SYNTHESIS TO USE:
BUILDING A BRIDGE FROM RESEARCH TO PRACTICE

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Forum for Youth Investment,
Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality
The Forum for Youth Investment is committed to changing the odds that all children and youth are ready for college, work, and life. We connect leaders to ideas, services, and networks that can help them make more intentional decisions that are good for young people. We help leaders who are trying to improve & align policies, plan & partner for impact, and/or strengthen programs & adult practice.

The Forum’s David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality is a leader in empowering education and human service leaders to adapt, implement, and scale research-validated quality improvement systems to advance child and youth development. Training and technical assistance in quality improvement system design, effective performance data, and lower stakes accountability has helped OST networks across the country be successful, scale-able, and sustainable. The Weikart Center is a critical part of the Forum’s overall effort to build leadership capacity to advance readiness and equity.

Learn more about our work and continue the discussion by visiting us at http://www.forumfyi.org.
Weikart Center Reach 2020

Policy Setting
140 Network/Systems

Organization Setting
>4,800 Sites
>31,000 Staff
Estimate based on mean of 6.5 staff per site in YPQI Study Sample

Point of Service Setting
>408,000 Children & Youth
Estimate based on mean daily attendance of 85 youth per day in YPQI Study Sample

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Identifying evidence-based practices

**Systematic Review**

**Meta-Analysis**

**Practitioner Insights**

*Pyramid of Program Quality*

- **Safe Space**
  - Psychological and emotional safety, inclusive practices, and welcoming

- **Supportive Environment**
  - Supportive environment to meet the developmental needs of young people and scaffold learning

- **Interactive Environment**
  - Peer interaction through collaboration and community building with empathy

- **Engaging Environment**
  - Higher order engagement through choice, planning, and reflection
Measuring evidence-based practices

Pyramid of Program Quality

Observational Assessment aligned to Domains of Program Quality
Example from SEL PQA | Safe Space

1. **Foster Positive Emotional Climate**
2. **Convey Warmth and Respect**
3. **Provide Support for Safe Space**
4. **Demonstrates Positive group Management Style**
5. **Demonstrates Mutual Accountability**
6. **Show Active Inclusion**

SAFE SPACE: Creating Safe Spaces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score box</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Level</th>
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**Level 3**
- The emotional climate of the session is predominantly negative (e.g., disrespectful, tense, exclusive, even angry or hostile); negative behaviors, such as rudeness, bragging, insults, “trash talking,” negative gestures or other such actions are not mediated by either young people or staff.

**Level 5**
- The emotional climate is always positive (e.g., mutually respectful, relaxed, equitable; characterized by teamwork, camaraderie, inclusiveness); young people and staff are observed offering encouragement, affirmations, or support to others.

**Supporting Evidence/Anecdotes**

**Anecdotal evidence**
Implementation of practices

Observational Assessment aligned to Domains of Program Quality

Example of a Measurable Item Description

SAFE SPACE: Creating Safe Spaces

Foster Positive Emotional Climate

Dedicated workshops to coach staff on practices

Practices

- Fostering Teamwork
- Building Community
- Ask-Listen-Encourage

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Supporting Implementation: Our approach

People can thrive when they feel **SAFE** and **SUPPORTED** to **LEARN** and **LEAD**.

**ACTIVE**
- Involves engaging the whole person in the learning process
- Learning is never passive
- Learning is social and emotional

**PARTICIPATORY**
- Full involvement in all aspects of youth programming
- Everyone’s ideas and experiences are valued
- People are owners of their learning process
- Opportunities to engage in authentic
- Decision making and opportunities to provide feedback to adults.
Quality Adult Practice to Youth Outcomes
Results from impact evaluations

Studies:
- Texas 21st CCLC Evaluation
- Palm Beach QIS Impact Study
- Nashville Exploratory Youth Outcomes Study

PQA Scores Correlate with:
- School Attendance
- School Behavior
- Grade Promotion
- Grades
- Achievement
Quality Matters!

[Diagram showing the relationship between learning settings, student experience, and student outcomes, focusing on elements like teaching and practicing social, emotional, and cognitive skills; embedding social, emotional, and cognitive skills into academic learning; safe and relationship-based learning environments; rigorous academic content and learning experiences; engagement, ownership, and purpose; sense of belonging and connection to community; academic success and educational attainment; civic and community engagement; life well-being; workforce and career readiness.]

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Thank You!

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