



POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT POLICY STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Family Success Institute is committed to Positive Youth Development (PYD) working tirelessly to ensure that all New Jersey school-age children and youth – 9 through 18 years old – live in a permanent home, achieve in school, and connect to their families and communities.

We advance a strength-based approach¹ that focuses on creating a safe and healthy environment for young people of all abilities, elevating their positive attributes rather than negative ones. Moreover, we seek to utilize youth-adult engagement strategies that develop supportive long-term relationships, build trust, increase personal skills and academic achievements, and offer ways for youth to succeed in their local communities and beyond.² “Positive Youth Development favors leadership and skill-building opportunities under the guidance of caring adults. It looks at youth as assets to be developed and gives them the means to build successful futures.”³ In this way, we believe youth should engage in active decision-making and solutions development with their schools, organizations, peer groups, and families to build strong characters and leadership skills for the future.⁴

Parent/care-giver training and development is encouraged by providing tools and peer support opportunities to strengthen their effectiveness throughout the child-rearing years. Breaking down isolation that single parents/guardians and parents/guardians of youth with intellectual/developmental disabilities may be experiencing as well as widening the network of support for all parents is promoted.

The purpose of this document is to outline policies that center on existing best practices and expands access to resources for positive youth development. We promote innovative ideas that will make a long-term difference in people’s lives. To ensure effective implementation of the policies proposed in this document, collective collaboration is required across a spectrum of community stakeholders organized around a common interest of sharing information, building community, and effecting local change. It is, therefore, our pleasure to present to you in the remaining sections of this document a PYD framework to prepare and empower young people to lead fulfilling lives within our community, to increase awareness of their potential and *be responsible, capable, and healthy adults to the best of their individual abilities.*

UNDERSTANDING THE ENVIRONMENT

¹ Stoerkel, Erika, What is a Strength-Based Approach? (incl. Activities and Examples), [What is a Strength-Based Approach?](#), PositivePsychology.com, May 25, 2021

² Annie E. Casey Foundation, [Positive Youth Development - The Annie E. Casey Foundation \(aecf.org\)](#)

³ U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration of Children & Families, [Positive Youth Development, Positive Youth Development | The Administration for Children and Families \(hhs.gov\).](#)

⁴ Ibid.



While this document outlines existing programming that will invest in success not distress. We must also advocate for a holistic approach to addressing the impact of structural and systemic poverty and discrimination.

We align with a community-directed, transformative approach that minimizes the adverse conditions that far too many families and communities suffer through. We acknowledge that the lack of basic needs such as affordable housing, food, clothing, and reliable transportation aids in the deterioration of communities, families, youths, and adults.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We created this document chiefly as a means of elevating PYD practices and calling attention to the need for deeper investments in youth and families support services. To begin with, increasing access to poverty alleviating resources are the foundational elements of PYD. Furthermore, our PYD approach embodies a conscious intention to incorporate trauma informed care and healing practices addressing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)⁵, and mental health needs.

Organizing a government, private sector, and community supported mutual aid model to provide families with sustainable access to poverty alleviating resources is how we invest in success not distress.

Positive Youth Development is one of the central aims of the Family Success Institute's developmental model, "Pillars and Journeys of Family Success." These pillars recognize four conditions essential to this outcome: 1) strong family relationships and community connections, 2) personal safety, equal opportunity and financial security, 3) high quality learning and education, and 4) good health and well-being. This provides the guiding framework for all Family Success Institute efforts, as well as the following recommendations:

Engage Youth Voices. It is important to consider how to engage youth and encourage participation in positive youth development programs. Consider the following recommendation: "Programs and activities are developed with youth, rather than for youth. In this kind of equal partnership, both adults and young people need to be fully engaged, open to change in how things are done, and share a unified vision for the partnership." Additional recommendations are presented⁶.

