the forum
FOR YOUTH INVESTMENT

N★TIONAL COLLABORATION FOR YOUTH

READY BY 21 ®
All youth ready for college, work & life.

A SHARED VISION FOR YOUTH

Common Outcomes and Indicators

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Problems affecting kids are well-documented. How do we know how well children in a given community are *progressing*, considering that school, child care, afterschool programs and so many other community resources are a part of kids' lives? Are there desirable outcomes for all children that the entire community is aiming for? There should be. The National Collaboration for Youth, which is the longest-standing coalition of national agencies committed to positive youth development, has begun to tackle this challenge and we've documented our findings in this publication.

While there are many variations in what NCY members do and why they do it, every member operates under the basic tenets of youth development. As a natural leader in the youth development field, the National Collaboration for Youth (NCY) is working with many of its members to articulate a shared vision for young people by identifying a common set of youth outcomes and indicators that cuts across the work of member organizations. Though there are commonalities in how many NCY members talk about their goals and impact, the lack of shared language across the field leads to missed opportunities for collaboration, alignment, and collective impact.

An internal survey conducted in 2010 confirmed that many members are working toward common positive youth development goals, and that some are interested in collaborative measurement work that could enhance efficiency and have important implications for accountability, quality improvement, workforce development and ultimately, community change. Though the survey revealed many common interests, to date, national organizations have mounted individual efforts to define and measure outcomes, at considerable expense. Therefore the NCY Research Group took on the task of building a common framework of youth outcomes and corresponding indicators that would reflect the range of developmental areas that youth organizations focus on.

It is important to note that it is not a given that youth programs have a positive influence on the outcomes included in this framework. This is why outcomes are not the only thing NCY member organizations are systematically assessing. Programs that are effective at helping young people become productive, connected and healthy employ a common set of positive youth development practices and invest in professional development efforts aligned with those practices. Just as there is common ground in terms of why these organizations do what they do, which is the focus of this document, consensus is also emerging around the what—quality youth development practices. In addition, many organizations also invest resources in assessing risk and protective factors in the contexts where youth spend time.

Our hope is that this outcome framework enhances organizations' individual and collective ability to define, communicate about, and document the purpose of youth development organizations. Possible uses for individual programs and organizations include:

- **Articulating program goals;**
- **Developing logic models and evaluations; and**
- **Developing communications tools and promotional materials.**

Possible uses of the framework at the collective level include:

- **Identifying commonalities and differences across organizations;**
- **Identifying common measures;**
- **Implementing cross-organizational research; and**
- **Crafting consistent policy advocacy messages.**

Ready by 21® was adopted by the National Collaboration for Youth in 2008 as a unifying lens. Ready by 21 mobilizes local, state and national leaders to improve family, school and community supports to ensure that all young people are ready for college, work and life. It is important to note that individual NCY members were not asked to endorse Ready by 21 or the specific outcomes and indicators featured in this document. NCY encourages alignment, but

For the purposes of this document, we are using the following terms in the following ways:

Developmental Domain:
Broad developmental area including multiple related outcomes

Outcome:
Aspect of child or youth development that programs can influence

Indicator:
Evidence that an outcome has or has not been achieved

Measure:
Specific data collection tool (e.g. survey, interview, observation protocol)

member organizations are not expected to stop using their own frameworks in lieu of this one. Finally, this framework is intended to provide a basic listing of outcomes and corresponding indicators. It does not capture complex relationships among outcomes and indicators or developmental differences in how some are manifested. Also, the "possible measures" included here were not identified through a formal review process. Organizations should consider them a starting point for identifying measures.

A SHARED VISION FOR YOUTH

Outcomes that Youth Organizations Can Influence

Healthy & Safe

THRIVING

- Active/Healthy Living
- Social/Emotional Health
- Safety/Injury Prevention

Connected

CONNECTING

- Positive Identity
- Positive Relationships
- Social/Emotional Development
- Cultural Competence

LEADING

- Community Connectedness
- Social Responsibility
- Leadership Development

Productive

LEARNING

- Academic Achievement
- Learning and Innovation Skills
- Engagement in Learning
- College Access and Success

WORKING

- Workforce Readiness
- Career Awareness
- Employment

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Developed by the Forum for Youth Investment with the National Collaboration for Youth Research Group

Healthy & Safe

Domain	Outcomes	Indicators	Possible Measures
THRIVING	**Active/Healthy Living***	• Youth develop skills and attitudes to make lifelong physical activity a habit. • Youth develop/maintain healthy eating habits. • Youth develop skills to prepare food themselves.	• California Healthy Kids Survey – RYD Module • Colorado Trust's Toolkit for Evaluating Positive Youth Development • Study of After School Activities Surveys (Vandell) • Youth Outcome Toolkit (National Research Center) • YMCA Purple Kit
	Social/ Emotional Health	• Youth identify, manage and appropriately express emotions and behaviors. • Youth make positive decisions and access external supports. • Youth prevent, manage and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways. • Youth develop healthy relationships.	• Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale • Devereux Student Strengths Assessment • Social Skills Improvement System (Pearson) • Survey of Afterschool Youth Outcomes (NIOST) • Youth Outcome Measures Online Toolbox (Vandell)
	Safety/Injury Prevention	• Youth avoid risky behaviors. • Youth avoid bullying behaviors. • Youth use refusal skills. • Youth avoid using illegal substances.	• California Healthy Kids Survey – RYD Module • Youth Outcome Measures Online Toolbox (Vandell) • Youth Risk Behavior Survey

* For additional resources related to measuring active/healthy living outcomes, see resources from the 4-H Healthy Living Program at www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/about/4h_health_eval.htm

