Supporting Literacy in Out-of-School Time: OST Early Literacy Quality Tool

Prepared by ***Research for Action*** • Rachel Comly • October 2017

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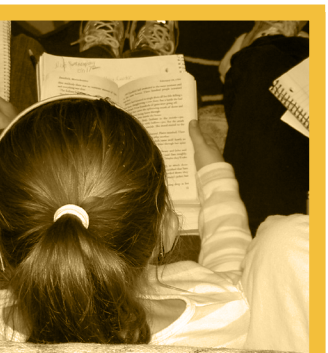

OST Early Literacy Quality Tool

The OST Early Literacy Quality Tool is a decision-making tool for out-of-school time (OST) providers seeking to improve or create early literacy supports. The tool provides questions to consider for providers who currently offer early literacy programming or who may offer literacy programming in the future. These questions are meant to engage providers in understanding whether their program is "on track" with regard to the ingredients and conditions for high quality OST programming, as well as thinking about areas they can improve. It can also help providers in the planning phase to develop high-quality literacy programming. The areas this tool addresses are practices, approaches, and conditions which research indicates lead to positive outcomes for students. They are described in Research for Action's literature review, Supporting Literacy in Out-of-School Time: Summary of Evidence (June 2017).

The tool begins with a conditions checklist for considering if the OST program has the conditions (e.g., positive relationships, connection to school) to be in a strong position to offer early literacy support. The tool has charts tied to program quality areas to support providers in understanding how their program aligns with the ingredients of high quality literacy OST programming. Finally, the tool offers a checklist for providers to consider if they have the ingredients to serve English Language Learners (ELLs). On page 14, providers can take notes about how their program aligns with the high quality program ingredients and conditions in order to identify areas to improve and to how to best support high quality literacy OST programming.

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OST Program Quality and Positive Relationships

- ☐ Is there a positive and safe emotional climate in the OST program?
- ☐ Are there positive relationships between the staff and students in the program?
- ☐ Are there positive relationships between the program and the community it serves?

Parent Involvement

- ☐ Are parents involved in the OST program?

Connection to School

- ☐ Does the program connect to the school day and align with the school curriculum?
  - ☐ Does the program take place in the school building?
  - ☐ Is the program staffed by teachers from the children's schools?
  - ☐ Is the program staff mentored by or does the staff coordinate with teachers from the children's schools?
  - ☐ Are students recommended for the program by the students' schools?
  - ☐ Is the school curriculum integrated into the OST curriculum or does the OST curriculum extend/fill in the gaps of the school curriculum?
  - ☐ Does the OST curriculum align with district, state, or national standards?

Infrastructure for Volunteer Recruitment & Support

- ☐ If the program uses volunteers, is there a system for recruiting, screening, training, and retaining them?

