

QUALITY IN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING

November 10, 2010

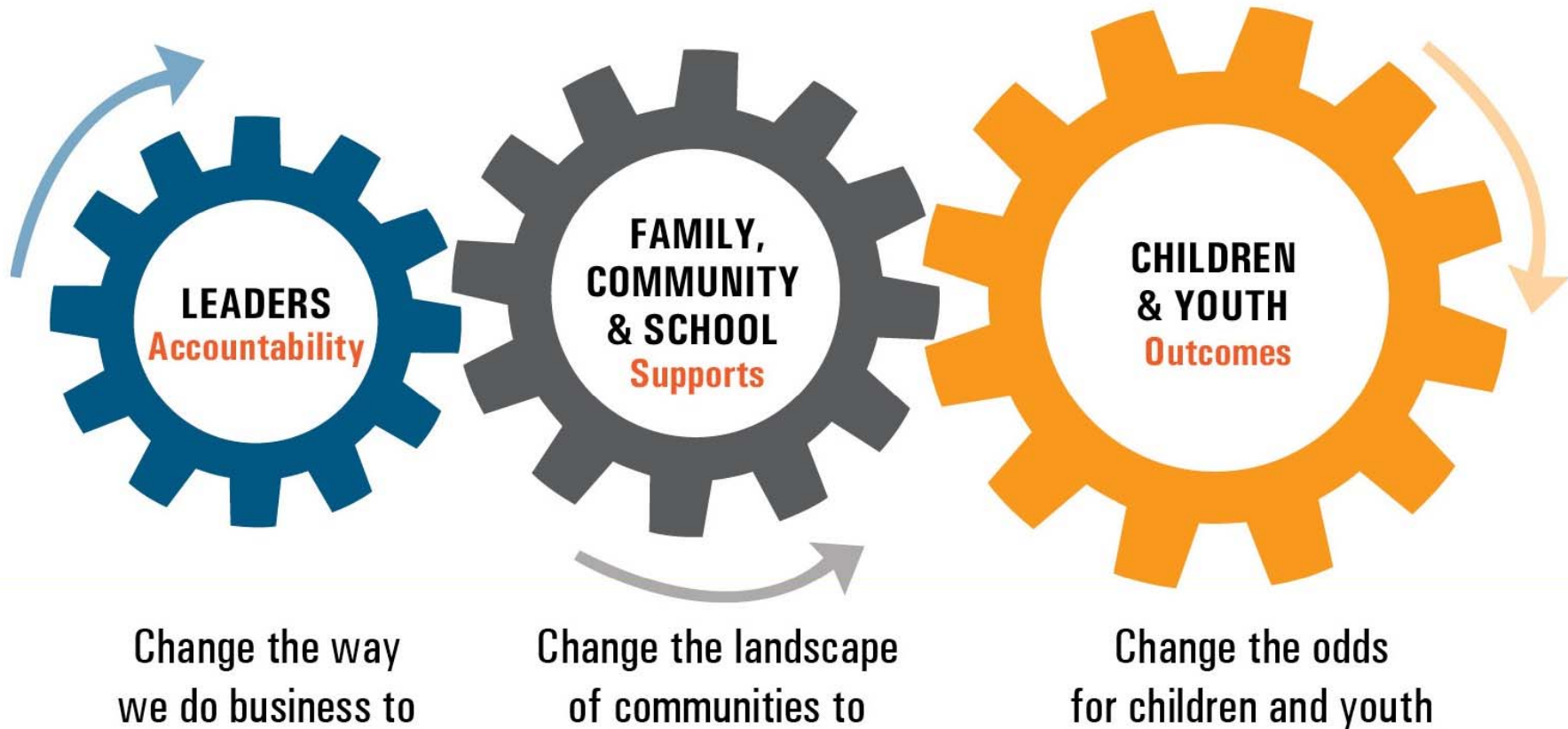
YCC Funders Forum

Nicole Yohalem

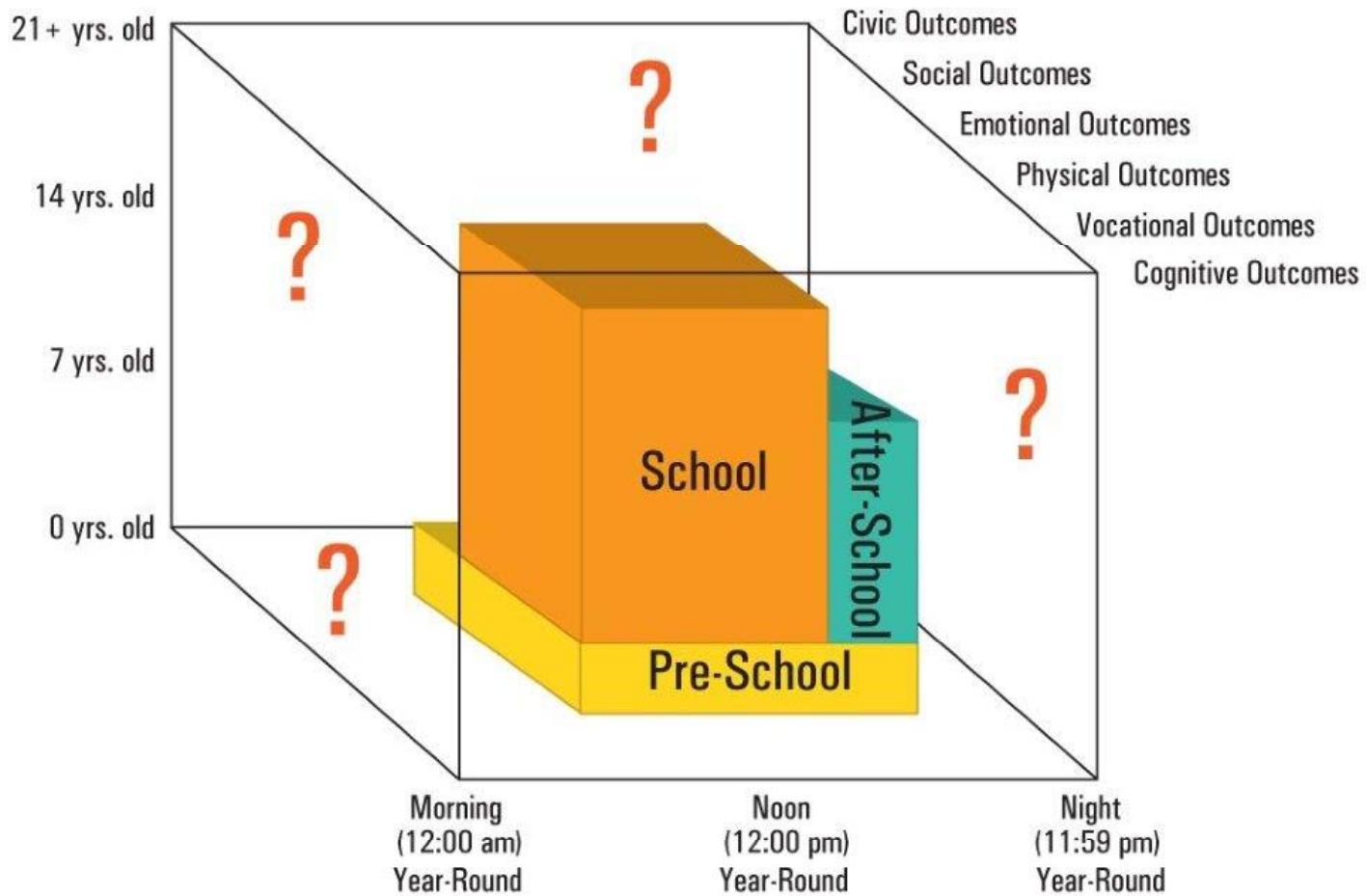
Forum for Youth Investment



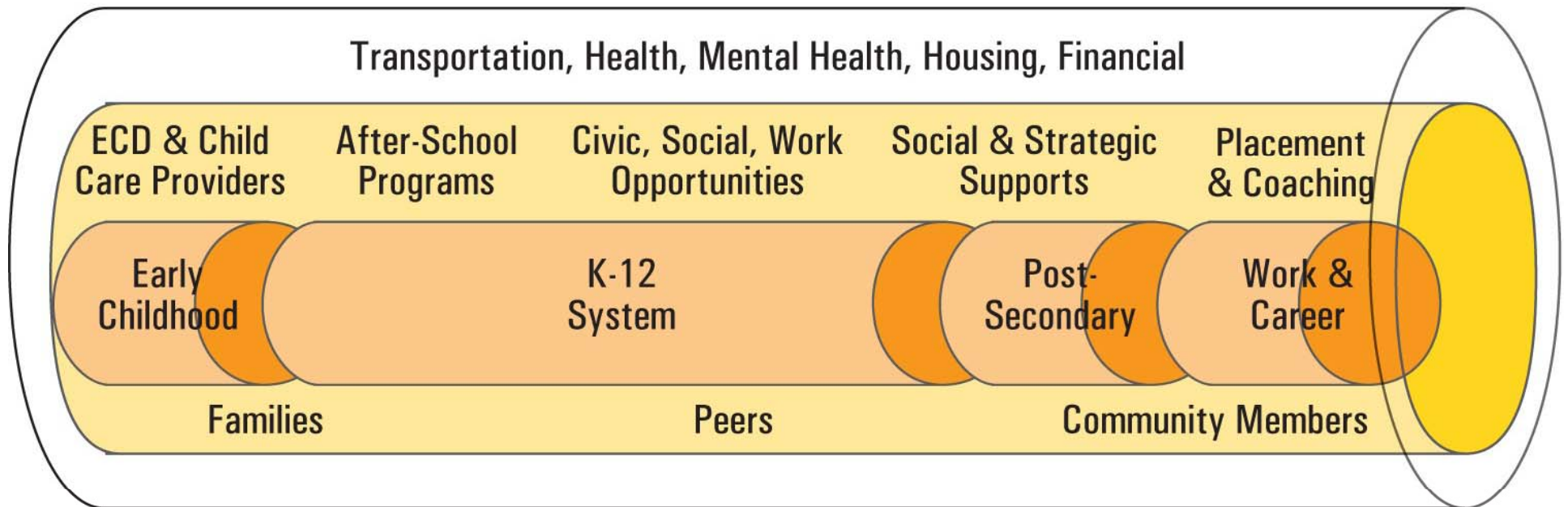
Moving the small gear makes a big difference



Think outside the box to fill the inside



The Insulated Education Pipeline



Why focus on quality?



- Quality Matters
- Quality is Measurable
- Quality is Malleable
- Is quality *Marketable*?

Quality Matters



- **The good news:** There is now strong evidence that OST programs *can* produce positive change in things we all care about – *academic achievement, social and emotional development.*
- **The bad news:** Many programs do not.

Why do only some programs make a difference?



Durlak & Weissberg, 2007

- Meta-analysis of 73 afterschool impact evaluations
