

Improving Youth Program Quality

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PROGRAM QUALITY

Agenda

- Quality Matters
 - Why Quality?
 - Quality and Outcomes
- Quality is Measurable and Malleable
 - The Youth PQA and other instruments
 - The Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI)
- Quality Improvement System (QIS) Building
 - Strategies and characteristics of effective systems
- QIS examples from the field
 - Rhode Island, Nashville, United Ways, etc

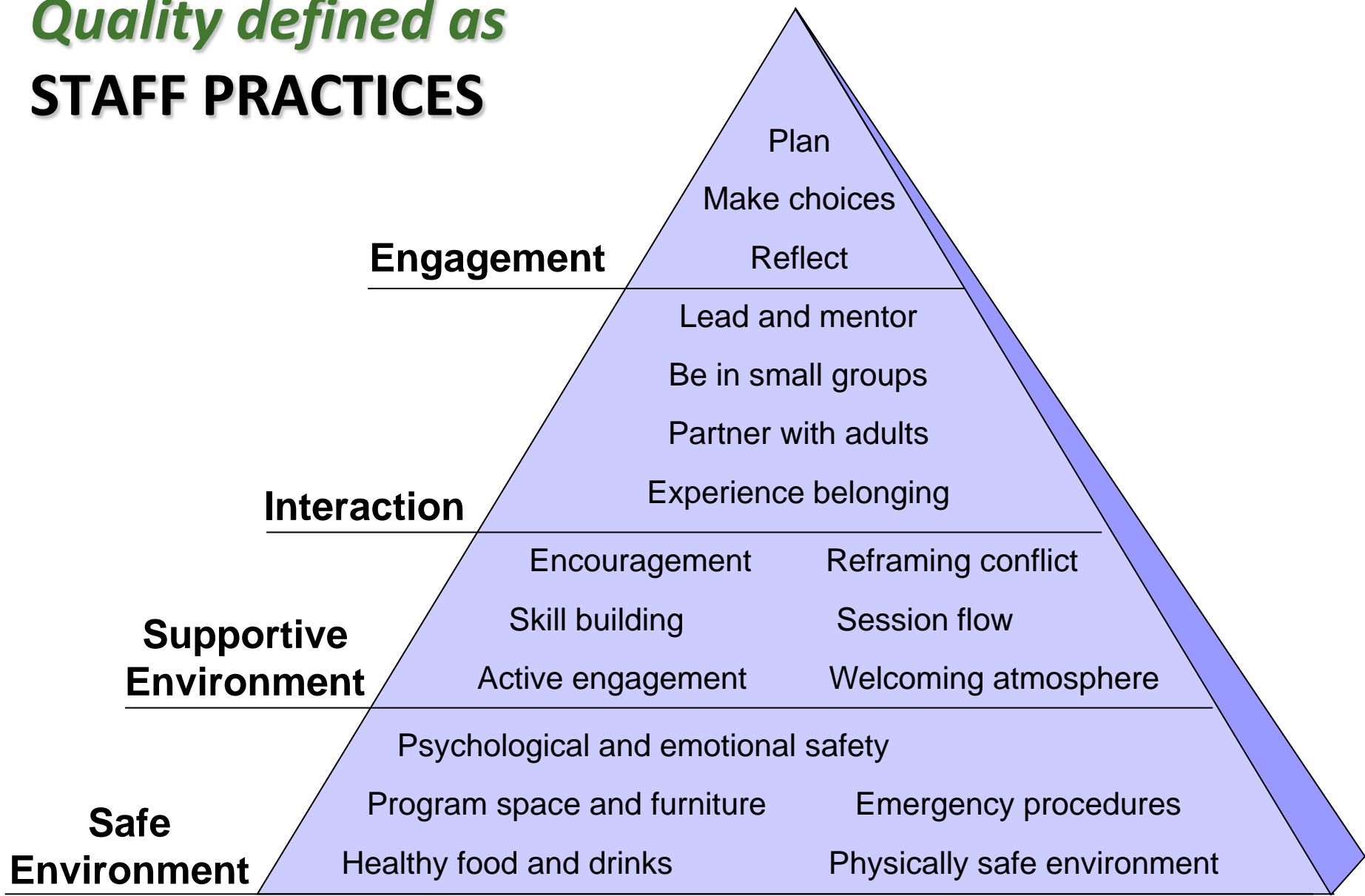
Quality Matters

Why do only some programs make a difference?

