

The CypherWorx AfterSchool Course Catalog



To Learn More

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1. Exploring the Continuum of Developmental Tasks of School-Age Children from 5 to 12 – 2 hours

Understanding the continuum of ongoing development between the ages of 5 and 12 provides the foundation for planning and implementing successful school-age programs. When staff know and understand the developmental tasks of school-age children, they can work with children and colleagues to design effective environments, plan engaging activities, set appropriate expectations and limits, and guide children's behavior effectively.

2. Exploring Four Areas of School-Age Development – 2 hours

One of the most helpful ways to gain an understanding of the needs and interests of youth between 5 and 12 is to examine their development from four different perspectives:

- Exploring Four Areas of School-Age Development – Physical Development – .5 hours
- Exploring Four Areas of School-Age Development – Social Development – .5 hours
- Exploring Four Areas of School-Age Development – Cognitive Development – .5 hours
- Exploring Four Areas of School-Age Development – Emotional Development – .5 hours

3. Exploring Developmental Needs and Characteristics – 2 hours

Certain developmental needs and traits are associated with younger school-age children, while others are typical of older school-age children and youth. While the differences between school-age children of different ages are not clear-cut, there are some general traits and tasks that are often associated with younger (ages 5-7), middle (ages 8-10), and older (ages 11-12) school-age children and youth.

- Exploring Developmental Needs and Characteristics: Age Group 5 to 7 – .67 hours
- Exploring Developmental Needs and Characteristics: Age Group 8 to 10 – .67 hours
- Exploring Developmental Needs and Characteristics: Age Group 11 to 12 – .67 hours

4. Exploring Individual Differences in School-Age Children: Implications for Programming – 2 hours

One of the most significant challenges for staff in school-age programs is learning how to identify, manage, and respond appropriately to individual differences in a group setting. Some differences among children are the

result of inborn characteristics and traits (e.g., physical characteristics, temperament, talents, race). Other differences are the result of external factors (e.g., the environment) or are cultivated as the child grows and develops (e.g., interests, skills, knowledge). The diverse needs, characteristics, interests, abilities, and skills of school-age children require a flexible atmosphere that supports diversity and choice for children with varying capacities for independent action. Staff who understand and appreciate individual differences in children are better equipped to plan and implement program experiences that help individual children grow and flourish in a group setting.

5. Guiding School-Age Children in Groups – 2 hours

- Guiding School-Age Children in Groups: Supervision and Boundaries – 1 hour When large numbers of children are involved in the program, it is challenging to create and deliver school-age program activities that can meet the needs of all children. The key to success is taking a systematic approach to program planning. It is important for staff to understand how to select appropriate activity options and use effective management strategies that make it possible to offer a balanced variety of simultaneous activity options. In this course, we will explore supervision and boundaries.
- Guiding School-Age Children in Groups: MAPs and DDADA – 1 hour When large numbers of children are involved in the program, it is challenging to create and deliver school-age program activities that can meet the needs of all children. The key to success is taking a systematic approach to program planning. It is important for staff to understand how to select appropriate activity options, and use effective management strategies that make it possible to offer a balanced variety of simultaneous activity options. In this course, we will explore two strategies for guiding children in groups: MAPs and DDADA.

6. Guiding the Behavior of Individual Children – 2 hours

This knowledge and understanding will help students develop strategies for creating programs that encourage individual children to develop self-discipline and self-direction, establish positive relationships with others, and exhibit respect for program materials and equipment and the rights of others.

7. Observation Skills: What's Going on Here? – 2 hours

Observation forms the basis of much of what people plan and do every day. As staff work with children in school-

age programs, observation takes a more formal role. High quality school-age care is based on the principle of developmentally appropriate practices. Developmentally appropriate practices combine general knowledge of child development with specific knowledge of each individual child. Conducting objective observations help staff learn about each child's development, and provides staff with valuable information to use in planning and implementing appropriate program experiences and in developing effective guidance strategies.

