

The YPQI



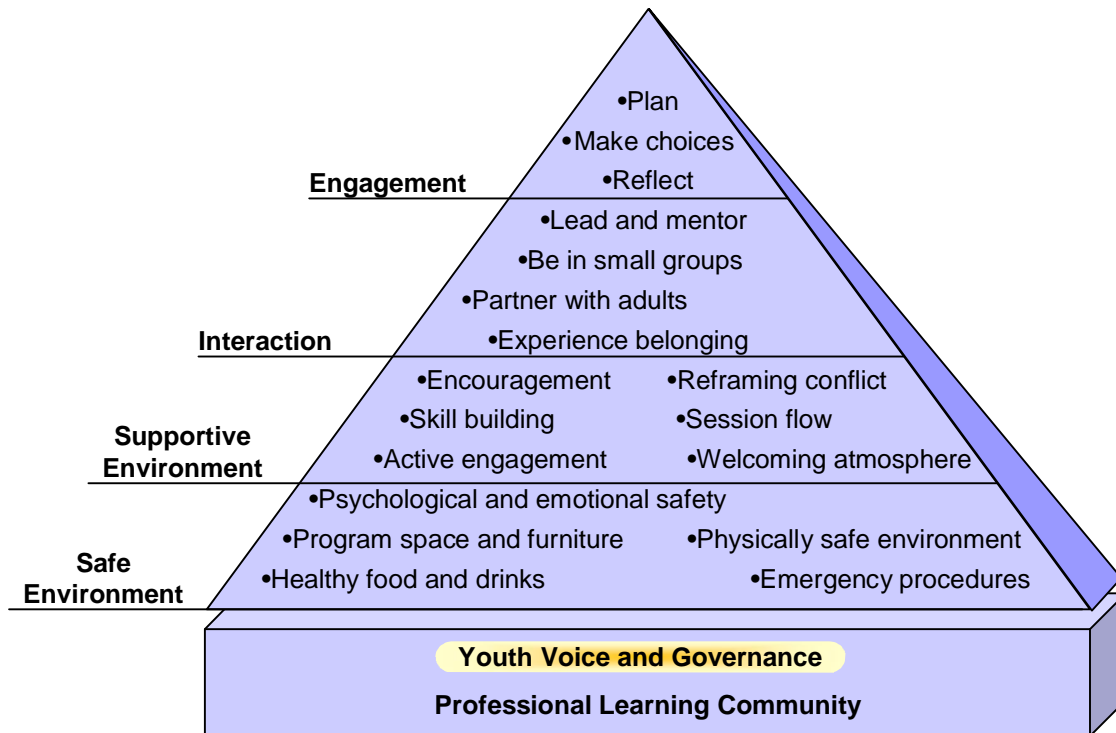
Youth Program Quality Intervention

The Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI) is a two-year intervention designed to improve the consistency of quality in youth-serving programs. The goal of the YPQI is to support and build on the things staff already do well. Ultimately, the YPQI seeks to build systems and habits that create lasting positive change in quality at the point of service—the place where adults, youth, and resources come together.

As you will see below, the YPQI introduces few new ideas, but supports the consistency of quality of delivery. Parts of the YPQI have been tested in a wide range of settings, including alternative high schools, camps, after-school programs, residential treatment facilities, and our own residential camp, the Institute for IDEAS (which has operated since 1963).

In 2006-2009, with generous funding from the W.T. Grant Foundation, High/Scope is offering the YPQI without cost to 100 youth programs in 4 states, and studying the effects. Fifty programs will begin the YPQI in January 2007, and the remaining fifty will begin in April 2008.

This document will explain the steps of the intervention. The pyramid below is the image of the quality the YPQI is designed to improve:



The following are two key components of the YPQI: the Youth PQA, and the eTools online learning center.

