

## Research

Significant improvement occurs the more organizations assess their youth programs and make changes based on these assessments.

Adolescence is an essential period in human development that is crucial to establishing positive health and social behaviours. At no other time, except in infancy, do human beings develop so rapidly in a short period.<sup>1</sup>

Adolescence is a time of concentrated social, emotional, and cognitive development. Research shows that there is a significant need to provide youth with enriching opportunities to support healthy development,<sup>2</sup> for example, afterschool programs.

High-quality out of school time (OST) programs provide a range of protective factors for all youth, from participating in cultural activities, having supportive adults and a sense of competence to feeling listened to and valued.<sup>3</sup>

Not all programs provide this. Out of school settings that lack certain qualities are unlikely to enhance academic or developmental outcomes.<sup>4</sup> Quality is a critical factor in program effectiveness.

The YPQI measures and improves program quality.



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Out of school time (OST) activities are associated with higher levels of youth engagement compared to both school and unstructured time with peers. They can positively influence outcomes over a wide range of cognitive, emotional, and applied skills.<sup>5</sup>

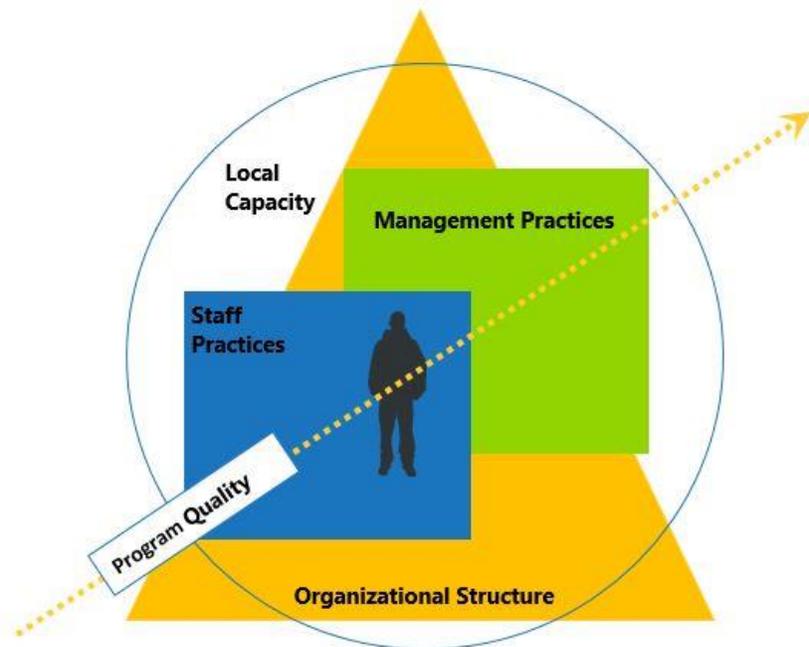
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Program quality is measurable and can be improved.

## The YPQI benefits the youth sector

The David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality<sup>6</sup> found that the quality of youth programming improved in response to standards and supports from the YPQI cycle: assess, plan, build skills, and improve.

Below the diagram illustrates how enhancing program quality improves the practices of the youth serving community as a whole. At its core the YPQI instills in youth serving organizations a common language and understanding of healthy development and the needs of young people. Organizations adopt a tried-and-tested evaluation process, perform program assessments, and develop improvement plans. Staff receive professional development training and gain core competencies. With increased capacity, program quality is improved, and most importantly, youth reap the benefits of high-quality afterschool programming.



## For More Information

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<http://www.communitycouncil.ca/YPQI>  
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<sup>1,2</sup> McNeely, C, Blanchard J. (2009). The teen years explained: A guide to healthy adolescent development. Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, <http://www.jhsph.edu/adolescenthealth/>

<sup>3</sup> McCreary Centre Society. (2013). BC Adolescent Health Survey, South Vancouver Island, [http://www.mcs.bc.ca/pdf/AHSV\\_SouthVancouverIsland.pdf/](http://www.mcs.bc.ca/pdf/AHSV_SouthVancouverIsland.pdf/)

<sup>4</sup> Vandell, D. (2007). Outcomes linked to high quality afterschool programs: Longitudinal findings from the study of promising afterschool programs. University of California, [https://www.purdue.edu/hhs/hdfs/fii/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/s\\_iafis04c04.pdf/](https://www.purdue.edu/hhs/hdfs/fii/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/s_iafis04c04.pdf/)

<sup>5,6</sup> Smith, C. et al. (2012). Continuous quality improvement in afterschool settings: Impact findings from the Youth Program Quality Intervention study. Washington, The Forum for Youth Investment, <http://cypq.org/printpdf/385>