



**SEQUOR** **YDI** youth  
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# YDI RESEARCH SUMMARIES VOL. 1

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YDI Research Summaries provides quick and easy access to the most current youth development research. Articles from the latest issues of youth development journals are selected and summarized. Each summary provides an overview of the article with special attention to practical findings. Specific research to practice points are highlighted in each summary. Volume 2 contains summaries of 12 articles in two categories: diversity and youth culture. Volumes will be produced twice each year. For questions about any of the articles in this volume or suggestions for topics in future volumes please contact [ydi@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:ydi@ag.tamu.edu).

### SERIES EDITOR

Mat Duerden  
Assistant Professor – Extension Specialist  
Coordinator, Youth Development Initiative  
Texas AgriLife Extension Service

### VOLUME CONTRIBUTORS

Kate Cromwell  
Mat Duerden  
Mariela Fernandez  
Texas A&M University



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## FAIR TREATMENT LEADS TO PERCEIVED WRONGFULNESS OF EXCLUSION

### ARTICLE SUMMARY

Authority figures such as teachers, parents, and other adults can influence the formation of prejudice in youth. Current research, however, has mainly focused on peer relations, with studies suggesting that unfair treatment from peers leads youth to disapprove of exclusion. This link between treatment—either fair or unfair—and the perceived wrongfulness of exclusion has received limited attention in regard to authority figures and youth. Accordingly, Crystal, Killen, and Rusk (2010) conducted a study using 9- to 16-year-olds to see if their interactions with authority figures led to perceived wrongfulness of exclusion. Students were asked to comment on the following situations: not inviting a peer to lunch due to personal reasons, not inviting a peer to a sleepover due to parental pressure, and not inviting a peer to a school dance due to peer pressure. Researchers discovered that youth who were treated fairly by authority figures perceived more wrongfulness in these types of group exclusion. Those who were treated unfairly did not see group exclusion as wrong as their counterparts did, and they mainly cited racial prejudice as a justification. Older youth perceived more acts of discrimination than their younger counterparts, partly because older youth are able to think more abstractly and reject peer and authority figures' prejudices that lead to discrimination and exclusion.

### RESEARCH TO PRACTICE POINTS

1. Authority figures can promote constructive interaction between youth and possibly decrease prejudicial attitudes. This means youth professionals should treat all youth fairly and reduce opportunities for group exclusion.
2. When authority figures treat youth unfairly, youth tend to repeat the cycle. Treating youth fairly and abstaining from negative interactions with them usually develops youth who are more likely to forgive and nurture others.
3. Youth practitioners should abstain from treating youth unfairly because this can condition a youth to accept such treatment in the future. When youth are constantly disrespected, they learn to accept and expect it. They may not speak against such treatment in the future, which goes against the youth development field's goal to empower youth in order to help them thrive as adults.

### FULL REFERENCE FOR THE ARTICLE

Crystal, D. S., Killen, M., & Rusk, M. D. (2010). Fair treatment by authorities is related to children's and adolescents' evaluations of interracial exclusion. *Applied Developmental Science*, 14(3): 125-136. doi: 10.1080/10888691.2010.493067.

This summary was prepared by **Mariela Fernandez**.



## YOUTH EXPERIENCES IN REGARD TO IMMIGRATION

### ARTICLE SUMMARY

First-generation immigrant youth travelling to the United States are presented with several stressful events during the premigration, migration, and postmigration stages. Ko and Perreira (2010) interviewed 14- to 18-year-old Latino youth from Mexico to document their struggles in these three stages. During the premigration stage, economic hardship in their home country led many families to initiate the journey to the U.S. In some cases, parents left without saying goodbye to the extended family in charge of their children. During the migration stage, youth had to leave the extended family that had been a safety net during the parents' absence. Youth were then faced with enduring the unsure journey sometimes with their parents, but at other times with strangers. Wealthier families made the journey by airplane, but most families had to walk the desert in fear of being robbed or raped. Finally, in the postmigration stage, youth adjust to the U.S. culture. Although families did comparably better in the U.S. than in Mexico, some youth had difficulties adjusting to American life. The language difference between Spanish and English left them unable to understand others, including teachers and peers, and they faced discrimination. This population also faced policies that restricted their participation in higher education.