Youth are credible messengers; their lived experience is an expertise that must be valued. It is vital that young people have a place at the table, and they should be paid for their time and expertise. To integrate youth voice, youth must serve on the decision-making bodies; be informed of the development of system policies, procedures, and practices; and continue to be a voice at the table as the system integrates new ideas, recommendations, and programs. Youth should be given an opportunity to participate in training development and lead training for agency staff. Systems must actively and intentionally recruit from all demographics and regions of New Jersey and include special

⁵ U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, "Social Determinant of Health", Office of Disease Prevention & Health Promotion, [Social Determinants of Health - Healthy People 2030 | health.gov](https://www.health.gov/social-determinants-of-health-healthy-people-2030)

⁶ Youth.Gov, "Involving Youth in Positive Youth Development", (n.d) <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/involving-youth-positive-youth-development>



populations such as teen mothers and teen fathers. Voices will not sound the same, but they all hold value. It must be understood that youth ranging from ages 9 - 18, who come from different demographics and populations will have a vast range when it comes to ability to communicate their ideas and recommendations, but every voice is as important as the next. The system holds the responsibility to learn from each youth's experience, so the system must ensure a platform for each youth that enables them to communicate in a way that makes the most of the youth's experience.

New Jersey should devote resources and investment with a goal of establishing a youth council in every New Jersey County. Youth Councils may begin regionally with counties initially combining to create youth councils as the councils are built and expanded. Funding will be necessary to incentivize youth participation and fund programming. Each youth council should be associated with an adult organization to build youth-adult partnership and relationships. With community partners, we should recruit and train a large cadre of volunteers to engage, support, mentor, and tutor students identified as vulnerable. On January, 19, 2022 Governor Murphy signed a Legislative Youth Council Bill ([S-3164/A-4987](#)) that established a forum for New Jersey's youth to advise the legislature and all of its committees, commissions, and task forces on their needs, opinions, and welfare for all youth in New Jersey.

Expand the Full-Service Community Schools Model and offer intensive tutoring and other promising interventions to help students who are falling behind academically accelerate their learning, catch up with their peers, and strengthen their commitment to attending and thriving in school. Adopt and aggressively implement school-wide strategies such as Restorative Justice, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Social & Emotional Learning (SEL), and mentoring support through Elevate, that, when implemented rigorously, have demonstrated capacity to significantly reduce disciplinary incidents and increase student achievement.

Expand the Adult Psychiatric Emergency Screening Services (PESS) and/or the Early Intervention Support Services (EISS) programs to include youth, providing mobile crisis evaluation, intervention, and medication assessment for children and youth ages 5 to 17 in a community setting at no cost to the family. The expansion of this service will limit the number of youths going to the emergency room for crisis intervention by increasing the ability to stabilize youth in a community setting. Additionally, this program will provide school clearances in a timely manner, reducing the amount of time a youth misses school waiting for mental health or psychiatric appointments. This service provides acute family support and linkage to outpatient providers/programs for ongoing support.

We also recommend further investment in mental health support for youth of color. More specifically, recruiting mental health practitioners of color and establishing a mental telehealth line designed to meet the needs of youth from underserved communities, as recommended in the Youth Justice Mental Health Toolkit⁷.

Invest in substance use prevention, early intervention, treatment, and recovery support services for youth. Most adults who meet criteria for Substance Use Disorder began using substances as an

⁷ New Jersey Institute of Social Justice, Salvation of Social Justice *"Investing in Youth, Not Incarceration: A Toolkit for Creating a Community-Lead Approach to Youth Mental Health."* July 2020
https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/njisi/pages/1427/attachments/original/1626807806/Investing_in_Youth_Toolkit_Final_7.20.pdf?1626807806



adolescent or young adult. Youth with Substance Use Disorder experience higher rates of mental illness. During the COVID pandemic, overdose deaths across the nation were the highest recorded since keeping data, with the majority of deaths attributable to illicit synthetic opioids such as Fentanyl. Fentanyl is found mixed with substances such as heroin, cocaine, and methamphetamine and is often made into illicitly manufactured pills such as Percocet or Xanax. Fentanyl has even been found in Marijuana and in vaping cartridges⁸.

