



# Youth Development GUIDE



*Engaging  
young people in  
after-school  
programming.*



# Youth Development Guide

*Produced by:*

Community Network for Youth Development (CNYD)  
657 Mission Street, Suite 410  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
(415) 495-0622  
info@cnyd.org

*Guidebook Project Director:*

Sam Piha

*Guidebook Project Manager/Lead Writer:*

Anne Tamar-Mattis

*Writers/Editors:*

Sam Piha, Amy Adams

*Curricular Design Consultant:*

Judy Vandegrift

*Design Concept:*

Suzanne West

*Graphic Design:*

Joe Sikoryak, designWELL; Joette Tizzone

*Photography:*

Franklin Avery, Joey Watanabe

*Photographs Contributed from:*

St. John's Educational Thresholds Center,  
San Francisco Beacon Initiative, Park Day School, Destiny Arts

*Proofing/Final Editing:*

Jennifer Barros, Jennifer Fornal

*Conceptual Input:*

Sue Eldredge, Stacey Daraio, Morva McDonald,  
and Oren Slozberg

Contents copyright ©2001 CNYD except as indicated.

All Rights Reserved.

Users of the Youth Development Guide may photocopy these materials for the non-commercial purpose of educational advancement, but in no event for commercial or other uses without the written consent of CNYD.

Printed and assembled in the U.S.A.

# Table of Contents

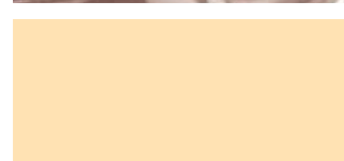
iv	<b>Acknowledgements</b>
v	<b>Opening Remarks</b>
viii	<b>Introduction: About This Guide</b>
xi	<b>Glossary</b>

## Section I: An Introduction to the Youth Development Approach

3	<b>Chapter 1</b> The Youth Development Approach
17	<b>Chapter 2</b> Creating After School Programs With Impact

## Section II: Youth Development Practices

29	<b>Chapter 3</b> Promoting a Sense of Safety
57	<b>Chapter 4</b> Encouraging Relationship Building
85	<b>Chapter 5</b> Fostering Meaningful Youth Participation
123	<b>Chapter 6</b> Providing Opportunities for Community Involvement
147	<b>Chapter 7</b> Creating Learning Experiences That Build Skills
181	<b>Resources</b>
199	<b>Endnotes</b>
209	<b>About CNYD</b>



# Acknowledgements

## About the Youth Development Framework for Practice

This Youth Development Guide is based on the Youth Development Framework for Practice<sup>1</sup>, the work of researchers James Connell and Michelle Gambone, through the Community Action for Youth Project (CAYP). CAYP, a cooperative project of Gambone & Associates and the Institute for Research and Reform in Education, works to strengthen youth-serving organizations and other community institutions through the use of a community action framework for youth development. The framework is based on applied and academic research, as well as on Dr. Gambone and Dr. Connell's fieldwork. CAYP also creates tools to support the use of this framework by organization leaders, funders, evaluators and others, and offers technical support for community-based youth initiatives and programs.

Community Network for Youth Development (CNYD) is grateful for the five year partnership we have enjoyed with Jim and Michelle, who worked side by side with us and a dedicated group of youth development practitioners, funders and policymakers, to create the Youth Development Framework for Practice. The framework has enabled many of us in the youth development community to have deeper, richer conversation about the contributions we can each make to create a stronger support system for our young people. We appreciate Jim and Michelle's generosity of spirit and their willingness to do the hard work of bringing the youth development vision alive at a community level. Many thanks!

## Community Advisory Committee

Many thanks to the members of our Community Advisory Committee who shared their expertise, stories, comments, photographs and quotes: Nancy Netherland of the Museum of Children's Art; Reba Rose of Destiny Arts Center; Robyn Richardson and Diana Acevedo of LYRIC; Katie Brackenridge and Claudia Jasin of Jamestown Community Center; Judy Glenn, Lynn Richards, Rebecca Laverdure, and Whitney Morris of Girls Inc. of Alameda County; Verna Springer of Gateway After School Enrichment Program; Ann Birnbaum of Community Bridges Beacon; and Linda Lovelace, Trish Bascom, and Wayne Ho of the San Francisco Unified School District.

Our deepest appreciation goes to all the young people who keep us honest, show us the way, and make the work worthwhile. They deserve the best we can give.

