

Essential Elements of Positive Youth Development

Youth development experts have increasingly paid attention to the ways in which the community environment can protect young people against negative choices and support their healthy development in such areas as educational success, interpersonal strength, and emotional well-being. Using an “asset-based” approach to youth development, some organizations work with community members and leaders to assess and strengthen available supports and opportunities for youths. One organization has listed 40 assets needed by youths to develop social competencies, positive values, and commitment to learning; and it has developed methods to survey youths, parents, and professionals to document the degree to which individual communities offer those assets. Another initiative focuses on helping communities ensure that their youths have safe places to gather, good relationships with peers and adults, opportunities to learn and practice skills, constructive activities during “gap periods” (for example, non-school hours or the transition from elementary school to middle school), as well as supports that endure throughout the adolescent years.

essential elements:

youth...

(1) were offered rich learning experiences,

(2) relished their active engagement in problem solving and decision making,

(3) were treated as resources and felt needed,

and

(4) found opportunities to develop positive relationships with adults and peers.

check out these links to more information about best practices:

The Future of Children

http://www.futureofchildren.org/information2826/information_show.htm?doc_id=71931

Act For Youth

<http://www.actforyouth.net/?ydManual>

Oregon Commission on Children and Families - Best Practices Positive Youth Development

<http://www.oregon.gov/OCCF/Mission/BestPrac/bestpy/mibestpy.shtml>

The Positive youth Development Project

<http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/PositiveYouthDev99/preface.htm>

Putting It All Together: Guiding Principles for Quality After-School Programs for Pre-Teens

<http://www.lpfch.org/afterschool/>

Positive Youth Development Info Sheet

Best Practices handouts (variety of youth topics)

Best Practices in Community Programs for Youth Development handout