



All youth ready for
college, work & life.

Bring Precision to Your Passion[†]

**A QUICK OVERVIEW OF THE
READY BY 21[®] APPROACH TO
DATA-DRIVEN DECISION-MAKING**

Bring Precision to Your Passion

Every community and state has dedicated leaders who have taken on the critical task of bringing diverse people and disparate efforts together in order to transform their community or state into a wonderful place to grow up.

These leaders have plenty of passion. They are looking for precision. There is no graduate school degree one can get to learn how to align a community or state's child and youth services. There is no professional association. Most of these leaders are not connected to other leaders in other communities and states or even in their communities. They do not have one of the critical resources they need to succeed – good research and reality-based advice.

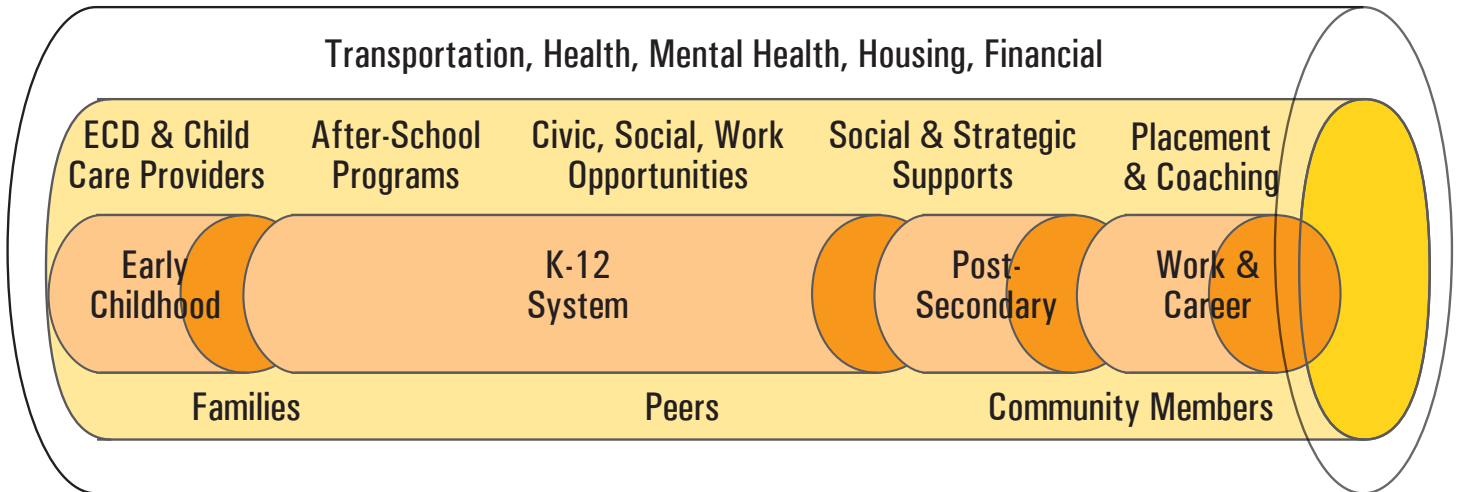
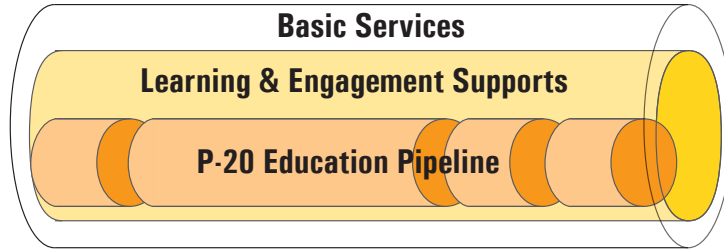
The Forum for Youth Investment has built a national movement based on four basic shapes: gears, cubes, pipes and grids. Download the Ready by 21 Leadership Network brochure to learn how these shapes can help you think differently about how to partner and plan for sustained improvements in young people's well-being.

Learn more about the Forum
and Ready by 21 at *www.readyby21.org*.

Commit Big: Insulate the Education Pipeline.

