

# *Youth Services Provider Network*

June 27, 2002 ~ Convening

## **Ideas for What Makes a “Youth Friendly Work/Program Environment...”**

- ❖ Read – “Young Enough To Matter” California Coalition for Youth 340-0505
- ❖ Recognize that youth need to be welcomed in to every process before they can be expected to be engaged
- ❖ Let them have a voice
- ❖ Let them have choices in the program
- ❖ Let them have input and feedback
- ❖ Input from youth on what would be helpful to them
- ❖ “Nothing with them, without them.” Casey Families Program
- ❖ Diversity – Cultural, class and generational
- ❖ Positive support/encouragement
- ❖ Provide our young people with the support and services needed to accomplish their goals
- ❖ Something that interests kids – useful, fun, a “hook”
- ❖ Respectful of kids and their ideas
- ❖ Easily accessible
- ❖ Program geared to their age/ability/skill level
- ❖ More programs for youth in churches
  1. Drug prevention programs
  2. STD Programs
  3. Early – childhood development
- ❖ Create a positive working environment
- ❖ Mentoring relationships
- ❖ Learning/training opportunities
- ❖ Equal value of ideas between youth and adults
- ❖ Welcoming smile
- ❖ Mutual respect
- ❖ Listening actively
- ❖ Clear expectations and information given to the youth employee
- ❖ Where youth are given opportunities to work in many disciplines within the business
- ❖ Involve the ideas/input of youth in the planning process
- ❖ Shared power – adults and youth
  1. Format built into meetings
- ❖ Youth need to be involved in decision-making
- ❖ Be innovative in its approach
- ❖ Based in effective – practices (research)
- ❖ Work spaces w/o barriers (walled offices) workshop spaces included
- ❖ Resources
- ❖ Respect youth as human beings that have legitimate concerns and issues.
- ❖ Safe and cared environment
- ❖ Diversity
- ❖ Youth are involved in decision making
- ❖ Mutual respect for both youth and adult
- ❖ Resources available with knowledge able people to assist and guide youth toward their goals
- ❖ Enthusiastic, committed and knowledgeable staff
- ❖ Engaging content/tasks

- ❖ Accessibility
- ❖ Choices
- ❖ Provide occasional fun workshops that allow for “out of the box” type learning. Perhaps motivational speakers that kids enjoy to hear speak; even rappers / basketball stars.
- ❖ Mentor within the workplace who can work with youth to help them initiate and learn responsibilities of work culture.
- ❖ Involve youth in committee or decision-making opportunities
- ❖ Having bilingual/bicultural staff to relate to multi-cultural youth.
- ❖ Youth and adults can make an environment where there is trust
- ❖ Fun comfortable atmosphere where youth can feel free to show creativity in their work / tasks
- ❖ Patience, support, written and visual training materials
- ❖ Youth involved in developing/creativity programs
- ❖ Easy physical local to home or school/efficient transportation
- ❖ Ask young people for their ideas and really listen
- ❖ Avoid “busy work”; provide real opportunities to contribute
- ❖ Include young people in decision making, problem solving
- ❖ Provide drop in or regular counseling for youths to discharge their pressing issues related to personal growth and to also get personal support from this confidential interaction
- ❖ Respect, ground rules
- ❖ Training for existing workers to become youth compatible
- ❖ Create a mentoring program in the work place to create an atmosphere of patience and tolerance.
- ❖ Having a youth forum where youth are able to express their ideas and thoughts to services providers would make a “youth friendly work/program environment.”
- ❖ Providers listening to youth
- ❖ Understand that youth may not know how to do everything and to take things slow so they can understand the flow of how things work
- ❖ Create a non-judgmental atmosphere
- ❖ Create a caring/supportive environment
- ❖ Good instructions
- ❖ Good work place
- ❖ Easy access (transportation)
- ❖ Physical environment supportive of youth interests
- ❖ Sharing of interests
- ❖ Making those in the program comfortable by introducing them to others in a non-threatening manner.
- ❖ Starting out with easy, simple projects where everyone can be successful and learn to work with others.
- ❖ Taking the fear out of working with adults/youths.
- ❖ Mentors
- ❖ Teaching environment
- ❖ Share resource knowledge
- ❖ Being very supportive
- ❖ Letting them be creative and being there for them when they need help
- ❖ Respecting their ideas
- ❖ Supportive and encouraging environment for the youth
- ❖ The employer and youth see eye to eye, both are open minded to new ideas
- ❖ Emphasis on the interests and skills each youth brings to the program and how those interests and skills can be utilized and integrated into the work/program
- ❖ Honesty, respect and equality shared between youth and adults
- ❖ A positive work environment
- ❖ Communication amongst youth and adults

- ❖ Provide opportunities for youth to interact with each other in positive ways
- ❖ Youth are listened to and respected
- ❖ Youth feel safe and supported
- ❖ Respect for the youth perspective – vocabulary, responsibilities
- ❖ Meaningful roles and advisory board
- ❖ Positive compassionate staff
- ❖ Program flexibility
- ❖ Youth guided planning
- ❖ Clear goals
- ❖ Youth friendly literature
- ❖ Patience
- ❖ Accessible