

RESEARCH You May Have Missed

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
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RESEARCH YOU MAY HAVE MISSED . . . provides brief summaries of recent research relevant to youth development practice. It is designed to help youth development professionals keep up-to-date with contemporary research.

■ Arnold, M. E. (2006).

Developing evaluation capacity in Extension 4-H field faculty: A framework for success.

American Journal of Evaluation, 27, 257-269.

This article describes a framework for improving the capacity of 4-H educators to evaluate their programs. County 4-H educators often do not have training in evaluation or research methods. This project was begun in Oregon with the intent of improving the evaluation skills of local county 4-H staff. The framework they used had four components: (1) providing training to increase the educators' ability to plan programs using logic models; (2) providing consultations for evaluation projects; (3) conducting program evaluations in small multi-county teams; and (4) conducting at least one statewide, multi-site evaluation each year. 4-H programs may not be planned in a way that supports evaluation; as a result, evaluation may be an afterthought. Logic models can serve as a planning and evaluation tool to help

identify what and when to evaluate, as well as in planning a program itself; the model can help the evaluator identify what will go into a given program, what they hope to accomplish with the program, and the target audience. The authors found that educators had a hard time applying the knowledge they gained of logic models to their own evaluations. The consultations they provided following the trainings as new evaluations were starting, were helpful in implementing the framework. The small-team, multi-county approach to evaluation allowed the staff members to experience a variety of roles in the evaluation process without having to "go it alone." In addition, the larger, state-level evaluations provided the ability to benefit local educators through an evaluation on a scale that county-based staff might not have been able to manage on their own. *-KH*

■ California 4-H Camp Evaluation Team (2007).

Beyond evaluation: Findings from the California 4-H camp study.

University of California, Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources; Davis, CA.

This report describes the findings from a two year study conducted by the California 4-H Camping Taskforce. The goal of the study was first, to find out whether and in what way California 4-H camps provide an environment where positive youth development happens and second, to see how camps could make improvements through engaging in the process of change. Using a framework of positive youth development supports and opportunities (Connell & Gambone, 2002), the study explored whether young

people, both teens and campers, experienced supportive relationships, safety, youth involvement and skill building at camp. In addition the study explored components of environmental stewardship at 4-H camp. To inform the question about how 4-H camp fares as a positive youth development setting, campers (n=342) and teen staff (n=72) from five camps across California were surveyed using an instrument developed by Youth Development Strategies Inc (YDSI). Camps selected were representative of the way 4-H Camps are structured in the state, namely,

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teen-led with adult oversight, and week-long overnight camps. Focus group interviews were conducted with campers, teen staff and adults (approximately five campers, teens and adults from each camp). In addition the camp evaluation team conducted site observations to document camp characteristics with regard to meal plans, sleeping arrangements and type of facilities. Findings from the first phase of camp evaluation suggest that i) overall teen staff scored more optimally in all areas of supports and opportunities compared to campers, ii) developing relationships with young people is a strength at 4-H camp, iii) youth generally feel safe at camp, however boys tend to report feeling less physically safe than girls and younger campers tend to feel less safe than older campers, iv) youth involvement is an area where 4-H camps could improve for campers, v) while most members believed they were learning and growing through camps, older campers felt there could be more novel and challenging activities. In general, a majority of young people strongly agreed that they were receiving strong environmental stewardship experiences. In the second phase of camp evaluation, camps reviewed

their data from the first year and formulated action plans to improve their camps. Two out of the four camps completed and executed their plans. The evaluation team used the same instruments to compare the results of camp improvement to the scores in the first year. Findings revealed that, i) there was significant change in campers' responses of certain supports and opportunities in the two camps that implemented their improvement plans while there was no significant changes in any area for the two camps that did not implement their plans, ii) significantly more campers scored optimally in the area of youth involvement while more teens scored favorably in the areas of safety, leadership and activity interest in year 2 compared to the camps that did not implement their plan, iii) the improvement process increased communication and creativity and provided a sense of ownership in camp by the adults, teen staff, and the campers. Based on the findings, the report provides suggestions for making change, including a sample camp improvement action plan. Youth development practitioners who are aiming to improve camp programs for and with young people should find this report relevant and useful. **-AS**

- Jellic, H., Bobek, D.L., Phelps, E., Lerner, R.M., & Lerner, J.V. (2007).