- SAFE programs (*sequenced/intentional, active, focused, with explicit goals*) promoted school achievement, feelings & attitudes, pro-social behavior
- Programs lacking these features DID NOT produce positive effects on any of these outcomes.

Durlak, J. A. and R. P. Weissberg (2007). *The impact of after-school programs that promote personal and social skills*. Chicago, IL., Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning.

SRCD Social Policy Report (Bob Granger, 2008) summarizes 3 rigorous after-school reviews (including above) and tells the same story.

http://srcd.org/documents/publications/22-2_afterschool_programs.pdf

Linking quality programs & child development



High quality programs benefit youth:

| | Positive Effects |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| ➤ <u>School Performance</u> | |
| • Achievement Test Scores | X |
| • School Grades | X |
| ➤ <u>Feelings & Attitudes</u> | |
| • Self-perception | X |
| • School Bonding | X |
| ➤ <u>Pro-social Behavior</u> | |
| • Positive social behavior | X |
| • Antisocial behavior | X |
| • Drug use | X |

Durlak & Weissberg, 2007

*High quality programs influence important youth outcomes.
Our best shot at achieving outcomes is investing in quality.*

We know what constitutes quality



Community programs with:

- Physical and Psychological **Safety**
- Appropriate **Structure**
- Supportive **Relationships**
- Opportunities to **Belong**
- Positive **Social Norms**
- Support for **Efficacy** and **Mattering**
- Opportunities for **Skill-Building**
- Integration of **Family, School and Community** efforts

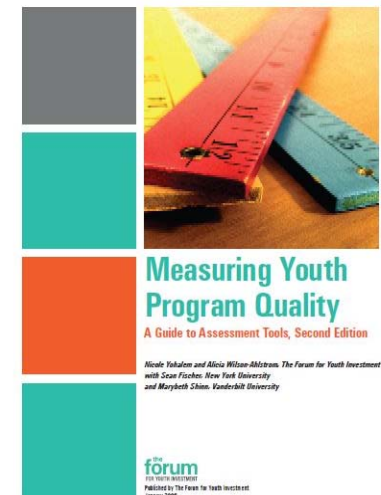
Contribute to:

- **Psychological/Emotional** Development
- **Physical** Development
- **Social** Development
- **Intellectual** Development

