



## How to Write a Procedure Tip Sheet

**The purpose of this Tip Sheet is to provide guidance on writing procedures. Here are a few thoughts to keep in mind as you begin the process:**

- **Write procedures for your staff, not for COA.**

The audience for your program's procedures is the staff who will be implementing them, not COA's endorsers.

- **Procedures must be useable by staff in their day-to-day work.**

Simple, clear language is best. Also, they need to be readily available to staff who may need to refer to them. Since the after school recognition process is likely to result in a number of new procedures, this is especially important soon after they are initially adopted.

- **For the most part COA does not expect staff to have procedures memorized, but they should have at least a basic familiarity with their content.**

For example, staff do not need to memorize the steps for making a grievance. But they should have a copy, or know where to get a copy should they wish to. On the other hand, where procedures define the day-to-day work of a staff member, e.g. serving snack, the staff member should know how to perform their job without having to continually refer to written procedures.

- **When writing a procedure, start with what you already have.**

Don't reinvent the wheel. It's very likely that your program is already doing most of what the standards require. And chances are that it works. So build on what you already have and are doing and work toward the standards. This may mean formalizing practices that are informal or not written down at all.

- **Procedures should reflect all applicable legal and regulatory requirements, not just COA after school standards.**

Confidentially procedures, for example, should integrate federal, state, and any other confidentiality requirements as well as COA after school standards. Otherwise they will not be able to provide needed guidance to staff on this important issue. Do not keep a separate set of procedures for the state licensing division and one for COA.

- **Procedures should address all relevant COA after school standards.**

In some cases the Tables of Evidence simply state the need to provide procedures. For example, if the evidence listed in the Self-Study Documents column instructs the program to provide procedures (such as "Hygiene Procedures" in ASP-PS 8) it is expected that these procedures will address the requirements of all Practice Standards related to that topic.

**Following is more specific guidance on how to write a procedure.**



**1. Use a header that includes the following or similar information:**

<b>Procedure Name:</b>	<b>Staff Grievance Procedures</b>
<b>Relevant Policy:</b>	<b>Non-Discrimination Policy [note: not all procedures require a policy]</b>
<b>Applicable to:</b>	<b>All staff and volunteers</b>
<b>Location of Procedure:</b>	<b>Employee Manual</b>
<b>Effective Date:</b>	<b>July 7, 2004</b>
<b>Date(s) of Revision:</b>	<b>February 9, 2007</b>
<b>Legal and Other References:</b>	<b>Office of Mental Health regulations (OMH 128: 14-35); COA After School Standards number (ASP-HR 5.08)</b>

**2. Tips for writing the procedure**

- a. A procedure is a set of instructions that outlines the steps for performing a task(s).
- b. A procedure should tell someone **how** to do something not just **what** to do.
- c. It does this by breaking task or tasks into discrete sequential steps.
- d. Use short, active voice/action statements. "Do this" is better than "should do this". E.g., "Place a copy of the signed consent form in the child's file."
- e. Include timeframes and documentation expectations when appropriate. These can include signatures, copies of forms, notes, etc.
- f. Test the procedures before fully implementing them.

**3. A procedure can be a Step-by-Step outline or a Process Description**

- a. A step-by-step outline breaks the task or tasks into discrete steps. Steps are sequential. Each step is numbered. Try to limit each step to a single one activity.
- b. A process description is written as a narrative.

**4. Include authorizing signatures.**

<b>Program Administrator</b> _____	<b>Date</b> _____
<b>Site Director</b> _____	<b>Date</b> _____

**5. Include a footer. Also, page numbers are important for multi-page procedures. For example:**