

Survey of Academic and Youth Outcomes – Teacher/Staff Version (SAYO T/S) by the National Institute on Out of School Time (NIOST)

The **Survey of Academic and Youth Outcomes – Teacher/Staff Version (SAYO T/S)** uses brief pre- and post-participation outcome surveys to collect data about youth from regular education teachers (SAYO T) and afterschool staff (SAYO S). The survey is based on a menu approach in which programs collect data on the social-emotional and academic outcomes that are most aligned with their goals for the youth that they serve.

Each outcome area is measured by asking teachers and staff to respond to four to seven questions related to observable youth behaviors. These items have been extensively tested and found to work as a single scale that effectively captures the outcome being measured. Teacher and/or staff responses to these surveys can be completed for all participating youth or for a sample of youth in a program. The pre-post design allows student skill growth to be measured.

With the exception of the academic performance outcomes, each item in the tool is a statement describing a desired practice/behavior. The five-point rating scale asks teachers/staff to answer the question “How often does this student do the described behavior?” Sample questions are shown in the box below.

| Please indicate how often this student: | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Usually | Always |
|---|--------------|---------------|------------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1. Shows consideration for peers. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Makes own effort to begin assignment before asking for assistance. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

The academic performance outcomes are only included on the SAYO T. For these, teachers are asked to rate the student’s performance in relation to grade level standards in each subject area. This four-point scale (1-4) classifies a student’s performance as poor (significantly below grade level standards), needs improvement (somewhat below grade level standards), satisfactory (at grade level standards), or very good (above grade level standards).

| Outcomes | Examples of Items Measured |
|--|--|
| <i>Social-emotional Skills</i> Self-Regulation Communication Skills Relations with Adults Relations with Peers Perseverance Critical Thinking Problem Solving Leadership | Works well independently; controls behavior; maintains focus on task; is self-reflective, thinks/plans ahead Asks and answers questions; contributes relevant ideas and information effectively; speaks loudly and clearly Shows respect and acknowledges praise; seeks appropriate assistance and support Gets along with other students; shows consideration; forms friendships Sets goals and prioritizes tasks; persists on task even when experiencing difficulty Analyzes relationships between ideas; considers other perspectives; identifies biases; explains conclusions Supports statements with evidence; identifies, describes and generates multiple solutions to problems Seeks out learning; offers new ideas; motivates others and understand social situations; organized |
| <i>Academic</i> Homework Academic Performance | Completeness, neatness, organization, accuracy, application of concepts and skills Significantly below, somewhat below, at or above grade level standards for the subject area. |

Domain names do not necessarily reflect official NIOST version of tool. APAS tools used with permission of NIOST.

Overview of Measurement Tools

Introduction to the Survey of Academic and Youth Outcomes (SAYO Teacher Survey)

What is the SAYO T?

The Survey of Academic and Youth Outcomes or SAYO uses brief pre and post surveys to collect information about youth participation and experiences in afterschool programs. The SAYO T helps out-of-school time programs:

1. Measure and track changes in selected youth outcomes.
2. Gain useful information for improving the design and quality of the program.
3. Increase their focus on selected youth outcome areas.

What does the SAYO T measure?

SAYO outcomes are the stepping stones that help youth develop the skills, attitudes, and behaviors that will help them be successful in school, work, and life. Research suggests that youth who possess key social-emotional skills and behaviors – such as strong communication and problem solving skills, positive behavior, and the ability to get along with peers – are more likely to experience success in school, work, and life. Findings from a Massachusetts study found that staff and teacher ratings of youth's intermediary skills and behaviors (as measured by the SAYO) were associated with teacher ratings of youth's academic progress. This suggests that the SAYO captures the key skills and behaviors youth may need to be successful.

What does the SAYO T not do?

