

## Exploring the Youth Program Quality Assessment

The Youth Program Quality Intervention is a comprehensive system for improving the quality of youth programs. It begins with training on the use of the Youth Program Quality Assessment tool, a validated instrument designed to evaluate the quality of youth programs and identify training needs. Programs use the Youth PQA to conduct a self assessment. Data from the self assessment is then used to set improvement goals tied to the observable measures in the PQA. Programs then are supported in reaching those goals and increasing program quality. This ASSESS-PLAN-IMPROVE sequence establishes a supportive system of continuous improvement.

In Arkansas, in addition to conducting a program self assessment, out of school time programs can also choose to have an external assessment conducted by a reliable external assessor. Data generated from both the self and external assessment is then used by programs to develop program improvement plans. During this process additional training and technical assistance supports are available to help programs meet their goals. Below is an explanation of the various trainings available to programs that choose to use the YPQA tool to meet the requirements outlined in the “Environmental Assessment” component of Better Beginnings. Visit the TAPP Registry at <http://professionalregistry.astate.edu> for more information about these upcoming trainings.

**Measuring Quality Using the Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA)** – This two hour training provides an introduction to the elements of the quality construct measured by the YPQA construct. In addition, participants will:

- Learn about the historical development of the YPQA/YYPQ in Arkansas
- Explore the domains assessed in the YPQA/YYPQA and how the tool compares to the SACERS
- Be introduced to the Youth Program Quality Intervention process
- Learn about the ASSESS-PLAN-IMPROVE sequence that helps programs establish a supportive system for continuous program improvement

This training will be delivered as both a face to face training and as a webinar.

**YPQA Basics** – This full day training provides the foundational training on the YPQA tool and how to effectively use it for self and external assessment. As a result of this training participants will:

- Become familiar with the “quality construct” that the Youth PQA represents.
- Learn the structure of the Youth PQA and how to use and score the instrument.
- Develop keen observation and note-taking skills to generate rich and precise anecdotal evidence.
- Understand the Assess-Plan-Improve cycle
- Apply new skills to score items on a Youth PQA through a consensus meeting.
- Develop an implementation plan for conducting your self-assessment

This training will be delivered primarily in a face-to-face format. Limited online training slots are available. Individuals interested in accessing this training online should contact Jennifer Harris at [jenharris@astate.edu](mailto:jenharris@astate.edu)

**Planning with Data** – This full day training is designed for site teams consisting of but not limited to the Site Director, Program Staff, etc. who have been involved in both the self and external assessment process. During this training, participants consider the realities of change initiatives and begin to make improvement plans based on the program quality data they generated during their self and external assessment. This training will be delivered primarily in a face-to-face format.

**Youth Methods Workshops** – These two-three hours trainings are aligned with the items of the YPQA and are excellent supplementary training for programs that create improvement plans and are looking for training that will assist their program in reaching their goals. These trainings are also an excellent entry point for individuals looking for foundational youth development training but who have not been engaged in the Youth Program Quality Intervention. The following is a listing of the various youth methods topics that are available:

- **Voice & Choice** – Providing young people with authentic, meaningful choices is a hallmark of truly engaging environments. This workshop is focused on providing meaningful choice within activities and voice within the youth program itself.

- *Planning and Reflection* – The planning and reflection process, central to the High/Scope approach for every age, can turn a fun activity into a powerful learning experience! Participants learn how to support youth in planning, implementing, and evaluating activities and projects.
- *Building Community* – This lively workshop introduces participants to numerous community-building and relationship-building activities.
- *Cooperative Learning* – This workshop addresses youth’s interaction in groups—both the cooperative learning environment and leadership opportunities.
- *Active Learning* – Introduces the remarkable benefits of providing opportunities for youth to actively explore materials and ideas. The workshop introduces the -ingredients of active learning as well as methods for creating high-impact, active environments.
- *Scaffolding for Success* – How do you set the bar high for youth and help them exceed their expectations? This workshop is about working closely with youth to find their learning edge and helping them experience just the right amount of challenge.
- *Ask-Listen-Encourage* – Introduces a method for building supportive, youth-centered relationships. The workshop prepares participants to ask lots of effective questions, to listen actively to youth, and to encourage youth by tapping their intrinsic motivation.
- *Reframing Conflict* – Helps participants consider an approach in which adults support youth in solving their conflicts and problems.
- *Structure and Clear Limits* – How do you prevent chaos in a youth environment without stifling youth’s positive energy? This workshop introduces methods for setting clear limits and a productive program structure.

To learn more about the YPQA and to access free technical assistance briefs regarding topics such as using the YPQA for self assessment, external assessment, and more visit the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program website at [www.cypq.org](http://www.cypq.org) . If you are interested in exploring the use of the YPQA in your program, contact Jennifer Harris at [jenharris@astate.edu](mailto:jenharris@astate.edu) or 501-240-2741