

Youth-Adult Partnership RUBRIC

A tool for professional
development and program
evaluation in youth settings

VERSION 1.0

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NZ *The Neutral Zone*
Where teens lead, create and innovate



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Youth-Adult Partnership Rubric

OVERVIEW

Youth-Adult Partnership (Y-AP) is an approach increasingly adopted in youth settings that involves youth and adults acting as partners for a common goal. Similar to the concepts of “youth-driven,” “youth participation” and “youth civic engagement,” it aims to increase **youth voice** and **youth leadership** in affairs that affect them and their communities. Growing research has suggested that such practice can contribute to youth empowerment (Wong, Zimmerman & Parker, 2010), enhance youth’s social-emotional learning (Akiva, Cortina, & Smith, 2014; Larson & Hansen, 2005) and promote effective school and community change (Mitra, 2008; Zeldin, Larson, Camino, & O’Connor, 2005).

This Rubric is developed based on a partnership between Community Evaluation and Research Collaborative (CERC) at University Outreach and Engagement, Michigan State University, and The Neutral Zone, Ann Arbor’s teen center. It is the primary product of a research study granted by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time, the Edmund A. Stanley, Jr. Research Grant with funding support from the Robert Bowne Foundation. It serves the following **purposes**:

1. To formalize the concepts of youth-adult partnership in youth settings
2. To be used as a low-stake peer/self-assessment tool for strengthening youth-adult partnership practices
3. To be used as a formative or summative evaluation tool for assessing the structures and processes of youth-adult partnership in youth settings



According to the article: **“The Psychology and Practice of Youth-Adult Partnership”** (Zeldin, Christens, & Powers, 2013), Y-AP is defined as “The practice of (a) multiple youth and multiple adults deliberating and acting together (b) in a collective (democratic) fashion (c) over a sustained period of time (d) through shared work (e) intended to promote social justice, strengthen an organization and/or to affirmatively address a community issue” (Zeldin, Christens, & Powers, 2013; pp. 390). Following this framework, the Rubric presents key indicators and behavioral examples suggested from extensive literature review and a series of observations, focus groups and interviews to capture the four critical dimensions of Y-AP highlighted in the article: **(1) authentic decision-making, (2) natural mentors, (3) reciprocity, and (4) community connectedness**. Although most of the observations were conducted in out-of-school time program settings for high-school aged adolescents, the Rubric should be applicable in any youth settings that intend to promote egalitarian relations between youth and adults.

Youth-Adult Partnership Rubric

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Contexts for rating:** Any settings that involve multiple youth and adult(s) working together with extensive dialogue for a common goal. Examples include: youth council meetings at schools or out-of-school time programs, clubs or extracurricular activities (i.e., arts, media production, robotic clubs, literacy programs, etc.).
- 2. Age groups:** This Rubric has been piloted and tested on high-school aged youth. It is designed for adults interacting with older middle-school and high-school aged adolescents.
- 3. Open the file or print:** The Rubric is designed in an interactive PDF format. You can use it on your computer or tablet, or simply print it out as regular rating sheets.
- 4. Read the items and rate:** We recommend that you spend some time getting acquainted with the Rubric before you start the observation and rating. Some people find it helpful to rate through ongoing observation; others like to rate the whole Rubric when the observation is finished. You may choose to pilot it beforehand to get yourself familiarized.
- 5. Rating scale:** The rating scale is 1 (low) - 5 (high); we provide specific descriptions for each score 1, 3, 5. You may find that sometimes the observables are above the lower score but not yet reaching the higher one. If you find yourself in between rating scores (i.e., 3 and 5), it is perfectly fine to rate a behavior as a 4. If you find an item is not applicable, check N/A.
- 6. Note-taking:** You may use the blank space at the end of each indicator to take notes and provide rationale for scoring. We have found it very helpful especially for sharing the results with your peers or for improvement purposes.
- 7. Total score:** A summary of the scores is available at the end of the Rubric. You may review the scores to find strengths and areas for improvement.
- 8. Submit:** This Rubric is a freely available instrument. Your submission of the data will help further improve the instrument. By clicking we'll receive the anonymous data with NO identifying information (i.e., your names, email addresses, etc.). The data will be automatically collected into our database and with a significant number of submissions, we'll be able to statistically test the psychometrics of the instrument and provide the reliability and validity results in the next version for future users. Your participation is completely voluntary; you may choose not to hit and we will have no access to the data you enter. Use the save and print functions to keep a copy for yourself. If you would like to erase all entries to start a new form, go to the cover page and hit "Start A Blank Form".