### RESEARCH TO PRACTICE POINTS

1. Youth practitioners must consider the Spanish-English language differences before reprimanding youth for not following instructions they might not even understand. The language barrier can lead to miscommunication between the immigrant child and youth worker, which can lead to punishment. Youth workers must make sure youth are fully aware of rules and expectations before punishing them.
2. Because the opportunities to advance to higher education are limited for young immigrants, youth practitioners must provide this population with life skills that will enable them to make a living. Practitioners may also stress the importance of getting an education as situations change, and a youth may eventually be able to attend a college or university.
3. Youth practitioners must ensure a safe environment for immigrant children. The Latino children in the study were ridiculed by their peers for being different. Practitioners must stop this ridicule as these children struggle with making sense of all these changes that are beyond their control.

### FULL REFERENCE FOR THE ARTICLE

Ko, L. K., & Perreira, K. M. (2010). "It Turned My World Upside Down": Latino youths' perspectives on immigration. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 25(3), 465-493.

This summary was prepared by **Mariela Fernandez**.



## PERCEIVED SAFETY AND POSITIVE ADULT RELATIONSHIPS PROMOTESOCIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

### ARTICLE SUMMARY

Although youth programs are designed to be for all youth regardless of race or ethnicity, ethnic minority youth participate in smaller numbers than do their White counterparts. Because youth programs are linked to positive outcomes, understanding why minority youth choose or do not choose to participate is important. Initial research found that Latino youth who participated in programs did so mainly because they felt safe, and they developed positive relationships with staff members. As such, Lee, Borden, Serido, and Perkins (2009) extended their study to include White, Asian/Pacific Islander, African American, and Hispanic youth. From their research, they determined that feelings of safety and positive relationships were vital in the process of learning social skills in minority youth, except for African American youth. This finding might have been because youth programs being studied had a majority African American population, which promoted safety and positive relationships. If safety and positive interaction with staff were already attained, these youth might have felt that they were already able to connect with those in the youth program without the need of learning more social skills.

### RESEARCH TO PRACTICE POINTS

1. Whenever possible, youth practitioners should hire workers who mirror the facilities' users. Doing so may allow positive relationships between the workers and youth. If this is not possible, incorporating culturally competent workers will help these positive relationships to occur.
2. Understanding youths' perceptions of the program, including safety and staff members, is vital to providing positive outcomes. If programs are made for youth instead of with youth, this omission can lead to ineffective programs.
3. Youth practitioners must ensure youth feel a sense of belonging. Once this is established, youth will thrive in the programs and commit to the program's "social norms, behaviors, and values."

### FULL REFERENCE FOR THE ARTICLE

Lee, S.A., Borden, L. M., Serido, J., & Perkins, D. F. (2009). Ethnic minority youth in youth programs: Feelings of safety, relationships with adult staff, and perceptions of learning social skills. *Youth & Society*, 41(2), 234-255.

This summary was prepared by **Mariela Fernandez**.



## FACTORS LEADING TO PARTICIPATION IN AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

### ARTICLE SUMMARY

Quality after-school programs are linked with positive outcomes that help negate deviant behavior. Although this is true for all youth, quality programs are of greater importance for youth from lower income groups, who are less successful in school and are increasingly from marginalized groups. As such, the Michigan 21st Century Community Learning Centers focus on these youth and provide “academic enrichment opportunities” so they can thrive like other youth. In this study, 2,256 students in fourth through 12th grades and their parents were questioned to discover how program quality and race/ethnicity could affect youths’ voluntary participation and why the parents enrolled. Findings showed that overall enjoyment in the program and opportunities to engage in challenging experiences were the reasons for youth participation. Parents’ reasons for enrollment were mainly attributed to academic opportunities or childcare service, but this varied by ethnic group. African Americans and Middle Eastern/Arab parents had the most interest in academic opportunities, and Whites had the least. Hispanics were less worried about childcare services. Overall, the Middle Eastern/Arab population showed fewer enrollments among the groups. Across all races and ethnicities, girls were more likely to participate in after school programs boys.

