Chinook

Going Across the "Spectrum of Attitudes"

History shows us that in the past American teenagers have been expected to be participants in adult activities and often maintain positions of leadership. It has only been recently that we have disengaged our youth from these responsibilities with the development of adolescence. Today's teenagers seem stuck in a void between childhood and adulthood, in which they are rarely seen as equals in adult activities.

In fact, teenagers are very capable of taking on many adult roles. Adolescence is a time when youth are learning to manage their time and responsibility, as well as beginning to set life-long goals. Positive relationships with adults and contributions to the community are experiences that greatly benefit struggling youth. These experiences accompanied with newfound responsibility lead to less participation in negative activities and added confidence. It is time for adults and youth to discover and share these capabilities together. An important framework for thinking about this process is Lofquist's "Spectrum of Attitudes."

Youth as Objects: Adults taking this approach hold the opinion that youth have little to contribute and control young people by keeping them in powerless positions. The adults may believe that it is necessary to protect young people from making mistakes, but we know that involvement in meaningful roles and

Youth as Recipients: This approach focuses on the need for young people to be guided and helped through their participation in adult society. Adults allow youth to participate in decision-making because the experience will be "good for them." Often the responsibilities and tasks given to young people are inconsequential or unpleasant to adults, and the terms and conditions of participation are controlled for them. Young people realize that their role is trivial and that the adults retain the positions of authority and responsibility.

Youth as Partners: Adults feel that young people are crucial to the success of the program and their participation is welcomed and valued. In this case youth are seen as equal partners in decision-making and they feel encouraged to become involved. The youth are respected as having significant things to contribute to the project. This type of relationship results in more effective programs and young people meeting their developmental needs.

Source: National 4-H Council. (1997). Creating Youth/Adult Partnerships. Chevy Chase, MD: National 4-H Council, http://www.fourhcouncil.edu

Feedback or requests for resources or training welcomed.
For more resources on family life education check out the UW Extension Family Life World Wide Web site, **"Dreamcatcher" at www.uwyo.edu/ag/ces/dream.htm**

Research Briefs
News on Youth Development

Self-Perceived Leadership Skills
Traditionally, student leadership programs have been geared towards those youth already maintaining positions of leadership. However, children from low socioeconomic backgrounds, predominantly African-American, evaluated their own leadership traits and abilities positively. This supported the idea that all students have the potential for leadership that should be developed.
Riley, Tracey L. & Frances A. Karnes. (1994). A Leadership Profile of Disadvantaged Youth Based on Leadership Strengths Indicator. Psychological Reports 74(3), 815-818.

Leadership Training
An eight-month leadership program maintaining goals of developing leadership skills, teaching youth about existing leadership opportunities, and challenging youth to assume leadership roles after completion of the program, was evaluated for perceived importance and effectiveness. The program showed considerable growth, helped students to prepare for successful and productive lives, provided students with connections to service organizations and jobs in their community, and increased volunteerism.
Knight, Karen W. (1995). Youth Leadership Broward: A Collaborative School/Business Program. ERS Spectrum 13(4), 28-34.

Model of Delinquency
A model of delinquency was constructed using elements of social control theory and social learning theory, and used to examine the relationship between delinquent behavior and parenting factors, social skills, value commitments, and problems in school. The model indicated that adolescents subject to inept parenting practices tend to develop a coercive interpersonal style and youth who do not identify with their parents tend not to develop prosocial value commitments. These outcomes put youth at risk of difficulties with course work, teachers, and peers.
Simons, Ronald L., Lee B. Whitbeck, Rand D. Conger, & Katherine J. Conger. (1991). Parenting Factors, Social Skills, and Value commitments as Precursors to School Failure, Involvement with Deviant Peers, and Delinquent Behavior. Journal of Youth and Adolescence 20(6), 645-664.

Predictors of Youth Leadership Life Skills
Senior 4-H members with more experience in 4-H activities and a higher achievement expectancy showed higher youth leadership life skills development; while self-esteem, number of years in 4-H, age, and place of residence had no impact. In addition, minority members and females indicated higher youth leadership life skills development than non-minority and male members. Youth would benefit from more involvement and encouragement in leadership activities both in the club and in the community.
Seevers, Brenda S. & Thomas J. Dormody. (1994). Predicting Youth Life Leadership Skills Development Among Senior 4-H Members: A Tri-State Study. Journal of Agricultural Education 35(3), 64-69.