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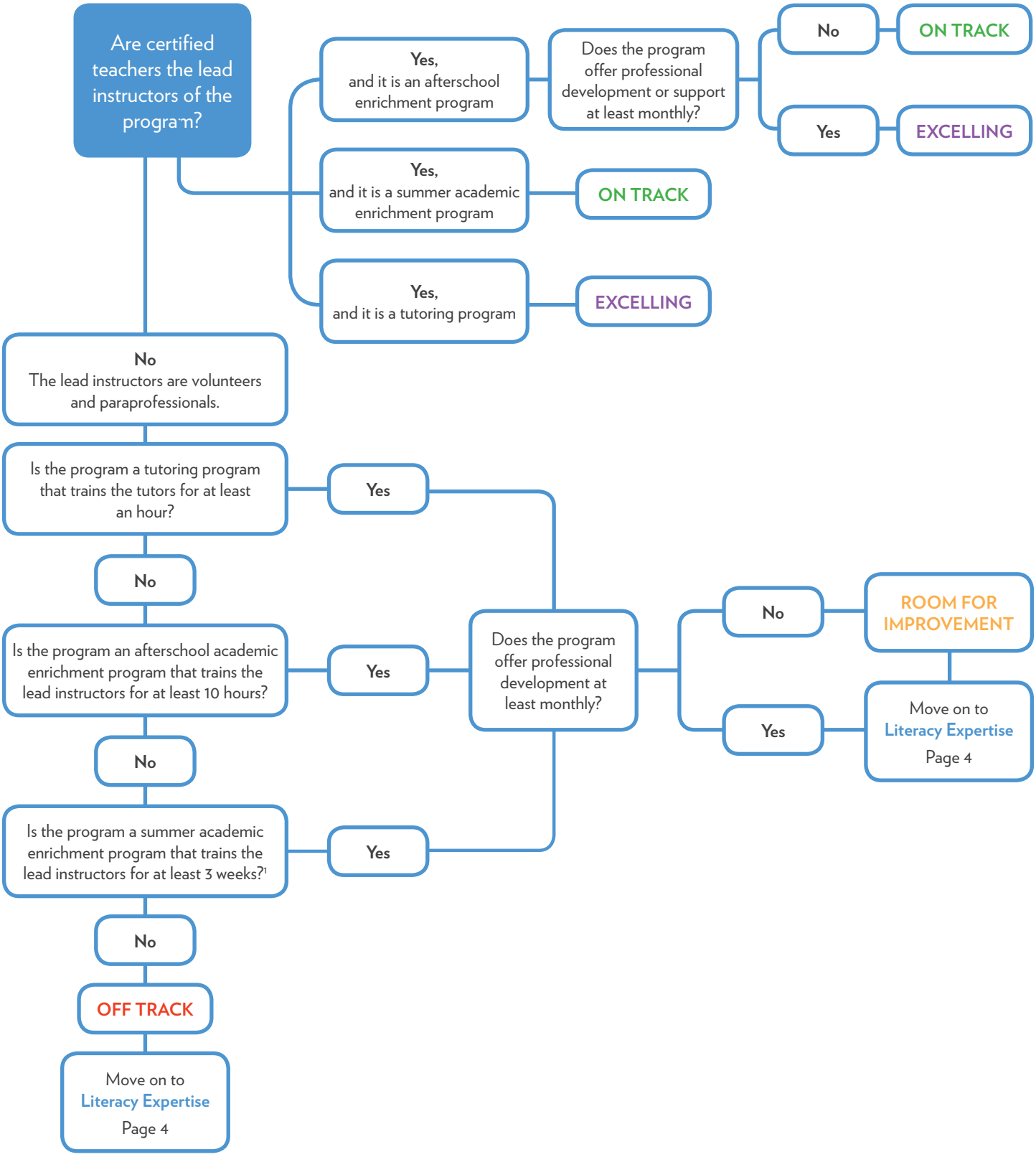
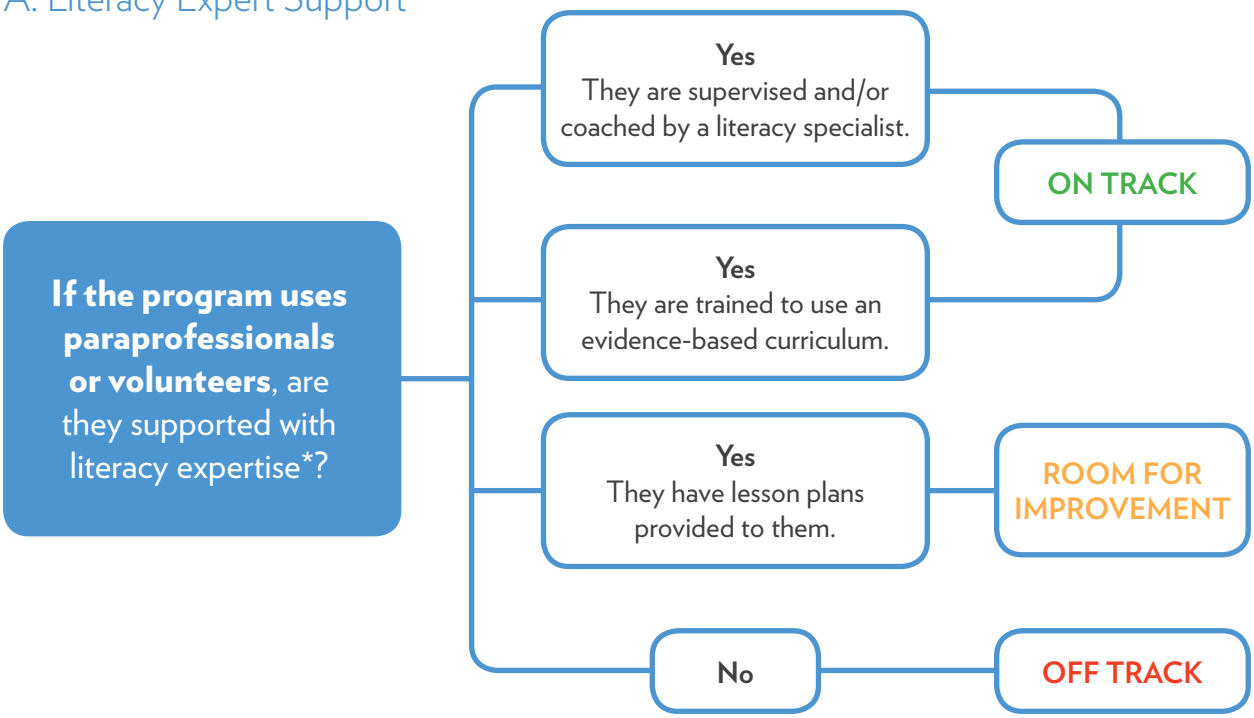
Staffing & Training

