Collaborative Support for Developmental Practices Asset Mapping Toolkit

Developmental practices are the dynamic supports young people need, in different ways and from different people, throughout their lives. Adults can learn these practices, and develop strategies for putting them in place, whenever and wherever they engage with young people.[i]

Five Non-Negotiables for Whole Child Design
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The five elements above provide the framing for this asset map.

The latest in the science of learning and development affirms that learning is optimized when it starts with strong relationships in environments filled with safety and belonging. In these contexts, children and youth can then fully engage in challenging experiences and opportunities. Optimal learning and engagement also requires personalization – individualized supports – that take into account a young person's specific needs. Intentional development of skills, mindsets and habits can be best maximized when these other components are in place.

For more information, or for coaching and technical assistance around using, interpreting, and applying this toolkit, contact the Forum for Youth Investment at info@forumfyi.org

WHY FOCUS ON DEVELOPMENTAL PRACTICE?

How much are developmental practices actually codified and supported within the child- and youth-focused systems in your community? A wealth of science tells us the elements of practice depicted on the graphic are essential for development.[ii] By ensuring people have these supports, we optimize their ability to experience whatever it is we want them to experience. There are likely many policies, practices, procedures, and programs that your system or agency says should explicitly support these practices. There could also be mandates that your system/agency requires that seem counter to these practices.

Why is it important to explore this question? Research has shown that if front-line staff and administrators do not get signals that they should proactively take specific actions in their work they will tend to be risk-averse or assume that the positive developmental practices that they are employing are actually exceptions to the institutional expectations.[iii] By reviewing our current operating procedures, policies and practices against the research of what makes a difference, we can work together to ensure that every young person is receiving the most effective services, supports and opportunities possible.

DEVELOPMENTAL PRACTICES ASSET MAPPING

On behalf of the Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs, the Forum for Youth Investment piloted an asset mapping toolkit and technical assistance process designed to support cross-system conversations about how to improve approaches and practices of the staff that work directly with youth across the multitude of places where young people spend their time. The asset map can be completed through a combination of questionnaires, group facilitation, interviews, and a document review. The Forum works with each collaborative leader upfront to design an effective and streamlined process for engaging partners in this scan.

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How to Use this Toolkit

The asset map can be completed through a combination of questionnaires, group facilitation, interviews, and a document review.

Who Should Use this Toolkit and Process?
The key to a successful asset mapping process is working through an established cross-system leadership group, such as children's cabinets, cradle-to-career initiatives, systems of care efforts, or coordinating boards. A commitment from such a leadership group provides for better access to top leadership in systems and agencies and sets up the opportunity for cross system learning and leveraging. This provides access to a wide spectrum of stakeholder perspectives and cross system learning about how requirements may vary in their impact on youth.

Tip: This mapping process is most useful when it is defined in support of other existing or planned efforts rather than as a standalone exercise.

Getting Started
Identify a facilitator to lead the process and nominate a small core team representing the cross system leadership group to work with the facilitator and manage the process.

Provide a rationale for this process to those that are invited to participate. Consider:
- it is an opportunity to validate and reinforce their commitment to best operationalizing the science beyond just evidence-based programs.
- it can support their ability to reflect on both the official practices and the informal implementation of those practices both internally with staff as well as with cross system partners.

Hold a Kickoff Event
This kickoff event would be the opportunity
- to share the science of positive youth development to establish the basis for the work,
- to focus on the impact adults across all systems and agencies have on development,
- to highlight the value adult practices have in interactions with youth, and
- to outline the process for reviewing how official practices prohibit or incentivize developmental practices.

Use the Tools

COMPONENT	PURPOSE	PROCESS	INFORMANT(S)
A. Definitions of Practices [*Definitions of Developmental Practices. How Important? How Well Practiced?*]	Build understanding of the definitions of developmental practice used as the basis for this scan. Gather key leader perceptions regarding how important these practices are and how much they are practiced within each system/agency.	Complete and return in advance of interview, either individually or during kickoff event	☐ Top level leader of system or agency ☐ Knowledgeable management staff
B. Document Review	Identification of documents that articulate key policies, procedures, and practices; identifying, where possible, who is defining these practices; and specifying the controlling policy level	Complete and return in advance of interview, if possible. Add to interview as needed	☐ Top level leader of system or agency ☐ Knowledgeable management staff
B. Interview	What supports and mechanisms are currently in place to support practice improvement? How much do they support or incentivize the use of developmental practices?	Scheduled Interview	☐ Top level leader of system or agency ☐ Knowledgeable management staff (or team)

Definitions of Developmental Practice: How Important? How Much Practiced?