8. Human Relations Skill Development – 2 hours

Being able to communicate effectively is an essential human relations skill for school-age care professionals. To be a good communicator, school-age professionals need to understand the components of communication, and how the communication process works. They need to identify barriers to clear communication, and develop strategies for minimizing or eliminating barriers to communication. School-age care professionals also need to work cooperatively with other team members to solve problems and conflicts. In this course, we will explore strategies for cultivating good communication skills.

- Human Relations Skill Development: Good Communication Skills – .67 hours
- Human Relations Skill Development: Cultivating Communication Skills – .67 hours
- Human Relations Skill Development: Team Building Skills and Strategies – .67 hours

9. School-Age Care as a Family Service: Emphasis on Relationship Building – 2 hours

Strong, positive, cooperative relationships with parents and families are at the heart of quality school-age programs. Unfortunately, positive relationships with parents and families are not always easy to achieve because parents, like children, have widely varying personalities; some are easier to reach than others. Parents in school-age programs have different ideas, values, concerns, knowledge, pressures, lifestyles, plans, dreams, resources, and constraints. Staff who are successful in building positive relationships begin by recognizing the importance of accepting parents as the most important people in children's lives, regardless of differences among them. They understand that staff attitudes toward parents can have a strong effect on whether or not staff can establish positive relationships with parents. Staff in quality programs make a commitment to learning as much as possible about parents' needs, interests, wants, and concerns and develop effective strategies for making positive connections with parents.

10. School-Age Care as a Family Service: Emphasis on Planning Opportunities for Family Involvement – 2 hours

The foundation for getting parents involved in school-age programs is to keep parents well informed about what is happening in the program. Quality programs also provide parents with opportunities to make suggestions and give feedback on program services through suggestion boxes, feedback forms, and surveys. When parents are encouraged to have input in the program, they develop trust and confidence in the program, and feel a sense of pride and ownership. They are more likely to participate as resourceful partners with program staff when they know their ideas are welcome and valued. Finally, because parents are all different from each other, it's important to provide many different opportunities for them to connect with the program. Staff in quality school-age programs recognize that all parents don't have to be involved in the same way.

11. Building Relationships with School Personnel – 2 hours

School-age programs and schools share a mutual goal of supporting the growth, development, and learning of school-age children. Over 50% of all school-age programs nation-wide are housed in school facilities. When school-age programs are housed in school facilities, it is essential for staff in school-age programs to establish and maintain a positive relationship with school personnel. This makes it possible for schools and programs to work together to support the needs of the whole child. Staff can develop successful partnerships with school personnel by cultivating an understanding of the needs, interests, and goals of school personnel and using effective strategies, tools, and systems to build a spirit of positive collaboration and communication.

12. Growing as a Professional in School-Age Programs – 2 hours

- Growing as a Professional in School-Age Programs: Professionalism in School-Age Programs – 1 hour In the search for a definition of professionalism in school-age programs, it is helpful to examine the common characteristics of professionalism in other fields. The next step is identifying qualities and characteristics associated with professional behavior in the school-age field itself. As a school-age professional, it is also important to understand the importance of acting as a public policy advocate on behalf of school-age children and their families.

- Growing as a Professional in School-Age Programs: Opportunities for Professional Development – 1 hour An important part of professionalism in the school-age field is continued personal growth and development in relation to the field. This requires using appropriate resources and strategies to further individual professional development. In this course, we will explore professional development opportunities for school-age staff.

13. Creating and Maintaining Safe School-Age Environments – 2 hours

Keeping school-age children safe during out-of-school hours is a top priority for school-age programs. This requires giving careful attention to setting up the program environment in a way that promotes safety, and using effective strategies for monitoring and maintaining a safe environment. Because school-age children are growing towards independence, it is also important for staff to help them develop habits and behaviors that will keep them safe from harm as they participate in program experiences. Promoting and protecting children’s safety is one of the major responsibilities of staff in school-age programs.

14. Creating and Maintaining Healthy School-Age Environments – 2 hours

Keeping school-age children healthy is a major priority for school-age programs. This requires giving careful attention to setting up the environment in a way that promotes healthy habits, and using effective strategies for monitoring and maintaining a hygienic environment. Because school-age children are growing towards independence, it is also important to help them develop habits and behaviors for living a healthy lifestyle.

