



Western Cape
Government

Norms and Standards for Youth Development

Department of Social Development

July 2017

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1. INTRODUCTION

According to Census 2011, the Western Cape is home to 2, 2 million young people between the ages of 15 and 34 years old. The Provincial Department of Social Development recognizes that young people are the heart and future of the Western Cape's economy, however a significant number of young South Africans experience exclusion through the debilitating effects of poverty, dysfunctional home environments, poor education, lack of appropriate skills and unemployment. In order to create more support, opportunities and services for all young people, the Western Cape Government adopted the Western Cape Youth Development Strategy that provides a roadmap for the provision of integration services to young people in order for them to better engage with their environment and successfully transition into responsible, independent, and stable adults¹.

The Provincial Youth Development Strategy is based on five pillars: strengthening families, improving education and training, increasing access to economic opportunities, giving youth a positive sense of belonging, and providing effective services and support to reconnect to society those youth who may have experienced social exclusion.

The Department of Social development is the lead Department in advancing developmental opportunities for the youth of the Western Cape. The vision of the Department of Social Development as set out in the Provincial Youth Development Strategy has vision that by age 25 all young people of the province should be economically self-sufficient, independent, healthy, with positive family relations, personal and social relationships and should be active in the community.

Youth Development services within DSD is informed by three key policy and strategic imperatives:

- i) The first is the Youth Development Strategy of the Department of Social Development (DSDYDS). This strategy informs and provides a strategic and conceptual framework and guide to all youth targeted programmes and initiatives funded by DSD.
- ii) The second is the Provincial Youth Development Strategy (PYDS), which is transversal strategic framework that guides all youth –targeted programmes

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across the Provincial Government. The DSDYDS and PYDS are strategies that are fundamentally aligned to each other – having very similar long-term strategic outcomes.

- iii) The third policy and strategic imperative is the Provincial Strategic Plan (PSP). Youth Development is now a key Strategic Provincial Goal, notably Strategic Goal 2: Improve education outcomes and opportunities for youth development.

A recent provincial-wide audit, found that the Western Cape Government spends in excess of R700 million on various youth targeted intervention across government departments in the Western Cape. Similarly the Department of Social Development has a number of programmes that also provide youth targeted interventions. These interventions are very often not reported and therefore the full extent of youth development services are seldom captured and reported on. This gap in understanding the full scope of youth targeted interventions has a bearing on the Department's ability to report on the implementation of the Provincial Youth Development Strategy.

2. Norms and Standards for Youth Development

Substantial research confirms that high-quality youth development programs positively impact social skill development, academic achievement, and risk reduction for the youth they serve. While a variety of factors contribute to quality, research shows that trained and skilled staff are essential to creating safe, engaging, interactive, youth-centered programs. Standards for Youth Development Programs have been created to support programs in achieving positive youth outcomes by providing staff with guidelines for what quality looks like in a program setting. The Standards are not intended to be a regulatory checklist but rather a definition of quality that programs can use to pursue continuous improvement. The Standards provide a research-based framework for providers to understand and measure program quality and to plan for improvement.

Standards are developed to achieve and support and that is based on three principles:

- Program quality matters: High-quality youth development programs are directly related to youth achievement of positive social, emotional, health, and academic gains.
- Program quality is measurable: There is great consistency in what researchers find most effective for youth development programs, and many assessments of program quality use similar indicators.

- Program quality can be improved: When programs focus on strengthening instructional practices aligned to indicators of quality, the quality of programs can be enhanced to produce better outcomes for youth.

It is important to remember that while quality standards provide a shared framework for community collaborations and encourage programs to involve young people in meaningful ways, standards alone cannot change the quality of programs or the skills of program staff and volunteers. The Standards provide a research-based framework for providers to understand and measure program quality and to plan for improvement. Furthermore, programmes plans should incorporate realistic and achievable goals so that programmes can work toward meeting the Standards gradually and systematically through tangible steps.

3. Guiding Principles:

Quality programs provide safe, healthy, and developmentally appropriate learning environments for all participants.

- The program ensures a safe and developmentally appropriate physical environment for all activities.
- The program provides a variety of activities, information, education, and resources to help youth identify and manage their physical, social, and emotional needs.
- The program promotes positive health, nutrition, and safety.
- The program has clear policies and procedures in place to protect the safety of all children, youth, and staff, including abuse prevention guidelines and reporting protocol.
- Staff provides an emotionally safe, welcoming, and supportive environment free of violence, intimidation, aggression, or bullying for all participants.

The benefits of standards:

Parents and Families - To understand the key elements of a high quality program and to be able to advocate for quality programs in their own communities.

- Funders and Policy makers - To link funding to research-based practices that lead to measurable outcomes.
- Organisations - To understand the key elements of high quality programs.