How much are developmental practices actually codified and supported within the child- and youth-focused systems in your community? A wealth of science tells us these elements of practice are essential for development. [iv] By ensuring people have these supports, we optimize their ability to experience whatever it is we want them to experience. There are likely many policies, practices, procedures and programs that your system or agency says should explicitly support these practices. There could also be mandates that your system/agency requires that seem counter to these practices. This questionnaire is designed as a first step in a conversation with your colleagues and counterparts about how you are defining and supporting developmental practices.

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Name: _____   System/Agency: _____

Instructions: Using the columns on the right, please rate each of the below categories from 1 (low) to 5 (high) on how important you feel it is and how well it is currently being practiced across your agency/system. [v]	HOW IMPORTANT? 1 (LOW) – 5 (HIGH)	HOW MUCH PRACTICED? 1 (LOW) – 5 (HIGH)
POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS — **Relational trust and respect** between and among staff, young people, and parents.		
Structures that allow for **continuity in relationships,** thereby reducing anxiety and supporting engaged learning.		
ENVIRONMENTS FILLED WITH SAFETY & BELONGING — **A caring, culturally responsive learning community**, where young people are well known and valued and can learn in physical and emotional safety.		
Structures that allow for **consistency in practices and predictability in routines** that reduce anxiety and support engaged learning.		
RICH INSTRUCTIONAL EXPERIENCES — **Meaningful work** that builds on young people's prior knowledge and experiences and actively engages them in rich, engaging tasks that help them achieve conceptual understanding and transferable knowledge and skills.		
Inquiry as a major learning strategy, thoughtfully interwoven with explicit instruction and well-scaffolded opportunities to practice and apply learning.		
Well-designed collaborative learning opportunities that encourage young people to question, explain, and elaborate their thoughts and co-construct solutions.		
Ongoing diagnostic **assessments and opportunities** to receive timely and helpful **feedback**, develop and exhibit **competence**, and **revise** work to improve.		
Opportunities to develop metacognitive skills through planning and management of complex tasks, self- and peer- assessment, and reflection on learning.		
INDIVIDUALIZED SUPPORTS — **Ongoing diagnostic assessments** to identify barriers to learning and development.		
Access to integrated services (including physical and mental health and social service supports) that enable healthy development.		
Access to learning opportunities that nurture positive relationships, support enrichment and mastery learning, and close achievement gaps.		
INTENTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL SKILLS, MINDSETS & HABITS — **Explicit instruction in social, emotional, and cognitive skills**, such as intrapersonal awareness, interpersonal skills, conflict resolution, and good decision-making.		
Infusion of opportunities to learn and use social emotional skills, habits, mindsets throughout all aspects of their work.		
Educative and restorative approaches to group management and discipline, so that children and youth learn responsibility for themselves and their community.[vi]		

Document Review: Where are developmental practices articulated and codified?

In reflecting on the types of practices discussed in the *Definitions of Developmental Practice* questionnaire, please identify the specific documents or resources that articulate practices, procedures or policies that align with or run counter to these developmental practices. If possible, please identify the specific places within these documents that speak to these practices, procedures or policies. Collecting this information will allow for a cross-systems look at how the different system/agency practices, procedures and policies compare. *See Document Review Rubric for the framing that will be used to capture the detail and produce a high-level summary.*

