community • Develop opening and closing rituals • Professional development on spirit activities	- February/March - April - May	1. Observe program activities 2. Interview program staff (incentives, traditions, competitions) 3. Interview students 4. Attend celebrations or special events	Site coordinators	Frontline staff Youth Parents
Equip site coordinator to observe each staff member during the summer and provide feedback connected to identified competencies at planned intervals. *Staff Observation and Feedback*	• Develop staff competencies • Design or select observation tool • Incorporate observation tool into staff training • Develop site coordinator training on observation tool.	- January - March - April - April	1. Observation log 2. Observation feedback reports	Training coordinator	Site Coordinators Frontline Staff

Purpose

INDICATOR	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Score and Notes
Grounded Mission and Vision	Program does not have a mission or vision statement.	Program has a mission and/or vision statement, but cannot connect it to a specific need of the community served.	Program has developed mission and vision statements that reflect the apparent needs of the community, without direct feedback from members of the community served.	Program has used a variety of information sources, including direct feedback from community members, to conduct a community needs assessment. Program has mission and vision statements that are connected to the needs of the community served.	
Youth Outcome Goals	Program has no youth outcome goals or goals so vague as to not be useful in evaluation.	Program has youth outcome goals that are not specific, measurable, realistic or time limited and are not clearly linked to the specific needs of the youth served.	Program has at least two youth outcome goals that are aligned with the mission and the needs of the youth served and have at least two of the following characteristics: specific, measurable, realistic and time limited.	Program has at least two youth outcome goals that are aligned with the mission and the needs of the youth served and have all of the following characteristics: specific, measurable, realistic and time-limited.	
Goal Measurement	Program has no goals or goals so vague as to not be useful in evaluation.	No goals are tied to indicators or data collection methods.	Some youth outcome and organizational goals are tied to indicators and data collection methods.	All youth outcome and organizational goals are tied to indicators and data collection methods.	

Planning

INDICATOR	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Score and Notes
Staff Collaborative Planning	No staff members have input into selection and development of the curriculum and activities for the summer. Program Director develops a schedule for the summer with no staff input.	Site coordinators have input into selection and development of the curriculum and activities for the summer less than three months prior to the start of the session, and line staff have no input.	Site coordinators and line staff have input into selection and development of the curriculum and activities for the summer through collaborative planning sessions less than a month prior to the start of the session. **OR** Only site coordinators have input into the selection and development of the curriculum and activities for the summer at least three months prior to the start of the session.	Site coordinators and line staff have input into selection and development of the curriculum and activities for the summer through collaborative planning sessions at least three months prior to the start of the session.	

Backward Planning	Program staff and partners plan activities with no connection to youth outcome goals.	Program staff and partners plan activities based on available materials and vendors. Some programming may be connected to broad goals but not to measurable youth outcomes.	Program staff and partners begin planning by selecting activities in areas related to program goals. Some programming is adapted to connect directly to measurable youth outcome goals.	Program staff and partners use youth outcome goals as the foundation for activity planning and curriculum development and/or selection. All programming is connected to measurable youth outcome goals.	
Lesson Plan Framework	Program does not use formal lesson plans for activities.	Program provides a form for site coordinators and line staff to submit lesson plans. It is not connected to education standards, program goals or unit planning. No examples of successful activities or units are used. Staff uses form inconsistently.	Program provides site coordinators and line staff a format for lesson planning that may be connected to program goals and state education standards, but does not help to plan an overall unit with benchmarks for learning or development. Staff consistently uses format to plan lessons.	Program provides site coordinators and line staff a framework for unit and lesson planning that is connected to program goals and includes instructional strategies and support for benchmarking. Staff consistently uses framework to plan units and lessons.	

