

*These notes have been excerpted from the drafts of forthcoming resource guides on TCE's Building Healthy Communities outcomes. The notes are designed as an interim tool and meant for internal use for facilitators and site coordinators. – Planning Support Team*

## Outcome #6

### Communities Support Healthy Youth Development

Youth development is a process by which youth build the capacity to understand, and act in relation to, their physical and social environment. While social policy discussions typically focus on solving problems, youth development is an asset-based approach that focuses on the positive attributes and skills that all people need to succeed.

#### Important Attributes that Facilitate Positive Youth Development

*National Academy of Sciences*

##### *Physical Development*

- Good health habits
- Ability to manage risky health behaviors

##### *Intellectual Development*

- Knowledge of essential life and vocation skills
- School success
- Critical thinking and reasoning skills
- Good decision-making skills
- Knowledge of skills needed to navigate through multiple cultural contexts

##### *Social Development*

- Connectedness; good relationships and trust with parents, other adults, peers
- Being connected to and valued by larger social networks

##### *Psychological & Emotional Development*

- Good mental health
- Good emotional and self-regulation skills
- Good coping skills
- Good conflict resolution skills
- Motivation to achieve goals
- Confidence
- Ability to plan for future life events
- Sense of personal autonomy and self-responsibility
- Optimism coupled with realism
- Positive personal and social identity
- Pro-social and culturally-sensitive values
- Spirituality or a sense of a “larger” purpose in life

#### Promising Strategies and Practices to Support Youth Development

*(Examples, case studies and resource links provided under each strategy)*

1. Supporting positive parenting across sectors, meeting families where they are.
  - [Strengthening Families model](#)
  - [Triple P – Positive Parenting Program](#)
2. Embedding youth development principles in government, while promoting youth leadership and civic participation within a comprehensive system of supports and opportunities.
  - [Building Effective Youth Councils: A Practical Guide to Engaging Youth in Policy Making](#) -
  - [Youth-Adult Partnerships in Public Action](#)
3. Building problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills among pre-teen (upper elementary and middle-school aged) children, their teachers, administrators and families.
  - [Evidence of effectiveness of the Olweus bullying prevention program](#)
  - [Making a Difference in Schools: The Big Brothers Big Sisters School-Based Mentoring Impact Study](#)
4. Bringing comprehensive supports into the school environment.
  - Case Study: [Beacon Schools \(San Francisco Initiative\)](#)

## Promising Strategies *(continued)*

5. Utilizing attendance data to identify and intervene early with struggling students, and creating a comprehensive community-wide dropout prevention plan.
  - [National Center for School Engagement](#) provides information about trends and best practices that reduce truancy and improve school attendance.
6. Using out-of-school time to provide academic support, build skills and create connections through effective mentoring.
  - Youth Development Guide: Engaging Young People in After-School Programming – guide available through author Sam Piha, [spiha@temescalassociates.org](mailto:spiha@temescalassociates.org).
7. Embedding service learning across sectors for children and youth of all ages.
  - [The Complete Guide to Service Learning: Proven, Practical Ways to Engage Students in Civic Responsibility, Academic Curriculum, and Social Action](#)
8. Providing opportunities for students to participate in career and college preparation opportunities.
  - Community college [opportunities](#) for disadvantaged high school students.
9. Providing supports and opportunities to youth who have experiences trauma, or who are involved in the foster care of juvenile justice systems.
  - [First Place Fund for Youth](#), an example of a Youth Development Strategy benefiting youth in the foster care system.
  - [California Youth Connection](#) provides leadership opportunities for CA youth in foster care in 30 counties across the state.
10. Access sustainable mental health funding for youth, such as through MediCal and Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funding.
  - [Funding opportunities through MHSA](#)
11. Building cultural competency and appreciation of diversity among youth.
  - [The Hillcrest Youth Center](#)
  - Resources: The Ali Forney Center [website](#)
12. Improving the quality of youth programming and experiences in places where they spend time, particularly in after-school and other out-of-school environments by integrating accountability and improvements systems such as quality assessments.
  - Center for Youth Program Quality, HighScope Educational Research Foundation, [www.highscope.org](http://www.highscope.org)

## Progress Measures for Youth Development Efforts

Indicators of successful community-wide efforts to promote positive youth development include the following:

- Youth have alternative activities and opportunities to mitigate the influence of gangs, and involvement with alcohol, drugs, violence and the juvenile justice system.
- School yards and facilities are available for programming for youth and community residents after school, on weekends and during summer.
- Youth development programs are strength-based and asset-based and promote healthy behaviors, including leadership development, civic engagement, healthy eating and increased physical activity.
- Public and private financing support strength-based and asset-based youth development programs.
- Youth-serving agencies in the public and private sectors collaborate to implement youth development plans at the local level and link to regional and statewide youth development efforts.
- Youth-serving organizations help link parents to schools and other youth-supporting networks
- Youth have elected or appointed positions in decision-making bodies.