Durlak & Weissberg (2007)

- Meta-analysis of 73 afterschool impact evaluations
- Programs with SAFE features promoted school achievement, feelings and attitudes, pro-social behavior
- Programs that lacked SAFE features DID NOT produce positive effects on any of these outcome measures.

Quality defined as **STAFF PRACTICES**





Measuring Youth Program Quality

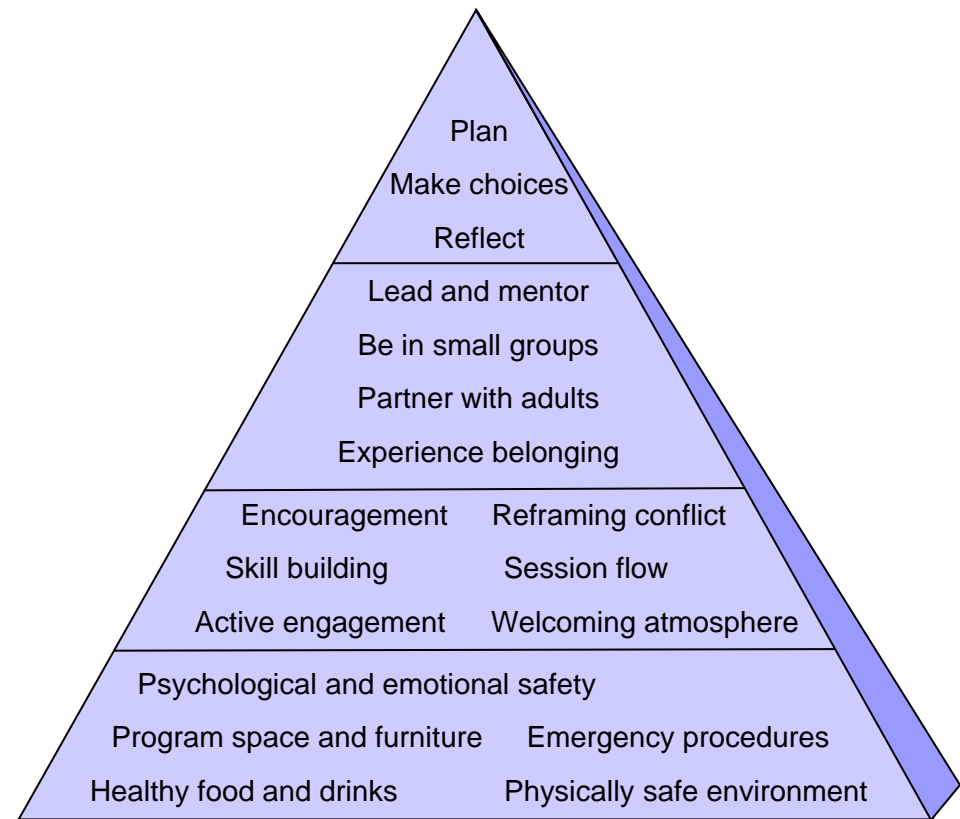
A Guide to Assessment Tools, Second Edition

*Nicole Yohalem and Alicia Wilson-Ahlstrom, The Forum for Youth Investment
with Sean Fischer, New York University
and Marybeth Shinn, Vanderbilt University*

the
forum
FOR YOUTH INVESTMENT
Published by The Forum for Youth Investment
January 2005

Leveraging Assessment with **The Youth PQA**

- Reliable & Valid
- Observational
- Content neutral
- Dual-purpose: external assessment (EA) and program self-assessment (SA)
- Can be used as a strengths-based empowerment tool



Quality Improvement System Building

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)

(repeat)