15. Designing Effective Indoor Play and Learning Environments for School-Age Programs – 2 hours

Planning effective environments is the first step to planning an effective program. When environments are attractive, interesting, and comfortable, they provide a backdrop for a varied program that can address the developmental needs of school-age children. The look and feel of well-planned environments send messages that let children know they are welcome and valued. They are inviting and encourage children to get involved and stay engaged with program activities and experiences.

16. Developing and Implementing Effective Indoor Interest Areas – 2 hours

In order to operate an effective school-age program environment, it is essential for staff to know how to design,

set up, and operate a variety of different interest areas that meet the developmental needs of school-age children. Effective interest areas are multi-dimensional; they provide a wide variety of activity options within the area. Effective interest areas provide children with opportunities to work and play independently on their own or with others. They also provide a setting for focused, staff-led activities designed to introduce children to new concepts and skills. Staff in quality school-age programs know how to work with colleagues and children to define, develop, and manage a wide variety of interest areas.

17. Developing Effective Outdoor Environments and Interest Areas – 2 hours

School-age children need daily opportunities to exercise, relax, and participate in a wide range of outdoor activities. The hours children spend in after school programs are often the best hours of the day for getting fresh air and enjoying the outdoors while it’s still daylight. School-age programs can provide safe, secure settings where children can enjoy the outdoors. In this course, we will explore how to assess space and plan activities in outdoor environment and interest areas.

- Developing Effective Outdoor Environments and Interest Areas – 1 hour
- Developing Effective Outdoor Environments and Interest Areas: Moving Indoor Interest Areas Outside – 1 hour

18. Exploring Effective Schedules, Diverse Activity Formats, Planning Tools, and Staff Roles – 2 hours

Flexible schedules make it possible to provide a varied program of activities that support the developmental needs and interests of school-age children. By establishing a flexible schedule, school-age staff can plan and implement a variety of different activity formats. To develop a balanced program, it is important for school-age staff to take a systematic approach to both short-term and long-range planning. Staff can use a variety of planning tools to plan different types of activities. To implement a diverse program of activities, it is essential for school-age staff to recognize and use a wide variety of roles as they interact with children throughout the program day.

19. Involving School-Age Children in Activity Planning and Implementation – 2 hours

As they grow and change and move toward independence, school-age children and youth become very interested in planning and directing their own activities. This means it’s very important for staff to think of ways to involve them in program planning and implementation. By planning

activities WITH children instead of FOR them, and engaging them in creating the program environment, staff can help children develop a feeling of ownership of the program—a positive feeling that the program belongs to them.

20. Developing Activities That Encourage Creativity and Cognitive Development – 2 hours

Children who regularly attend school-age programs need many opportunities to engage in activities that will help them develop their creative potential and apply their emerging thinking abilities and skills. To support children's needs, it is essential for school-age staff to understand the creative process, and the relationship of cognitive development to creativity. With this knowledge and understanding, staff can design and implement a program that encourages a sense of wonder as children explore their environment, fosters creative imagination, and enhances children's ability to apply reasoning skills appropriately, as they develop ideas and encounter challenges, problems, and opportunities.

21. Creating Successful Clubs, Special Events, and Field Trips in School-Age Programs – 2 hours

Children who regularly attend school-age programs need many opportunities to participate in activities that help them connect with their communities and work together to build on their interests, talents, and abilities. Clubs, special events, and field trips are ideal vehicles for providing these opportunities. When staff know how to work with children to plan and implement these activities, children develop a sense of program ownership that helps them become productively engaged in a variety of meaningful activities that support their development.

22. Developing Activities That Support Character Development and Promote Social Interaction – 2 hours

School-age programs can provide children with many opportunities to work on character development. Staff who are knowledgeable about character development can create program experiences that help individual children bring out their best inner qualities as they interact with peers and adults outside the family. Staff can also use this knowledge to help children make positive contributions to the program, their school, their community, and to the world beyond their community.