Connected

Domain	Outcomes	Indicators	Possible Measures
CONNECTING	**Positive Identity**	• Youth develop a strong sense of self. • Youth develop positive values.	• Colorado Trust's Toolkit for Evaluating Positive Youth Development • Developmental Assets Profile (Search) • Junior Girl Scout Group Experience: Outcomes Measures Guide
	Positive Relationships	• Youth develop positive, sustained relationships with caring adults. • Youth develop positive relationships with peers. • Youth affiliate with peers who abstain from negative behaviors.	• California Healthy Kids – Resilience and Youth Development Module • Colorado Trust's Toolkit for Evaluating Positive Youth Development • Devereux Student Strengths Assessment • National 4-H Impact Assessment Study – Youth Outcome Measures • San Francisco Beacons Survey (P/PV) • Survey of Afterschool Youth Outcomes (NIOST) • Youth Survey of Supports and Opportunities (YDSI) • Youth Outcomes Battery (ACA)
	Social/Emotional Development	• Youth develop social skills (e.g. interpersonal communication, conflict resolution). • Youth demonstrate pro-social behavior. • Youth develop friendship skills. • Youth develop coping skills.	• Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale • Children's Institute Rating Scales • Developmental Assets Profile (Search) • Devereux Student Strengths Assessment • Social Skills Improvement System (Pearson) • Youth Experience Survey 2.0 (Larson) • Youth Outcomes Battery (ACA) • Gallup Student Poll (Gallup)
	Cultural Competence	• Youth develop cultural competence. • Youth advance diversity in a multicultural world. • Youth respect diversity.	• National 4-H Impact Assessment Study – Outcome Measures
LEADING	**Community Connectedness**	• Youth feel a sense of belonging. • Youth participate in community programs.	• Developmental Assets Profile (Search) • Home and Community Social Behavior Scale • Youth Experiences Survey (Larson)
	Social Responsibility	• Youth demonstrate civic participation skills (e.g., compromise, perspective-taking). • Youth feel empowered to contribute to positive change in their communities. • Youth volunteer/participate in community service. • Youth consider the implications of their actions on others, their community, and the environment.	• Children's Institute Rating Scales • Developmental Assets Profile (Search) • Home and Community Social Behavior Scale • Youth Experiences Survey 2.0 (Larson) • Social Skills Improvement System (Pearson)
	Leadership Development	• Youth educate and inspire others to act. • Youth demonstrate leadership skills (e.g., organizing others, taking initiative, team-building). • Youth model positive behaviors for peers. • Youth communicate their opinions and ideas to others.	• New Basic Skills Rubrics (Citizen Schools) • Social Skills Improvement System (Pearson) • Student Leadership Practices Inventory (Jossey-Bass) • Survey of Afterschool Youth Outcomes (NIOST) • Youth Outcome Measures Online Toolbox (Vandell)

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Productive

Domain	Outcomes	Indicators	Possible Measures
LEARNING	**Academic Achievement**	• Youth are on track for high school graduation. • Youth graduate from high school. • Youth perform at or above grade level. • Youth improve grades/GPA. • Youth improve test scores.	• School Records
	Learning and Innovation Skills	• Youth demonstrate critical thinking skills (e.g. reasoning, analysis). • Youth solve problems. • Youth work in groups to accomplish learning goals. • Youth think creatively.	• California Healthy Kids – RYD Module • California Measure of Mental Motivation • Devereux Student Strengths Assessment • Survey of Afterschool Youth Outcomes (NIOST) • Youth Outcomes Battery (ACA)
	Engagement in Learning	• Youth express curiosity about topics learned in and out of school. • School attendance improves. • Youth spend time studying. • Youth spend time reading. • Motivation to learn.	• Gallup Student Poll (Gallup) • Academic Competence Evaluation Scales (Pearson) • Achievement Motivation Profile • Developmental Assets Profile (Search) • San Francisco Beacons Survey (P/PV) • Survey of Afterschool Youth Outcomes (NIOST)
	College Access/ Success	• Youth plan to attend postsecondary education. • Youth enroll in postsecondary education. • Youth complete some type of postsecondary credential.	• National Student Clearinghouse • California Healthy Kids – RYD Module
WORKING	**Workforce Readiness**	• Youth develop communication skills. • Youth work effectively in groups. • Youth develop critical thinking and decision-making skills. • Youth develop positive work habits.	• New Basic Skills Rubrics (Citizen Schools) • Social Skills Improvement System (Pearson) • Survey of Afterschool Youth Outcomes (NIOST) • ACA Youth Outcomes Battery • Youth Outcome Measures Online Toolbox (Vandell)
	Career Awareness	• Youth develop knowledge about occupations. • Youth are aware of their interests and abilities.	• Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment
	Employment	• Youth are employed at wages that meet their basic needs. • Youth established in employment/career within five years of graduating from high school.	• New Basic Skills Rubrics (Citizen Schools) • Social Skills Improvement System (Pearson) • Student Leadership Practices Inventory (Jossey-Bass) • Survey of Afterschool Youth Outcomes (NIOST) • Youth Outcome Measures Online Toolbox (Vandell)

The National Collaboration for Youth is a 45-year old coalition of more than 50 of the nation's leading child and youth serving organizations. Its mission is to provide a **united voice** as advocates for children and youth to improve the conditions of young people in America, and to help young people reach their full potential. The National Collaboration for Youth brings together experts in public policy, programming and research to share knowledge and promote collective action to improve the lives of America's youth.

www.collab4youth.org

For more information on these recommendations, contact:

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