Quality is Measurable



- **Assessing Afterschool Program Practices Tool (APT)**
National Institute on Out-of-School Time and the MA Department of Education
- **CORAL Observation Tool (CORAL)**
Public/Private Ventures
- **Out-of-School Time Observation Instrument (OST)**
Policy Studies Associates
- **Program Observation Tool (POT)**
National Afterschool Association
- **Program Quality Observation (PQO)**
Deborah Vandell and Kim Pierce
- **Promising Practices Rating Scale (PPRS)**
WI Center for Education Research and Policy Studies Associates, Inc.
- **Quality Assurance System (QAS)**
Foundations Inc.
- **Program Quality Self-Assessment Tool (QSA)**
New York State Afterschool Network
- **School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS)**
Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, UNC
- **Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA)**
High/Scope Educational Research Foundation



Measuring Youth Program Quality
A Guide to Quality Assessment Tools
Updated January 2009

Quality is Measurable



There is *a lot* of similarity in how quality practice is defined. All 10 tools assess:

- Relationships
- Environment
- Engagement
- Social/Behavioral Norms
- Skill Building Opportunities
- Routine/Structure

Measuring what matters



- Importance of the point-of-service.
- Good measures have clear, unambiguous items.
- The best measures also teach.

Is there an emphasis on the point of service?



- SACERS & NAA < half of the items focus on point-of-service quality
- APT & YPQA > half of the items focus on point-of-service quality

Is the measure clear and unambiguous?



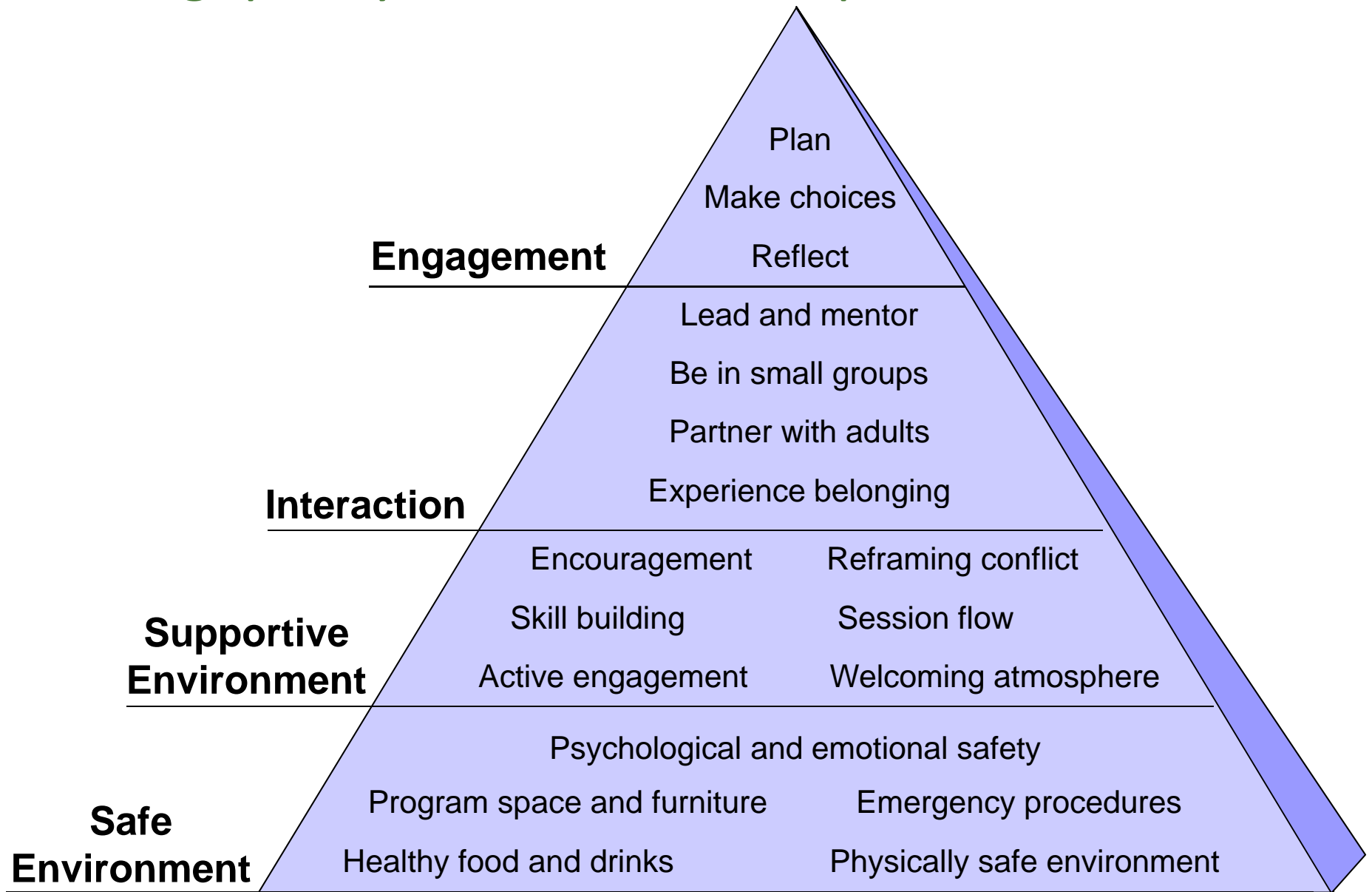
- High-inference example (NAA Program Observation Tool)
 - Staff are engaged with children
- Low-inference example (Youth Program Quality Assessment)
 - During activities, staff generally smile, use friendly gestures, and make eye contact.
 - Staff encourage all youth to try out new skills or attempt higher levels of performance.
 - During activities, staff are almost always actively involved with youth (e.g. they provide directions, answer questions, work as partners or team members, check in with individuals or groups).
 - Staff make use of frequent open-ended questions.