Make deeper investments in community-led restorative justice and violence intervention programs.

Restorative Justice practices focus on creating a community where youth and adults are brought together to discuss concerns and conflicts and explore solutions that lead to reconciliation and healing. Linking the restorative justice approach with violence intervention strategies allow communities to create safe environments and build stronger relationships. We commend New Jersey for recent efforts to support these practices and strategies. The \$8.4 million grant funding for the Restorative and Transformative Justice for Youths and Communities pilot program and the \$12 million in grant funding to reduce gun violence and support victims are instrumental in establishing support structures and places youth can go to build healthy relationships in the community⁹. These practices help to facilitate collective healing, as well as individual healing, and strengthens communities. The tools used include restorative conversations, conflict resolution strategies, violence intervention strategies, and trauma-informed practices. We urge New Jersey to continue to support and fund these programs beyond the initial investments and pilot program periods.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Best Practices and Evidence-Informed Programming

The Family Success Institute’s PYD framework sets standards and guidelines to achieve reliable outcomes and positive change in New Jersey communities. We factored in national evidence-informed practices and professional expertise to craft the framework. Additionally, we looked at positive relationship development, strengthening families, effective school-based programming, and collaborative community solutions to build the framework. But, more than that, youth and family voices helped to shape the policy recommendations presented in this document.

Engage Youth and Family Voices

FSI believes in youth engagement and treats the voices of young people with the greatest respect. To establish credibility in PYD, youth must be engaged in program planning, development, and implementation. But, more than that, youth voices should inform and validate the decision-making process.

⁸ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office of the Surgeon General, “Facing Addiction in America: The Surgeon General’s Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health. Washington, DC: HHS”, November 2016. www.cdc.gov www.drugabuse.gov

⁹Buck, Andrew J “Acting AG Bruck Announces \$12 Million in Grant Funding to Reduce Gun Violence and Support Victims.” November 2021. [Acting AG Bruck Announces \\$12 Million in Grant Funding to Reduce Gun Violence and Support Victims - New Jersey Office of Attorney General \(njoag.gov\)](https://www.njoag.gov/acting-ag-bruck-announces-12-million-in-grant-funding-to-reduce-gun-violence-and-support-victims)



In 2021, the [Annie E. Casey Foundation](#) hosted a webinar focused on [Measuring Program Effectiveness With Youth Voice](#). The webinar highlighted [Latinos in Action \(LIA\)](#), a program that builds college and career skills for young people across 13 states, and collects data from youth to measure and improve its program model. Collecting data in a meaningful way is moving LIA to become an evidence-based organization.

In the same webinar AECF featured Hello Insight, a program that strengthens PYD through Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) practices for young people developing the skills young people need to manage themselves; build and maintain relationships; and treat challenges as learning experiences. Hello Insight offers a proven and research-based, measurement tool informed by youth voices. Supports a network of 562 diverse organizations and 45,000 young people.

Closer to home, counties across New Jersey have active Youth Councils that exist to incorporate youth voice into decisions that directly impact youth, children, and families. Camden County, Monmouth County, [East Brunswick](#), [Paterson](#), [Franklin Township](#), [Passaic](#), and [Somerset County](#) are among the locations of active Youth Councils that bring middle and high-school youth together in forums that not only seek youth input, but also provide opportunities for leadership development and the promotion of community-engagement among youth.