Successful Drug Prevention Programs
Youth organizations such as the Boys & Girls Clubs provide a valuable channel for reaching a community's youth population due to the existing purpose of positive youth development, established safe and comfortable environments for youth, and the inherent flexibility in the programs. Additionally, successful programs need to have a program leader that is positive and capable, group cohesion and identity promoting prosocial group bonding, and should involve program graduates in recruiting and serving as role models.
Kaltreider, Lynne D. & Tena L. St. Pierre. (1995). Beyond the Schools: Strategies for Implementing Successful Drug Prevention Programs in Community Youth-Serving Organizations. Journal of Drug Education 25(3), 223-237.

Youth Leadership Life Skills Development Scale
Although many involved in youth leadership programs view them as effective, there is little recent research to verify their claims. A valid and reliable 30-indicator summated scale was developed to measure youth leadership life skills development. The scale could be useful as an assessment tool, or for predicting youth leadership life skills based on youth organization participation.
Seevers, Brenda S., Thomas J. Dormody & Dennis L. Clason. (19950. Developing a Scale to Research and Evaluate Youth Leadership Life Skills Development. Journal of Agricultural Education 36(2), 28-34.

Perceived Youth Benefits of Mentoring
Reports of more extensive amounts of youth-mentor contact were related to increased perceived youth benefits. Effective mentoring relationships exhibited continuity, consistency, and strong feelings of personal closeness. Contacts with agency staff and relationship obstacles were both associated negatively with relationship closeness, suggesting a need for agencies to assess the training and assistance that volunteer mentors receive. Mentors in long term relationships reported less contact with agency staff indicating more skill and autonomy. However, the long-term mentors also reported spending time with youth less frequently.
DuBois, David L. & Helen A. Neville. (1997). Youth Mentoring: Investigation of Relationship Characteristics and Perceived Benefits. Journal of Community Psychology 25(3), 227-233.
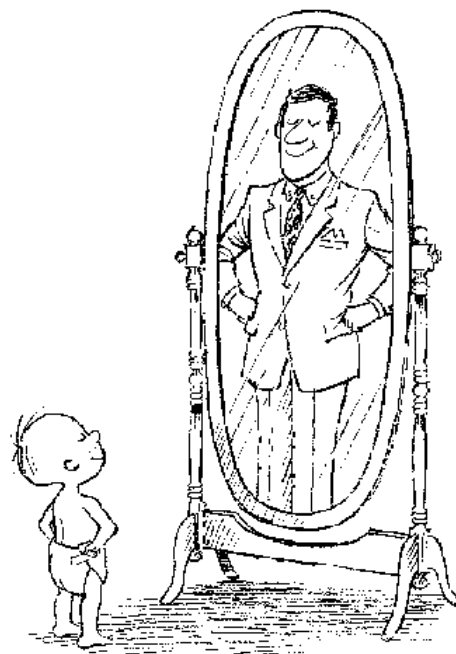
Statistics: Where we Stand

Youth Involvement in Community Service
*93% of teenagers asked to volunteer did participate
*24% of teenagers not asked participated
*84% of students reported that their schools arranged student community service
*16% of those indicated that their schools also required it
*14% of students reported that their schools neither arranged nor required community service
*Only 2% of students were in schools that required yet did not arrange community service
*87% of students whose schools required and arranged community service planned to participate again the next year
*81% of students whose schools arranged but did not require community service planned to participate the next year
*70% of students whose schools neither arranged nor required community service planned to participate the next year
*26% of 6th through 12th grade students participate in community service on a regular basis
*33 to 37% of students participate in community service regularly if the student lives in a household with at least one participating adult
*20 to 21% participate regularly if no adult participates in community service

Source:
U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, spring 1996, Youth Civic Involvement component.

Results of 4-H Programs to Develop Critical Life Skills
•72% of youth in 4-H Clubs practiced and further developed decision-making skills
•61% of youth in 4-H clubs practiced and improved communication skills
•82% of 4-H Club members gained skills in working as a member of a group and worked on developing positive relations with others
•62% of club members report a greater appreciation for learning as a result of their 4-H involvement
•over 3200 4-H club youth increased their understanding of citizenship through service through their participation in a service project in their community
•69% of 4-H club members learned and practiced positive ways to manage their resources
•over 1200 youth were involved in career exploration and/or developed resumes, skills in interviewing, and other job skills.