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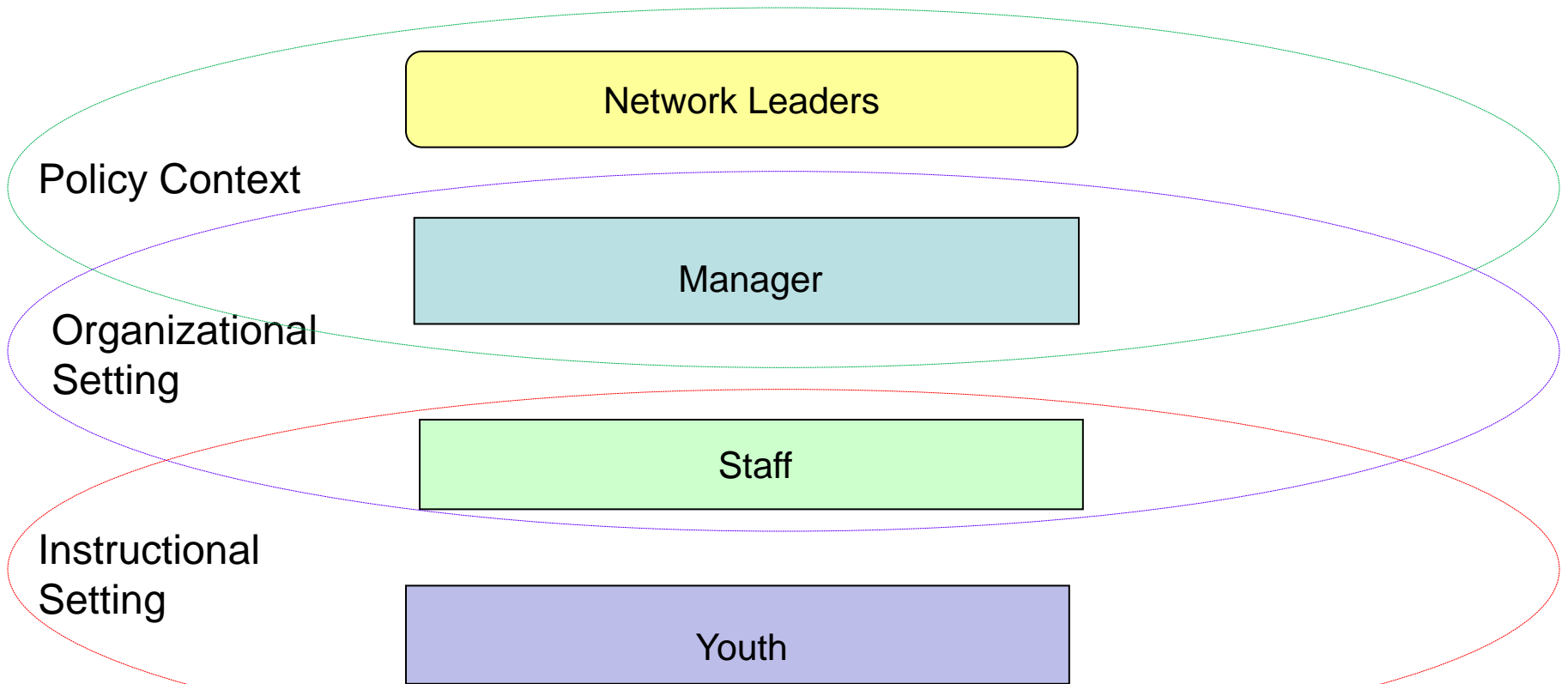
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Quality: Embedded Settings and Setting Actors