Youth-Adult Partnership Rubric

CONTEXT INFORMATION

DATE:

NUMBER OF YOUTH:

Male Female Undisclosed
 White Black Hispanic Asian Other/Undisclosed

NUMBER OF ADULTS:

Male Female Undisclosed
 White Black Hispanic Asian Other/Undisclosed

AGE RANGE OF THE GROUP:

CONTEXT:

School School-based afterschool program Community-based afterschool program Camp Boy/Girl Scouts

ZIP CODE:

HOW FAMILIAR ARE YOU WITH YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIP/YOUTH DRIVEN APPROACH?

Not familiar Slightly familiar Somewhat familiar Moderately familiar Extremely familiar



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Youth-Adult Partnership Rubric

CONTEXT INFORMATION

WHAT SETTING ARE YOU OBSERVING?:

Planning meetings

Youth council or board meeting

Special event planning

Other:

Program activities (i.e., school clubs or extracurricular activities):

Reading/Literacy

Media production

Risk prevention

Social studies

Music

Positive youth development

Science

Theater

Food and nutrition

Technology

Arts

Other:

Engineering

Robotic clubs

Math

Foreign language



DIMENSION 1:

Authentic Decision-making—Youth are involved in meaningful decision-making

	1	3	5	1 2 3 4 5 NA
<p>1.1 Youth’s voices are shared and valued.</p>	<p>Adults dominate group discussions. Youth voice is rarely solicited or valued.</p> <p>During meetings: Adults change topics, interrupt youth or push youth to follow their decisions.</p> <p>During activities: Adults direct and instruct youth throughout the activities.</p>	<p>Adults frequently solicit youth’s inputs, but new perspectives are rarely incorporated or extended upon.</p> <p>During meetings: Youth are invited to share their thoughts but their presence is mostly tokenized.</p> <p>During activities: Youth contribute new ideas for an activity, but new ideas are rarely accepted.</p>	<p>Adults intentionally support youth voice; new perspectives are as valued as past experiences.</p> <p>During meetings: Youth challenge routines and new possibilities are discussed thoroughly.</p> <p>During activities: Youth contribute new ideas for activities and are encouraged to try them out.</p>	<p>NOTES</p>
<p>1.2 Youth participate in authentic decision-making.</p>	<p>Youth participate in little or no decision-making. Decisions are mainly made by adults.</p> <p>During meetings: When planning a special event, all decisions have been made by adults. Youth are there to do the work.</p> <p>During activities: Adults decide what subject areas youth will learn.</p>	<p>Youth participate in some decision-making, but not on important items. Youth tend to seek adults’ approval for decisions or next steps.</p> <p>During meetings: When planning a special event, youth only get to vote on trivial or smaller Issues (ordering food).</p> <p>During activities: Adults consult with youth on what subject areas they’d like to learn before adults make decisions.</p>	<p>Youth participate in all decision-making, including both low- or high-stake items.</p> <p>During meetings: When planning a special event, adults collaborate with youth on decisions.</p> <p>During activities: Adults and youth collaborate on ideas or contents for subject learning.</p>	<p>NOTES</p>

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DIMENSION 1:

