



Bulletin #2: Youth Voice

What is Youth Voice?

- The ideas, opinions, experiences, attitude, knowledge, actions, involvement and initiatives of young people
- Meaningful inclusion of young people in the creation and implementation of programs
- “Nothing about us without us”

Key Components: Young people...

- are equal partners in all aspects of their own individual case planning and decision-making
- are equal partners in making decisions and determining the direction of program and activities, agency policy development, service design, training design and delivery
- expect to, and receive, consistent opportunities to set goals, devise strategies, and act
- are respected for their ideas and opinions and are free to state them
- participate in challenging experiences, with the necessary support to help them succeed
- thrive when adults listen to them, respect them, and engage them in meaningful programs and activities

Key Components: Adults...

- work with young people in ways that reflect and demonstrate a commitment to true partnership of ideas and decision-making
- listen actively when young people are speaking
- involve young people in expressing ideas, making suggestions for improvement and in determining the direction of the activity
- encourage young people to set goals and reflect on process in completing activities
- assist young people in developing skills to speak confidently
- encourage young people to reflect on their level of involvement and make suggestions on how to increase that level
- support mistakes as opportunities and reinforce appropriate risk-taking
- are respectful of a young person’s culture, religion, language, and the values of the family
- value young people and their contributions

Related Subjects

- Positive Youth Development (PYD), which sees young people as resources rather than as problems and emphasizes strengths and potential, rather than deficits and challenges
- Developmental assets – the talents, energies, strengths and constructive interests of the young person

Find Out More

Read “Challenges and Strategies for Success,” “Recommendations for Adults in Service-Learning Initiatives” and “Recommendations for Young People” sections of *Integrating Youth Voice in Service-Learning*

<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/23/67/2367.htm>