Norm	Standard	Outcomes
<p>Organisations has intentional programme design</p>	<p><u>The Program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively recruits and hires staff that reflects the community of the young people served • Evidence available that a needs analysis was conducted in order to understand the community needs • Programmes must be aligned to PYDS • States its explicit commitment to diversity and equity in its outreach materials and/or policies • Is aware of and seeks further information and strategies to support all participant needs • Creates a welcoming environment by representing the diversity of the participants through program materials, displays, etc. • Celebrates diversity related to participants' race, religion, sex, 	

	<p>age, income level, nationality, physical ability, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity and expression</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aligned with the requirements of the work environment • <p><u>The Staff</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in on-going diversity and sensitivity training • Adapt activities to accommodate the physical and developmental abilities of all participants, and actively encourage their participation in the program • To be role models for the youth on how to act in a work environment • <p><u>Participant Level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants and staff are comfortable and given opportunities to share, their diverse experiences and 	
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	<p>backgrounds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants are willing to be part of a work type environment to give them exposure of what it is like in a work situation. • <p><u>The organisation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops a clear vision, mission and goals for each programme • The programme achievement of positive social, emotional, health, and academic gains for young people. • Program quality is measurable and there is consistency between researcher, best practice and implementation • The organisation informs participants, parents and community of programmes outcomes • The programme has targeted outcomes, and performs 	
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	<p>continuous monitoring and evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes a clear procedure for getting consent to collect information from stakeholders that addresses the purpose of the information. • Records and keeps track of the information it collects in a manner that protects the confidentiality of stakeholders. • Shares lessons learned and key outcomes from the quality improvement process with stakeholders and request their feedback. • Program quality can be continuously improved to produce better outcomes for youth. 	
	<p><u>The Staff</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design activities to make progress toward program's goals and outcomes • Purposefully develop and 	

	<p>implements routine and structure in programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regular self-assessment of • Assess individual performance and attending professional development opportunities that expand their capacity. • Help collect data and are supported in using this data to understand strengths and weakness in programming. • Solicit participant feedback about program activities. • Share data about the program strengths and challenges with participants, and involve them in program planning • Use outcomes to prioritize future program design, professional development, and program practices 	
	<p><u>The Participants</u></p>	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand goal and vision • Provide insight into programming to review programme design
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Norm	Standard	
Sound Programme management	<p><u>The Organisation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has developed defined roles, procedures and practices for staff, volunteers and partners • Develops and shares coherent information around fiscal management, personnel policies, and program operation • Has a clear organizational structure, which allows staff to focus on the needs of participants, and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff job descriptions • Lines of supervision • Information about who to ask for resources • The percentage of direct service and 	



	<p>administrative costs that is allocated for each position</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong fiscal management system that includes: • A well-documented budget with line item expenses and the duration and amount of each revenue source • Crowding in of resources for sustainability • Organisation should have sound business principles that could serve as a model to young people in order development business. • <p><u>The Staff</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use various well-defined channels of communication, including regular meetings, with all stakeholders • Keep up-to-date and accessible records on all participants and employees • Manage site-level budgets • Make an effort to develop management 	
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	<p>and leadership skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep informed about new research, best practices, and innovations in expanded learning programs 	
<p>Quality staff</p>	<p><u>The Organisation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruits and hires staff based on experience, knowledge, interest and ability • Provides staff and volunteers with clear titles and job descriptions; continuous training and professional development; resources and materials to deliver activities and on-the-job coaching • Supports staff with information regarding funding requirements, budgets, and any information that affects the day-to-day operations of the program • Provides competitive pay • Allows participants and other stakeholders to provide feedback on staff and volunteers <p><u>The Staff</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a program that meets thought out requirements 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate activities that engage students in active and meaningful experiences that build mastery and expand horizons • Welcome and engage volunteers in roles that meaningfully and effectively support student learning • Role model to the young people ethical principles applicable to the business environment. • 	
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<p>Family, School and Community Engagement</p>	<p><u>The Organisation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops collaborative partnerships that are formalized through written agreements, and are maintained through meetings and communication • Coordinates a partnership between the instructional day and expanded learning program • Actively engages potential partners (public and private) in order to sustain 	
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	<p>program services and create opportunities for participants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses culturally and linguistically appropriate strategies to engage families as advocates for their children's development • Trains staff to work collaboratively with internal and external stakeholders in order to achieve program goals • Proper evaluation needs to be conducted to make sure that youth with a passion for youth development in an organisational structure • Decision-making as part of a process of continuous improvement is informed by various stakeholders <p><u>The Staff</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage, communicate, and connect parents to information and services available to them within their community and school • Regularly meet (formally and informally) 	
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	<p>with partners to discuss data and agree upon program goals and design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold collaborative meetings with both internal and external partners to discuss impact, highlights, and areas of growth 	
<p>Create a safe, supportive (physically and psychologically) environment</p>	<p><u>The Organisation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops policies and procedures to: • Communicate health, safety, and behaviour procedures with staff, participants, and families; • Identify the health and medical needs of participants; ensure that staff are easily identifiable (e.g., staff shirts, vests, badges, etc.); • Create spaces that are accessible for people with disabilities • Ensure that staff, participants, families, and school partners understand where participants are located throughout the duration of the program; • ensure that staff are trained in safety and first aid; clearly document and communicate incidents (i.e. written 	

reports and phone records); and maintain an easily accessible list of all participants with current emergency contacts