4-H Contributions to Development of Life Skills
40.5% of 4-H alumni reported increased knowledge
28.7% of alumni from other organizations reported an increase in knowledge
34.1% of 4-H alumni reported increased leadership skills
44.4% of alumni from other organizations reported increased leadership skills
33.8% of 4-H alumni reported increased responsibility
46.7% of alumni from other organizations reported increased responsibility
34.3% of 4-H alumni reported increased self-worth
29% of alumni from other organizations reported increased self-worth
33.1% of 4-H alumni reported developed communication skills
31% of alumni from other organizations reported developed communication skills
27.8% of 4-H alumni reported increased cooperation skills
27.8% of alumni from other organizations reported increased cooperation skills

Youth Involvement in Other Activities
*6,512,616 youth are involved in 4-H
    -1,584,114 in clubs
    -2,048,332 in special interest groups
    -50,806 in individual study programs
    -45,181 in instructional television programs
    -103,529 in school-aged child care programs
    -190,370 in 4-H conducted camps
*4.6 million youth were involved in Boy Scouts of America in 1997
    -40,296 youth earned Eagle Scout
    -57.7% of all Boy Scouts and Varsity Scouts participated in long-term camping expeditions
*2,670,692 girls are enrolled in Girls Scouts of America, the largest organization for girls

Sources:
http://www.4h-usa.org, http://www.gsusa.org, http://www.bsa.scouting.org, Howard Ladewig & John K. Thomas. (1987) Does 4-H Make a Difference? College Station, TX: The Texas A&M University System.

Facts on Developing Competent Youth

Benefits of Youth Participation Programs

Organizations
-Young people provide new and unique perspectives on decision-making, including information about their needs and interests.
-Young people provide more effective outreach to other youth by getting the message out, recruiting, and referring them to the program.
-Enthusiasm and creativity from youth help in sharing the work responsibilities.
-Involving youth in the decision-making process leads to better acceptance of the decisions.
-Youth contributions revitalize the organization while retaining the skills and experience of adults.

Communities
-The inclusion of young people provides more active contributing members and a pool of future leaders with skills, experiences, and commitment.
-Communities gain insights on ways to identify and meet the need of young citizens accompanied by a reduction in negative youth activities.
-Results in positive community spirit and youth role models demonstrating opportunities for advancement, self-fulfillment, and social justice.

Youth
-Positive status and stature in the community combined with increased self-esteem and career choices.
-New skills, leadership experience, better understanding of diversity, and a sense of self-discipline.
-A better appreciation for the multiple roles adults play.

Adults
-Young people become valuable resources, relieving some responsibility.
-Programs and activities are planned with an enhanced sensitivity to the needs of youth.
-A positive view and real appreciation for the creative energy that young people contribute, combined with a better understanding of diversity.

Source: National 4-H Council. (1997). Creating Youth/Adult Partnerships. Chevy Chase, MD: National 4-H Council, http://www.fourhcouncil.edu

Tips for Ensuring a Good Experience for Youth
-A coach is necessary to prepare them for their role.
-Be prepared for teens to need closure or "so what."
-Leave time to reflect with them after the event.
-Teens should be involved, not used.
-Teens need immediate feedback.
-Celebrate with them in a variety of ways after an accomplishment.

Important Issues for Youth Meeting Adults
-The role of youth should be protected.
-The agenda should address issues that youth are interested in.
-The role of the coach and the importance of reflection with youth are essential.
-Adults should be oriented to accept and listen to youth.
-Youth benefit from training in communication and group processes.

Source: Roy E. Hougen, Katey Walker, Elizabeth Templin & Janet Ayers. (1993). Partners in Community Leadership. Ames, IA: Iowa State University Printing Services, (515)294-8321

Educational Tools
Ground Rules and Basic Training for Youth-Adult Teams

Examining Youth Adult Relationships
Role Playing

Possible Role Plays for Youth
Handle each situation in a negative way and then in a positive.
- The teacher won't admit that he/she graded a test incorrectly after you prove it to them with your text.
- You missed practice due to a family emergency and now your coach won't let you play in the big game.
- You found a stolen book bag in the bathroom and turned it in to the principal, but now are accused of stealing it.
- You returned a library book that was in poor condition when you checked it out, and now the librarian wants you to pay for the replacement of the book.
- An officer pulls you over, only because you drive a red sports car. You have done nothing wrong.

