



## COA After School Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

### **If I am currently NAA accredited, when do I begin working with COA?**

For after school programs that are currently NAA accredited, your current expiration date for NAA accreditation is still valid and in effect. All ongoing annual/interim reports and fees are submitted to NAA based on their expectations and timeline. The transition to COA's after school accreditation should typically begin no later than nine (9) months before your NAA accreditation expiration date. This should allow sufficient time for a review of the COA after school standards, and any steps that may need to be taken to ensure full implementation of the COA After School standards within your program. Of course, since all COA after school standards are available online at no cost, programs are welcome to visit the website at [www.COAafterschool.org](http://www.COAafterschool.org) and begin implementation at any time.

### **I noticed a comment about discount pricing for multiple sites being accredited. Where do I find this information?**

Discount pricing is determined on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the number and locations of program sites, etc. In addition, please note that this would pertain only to programs within the same organization that are prepared for their site visit at the same time, and located within reasonable geographic proximity to one another. If you are interested in additional information, please contact COA at [jmurphy@coanet.org](mailto:jmurphy@coanet.org).

### **I am an active Endorser with NAA and am interested in finding out how to remain an Endorser with COA.**

As a first step, COA reached out to an initial group of NAA Endorsers inquiring about their interest in being Endorsers for the COA After School Recognition system. We anticipate reaching out to additional NAA Endorsers as we move ahead, as well as open the opportunity to others who are interested in becoming an After School Endorser with COA. All NAA Endorsers will be required to attend and successfully complete training provided by COA. More information will be forthcoming regarding this training. Please feel free to contact COA at [clouissaint@coanet.org](mailto:clouissaint@coanet.org). Please note that NAA Endorsers who are not currently active or in good standing with NAA will not be transitioned into the COA Endorser training process.

### **Is there a different cost for a program being re-accredited with COA versus a newly accredited program?**

There is not a price differential between new accreditation and re-accreditation with COA since it entails that same basic process.

### **Where do I find more information regarding COA After School Recognition opportunities?**



The COA After School website is up and running at [www.COAafterschool.org](http://www.COAafterschool.org). After School standards, recognition processes, applications, etc. can all be found online, and are available at no cost.

**Where do I find the applications for the COA after school recognition opportunities?**

All applications for COA After School Recognition opportunities can be found online at [www.COAafterschool.org](http://www.COAafterschool.org). Follow the “Guidelines” tab which can be found toward the top right corner of the page, then select the After School Recognition opportunity (Accreditation, Certification, or Registration) you are interested in, and then select “Where do I begin” from the drop down menu that appears.

**What are “recognition opportunities” with COA? What are the differences and how do I know which I should pursue?**

COA developed three (3) distinct, stand-alone options for After School programs to achieve national recognition. These options are incremental in terms of the evidence required and are designed to afford programs of all sizes an opportunity to participate in the growing national movement to identify and celebrate high-performing After School programs. Programs may begin these quality improvement processes at any time, and are eligible based on the established criteria. No opportunity is a prerequisite for the next and programs are registered, certified and accredited independent of other programs within the same organization.

After School Accreditation: is the most comprehensive of the three recognition opportunities. Programs achieving After School Accreditation will have demonstrated the full implementation of COA’s After School Quality Standards. An observational site visit by a specially trained Volunteer Endorser(s) is an essential component of the process. Each applicant for After School Accreditation will be assigned an Accreditation Coordinator to assist it throughout the process. Accreditation is valid for four (4) years.

After School Certification: provides After School programs with a process to expand their capacity and improve quality prior to seeking accreditation. Working with COA staff, the program submits a self-study that is reviewed by a specially trained Volunteer Endorser. An observational visit is not required. Certification is valid for three (3) years.

After School Registration: provides small and start-up After School programs an opportunity to reflect their commitment to promote COA’s After School Quality Standards. Registration is a three (3) year progressive process designed to demonstrate a program’s continuously increased capacity for positive outcomes.


Eligibility criteria, fees, standards, process information, and applications for all three (3) recognition opportunities can all be located online at the COA After School website at [www.COAafterschool.org](http://www.COAafterschool.org).

