



YOUTH ADULT PARTNERSHIPS



Youth–Adult Partnerships (Y–AP) is the practice of youth and adults working together in a democratic way—through shared work over a sustained period of time—to strengthen their organization and/or community.

PRACTICING YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIPS

- Creates sense of belonging—youth voices are heard, enhancing ownership and responsibility
- Builds relationships—youth are seen as capable partners, taking active leadership roles working alongside volunteers and staff
- Emphasizes learning by doing—youth and adults gain hands-on experience learning from each other

THROUGH COMMUNICATION

- Create a Facebook page
- Start a Snapchat story
- Invite youth to start a blog or podcast

THROUGH MENTORING

- Pair new staff/volunteers with seasoned youth
- Set measurable goals for mentorship

THROUGH LEADERSHIP

- Recruit youth to lead or co-facilitate group meetings and events
- Host youth discussion panels at professional development trainings

HOW TO IMPLEMENT YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIPS

YOUTH

- Encourage youth to challenge their biases towards adults
- Ask for feedback often from youth on how to improve Y–AP
- Take stock of youth skill sets and abilities to determine potential roles and responsibilities
- Learn from youth and ensure their voice is heard

STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

- Remember your role is a partner
- Provide opportunities for young people to lead and teach
- Treat youth as individuals
- Challenge your biases towards youth
- Identify staff, volunteers, and youth as champions to advocate for and encourage best practices of Y–AP

ORGANIZATION AND COMMUNITY

- Provide education to stakeholders on value and purpose of Y–AP
- Facilitate training to staff and volunteers on practice of Y–AP
- Conduct ongoing evaluation to assess level of engagement in Y–AP
- Include all stakeholders in decision-making to promote shared ownership

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STRATEGIES TO IMPLEMENT YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIPS

- Host a youth-adult social to welcome new members and get re-acquainted with returning members
- Conduct a brainstorming session to review goals of Y-AP and identify what Y-AP looks like in your group
- Create mission or vision statement that inspires and energizes group to practice Y-AP
- Have youth and adults write down skill sets and interests to assist with matching of mentors
- Build on group strengths and abilities to identify projects youth and adults can share in overseeing
- Track progress with regular meetings to celebrate success stories and address challenges

YOUTH BENEFITS

- Gain confidence, responsibility, and independence
- Build critical thinking, teamwork, public speaking, and leadership skills
- Strengthen commitment to community service into adulthood
- Enhance sense of belonging

STAFF AND VOLUNTEER BENEFITS

- Strengthen sense of community connectedness
- Enhance understanding of young people and their developmental needs
- Build skills in collaboration and teamwork

ORGANIZATION BENEFITS

- Gain new energy, perspective, and ideas
- Become more connected and responsive to the needs of young people in the community
- Better enhance overall mission to better serve children and youth

RESOURCES

- Act for Youth: http://actforyouth.net/youth_development/engagement/partnerships.cfm
- Advocates for Youth: <http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/youth-adult-partnerships>
- Making it Work—A Guide to Successful Youth-Adult Partnerships: <http://4h.ucanr.edu/files/2423.pdf>
- Youth-Adult Partnership Rubric: <https://cerc.msu.edu/yaprubric>
- Youth-Adult Partnership for Youth Empowerment: <https://fyi.uwex.edu/youthadultpartnership/>

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