### RESEARCH TO PRACTICE POINTS

1. Understanding the different racial and ethnic group preferences can help youth practitioners attract underrepresented groups to programs. For instance, if parents emphasize academic opportunities, youth practitioners should consider weaving more academic opportunities into their programs.
2. Youth practitioners must provide challenging experiences within their programs. Activities that are not too easy or too hard, but right in the middle, can inspire youth to achieve.
3. Staff and peer interaction, challenging experiences, and youth empowerment are components of quality after-school programs. Youth practitioners control all these areas, but must use this control to make it happen.

### FULL REFERENCE FOR THE ARTICLE

Wu, H., & Van Egeren, L. A. (2010). Voluntary participation and parents’ reasons for enrollment in after-school programs: Contributions of race/ethnicity, program quality, and program policies. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 42(4), 591-620.

This summary was prepared by **Mariela Fernandez**.



## FACTORS INFLUENCING LATINO YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

### ARTICLE SUMMARY

For this study, researchers surveyed Latino adolescents to evaluate what made them more or less likely to participate in extracurricular activities. Researchers noted that extracurricular activities were critical in creating friendships, and improving social capital and academic achievement among youth. Research also found a positive correlation between parental education level and income and adolescent extracurricular participation. In addition, friendships among a diverse group of youth were correlated with increased participation. Youth who were friends with mostly foreign-born Hispanic friends were less likely to participate in activities. Finally, Latino adolescents who were not born in the United States were more likely to participate in activities than were their native-born peers.

### RESEARCH TO PRACTICE POINTS

1. Specific recruitment interventions should target Latino youth. Practitioners may need to focus on recruiting groups of friends to participate in activities together, as research found youth were less likely to participate in activities if they had a predominately Latino group of friends.
2. Programs may need to shift as youth transition from middle school to high school because researchers found participation dramatically declined during this time. As participation is already lower among Latino adolescents, developing specific programs for Latino high school students may boost enrollment.
3. Culture, ethnicity, and immigration status are important considerations in extracurricular programming. Practitioners must realize different cultural expectations may influence the likelihood of a youth's participation. They should also be culturally aware of these perceived constraints and communicate with families about the importance of after-school programs.

### FULL REFERENCE FOR THE ARTICLE

Simpkins, S. D., O'Donnell, M., Delgado, M. Y., & Becnel, J. N. (2011). Latino adolescents' participation in extracurricular activities: How important are family resources and cultural orientation? *Applied Developmental Science, 15*(1): 37-50. doi: 10.1080/10888691.2011.538618.

This summary was prepared by **Kate Cromwell**





## FACTORS INFLUENCING LATINO YOUTH SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT

### ARTICLE SUMMARY

This study involved evaluating the patterns of academic engagement and achievement of more than 400 adolescents who immigrated to the United States within the past five years. Researchers found academic self-efficacy to be the strongest protective factor in achievement of immigrant youth. Additional protective factors include: English language proficiency, a dual-parent household, gender (females were more likely to succeed), and parental education levels. The largest predictor of academic disengagement was relational attachment to school. Youth who were able to find meaningful peer relationships and a sense of belonging were far more likely to engage in school than youth who did not. Researchers also found country of origin to be a predictor of academic engagement; youth from Mexico had lower grades for the duration of the study, but grades declined at a higher level among students from Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Central America. Researchers predicted the lower constant level of academic performance among youth from Mexico may be related to heightened stereotypes and racism.

### RESEARCH TO PRACTICE POINTS

1. Academic self-efficacy is the most important predictor of academic success. Practitioners can help students feel more empowered and inspired to do well in school. By creating situations for success in after-school programs, practitioners can help youth feel that success is possible.
2. Boys are more likely to feel disengaged with school than girls are. By creating an environment or school program that caters to the needs of immigrant boys, schools may engage boys and encourage them to feel they belong in school. Practitioners should pay special attention to this at-risk population and try to help them connect with school in meaningful ways.
3. Youth from Mexico had a harder time engaging in school than youth from other countries. Despite of the large number of new immigrants from Mexico, youth from this area still have a higher level of academic disengagement than their peers. Schools should help eliminate the perceived stereotypes many felt in the academic setting. By creating an environment of inclusion, schools may help this population be more engaged with school.