Does the measure itself teach?



- Diagnostic (from New York QSA)
 - A quality program provides participants with a variety of engagement strategies.
- Diagnostic *and* prescriptive (from NIOST APT)
 - Youth are busy and engaged in conversation or activities.
 - Youth appear relaxed and in control of themselves.
 - Youth independently gather resources, materials or get information.
 - Youth help select, lead or contribute to the running of the activity.
 - Youth solve problems alone or in groups.
 - When trying to solve a problem, youth try to identify the source, nature of the problem and/or try out potential solutions.

Defining quality in terms of staff practices



Discussion

- Questions/reflections related to how quality is defined and measured?
- Shifting gears into quality *improvement* and system building.

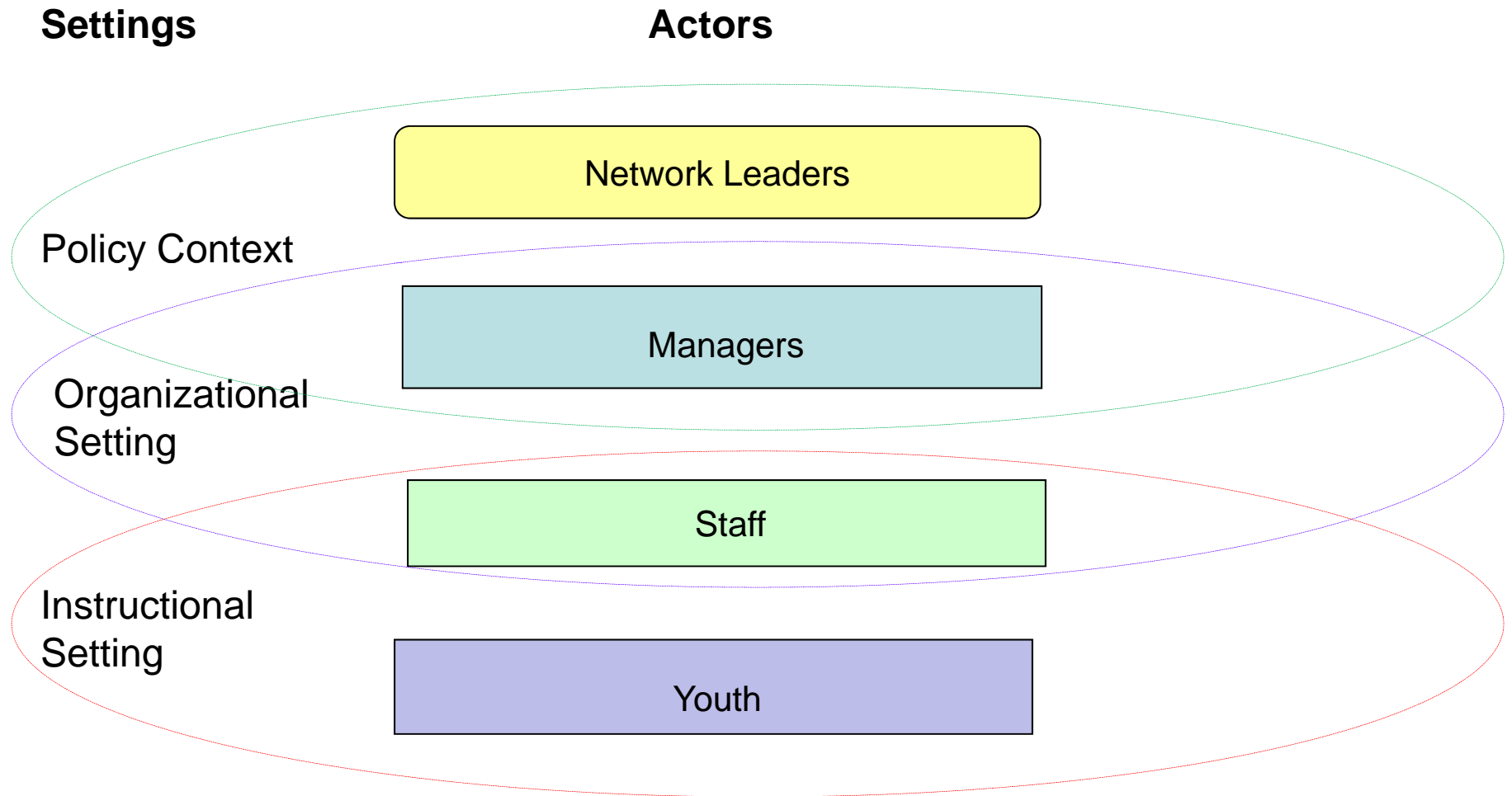
Quality is Malleable



Key components of quality improvement systems:

- Quality standards (or framework) that include what should happen at the point of service;
- Ongoing assessment of how well services compare to the standards;
- Targeted plans for how to improve;
- Training and coaching that fits improvement plans.

OST Field Structure: Embedded Settings & Actors



Youth Program Quality Intervention

ASSESS

Conduct SA
(YPQI Team)

Conduct EA
(External assessor)

[Collect other data]