The Office of Family Voice from New Jersey's Department of Children and Families (DCF) facilitates the DCF Youth Council. The Youth Council began in January 2020 and is composed of young people between the ages of 14-23 who are currently, or have been, involved with the Division of Child Protection and Permanency, the Children's System of Care, and/or DCF's Regional Schools, and who want to create change. Council members work collaboratively with DCF staff to achieve shared leadership. Goals include elevating the voices of youth and alumni directly impacted by DCF services; working collaboratively with DCF leadership to identify key issues and priorities; and empowering youth by providing resources and knowledge that enable them to take action, influence and make decisions on critical issues. In November 2021, the DCF Youth Council, along with DCF Commissioner Christine Beyer and the DCF Office of Family Voice presented: "[The Power of Youth; The Impact of Our Voices](#)." Council members spoke about the important work of the Council over its first two years, particularly in the areas of policy and legislation, youth outreach and engagement, youth aging out of the system, maintaining sibling connections through foster care, peer mentorship, resource and kinship parent training, and empowering youth voice.

Develop Positive Relationships

According to studies conducted by Search Institute, positive relationships help shape the identity and lives of young people.¹⁰ These critical relationships drive healthy social-emotional development; increase academic motivation; increased sense of personal responsibility; and reduce engagement in high-risk behaviors.¹¹ Unfortunately, Search Institute's research found that very few young people experience strong, positive relationships. Once this sunk in, the Institute created The Developmental

¹⁰ Search Institute, "What We're Learning about Developmental Relationships", (n.d) <https://www.search-institute.org/developmental-relationships/learning-developmental-relationships/>.

¹¹ Ibid.



Relationships Framework¹² identifying five elements and twenty actions that build social-emotional support systems for young people. This approach has two benefits. First, the five elements focus on ways adults can cultivate relationships with youth: to express care, challenge growth, provide support, share power, and expand possibilities.¹³ Second, embedded in the five elements are twenty actions that build powerful youth-adult relationships.¹⁴

The Nurtured Heart Approach¹⁵ (NHA) – created by therapist Howard Glasser in the 1990s – is another positive adult-child relationship building methodology designed to support adults and help children develop self-regulation practices. More precisely, NHA addresses children – with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) – who have trouble paying attention and controlling impulsive behaviors. The 3 Stands strategy offers school interventions and interactive exercises that create environments, which build positive relationships for parents, teachers, and peers¹⁶. Since its inception, NHA has been found to be quite effective and is being used in homes and classrooms around the world.¹⁷

Strengthen Families

Delaware had seen a sharp increase in the number of teens entering their child welfare system, often for reasons not related to abuse and neglect¹⁸. In 2012, when just over a third of the nation's child welfare population was age 13 or older, teens made up nearly half of Delaware's out-of-home population. The majority were going straight into an out-of-home placement upon entry to the child welfare system.

Delaware implemented the Family Assessment and Intervention Response (FAIR) into its Differential Response System in March 2013. Within this response system, families are contacted by phone within 24 hours, are assessed for safety, risk, and other youth/family needs. Families with outstanding safety threats or risk factors then fall into either Level I or Level II for ongoing services: In Level I, children and families are assigned to the Family Keys community-based program, through which they receive short-term crisis intervention, conflict resolution, and referrals to further services. In Level II, families are assigned to the Functional Family Therapy evidence-based program, which includes a 3-stage, intensive counseling approach.

Promote Vulnerable Students' Social and Emotional Learning at School

¹² Search Institute, “*The Developmental Relationships Framework*” (January 2022) <https://www.search-institute.org/developmental-relationships/developmental-relationships-framework/>.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Nurtured Child, [Nurtured Heart Approach \(nurturedchild.org.uk\)](https://nurturedchild.org.uk)

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ The Annie E. Casey Foundation, “*When Teens and Parents Can't Get Along: Prevention, Not Placement, Is the Answer*” (October 2021) <https://www.aecf.org/blog/when-teens-and-parents-cant-get-along-prevention-not-placement-is-the-answer>