Using positive youth development to predict contribution and risk behaviors in early adolescence: Findings from the first two waves of the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development.

International Journal of Behavioral Development, 31(3), 263-273.

The theory that healthy, positive development results from the mutually beneficial relation between a developing person and the resources in life that support and promote healthy growth has been the framework for the perspective of 'positive youth development' (PYD). The PYD model views young people as resources to be developed, in contrast to a traditional deficit perspective of youth as problems to be managed. Based on the experiences of practitioners and on the adolescent development literature, "Five Cs" – Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character, and Caring – were hypothesized as a way to conceptualize PYD. The model specifies that when there is an alignment between individual strengths and ecological assets that promote healthy development, the Five Cs will evolve over the course of an individual's development. The Five Cs have been used to describe the characteristics of a 'thriving youth' (p. 263), and been linked to the positive outcomes of youth development programs. The 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development was launched in 2002 with a group of approximately 1700 fifth grade youth from 13 states. It was the first longitudinal study to

attempt to measure PYD and the links between PYD, the Cs, and whether the relation adjusted over time with youth contributions to family, community and society, and risk/problem behaviors. The first wave provided cross-sectional information indicating the usefulness of measuring the Cs as a means to operationalize PYD. Wave 2 participants included those in Wave 1 and an additional sample of previously unassessed sixth graders, totaling 1,973. The sample reported in the present study contains 982 participants, reflecting some attrition from the Wave 1 group. Students completed the Student Questionnaire which was created from various established measures developed to yield information about the Cs. PYD is constructed as the mean of the Five Cs. The Five Cs and PYD measured at Wave 1 were used to predict three outcomes at Wave 2: depression, substance use and delinquency, and contribution. Each of these were measured through specific scales and composite scores of items included in the Student Questionnaire. Analyses of the data from Waves 1 and 2 were done to determine whether or not there is empirical evidence that a latent measure of PYD in fifth graders can predict a positive outcome, youth contribution, a year later in sixth grade.

This is a key prediction of the PYD theory – that PYD as operationalized through the Five Cs, promotes a sixth C of contribution. Results indicated that when controlling for within school effects, adolescents who had higher scores on PYD in Grade 5 had higher levels of contribution in Grade 6, and lower levels of risk behaviors and depression in Grade 6. Girls had significantly higher contribution scores and lower

levels of risk behaviors than boys. The present study provides initial longitudinal evidence about the use of PYD in understanding the structure of the C's of positive adolescent development, and the links among PYD, contribution, and negative outcomes or behaviors. The authors believe results from this ongoing study may impact the design of programs and policies that serve youth. **-RC**

- Loukas, A., Prelow, H. M., Suizzo, M., & Allua, S. (2008).

Mothing and peer associations mediate cumulative risk effects for Latino youth.

Journal of Marriage and the Family, 70(1), 76-85.

Despite a wealth of research documenting the negative effects of neighborhood and economic risk on youth adjustment, there is a lack of empirical investigation of this process in Latino youth. Many studies examining maladjustment in Latino youth have focused on family level predictors. However, studies utilizing other populations of youth and families have found evidence for the effects of family stress (economic pressure, poor neighborhood conditions, and parental psychological distress) and deviant peers. Drawing from the Family Stress and the Social Interaction Models, the current study aimed to replicate previous studies that have documented a process by which family and neighborhood risk factors affect the adjustment of youth by negatively impacting parenting, which results in associating with deviant peers. The

authors aimed to extend this model to a sample of 449 low-income Latino youth (10-14 years of age) and their mothers. Results indicated that cumulative risk factors were associated with less positive parenting at Wave 1. Disruption in positive parenting subsequently predicted youths' associations with deviant peers 16 months later, which concurrently predicted both externalizing and internalizing problems in target youth. The results are the first to examine this pattern of associations longitudinally in Latino youth. Results indicate that Latino youth are also susceptible to the negative effects of deviant peer group associations, and that parenting is a strong predictor of their peer group. Programs working with Latino youth should account for the importance of parenting in shaping youths' decisions on peer group affiliations. **-LO**

- Perkins, D. F., & Le Menestrel, S. (Eds.) (2007).

Sports-based youth development.