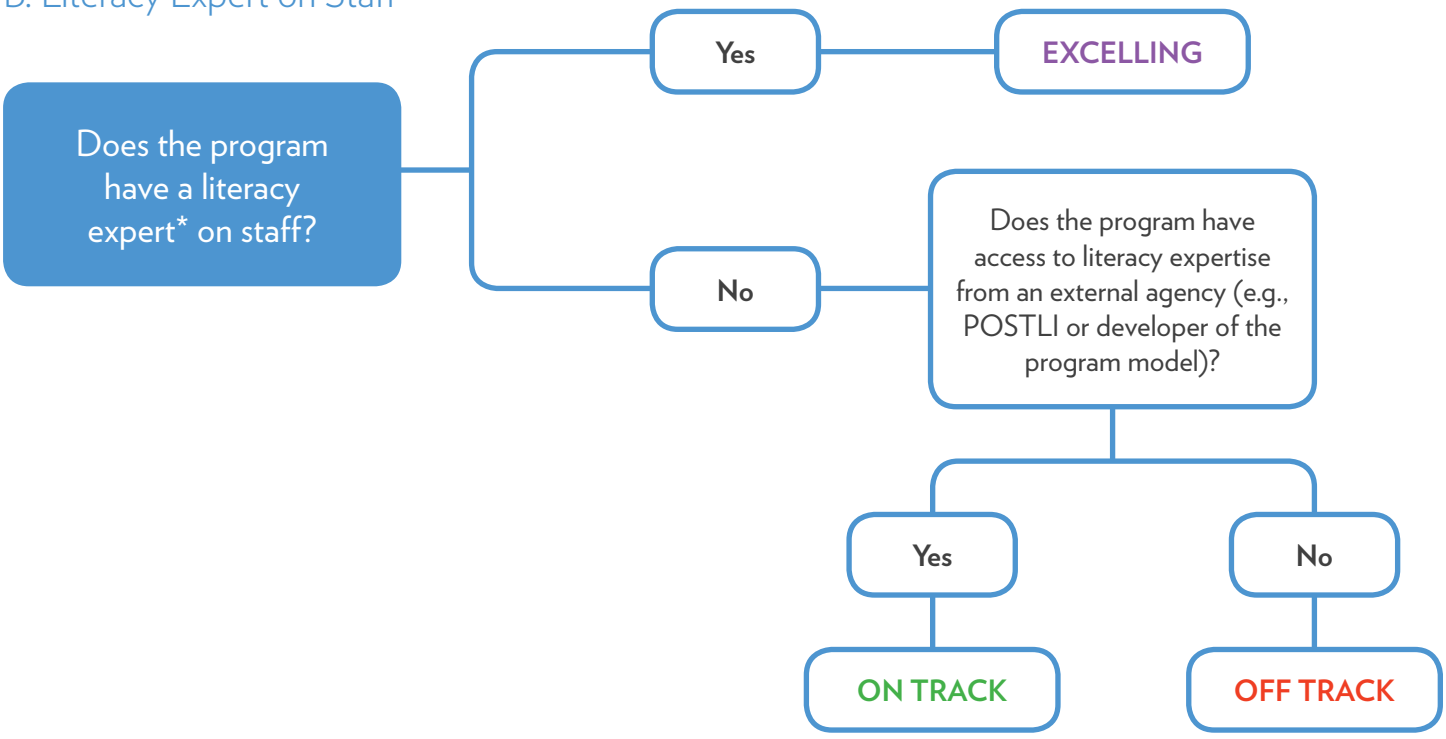


[1]Based on one program model identified in lit review.

A. Literacy Expert Support



B. Literacy Expert on Staff



*Defined as a reading specialist or someone with an early literacy teaching certification.