To improve PYD program outcomes, Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF) recommends “building evidence of what works” in the program design.¹⁹ Shared culture and beliefs of a target community area are crucial factors to consider in program development.²⁰ Similarly, lived experience and relationships will drive behavior change and positive outcomes.²¹ That’s why since 2001, Latinos In Action (LIA) has worked to align cultural values and practices with their youth programs, which focuses on mental health and trauma-informed care and includes literacy tutoring, student leadership, and college and career readiness.²² Currently, LIA programs are operating in 13 states across the country. 250+ schools and 9,000+ students participate in the program. Four years in LIA: AP Classes (AP Classes, 43.5% of students), (Extracurricular activities, 78% of students), Concurrent Enrollment, 48.7% of students).²³

Scholars at the Chicago Crime Lab have published two random assignment studies showing powerful benefits from a school-based intervention called “Becoming a Man.”¹¹⁴ In the program, high school students from disadvantaged neighborhoods meet weekly in a group to learn cognitive behavioral skills, participate in experiential group exercises, and talk about their concerns. The studies found that BAM improved participants’ school outcomes, raised graduation rates by 19%, and cut the likelihood of violent crime arrests by half. Since 2015, the BAM program has expanded to serve 8,000 students per year in Chicago, and replication efforts are underway in Boston, Los Angeles, and Seattle²⁴.

Elevate New Jersey is school-based youth development programming that incorporates a holistic model by hiring community-based teachers to also serve in mentorship roles with their students outside of the classroom. Operating through 4 primary program areas -- Accredited Classes, Mentoring, Adventure, and College and Career -- Elevate NJ provides urban youth with opportunities for character, leadership, and life skills development, building relationships with caring and invested adults, exploring new environments, preparing college applications and career development. The Elevate methodology is proven across multiple states, including New Jersey. 98% of Elevate students are on track to graduate and 86% of graduating Elevate students enroll in college, military or trade school²⁵.

¹⁹ Annie E. Casey Foundation, “*Measuring Effectiveness with Youth Voice: A Leading With Evidence Webinar*”, (September 2021) <https://assets.aecf.org/m/blogdoc/aecf-measuringprogrameffectivenessvoice-2021.pdf>, page 9.

²⁰ Annie E. Casey Foundation, “*Measuring Effectiveness with Youth Voice: A Leading With Evidence Webinar*” (September 2021), <https://assets.aecf.org/m/blogdoc/aecf-measuringprogrameffectivenessvoice-2021.pdf>, page 10.

²¹ Ibid, page 10.

²² Annie E. Casey Foundation, “*Measuring Effectiveness with Youth Voice: A Leading With Evidence Webinar*”, (September 2021) <https://assets.aecf.org/m/blogdoc/aecf-measuringprogrameffectivenessvoice-2021.pdf>, 16-19.

²³ Annie E. Casey Foundation, “*Measuring Effectiveness with Youth Voice: A Leading With Evidence Webinar*”, <https://assets.aecf.org/m/blogdoc/aecf-measuringprogrameffectivenessvoice-2021.pdf>, page 21.

²⁴ Richard Mendel, “*Back-to-School Action Guide: Re-Engaging Students and Closing the School-to-Prison Pipeline*” (September 2021) <https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/back-to-school-action-guide-re-engaging-students-and-closing-the-school-to-prison-pipeline/>

²⁵ Elevate New Jersey, “*We Measure Student Growth in These Areas.*” (n.d) <https://elevatenewjersey.org/the-impact/#results>



Support Out-of-school-time (OST) Programs, which include After-school and Summer Learning Programs

The Cumberland County Positive Youth Development Coalition focuses on Youth Employment as a central Positive Youth Development Initiative. Through the Cumberland County Custom Career Club (C5) Program, CCPYDC's County Break Out Group has offered relevant curriculum, assisted with providing job opportunities and internships, and hosted hiring events for about 100 youth since 2017²⁶.