Document type	Guidance/Examples	Document List *Note relevant page numbers*	Level of Jurisdiction *Federal, State, County, City, Agency*
Statutes or Laws	• Federal, state, county or city statutes or laws (e.g., laws or statutes that govern treatment for substance-use disorders, labor laws that dictate hours worked or access for people with disabilities to workforce programs)		
Administrative Rules Policy Directives	• An administrative rule adopted by an agency to make the law it enforces or administers more specific or to govern the agency's procedures • External policy statements that clarify or amplify existing procedures (e.g., policies managing attendance, discipline, credit)		
Procedures Manuals Bulletins	• An official way of doing something, established through manuals, guidance documents, or other official documentation (e.g., procedures, practice guidance or manuals on making placement decisions in court, case documentation) • Bulletins or announcements emphasizing best practices		
Licensing Requirements Standards Certifications	• A set of defined practices that grant permission or permit an official capacity or denote a level of quality attainment (e.g., licensing, certification, or approval requirements for foster parents; quality standards for afterschool programs or childcare facilities; staffing qualifications or training requirements)		
Grant Guidelines or Proposals Requests for Proposals	• Grant-making guidelines (funds you are distributing) • Major grant applications (your submissions) (e.g., WIOA plan)		
Plans & Recommendations	• Detailed outlines or proposals for accomplishing a certain goal, that may or may not be mandated (e.g., early childhood equity plan; youth master plan; task force recommendations)[vii]		

Interview: Overview of Interview Parts

The following questions should focus specifically on System/Agency assets related to the promotion of developmental practices as defined and discussed in *Definitions of Developmental Practice* questionnaire.

Part One: A discussion of perceptions of developmental practice [see rubric]

- Review of scaled responses on *Definitions of Developmental Practice* questionnaire
- Clarifying questions on documents
- Discussion of perceptions around how much the system is promoting or constraining the 5 components of optimized development and learning: strong relationships; environments filled with safety and belonging; rich instructional experiences; individualized supports; intentional development of critical skills, mindsets, and habits

Part Two: A discussion of the landscape of supports for development practice [see scaled response worksheet next page]

Vision & Frameworks
1. Has your System/Agency explicitly incorporated a developmental approach into its vision, goals and/or strategic plan?
2. Has your System/Agency adopted a developmental framework, standards, or approach? To what extent are they used by your practitioners/programs?
3. How often do you engage with staff, young people, and parents in discussions about developmental standards, practices, approaches?

Professional Learning and Development
4. How often do staff, regardless of role, from different parts of the System/Agency meet to discuss plans or progress related to promoting these developmental practices or to receive joint professional development?
5. How is data used in these professional development efforts? What data?
6. Does your System/Agency provide ongoing coaching support for implementation of developmental practices? Who receives coaching?

Evidence & Assessment
7. If relevant (see #2), what is the evidence base that supports your standards of practice?
8. If relevant (see #2) does your System/Agency have a mechanism such as an aligned assessment tool to measure performance against developmental standards?

Continuous Improvement
9. How does the System/Agency collect data on quality across providers/programs? What data is collected? Is it uniform?
10. To what extent does the System/Agency examine and reflect on quality data and use it to inform developmental practices, procedures or policies?
11. How often do improvement plans include actions to enhance developmental practices? Do both the System/Agency and its component parts (e.g., schools, sites, programs) have improvement plans that include action to enhance developmental practices?

Resources & Alignment
12. To what extent does your System/Agency budget support activities that promote developmental practices across all areas of delivery/instruction/programming/services?

Part Three: Reflection Questions

13. **Feedback from direct service staff**: Do direct service staff ever point out any areas that are concerning? Or areas that are particular strengths?
14. **Challenges & opportunities for improvement**: What issues do you struggle with when it comes to delivering upon your vision of "high quality" across your System/Agency? What barriers get in the way? What are opportunities you see for improvement?
15. **Strengths & opportunities for scale:** What do you see as particular strengths of your System/Agency when it comes to promoting these developmental practices? How do you see building on these strengths so that more children and youth benefit?
16. **Partnerships**: Given the challenges and strengths you've discussed, what opportunities do you see for partnering or aligning with other systems? To what extent does your partnership or community have a shared, articulated vision that could be a foundation for joint work in this area?

Interview Part Two: What is the broader landscape for supporting developmental practices?

The following questions should focus specifically on System/Agency assets related to the promotion of developmental practices as discussed in the *Definitions of Developmental Practice* questionnaire.