Authentic Decision-making—Youth are involved in meaningful decision-making

<p>1.3 Youth have key leadership roles or responsibilities.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p>Youth have minimal leadership roles and responsibilities. Adults are the leaders of the group.</p> <p>During meetings: Youth are only responsible for small roles and tasks.</p> <p>During activities: Youth learn from adults and do not demonstrate or lead anything.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>Youth have some leadership roles and responsibilities, but they are low-stake.</p> <p>During meetings: Youth act as meeting co-facilitators but only participate in note taking or rarely lead the discussions.</p> <p>During activities: Youth lead the ice-breaker activities, but not high-stake activities.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p>Youth take on key leadership roles and responsibilities that further develop their skills and networks.</p> <p>During meetings: Youth act as co-facilitator and lead the discussions.</p> <p>During activities: Youth co-teach with adults and demonstrate the activities.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5 NA</p> <p>NOTES</p>
<p>1.4 All youth participate fully in the conversation.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p>A few youth dominate the conversation and act as representing the whole group. There is little to no intention in trying to balance out unequal power among youth.</p> <p>During meetings: Only a few youth pay attention to the meeting. Facilitators do not try to engage others.</p> <p>During activities: Only a few youth are encouraged to present their work.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>A few youth dominate the conversation. There is some intention in trying to balance out unequal power among youth, but it often fails.</p> <p>During meetings: Only a few youth pay attention to the meeting. Facilitators try to engage others but often fail.</p> <p>During activities: All youth are encouraged to present their work, but only a few want to do so.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p>Youth participation is even. Youth may decline the opportunity to speak up based on their own comfort level but their full participation is present.</p> <p>During meetings: Almost all youth pay attention to the meeting.</p> <p>During activities: All youth are encouraged to present their work. The majority of them want to do so.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5 NA</p> <p>NOTES</p>
<p>1.5 The organization’s culture or by-laws supports youth governance.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p>Youth have no explicit roles beyond being a participant in the organization.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>Youth can take on certain leadership roles in program activities, but not for the whole organization governance.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p>Youth are part of the whole organization governance, as demonstrated by explicit roles they have across the organization.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5 NA</p> <p>NOTES</p>



DIMENSION 2:

Natural Mentors—Adults intentionally support relationships with youth to help them develop

	1	3	5	1	2	3	4	5	NA
<p>2.1 Adults support youth with appropriate boundaries.</p>	<p>Adults do not provide sufficient support for youth.</p> <p>During meetings: Youth express a concern but receive no support from adults.</p> <p>During activities: Adults overlook an individual youth's interest.</p>	<p>Adults support youth but fail to maintain appropriate boundaries.</p> <p>During meetings: Youth express a concern; adults overreact and take it on a personal level.</p> <p>During activities: Adults spend the whole session discussing an individual youth's interest.</p>	<p>Adults support youth with appropriate boundaries.</p> <p>During meetings: Youth express a concern; adults check in with youth and provide supportive advice.</p> <p>During activities: Adults acknowledge an individual youth's interest and direct them to valuable resources for advanced learning.</p>	<p>NOTES</p>					
<p>2.2 Adults are intentional in utilizing tasks to enhance youths' experiences and skills.</p>	<p>Youth take on activities that have limited opportunities to strengthen or develop new experiences and skills. Adults do not explicitly encourage them to take on more challenging tasks.</p> <p>During meetings: Youth and adults plan to set up interviews with new participants. Youth only volunteer to reserve rooms while adults do the interview.</p> <p>During activities: Youth complete the activity; adults do not help them improve or learn new things.</p>	<p>Youth take on activities that could be challenging and are provided with opportunities to strengthen or develop new experiences and skills. However, no further training or preparation is provided to prepare them for success.</p> <p>During meetings: Youth express interest in interviewing peers. Adults do not have plans for any training or protocol review ahead of time with youth.</p> <p>During activities: Youth complete the activity; adults provide some basic information that doesn't stimulate growth or discussion.</p>	<p>Youth take on activities that could be challenging and are provided with opportunities to strengthen or develop new experiences and skills. Adults foresee potential challenges and prepare youth for success.</p> <p>During meetings: Youth express interest in interviewing peers. Adults conduct role-playing activities to prepare youth for the interview.</p> <p>During activities: Youth complete the activity; adults provide essential information that stimulates learning new skills.</p>	<p>NOTES</p>					

DIMENSION 2:

Natural Mentors—Adults intentionally support relationships with youth to help them develop

