

Office of Child and Youth Success

OPTIMIZING SUCCESS FOR YOUTH THROUGH POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Presented by Juárez & Associates

April 2025



Office of Child
and Youth Success

Office of Child and Youth Success

Mission

The Office of Child and Youth Success is dedicated to prioritizing San Diego's youngest community by providing equitable access to programs, resources, and services that aim to improve social, emotional, health and educational outcomes.

Objectives

Through trust, transparency, equity and inclusion, the City of San Diego's Office of Child and Youth Success coordinates a network of stakeholders that contribute to a shared vision for delivering high-impact solutions to challenging circumstances for young people and caregivers who strive to build a community where they can thrive.

Vision

- ❖ Create a culture of trust and transparency into the planning, developing and execution process of the The Child and Youth Strategic Plan (CYP) to implement shared goals that address systemic inequities and challenges affecting children, youth, and their families.
- ❖ Create children and youth-centered partnerships with various local stakeholder groups, including state and national conveners, to centralize processes to execute the CYP goals.
- ❖ Leverage public and private resources and assets to support long-term sustainable programs, resources and services that are grounded in evidence-based frameworks which address the identified system weaknesses.

The Child and Youth Strategic Plan 2024-26

Purpose

In July 2024, the San Diego City Council approved the first-ever youth centered strategic vision plan to ensure accountability, equity and a shared framework for stakeholders.

The Child and Youth Strategic Plan (CYP) 2024-2026 targets five focus areas:

- 1) Education and Career Pathways
- 2) Economic and Workforce Development
- 3) Youth Empowerment
- 4) Engaging Activities
- 5) Child Care



CYP can be found at:

<https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/2024-07/child-and-youth-plan.pdf>

Agenda

- ❑ Introductions
- ❑ Positive Youth Development (PYD) framework
- ❑ Four focus areas from the CYP as they relate to the PYD framework
- ❑ Importance of feedback
- ❑ Q&A

Juárez & Associates

Our Firm

Juárez & Associates (J&A) is a minority-owned, independently operated small business founded in 1971. We are a research and management consulting firm that has carried out over 120 U.S. government-funded activities in 30+ countries, implementing and evaluating youth development/education programs, literacy, healthcare improvement, gender equity, workforce development and other community-based programs across the globe. J&A's headquarters are in Los Angeles, CA, with regional offices in Washington DC and Guatemala City.

Services

J&A has managed projects for more than 50 years as a prime and subcontractor, providing services to federal, state and local governments as well as the private sector in areas such as program design and implementation, research design and execution, policy analysis, strategic planning, performance measurement and sector assessments throughout the U.S. and the world.

Positive Youth Development (PYD)

Definition

An intentional, pro-social approach that engages youth within their communities and families to recognize and build on their strengths and promotes positive outcomes by providing opportunities and support to build leadership skills and positive relationships (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)

Core Principles of PYD

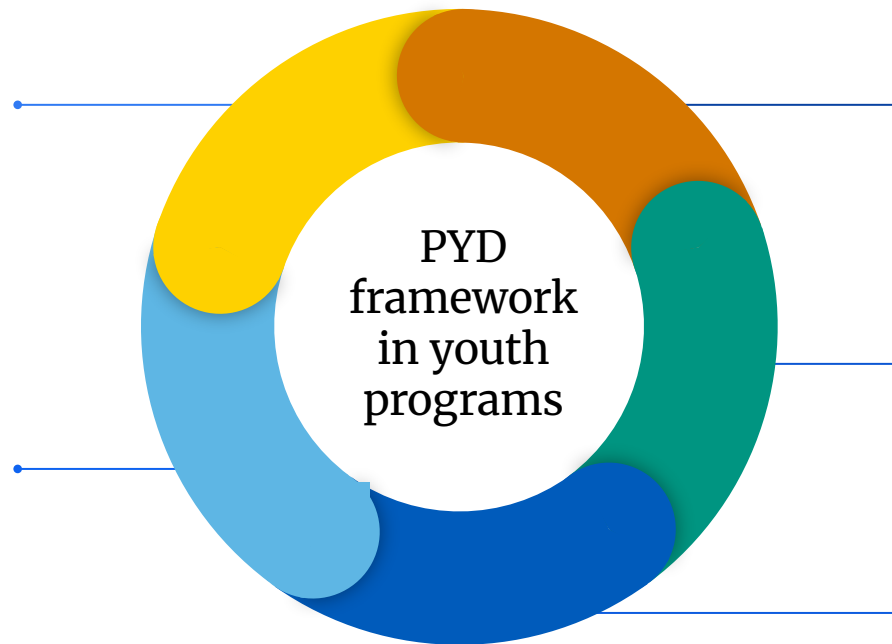
- ❖ Views young people through a strength-based approach
- ❖ Empowers youth, elevates their voices and sense of self-worth
- ❖ Encourages skills building and knowledge development
- ❖ Fosters community-based collaboration and positive relationships