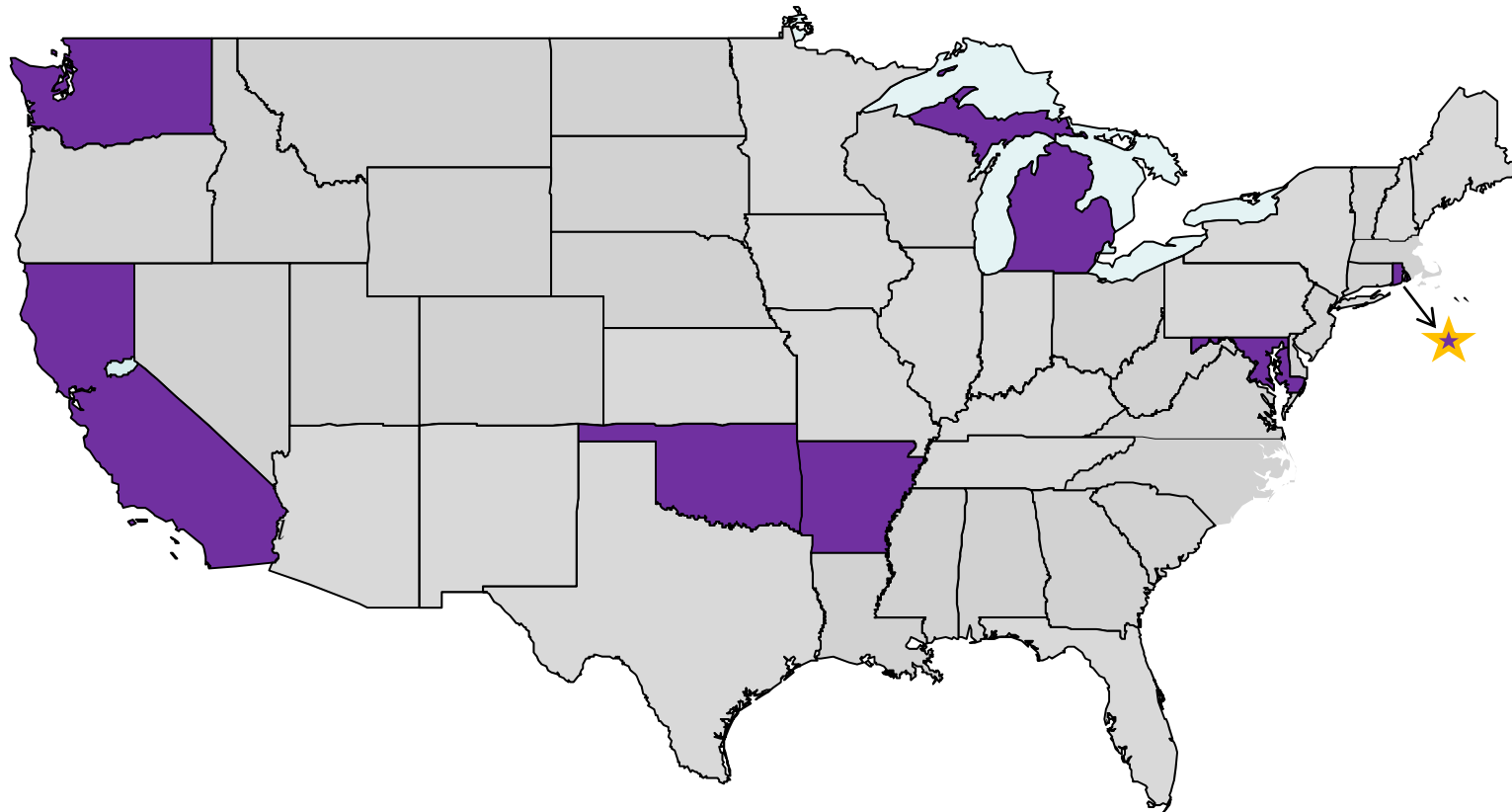
PLAN

**Create
improvement plan**
(YPQI Team)

IMPROVE

**Carry out
improvement plan**
(Mgr coaches;
Staff do)

State Afterschool Networks Playing a Lead Role in YPQI Implementation



The Ready by 21 Quality Counts Initiative



STATES (w/ participating localities)

- Iowa
Linn County, N. Central Iowa, Polk County/Des Moines
- Kentucky
Lexington, Louisville
- New York
Broome, Onondaga, Orange & Rockland Counties
- Oklahoma
Norman, Tulsa
- Rhode Island
Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket
- *Washington State*
(Honorary member – year one)

LOCALITIES

- Austin, TX
- Georgetown Divide (Black Oak Mine), CA
- Columbus (Bartholomew County), IN
- Grand Rapids, MI
- Indianapolis, IN
- Nashville, TN
- St. Louis, MO

NATIONAL PARTNERS

- The Forum for Youth Investment
- High/Scope Educational Research Foundation
- AED National Training Institute

Pre-post changes in site capacity



At the System Level:

Decision-maker agenda on quality and reach

Change structure

Positive vision for youth

Demand for change ↑

Link to youth and families ↑

Standards and quality policies across sectors ↑

Data and information

Coordination within sector

Coordination across sectors

At the Intermediary Level:

Links to policies and decision-makers

Communicating and convening

Training and technical assistance capacity ↑

Cross-sector reach

At the Provider Level:

Presence of standards ↑

Quality assessment, improvement, monitoring ↑

Quality Counts lessons learned



- Quality can be a galvanizing topic.
- Quality improvement can help bridge policy “silos.”
- There is no one right place to house the system.
- Building on existing infrastructure can ensure success and sustainability.
- Lower stakes accountability models can work.

Quality can be a galvanizing topic