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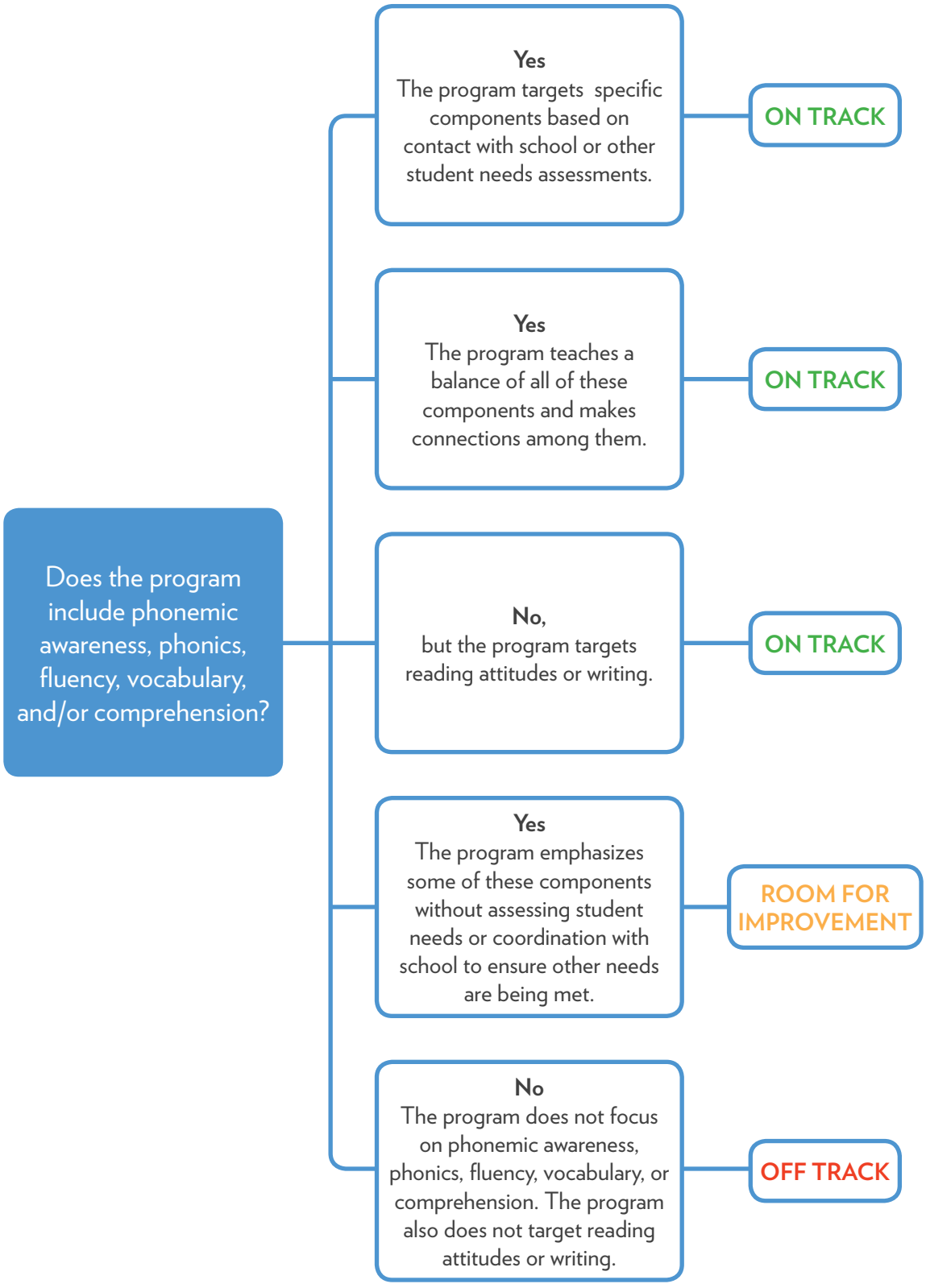
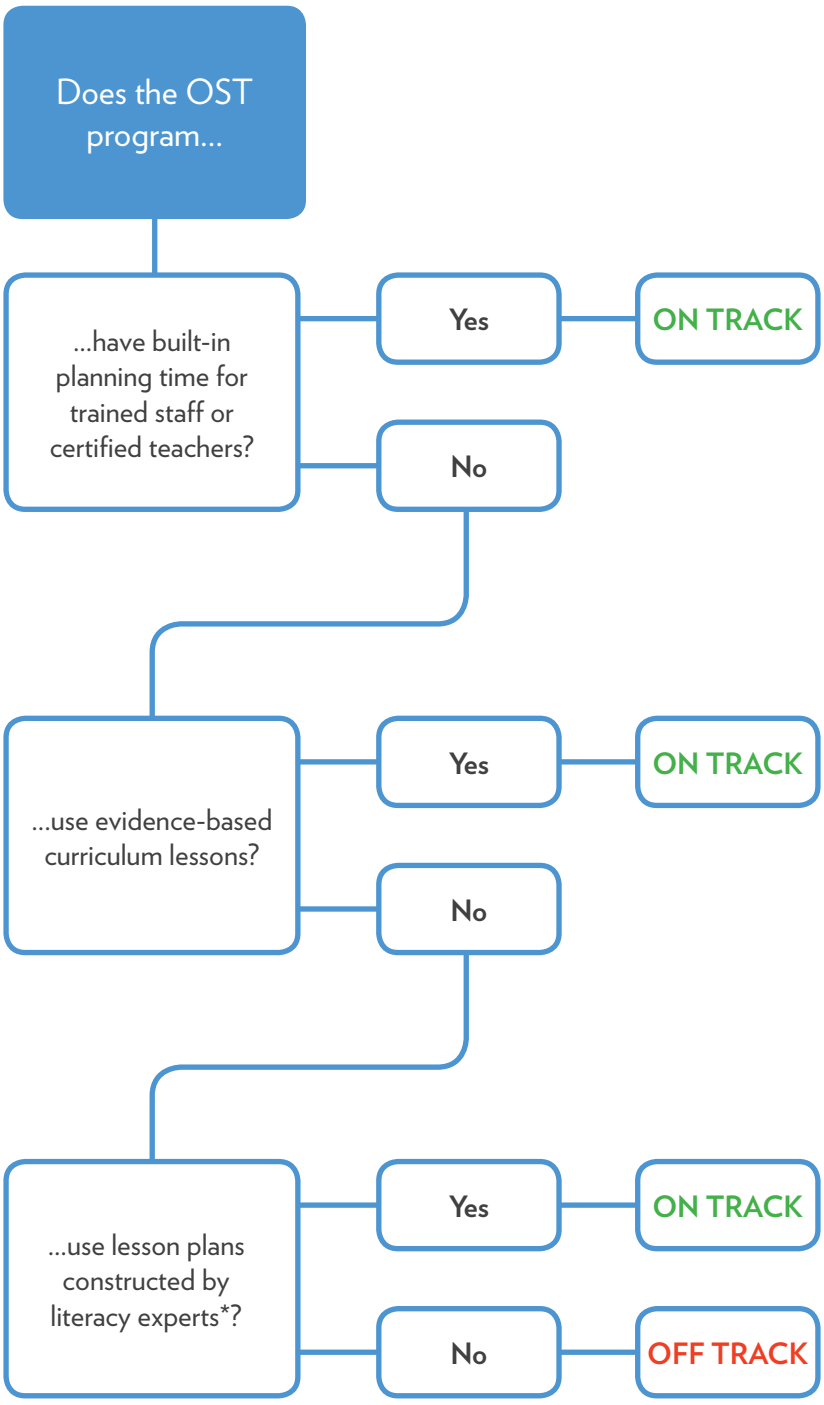
Literacy Content: *Focus*