23. Providing Homework Support – 2 hours

- Providing Homework Support: Developing a Homework Support Program – 1 hour Research indicates there are many different ways to provide

effective homework support in school-age programs. When planning a homework support program, it is important for school-age programs to develop a homework philosophy that is consistent with the program's overall philosophy, and reflects current research on best practices for providing homework help. The homework philosophy should also reflect the needs of parents and children in the program, and strike a balance between homework needs and other experiences that help children grow and learn out-of-school. In this course, we will examine how to develop a homework support program.

- Providing Homework Support: Types of Homework Support – 1 hour Research indicates there are many different ways to provide effective homework support in school-age programs. When planning a homework support program, it is important for school-age programs to develop a homework philosophy that is consistent with the program's overall philosophy, and reflects current research on best practices for providing homework help. The homework philosophy should also reflect the needs of parents and children in the program, and strike a balance between homework needs and other experiences that help children grow and learn out-of-school. In this course, we will explore the various types of homework support.

24. Helping Children with ADD Succeed In School-Age Programs – 2 hours

- Helping Children with ADD Succeed In School-Age Programs: Characteristics and Needs of Children – 1 hour Children with ADD regularly experience struggles and challenges at home, in school, and in the community. Without the help of knowledgeable, understanding, and supportive people, they often experience multiple failures and frustrations on a daily basis. In this course, we will explore characteristics and needs of children with ADD.
- Helping Children with ADD Succeed In School-Age Programs: Strategies and Techniques for Staff – 1 hour Children with ADD regularly experience struggles and challenges at home, in school, and in the community. Without the help of knowledgeable, understanding, and supportive people, they often experience multiple failures and frustrations on a daily basis. In this course, we will examine strategies and techniques that staff can use when working with children with ADD.

Growing as a Professional: Health and Stress Management – 2 hours

- Growing as a Professional: Health and Stress Management: Nurturing and Maintaining Good Health – 1 hour Every day, school-age care professionals

dedicate themselves to caring for and nurturing children, youth, and families. Often, school-age care professionals are so dedicated to serving others, they neglect their own needs. When this happens, school-age staff can experience stress that causes them to become overwhelmed, exhausted, frustrated, dissatisfied with job responsibilities, and unappreciated. When school-age care professionals maintain a healthy, balanced lifestyle, they are in a much better position to face the challenges of supporting and nurturing children and families with positive energy, enthusiasm, patience, and empathy. In this course, we will explore ways to nurture and maintain good health.

- Growing as a Professional: Health and Stress Management: Strategies for Coping with Stress – 1 hour Every day, school-age care professionals dedicate themselves to caring for and nurturing children, youth, and families. Often, school-age care professionals are so dedicated to serving others, they neglect their own needs. When this happens, school-age staff can experience stress that causes them to become overwhelmed, exhausted, frustrated, dissatisfied with job responsibilities, and unappreciated. When school-age care professionals maintain a healthy, balanced lifestyle, they are in a much better position to face the challenges of supporting and nurturing children and families with positive energy, enthusiasm, patience, and empathy. In this course, we will examine strategies to help staff cope with stress.

26. Human Relations Skill Development: Focus on Leadership Styles and Conflict Management – 2 hours

- Human Relations Skill Development: Focus on Leadership Styles and Conflict Management: Leadership Styles – 1 hour Research indicates that those in positions of leadership use a variety of different leadership and management styles. A person's effectiveness as a leader is often directly linked to his or her leadership style. It is important for school-age care professionals to be aware of the assumptions and characteristics of different leadership styles. Knowledge of different leadership styles can help school-age care professionals reflect on their own leadership style, and assess its effectiveness.
- Human Relations Skill Development: Focus on Leadership Styles and Conflict Management: Managing Conflict – 1 hour Research indicates that those in positions of leadership use a variety of different leadership and management styles. A person's effectiveness as a leader is often directly linked to his or her leadership style. It is important for school-age care professionals to be aware of the assumptions

and characteristics of different leadership styles. Knowledge of different leadership styles can help school-age care professionals reflect on their own leadership style, and assess its effectiveness. Leaders also use a variety of different styles when it comes to managing and resolving conflicts. By understanding how to diagnose the causes and dynamics of conflict, and understanding the characteristics of different conflict management styles, school-age care professionals can choose the best conflict management strategy for each situation.

