Blurring the Lines: Being Allies in the Pursuit of Readiness, Equity, and Quality

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Working **together** we can make this happen
The Path to Improved Outcomes Starts with Providing Opportunities powerful enough to literally *Change the Odds*

Commitments to equality, access and completion are important steps that can help youth move along the path. More specific commitments to ensure equity, quality and readiness are needed to change the odds.
Programs can Change the Odds by Thinking Differently

Helping individual youth beat the odds

Preparing all youth to change the odds

#rb21

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Systems and Communities can Change the Odds by Thinking Differently
• **Knowing the Odds/Changing the Odds – the power of interventions**
• **New Science and Consensus Frames – ideas as interventions**
• **Moving Forward NOW – partnering to blur the lines**

Three Topics for Today
Pathways to the Middle Class: Balancing Personal and Public Responsibilities

Isabel V. Sawhill, Scott Winship, and Kerry Searle Granits
September 20, 2012
Starting Out Off Track Doesn’t Mean You Stay Off Track
... and vice versa

Key Determinants of Being “On Track”

Family Formation:
Marriage, Delayed parenthood,
Maternal education & employment
Normal birthweight babies

Early childhood (0-5):
Reading & math skills
Social behavior

Middle childhood (5-11):
Reading & math skills
Social-emotional skills

Adolescence (11-19):
High school grad w/c+
No convictions, No children

Young Adults (19-29):
Live independently
P.S. degree or above poverty income
Being on Track is More Important than Being Advantaged.

But kids from less advantaged families are only half as likely to be on track all the time (17% vs 37%)
Kids Born to Less Advantaged Families are Less Likely to be On Track at each Life Stage

![Bar Chart]

- Early Childhood (Age 5): 59% Born Less Advantaged, 72% Born More Advantaged
- Middle Childhood (Age 11): 60% Born Less Advantaged, 77% Born More Advantaged
- Adolescence (Age 19): 41% Born Less Advantaged, 70% Born More Advantaged
- Transition to Adulthood (Age 29): 48% Born Less Advantaged, 70% Born More Advantaged
- Adulthood (Age 40): 49% Born Less Advantaged, 71% Born More Advantaged

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...as are Children and Youth of Color

[Bar chart showing percent meeting benchmark across different stages of life for White, Black, and Hispanic populations.]
What Interventions Help More Youth Climb the Income Ladder?

**Family Formation**
contraception, teen pregnancy prevention, and social marketing campaigns or NGO funding to encourage youth to behave responsibly

**Early Childhood**
home visiting programs and high quality preschool

**Middle Childhood**
school quality, SEL, and access to healthcare

**Adolescence**
juvenile justice, teen pregnancy prevention, school quality

**Young Adulthood**
college access and completion

**Adulthood**
labor market, income assistance, career and technical education, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training
How Much Do They Help?

Early childhood education helped, but the impact fades over time.
Multiple sustained investments have larger, longer-lasting effects on Kids Born Low Income ...

Smallest Gains in Adolescence
Multi-Stage Interventions Reduce White-Black Success Gap ... Except in Adolescence

![Graph showing the success gap reduction in different stages of life.](image)
New Science & Consensus Frames
The SEAD Commission, The SoLD Initiative and More!
Final Reports

The final report and the accompanying recommendations reports are written for a K-12 audience but use inclusive language (e.g. adult capacity, learning settings) and include recommendations focused on OST.
SEAD Commission’s Six Recommendation Areas

1. Set a clear vision that broadens the definition of student success to prioritize the whole child
   • Align action plans, budgets, adult workforce development; use measures across school and OST to support continuous improvement.

2. Transform learning settings so they are safe and supportive for all young people
   • Bring assets of community organizations into the life of the school.

3. Change instruction to teach social, emotional, cognitive skills; embed these skills in academics and in schoolwide practices

4. Build adult expertise in child development

5. Align resources and leverage partners in the community to address the whole child.
   • Fund dedicated positions in schools and districts to intentionally engage partners...
   • Provide access to quality summer school and afterschool programming for each young person.
   • Use data to identify and address gaps in students’ access to full range of learning opportunities in and out of school.