Settings

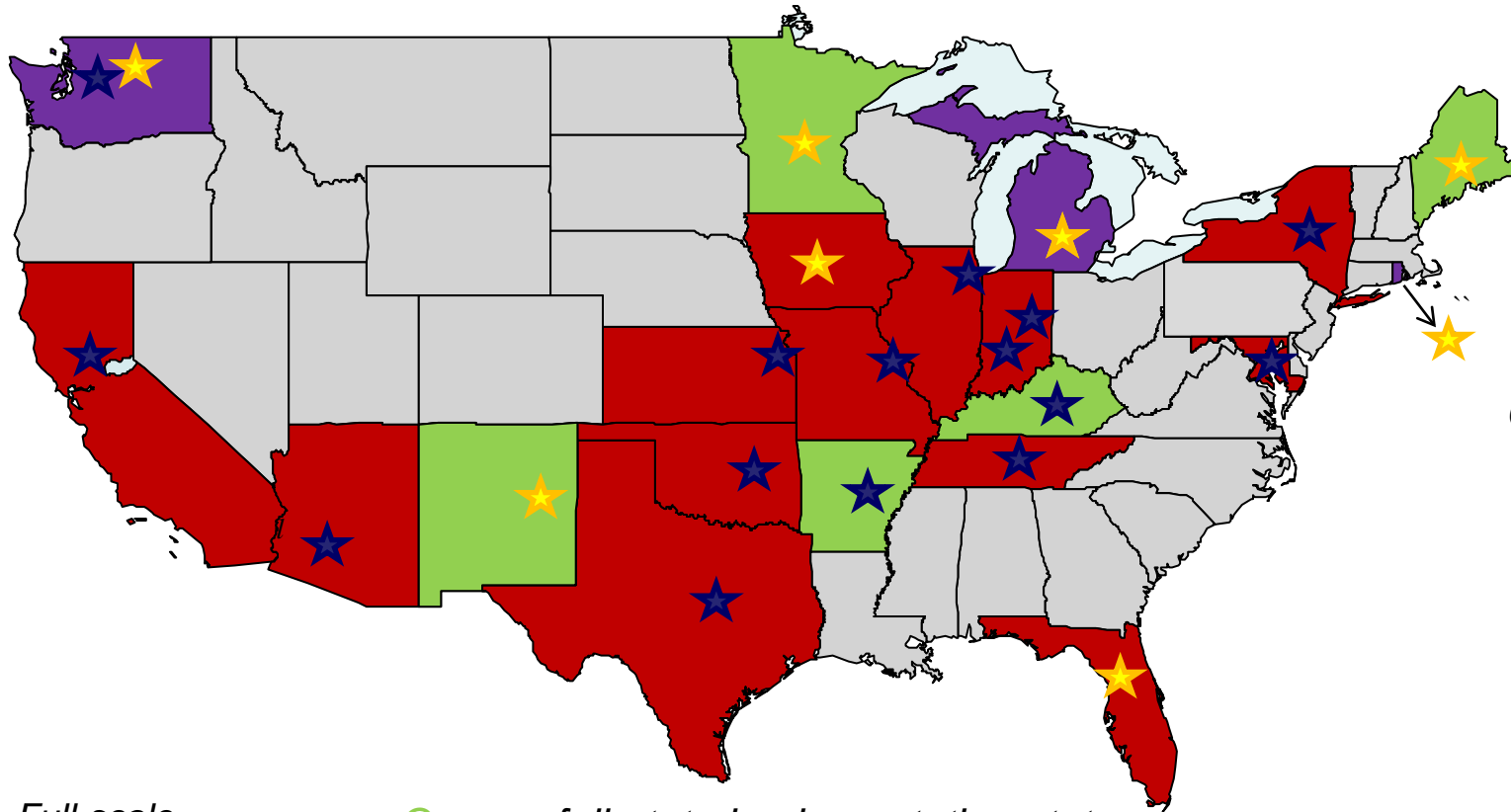
Actors



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National: Efforts to assess and improve youth program quality is happening across the country...