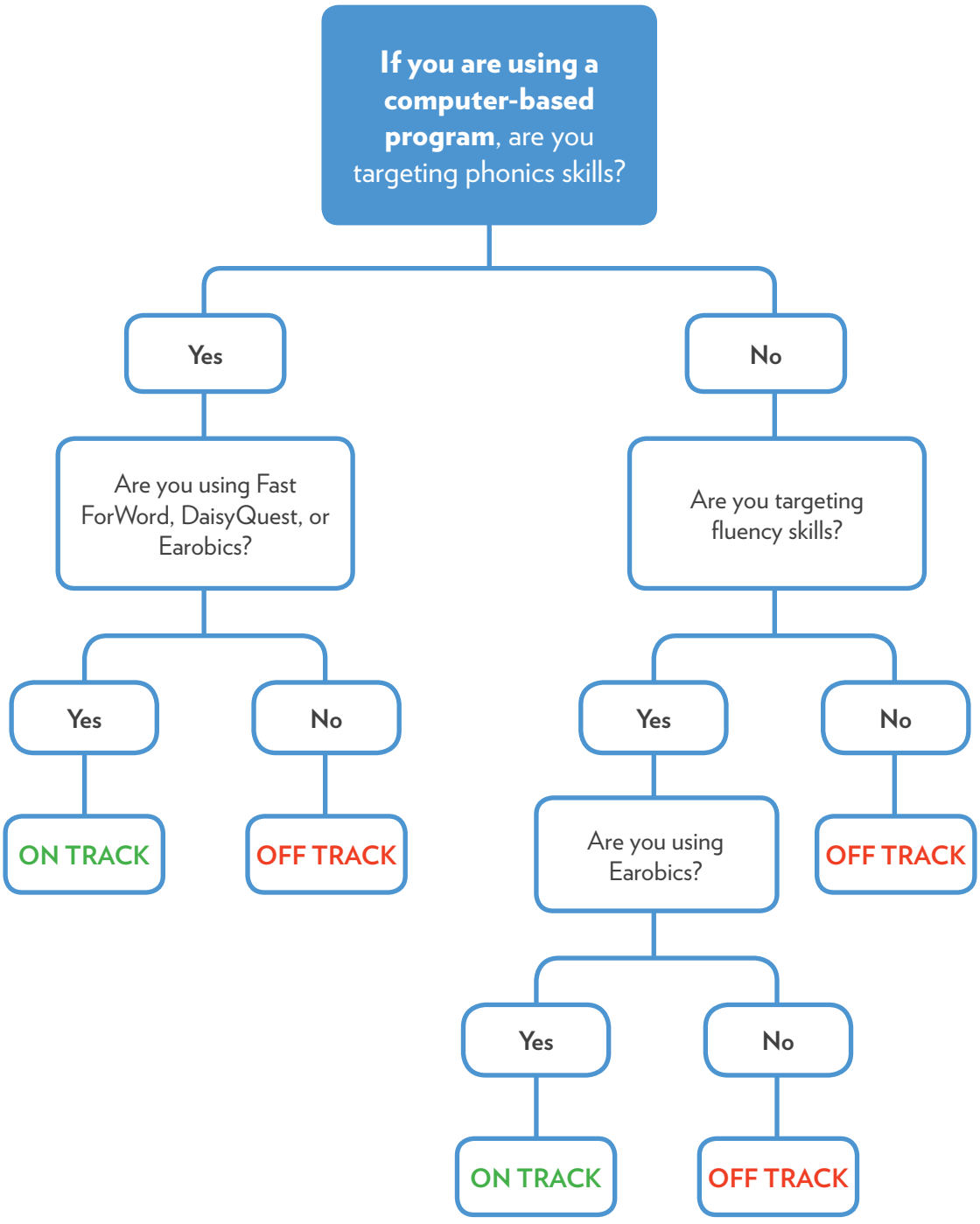
Consideration: To assess outcomes, ensure that measures align to the program's literacy focus.