The SAYO T alone cannot *prove* that your program is *responsible* for positive youth outcomes. The SAYO T demonstrates changes in youth and can help explore the possible reasons for these changes. OST programs are among many factors that influence the development and wellbeing of youth. Parenting, school experiences, peers, and broader societal factors all impact youth development on a daily basis. In order to scientifically prove that an OST program is the reason for SAYO T changes, one would need to collect SAYO T data from a comparison group of youth who did not attend the program.

Determining Who Will Complete the SAYO T

Important notes to keep in mind:

1. The SAYO T should be completed by **an adult who knows the child well**.
2. Programs should strive to have the **same** individual or team complete both pre and post SAYO T's on individual youth. This will allow your program to more accurately capture changes that may have occurred over the course of the program. **Pick a staff member/teacher who you expect will still be with the program at the end of the program.**

Individual Staff/Teacher Ratings

For some programs there is a logical staff person who should be asked to complete a child's SAYO T. For example, a team leader or activity specialist. For other programs there is not one staff member that knows a child best. In these cases, programs may decide to complete SAYO T's as a team.

Overview of Measurement Tools

Team Ratings

Many OST programs have found benefits to completing SAYO T surveys as a team, for instance, having the opportunity to discuss the needs of individual youth. However, please note that completing SAYO T's as a team may require more time than individual ratings. Programs wishing to complete SAYO T's as a team have two options:

1. OST staff members gather as a team to discuss the individual child. As a group, the team assigns ratings that reflect the consensus opinion of all present.

-OR-

2. OST staff members each complete SAYO T ratings independently – without discussing the child or their ratings with others ahead of time. Next, staff gather to share their independent ratings in a team meeting. At this point, teams create an average SAYO T rating for the child that reflects the consensus of the team.

Before you rate youth using the SAYO T, be sure that...

1. You have known the youth for a great enough period of time.
2. You are familiar with the SAYO T sections you will be using.
3. You have recently spent time observing the youth you will be rating.
4. You assign honest and accurate ratings. This means that:
 - You assign ratings based on typical behavior patterns of the youth you are observing.
 - Don't let uncommon events, cultural biases, or your own strong positive or negative feelings about a youth influence your ratings.
 - You assign ratings that accurately reflect the youth's behavior.
 - Be sure not to inflate or deflate ratings.

Assigning Honest and Accurate Ratings

Assign ratings that reflect actual and typical behavior for that youth. Adults making SAYO T ratings should try not to let uncommon events, cultural biases, or their own strong positive or negative feelings about a young person influence their ratings. Everyone's behavior normally fluctuates. We all have good and bad days. However, people also tend to have patterns in their behavior. For example, an outgoing youth may have a day when they are quiet, but typically they are talkative and enthusiastic. The SAYO T asks you to report on the typical patterns you see in youth's behavior.

Assign ratings that are an accurate reflection of the youth's behavior. Inflating ratings (assigning a rating that is higher than it should be) will make it more difficult to determine whether youth have improved in their skills and behaviors over the course of the year. It is also important to note that deflating ratings (assigning a score that is lower than it should be) will not provide your program with useful data. *Inflating and deflating ratings are a violation of ethical research practices.* If ratings have been found to be inaccurately assigned, this will undermine confidence in your SAYO T findings.

Communication is the Key to Successful Data Collection

Teachers and staff are vital members of your evaluation team. It is important to communicate early and often with your OST staff about your SAYO T evaluation plans. Many programs have found that gaining the support of staff, teachers, and site coordinators prior to distributing the SAYO T survey is **key** to obtaining complete, accurate, and timely data.

Staff and teachers will want to understand:

- **Why** you are collecting SAYO T data,
- **How** to assign ratings, and
- **When and how** they should return their survey.

Communicating this information in person and in a letter is a critical first step. When you distribute surveys, include a “cover letter” with your surveys explaining the purpose of the SAYO T evaluation, what is expected of staff and teachers, instructions and deadlines for returning and/or completing surveys online, and how this survey information will help the youth you serve. Be sure to thank staff and teachers for completing SAYO T surveys.