6. Forge closer connections between research and practice
   • …robust data-sharing agreements between schools and other youth-serving agencies to collaboratively address strengths and challenges
SEAD’s 4 Graphics

The Evidence Base for HOW LEARNING HAPPENS

The Practice Base for How Learning Happens

PreK-12 Education Ecosystem

Where and When Learning Happens

Expanding our understanding of all the places and times young people grow and learn
The final graphic summarizing how SEL (or SEAD) can be explained acknowledges the broader competencies, mindsets and values.

It also makes the distinction between cognitive skills and academic content. This was an important win.

(Social, emotional and academic is still the name of the Commission, but the distinction is acknowledged in the research agenda and final report.)
SoLD: Building Blocks for Learning Framework

A Framework for Comprehensive Student Development
Commision Consistent with Other Frames

- The 2002 NRC report, Community Programs that Promote Youth Development, identified 4 developmental domains that predict adult success:
  - **Physical development**
    - good health habits, risk management skills
  - **Intellectual development**
    - school success, critical thinking, decision-making, life skills, vocational skills
  - **Psychological and emotional development**
    - good mental health, positive self-regard, self-regulation, coping skills, autonomy, effective time management
  - **Social development**
    - connectedness, sense of place, attachment to pro-social institutions, ability to navigate cultural contexts, commitment to civic engagement

The 2015 CCSR Report, Foundations for Young Adult Success, funded by the Wallace Foundation, helps us understand how the skillsets and mindsets build an interconnect.
Commission Affirms Theory of Action

**LEARNING SETTINGS**
Learning and development are influenced by the familial, community, and societal contexts in which students grow. Learning settings that support young people’s comprehensive growth often focus on 3 essential elements.

- Teaching and practicing social, emotional, and cognitive skills
- Embedding social, emotional, and cognitive skills into academic learning
- Safe and relationship-based learning environments

**STUDENT EXPERIENCE**
These settings lead can lead to learning experiences where young people are more likely to be engaged and grasp complex academic content.

- Engagement, ownership, and purpose
- Rigorous academic content and learning experiences
- Sense of belonging and connection to community

**STUDENT OUTCOMES**
The evidence shows that students who experience these learning settings are more likely to achieve success both now and in the future.

- Academic success and educational attainment
- Civic and community engagement
- Life well-being
- Workforce and career readiness
Frames Confirm that Learning Setting Quality is More Than Content

NRC Features of Positive Developmental Settings
(Community Programs that Promote Youth Development, 2002)

- Physical and psychological safety
- Appropriate structure
- Supportive relationships
- Opportunities to Belong
- Positive Social Norms
- Supports for Efficacy and Mattering
- Opportunities for Skill Building
- Integration of Family, School and Community Efforts
Commission Affirms Importance of Learning Settings & Partners Beyond School

The ecosystem graphic, created early on to reflect the general importance of a wide range of entities, was updated to de-emphasize the roles local community actors play in supporting learning and development.

Local Community
- Youth Development Organizations
- Local employers
- Health and Social Services
- Faith-based and Civic Organizations
A Youth Development Work Group was created to ensure that the “community” ring had a voice in shaping the final reports and recommendations.

The group also created its own issue brief.

Youth Development Work Group Recommendations

- Include youth development partners in setting a clear vision.
- Strengthen and expand adult capacity.
- Create and support engaging learning settings throughout the day and the year.
- Provide systems and supports to maintain partnerships.
- Leverage resources efficiently and equitably.
Commission Embraces Value of Defining Learning Settings by Characteristics, Not Just System

The graphic curated by the YD Work Group offers a more nuanced perspective on where and when learning happens that improved the dialogue with K-12 leaders.

The graphic is included in the research brief and the final report.
Taking Action ... NOW
Equity has to be linked to readiness

We have to get kids ready to play in the game

This starts by asking them how they see the games, the rules, and the resources in their communities
Acknowledge the power of “in the meantime” improvements... and the science behind them.