This Guide was produced through a grant from the Foundation Consortium, with resources from the Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Fund and the California Department of Education Public-Private Partnership as part of the After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnership Program.

# Opening Remarks

The Youth Development Guide breaks new ground in converting the youth development approach from a set of compelling ideas to concerted and intentional action. This guide takes the linchpins of the developmental approach – the kinds of supports and opportunities youth need to experience in order to attain the outcomes we desire for them – and provides specific and practical advice about how to strengthen individual staff practices and organizational policies to ensure youth have these experiences.

In 1999, Community Action for Youth Project (CAYP), was formed as a joint venture of Gambone & Associates and the Institute for Research and Reform in Education (IRRE). The basis for this Guide and our ongoing collaboration with the Community Network for Youth Development is CAYP’s Community Action Framework for Youth Development. Through our work as a national youth development intermediary, we use this framework to organize current knowledge – from research and practical experience – and provide a common language for youth development investors, program operators, staff and youth themselves to use in their conversations about what they do together and what they are trying to accomplish.

While this guide was written for the sponsors, administrators and staff of after school programs, we urge evaluators and researchers in education and other youth development settings to read it as well. In our view, we now have sufficient knowledge about what matters for youth’s success to gear up for an even more daunting challenge — figuring out what it takes to plan, implement and sustain high quality experiences for diverse young people during gap periods. The Youth Development Guide provides important tools to begin meeting this challenge in the after school hours and can serve as a model for the type of work that will need to be done in other settings where youth spend time — in schools, families and neighborhoods — if a true community approach to youth development is to be realized.

James P. Connell, Ph.D  
Michelle Alberti Gambone, Ph.D  
Community Action for Youth Project (CAYP)

# Opening Remarks

Our organization’s mission is to strengthen the field of youth development by providing youth serving agencies with technical assistance, training and resources, and working with funders and policymakers to align resources to more effectively support youth development efforts. The Youth Development Guide represents many of the learnings we have accumulated over the past ten years working with both community and systems level providers and from research in child and adolescent development, learning, childhood resiliency, and the prevention of high risk behaviors.

We appear to have both the necessary knowledge and agreement on what the critical “turn-keys” are in boosting young people’s positive development and readiness to learn. However, front-line workers tell us that their greatest challenge lies in applying this knowledge to the design of youth programs and activities. They also speak of the importance of staff training and support that focuses on these issues, especially when faced with the pressures of program start-up and looming program performance measures. This is particularly true for the rapidly growing number of after-school workers who are mounting new programs throughout California.

This year, CNYD is embarking on a new initiative—the Community School Partnerships Initiative - to support the growing number of community and school partners working together to expand out-of-school learning opportunities for young people. Through our work, we will strive to create a common commitment to the youth development approach in after-school settings and strengthen the capacity of community and school partners to improve youth outcomes through improved youth development practices. We wrote the Youth Development Guide with teachers, after-school workers and youth program leaders in mind. We hope this Guide provides them with an opportunity to examine the youth development approach and further explore how to best support young people through their own organizational and program practices.

Sam Piha  
Director of Community School Partnerships  
Community Network for Youth Development

Sue Eldredge  
Executive Director  
Community Network for Youth Development

# Opening Remarks

This year, due to tremendous public support and the dedicated work of school teachers, youth workers and neighborhood volunteers across the State, an unprecedented number of young people will participate in after school programs in California.

Historically, after-school programs have been viewed as a way to provide young people with safe, supervised places to spend time, and later to prevent “headline” problems, such as alcohol and other drug use, early pregnancy, juvenile crime and violence, and more recently academic failure. Over time, however, we have learned that deficit-based approaches are not effective. In the words of youth development expert Karen Pittman, “‘Problem-free’ does not represent the full range of goals most parents have for their children. Further, academic competence alone, while critical, is not enough to ensure success in adolescence or adulthood.”

Today, with the benefit of a growing body of research in youth development and resiliency, we know that to contribute positively to young people’s learning and healthy development, we must address and meet their broader developmental needs. Further, because these are the same things that young people say they want from programs, providing for these needs is how we can both attract and sustain their involvement in our before and after-school settings.