### FULL REFERENCE FOR THE ARTICLE

Suárez-Orozco, C., Rhodes, J., & Milburn, M. (2009). Unraveling the immigrant paradox. *Youth & Society*, 41(2), 151-185.

This summary was prepared by **Kate Cromwell**



## POPULARITY AND LIKABILITY NOT NECESSARILY LINKED AMONG TEENS

### ARTICLE SUMMARY

This study evaluated the relationship between popularity and likability among teenagers in The Netherlands. By asking teenagers to rate who they felt were likeable and popular, researchers found popularity and likability were often negatively correlated with affiliation with peers. Students whose peers reported they were likeable or popular reported lower levels of affection from members of the same sex. In addition, perceived popularity was associated with increased association with members of the opposite sex. Researchers concluded that the idea of “basking in reflected glory” presented only marginal benefits as friends of a popular person often experienced reduced likability.

### RESEARCH TO PRACTICE POINTS

1. Youth who are popular may not have close affiliation with many of their peers. Despite being deemed popular, many of these adolescents may feel lonely. Practitioners must be aware that these youth may feel isolated, and this isolation could lead to depression. Make sure that popularity is not the sole focus among adolescents
2. Popularity is often based on friendship with the opposite sex. Popular youth often list more friends of the opposite gender than youth who are not deemed popular by their peers. Many of these relationships may be sexual, so practitioners should ensure youth are receiving appropriate sex education to prevent teenage pregnancy and disease transmission.
3. “Respected” adolescents listed a higher number of close friends and indicated they felt more affection from their friends. These adolescents felt a mutual respect between both popular youth and other youth in the school but did not explicitly seek out friendship with popular youth. These adolescents did not feel the desire to affiliate with peers but also felt they received appropriate amounts of affection from their friends. Ensuring that adolescents realize there is more to high school than popularity is important. Practitioners should help foster friendships among a diverse group of youth.

### FULL REFERENCE FOR THE ARTICLE

Dijkstra, J. K., Cillessen, A. H. N., Lindenberg, S., & Veenstra, R. (2010). Basking in reflected glory and its limits: Why adolescents hang out with popular peers. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 20(4): 942-958. doi: 10.1111/j.1532-7795.2010.00671.x.

This summary was prepared by **Kate Cromwell**



## WHAT CELLPHONES MEAN TO EARLY ADOLESCENTS

### ARTICLE SUMMARY

Researchers interviewed a sample of 20 parent-child dyads to determine what owning a cell phone means to a pre-adolescent. The study found that, in addition to being a practical device for communicating with family and friends, cell phones had significant psychological meaning for youth in this age-range. The main psychological meaning associated with owning a cell phone was increased adolescent autonomy. Young adolescents who owned a cell phone felt more able to do things on their own and more independent of their parents. In addition, adolescents who owned a cell phone reported talking on the phone with their friends more frequently than those who only had access to a landline or parental cell phone. Finally, many adolescents reported that owning a cell phone increased their social status among their peers.

### RESEARCH TO PRACTICE POINTS

1. Cell phones provide adolescents an opportunity to show increased responsibility. Many parents give their children cell phones when they feel the children are mature enough to handle the responsibility. Having opportunities to demonstrate responsibility is important for adolescents.
2. Cell phones make adolescents feel more connected with their peers. As cell phone ownership increases among youth, be mindful that youth without phones may begin to feel isolated. Teaching them about the value of communication both with and without cell phones may decrease feelings of isolation among youth without cell phones.
3. Many parents provide their children with cell phones as a means of enhanced monitoring. Cell phone policies among organizations, such as when use is prohibited and what the consequences are for violating policy, should consider the communication pattern between parents and youth. Confiscating cell phones for extended periods should be used only when families are aware of the policy.