Support Healthcare-based PYD Programs

Trauma-Informed Care for children and adolescents is most effective when early assessment and intervention takes place. Integrating pediatric behavioral health into the pediatric primary care/family medicine settings is a model shown to lessen physical and psychological struggles in children and adolescents, as well as in their parents. Increasingly, assessments, such as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES), are administered to not just children and adolescents, but parents as well, so that support can be provided in a tiered, multifaceted, and holistic way. The importance of trauma-focused prenatal assessment is gaining popularity as a means for ultra-early prevention, with a goal for providing the healthiest environment into which a child is born. Whether or not trauma registers as significant on ACES or a similar assessment²⁷, providing on-site, warm, and immediate referrals for behavioral health support at pediatric primary care/family medicine centers leads to positive outcomes for children, adolescents, and their families. Access to mental health counseling, parenting assistance and social/emotional support services should be provided by professionals who are trained to respect the individual wants and needs of families and demonstrate multicultural competence when delivering services.

Support Community-based PYD programs

In 2015, the Cumberland County Positive Youth Development Coalition found that youth who were administered a Stationhouse Adjustment had a low "recidivism rate... at only 12.9%"²⁸. Stationhouse adjustment is "an alternative method for police to handle first-time juvenile offenders with minor offenses"²⁹. Rather than a juvenile delinquency record, SHA provides youth with community service or restitution as consequences. Cumberland County Positive Youth Development Coalition reports their Stationhouse Adjustment effort to be "successful," with the following statistics:

"Data collected indicates that CCPYDC's Stationhouse Adjustment effort has been widely successful. Between 2013 and 2015, Cumberland County SHAs increased by 122%. Individually, all three municipalities have also increased the number of SHAs administered since 2013. Bridgeton saw the greatest increase in SHAs, from 2 in 2013 to 35 in 2015; a growth of 1650%. SHAs in Millville and

²⁶ The Cumberland County Positive Youth Development Coalition, "Current Initiatives" (n.d.) <https://ccpydc.org/initiatives/current/>

²⁷ Monmouth County Needs Assessment 2020. (n.d.). Retrieved January 14, 2022, from <https://www.nj.gov/dcf/about/divisions/opma/docs/Monmouth%20County%20Needs%20Assessment%20Report%202020.pdf>

²⁸ The Cumberland County Positive Youth Development Coalition, "Stationhouse Adjustments" (n.d.) <https://ccpydc.org/initiatives/stationhouse-adjustment/>

²⁹ Ibid.



Vineland grew by 78.7% and 24%, respectively. The recidivism rate (a subsequent contact with law enforcement or an arrest) of youth who were administered a SHA in 2015 is exceptionally low at only 12.9%. SHAs appear to be benefiting youth in a multitude of positive ways: in addition to stemming repeat of delinquent behavior, the majority of parents/guardians surveyed reported a positive change in their child's behavior after the completion of their SHA."³⁰

Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES) Cooperative Extension seeks to respond to the negative outcomes New Jersey youth are at risk of encountering (for example: poor health, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, school failure, abuse, neglect, poverty, and violence). NJAES Cooperative Extension seeks to create an environment "where [youth] have opportunities to acquire the basic skills they need to become responsible family members, participants in the work force and contributing citizens"³¹. NJAES focuses on the core issues of: Essential Elements (life skill development), Experiential Education, Youth/Adult Partnerships, and Volunteer Development and Leadership. The 4-H Youth Development Program is a program of Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station Cooperative Extension. 4-H "uses a learn-by-doing approach" in its Positive Youth Development model through "projects such as gardening, woodworking, small animals, food and nutrition, karate, photography, etc."³²