Possible Outcomes from Implementing PYD

Youth gain
confidence and
knowledge of their
strengths
(self-awareness)

Youth develop a sense
of belonging

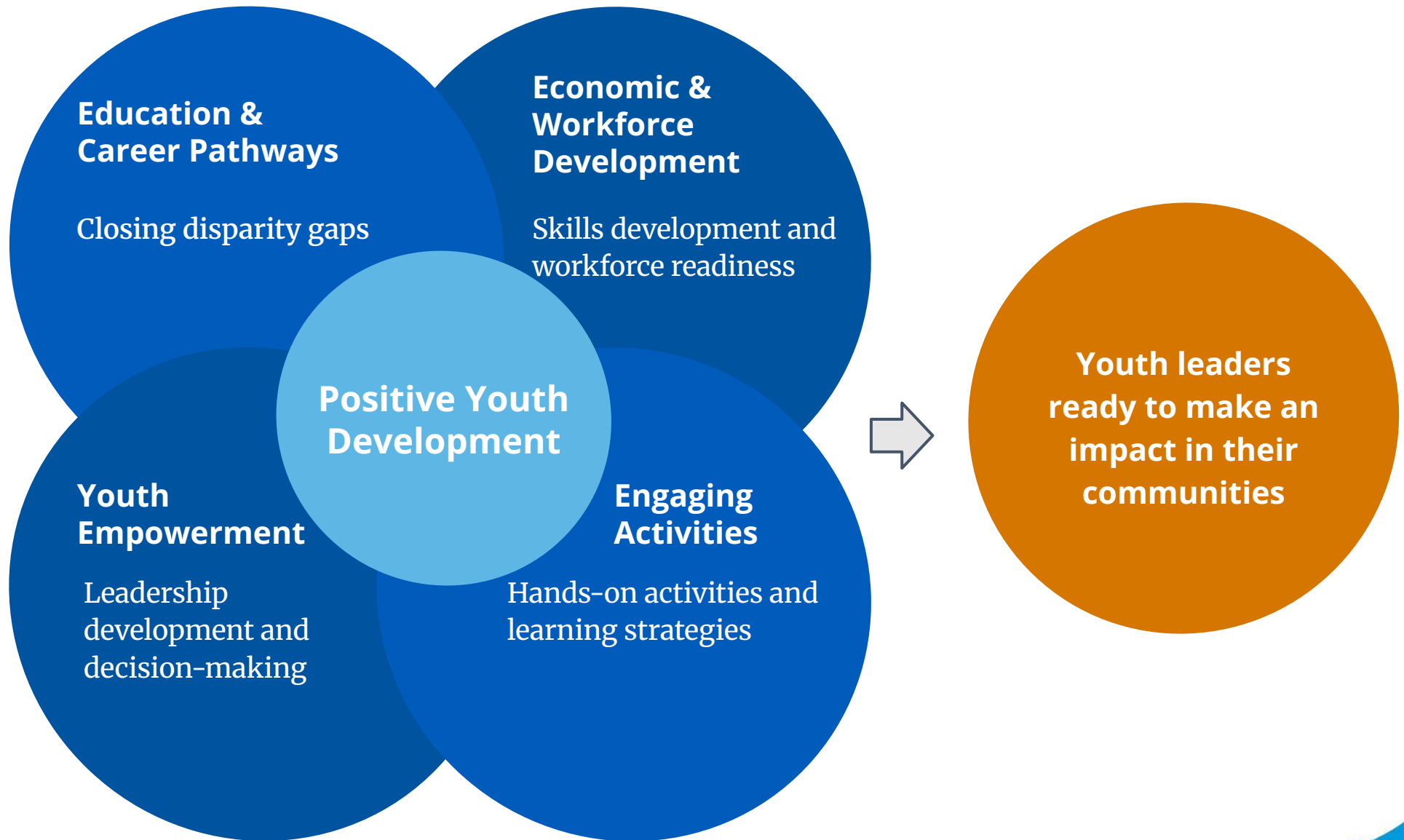


Youth learn to
develop supportive
relationships

Youth develop
decision-making skills

Youth develop
leadership, critical
thinking and
application skills

The Four Focus Areas





Education & Career Pathways

Goal

Strengthen resources to address disparities and improve access to opportunities that develop skills and career pathways

Youth Development Strategies

- ❖ Use of real-world learning
- ❖ Intentional use of positive relationships between managers & youth workers

Practice

- ❖ Mentoring: Staff-youth; youth-youth
- ❖ Career exploration: Youth engaging in relevant work tasks
- ❖ Managers and youth conversations to get to know work, values, norms, and expectations
- ❖ Self-guided online trainings

