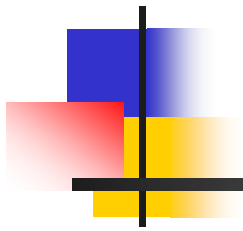


Youth with Disabilities



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The Guideposts to Success

- School-based Preparatory Experiences
- Career Preparation and Work-Based Learning Experiences
- Youth Development and Leadership
- Connecting Activities
- Family Involvement and Supports



GUIDEPOSTS

3. Youth Development and Leadership

- **In order to control and direct their own lives based on informed decisions, all youth need the following:**
- **mentoring activities designed to establish strong relationships with adults through formal and informal settings;**
- **peer-to-peer mentoring opportunities; exposure to role models in a variety of contexts;**
- **training in skills such as self-advocacy and conflict resolution;**
- **exposure to personal leadership and youth development activities, including community service;**
- **opportunities that allow youth to exercise leadership and build self-esteem.**

Youth with disabilities also need the following:

- **mentors and role models including persons with and without disabilities;**
- **an understanding of disability history, culture, and disability public policy issues as well as their rights and responsibilities.**



The Value of Mentoring Programs to Youth Generally

Sipe (1996) in her study of mentoring research conducted by PPV found that mentoring has the following advantages:

- Shows promise in the prevention of substance abuse (less likely to drink or use drugs);
- Appears to reduce *some* negative youth behaviors (violence and skipping school); and
- Promotes positive social attitudes and relationships.

Overall, PPV found youth participating in mentoring relationships experience:

- positive academic returns.
- fewer unexcused absences from school,
- more positive attitudes toward school, and
- were more likely to pursue higher education



The Value of Mentoring Programs to Youth Generally

Jekielek, Moore, and Hair (2002) found through a synthesis of research that youth who participate in programs that include stand-alone mentoring or mentoring as one component of a comprehensive intervention have the following positive outcomes, compared with similar youth:

- Significant reductions in school absence;
- Higher college participation;
- Better school attitudes and behavior;
- Less drug and alcohol use;



The Value of Mentoring Programs to Youth Generally

- Lower likelihood of aggressive behaviors;
- Lower likelihood of committing misdemeanors or felonies and major offenses;
- More positive attitudes toward their elders and toward helping; and
- Improved parental relationships and support from peers.



The Value of Mentoring Programs to Youth Generally

In all mentoring programs, including those not focused on career readiness, mentoring tends to positively impact communication skills, interpersonal effectiveness, social skills, and self-confidence—all of which affect students' career readiness (Grossman, 1999).

What about Youth w/Disabilities???

There is little data regarding the value of mentoring for youth with disabilities.





What about Youth w/Disabilities???

What does exist suggests that:

Mentoring can help youth with disabilities achieve goals that are part of the transition process including

- career awareness,
- academic achievement,



What about Youth w/Disabilities???

- connecting with the adult world,
 - leadership and social skill development, and
 - development of skills related to overcoming societal barriers
- (Rhodes, Grossman, & Resch, 2000; Sword & Hill, 2002; Moccia, Schumacher, Hazel, Vernon, & Dessler, 1989).



What about Youth w/Disabilities???

Mentoring can help youth with mild disabilities “have higher self esteem, higher grade point averages, better attendance and fewer suspensions” (Campbell-Whatley, 2001, pg. 212).



What about Youth w/Disabilities???

A recent study conducted for PPV suggests that for high risk youth, mentoring may act as a barrier against depression. (Bauldry 2006)



Youth with Disabilities are in All Child-Serving Systems

- 60 to 70 percent of youth in the residential juvenile justice system have mental health disabilities; large number also have learning disabilities
- A study of over 600 foster care alumni revealed that 54.4% had a mental health disorder, including 25.2% with post-traumatic stress disorder, 20.1% with major depression, and 17.1% with social phobia (Pecora, Kessler, Williams, O'Brien, Downs, English, White, Hiripi, White, Wiggins, & Holmes, 2005).



Youth with Disabilities are in All Child-Serving Systems

- 4/5 of Adults in Foster Care have significant mental health disabilities
- The same issue exists in the dropout and TANF populations
- Migrant Youth. Studies have linked depression in teenage workers to long hours of work in high-intensity, low-skilled jobs-precisely the kind of labor undertaken by farmworkers.

As a result of these pressures, farmworkers are vulnerable to substance abuse,