The Staff

- Use procedures and policies for safety
- Intentionally build and maintain trusting, nurturing, and supportive relationships with participants
- Intentionally identify participant strengths, interests, and learning styles, and encourage participants to develop skills related to their strengths and interests
- Hold participants to high expectations for behaviour and achievement by acknowledging positive behaviour accomplishments; and intervening when participants engage in unsafe behaviour
- Provide an environment free of violence, intimidation, aggression, or bullying for all participants

The Participants

- Actively co-create behavioural

	<p>agreements in collaboration with program staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants and staff share responsibility in building a sense of community and belonging 	
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<p>Foster positive relationships with adults and peers</p>	<p>The Organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has structured to create appropriate and trusting relationships among youth and caring staff/volunteers <p>The Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a welcoming environment with opportunities for youth to connect with each other and build community • Communicate high expectations to young people • Model professional relationships and safe, healthy boundaries 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and youth engage each other in positive and respectful ways through deliberate listening, acceptance, and appreciation 	
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<p>Youth voice, choice and leadership</p>	<p>The Organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliberately create opportunities to exercise choice and access authentic leadership roles • Provides participants with opportunities and space to share their viewpoints, concerns, or interests in order to impact program practices or policies • The program provides opportunities for participants to actively exercise their leadership skills and address real world problems that they identify in their communities • The program trains staff to facilitate youth voice and leadership <p>The Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage participants on a regular basis to 	
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	<p>share their perspectives regarding program and the quality of their experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff work to recognize the leadership potential in young people and nurture opportunities for them to develop their leadership skills by providing authentic leadership roles <p>The Participants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in leadership roles • Take ownership of programme design • Express themselves • Reflect on their experience • Evaluation form after each training 	
<p>Nurture self-worth amongst participants</p>	<p>The Organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurture higher aspirations, capacity, healthier choices and enjoyment maintains a healthy culture and environment • Promotes healthy lifestyles. • Create an environment with high 	

	<p>standards and expecting more rather than less from participants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>The Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff provide daily opportunities for participants to engage in developmentally appropriate, research-based nutrition and physical activities that support program goals. • Understand how knowledge, skills, and behaviours around health contribute to academic performance and a positive socio-emotional lifestyle • Affirm that what participants express is valued • Recognise participants for their potential – they set goals and understand that success is possible for them 	
<p>Enable youth to discover themselves, and develop personal values and norms</p>	<p>The Organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognises the value of personal reflection 	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth are given opportunities for autonomy to foster a greater sense of agency • Supports youth to develop skills in decision-making, planning, and goal setting • Creates opportunities for participants to express ideas, exchange information, solve problems, and derive meaning <p>The Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate personal reflection • Support and encourage youth to make decisions and solve problems they find meaningful • Design and facilitate activities to encourage youth to value, acknowledge, and celebrate their own and their peers' improvement and efforts 	
<p>Ensure active, engaged learning and/or skill building</p>	<p>The Organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports projects and activities in which participants demonstrate mastery by working toward a final product or 	



	<p>presentation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports activities in which participants develop and demonstrate 21st century skills. • Ensures Activities engage different learning styles (e.g. auditory-sequential, visual-spatial, kinaesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, etc.) and different skill levels, enabling all youth to participate, benefit, and experience success. <p>The Staff</p> <p>Use practices that support mastery such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing youth with opportunities to practice skills • Sequencing activities to allow participants to build on previously learned skills. • Facilitating youth reflections and offering constructive feedback to help youth learn from their experiences of successes, mistakes, and failures • Helping youth make links between the activity and their lives outside of the program 	
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	<p>The Participants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants are involved in projects, activities, and events that increase their understanding and use of 21st century skills 	
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<p>Foster Opportunities to Belong</p>	<p>The Organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth participate in meaningful activities where they feel safe and welcome • Creates opportunities for leadership and authentic engagement by participants • Youth make choices show progress on a range of academic and social and emotional indicators • Encourages positive relationships with peers, volunteers and staff <p>The Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster positive relationships with participants • Facilitate meaningful activities and 	
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	<p style="text-align: center;">engagement</p> <p>The Participants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively engage in discussions and activities 	
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<p>Environment values and embraces diversity and equity</p>	<p>The Organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively recruits and hires staff that reflects the community of the students served • States its explicit commitment to diversity and equity in its outreach materials and/or policies • Is aware of and seeks further information and strategies to support all participant needs • Creates a welcoming environment by representing the diversity of the participants through program materials, displays, etc. • Celebrates diversity related to participants' race, religion, sex, age, income level, nationality, physical ability, 	
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	<p>sexual orientation, and/or gender identity and expression</p> <p>The Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in on-going diversity and sensitivity training • Adapt activities to accommodate the physical and developmental abilities of all participants, and actively encourage their participation in the program <p>Participant Level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants and staff are comfortable and given opportunities to share, their diverse experiences and backgrounds 	
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SIGN OFF			
DESIGNATION	NAME	SIGNATURE	DATE
Programme Manager: Youth Development	JAMES ALBANIE		31.07.17
Director: Community Development	LIONEL ARNOLDS		31/07/2017