<p>2.3 Adults are able to work with youth to maintain an organized, inclusive and collaborative environment for all.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p>Chaos, disorganization or dysfunction is frequently present in the activity youth participate in.</p> <p>During meetings: Discussions get off-track. Adults are unable to work with youth to get the discussion back on track for a long time.</p> <p>During activities: Adults come disorganized or unprepared for the activity.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>Sometimes the activity seems chaotic, disorganized or dysfunctional, but there is some support for collaboration and getting tasks accomplished.</p> <p>During meetings: Discussions get off-track. Sometimes adults are able to get the discussion back on track quickly while other times it varies.</p> <p>During activities: Adults forget to bring some materials for the lesson but are able to improvise.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p>Adults support an organized, inclusive and collaborative environment that helps youth work to meet their goals.</p> <p>During meetings: Discussions stay on-track with full participation. Meeting ends on time with goals accomplished.</p> <p>During activities: Youth are in good hands to complete their activity and enjoy the session.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5 NA</p> <p>NOTES</p>
<p>2.4 Adults are resourceful and intentional in enhancing youths' social capital.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p>Adults do not mention any resources or networks that could benefit youth.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>Adults mention resources or networks that could be beneficial to youth, but lack tangible actions.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p>Adults provide youth with specific contacts or information that could enhance their resources or networks.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5 NA</p> <p>NOTES</p>
<p>2.5 Adults are active listeners; youth reflect and develop own ideas.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p>Adults do most of the talking. Youth are constantly interrupted or have limited opportunity to share and develop their ideas.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>Adults are intentional in letting youth talk, but still end up doing most of the talking rather than being an active listener.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p>Adults act as active listeners by giving encouragement, repeating back what they're saying, giving wait time for youth to further develop their thoughts. Adults encourage youth to reflect and develop own ideas.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5 NA</p> <p>NOTES</p>

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DIMENSION 2:

Natural Mentors—Adults intentionally support relationships with youth to help them develop

<p>2.6 Adults help youth think through the complexity of issues and respect whatever conclusions youth reach.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p>Adults do not help youth think through the complexity of issues, or even if they do, they try to persuade youth what they think would be best for them to do.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>Adults help youth think through the complexity of issues. Sometimes they try to persuade youth what they think would be best for them to do; other times they encourage youth to reach their own conclusions.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p>Adults help youth think through the complexity of issues and make clear that they will respect whatever conclusions youth reach.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5 NA</p> <p>NOTES</p>
<p>2.7 Adults help youth think about goals and possibilities for the future, and identify steps to achieve them.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p>Adults do not help youth think about goals or opportunities for the future.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>Adults help youth think about goals and possibilities for the future. Yet, discussion is minimal and there are no clear steps to achieve these goals.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p>Adults help youth think about goals and possibilities for the future. Discussions include clear tangible steps to achieve these goals.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5 NA</p> <p>NOTES</p>
<p>2.8 Adults celebrate youths' progress, strengths and successes.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p>Adults do not mention any progress, strengths or successes youth have achieved.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>Adults mention some progress, strengths or successes youth have achieved; but youth do not have the opportunity to reflect on their experiences.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p>Adults mention some progress, strengths or successes youth have achieved. Youth are encouraged to reflect on their experiences.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5 NA</p> <p>NOTES</p>



DIMENSION 3:

