

Core Qualities for Successful Expanded Learning Time Programs

NCLR
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LA RAZA

Don't forget
to sign up for
summer
programs!

3:00PM Snack Time
3:30PM H.W. Time
4:30PM Comics Club



The National Council of La Raza (NCLR)—the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States—works to improve opportunities for Hispanic Americans. Through its network of nearly 300 affiliated community-based organizations, NCLR reaches millions of Hispanics each year in 41 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. To achieve its mission, NCLR conducts applied research, policy analysis, and advocacy, providing a Latino perspective in five key areas—assets/investments, civil rights/immigration, education, employment and economic status, and health. In addition, it provides capacity-building assistance to its Affiliates who work at the state and local level to advance opportunities for individuals and families.

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Acknowledgments

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Introduction

The National Council of La Raza (NCLR) recognizes the positive effects of expanded learning time on the academic achievement and social and emotional development of Latino youth and English language learners (ELLs). Expanded learning time includes after-school activities, summer learning, and any other programming that allows youth to learn outside the formal classroom. To develop its expanded learning initiatives, NCLR has prioritized research, professional development resources, and building opportunities for its network of community-based organizations and schools to connect with each other. With the Core Qualities for Successful Expanded Learning Time Programs, NCLR builds on existing research and assessment tools to address the unique needs of community organizations and schools serving Latino students and their families. These Core Qualities will drive NCLR's efforts to improve the ability of all expanded learning time programs to serve Latino and ELL children. The following framework outlines essential qualities as well as indicators, measurements, and evidence that demonstrate Latino student success in expanded learning time programs.

Core Qualities Defined

- **Cultural Competence:** The program respects and incorporates all aspects of Latino culture, including its values, history, experiences, and traditions. It embraces its role as a cultural mediator and institution that promotes the advancement of a vibrant multicultural community. The program engages in a continual process of discovery regarding the cultures of its families, community, and staff.
- **Supporting ELL Language Development and Needs:** Students' native languages are used whenever possible. The program utilizes strategies designed to help ELL students develop academic language proficiency in all areas of the curriculum.
- **Academic Support and Alignment with the School Day:** The program makes an intentional effort to tailor expanded learning time projects and activities to support and enhance what students learn throughout the school day.
- **Youth Development Integration:** The program has the overarching goal of strengthening youth's social and emotional skills and providing opportunities to build their cultural capital.
- **Family and Community Engagement:** The program highly values family engagement and community collaboration and creates structures and resources to promote them.

Cultural Competence

The program respects and incorporates all aspects of Latino culture, including its values, history, experiences, and traditions. It embraces its role as a cultural mediator and institution that promotes the advancement of a vibrant multicultural community. The program engages in a continual process of discovery regarding the cultures of its families, community, and staff.

Indicators	Measures	Evidence
<p>The culture and values of students and their families are celebrated and deliberately integrated into the program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program staff appreciate each family's unique story and characteristics and make a concerted effort to get to know them. • Program materials and literature reflect and honor students' cultures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program offers opportunities to integrate families' cultural values through family nights or student identity projects. • Program space reflects students' cultures and interests through displays of their artwork and other cultural expressions.
<p>Programming increases youth's cultural awareness by allowing youth to learn how to respect and interact with cultures that are different than their own.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities allow youth to value their cultural identity while learning about other cultures and traditions. • Programming includes community analysis and reflection, which allows youth to think about themselves and their place within the community fabric. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through projects and activities, children and youth learn about each other's differences and similarities. • Through projects and activities, children and youth compare and contrast their community with other parts of the world.
<p>Program staff are culturally competent and have an understanding of the breadth of Latino culture.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program recruits and hires staff who are rooted in the community, are bilingual, and/or view language and culture as an asset. • Program staff receive regular training on cultural sensitivity. • Staff training addresses the vast diversity within Latino culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs recruit former participants since they understand student and community needs. • Training on cultural sensitivity considers differences in the Latino community. • Staff recognize and celebrate differences and similarities between diverse backgrounds (including their own) and use these to promote greater understanding and development. • Cultural sensitivity training highlights social justice issues such as access and equity.

Supporting ELL Language Development and Needs

Students' native languages are used whenever possible. The program utilizes strategies designed to help ELL students develop academic language proficiency in all areas of the curriculum.