Questions & Indicators			Score	Supporting Evidence/Anecdotes
Vision & Frameworks				
1. Has the System/Agency explicitly incorporated a developmental approach into its visions, goals and/or strategic plan?				
1 The System/Agency has not incorporated a developmental approach into its vision, goals, or strategic plan.	**3** The System/Agency has explicitly incorporated a developmental approach into one of the following: its vision, goals, or strategic plan.	**5** The System/Agency has explicitly incorporated a developmental approach into its vision, goals, and strategic plan.		
2. Has your System/Agency adopted a developmental framework, standards, or approach? To what extent are they used by your practitioners/programs?				
1 The System/Agency has not adopted a developmental framework, standards or approach.	**3** The System/Agency has adopted a developmental framework, standards or approach.	**5** The System/Agency has adopted a developmental framework, standards and approach.		
3. How often do you engage with staff, young people and parents in discussions about developmental standards, practices, approaches?				
1 The System/Agency has not created opportunities to involve stakeholders (families, youth, community) in developing shared language, understanding, and ownership for prioritizing developmental experiences for all children/youth.	**3** The System/Agency has created opportunities to involve some stakeholders (families, youth, community) in developing shared language, understanding, and ownership for prioritizing developmental experiences for all children/youth.	**5** The System/Agency has created opportunities to involve multiple stakeholders (families, youth, community) in developing shared language, understanding, and ownership for prioritizing developmental experiences for all children/youth.		
Professional Learning and Development				
4. How often do staff, regardless of role, from different parts of the System/Agency meet to discuss plans or progress related to promoting these developmental practices or to receive joint professional development?				
1 Meetings or trainings happen informally and are not focused on developmental practices.	**3** Meetings or trainings occur but only occasionally or most staff do not participate.	**5** Staff meet to discuss plans or progress related to developmental practices or to receive developmental-focused professional development at least several times per year, and most staff participate.		
5. How is data used in these professional development efforts? What data?				
1 Data is not used in professional development efforts.	**3** Data is used in some professional developmental efforts.	**5** Data is used in all professional developmental efforts.		
6. Does your System/Agency provide ongoing coaching support for implementation of developmental practices? Who receives coaching?				
1 The System/Agency does not provide ongoing coaching support for the implementation of developmental practices.	**3** The System/Agency provides ongoing coaching support for the implementation of developmental practices for some staff.	**5** The System/Agency provides ongoing coaching support for the implementation of developmental practices for all staff.		

Questions & Indicators			*Score*	*Supporting Evidence/Anecdotes*
Evidence & Assessment				
7. If relevant (see #2), what is the evidence base that supports your developmental standards, practices, or approaches?				
1 No evidence base has been identified to support the standards, practices, or approaches.	**3** An identified evidence base supports some but not all of the standards, practices, or approaches.	**5** A documented evidence base supports the standards, practices, or approaches (e.g., literature review, research, etc.).		
8. If relevant (see #2), does your System/Agency have a mechanism such as an aligned assessment tool to measure performance against developmental standards?				
1 The System/Agency does not developmental standards available.	**3** The System/Agency has standards available but there is no way to assess against the standards.	**5** The System/Agency has a common set of standards for developmental practices and has an aligned assessment tool.		
Continuous Improvement				
9. How does the System/Agency collect data on quality across staff/units/programs? What data is collected? Is it uniform?				
1 The System/Agency does not collect data on quality across staff/units/programs.	**3** The System/Agency collects data on quality across some staff/units/programs but not all or it is not uniform.	**5** The System/Agency collects data on quality across all staff/units/programs and it is uniform.		
10. To what extent does the System/Agency examine and reflect on quality data and use it to inform developmental practices, procedures or policies?				
1 The System/Agency staff does not reflect on quality data from the sites.	**3** The System/Agency staff reflect to some degree on these data, but not to inform developmental practices, procedures or policies.	**5** The System/Agency staff reflect on these data to inform developmental practices, procedures or policies.		
11. How often do improvement plans include actions to enhance developmental practices? Do both the System/Agency and its component parts (e.g., schools, sites, programs) have improvement plans that include action to enhance developmental practices?				
1 Any improvement plans do not include actions to enhance developmental practices.	**3** Some improvement plans include actions to enhance developmental practices.	**5** The System/Agency improvement plan and all component part improvement plans include actions to enhance developmental practices.		
Resources & Alignment				
12. To what extent does your System/Agency budget support activities that promote developmental practices across all areas of delivery/instruction/programming/services?				
1 The System/Agency does not support developmental practices work with funding and resources.	**3** The System/Agency manages and coordinates a budget, staff and other resources to support a long-term plan to sustain and improve developmental practices across areas of delivery but the budget and the resources are inadequate.	**5** The System/Agency manages and coordinates a budget, staff and other resources to support a long-term plan to sustain and improve developmental practices across areas of delivery.[viii]		

Rubric: To what extent do official practices support or constrain developmental practice?