- *“The implementation of Youth Program Quality in the afterschool community of Central Texas has truly been transforming...**For the first time, afterschool is being viewed as a true link to learning and development.**”*

Laura Celli, Austin Independent School District

Quality improvement can help bridge policy “silos”



| | Sectors | | | | | Funding Streams | | | |
|--------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| | Education | After School | Parks/Rec | Faith-Based | Libraries/ Museums | United Way Grantees | 21st CLCC Grantees | Juvenile Justice/ Child Welfare | Prevention/Health (Health Dept. DC, SAMSHA) |
| Iowa | | X | X | X | | X | | X | X |
| Kentucky | | X | | X | | X | | X | |
| New York | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Oklahoma | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | X |
| Rhode Island | X | X | X | | X | X | X | X | |
| Austin, TX | X | X | X | | | X | X | | |
| Black Oak Mine, CA | X | X | X | | | X | X | | X |
| Columbus, IN | X | X | X | | X | X | X | | |
| Grand Rapids, MI | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | |
| Indianapolis, IN | | X | | X | | X | | X | X |
| Nashville, TN | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | X |
| St. Louis, MO | | X | | X | | X | | X | X |

KEY

Engaged as of 12/08

Engaged as of 6/08

Engaged as of 2/10

There is no one “right place” to house a system



- Cross-Sector Coalitions
- United Ways
- School Districts
- Capacity Building/Training Organizations
- State or Local Advocacy Organizations
- Government Agencies
- Youth-Serving Organizations
- State Afterschool Networks

Build on existing infrastructure to ensure success, sustainability



“The way Orange County has embedded this into our daily system – monitoring tools, linguistic integration within funding applications, professional development, training and requirements, etc. ensures the work will be sustained both short and long term.”