Indicators	Measures	Evidence
<p>Programming supports English language skills development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program makes an intentional effort to differentiate students' language development needs, especially among ELL children and youth. • Staff use strategies designed to support the needs of ELLs and language development of all students. • Program staff make a concerted effort to align language development activities to state English language proficiency standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program staff adapt basic strategies that help ELLs improve their language skills (e.g., activating prior knowledge to connect with students, teaching vocabulary). • Family literacy programs address the language development needs of the whole family.
<p>Program creates a supportive environment that is conducive to learning and makes students feel comfortable with their progress in language development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program actively recruits bilingual staff and sees them as an asset. • Program offers a low-pressure environment for students, especially ELL children and youth, to strengthen oral, reading, and writing skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students work collaboratively with their peers in a low-pressure environment to support language development. • Program staff encourage youth to read and speak in their native language as much as possible.
<p>Program offers professional training in language development and ELL needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program recognizes the need for staff to receive professional development on students' language development needs. • Training for staff includes information on formal and informal methods of assessing language development and systems to identify ELLs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program staff learn about ELLs in the United States (e.g., differences among ELL groups). • ELLs employ language skills in various contexts (e.g., classroom, playground, community).

Academic Support and Alignment with the School Day

The program makes an intentional effort to tailor expanded learning time projects and activities to support and enhance what students learn throughout the school day.

Indicators	Measures	Evidence
<p>Programming is connected to academic content but also emphasizes experiential learning through project-based approaches.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program, whether housed in a school or a community-based organization, builds strong relationships with school-day teachers and administrators. • The alignment of program activities to common core standards or other state standards is a part of the program's overall strategy. • Project-based activities are hands-on and allow students to see the real-world applications of academic learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent systems of regular communication exist between program staff and school-day staff. • Program staff communicate with parents or guardians to obtain information about student progress in school. • Program staff receive professional development on the use of academic standards.
<p>Program collects data on student progress on a regular basis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program activities are outcome-based and focus on an ultimate learning goal for students. • Program provides training on data collection and evaluation for expanded learning time staff members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff focus on collecting different types of data such as program and school attendance, grades, test scores, and student attitudes toward school. • Staff are trained on how to collect and analyze various types of data. • Whenever possible, pre-tests and post-tests are used.

<p>Program sets high expectations for students and creates a pathway for college and career readiness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program activities create a college-going culture at all levels of learning. • Children and youth develop and articulate goals for their own postsecondary education. • Program activities emphasize real-world applications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program offers college information and preparation workshops for parents and students. • Program activities focus on academic or life skills that help students succeed academically. • Programs connect older youth and younger children, encouraging peer-to-peer learning and mentoring opportunities.
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Youth Development Integration

The program has the overarching goal of strengthening youth's social and emotional skills and providing opportunities to build their cultural capital.

Indicators	Measures	Evidence
<p>Program creates a space that fosters individual voice and self-reliance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities that nurture children and youth identity and self-esteem are integrated into the program. • Children and youth have a level of decision-making power in program activity design. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students assume a leadership role in activities and projects such as service learning projects or internships for older youth and event organizing or serving as a group leader for younger youth. • Program staff constantly check in with students to assess what works and what needs to be improved.
<p>Program offers youth and children a safe environment where they can build sustained relationships with each other as well as with positive adult role models.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship-building and mentoring opportunities are available for children and youth participants. • Children and youth have a sense of ownership for their expanded learning space. • Students have access to services or referrals to address social and emotional needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students build relationships with positive adult mentors who come from similar cultural backgrounds. • Children and youth are allowed to decorate their space or, if the program takes place in the school building, the setting is made welcoming and differs from that of the school day.
<p>Program expands student horizons, exposes students to new ideas, places, and people, and increases their cultural capital.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students have more time and flexibility to develop interests and skills that they cannot access in their immediate community or at school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students go on field trips that introduce them to new places and redefine how they view their surroundings. • Program offers students music and art classes and provides them not only with instruction but also with materials.

Family and Community Engagement

The program highly values family engagement and community collaboration and creates structures and resources to promote them.

Indicators	Measures	Evidence
<p>Families are comfortable approaching program staff and see themselves as an integral part of program success.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program outreach strategies are targeted toward the needs of Latino parents and families. • Program treats families as partners in their children’s development and fosters mutual trust. • Families have a voice in program design and activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff feel comfortable seeking out families in the community (e.g., at home, church, or the supermarket). • Staff promote the program in ways that are accessible to parents, including through clear language, parents’ native language, and language that reflects parents’ values. • Parents become actively involved in the program and serve as spokespersons to those who are not. • Staff survey or ask parents what they value and would like to see in programming to promote greater parent investment in the program.
<p>Program embraces its role as a community hub and mediator between families and schools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program offers wraparound services that provide families with an incentive to engage in the program. • Program facilitates the relationship between families and schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students and families gain access to other services such as counseling, support groups, and legal advice. • Program staff provide parents with tools to navigate the school system and advocate for their children’s education.
<p>Program takes advantage of community resources to enrich its general mission and offerings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community partnership cultivation promotes long-term program sustainability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships with local businesses or government agencies create internship or mentoring opportunities for older youth. • Connections with community-based organizations, schools, and cultural institutions such as museums and universities allow programs to offer resources they cannot provide on their own.

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