Directions for Use with Document Review: Insert specific language from the documents or into the corresponding cell that signals where on the scale of prohibitive to incentivizing the official practice falls.

Directions for Use with Interview: Notate the interviewees perception of practices by place a checkmark or recording relevant notes in the appropriate column for each row. [ix]

Prohibitive policies and practices. Limit or cut-off opportunities to foster youth readiness.

Not Prohibitive policies and practices. Do not actively prohibit or promote youth readiness.

Promotional policies and practices. Encourage opportunities and pathways to promote youth readiness.

Incentivizing policies and practices. Enable the promotion of youth readiness through funding and other incentives.

POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS	**Relational trust and respect** between and among staff, young people, and parents.				
	Structures that allow for **continuity in relationships,** thereby reducing anxiety and supporting engaged learning.				
ENVIRONMENTS FILLED WITH SAFETY & BELONGING	**A caring, culturally responsive learning community**, where young people are well known and valued and can learn in physical and emotional safety.				
	Structures that allow for **consistency in practices and predictability in routines** that reduce anxiety and support engaged learning.				
RICH INSTRUCTIONAL EXPERIENCES	**Meaningful work** that builds on young people's prior knowledge and experiences and actively engages them in rich, engaging tasks that help them achieve conceptual understanding and transferable knowledge and skills.				
	Inquiry as a major learning strategy, thoughtfully interwoven with explicit instruction and well-scaffolded opportunities to practice and apply learning.				
	Well-designed collaborative learning opportunities that encourage young people to question, explain, and elaborate their thoughts and co-construct solutions.				
	Ongoing diagnostic **assessments and opportunities** to receive timely and helpful **feedback**, develop and exhibit **competence**, and **revise** work to improve.				
	Opportunities to develop metacognitive skills through planning and management of complex tasks, self- and peer- assessment, and reflection on learning.				
INDIVIDUALIZED SUPPORTS	**Ongoing diagnostic assessments** to identify barriers to learning and development.				
	Access to integrated services (including physical and mental health and social service supports) that enable healthy development.				
	Access to learning opportunities that nurture positive relationships, support enrichment and mastery learning, and close achievement gaps.				
INTENTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL SKILLS, MINDSETS & HABITS	**Explicit instruction in social, emotional, and cognitive skills**, such as intrapersonal awareness, interpersonal skills, conflict resolution, and good decision-making.				
	Infusion of opportunities to learn and use social emotional skills, habits, mindsets throughout all aspects of their work.				
	Educative and restorative approaches to group management and discipline, so that children and youth learn responsibility for themselves and their community. [x]				

[i] Stephanie Malia Krauss, Karen Pittman, and Caitlin Johnson; The Forum for Youth Investment (2016) *Ready by Design: The Science (and Art) of Youth Readiness.*

[ii] Linda Darling-Hammond, Lisa Flook, Channa Cook-Harvey, Brigid Barron & David Osher (2020) *Implications for educational practice of the science of learning and development*, Applied Developmental Science, 24:2, 97-140.

[iii] The Forum for Youth Investment (2014) *Collective Impact for Policymakers: Working Together for Children and Youth.* https://forumfyi.org/knowledge-center/collective-impact-for-policymakers/

[iv] Krauss, Pittman, Johnson. *Ready by Design: The Science (and Art) of Youth Readiness.*

[v] The Forum for Youth Investment (2006) *Change Horsepower Diagnostic. https://forumfyi.org/knowledge-center/change-horsepower-diagnostic/*

[vi] Darling-Hammond, Flook, Cook-Harvey, Barron, Osher. *Implications for Educational Practice of the Science of Learning and Development.*

[vii] The Forum for Youth Investment (2006) *Document Review Rubric.*

[viii] The Forum for Youth Investment (2017). *The Wallace Foundation's Partnerships for Social Emotional Learning Initiative, Social Emotional Learning Inventory.*

[ix] The Forum for Youth Investment. *Change Horsepower Diagnostic.*

[x] Darling-Hammond, Flook, Cook-Harvey, Barron, Osher. *Implications for Educational Practice of the Science of Learning and Development.*