**I tried logging into “MY COA” and was not able. How do I find out my user name and access code?**



MY COA Accounts are not developed for a program until after they have applied, and are determined to meet the criteria to pursue, After School Accreditation or Certification. Programs pursuing After School Registration will not use MY COA. Once your program has submitted the application (and Accreditation Agreement for programs pursuing Accreditation), it has been reviewed and approved by COA, then your Coordinator from COA will be in touch regarding next steps, including information about logging into your MY COA account.

### **How can I receive a hard copy version of the after school standards?**

COA is striving to be a **green** organization, and as such has chosen not to publish print or hard-copy versions of the After School standards. We do, however, offer the option to print the standards out if you wish. On the standards page of the COA After School website, when you select “Accreditation”, you may choose to use the printer icon  in the upper right portion of the screen, to print that section of the standards. Please note that Human Resources, Program Administration, and Programming and Services standards would be opened and printed as separate files.

### **I am COA Accredited under the 8<sup>th</sup> edition, how do the After School standards affect my organization?**

If you are currently accredited by COA using the 8<sup>th</sup> Edition standards, the After School Recognition opportunities do not apply to you at this time. COA is currently working on the development and integration of more comprehensive After School service standards for the 8<sup>th</sup> Edition standards, and additional information will be communicated when these are ready.

### **We would like to be come fully Accredited as an Organization, and we also run After School programs, how should we proceed?**

Organizations who would like Full COA Accreditation for their entire organization and all services they provide, should pursue Accreditation with COA under the 8<sup>th</sup> Edition standards. These can be found at [www.coastandards.org](http://www.coastandards.org) (or at [www.coacanadastandards.org](http://www.coacanadastandards.org) for Canadian organisations). COA’s After School Recognition is program specific – not organization-wide, and is designed only for After School services provided to school-age children and youth.

### **We run many After School programs, and I heard we can receive a discount. How does that work?**

COA does offer a discount to organizations that run multiple After School programs, when they bring these programs through COA After School Recognition at the same time (including site visits for Accreditation being conducted concurrently or sequentially). Organizations with multiple After School programs pursuing COA After School Recognition at different times, are not eligible for this discount. For additional information regarding these discounts, please contact us. Discounts may vary based on individual circumstances and situations.

### **What does COA After School Recognition Cost?**



### **After School Program Accreditation**

Accreditation is the highest and most comprehensive recognition opportunity and is available to programs of every size. Programs achieving Accreditation will have demonstrated the full implementation of COA's After School Quality Standards. Essential components of Accreditation include an observational site visit by a specially trained endorser(s) as well as the assignment of a COA After School Coordinator to assist the program throughout the process. Accreditation is valid for four (4) years.

Please note that, except in extraordinary circumstances, programs currently accredited by NAA are expected to pursue COA accreditation.

Application Fee: \$ 250

Accreditation Fee: \$2,400

Site Visit Costs: \$1,800 (estimated for 2 Endorsers for a 2 day/1 night visit)\*

**Total estimated Cost: \$4,450**

Please note that there is also an annual Maintenance of Accreditation (MOA) fee of \$200.

\* Site visits requiring a 2-day/1-night visit will incur a flat-rate fee of \$900 per Endorser. Site Visits requiring a longer stay may incur a flat rate of \$1,500 per Endorser per 3-day/2-night visit, and a fee of \$425 per day, per Endorser for each additional overnight required.

### **After School Program Certification**

Certification provides programs that choose not to seek Accreditation with a process to expand their capacity and quality. Working with COA staff, the program submits a self-study that is reviewed by specially trained endorser. An observational visit is not required. Certification is valid for three (3) years. *A program with fewer than 150 children or a budget of less than \$120,000 is eligible to apply for Certification.*

Application Fee: \$ 250

Certification Fee: \$1,200

**Total Initial Cost: \$1,450**

Please note that there is also an annual Maintenance of Certification (MOC) Fee of \$200.