Literacy Content: *Curriculum & Structure*

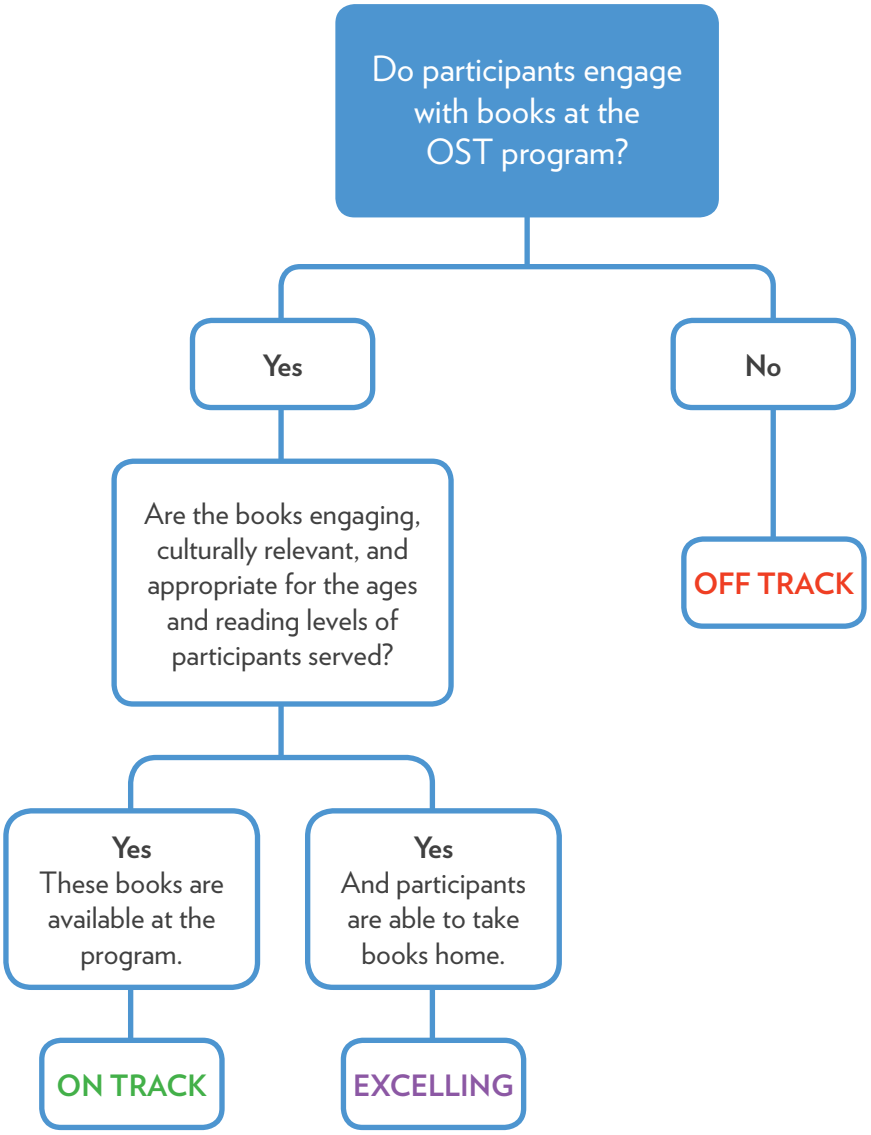


*Defined as a reading specialist or someone with an early literacy teaching certification.

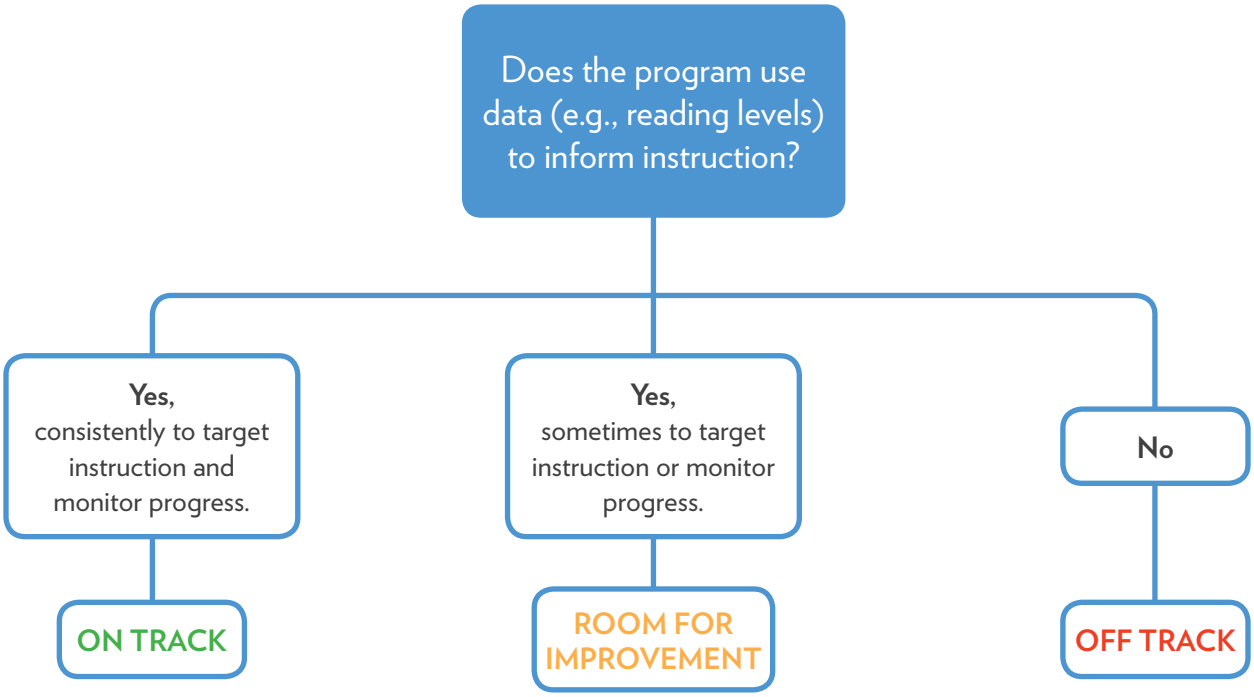
Literacy Content: *Computer-Based Program*



