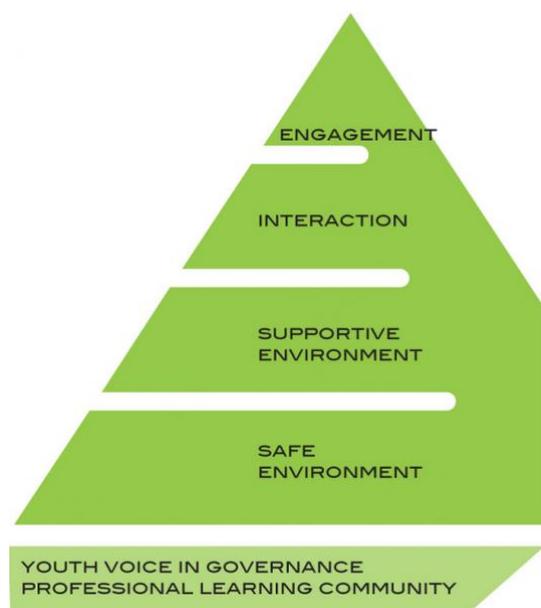# Approach

The David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality empowers education and human service leaders to adapt, implement, and scale best-in-class, research validated quality improvement systems to advance child and youth development.

Our approach is based in positive youth development research, and the desire to create a safe, supportive, and productive environment for youth. The approach, pictured in the pyramid, is premised on the belief that it is a youth worker?s job to set up an environment for youth in which needs are met and learning is encouraged?to create a space in which young people can thrive. The pyramid provides a way to organize the many, many things a youth worker does to build a great experience for young people.

The Weikart Center is committed to helping programs enhance the experiences they provide for youth. We do this in three ways:

Enhancing Youth Programs

The Weikart Center?s research-based improvement system helps youth programs set meaningful improvement goals based on data, enact new practices, and create powerful developmental environments for youth.

Lasting quality improvement requires more than what you get in a typical training. That?s why the Weikart Center helps youth programs establish ***quality improvement systems*** [1] to support staff. Our improvement approach is based on the assess-plan-improve sequence:

This sequence, detailed in our three-part [Youth Work Management training course](#) [2], begins with assessment in order to build on youth workers? existing strengths and identify areas to address. These areas then go into an improvement plan as goals, with clear steps and benchmarks for success. We follow this up with powerful supports for youth leaders to manage improvement, and the high quality Youth Work Methods series of workshops for staff. As a whole, the assess-plan-improve sequence establishes a supportive system for continuous improvement.

Click to read about the numerous [projects to enhance youth programs](#) [3] that are underway.

Click to read the results of a study of the [Youth Program Quality Intervention](#) [1], a data-driven continuous improvement model for afterschool systems.

Strengthening Intermediaries

Youth-serving systems need intermediary organizations with the know-how to provide ongoing training, technical assistance and related supports.

The Weikart Center helps organizations strengthen the services they provide to youth programs in their networks. We have partnered with numerous intermediary organizations that serve networks of youth programs, ranging from a handful of local sites to full statewide networks. These intermediaries provide a variety of training and technical assistance services and often are involved in accountability messages, policies, and funding decisions. By providing evidence-based tools, training, and expert consulting, the Weikart Center helps enhance the supports these critical organizations can provide.

Taking Quality Improvement to Scale

The Weikart Center works closely with its out-of-school time clients to design, pilot and effectively scale up quality improvement and accountability systems.

The [Youth Program Quality Intervention](http://cypq.org/ypqi) [1] is specifically designed to be effective in large-scale deployments. This is achieved through ramping up stages that enable a network to build local resources. The Weikart Center provides comprehensive services for building local capacities?in data collection, training, and technical assistance?to support large-scale systems that operate with fidelity.

Source URL: http://cypq.org/about/approach

Links:
[1] http://cypq.org/ypqi
[2] http://cypq.org/products_and_services/training
[3] http://cypq.org/projects/overview