Staff

INDICATOR	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Score and Notes
Alignment of Staff Needs and Training	Program does not assess staff abilities upon hire and does not offer any pre-service staff training.	Program does not assess staff abilities upon hire against any articulated competencies, but does offer staff training connected to curricula or procedures.	Program informally assesses staff abilities upon hire against a set of competencies for each position, and training objectives align with some of the competencies.	Program formally assesses staff abilities upon hire against a set of articulated competencies for each position and sets training objectives based on identified needs in those competencies.	
Staff Training Timeline	Program only requires training necessary for the safety of staff and participants prior to the start of the session. There is no paid planning time prior to the start of the session .	Program requires summer program-specific staff training at least a week before the program starts, but does not include additional paid time for individual or group preparation.	Program requires summer program-specific staff training at least a week before the program starts and includes additional paid time for individual or group preparation.	Program requires summer program-specific staff training, connected to identified staff needs, at least two weeks before the program starts and includes additional paid time for individual or group preparation.	

Partnerships

INDICATOR	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Score and Notes
Partner Communication Structure	Partners do not have a clear means for exchanging information and sharing resources. There is no formal MOU to outline roles and responsibilities or distribution of resources.	Partners have a signed contract outlining financial obligations, but do not have a document articulating the roles and responsibilities of each partner.	Partners have a clear means for exchanging information and sharing resources. Memoranda of Understanding are in place and clearly articulate the roles and responsibilities of each partner.	Partners have a clear means for exchanging information and sharing resources. Memoranda of Understanding are in place and clearly articulate the roles and responsibilities of each partner as well as the distribution of resources.	

Unique Program Culture

INDICATOR	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Score and Notes
Program Spirit	Program makes little or no effort to create a unique culture for youth. There are no program traditions and little incentive for good behavior or attendance.	Program attempts to create a spirit of ownership and pride among young people, but their use of themes and traditions are inconsistent and there appears to be little youth buy-in.	Program creates a spirit of ownership and pride among most young people through: daily shared traditions, cheers, competitions, team designations and awards for positive actions or attitudes.	Program creates a spirit of community and pride among all young people through: daily shared traditions, cheers, competitions, team designations and awards for positive actions or attitudes.	

Purpose

INDICATOR	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Score and Notes
Average Daily Attendance	On average, participants attend less than 50% of the summer session.	On average, participants attend between 50% and 70% of the summer session.	On average, participants attend between 70% and 85% of the summer session.	On average, participants attend at least 85% of the summer session.	
Collection and Analysis of Data by Staff	Staff is not involved in the collection or analysis of data.	Some year-round or seasonal staff is involved in informal data collection, but no formal analysis occurs.	Either year-round or seasonal staff is involved in the collection and analysis of data related to program goals and stakeholder perspectives. .	Year-round and seasonal staff is involved in both the collection and analysis of data related to program goals and stakeholder perspectives.	

Staff

INDICATOR	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Score and Notes
Staff Observation and Feedback	Site coordinator does not observe staff during the summer session.	Site coordinator of program observes most staff at least once during the summer session. There is no feedback to staff.	Site coordinator observes each staff member multiple times during the summer session. Feedback is provided to staff based on observations but may not be directly connected to staff competencies or at planned intervals.	Site coordinator observes each staff member multiple times during the summer session and provides feedback connected to identified staff competencies at planned intervals.	
Partner Staff Collaboration	Program staff and partner staff have little to no interaction and do not work to align program activities or coordinate services for youth.	Program staff and partner staff communicate to coordinate scheduling and logistics, but true alignment of program activities and services is not achieved.	Program staff and partner staff collaborate to align program activities and coordinate services for youth.	Program staff and partner staff collaborate to align program activities and coordinate services for youth. Strategies such as joint training, team-teaching, co-facilitation, shadowing, and mentoring are implemented.	

Planning

INDICATOR	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Score and Notes
Total Hours of Programming	Program offers less than 80 hours of programming to each youth.	Program offers a minimum of 80 hours of programming to each youth.	Program offers a minimum of 120 hours of programming to each youth.	Program offers a minimum of 150 hours of programming to each youth.	
Youth Input	Program does not engage any youth to provide input on program content.	Program engages a few youth informally for their opinions on program content.	Program solicits input from some youth to inform program design and planning each year.	Program solicits input from most youth to inform program design and planning each year.	
Use of Certified Teacher	There are no certified teachers on staff or consulting with the program.	There is a certified teacher on staff, but he/she is not engaged in activity planning or curriculum development program wide.	There is a certified teacher on staff or available for consultation on curriculum or activity planning, but he/she is not actively engaged with all staff throughout the planning process.	There is a certified teacher on staff or available for consultation from the beginning and throughout the duration of the curriculum development and activity planning process to assist staff.	

