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## **DCYF Specialized Teen Programs Quality Program Standards November 2012**

1. **Program Environment and Safety**: Staff promotes a peaceful environment within the program by using strategies to promote positive relationships among participants and between staff and participants. Staff is trained and supported on how to maintain appropriate participant behavior. Further, program space is safe, clean and can be adapted for a variety of activities.
2. **Youth Development & Leadership**: Staff consistently communicates high expectations, challenges young people to do their best and acknowledges positive youth behavior. Staff knows youth on an individual basis and can identify their interests, talents and developmental needs. Activities are designed and implemented with youth engagement in mind. Staff encourage the development of critical thinking skills and provide opportunities for youth to play a meaningful, active role in their program so that young people have input in decision making, opportunities for responsibility and leadership, and feel a sense of ownership.
3. **Promoting Diversity, Access, Equity and Inclusion**: Program space, activities, and norms encourage inclusive attitudes and behaviors among staff and youth. Activities are designed to encourage youth to interact with peers from a variety of backgrounds and social groups. Staff models inclusive, tolerant attitudes and behaviors and demonstrates an understanding and respect for the cultures of the program participants and their families. . Program ensures culturally competent communication that fosters and celebrates various backgrounds to ensure a welcoming environment for all youth and families.
4. **Intentional Skill Building**: Using a variety of learning approaches, program activities promote skill building by intentionally focusing on a specific skill, promoting successively higher levels of mastery, and allowing youth to present their work or perform for others.
5. **Relationship Building**: Program promotes trust and confidence between participants and staff in a supportive environment so that young people can experience guidance and emotional and practical support in individual, group, and peer relationships.
6. **Program Design, Planning, and Assessment**: Program has time set aside to discuss youth and overall program progress including, but not limited to, time for assessing youth skill development and adequate preparation time to design and modify program activities.

7. **Community Collaboration and Connection:** Program seeks to utilize and engage community assets and resources (volunteers, neighborhood business, local parks, neighborhood leaders, other service providers) to strengthen and enhance programming and connect families to other supports as needed. Program promotes knowledge building, about and with the community so that young people may explore avenues for making a positive contribution to their community.
  
8. **Nutrition:** Program makes healthy foods and beverages available to participants, limits unhealthy foods, emphasizes appropriate portion sizes, and encourages staff to model healthy eating behaviors. Program encourages youth to drink water, and will avoid serving sugar-sweetened beverages such as soda or sports drinks.