### **After School Program Registration**

Registration provides small and start-up after school programs an opportunity to reflect their commitment to promote COA's After School Quality Standards. Registration is a



three (3) year progressive process designed to demonstrate a program's continuing capacity for positive outcomes. *A program with fewer than 75 children or a budget of less than \$60,000 is eligible to apply for Registration.*

Registration Fee: \$250 annually for 3 years

**Total Cost: \$750**

### **How do I get started?**

Any After School program can pursue COA After School Recognition. The first thing to do is visit our After School website at [www.COAafterschool.org](http://www.COAafterschool.org) and begin learning about the different recognition opportunities we offer for After School programs. When you are at the main page for COA After School, click on the "Guidelines" tab at the top right of the screen. Then, using the menu options on the left panel of the screen, you can navigate through information regarding the different recognition opportunities and how to determine which opportunity will be most suited for your program. This includes information such as eligibility criteria for each opportunity, costs, etc. Applications for each recognition opportunity can be located by selecting one of the recognition opportunities (Accreditation, Certification and Registration) from the left panel, and clicking on the "Where do we begin?" option from the drop down menu that appears.

### **I am interested in becoming an Endorser for COA's After School Recognition. Who do I contact?**

Thank you for your interest in supporting the process of professionalizing the After School field, raising the quality of After School programming, and in supporting COA's After School Recognition initiative. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer Endorser for the COA After School Recognition system, please contact us at [clouissaint@coanet.org](mailto:clouissaint@coanet.org).

### **How were COA's After School Program Standards developed?**

COA's After School Program Standards were developed by merging *The NAA Standards for Quality School-Age Care* with portions of COA's 8<sup>th</sup> Edition Standards, under the guidance of the NAA Accreditation Transition Team. COA also consulted with other experts in the field, and posted the standards for field comment, as part of the standards development process.

### **How do I provide feedback about the standards?**

One of the exciting aspects of the standards is that they are truly dynamic in nature. You can always contact your Coordinator with feedback about the standards, and COA can periodically update and refine them based on new research, literature, and feedback from the field. When a standard is changed, COA will issue a Standards Update. For more information about Updates, please visit <http://www.coafterschool.org/updates.php>.



## How are COA's standards similar to and different from NAA's standards?

COA's After School Program Standards contain most of the content of *The NAA Standards for Quality School-Age Care*. However, they also place greater emphasis on the administration and management practices that support a program's ability to provide quality programming for children and youth.

The structure of NAA's and COA's standards also differs. NAA's standards were organized into thirty-six keys of quality. Twenty of the keys were classified as "observable," and were organized into five categories: Human Relationships; Indoor Environment; Outdoor Environment; Activities; and Safety, Health, and Nutrition. Sixteen additional keys comprised a sixth category, entitled Administration, and describe the program's organization, procedures, and policies. Each of the thirty-six *keys* included specific *standards*, and most standards included *examples* of the kinds of things to look for when using the standards to evaluate a program.

COA's After School Standards are divided into three (3) different sections: After School Program Administration (ASP-AM), After School Human Resources (ASP-HR), and After School Programming and Services (ASP-PS). The standards in each section are organized according to a three (3) level structure. At the highest level, a *purpose standard* provides the overall aim of the section of standards. At a middle level, each section is comprised of several sub-sections that are headed by *core concept standards*. Lastly, at a third level, standards that contain detailed practices contribute to the core concept, and to meeting the purpose. These are *practice standards*. All three (3) types of standards may be accompanied by *Interpretations* that elaborate on the meaning of the standard. When Interpretations include examples of ways programs can demonstrate implementation of a standard, an individual program is not expected to demonstrate that all of those specific examples will be found at the program. In contrast, the examples are illustrations of ways to demonstrate that a standard is being met. Programs may also be meeting the standard in other ways not included in the list of potential examples. For more information about the structure and features of the standards, please visit the section of the Accreditation Guidelines entitled "Understanding the After School Program Standards," at [http://www.coafterschool.org/p\\_guidelines.php](http://www.coafterschool.org/p_guidelines.php).

In NAA's standards, each standard was typically assessed by *either* observation or an administrative review of policies, procedures, and other documents. In contrast, many of COA's standards are to be assessed through a *combination* of observation and document review. For example, when determining implementation of COA's standard about family involvement (ASP-PS 10), Endorsers would assign ratings based on a combination of: (1) the interactions they observe at the program, (2) the Family Handbook, (3) policies and/or procedures regarding family involvement, and (4) documentation included in the files of children and youth. Please see the Tables of Evidence included with each section of standards, and the Accreditation Guidelines, for more information.