★ Full-scale interventions

★ Pilot interventions

Green - full-state implementation states

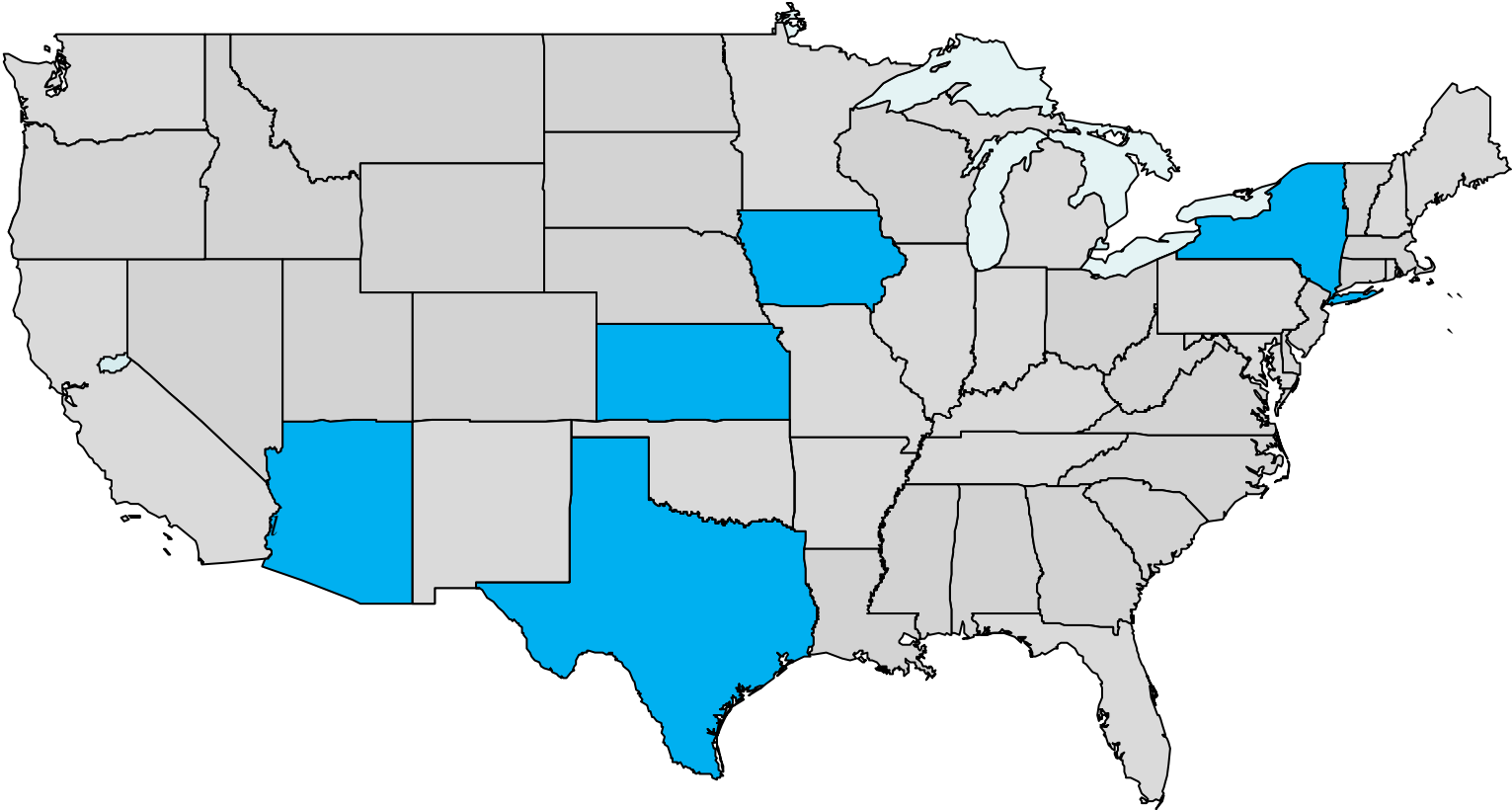
Red - place-based implementations (select cities)

Purple - place-based and are full-state implementation states

National Organizations



State and Local United Ways



Quality Improvement System Building

- Lower stakes accountability models can work – joining QIS and accountability purposes. Point is to hold managers accountable for a process that leads to staff learning and improved quality.
- Identify clearly what the performance expectations are (can be expectations for levels of performance or amounts of change);

Quality Improvement System Building

- Use a uniform and research validated observational assessment to produce ratings that are comparable across sites. Rand study on CO for school age system and several studies in ECE have found that the observational data was the firmest foundation to stand on if you wanted to know about the quality of the program.
- Unclear expectations about performance and non-uniform data are the greatest threats to effectiveness for a QIS/QRIS