Intentional and Integrated

INDICATOR	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Score and Notes
Skill Building	Activities are not age-appropriate.	Most activities are not age-appropriate and do not work to build subject matter expertise or skill mastery. (What this looks like: kids in grades 3-6 share the same curriculum)	Most activities are intentionally linked to age-appropriate academic and developmental skills, but enough time isn't devoted to any particular subject to achieve subject matter expertise or skill mastery. (What this looks like: a different topic every day or every week)	Most activities are intentionally linked to age-appropriate academic and developmental skills and work to build subject matter expertise and skill mastery through deep analysis of a subject or idea.	

Integration of Academic and Developmental Focus	Program schedule and activities show a focus on strategies to promote either academic growth or social or emotional growth, but not both.	Program schedule and activities show a focus on both academic growth and social or emotional growth, but the schedule is divided into two distinct parts and program staff leads either academic or social/emotional activities, but not both.	Program schedule and activities show some integration of strategies to promote academic growth and strategies to promote social or emotional growth. Some staff leads integrated activities, but not all.	Program schedule and activities show a full integration of strategies to promote academic growth and strategies to promote social or emotional growth. All staff leads integrated activities throughout the day.	
Inquiry-based learning	No activities involve a hands-on, kinesthetic or project-based component that allows youth to engage in in-depth investigations with objects, materials, phenomena and ideas and draw meaning and understanding from those experiences.	Some activities involve a hands-on, kinesthetic or project-based component but may not be age-appropriate or focused enough for youth to draw meaning and understanding from those experiences.	Some activities involve a hands-on, kinesthetic or project-based component that allows youth to engage in in-depth investigations with objects, materials, phenomena and ideas and draw meaning and understanding from those experiences.	Most activities involve a hands-on, kinesthetic or project-based component that allows youth to engage in in-depth investigations with objects, materials, phenomena and ideas and draw meaning and understanding from those experiences.	

Partnerships

INDICATOR	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Score and Notes
Shared Mission	Program contracts with outside entities to provide services, but does not collaborate to expand either group's access to information or expertise. Program has little information about the mission and goals of its contracted service providers.	Program partners with entities that complement its mission and expand its access to expertise.	Program builds collaborative partnerships with entities that complement its mission and expand its access to information and expertise. Partners share buy-in to a broader set of goals for youth.	Program builds collaborative partnerships with entities that complement its mission and expand its access to information and expertise. Partners share buy-in to a broader set of goals for youth. Partners jointly identify and recruit participants.	
Family Involvement	Program makes little effort to reach out to families.	Families are considered to be important to the program, but there are no opportunities for families to visit the program except for daily drop-off and pick up and one special event.	Families are considered primary stakeholders in the program and there are some opportunities for families to volunteer in and visit the program.	Families are considered primary stakeholders in the program and there are both required and voluntary opportunities for families to participate in the program.	

Phase Three

Purpose

INDICATOR	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Score and Notes
Stakeholder Perspectives Data	Program does not collect any data on youth satisfaction.	Program collects data on perspectives from at least one stakeholder group (staff, youth, families and partners).	Program collects data on perspectives from at least two stakeholder groups (staff, youth, families and partners).	Program collects data on stakeholder perspectives from at least three groups (ex. staff, youth, families and partners).	