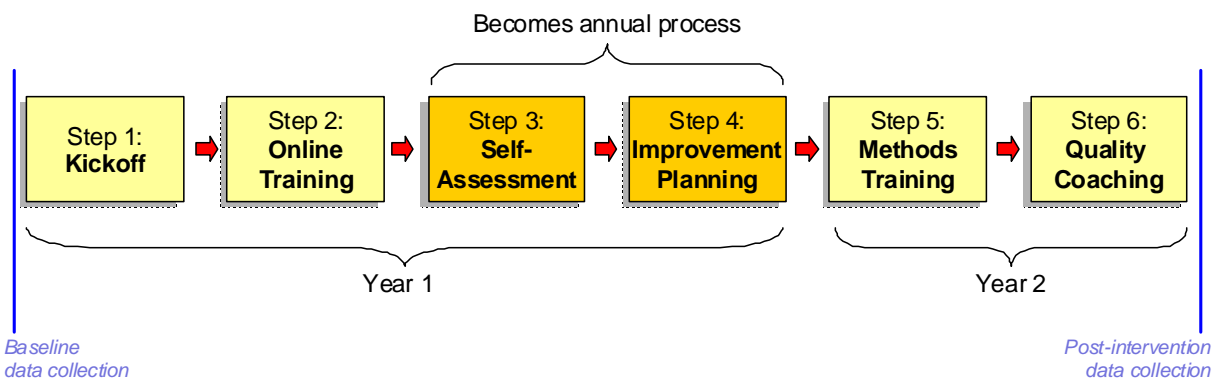


The Youth PQA is a validated assessment instrument that uses evidence gathered through observation to produce both numeric and narrative data. The Youth PQA is a dual-purpose instrument that can produce accurate scores and stimulate learning about point of service quality. The Youth PQA is designed to measure widely agreed upon tenets of positive youth development.

The Youth PQA uses the quality pyramid pictured on the previous page. The key areas of point of service quality are: safe environment, supportive environment, interaction, and engagement.

eTools is High/Scope’s comprehensive online learning center and will be the virtual meeting place for the intervention. eTools will provide access to information about the YPQI and all related procedures and deadlines, online learning workshops, discussion forums, online data and reports, and links to resources about best practice. Most survey data will be entered into eTools.

We will provide an eTools account for supervisors and select staff members (upon the request of the supervisor). With this account you will be able to access online learning workshops and automated quality reports specific to your program.



Step 1: Kickoff

The intervention begins with a chance for everyone to meet and get on the same page. Half-day kickoff meetings will occur in each participating network. At this meeting you’ll learn about the thinking behind the intervention, get a preview of the components of the project (including a look at eTools), and of course, meet others in your area who are participating.

There will be a kickoff for year two as well, in conjunction with an end-of-year one reflection and/or conference.

Step 2: eTools Online Training *(supervisors and at least 1 frontline staff member)*

In Year 1 of the project, you will complete two online learning workshops: Youth PQA Basics, and Youth Voice and Governance. These two workshops will take a total of 5-9 hours of your time and provide the foundation for the whole intervention.

All online learning workshops are self-paced, which means that you can complete lessons and assignments any time of day, in whatever lengths of time you prefer, and at your own pace, as long as each workshop is completed by the due date (see calendar). These workshops are designed in very short chunks so that you can sit down for 5 minutes and complete a section or sit down for 2 hours and complete several sections. You may choose to complete the entire course in a few days, or spread your learning out over several weeks. You will complete the online workshops as part of a cohort which will include others from your network.

Youth PQA Basics

Like all eTools workshops, Youth PQA Basics is self-paced and designed in very short, bite-sized pieces. We estimate that the entire course will take 4-6 hours to complete. Some assignments will ask you to work together with your colleagues.

Here's a list of the main sections:

- Welcome Learn the basic thinking behind the Youth PQA, and a little bit about how it is used.
- Introduction Learn about how the Youth PQA works, including topics such as the 1-3-5 rubrics and how items work.
- Observational Note Taking Consider how to write effective anecdotes and practice taking objective notes.
- Fitting and Scoring Fit and score pre-made anecdotes to PQA indicators. In this section you'll also be introduced to the data entry side of eTools.
- Self-Assessment Method This gets into the details of how the self-assessment method works. You'll have lots of practice fitting evidence into the Youth PQA.

Youth Voice and Governance

Like all eTools workshops, Youth Voice and Governance is self-paced and designed in very short, bite-sized pieces. We estimate that this course will take 1-3 hours to complete. As with Youth PQA Basics, some assignments will ask you to work together with your colleagues. Here are the main components:

- What is Youth Voice? Consider the decisions youth are able to make in an organization about how they spend their time and about how the organization functions. The workshop begins with the narrowing of this often used concept.

- Youth Advisory Research Consider relevant research about the importance of involving youth in organizational decision making.
- Establishing Youth Advisory Explore numerous ways that youth advisory can be set up in your program.
- Action Plans After everyone in the cohort has completed the youth voice workshop, your program will submit a plan (this actually occurs outside of the workshop) for how you will implement youth voice structures this year.