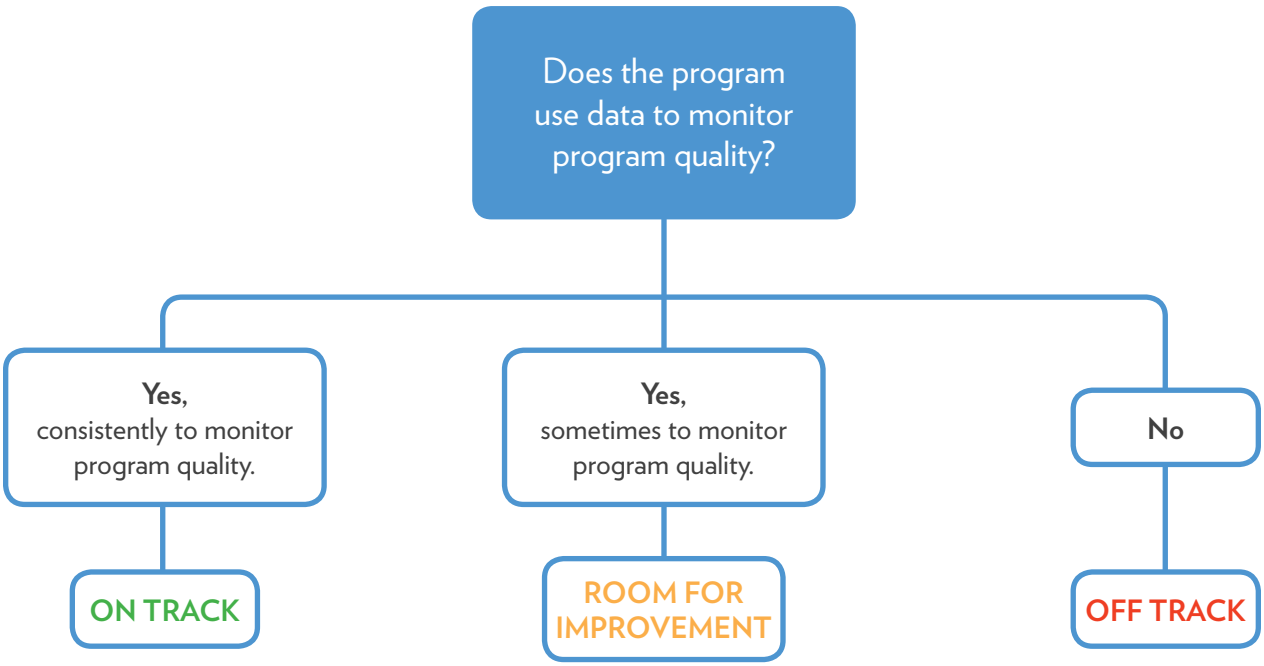
Literacy Content: *Books*



A. Data to Inform Instruction



B. Data to Monitor Program Quality



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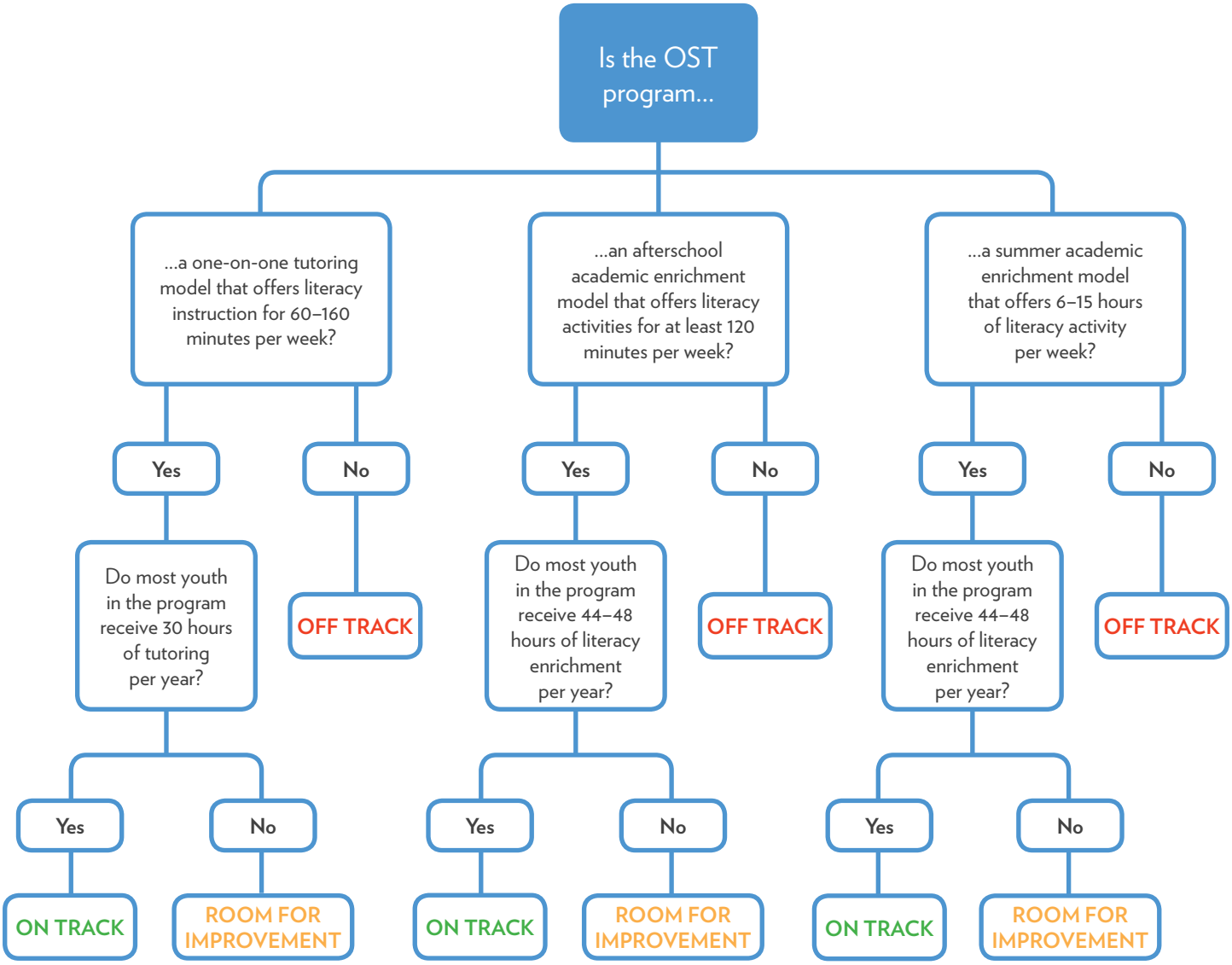
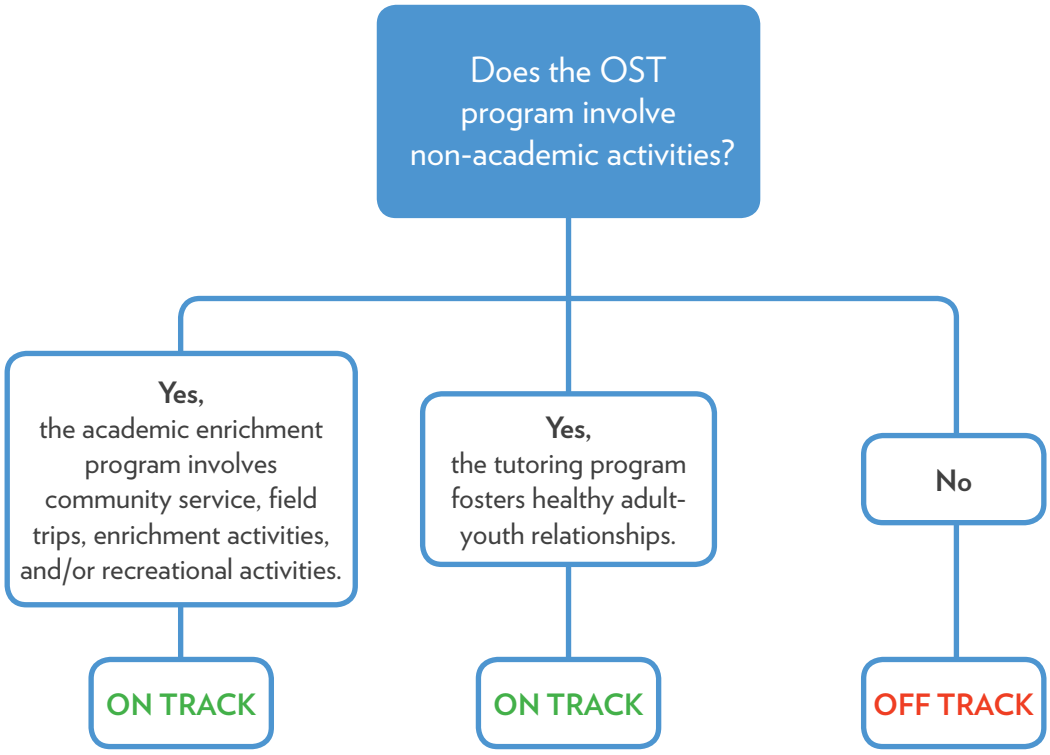
Other OST Program Goals: *Time Needed*



Other OST Program Goals: *Non-Academic Activities*



Promising Practices for Serving ELLs

- ☐ Program has small group or one-on-one tutoring opportunities.
- ☐ Program provides explicit instruction in the elements of English literacy, such as vocabulary.
- ☐ Program provides students with opportunities to practice speaking in a low-risk, inclusive environment.
- ☐ Program respects and is inclusive of students' home language and culture.
- ☐ Program provides connection and collaboration between home and school.

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OST Early Literacy Quality Worksheet

This page serves as a place to keep track of how the program aligns with the high quality program ingredients and conditions in order to identify areas to improve and to how to best support high quality literacy OST programming.

Which conditions should be targeted to strengthen the program's position to offer effective early literacy support? See the checklist on page 3 and take notes about the conditions upon which the program should focus.

Notes

How did the program align to each program quality area? Below, mark your ratings (i.e., on track, room for improvement, off track, or excelling) from pages 4-11 of the OST Early Literacy Quality Tool. Take notes about the program's alignment to these areas in order to monitor your program's early literacy program quality.

Program Quality Area	Rating	Notes
Staffing and Training		
Literacy Expertise: Literacy Expert Support		
Literacy Expertise: Literacy Expert on Staff		
Literacy Content: Focus		
Literacy Content: Books		
Literacy Content: Use of Data to Inform Instruction		
Literacy Content: Use of Data to Monitor Program Quality		
Other OST Program Goals: Time Needed		
Other OST Program Goals: Non-Academic Activities		

If the program serves English Language Learners, does it use promising practices? In the space below, take notes about promising practices (p. 13) to implement in order to best serve ELL students.

Notes