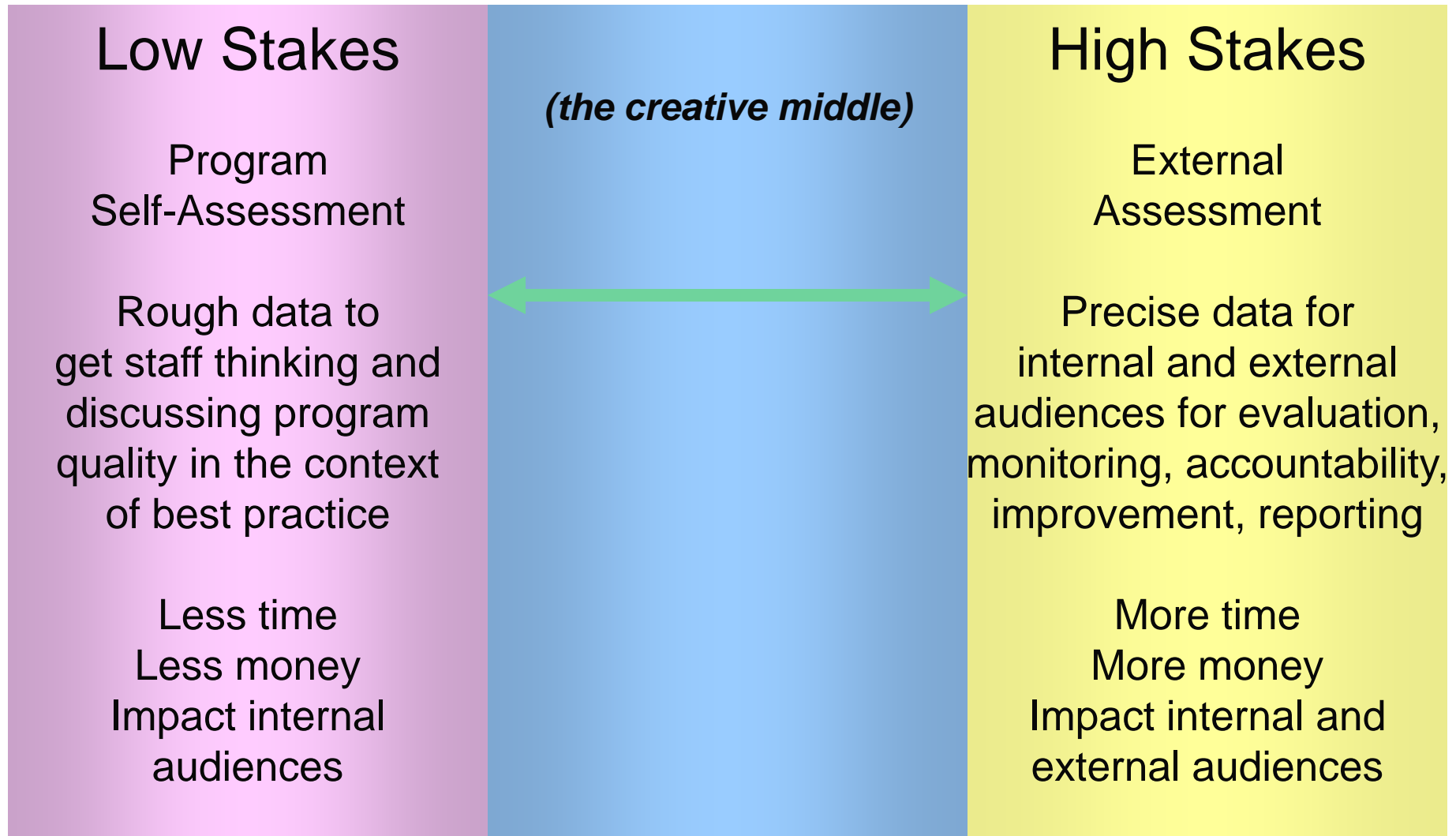
- Carol Chichester, Orange County Youth Bureau

Lower stakes accountability models can work



- Low stakes is not the same as *no* stakes.
- Hold organizations accountable for *a process* that leads to staff learning and improved quality.

System Building: Purpose, Methods, Resources



QIS

QRIS

QRS

Is quality *marketable*?



- Amidst scarce resources, systematic approaches to quality assessment and improvement are considered central rather than optional.
- ROI: Quality improvement is critical to protecting major investments being made in service-delivery.
- Positioning quality within the big picture is key to sustaining quality improvement systems.
 - Substantive links: to child/youth wellbeing, to academic success in particular
 - Structural links: to youth master plans, dropout prevention strategies

CONTACT INFORMATION

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