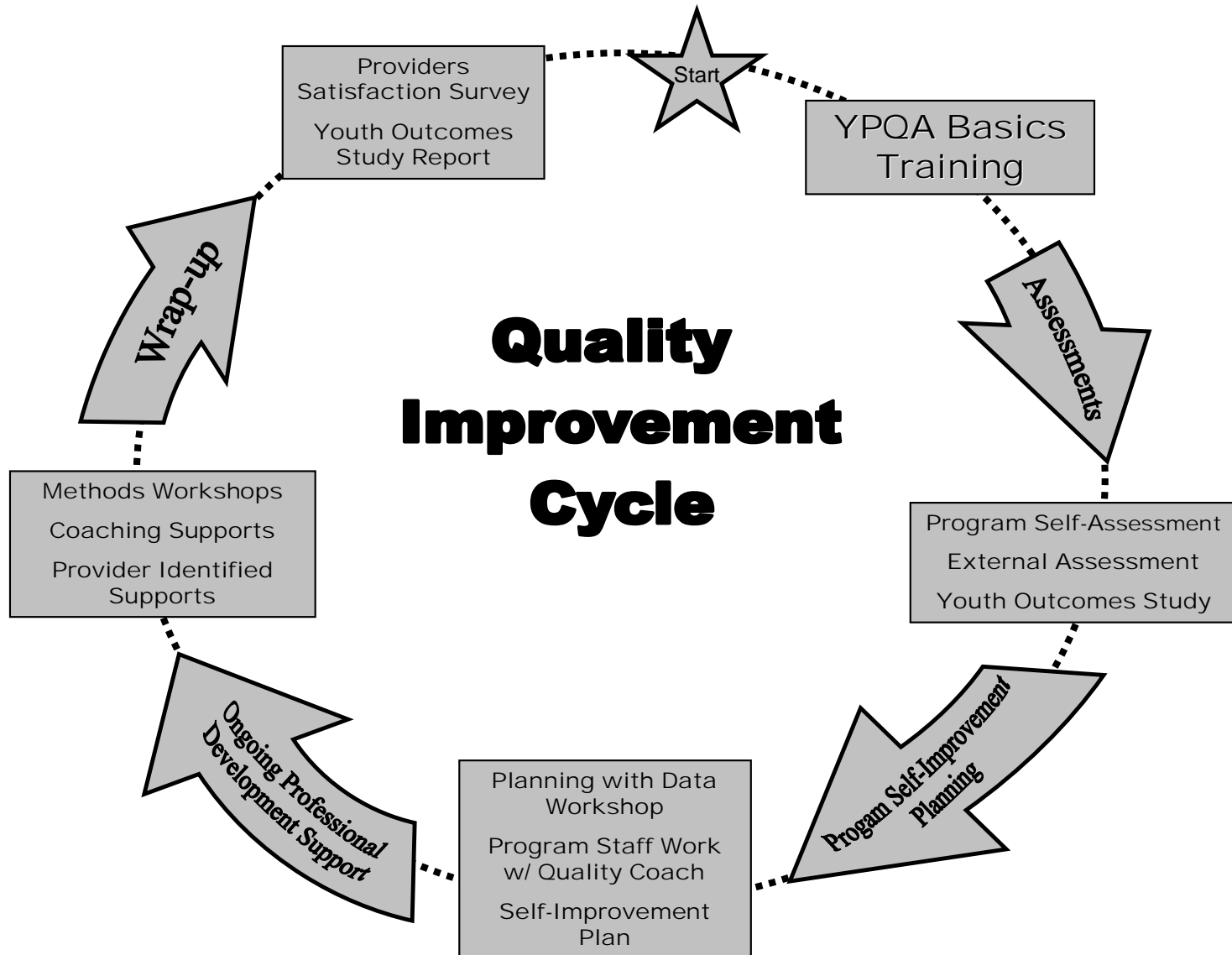
Arkansas – Better Beginnings

- Statewide Partnership:
 - Arkansas Out of School Time Network
 - Arkansas Department of Education
 - Arkansas Department of Human Services
- 2010 Self Assessment pilot with 80 21stCCLC sites
- 2010 pilot with DHS Licensed programs
- Youth PQA will be an option for Quality Rating System
- Regional training and technical assistance system available to all programs (DHS, 21stCCLC)