The Youth Development Guide provides a valuable resource to before and after-school administrators and practitioners as it focuses attention on the supports that matter most: adults and young people developing caring relationships; adults holding high expectations of youth; and adults providing youth with opportunities for meaningful participation. The Guide quickly moves from theory to the day-to-day practices that provide young people with the supports and opportunities they need in order to be increasingly productive, connect with others, and safely and effectively navigate their changing environments. The organizational and youth worker practices offered in the Youth Development Guide serve as essential “threads” that can be woven into any program that seeks to promote learning and broader development, whether it features academic instruction and enrichment, sports, recreation, or the arts.

It is the goal of parents, educators and youth workers, alike, to prepare our young people for the challenges they will face as they mature, and ultimately, to be successful in their adult lives. The youth development approach, as offered in this Youth Development Guide, is essential if we are to meet these goals and support the goals that young people hold for their own futures.

Wade Brynelson, Assistant Superintendent  
California Department of Education

# Introduction: About this Guide

The first section of this Guide reflects the work of the Community Network for Youth Development (CNYD) in close partnership with youth development researchers Michelle Gambone and James Connell, and with youth-serving agencies, public institutions, policymakers and the funding community throughout the San Francisco Bay Area.

## What is the Purpose of this Guide?

This Guide is designed to offer an introduction to youth development principles and practices to the diverse group of people involved in creating and implementing after school programs—program directors, school administrators, teachers, staff, volunteers, community partners, and others. We believe that adopting a youth development approach when designing and implementing after school programs can help ensure that young people get the most out of the time they spend in these programs.

The Guide draws on youth development principles and the underlying research to help after school program leaders and staff answer two fundamental questions they face as they design and implement after school programs:

1. What experiences can we provide for young people in our after school programs that will have the greatest positive impact on their lives and contribute to successful learning?
2. What practices can we use in our after school programs to create environments that provide these experiences?

## Who Should Read the Guide?

Initially, the Guide will be distributed to after school program sites and school districts throughout the state of California as part of the After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnership Program (SB 1756). These after school programs are intended to provide academic support for young people ages five to thirteen, using youth development practices. Programs are school-based and are created in partnership with community organizations. It is with these programs in mind that the Guide was written. If you are involved with another kind of youth program, or are a funder, a parent, a policymaker, or someone interested in community development, this book can also serve as a good basic introduction to the field of youth development.

## How Should I Use the Guide?

It is our hope that program and school administrators will read this book, and share it with lead program staff. In addition, we hope that parts of the Guide will be shared with the entire program staff, community partners, local policymakers, volunteers, parents, and young people. In an effort to make the text accessible and useful to a wide variety of people, we have included both theoretical background and practical examples and exercises. The Guide is divided into two sections.

### Section One

Section One identifies the experiences we can provide in after school programs that will have the greatest positive impact on young people's lives and contribute to successful learning. This section:

- provides background on the origins of the youth development movement and the research underlying this approach;
- outlines the kinds of experiences that research has identified as crucial to helping young people learn and develop into healthy adults;
- points to some of the unique opportunities that after school programs have to provide these important experiences for young people;
- offers an overview of the youth development approach and provides the context for better understanding the strategies described in Section Two.

### Section Two

Section Two identifies the practices we can use in our after school programs to create environments that provide the experiences young people need to grow and develop. This section contains hands-on guidance and implementation strategies. The chapters in Section Two can be read all at once, or separately, as it makes sense for your program.

Section Two offers guidance on how to implement five key youth development practices which are crucial to promoting young people's healthy development and creating successful learning environments:

- promoting a sense of safety;
- encouraging relationship building;
- fostering meaningful youth participation;
- providing opportunities for community involvement;
- creating challenging and engaging learning experiences that help participants build skills.

## I N T R O D U C T I O N

This Guide is just an introduction. Ongoing learning and assessment are vital to the success of any after school program and we strongly urge you to utilize the resources listed for continued support and to provide your staff with training opportunities.

### What the Guide is Not

This Guide is not meant to present a prescriptive system that tells you exactly how your program must be structured in order to be successful. There are many different routes to success for young people and programs alike; and different young people in different communities will have different strengths and needs. Rather, regardless of program design or content, this approach helps keep the focus on the developmental outcomes we want for young people and the key experiences we can provide to help them reach those outcomes.

We hope that the insights and tools provided in the Guide will be useful to the teachers, administrators, program staff, and community members who are working hard to help all young people reach their fullest potential.