Step 3: Self-Assessment (*supervisors and frontline staff*)

Program self-assessment allows you to hold up a mirror and take a look at your program’s strengths and areas for improvement. You will do this in a structured way with the Youth PQA as your guide.

In order for self-assessment to be a productive use of your time it is crucial to provide an honest assessment of your program. Resist the tendency to score yourselves unrealistically high in order to put your best foot forward. While this is natural and understandable, it is not a good use of your time. The scores you give your program will in no way hurt you. In fact, the most important thing is not the numbers you give yourself, but rather the conversations you and your colleagues have through the process.

The details of self-assessment will be explained in the online training workshop; however, here’s a quick overview. The box on the right lists the steps.

The first step (3a) is to put together a team. This team ***should consist of the individuals who completed the Youth PQA Basics workshop.*** If you wish to involve more of your staff in this process, we will gladly provide additional support materials that will allow you to do so.

Self Assessment Steps	
STEP 3a	Select team (2-6 people)
STEP 3b	Plan the data collection
STEP 3c	Collect data
STEP 3d	Have a scoring meeting
STEP 3e	Enter & report data

The next step (3b) is to make a plan for the data collection. In step 3c, members of the “team” observe program sessions and take notes. Typically this is done in very short chunks of time: 10-15 minutes. The overall goal is to observe as many staff as possible and collect several pages of notes.

In step 3d, supervisors and frontline staff come together to score the Youth PQA. You’ll score each indicator and provide written evidence for that score. This scoring meeting (or meetings) will take 1-2 hours. Finally, in step 3e you will enter your scores online and be able to see an automatic report.

The self-assessment method was designed to maximize staff participation, promote staff buy-in and to ensure objective measurement. Mostly, it gives you a lens to look through and have a meaningful conversation about program strengths and areas for improvement. You’ll look at where you are and begin to think about where you want to be. We recommend that self-assessment becomes an annual process in your program.

Step 4: Improvement Planning (*supervisors and frontline staff*)

Step 4 involves the critical task of making clear, do-able improvement plans, based on assessment data. You'll receive a report and then make plans from both your self-assessment data and the external baseline data that was collected before the YPQI got started. This step begins at the Planning with Data workshop (attended by the same "team" who completed the workshops in Step 2) and then continues as you return from the training to your program.

Planning with Data Workshop

This full-day workshop packs a lot in, and at the end of the day participants leave with draft improvement plans for their organizations. Here's an outline:

- Leading Change We begin the day with some staggering and challenging truths about change. We consider change on the individual level (e.g. quitting smoking) and on the organizational level. This section also introduces the "steps of change" an idea that is carried throughout the training day.
- Making Plans You'll spend productive time generating program improvement plans. Special care is given to making sure these plans are doable and linked to quality data.
- Supporting Staff This part of the workshop focuses on strategies that help managers be successful as they guide staff through the change initiative of the YPQI.

Participants leave the workshop with draft plans; however, we strongly recommend that all staff at a program have a say in what goes into an improvement plan. So we recommend that participants go back and share their vision with other staff and get their input. Final plans for the year will be posted online on the eTools YPQI community forum.

Step 5: Methods Training (*frontline staff*)

Year 2 shifts focus to the frontline staff with the introduction of *Youth Worker Methods* training modules that are aligned with specific areas of quality that sites want to improve – based on their quality data. These workshops don't necessarily present new ideas but do provide real strategies for actually carrying out the ideas. Our youth worker methods training workshops have extremely high customer satisfaction ratings, and some of the strongest research on effectiveness in the field.