New Directions for Youth Development, 115(Fall). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

This volume of the “New Directions for Youth Development” series contains seven chapters on the relationship between sports programs and youth development. Over 40 million youth participate in organized sports programs. Sports participation can have a beneficial effect on health, weight, and fitness; in addition, youth involved in sports are less likely to smoke cigarettes. Youth sports programs can foster positive youth-adult relationships and social behaviors, a sense of belonging, and can contribute to academic success and self-confidence. However, some research suggests that participating in sports may be associated with greater engagement in problem behaviors, such as substance use and lying, compared to youth who are engaged in school-based clubs or other types of activities. Sports programs may not always support positive youth development; youth surveyed after dropping out of a sport reported they stopped because they were “not having fun,” there

was “too much time required,” and there was “too much pressure.” Programs that are designed with positive youth development in mind, with coaches who are aware and conscious about youth development principles, are likely to be more successful at implementing a positive framework. In addition to an overview, the chapters in the volume focus on the effects of youth sports programs on health; moving beyond the dichotomy of cooperation vs. competition; youth sports as a component of organized after-school programs; characteristics of sports-based youth development programs, i.e., using a community youth development approach in implementing sports programs; specific examples of four sports-based youth development programs, including programs involving baseball, tennis, basketball, and snow sports; and intermediary organizations that support sports-based youth development programs through engaging national partners, such as *Sports Illustrated*, to improve the quality of youth sports programs. **-KH**

- Sabaratnam, P., & Klien, J.D. (2006).

Measuring youth development outcomes for community program evaluation and quality improvement: Findings from dissemination of the Rochester Evaluation of Asset Development for Youth (READY) tool.
Journal of Public Health Management Practice, November (Suppl), S88-S94.

This article describes the usage, dissemination, and findings of the Rochester Evaluation of Asset Development for Youth (READY) tool. The purpose of developing the READY was to offer community-based youth programs in the state of New York an easy program-controlled evaluation and quality improvement tool to measure positive youth development outcomes in the following areas: caring adult relationships, basic social skills, decision making, and constructive use of leisure time. “The READY tool is a self-report, 40-item questionnaire that assesses: key demographics, program participation and connectedness, and four common youth development outcomes; developed by a project team of researchers, funders, and program leaders representing local youth-serving organizations” (S89). The READY tool and data analysis software were disseminated through the creation of a customizable computerized Tool Kit in Microsoft Office. The software program was designed to help users manage data entry and easy generation of summary score reports without external assistance or database manipulation expertise. Results

indicated that all community-based youth-serving agencies were able to use the READY tool easily as a program evaluation tool, although most needed technical assistance in conducting evaluations and performing data analysis. The READY survey was given to 1,070 youth. The data from these surveys were able to confirm the positive effects of the community-based youth-serving programs that administered them. Frequent, regular and active participation by youth yielded higher scores on constructs measuring the outcome of caring adult relationships and participant’s perceived program involvement was associated with positive youth development outcomes. Some of the limitations of the READY tool include program representativeness, generalizability to other geographic areas and types of programs, and the inability to measure and control for other external influences such as family, community, and school on youth development outcomes. Nevertheless, the READY tool seems promising in measuring positive outcomes, and in accessibility and simplicity while allowing for direct feedback from youth themselves, rather than relying on adults’ observation. *-TN*

- Surko, M., Pasti, L.W., Whitlock, J., & Benson, D.A. (2006).

Selecting statewide youth development outcome indicators.
Journal of Public Health Management Practice, November (Suppl), S72-78.

A workgroup of the New York State Youth Development Team (YDT), made up of public and private youth-serving organizations, identified a core set of youth development indicators on adolescent well-being after reviewing published literature, existing instruments, as well as local and other states’ sets of indicators. The YDT came up with a list of ninety-one indicators. The workgroup then asked three groups to rate the indicators on a 1-5 scale, with 1 being not important and 5 being very important. The three groups consisted of state and federal employees, program providers, and youth (aged 18-21). State and federal employees, including policy makers were asked for their input through the use of concept mapping. Program providers and youth were asked through the form of web-based

surveys. The YDT came up with a core list of fifteen indicators from nine clusters taken from the three group’s responses. Indicators from Family Connections, Prosocial Values & Skills, School Climate, Safety, Positive Use of Time, and Community & Peer Relations were found among the top fifteen. They found that indicators “typical of youth development” were at the top of the list while indicators from “more traditional” clusters such as “Health Outcomes” were not (S77). Some of the issues that came up during this process were: the difference in youth development definitions among organizations, which leads to different goals and focus; YDT member’s personal view; and the highly debated “asset” perspective. The workgroup hoped to aid in the development of a common mode of information collection and sharing across all levels and purposes. *-TN*

- Tebes, J. K., Feinn, R., Vanderploeg, J.J., Chinman, M.J., Shepard, J., Brabham, T., Genovese, M., & Connell, C. (2007).