### FULL REFERENCE FOR THE ARTICLE

Blair, B. L., & Fletcher, A. C. (2011). "The only 13-year-old on planet earth without a cell phone": Meanings of cell phones in early adolescents' everyday lives. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 26(2), 155-177. doi: 10.1177/0743558410371127

This summary was prepared by **Kate Cromwell**



## FACILITATING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH YOUTH

### ARTICLE SUMMARY

The ways and means that youth use to communicate have changed over the last 10 years. Advances in technology have opened new pathways for youth to connect with peers, parents, and out-of-school time program leaders. In an effort to better understand these developments, a survey, designed in part by youth, was conducted with 148 members of 4-H. Findings show that while youth use several technologically assisted communication methods, phones and text messaging are the two most frequently chosen. Although 78 percent reported using email, only 5 percent selected email as their primary method of communication. Youth were also asked about face-to-face and online communication. Sixty-one percent preferred face-to-face over online communication, with associated comments noting that face-to-face communication is more sincere. In support of online communication, participants said this method was easier for initiating conversations or dealing with difficult topics. In summary, the findings support the claim that youth use many communication tools. Youth professionals do not need to adopt all of these communication practices, but they do need to understand how youth communicate in order to meet and communicate with them where they are.

### RESEARCH TO PRACTICE POINTS

1. Youth professionals need to stay up to date on the latest trends in youth communication. Fortunately, the best resource for this information is the youth they work with. Adults who show interest youth communicate methods will gain understanding about youth culture and communication practices.
2. Thirty percent of participants said they felt youth were not good face-to-face communicators. Youth professionals should incorporate opportunities for the development of communication skills within their programs.
3. Although all youth may be thought to be technological experts, youth may not always be as savvy as they are perceived. Youth professionals should teach youth how to safely communicate online. Safety tips can be found at a number of sites including <http://www.netsmartz.org/Parents>.
4. Have organizational policies related to technology and communication. These policies should address how youth can use technology within the program—for example, no cell phone calls during activities—and establish appropriate guidelines for online communication between adult staff and youth participants.

### FULL REFERENCE FOR THE ARTICLE

Bovitz, L. (2010). Connecting and communicating effectively with teens: An online survey of teen communication styles. *Journal of Youth Development* [Online].5(2). Available at [http://data.memberclicks.com/site/nae4a/JYD\\_100502\\_finalx.pdf](http://data.memberclicks.com/site/nae4a/JYD_100502_finalx.pdf)

This summary was prepared by **Mat Duerden**



## WHAT YOUTH PROFESSIONALS SHOULD KNOW AND DO ABOUT YOUTH USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

### ARTICLE SUMMARY

The speed of technology development and adoption among youth can leave adults feeling left behind. The rise of social media among youth is a perfect case. More and more youth are turning to social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace to connect with peers and develop personal identities. This pattern leads researchers, policy makers, parents, and youth professionals to ask the questions:

- What impact is social media having on youth?
- How should adults react?
- On the first question, research findings are inconclusive regarding the impact of social media. Technology is changing so fast that researchers can barely catch up. That being said, a few findings are known:
- Youth are more likely to use social media to maintain existing friendships than establish new relationships.
- Most, but not all youth, are careful about the amount of private information they share online.
- Youth with lower self-esteem and fewer social connections are more likely to chat with strangers online.
- While online sexual predation is a risk for youth, a more common danger is the use of personal information by spammers and scam artists.

The impact of social media on youth requires further, ongoing attention, but action should be taken now, to insure the safety and positive development of youth in their use of social media.

### RESEARCH TO PRACTICE POINTS

1. Digital media literacy should be taught to both adults and youth. Organizations need to develop appropriate training tools, many of which can be found online, to help individuals become informed social media users.
2. Youth may be more drawn to social media as a primary social outlet if they feel they have no other safe places to meet and interact with their peers.
3. Youth who may be struggling with self-esteem and other social issues are the most at-risk of exposing themselves to compromising situations online.
4. Youth need to be involved in both teaching adults about social media and helping organizations create policies regarding the use of social media and other technologies by participants in their programs.

### FULL REFERENCE FOR THE ARTICLE

Livingstone, S., & Brake, D. R. (2010). On the rapid rise of social networking sites: New findings and policy implications. *Children & Society*, 24(1), 75-83.

