

Program Quality News

From the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality

Program Quality News connects education and human service leaders with research, case studies, tools and training to improve the quality of youth programs.

Features

YouthBuild increases its power to deliver high quality youth development

While YouthBuild programs focus on teaching employment skills, a key part of their mission is to provide positive youth development experiences both in the classroom and on the job site. So this fall the Weikart Center began working with YouthBuild USA to pilot the [Youth Program Quality Intervention \(YPQI\)](#) at four sites. The purpose: measure this point-of-service quality, then empower staff and youth to drive improvement and professional development.



Through the YPQI, YouthBuild USA is increasing the capacity of its site coaches to support the program self-assessment process. Learn more about YouthBuild at <https://youthbuild.org/>

Community Learning Centers get parents engaged with their middle schoolers

Three middle schools in Michigan are participating in an eight-week program for youth and their families to discover the personal strengths, interests and resources that equip them for success. A series of family meetings that parallel youth activities during the afterschool program will culminate in a youth-led conference, where youth share their plans for the future.



Comments about the experience:

"It's been a great opportunity for parents to come together to share common issues, concerns and stories about their middle school kids. The more I've seen the parents talk, the more connected I think they are with each other and the fact that they aren't alone with the issues they are facing." - Sam Froomkin, site coordinator

"I had one mom tell me, 'This is great for us! I need my son to know I care about who he becomes.' " - Carmen Smith, site coordinator

The initiative, sponsored by Michigan Department of Education 21st Century Community Learning Centers, kicked off this fall and will continue through this month.

Methods training helps teachers in classroom

The Youth Work Methods instruction is helping teachers in a new school district improve how they interact with students.

This summer, two school districts combined to form the district of [Ypsilanti Community Schools \(YCS\)](#). Two YCS staffers attended the Weikart Center's [Youth Work Methods Training of Trainers](#) course last month; more will follow.

Social studies teacher Lauren Spoerl says the training "has allowed me to reflect upon myself as an educator, [has] improved student engagement, and has given me the resources to diversify classroom strategies to increase student retention of the content." For example: She is now using alternative ways to gather students' attention and is involving students in planning instructional activities in order to incorporate their interests. "This training has given a new dimension to my classroom, and allowed students to become more active participants in their own education," Spoerl says.

Annie Hampel, the safe and supportive schools liaison at Ypsilanti New Tech High School, has a broad vision of the impact that the Methods training can have on teachers. "The Methods trainings are a very engaging, accessible and exciting way to offer specific skills to staff that will help them create a safe and supportive school culture where students can focus on learning. What is more, the workshops model the skills to deepen learning and can further create opportunities for staff to become a cohesive team."

Back in the school district, Spoerl and Hampel will lead their colleagues through training on the Youth Work Methods throughout the year, prioritizing the methods that match the needs of staff.



Presentations

Summer Learning PQA at National Summer Learning Conference

Training Coordinator Ravi Ramaswamy presented a session that featured Weikart Center work at the [National Summer Learning Conference](#) in Orlando, Fla.

The Weikart Center partnered this year with the National Summer Learning Association to develop and pilot a joint instrument and process to assess the quality of summer programming. The instrument contains the following scales: Program Culture, Staff Friendliness, Staff Circulation, Purpose, Planning, Staff, Partnerships, and Instructional Context.

The conference presentation overviewed the use of the instrument in programs during the pilot and touched on future plans for continued development and field testing.



Calendar of Events

Host the next Youth Work Methods Training of Trainers!

The Weikart Center is looking for networks that are interested in hosting a Youth Work Methods Training of Trainers (TOT). If your network or organization plans on sending more than five people to a Methods TOT, you should consider hosting!

Contact Ravi Ramaswamy for more information.



Ready by 21 National Meeting registration now open

Registration is now open for the Ready by 21 National Meeting, which will be held April 22-24, 2014, in Northern Kentucky. Join hundreds of leaders from around the country who are working toward the same goal: Getting all young people ready by 21 for college, work and life.



Where & When: Northern Kentucky, April 22-24

Learn more >>

Register now>>

Reminder

The Weikart Center has moved!

Our new address is:
The David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality
301 W. Michigan Ave., Ste. 200
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Staff phone numbers and email addresses have remained the same.

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The Forum for Youth Investment is the proud parent company of The Ready by 21 National Partnership, the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality, the Children's Cabinet Network and SparkAction.org.

