

# Overview of the Ready by 21™ Quality Counts Initiative



# Rhetoric and Reality Don't Match



## The American Dream

*All youth ready, every family  
and community supportive,  
each leader effective.*

## The American Reality

*Only 4 in 10 youth ready, only 1 in 3 youth  
supported, too few leaders effective.*

## The American Dilemma

*Fragmentation, complacency, and low expectations of  
youth, communities and leaders*

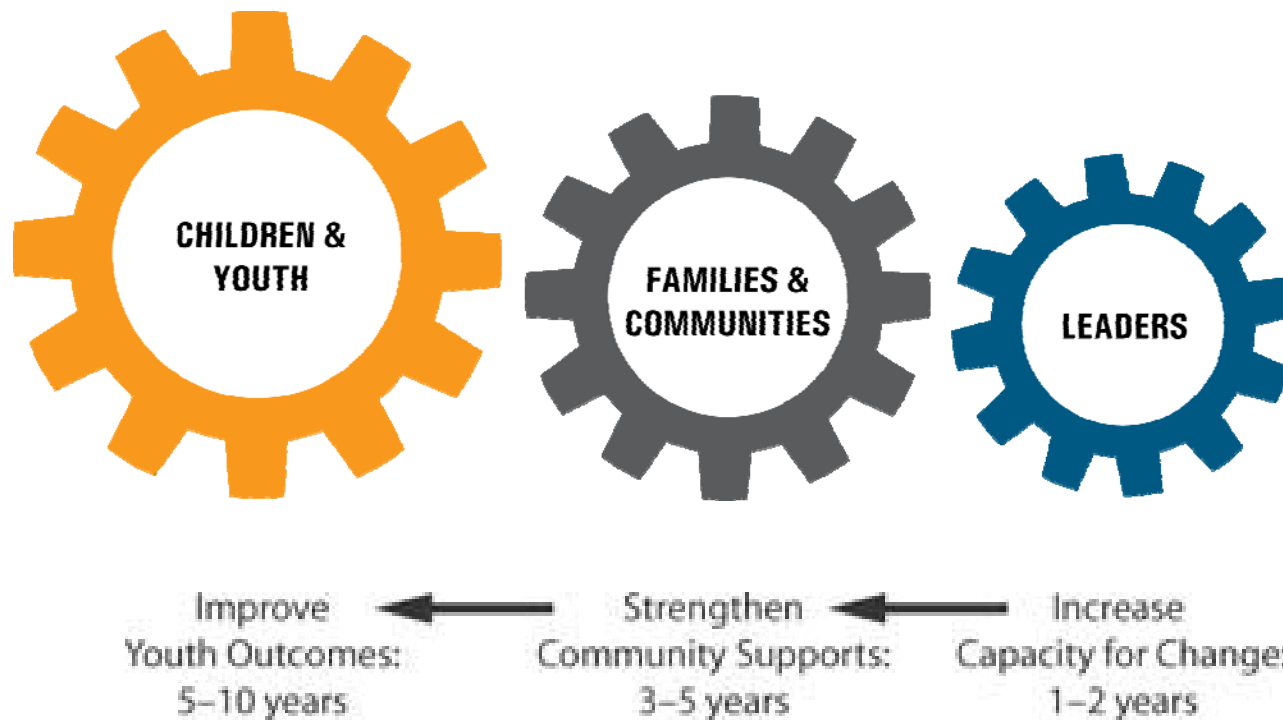
## The Ready by 21™ Challenge

Change the odds for youth by changing the way we do business

# The Ready by 21™ Challenge:



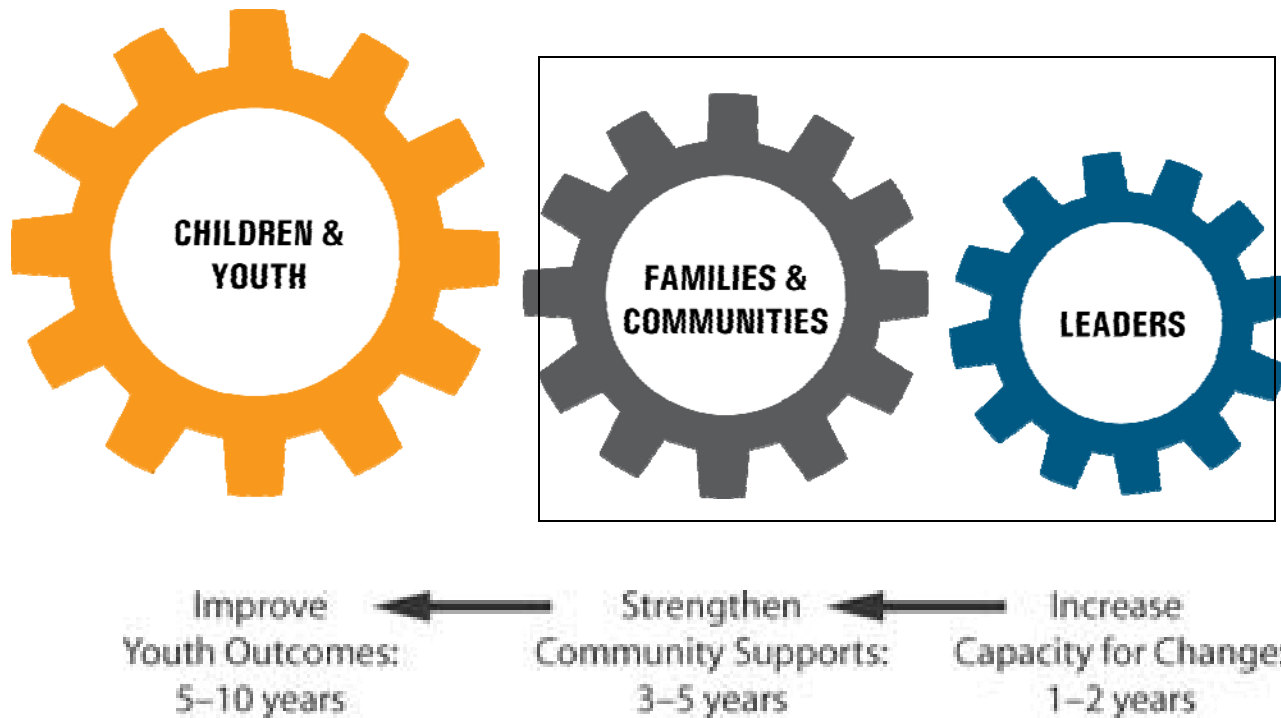
To change the odds for **youth** by changing the way **we** do business.



# The Ready by 21™ Quality Counts Initiative



Improving *youth outcomes* is the goal,  
helping *leaders* improve *community supports* is the focus.



# Building the Capacity to Sustain Change: The Four Quality Counts Work Areas



Capacity to Assess  
& Improve  
Programs

Capacity to  
Recruit, Train,  
Retain Workforce

Strong, Stable  
Program Base

Strong Policy /  
Leadership  
Horsepower

There is no one blueprint, but all communities face the same challenge: Without *coordinated action* in all four target areas, returns on existing investments will be under-realized.

# Capacity to Assess & Improve Program Quality



Capacity to Assess  
& Improve  
Programs

Capacity to  
Recruit, Train,  
Retain Workforce

Strong, Stable  
Program Base

Strong Policy /  
Leadership  
Horsepower

## Assumptions:

- High-quality programs can influence key developmental outcomes for children and youth.
- Accurate, accessible data about program quality can influence staff practice and drive planning and decision-making at the system level.

# Capacity to Recruit, Train, & Retain a Strong Workforce



Capacity to Assess  
& Improve  
Programs

Capacity to  
Recruit, Train,  
Retain Workforce

Strong, Stable  
Program Base

Strong Policy /  
Leadership  
Horsepower

## Assumptions:

- Good youth development practice lies at the heart of high quality programs.