Possible Outcomes

- ❖ Youth develop a sense of belonging and engagement
- ❖ Youth have a better understanding of different career paths and being part of the workforce
- ❖ Youth acquire “soft skills” (e.g., communication, decision making, management, conflict resolution)



Economic & Workforce Development

Goal

Foster equitable opportunities, resilience and long-term workforce skills & abilities

Youth Development Strategies

- ❖ Use of real-world learning experiences
- ❖ Development of executive function skills, e.g. planning, flexibility, self-regulation

Practice

- ❖ Sessions on goal planning, career exploration, job search, etc.
- ❖ Advice on options for career pathway opportunities
- ❖ Awareness of how one responds to others in the setting

Possible Outcomes

- ❖ Youth develop an ability to focus and establish priorities
- ❖ Youth develop work plans and track project progress
- ❖ Youth engage with workmates more collaboratively



Youth Empowerment

Goal

Develop safe and supportive spaces and partnerships with opportunities for youth to lead and become contributing members of their communities

Youth Development Strategies

- ❖ Co-creator work
- ❖ Structured opportunities for skill development

Practice

- ❖ Formal/informal peer mentoring
- ❖ Shadowing: Pairing of experienced staff with youth
- ❖ Youth-led activities

Possible Outcomes

- ❖ Youth strengthen peer-to-peer relationships and communication skills
- ❖ Youth overcome barriers to success
- ❖ Youth engage in the community



Engaging Activities

Goal

Offer opportunities for expanding youths' horizons, creativity, inspiration and life experiences

Youth Development Strategies

- ❖ Opportunities to contribute to group discussions
- ❖ Opportunities to work with different peers and staff

Practice

- ❖ Interactive and collaborative activities
- ❖ Hands-on experiences
- ❖ Variety of learning strategies and/or modalities
- ❖ Activities that are inclusive and reflect community

Possible Outcomes

- ❖ Youth strengthen critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- ❖ Youth have access to leadership opportunities that empower youth and community involvement through collaborative activities

Staff are the **core drivers** of PYD success

Train and Support:

- ❖ Guide staff in PYD practices on an ongoing basis: handling sensitive information, being empathetic, setting boundaries, etc.
- ❖ Equip staff with tools to facilitate groups to elevate youth voices, inclusion and leadership opportunities
- ❖ Provide support to staff to manage stress, avoid burnout and reduce staff turnover

Impact:

- ❖ Supportive and positive staff culture → Team satisfaction
- ❖ Staff commitment and satisfaction in their work → Higher staff retention
- ❖ Higher staff retention → Program consistency in implementation and quality

Staff:

- ❖ Possess subject expertise (e.g., health education, financial literacy)
- ❖ Experience working with youth and relationship building skills
- ❖ Reflect the population served to foster connections with youth (e.g.. shared life experiences, language, gender, culture)

How Will You Know If You Are Making A Difference

The Importance of Getting Feedback!

1.

Consider listening to what program participants say in describing their experiences in your programs

2.

Use formative evaluation strategies like focus groups, surveys, group meetings, where they can share their experiences, the strategies they use, their successes, failures, challenges, and ideas for improvement

3.

Use their feedback to improve successes.

Q&A



Juárez & Associates
info@juarezassociate.com
(323) 478-0826

Tara Ryan- Office of Child and Youth Success
tryan@sandiego.gov
(619) 904-0794

References

Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2024). Case Studies Show Positive Youth Development Empowers Young Workers.
<https://www.aecf.org/blog/case-studies-show-positive-youth-development-empowers-young-workers>

Center on the Developing Child. Building the Core Skills Youth Need for Life: A Guide for Education and Social Service Practitioners. Harvard University.
<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/handouts-tools/building-core-skills-youth/>

Millacci, Tiffany S. (2024) Positive Youth Development: Best Activities and Training Programs.
<https://positivepsychology.com/positive-youth-development>

Moore, Kristin A., Andrea Vazzano, Isabel Griffith, Mindy E. Scott, and Deana Around Him. (2021). Integrating Positive Youth Development into PREP Programming. OPRE Report # 2021-19. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
<https://acf.gov/opre/report/integrating-positive-youth-development-prep-programming>

Preston, Amber. (2025). Executive Functioning Skills for Teens. (no publisher)

Sacks, V., & Bradley, M. (2024). Promising practices for incorporating positive youth development into supervision of young adult workers. Child Trends. DOI: 10.56417/5241v8980t.

Strong, T. and Sacks, V. (2024). How Positive Youth Development Approaches Can Inform Your Business Choices.
<https://nationalfund.org/how-positive-youth-development-approaches-can-inform-your-business-choices/>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (n.d.). Positive youth development. Office of Population Affairs.
<https://opa.hhs.gov/adolescent-health/positive-youth-development>