Factors to Consider after a Negative Role Play
- Thoughts about the experience
- Feelings about the roles acted out
- Things seen or heard during the role play
- Similar experiences from real life
- Current ways of dealing with these situations
- Words to describe the overall feeling between the two people
- Major characteristics of the adult and youth
- Conclusions about working with adults

Factors to Consider after a Positive Role Play
- Thoughts about the experience
- Difference between the positive and negative
- Role most similar to the real you
- Key phrases or expressions from the role play
- Words to describe the overall feeling between the two people
- Major characteristics of the adult and youth
- Lessons about working with adults
- Necessary elements in partnerships with adults

Source: National 4-H Council. (1997). Creating Youth/Adult Partnerships. Chevy Chase, MD: National 4-H Council, http://www.fourhcouncil.edu

Developmental Outcomes of Successful Programs

It is essential that youth programs such as sports and recreation programs, camps, service programs, mentoring programs, school-to-work programs, and drop-in centers include activities that encourage attainment of these key developmental requirements.
- *Competence- usable skills
- *Character- meaningful values
- *Connection- positive interpersonal relationships
- *Confidence- positive outlook and self-esteem

How to Begin
- select a program leader with a helpful, reassuring attitude
- seek parental involvement and encouragement
- invite older youth to continue involvement
- support youth leadership within the program
- institute relationship building activities
- involve youth in decision-making
- give training and support to dedicated mentors
- arrange opportunities for youth adult relationships in a work environment
- encourage present and long-term goal setting

Developmental Outcomes cont.

Reap the Benefits
- -improved self-concept and self-esteem
- -increased interest in extracurricular and community service participation
- -academic success
- -decreased negative behaviors
- -realistic goal setting
- -problem-solving skills
- -leadership development
- -caring relationships
- -career investigation
- -increased interaction with adult role models

Sources: http://www.search-institute.org/youthserving/outcomes.htm
Lerner, Richard M.; Ostrum, Charles W.; Michigan State University; Freel, Melissa A. & University of Kentucky, Cooperative Extansion Service. (1995). Promoting Positive Youth and Community Development Through Outreach Scholarship: Comments on Zeldin and Peterson. Journal of Adolescent Research, 10, (4), 486-502.

A Model for Planning Projects with Youth

Step 1: Identify the **project goal**.
Step 2: Identify the actions needed to complete the project and record them as action steps.
Step 3: Identify potential resources to aid in completing the action steps.
Step 4: Put the action steps and tasks in the time sequence necessary to complete the project by numbering them.
Step 5: Write the tasks in order on an action plan sheet, identifying a date of completion for each task.
Step 6: Identify a volunteer and a helper from the group to complete each task on the action plan.
Step 7: Create a checklist for planning an activity including tasks such as facilities, food, equipment, resource people, registration, transportation, insurance, printing, publicity, awards, budget, and follow-up. A person to complete the task and a date of completion for each task should also be included on the checklist.

Source: Roy E. Hougen, Katey Walker, Elizabeth Templin & Janet Ayers. (1993). Partners in Community Leadership. Ames, IA: Iowa State University Printing Services, (515)294-8321

Discovering Youth Assets

Often positive aspects of youth are overlooked due to negative stereotyping. While the intense energy and creativity of youth can be great assets to the communities they live in, adults sometimes focus more on their deficiencies and lack of experience. In fact, youth have many qualities that enable them to be productive and meaningful partners.

Time

Often youth have great amounts of spare time after school and during the summer not available to adults who spend that time working. Summer vacation is an opportune time for youth to be involved in productive activities that are beneficial to their communities and increase their self-esteem.

Ideas and Creativity

Creativity and a drive to develop new ideas are characteristics typical of youth. This new way of looking at things can be extremely helpful to adult leaders searching for new ways to solve old problems.

Connection to Place

Most activities youth engage in take place within their own neighborhood. They are most likely to be in touch with things that happen and have the biggest stake in the welfare of the neighborhood.