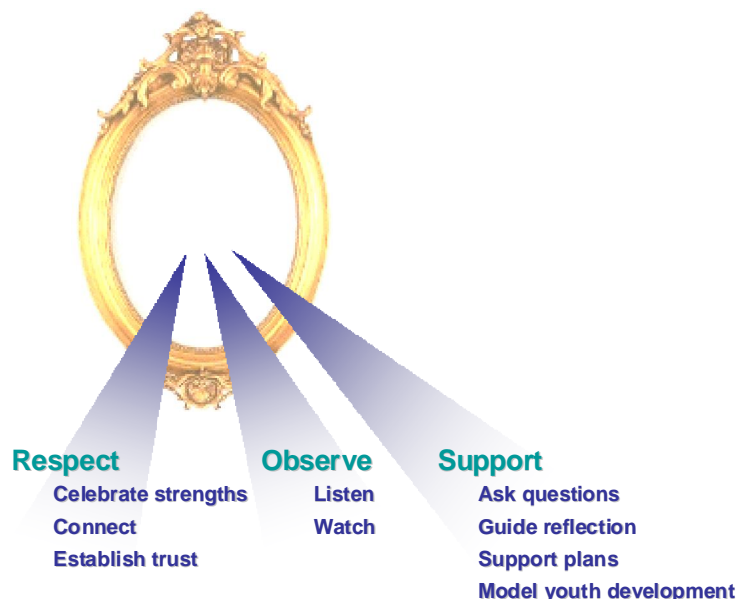
The Youth Worker Methods training follows an "a-la-carte" model. You'll be able to select and attend any of several half-day workshops offered. Each half-day workshop is aligned with a particular Youth PQA item or items, so you can make decisions based on your assessments. Here are the half-day workshops that will be offered:

Youth Worker Methods Half-day workshops	
Engagement	
Planning and Reflection	The planning and reflection process, central to the High/Scope approach for every age, can turn a fun activity into a powerful learning experience! Participants learn how to support youth in planning, implementing, and evaluating activities and projects.
Choice and Challenge	Providing young people with authentic choices and the right level of challenge are hallmarks of truly engaging environments. This is focused on providing choice and challenge within activities, and the youth voice workshop is focused organizationally.
Interaction	
Peer Collaboration	This workshop addresses youth’s interaction in groups—both the cooperative learning environment and leadership opportunities.
Peer Community	This lively workshop introduces participants to numerous community building activities.
Supportive Environment	
Homework Help	Homework time can be filled with valuable learning and taking-care-of-business experiences...or it can be a waste of everyone’s time. This workshop explores the features of successful homework help environments and real strategies for making this time productive.
Active Learning	Introduces the remarkable benefits of providing opportunities for youth to actively explore materials and ideas. The workshop introduces the “ingredients” of active learning as well as methods for creating high-impact, active environments.
Ask-Listen-Encourage	Introduces a method for building supportive, youth-centered relationships. The workshop prepares participants to ask lots of effective questions, to listen actively to youth, and to encourage youth by tapping their intrinsic motivation.
Reframing Conflict	Helps participants consider an approach in which adults support youth in solving their conflicts and problems.
Safe Environment	
Psychological Safety	Safety is the foundation for a successful youth environment. Participants consider all the aspects of safety, many of which are often disregarded.
Structure and Clear Limits	How do you prevent chaos in a youth environment without stifling youth’s positive energy? This workshop introduces methods for setting clear limits and a productive program structure.

Step 6: Quality Coaching Workshop (*supervisors and at least 1 frontline staff member*)

Supervisors will continue to develop their quality improvement skills in year 2 through *Quality Coaching*. This workshop focuses on helping staff improve through one-on-one consultation. The workshop takes the improvement process to the next level by providing supervisors with powerful tools to further help their staff to deliver high quality at the point of service.

The High/Scope Quality Coaching method is based on the three main concepts of respect, observe, and support. The idea is to maximize productivity in the manager-staff relationship by starting with a foundation of *respect*, taking time to *observe* staff at the point of service and then *supporting* staff to develop professionally. Here are the components of the one-day workshop:



- Respect We begin the day with a look at the Respect-Observe-Support framework and spend some time sharing strategies for establishing respect in the coaching relationship.
- Active listening This is a critical skill for quality coaching and is a key component of observation-reflection (the next part).
- Observation-Reflection Observation-Reflection puts the observed staff in control of their improvement and learning. In this counter-intuitive method, rather than providing feedback, a quality coach guides staff through their own reflective improvement discussion. We'll spend the bulk of the day learning this powerful technique.

Although a quality coach can be any professional—e.g. directors from other programs, High/Scope consultants, etc.—in the YPQI, most quality coaching will happen within individual programs.

To be continued...

The goal of the YPQI is to build an improvement system within your organization that will be sustainable without extensive continued support from High/Scope. We recommend that the self-assessment and improvement planning (steps 2 and 3) become an annual process. Because of this, as part of the agreement to participate in YPQI, your network leaders stated that support for these practices would be integrated into current systems and continue beyond the scope of the intervention.

We look forward to working with you in the YPQI!