Finance and Sustainability

INDICATOR	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Score and Notes
Diverse Funding	Program operating budget shows revenue from just one funding source.	Program operating budget shows revenue from at least two different sources, which may include government, corporate, earned income, in-kind, foundation or individual giving. More than 75% of funding comes from one funding source.	Program operating budget shows revenue from at least two different sources, which may include government, corporate, earned income, in-kind, foundation or individual giving. No more than 75% of program operating budget comes from a single source.	Program operating budget shows revenue from four or more different sources, which may include government, corporate, earned income, in-kind, foundation or individual giving. No more than 75% of program operating budget comes from a single source.	
Stakeholder Communication	Annual publications or materials are not prepared or disseminated to communicate program outcomes.	Program prepares an annual report or publication and disseminates to at least one external stakeholder group to communicate program outcomes.	Program prepares an annual report or publication and disseminates to at least two external stakeholder groups to communicate program outcomes.	Program prepares an annual report or publication and disseminates to several external stakeholder groups (families, board members, community leaders, funders) to communicate program outcomes.	
Advocacy	There is no evidence that the director communicates or educates others about summer learning loss or the need for the program.	There is evidence that the director has engaged others informally about summer learning loss and the need for the program. Director does not engage youth, families or staff in advocacy efforts.	There is evidence that program leadership or staff has presented information formally and informally to the media, community stakeholders, funders **or** policymakers educating them about summer learning loss and the program. Director has asked a program participant or family member to advocate for the program, but it is not a consistent practice.	There is evidence that the program leadership or staff has presented information formally and informally to the media, community stakeholders, funders **and** policymakers educating them about summer learning loss and the program. Director consistently empowers other stakeholders, including youth, families and staff, to publicly advocate for the summer program.	

Staff

INDICATOR	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Score and Notes
Staff Recruitment Timeline	Staff recruitment begins less than two months before the start of the program and may be ongoing during the session.	Seasonal staff recruitment begins two to three months before the start of the session. Job offers are made at least one month prior to the start of the session.	Seasonal staff recruitment begins four to six months before the start of the session. Job offers are made at least two months prior to the start of the session.	Seasonal staff recruitment begins at least six months prior to the start of the session. Job offers are made at least three months prior to the start of the session.	

Partnerships

INDICATOR	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Score and Notes
Relationship-building with Families	Staff does not proactively engage with parents to build relationships or share positive information or constructive feedback.	Staff acknowledges parents at arrival and departure but does not make an effort to learn the names of all parents and caregivers or greet them personally. Staff rarely shares positive information and constructive feedback with parents and caregivers about their child.	Staff makes an effort to learn the names of all parents and caregivers and greet them personally. Staff primarily shares positive information and constructive feedback with parents and caregivers about their child through informal, unscheduled conversation.	All staff makes an effort to learn the names of all parents and caregivers and greet them personally. All staff makes a regular effort to share positive information and constructive feedback with parents and caregivers about their child through both written updates and conversations.	

Individualized and Integrated

INDICATOR	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Score and Notes
Individualized, Tailored Instruction	Program does not plan activities based on youths' skill levels or individual needs.	Observation may lead staff to group some youth differently, but there is no uniform process for differentiation.	The content of the assessment is aligned with the planned content for the summer, and some results are incorporated into planning for the summer.	The results of the pre-program assessment(s) inform lesson planning and instruction, and activities show differentiation for youth of different abilities or attitudes.	

INDICATOR	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Score and Notes
Youth Voice	Youth voice is not incorporated into the program's schedule or daily activities.	Youth have the opportunity to make very basic day-to-day choices in the program regarding materials or groups.	Youth have the opportunity to make day-to-day choices regarding materials, groups or subject matter, but do not use their voice to set a direction for their overall experience in the summer program.	Over the course of the program, all youth have the opportunity to make major decisions, based on their interests, which impact what and how they learn in the program.	

Phase Four

Finance and Sustainability

INDICATOR	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Score and Notes
Comprehensive Strategic Plan	Program does not have a comprehensive planning document that is regularly updated. Program may have a written document outlining one of the following: programming, evaluation, budgeting or administration.	Program has a written document that serves as the strategic plan. Planning document sets the direction for two of the following: programming, evaluation, budgeting and administration.	Summer program is included in long-term planning for the parent agency or organization. Summer program strategic plan sets the direction for 3-5 years of three of the following: programming, evaluation, budgeting and administration.	Summer program is included in long-term planning for the parent agency or organization. Summer program strategic plan sets the direction for 3-5 years of programming, evaluation, budgeting and administration.	
Strategic Plan Updating	Program does not dedicate any time to assessing or updating the strategic plan.	Program dedicates planning time less than once per year to assess and update the strategic plan.	Program dedicates collaborative planning time for most staff once per year to assess and update the strategic plan.	Program dedicates collaborative planning time for all staff at least twice per year to assess and update the strategic plan.	