



## Communities and Schools Promoting Health

A Gateway to information on comprehensive school health (CSH) and health promoting schools (HPS)  
Providing links to research, reports, how-to manuals, planning & assessment tools, lesson plans and student webquests

<b>Understanding CSH</b>	<b>Applying CSH</b>	<b>Lesson Plans</b>	<b>Student Webquests</b>	<b>Trend/News Reports</b>
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### Youth Engagement Through Schools Summary *(Prepared 12/15/02)*

#### Background Information

- [Key Organizations](#)
- [Research/Reports/Initiatives](#)

This summary presents links to new educational, planning and assessment resources as well as research on engaging or empowering youth through school-community programs. These online and other documents have been identified through a variety of sources. Select items from the list in the right hand margin to find links to items of direct interest to educators and other front-line workers.

An Overview of the Issue

#### Policy/Program Development

- [Working With Youth](#)
- [Policy Models](#)
- [Planning/Assessment Tools](#)

Schools provide a number of opportunities for engaging youth in meaningful ways that will empower them and create processes and structures that ensure greater student involvement in educational and school decision-making. These include instructional strategies such as self-directed and cooperative learning strategies, project-based learning, student webquests and other online learning, formal student leadership programs and obligatory community service programs. There are also many ways that schools can empower and engage youth through school-based peer helper and mentoring programs, voluntary student activity programs, clubs and other extra-curricular activities. The policy, procedures and practices of the school can emphasize student involvement, fairness and assumption of responsibilities by young people. Further, the decision-making processes of the school can be modified to enhance student engagement, including formal roles for the Student Council, efforts to manage a wide range of students and the frequent use of formal needs assessments and student surveys.

#### Comprehensive Programs

- [Community-based](#)
- [Community and School](#)

Youth engagement is the meaningful participation and sustained involvement of a young person in an activity which has a focus outside of himself or herself. Youth can be engaged in many things, and in many different ways. It may involve doing volunteer work, participating in a youth organization, playing in a band or a school orchestra, working for a political party or a non-governmental organization, or taking part in the activities of one's church, mosque or synagogue, among many other things. Some youth will take a leadership role in these activities, helping to organize other youth in their efforts, while other youth will be satisfied to be participants in the activity or organization.

#### Whole School Programs

- [School Climate/Policies](#)
- [Staff/Volunteer Training](#)
- [Consulting Students](#)

#### Student Representatives

An expert on youth participation (Roger Hart) has described such involvement in an eight step Ladder, described below in reverse order. The bottom three rungs describe youth involvement that is not true participation whereas the top five rungs describe true participation.

#### Instructional Programs

- [Active Learning](#)
- [Project-based Learning](#)
- [Online Learning](#)
- [Community Service Learning](#)

Degrees of Participation

Youth-initiated, shared decisions with adults is when projects or programs are initiated by youth and decision-making is shared among youth and adults. These projects empower youth while at the same time enabling them to access and learn from the life experience and expertise of adults.

#### Social Support

- [Peer Helper Programs](#)
- [Student Leadership Programs](#)
- [Student Clubs/Sports](#)
- [After School Programs](#)
- [Mentoring Programs](#)

8. Youth-initiated, shared decisions with adults is when projects or programs are initiated by youth and decision-making is shared among youth and adults. These project empower youth while enabling them to learn from experience and the expertise of adults.

7. Youth-initiated and directed is when young people initiate and direct a project or program  
Adults are involved only in a supportive role.

#### Youth Services

- [Empowering/Friendly](#)
- [Crisis/Help Lines](#)
- [Advisory Services](#)

6. Adult-initiated, shared decisions with youth is when projects or programs are initiated by adults but the decision-making is shared with the young people.

5. Consulted and informed is when youth

#### Key Resourceurs

#### [Voices & Choices](#)

- [An Assessment/Planning Tool](#)

#### [United Nations/Health Canada](#)

- [A Statement on Youth Participants](#)

- [Canada's Plan of Action](#)

- [Report on Canada's Progress](#)

#### [Canadian Association for School Health](#)

- [Organization Self-Assessment Tool](#)

- [Research Summary](#)

#### [Canadian Association of Principals](#)

- [Student Leadership Awards](#)

#### CAHPERD

- [Spirit of Sports Awards](#)

- [Canadian Active Living Challenge](#)

- [Student Leadership Program \(CIRA\)](#)

- [Playground Leadership Program \(CIRA\)](#)

- [Health in Perspective \(CIRA\)](#)

#### CASAA

- [Leadership Handbook](#)

- [Student Activity Sourcebook](#)

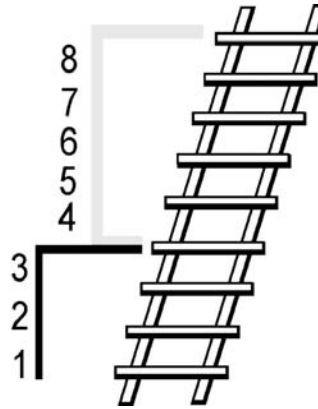
- [Making It Work](#)

#### [Centre of Excellence on](#)

- Employment/Education Services
- Personal Counseling/Support

give advice on projects or programs designed and run by adults. The youth are informed about how their input will be used and the outcomes of the decisions made by adults.

4. Assigned but informed is where youth are assigned a specific role and informed about how and why they are being involved.
3. Tokenism is where young people appear to be given a voice, but in fact have little or no choice about what they do or how they participate.
2. Decoration is where young people are used to help or "bolster" a cause in a relatively indirect way, although adults do not pretend that the cause is inspired by youth.
1. Manipulation is where adults use youth to support causes and pretend that the causes are inspired by youth



#### Youth Engagement

- Fostering Engagement in Schools Planner
- Youth Engagement and Health Outcomes
- Survey of Youth-Serving Organizations
- McGill University
- Student Engagement in Learning and School Life

Research collected by the Centre of Excellence on Youth Engagement indicates that activities and programs to engage youth can:

- make youth more aware of those in society who are disadvantaged
- help youth cope with stressful life situations
- provide youth with supportive social networks
- enhance their social skills
- increase their sense of what kind of work or occupation they might enjoy
- increase their sense of competence
- increase their self-esteem
- give them a better sense of what is right and wrong
- decrease problem behaviours
- increase their academic performance and their likelihood of going on to higher education
- enhance their life skills in areas such as public speaking
- make them feel empowered, valued and important
- help them get along better with adults
- increase their leadership abilities
- increase their sense of social responsibility
- reduce drug use, teen pregnancy and aggression

This summary and collection of resources is aimed primarily at adults working in or with schools systems who are interested in promoting youth engagement through school-based and school-linked programs, practices and policies.

There are numerous on-line sources of information and advice about youth engagement and empowerment, including:

- the [Centre of Excellence on Youth Engagement](#) (Funded by Health Canada)
- the [McCreary Centre](#) in British Columbia
- the [youth resources](#) on the [Canadian Health Network](#)
- our collection of links to resources and research (See the right hand margin of this page)
- our collection of [lesson plans](#), student webquests on social development

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**Administered by: Shannon & McCall Consulting Ltd.**