Persistent Contextual & Structural Barriers

Strategies for Optimizing Youth Potential

EQUITY

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read·i·ness

NOUN
1. the *willingness* to do something
2. the state of *being fully prepared* for something

How does belonging fit in?

COM-B Model
- Capacity
- Motivation
- Opportunity
- Behavior

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Belonging is a Fundamental Need

The need for social connections is innate and universal

It is a need not a want
Belonging is a Fundamental Need.
Do I Belong Here?

Peer doesn’t say “hi” in passing

I’m not sure I belong.

No one here likes me.

Less effort towards relationships.

Interpretation

Yes, I belong!

They just didn’t see me.

Response

Be more direct next time.
Belonging and Equity

Addressing educational achievement gaps and other inequitable life outcomes requires structural solutions

Structural inequality and discrimination → Lower sense of belonging → Inequitable outcomes

“In the meantime”
Addressing issues related to the diversity of staff and volunteers and the appropriateness of programming and curricula can increase the chances that youth participants...

Feel safe showing their skill levels Capacity + Feel supported enough to try Motivation + See the relevance of the Opportunity = Feel confident their Behavior will be interpreted correctly
What Learning Could Look Like Settings Across Systems

What are some of the unique things about the OST context?

- Exploration
- Lower stakes, trying new things, failure is more okay
- Gives young people new ways to excel
- Authentic relationships with adults and peers
- Focus on relationships
- More opportunity for voice and choice.
- Age diversity
- Grouped by interest
- No grading. Kids are more apt to try new things to because of the lack of evaluation
- Fun
- Don’t have to go – it’s optional (or can be)
- Adults are more reflective of the background of the kids than in the school day
- Facilitation more than instruction
- Relationship Continuity (Staff may turn over, but it’s possible that the kid could have the same relationships over years in a way that they can’t in school where teachers change every year.)
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Affirming Potential is than a curricula...

“I’ve come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It’s my personal approach that creates the climate. It’s my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child’s life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanized or dehumanized.”

-DR. HAIM GINOTT
THE
POWER
YOU
CARRY

Who is “you?” Can you become “we” rather than “they”?
The Practice Dilemma
The Official doesn’t explicitly name Developmental

Required or Established Practices codified by each system or setting as necessary for the achievement of official outcomes

Official Practices

Developmental Practices

Informal or optional practices that support growth and development and are necessary for the development of youth’s sense of agency
The Readiness Practices

community-oriented
relational
resourced
safe and structured
socially and culturally responsive
strengths-based
youth-centered

coop and care
equip & empower
skillfully plan and execute
train and assess

are stage and age appropriate
build skills and mastery
challenge and engage
connect to real life
encourage agency and choice
promote group work

observe and explore
practice and demonstrate
apply and connect
reflect and refine
Blurring the Lines for Educational Equity: increase ownership and engagement across settings
Connecting Readiness, Equity, Quality to a more Nuanced Definition of Where/When/How Learning Happens helps to . . .

- reinforce the roles that families, communities, peers
- specify the full range of learning environments
- promote consistent standards for all learning environments
- acknowledge that adult educators cross institutional boundaries
- affirm the need for consistent recognition and cross training
- recognize the cumulative impact differences in access and quality across learning environments
- advocate for better and more data
- highlight the need for more and better funded supports and for coordinated partnering
Beating the Odds vs. Changing the Odds

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The Forum is committed to changing the odds that all children and youth are ready for college, work and life.

We connect leaders to ideas, services and networks that can help them make more intentional decisions that are good for young people, even in the face of limited resources.

We help leaders who are trying to improve & align policies, plan & partner for impact, and/or strengthen programs & adult practice.
is the proud home of...

Helps leadership groups build broader partnerships, set bigger goals, use data better and implement bolder strategies.

Builds quality improvement systems to strengthen practices and programs serving young people.

Supports state and local policy leaders.

Mobilizes action by and for young people.

Works to expand economic mobility and close the opportunity gap in America.