This summary was prepared by **Mat Duerden**



## UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF CONSUMERISM IN YOUTH CULTURE

### ARTICLE SUMMARY

One of the most important tasks of adolescence is for youth to begin to establish a sense of personal identity. Youth are faced with an almost constant barrage of media messages as to how they should look, what they should wear, and who they should hang out with. Youth must sort through this deluge as they develop their own personal identities. This study is based on several years of observation and interviews with youth at an urban Boys and Girls Club. Current and future material possessions played an important role in the participants' identity development. The youth in the study were primarily from disadvantaged backgrounds, and many saw the acquisition of certain material goods as a way to detach from their surroundings. Boys more frequently talked about desires to get rich to support family members, and girls talked more about financial independence and educational goals beyond high school. The authors note that since youth do not have access to social power through political and education tracks available to adults, they often see gaining and displaying material goods as the only way to improve their social standing.

### RESEARCH TO PRACTICE POINTS

1. Youth professionals should be aware of the pressure many youth feel to acquire material possessions to obtain social power. Youth need to be exposed to alternative messages about the power of education, civic engagement, service, and other prosocial avenues for growth and development.
2. Youth need opportunities to develop positive relationships with adults who can provide examples of success and life satisfaction other than those in popular media, such as sports stars, and movie stars.
3. Programs should help youth understand different post-high school paths towards desired goals. Some of the adult staff surveyed in this study note that the youths' desire to acquire material goods leaves them feeling they have no choice beyond illegal means to acquire income. Youth need to be prepared for the post-high school transition. This should be an intentional topic of mentoring relationships.

### FULL REFERENCE FOR THE ARTICLE

Deutsch, N. L. & Theodorou, E. (2010). Aspiring, consuming, becoming: Youth identity in a culture of consumption. *Youth & Society*, 42(2):229-254.

This summary was prepared by **Mat Duerden**



## THE IMPACT OF OLD AND NEW MEDIA ON YOUTH

### ARTICLE SUMMARY

Media plays an increasingly pervasive role in the lives of adolescents. According to research, the average teenager spends more than seven hours each day consuming one type of media or another. In the last 10 years traditional forms of media—such as TV, radio, and magazines—have been joined and even overtaken by newer options in the form of cell phones, the Internet, and social media. In this article Brown and Bobkowski review the last 10 years of research on the impact of both old and new media on youth. Evidence suggests that media can contribute to increases in aggressive behavior, sexual activity, eating disorders, and alcohol, tobacco and illegal drug use. At the same time, preliminary research suggests some media use can help facilitate identity development, civic engagement, and the development of positive social capital. Initial concerns about the Internet as a vehicle for sexual predators and rampant cyber bullying appear overinflated, although still deserving of considerations. The authors encourage incorporating media literacy curriculum into schools and out-of-school time programs.

### RESEARCH TO PRACTICE POINTS

1. Exposure to media containing violent and sexual images is linked to greater likelihood of aggressive and sexual behavior among adolescents. Parents and youth should be made aware of this connection, which some research findings indicate is stronger than other popularly acknowledged links between factors such as secondhand smoke and cancer, and homework completion and academic success.
2. Because media plays such an influential role in youths' lives, they need clear and effective guidance on how to be informed media consumers. Media literacy should be included wherever possible in out-of-school time programming.
3. As media consumption increases, other activities decrease, including those that may be more physically and socially engaging. Youth need opportunities to assess their time-use patterns and think about how they can best use their free time.

### FULL REFERENCE FOR THE ARTICLE

Brown, J. D., & Bobkowski, P. S. (2011). Older and newer media: Patterns of use and effects on adolescents' health and well-being. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 21(1), 95-113.

This summary was prepared by **Mat Duerden**





For more information on the Sequor Youth Development Initiative  
please visit us at: <http://ydi.tamu.edu>

Mat Duerden, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist  
Sequor YDI Project Coordinator  
Texas A&M University, MS 2261  
College Station, TX 77843-2261

Phone: 979-845-5983  
Fax: 979-845-0446  
E-mail: [ydi@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:ydi@ag.tamu.edu)