27. Exploring Ethics in School-Age Care: Focus on a Professional Code of Ethics – 2 hours

According to Frank Loewenberg and Ralph Dolgoff, developing a code of ethics is a significant stage for any profession. "For most American occupational groups the development of a code of ethics coincided, more or less, with the decision to formalize the transformation of the occupation into a profession." The transformation to a profession allows those working in the profession continuity and heightened sense of purpose. It allows those outside of the profession to realize the integrity and importance of the profession. When SAC/OST professionals develop, adopt, and adhere to a Code of Ethics, they are guided by underlying principles that represent the values of the field. These underlying principles help them determine appropriate courses of action when they face ethical issues as they work with children, parents, colleagues, and community members.

28. Commitment to Quality in School-Age Programs – 2 hours

School-age child care programs were prevalent during World War II. Many mothers worked outside the home to support the war effort and needed care for their children. When the war ended, school-age childcare programs disappeared almost overnight as mother chose to stay at home. School-age programs emerged again in the late 1960s in response to the vast numbers of mothers across the nation who were re-entering the workforce. National surveys in the 1970s indicated that at least two-thirds of mothers with school-age children were again employed outside the home. The divorce rate was increasing, as well as the number of households headed by a single parent. As a result, many elementary school children spent hours alone from 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM when school was out. Clearly, there was a growing need for out-of-school support services for school-age children. In the 1970s, programs were commonly known as school-age childcare or extended day programs. By the mid 1970s, childcare advocates also emphasized the importance of providing quality programs. Childcare advocates, parents, educators,

public policy experts, and representatives from a wide variety of childcare and community organizations began a national dialogue to explore and identify the components of quality school-age childcare services. Today, national, state, and local organizations are working to educate the public about quality school-age childcare services and to assist school-age childcare professionals achieve quality programming in their communities. It is essential for today's school-age professionals to be aware of the national and state organizations, research, and practices that focus on the development of quality school-age childcare programs.

29. Making Plans and Developing Policies – 2 hours

Planning and policy-making are closely linked to the development of quality school-age care programs. When school-age staff are skilled as planners and policy-makers, they can use these skills to design and implement high quality programs that benefit children, youth, and families. It is essential for school-age care professionals to recognize that it is important for policies to grow out of a vision of quality, and a mission that supports that vision. Therefore, creating a vision for quality, developing a program philosophy, and writing a clear mission statement are the first steps in program planning. It is also important for school-age care professionals to use a systematic process to develop goals and objectives, set priorities for accomplishing goals and objectives, and develop goal-based action plans that will help the school-age program achieve its mission. High quality school-age programs are led by professionals who understand how to use effective strategies for creating a continuous cycle of planning and evaluation that supports ongoing program improvement.

30. Creating and Managing Budgets in School-Age Programs – 2 hours

When program budgets are developed through a careful, step-by-step process, they become valuable planning tools. By using effective budget planning tools and strategies, school-age care professionals can make realistic projections about the program's financial stability, and design strategies for generating and allocating resources to support the program's vision and mission. It is important for school-age care professionals to understand that the budget process is ongoing. It involves linking financial goals to program goals, identifying program priorities, allocating resources effectively, using reliable methods for calculating potential expenses and revenues, monitoring performance against projections made, and making needed changes and adjustments for the future.

31. The Six Ps of Marketing School-Age Programs – 2 hours

Effective marketing of school-age programs is a systematic process that involves research, analysis, assessment of market trends and needs, short-term and long-term planning, and development of effective strategies to promote school-age program services and develop a positive image of the program in the community. It is important for school-age care leaders to recognize that marketing is a far reaching process that includes, but is not limited to, advertising and publicity. When leaders take a comprehensive approach to marketing, their programs and projects have an excellent chance of success. Knowledge and understanding of the marketing process is an invaluable tool for leaders as they plan and implement new programs and projects, assess the stability and need for improvement of current programs, develop plans for new or expanded programs, and develop a positive public image of the program and its services.

