



“Making it happen...”

Strengthening youth development in schools

Ministry of Youth Development
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Introduction

We can all contribute to the positive development of young people by understanding the things that are important to them, providing a wide range of role models, encouraging them to meet challenges, showing them we care and by creating opportunities for them to contribute.

The years from age 12 to 24 are critical for the development of young people as they move from childhood to adulthood and test society's values and norms along the way. Learning by doing and being involved is part of young people's contribution to changes in society. Education plays a large part in the lives of these young people; the way they view themselves and approach new challenges is shaped by the way schools assist their growth.

Youth development is not static and we as adults are still learning how best to enhance the process. By recording and evaluating how and why youth development processes work best in New Zealand we can all promote better practices.

This resource outlines some ideas about how the concepts of youth development might be used, but the list is by no means conclusive. It is hoped the examples might stimulate further thinking about how you might implement the principles

differently. You are encouraged to try these ideas or something new, evaluate them, and refine them to best suit the needs, desires and realities of your young people.



The thinking and ideas outlined in this resource may be challenging when considered alongside the myriad of other activities in which teachers and schools are involved. On the other hand, you might find them useful affirmations of things you already do.



YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

THROUGH EDUCATIONAL

opportunities

Youth development is about young people growing up and developing the skills and attitudes they need, both now and in the future, to feel positive and comfortable with their own identity, and believe they have choices about their future.

It is also about young people developing ways for increasing their control over what happens to them and around them. They need to feel they are contributing something of value to society and to their family, friends and community. They also need to feel connected to society as a whole.

The *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa* (YDSA) [Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002] is a powerful document that describes youth development with respect to six key principles. Each of these principles is a component of good youth development practice.

The principles of the YDSA provide a useful vehicle to implement a number of concepts recognised in major educational strategic documents. These strategic publications (see below) endorse the youth development approach as one that is consistent with the future of education.



Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa	Education Priorities for New Zealand	Schooling Strategy/ Making a bigger difference	Best Evidence Synthesis	Health Promoting and Mentally Healthy Schools
Principle 1. Youth development is shaped by the “big picture”	Developing a collaborative and responsive education network		The complexity of community and family influences on children’s achievement in NZ	
Principle 2. Youth development is about young people being connected	Strengthening family and community involvement	Strengthen the involvement and engagement of family/ whānau and communities	The complexity of community and family influences on children’s achievement in NZ	Enhance the links between schools and their communities
Principle 3. Youth development is based on a consistent strengths-based approach	We need to recognise and build on our strengths, while acknowledging and working on the areas where we can do better			Positive effort and achievement is acknowledged
Principle 4. Youth development happens through quality relationships	Focusing on quality teaching	Build teacher quality	Quality teaching for diverse students in schooling	Communication is respectful. Attitudes are caring and nurturing
Principle 5. Youth development is triggered when young people fully participate		Enhance student engagement and motivation		
Principle 6. Youth development needs good information	Promoting the knowledge base of the sector	A strengthened knowledge and evidence base that is applied to all our planning, practice and evaluation	The best evidence synthesis reports are part of the ongoing investment to strengthen the evidence base that informs education policy and practice	Help schools evaluate the range of health related activities they are currently involved in, identifying areas of need and setting goals for future action



Using this resource



The resource explores each of the principles of the *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa* (YDSA) in a similar format.

Each of the six principles are titled and introduced with respect to how they work and the contribution they make to the development of young people. The principles themselves are at a conceptual level and therefore it is important to link them with real life.

A plain English description of the principle is included in bold in the middle of the page. This provides an easy reference for readers to quickly understand the intention of the principle.

Each section is completed by providing a range of examples where the principle can be used within an educational context. These examples also seek to demonstrate a range of different levels on which the principle can be applied.

The examples provided in this resource document should be considered illustrative rather than official. Neither the activity nor the level it is introduced at should be considered prohibitive of other approaches.

SCHOOL WORKLOAD

It is appreciated that schools are busy places and that curriculum and assessment activities take a considerable amount of time. Youth development approaches should not be considered additional workload, but rather as strategies for more effective teaching and relationships with students.

Many teaching practices currently used within education demonstrate the YDSA principles. The YDSA provides a useful framework, however, to evaluate which principles are receiving attention and which ones are currently underused within the school. Being conscious of, and deliberately applying multiple principles can lead to better results for young people both academically and behaviourally.

Title	
intro	intro
intro	intro
Plain English	
context	context
context	context

example

example

example

example

FLEXIBLE SCHOOLS

Schools succeed by being responsive to the desires of the community, the needs of students and the practicalities of the education environment. Each school develops its own culture and management processes. It is possible that some schools will pursue a whole school approach to youth development while other schools may utilise the principal or senior management team to drive youth development opportunities. In other schools, boards of trustees may find it useful to increase engagement.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN RESOURCE DESIGN

As this document may change the way young people interact with the education environment, their views and perspectives have been used to shape this resource. The section entitled *Walking the talk* outlines how a youth development approach has been taken in the conceptualisation and design of this resource.

The partnership between young people and educationalists has enabled this resource to provide guidance, examples and stimulate thinking on how the education sector can lead the implementation of youth development approaches.

development

Involve

Education