Reciprocity—Youth and adults work together as partners

<p>3.1 Youth and adults create a mutual agenda.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p>The agenda is largely created by adults.</p> <p>During meetings: The meeting agenda is largely created by adults.</p> <p>During activities: Adults prepare what activities are to be delivered to youth.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>The agenda is created by adults with minimal youth input.</p> <p>During meetings: The meeting agenda is largely created by adults, but youth get to review it ahead of time for additions.</p> <p>During activities: Adults prepare what activities are to be delivered to youth, but ask youth if there is anything they want to add on.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p>The agenda is co-created by youth and adults.</p> <p>During meetings: Youth and adults co-create meeting agenda ahead of time.</p> <p>During activities: Youth and adults co-prepare for the delivery of activities.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5 NA</p> <p>NOTES</p>
<p>3.2 Youth and adults exchange ideas as supportive peers.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p>Youth and adults rarely draw on each other’s ideas.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>Youth and adults sometimes draw on each other’s ideas, but they don’t genuinely integrate those ideas together.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p>Youth and adults routinely seek out one another’s opinion and integrate their ideas. Intergroup interactions are natural.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5 NA</p> <p>NOTES</p>
<p>3.3 Youth and adults work collaboratively as supportive peers.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p>Youth and adults tend to work separately from one another.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>Youth and adults occasionally perform tasks that involve collaboration.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p>Youth and adults routinely perform tasks that involve collaboration.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5 NA</p> <p>NOTES</p>
<p>3.4 Youth and adults are co-learning partners.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p>Adults assume their role is to answer questions for youth or teach youth how to do their tasks.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>Adults encourage youth to share some knowledge but still think they know better or it’s their role to teach youth how to do their tasks.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p>Adults assume they don’t have all the answers and they’re willing to learn from youth or explore new possibilities with youth.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5 NA</p> <p>NOTES</p>



DIMENSION 4: Community Connectedness—Youth are engaged in communities

<p>4.1 Youth develop a sense of community through program involvement.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p>There is little to no opportunity for youth to develop on-going relationships and connections with each other.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>There are some opportunities for youth to develop relationships with each other, but youth do not have a sense of group membership.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p>Youth identify themselves as an active member of the group or the overall program.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5 NA</p> <p>NOTES</p>
<p>4.2 Youth are active contributors to the community.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p>Youth participate in activities beneficial to themselves.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>Youth participate in activities that benefit themselves and support the program as a whole.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p>Youth participate in activities that support themselves, the program as a whole, and the external community.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5 NA</p> <p>NOTES</p>
<p>4.3 Youth gain essential social capital through program involvement.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p>The activities provide no opportunities for youth to engage in communities outside of the organization.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>The activities provide youth with minimal opportunities to engage in communities outside of the organization.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p>The activities provide youth with meaningful opportunities to engage in communities outside of the organization. Collaboration includes planning or working together so youth can enhance their skills or networks.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5 NA</p> <p>NOTES</p>

Youth-Adult Partnership Rubric

SCORING

Please share your data for improvement of the Rubric by either entering the data in the PDF form and clicking the submit button below, faxing the pages to (517) 432-9541 or emailing to wuhengch@msu.edu.

Dimension 1: Authentic Decision-making—Youth are involved in meaningful decision-making		AVERAGE	
1.1	Youth’s voices are shared and valued.		
1.2	Youth participate in authentic decision-making.		
1.3	Youth have key leadership roles or responsibilities.		
1.4	All youth fully participate in the conversation.		
1.5	The organization’s culture or by-laws supports youth governance.		
Dimension 2: Natural Mentors—Adults intentionally support relationships with youth to help them develop		AVERAGE	
2.1	Adults support youth with appropriate boundaries.		
2.2	Adults are intentional in utilizing tasks to enhance youths’ experiences and skills.		
2.3	Adults are able to work with youth to maintain an organized, inclusive and collaborative environment for all.		
2.4	Adults are resourceful and intentional in enhancing youth’s social capital.		
2.5	Adults are active listeners; youth reflect and develop own ideas.		
2.6	Adults help youth think through the complexity of issues and respect whatever conclusions they reach.		
2.7	Adults help youth think about goals and possibilities for the future, and identify steps to achieve them.		
2.8	Adults celebrate youths’ progress, strength or success.		
Dimension 3: Reciprocity—Youth and adults work together as partners		AVERAGE	
3.1	Youth and adults create mutual agenda.		
3.2	Youth and adults exchange ideas as supportive peers.		
3.3	Youth and adults work collaboratively as supportive peers.		
3.4	Youth and adults are co-learning partners.		
Dimension 4: Community Connectedness—Youth are engaged in communities		AVERAGE	
4.1	Youth develop a sense of community through program involvement.		
4.2	Youth are active contributors to the community.		
4.3	Youth gain essential social capital through program involvement.		
Do you have any feedback on the rubric?		TOTAL The average of four dimension scores/highest score possible (5) x 100%	%