Importance of a Multiculturally Competent and Diverse Mental Health Workforce to Serve Youth
Research shows that mental health services are most effective when clients feel as though the practitioner knows and understands their culture³³. Thus, it is important for practitioners to possess multiculturally competent counseling skills, which means that they harbor self-awareness, knowledge and skills needed to effectively work with clients of diverse backgrounds. That said, many clients of color seek mental health practitioners of a shared race or ethnicity for the trust and comfort it provides, just as White clients do³⁴. Yet only 5% of psychologists are Hispanic, 4% are Black, and the large majority, 86%, are White – and these statistics are nearly identical in the fields of social work and psychiatry.³⁵ Thus, the value of a more multiculturally counseling competent and diverse mental health services workforce is undeniable. Particularly in the case of youth, who many times see mental health practitioners because they are requested or required to do so – not necessarily because they seek to do so – it is important that they meet with practitioners whom they trust and feel a sense of connection.

³⁰ The Cumberland County Positive Youth Development Coalition, "Stationhouse Adjustments" (n.d.) <https://ccpydc.org/initiatives/stationhouse-adjustment/>

³¹ New Jersey Agricultural Experimentation Station, "Human and Community Development: Positive Youth Development" (n.d.) <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/extension/human-community.php>

³² New Jersey Agricultural Experimentation Station, "New Jersey 4H: A Program of Rutgers Cooperative Extension" (n.d.), <https://nj4h.rutgers.edu/about/faq.asp#1>

³³ Soto, A., Smith, T. B., Griner, D., Domenech Rodríguez, M., & Bernal, G. (2018). Cultural adaptations and therapist Multicultural Competence: Two meta-analytic reviews. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 74*(11), 1907–1923. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.22679>

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ American Psychological Association. (n.d.). *How diverse is the psychology workforce?* Monitor on Psychology. Retrieved January 14, 2022, from <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2018/02/datapoint>



ACTION PLAN

Make deeper investments in basic needs for youth and families

- Advocate for deeper investments in basic needs such as affordable housing, food, clothing, and reliable transportation.
- Develop legislative and outreach strategies in support of the FSI bill. (Need the official name).

Engage Youth Voices

- Identify the agencies that will run the youth councils – identify programs within the counties that will staff the youth council, identify meeting locations, transportation, and logistics.
- Before creating youth council meetings with youth in the region, ask about the type of work they would recommend for a youth council focused on PYD in their region.
- Hire staff to run youth councils. Must be able to connect with youth and communicate in a way that respects and empowers the youth. Must be able to recruit through connections in the community.
- Recruit youth: create a budget for youth council members that outline payment structure for their work. Recruitment for youth must be conducted by credible messengers.
- Create Youth council operating Budget – include budget for staffing the youth council, payment for youth council attendance, additional work speaking opportunities etc, food, transportation, and any other necessary items.
- Determine how to include the voice of younger youth, ages 9-13. Include an opportunity for them to have a voice that may not be a traditional youth council. Include their voice, by conducting early conversations with youth in this age range and learn how they would best express their voice.
- Determine the amount of additional funding needed.

Expand the Full-Service Community Schools Model

- Identify the agencies that provide intensive tutoring and other promising interventions to help students who are falling behind academically. Identify and document best practices. Monitor outcomes and impact. Identify best practices.
- Monitor New Jersey school-wide strategies such as Restorative Justice, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Social & Emotional Learning (SEL). Monitor outcomes and impact. Identify best practices.
- Learn about Elevate NJ and identify how it can reduce disciplinary incidents and increase student achievement. Monitor outcomes and impact. Identify best practices.
- Determine the amount of additional funding needed.

Invest in substance use prevention, early intervention, treatment, and recovery support services for youth



- Identify the agencies that provide recovery support services for youth.
- Determine how to expand substance recovery support for youth ages 5 to 17 in a community setting at no cost to the family. Identify and document best practices.
- Determine how to expand mental health support for youth of color. Identify and document best practices.
- Determine the amount of additional funding needed.

Make deeper investments in community-led restorative justice and violence intervention programs

- Monitor community-led restorative justice and violence intervention programs and their outcomes and impact. Identify and determine best practices.
- Advocate for deepening investments in these initiatives.