32. Current Trends and Issues in Out-of-School Time Programs – 2 hours

- **Current Trends and Issues in Out-of-School Time Programs: Needs and Benefits – .67 hours** It is important for school-age care professionals to understand how the field has developed since its inception, and to be knowledgeable about the current status of the field of school-age care. With this knowledge and understanding, it is possible for school-age care professionals to participate in shaping the field as it grows in the future. In this course, we will explore needs and benefits in out-of-school time programs.
- **Current Trends and Issues in Out-of-School Time Programs: Funding & Support – .67 hours** It is important for school-age care professionals to understand how the field has developed since its inception, and to be knowledgeable about the current status of the field of school-age care. With this knowledge and understanding, it is possible for school-age care professionals to participate in shaping the field as it grows in the future. In this course, we will explore funding and support issues in out-of-school time programs.
- **Current Trends and Issues in Out-of-School Time Programs: Growth and Change – .67 hours** It is important for school-age care professionals to understand how the field has developed since its inception, and to be knowledgeable about the current status of the field of school-age care. With this knowledge and understanding, it is possible for school-age care professionals to participate in shaping the field as it grows in the future. In this course, we

will explore growth and change in out-of-school time programs.

33. Youth Development Trends: Focus on Older Youth – 2 hours

- Youth Development Trends: Focus on Older Youth: Developmental Needs – 1 hour The Center for Early Adolescence at the University of North Carolina and the Search Institute have found that early adolescence is a time of rapid change in youth development and developmental needs. For many children, the characteristic needs of early adolescence begin to emerge as early as age nine, when children are still in elementary school and attending traditional school-age care programs. School-age care professionals who understand these emerging needs are better equipped to create successful program experiences with older children in their programs. In this course, we will explore the developmental needs of older youth.
- Youth Development Trends: Focus on Older Youth: Programming Approaches – 1 hour The Center for Early Adolescence at the University of North Carolina and the Search Institute have found that early adolescence is a time of rapid change in youth development and developmental needs. For many children, the characteristic needs of early adolescence begin to emerge as early as age nine, when children are still in elementary school and attending traditional school-age care programs. School-age care professionals who understand these emerging needs are better equipped to create successful program experiences with older children in their programs. In this course, we will examine programming approaches that address the needs of older youth.

34. Creating Community Collaborations – 2 hours

Across the country, more and more communities are forming community collaborations to address the out-of-school needs of children and youth of all ages. When different segments of the community join together, share ideas, and pool their resources and efforts to create out-of-school time initiatives, children and youth benefit. What one organization or program may not be able to accomplish alone is often achievable when partnerships and collaborations among diverse groups and individuals are formed. When school-age care professionals are knowledgeable about what it takes to create and sustain successful collaborations, they can play an important leadership role in creating out-of-school time initiatives and programs that will meet the needs of children and youth in their communities now and in the future.

35. Observing Children in School-Age Programs – 2 hours

Conducting and documenting objective, accurate observations of children in school-age programs is an important professional responsibility of school-age care professionals. Two useful tools for structuring observations are developmental checklists and anecdotal records. Both tools provide rich information that help staff learn about children's development. When school-age care staff conduct regular observations of children's development, and prepare objective documentation of these observations, they are able to discover the uniqueness of each child, and provide developmentally appropriate guidance and support for all children in the program.

36. Sharing Information with Parents and Other Professionals – 2 hours

- Sharing Information with Parents and Other Professionals: Communication Tools – 1 hour School-age children work on many important developmental tasks during their out-of-school hours. One of the important responsibilities of school-age care staff is to help parents stay in touch with how their children are growing and developing during program hours. In this course, we will explore tools used to communicate with families about their children.
- Sharing Information with Parents and Other Professionals: Policies & Conferences – 1 hour School-age children work on many important developmental tasks during their out-of-school hours. One of the important responsibilities of school-age care staff is to help parents stay in touch with how their children are growing and developing during program hours. In this course, we will explore policies and conferences.