PROJECT RUBRIC

Project title		**Project dates** _____ **to** _____
Staff	**School**	**Age/grade level of children**

Category	**Criteria**[1]	**Levels of attainment**			Score
		No = 1	**Partially = 2**	**Yes = 3**	
Project organization	*Did the project have beginning, middle, and concluding phases that built upon each other?*[2]	The project did not have beginning, middle, and concluding phases that built upon each other.	Although the project had beginning, middle, and concluding phases, they did not build upon each other.	The project had beginning, middle, and concluding phases that built upon each other.	
Project depth	*Did the project provide sufficient new challenges and require sustained effort over time?*[3]	The project did not provide sufficient new challenges or require sustained effort over time.	While project success required sustained effort over time, the project did not provide new challenges.	The project provided new challenges and required sustained effort over time.	
Interest level/ Student engagement	*During time allocated to project tasks, did most children's conversations stay focused on the project?*	Without persistent staff intervention, most children's conversations quickly strayed to topics other than the project task.	Children's talk was mainly about the project, though side conversations sometimes diverted attention away from the project.	Children's conversations generally stayed focused on the project; all children regularly took part in project-related discussions.	
Level of child-initiated learning	*Were children actively engaged in developing the project, its component tasks, and problem-solving strategies?*	Children were not involved in developing the project or its component tasks and did little of their own problem solving; project activity and content did not go beyond staff ideas and suggestions.	Although children helped to develop some project tasks and did some of their own problem solving, project activity and content did not go much beyond staff ideas and suggestions.	Children played a major role in developing the project, its component tasks, and problem-solving strategies; much of the project activity and content went beyond staff ideas and suggestions.	
Practice and integration of research skills	*Did children use a variety of sources, including primary and secondary sources, to learn about the topic?*	The project did not call for children's research to learn about the topic; staff furnished most or all project-related information.	Children used secondary sources (e.g., books, internet, video) to learn about the topic.	Children used a variety of primary (e.g., field trips, interviews) and secondary sources to learn about the topic.	
Inclusion/ Collaboration	*Did all children who were involved in the project take part in all of its aspects?*	The project was dominated by a few children and showed little or no teamwork.	A majority of the children involved with the project took part in most of its aspects.	All of the children involved with the project took part in all of its aspects.	
Alignment with school/district/ state academic skill development goals	*Did the project support children's learning to read, write, calculate, and solve problems and their use of these skills in ways that were meaningful to them?*[4]	Project tasks did not support children's learning to read, write, calculate, and solve problems or their use of these skills in ways that were meaningful to them.	The project included some tasks that supported children's learning to read, write, calculate, and solve problems and their use of these skills in ways that were meaningful to them.	Many project tasks supported children's learning to read, write, calculate, and solve problems and their use of these skills in ways that were meaningful to them.	
Evidence of learning outcomes	*In the concluding phase of the project, did the children's culminating work show what they learned and the ways they went about learning?*	The project did not have a concluding phase in which the children shared in culminating work what they learned or how they learned.	The children's culminating work from the project represented some of what they learned, but not the ways in which they went about learning.	The children's culminating work from the project represented in a variety of ways what they learned and the processes of how they went about learning.	
				Total score (range = 8-24)	

Notes

1 The *Massachusetts 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program* calls for a project-based approach to learning that complements rather than duplicates school-day instructional methods. This project rubric draws from recent thinking on the qualities of good project-based learning activities for school-age children (e.g., Alexander 2000). The criteria in this project rubric should be interpreted in light of the emerging competencies typical of the age span of the children involved in the project being evaluated as well as the considerable variation in individual developmental abilities and needs within any age group.

2 Project work can be divided into three phases:

(1) a *beginning phase* that includes selecting a topic, planning, and getting started;

(2) a *middle phase* during which children develop the project through observing, collecting data, exploring, constructing models, recording findings, discussing new information and concepts, and identifying new questions to investigate; and

(3) a *concluding phase* in which children plan and carry out culminating work (e.g., report, exhibit, school presentation, community display) that demonstrate learning outcomes (Katz & Chard 1997; Helm & Katz 2001).

3 Research shows that children need to experience success in their learning tasks most of the time to maintain their motivation and perseverance. In facilitating children's learning through project work, afterschool program staff should plan projects that give children opportunities to succeed and at the same time challenge them to learn new skills and knowledge.

4 By encouraging children to apply their reading, writing, arithmetic, thinking, and other skills in tasks that they participate in choosing and designing, project work provides a context and rationale for academic skill development. In project work, children gain proficiency in reading by reading, writing by writing, calculating by performing calculations, and problem solving by solving project-related problems (Alexander 2000).

References

Alexander, D. (2000, Spring). The learning that lies between play and academics in afterschool programs. *21 Community News*, Yale University.

Helm, J.H., & Katz, L. (2001). *Young investigators: the project approach in the early years*. New York: Teachers College.

Katz, L.G., & Chard, S.C. (1997). *Engaging children's minds: the project approach*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.