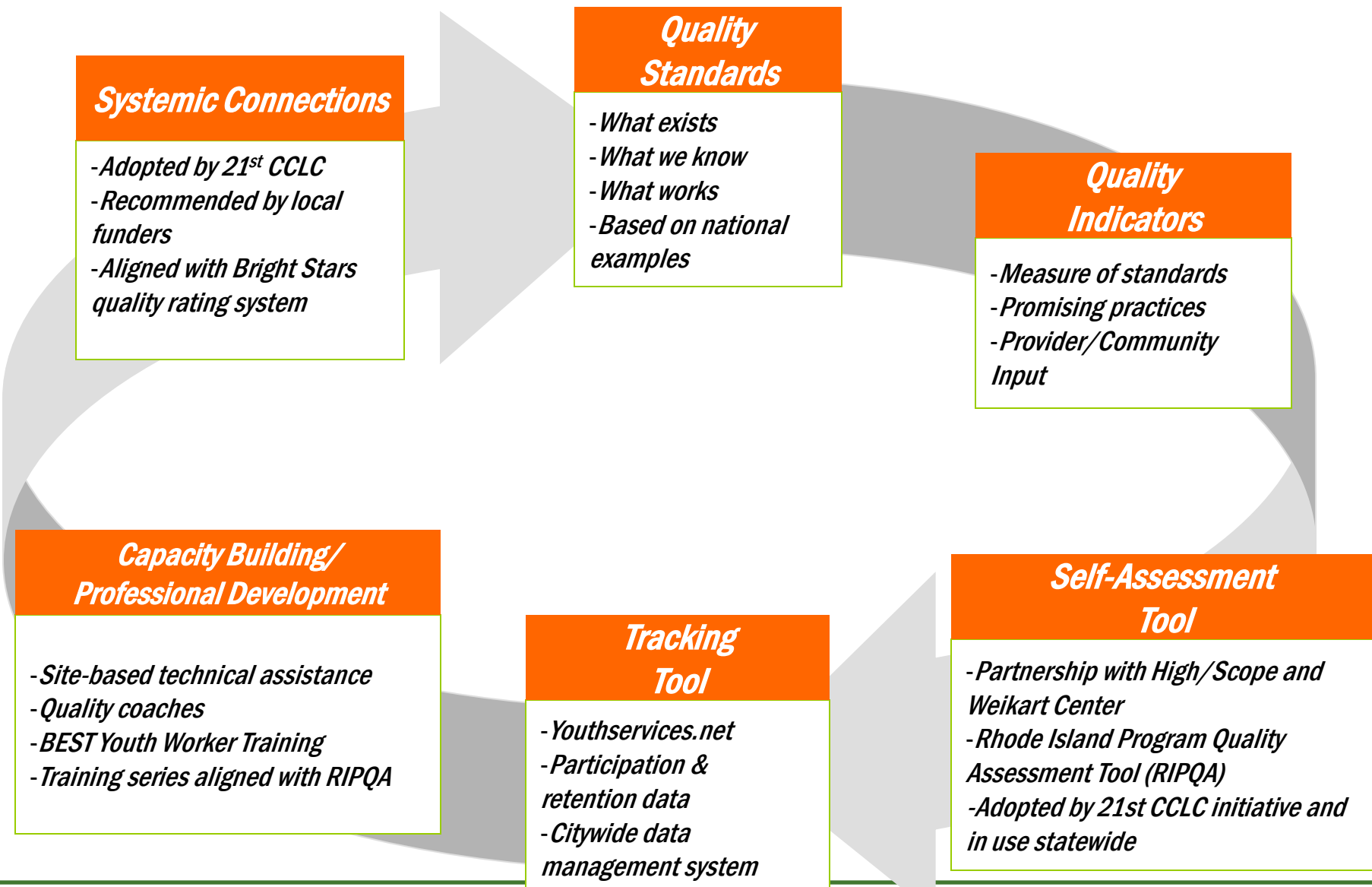
Kansas City United Way

- 2009-2010 Pilot with 10 orgs - 25 program sites
- United Way of Greater KC is coordinating entity
- *Assess*
 - UMKC's Institute for Human Development
- *Plan/Improve*
 - The Francis Institute for Child and Youth Development at Metropolitan Community College-Penn Valley Campus.
- *Research – Youth Outcomes*
 - University of Kansas School of Education

Kansas City UW Quality Improvement Cycle



Rhode Island: Quality Improvement Cycle: PASA's Approach





Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA)

Sample Items

Older Youth Version- Grades 4-12

The David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality

A Joint Venture between HighScope and the Forum

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II. Supportive Environmen

II-H. Activities support active engagement.