- An effective quality improvement system supports the ongoing professional development of staff whose programs are involved.
- Other factors that contribute to building a strong, stable, skilled workforce include compensation, recruitment, retention, career pathways and organizational capacity.

# Strong, Stable Program Base



Capacity to Assess  
& Improve  
Programs

Capacity to  
Recruit, Train,  
Retain Workforce

Strong, Stable  
Program Base

Strong Policy /  
Leadership  
Horsepower

## Assumptions:

- Building a quality assessment system that reaches across the range of programs in a community requires accurate information about the programmatic landscape.
- Once stakeholders have a collective understanding of the landscape (how many people, hours, dollars, slots are at play), the more motivated they are to assess and improve quality.

# Strong Policy/Leadership Horsepower



Capacity to Assess  
& Improve  
Programs

Capacity to  
Recruit, Train,  
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Strong, Stable  
Program Base

Strong Policy /  
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## Assumptions:

- Changing child and youth outcomes requires broad commitments to a comprehensive set of goals that cut across systems and settings.
- A shared vision; supportive policies, structures and funding; and engaged leaders and decision-makers are critical to building and sustaining a quality improvement system.

# A “Big Picture” Approach to Improving Quality and Reach



- Take Aim** Define quality. Push to involve a range of programs in assessment and improvement efforts.  
Generate decision-maker buy-in.
- Take Stock** Build local capacity to map the program landscape, assess quality across programs, survey the workforce, document quality improvement resources (e.g. training, funding).
- Take Action** Create data-driven improvement systems.  
Institutionalize expectations, processes and supports.
- Track Progress** Report progress to organizations, funders and community.