Impact of a positive youth development program in urban after-school settings on the prevention of adolescent substance use.

Journal of Adolescent Health 41, 239-247.

Positive youth development (PYD) is a strength based approach to the promotion of positive outcomes for youth. In the past, PYD practitioners have avoided focusing on risk reduction because it is inconsistent with the PYD general asset-based approach. However, integrating PYD with a risk-reduction approach can not only build competencies and promote resilience, but also reduce health-compromising behaviors such as substance use. This research analyzes the effectiveness of The Positive Youth Development Collaborative (PYDC), an after-school program designed to prevent adolescent substance use by targeting substance use attitudes and behaviors among urban minority adolescents. The study divided 304 adolescents from two different communities into an intervention and a control group. The youth, on average, were 14.5 years old, equally split by gender, 76% African-American, 20% Hispanic, and 4% Caucasian. PYDC intervention focused on cultural heritage activities, health education and substance abuse prevention. They also formed collaborations with community groups to facilitate field trips to organizations that provided resources for

youth. The control group also participated in a varied after-school program, but it did not include curriculum specific to PYDC. Adolescents self-reported data by participating in a pretest, a post-test and a follow-up one year after the conclusion of the program. Using a multilevel regression model, researchers found that the PYD model was effective in reducing substance use. Adolescents from the intervention group were more likely to view drugs as harmful at program exit, and demonstrated a significantly reduced incidence of past-30-day alcohol, marijuana and other drug use one year after the program. Slight increases of substance use occurred for all participants in the year following the program; however, for youth in the intervention group, increases were significantly less. This study shows the benefits of community collaborations for youth development by engaging community members in meaningful relationships with youth. Additionally, this study demonstrates the effectiveness of blending PYD and risk-reduction approaches. Finally, this study indicates that interventions that have been tested as effective in other contexts to reduce substance use in adolescents, can also be effective and appropriate in an after-school setting. **-ES**

- Youngblade, L. M., Theokas, C., Schulenberg, J., Curry, L., Huang, I-C., & Novak, M. (2007).

Risk and promotive factors in families, schools, and communities: A contextual model of positive youth development in adolescence.

Pediatrics 119(February Supplement), S47-S53.

This study used data on over 42,000 adolescents ages 11 to 17 in the 2003 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) to examine the relationship of reported personal, family, and community factors to youth development outcomes and behaviors. The NSCH is a random-digit-dial telephone survey that included questions for the parents of adolescents. 81% of respondents were white, 19% were African American, and 15% were Hispanic/Latino. 16% of respondents were below the federal poverty level; 53% lived in two-parent households. Positive outcomes included social competence (showing respect for teachers and neighbors, getting along with other kids, empathy, conflict resolution); health (sleep, aerobic exercise, and BMI); and self-esteem. Negative outcomes included conduct problems (arguing, bullying, cruelty, disobedience, sullenness); parental concerns about depression; and problems at school (parent contacted by school, poor achievement, learning difficulties, grade repetition). Predictors included demographics,

family interactions, family closeness, healthy parental role modeling, household rules, family aggression, neighborhood connectedness and safety, school violence and neighborhood safety. Adolescents who had a close family and good parental role models had higher levels of social competence and healthier behaviors, and fewer academic problems. Conversely, family aggressive behavior such as yelling, arguing, and parent aggravation were associated with higher levels of adolescent negative behaviors. Neighborhood connectedness promoted social competence for adolescents, while school violence predicted a range of negative outcomes, such as lower self-esteem and less academic success. The results provide data on the importance of the context of adolescents' lives in influencing their successful navigation of school and home life. This study is consistent with youth development theory in support of a holistic view of youth development; the context of young people's lives is relevant to the range of outcomes and behaviors among youth. **-KH**

Book Reviews . . . on topics relevant to youth development will be periodically published. We encourage submissions for future editions. Reviews may be sent to Ramona Carlos (rmcarlos@ucdavis.edu).

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Reprints of articles reviewed may be obtained by contacting the 4-H Center for Youth Development at (530) 754-8433.



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