Dreams and Desires

Often youth desire to make positive contributions to their communities. By tapping into this desire now instead of postponing their dreams, young people can become valuable partners. Youth will value the opportunity and make positive lasting impacts.

Peer Relationships

Whether for positive or negative purposes, youth establish group solidarity with their peers. Young people maintain clear connections to one another even when they are not involved in the positive aspects of the community. Youth gang activity indicates lost potential of a peer group that is misdirected. This connection between youth can be a great asset when cultivated in a positive manner. Young people can effectively mobilize each other and become a positive driving force in their communities.

Family Relationships

Most youth remain an integral part of their families and can serve as a connection between their parents and the community. Especially in circumstances in which parents have become isolated, for example if the child is the only person in the family that speaks English, youth can reconnect their families to the community. Young people have the ability to engage their families in positive activities outside the home.

Youth as Teachers

It is important to realize that although most young people are students, they can also be effective teachers, role models, and mentors. Using previously established relationships with their peers, youth can be very credible as instructors in positive learning experiences.

Enthusiasm and Energy

Youth have enthusiasm and energy lacking in many adults due to the fact that they have yet to experience many failures and disappointments. This new perspective and lack of discouraging experiences gives youth the willingness to attempt solving old problems and finding new opportunities. These qualities can also make youth perfect entrepreneurs.

Connecting Youth to the Community

Youth assets can be translated into valuable resources in a number of ways. The community must investigate the skills youth may already have developed. This includes a wide range of possibilities and differs between individuals. Youth may have experience with:

- Caring for the elderly or sick
- Taking phone messages, operating a calculator, or typing
- Painting, tiling, or other home repairs
- Cleaning and washing
- Mowing lawns or other yard maintenance
- Preparing and serving food
- Childcare
- Selling products or services
- Singing or playing an instrument
- Sewing, knitting, or crocheting

Youth often have unexpected skills which when discovered can be transformed into valuable resources. These skills can be utilized in a number of ways that lead to beneficial relationships between youth and their communities. Most young people are in school and have therefore maintained social relationships outside their families and have participated in activities facilitated by their schools. However, school is only one of the many places youth can participate in their communities. Many other opportunities exist for youth to become linked with partners in their communities and there are many examples of success.

Citizens Associations
Community organizations such as community centers, religious institutions, and cultural organizations can facilitate youth participation in their communities and benefit from the unique assets of young people. Opportunities to institute these beneficial relationships exist and can be created.
Youth and adults participate in a crisis intervention center. Youth are included on the board of directors, serve as educators, and maintain a crisis hotline.

Public Institutions
Youth are often associated with several public institutions in their communities other than their schools. Libraries, parks, community colleges, the police, and others have opportunities to mobilize youth as productive members of their communities. As a result of these relationships youth can begin to view themselves as important contributors in relation to public institutions.
A section of a park is given to a group of youth to cultivate and turn into a community garden. Local citizens appreciate the effort and powerful youth-adult relationships develop as the garden grows.

Private Sector
It is advantageous for the private sector to encourage the development of young people as important components of the community they depend upon. This type of partnership teaches young people valuable skills, while providing businesses with more developed and productive relationships with the community.
A mentoring program is established between youth and local businesses. The program provides internships for teens, who are paid for a limited number of hours each week.

Individuals within the Community
By re-evaluating the assumption that young people in groups remain destructive elements of the community, all members can witness the incredible positive force youth become when given the opportunity. All members of the community, from other youth to senior citizens, can benefit from partnerships with young people.
Youth home alone after school can telephone the home of a local senior citizen in case they experience a crisis or just want to talk.

Source:
John Kretzmann & John McNight. (1993). Building Communities From the Inside Out. Chicago: ACTA Publications, 800/397-2282.