Indicators			Supporting Evidence/Anecdotes
<p>1 The activities provide no opportunities for youth to engage with either materials or ideas or to improve a skill through guided practice; activities mostly involve waiting, listening, watching, and repeating.</p>	<p>3 The activities provide limited opportunities for youth to engage with materials or ideas or to improve a skill though guided practice.</p>	<p>5 The bulk of the activities involve youth in engaging with (creating, combining, reforming) materials or ideas or improving a skill though guided practice.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>1 The activities do not (will not) lead to tangible products or performances.</p>	<p>3 The activities lead (or will lead) to tangible products or performances but do not reflect ideas or designs of youth (e.g., only staff's ideas are reflected).</p>	<p>5 The program activities lead (or will lead in future sessions) to tangible products or performances that reflect ideas or designs of youth.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>1 The activities provide no opportunities for youth to talk about (or otherwise communicate) what they are doing and what they are thinking about to others.</p>	<p>3 The activities provide at least one opportunity for some youth to talk about (or otherwise communicate) what they are doing and what they are thinking about to others.</p>	<p>5 The activities provide all youth one or more opportunities to talk about (or otherwise communicate) what they are doing and what they are thinking about to others.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>1 The activities focus almost exclusively on abstract concepts, providing limited or no related concrete experiences.</p>	<p>3 The activities focus almost exclusively on concrete experiences, providing limited or no opportunities to engage with related abstract concepts.</p>	<p>5 The activities balance concrete experiences involving materials, people, and projects (e.g., field trips, experiments, interviews, service trips, creative writing) with abstract concepts (e.g., lectures, diagrams, formulas).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

$$\text{Sum } \boxed{} \div \boxed{} \text{ number of indicators scores} = \boxed{} \text{ item}$$

III. Interaction

III-L. Youth have opportunities to develop a sense of belonging.

Note: **Structured** refers to the quality of being intentional, planned, and/or named; it does not refer to informal conversation.

Indicators

1 Youth have no opportunities to get to know each other (beyond self-selected pairs or small cliques).

3 Youth have informal opportunities to get to know each other (e.g., youth engage in informal conversations before, during, or after session).

5 Youth have structured opportunities to get to know each other (e.g., there are team-building activities, introductions, personal updates, welcomes of new group members, icebreakers, and a variety of groupings for activities).

Supporting Evidence/Anecdotes

1 Youth exhibit predominantly exclusive relationships, limited to a few individuals or a small clique within the program offering.

3 Relationships to others in the group are not fully inclusive, but youth know and use one another's names.

5 Youth exhibit predominately inclusive relationships with all in the program offering, including newcomers.

1 Youth do not identify with the program offering (e.g., many youth complain about or express dislike of the program offering or activities).

3 Youth do not strongly identify with the program offering but do not complain or express dislike.

5 Youth strongly identify with the program offering (e.g., hold one another to established guidelines, use ownership language, such as "our program," engage in shared traditions such as shared jokes, songs, gestures).

1 The activities provide no opportunities to acknowledge the achievements, work, or contributions of youth.

3 The activities provide opportunities to acknowledge the achievements, work, or contributions of some youth, but opportunities are unscheduled or impromptu.

5 The activities include structured opportunities (e.g., group presentations, sharing times, recognition celebrations, exhibitions, performances) to publicly acknowledge the achievements, work, or contributions of at least some youth.

Sum ÷ number of indicators scores = item score

IV. Engagement

IV-R. Youth have opportunities to reflect.

Note: (a) **Reflect** means to review, summarize, and/or evaluate recent events or activities. **Reflections** are usually expressed by talking with others and/or in writing, for example, a journal or report. (b) **Structured** refers to the quality of being intentional, planned, and/or named; it does not refer to informal conversation.

Indicators			Supporting Evidence/Anecdotes
1 No youth are engaged in an intentional process of reflecting on what they are doing or have done.	3 Some youth are engaged in an intentional process of reflecting on what they are doing or have done.	5 All youth are engaged in an intentional process of reflecting on what they are doing or have done (e.g., writing in journals; reviewing minutes; sharing progress, accomplishments, or feelings about the experience).	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 Some or all youth are not given the opportunity to reflect on their activities.	3 All youth are given the opportunity to reflect on their activities in at least one way.	5 All youth are given the opportunity to reflect on their activities in 2 or more ways (e.g., writing, role playing, using media or technology, drawing).	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 No youth have structured opportunities to make presentations to the whole group.	3 Some youth have structured opportunities to make presentations to the whole group.	5 In the course of the program offering, all youth have structured opportunities to make presentations to the whole group.	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 Staff dismiss feedback from youth who initiate it, or youth have no opportunities to provide feedback on the activities.	3 Staff are receptive to feedback initiated by youth on the activities but do not solicit it.	5 Staff initiate structured opportunities for youth to give feedback on the activities (e.g., staff ask feedback questions, provide session evaluations).	<input type="checkbox"/>

Sum ÷ number of indicators scores = item score