Resources and Public Policy

Resources

National Council on Youth Leadership
A non-profit organization giving recognition and encouragement to youth. The organization creates public awareness of the importance of youth leadership, provides programs to build youth leadership skills, recognizes outstanding adult commitment to youth, and encourages community involvement.
http://www.ncyl.org/home.htm

Spectrum of Light
This organization forms youth adult partnerships focusing on environmental education, action, and public service. They foster dialog between youth and Congress, and provide many programs that encourage youth to become active and responsible citizens.
http://www.erols.com/slym

Iowa State University Extension
As well as providing success stories of previously completed youth adult programs, this site includes information on legislation, materials, and many other resources related to community empowerment. Other program information includes parent, youth and family skills building curriculum.
http://www.exnet.iastate.edu/Pages/families/

Search Institute
An entire section is devoted to youth-serving organizations, containing articles, stories, ideas, and training materials. The site identifies the types of programs available such as mentoring and service programs and the benefits related to each. Also included are outcomes of youth adult partnerships and ways to strengthen existing programs. The Search Institute has identified a framework of forty developmental assets that children need to grow up as competent, responsible, caring adults. Several of these assets emphasize the importance of non-parent relationships with adults through both formal relationships such as mentors and informal relationships like neighbors.
http://www.search-institute.org

YMCA Earth Science Corps
This is a service learning program focused on leadership development, environmental education, and cross-cultural awareness. Youth work equally with other youth, educators, and volunteers to solve important issues. The program has shown positive impacts on leadership skills, commitment to future volunteerism, and additional tools for healthy and caring lives.
http://www.yesc.org

America's Promise-The Alliance for Youth
The President's Summit on America's Future initiated this national campaign to encourage communities around the country to recognize and provide the five fundamental resources all youth need.
-*Ongoing relationships with caring adults*
-*Safe places and structured activities*
-*A healthy start for a healthy future*
-*Marketable skills through effective education*
-*Opportunities to serve*
http://www.americaspromise.org
(703)684-4500

Youth Info
A section contains dozens of speeches made on topics related to youth by Donna E. Shalala the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and human Services, officials at the Department of Justice, and officials at the Department of Education. Topics for the speeches vary, but include *Combating School Violence*, the *1998 National Youth Town Meeting*, and *Making Girls Stronger*. Another section is devoted to reports and publications on a wide variety of issues concerning youth. The site also includes resources for parents covering many issues including child care and mentoring.
http://youth.os.dhhs.gov

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency
This site provides information on the many programs funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency. The programs cover a variety of issues involving youth adult partnerships including programs on drug prevention, juvenile mentoring, youth environmental service, and many more.
http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org

Public Policy

21st Century Community Learning Centers
President Clinton and Secretary Riley released the administration's proposal "The Education Excellence for All Children Act of 1999," in late May. The legislation includes the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program which provides financial support for after-school programs. The 21st CCLC's are school- based learning centers providing a safe, supervised, and cost-effective programs for children after school, on the weekends, or in the summer. The program is currently funded at $200 million.

Volunteers for Children Act
On October 9, 1998, the Volunteers for Children Act was signed into law by President Clinton. The act enables all businesses and organizations that "provide care, treatment, education, training, instruction, supervision, or recreation to children" to request that their volunteers and employees undergo fingerprint-based national criminal history background checks.

After-School Children's Education Act
Representative Michael Castle introduced this act on March 25, 1999. It amends the Child Care and Development Block Grant of 1990 by providing grants, a national clearinghouse, and a report describing after-school activities in each state. Each state would be required to spend no less than one percent of every year's fiscal budget on programs that improve after-school programs.
source: http://www.nydic.org/pubpol.html

Paradoxes: The Ups and Downs of Empowering Youth

To be successful youth need:
-efficient and self-directed learning
-opportunities to fill new roles and accept new responsibilities
-support and encouragement from adults and peers
-to be motivated by high expectations set for them by adults
-a support system and developed social networks
-involvement in challenging activities that effect others
-to be accountable for their actions
-to be equal and active partners in decision-making
-time to plan and review activities

For adults this means:
-a strong dedication and commitment of time
-possibly feeling some inadequacy as a role model
-giving up some power and control
-showing restraint and patience in difficult situations
-providing unwavering support
-concern associated with greater responsibility as a role model
-being a resource day or night
-frustration and facing the possibility of disappointment
-being accountable while lacking full control
-finding a balance between dedication to the project and personal responsibilities
-concerns about resource allocation
-a long-term emotional commitment to youth involved

Source: Zeldin, Shepherd. (1995). Community-University Collaborations for Youth Development: From Theory to Practice. Journal of Adolescent Research, 10 (4), 449-469.