75 percent of high school graduates go on to post-secondary education within two years. However, only 9 percent of those from low income families earn a four-year degree. The education pipeline is cracked in multiple places and corroded inside.

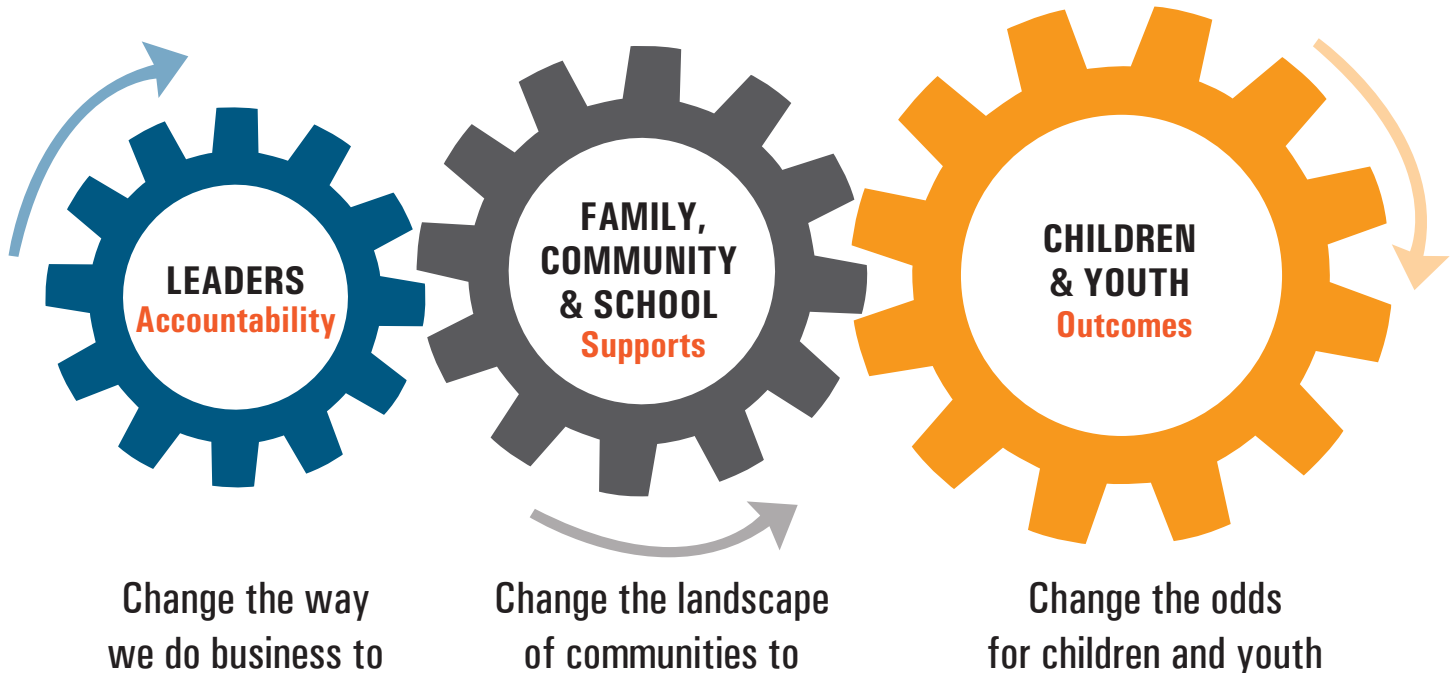
But fixing these problems alone won't ensure that young people are ready for college, work and life. We have to insulate the pipe with basic services such as transportation and health care, and with multiple opportunities for learning, engagement and employment. This means changing the way we do business as leaders, whether we're on the front lines or in the board room.



Focus on the Small Gear. It Makes a Big Difference.

It sometimes takes as much as decade to make significant progress on an intractable problem. But changes in the direction and coordination of the leadership focused on an issue can happen within a few years; if leaders make their own capacity-building a priority by focusing on partnerships, shared goal-setting, data-driven decision-making and strategies that strengthen systems and neighborhoods, not just programs.

Moving the small gear can make a big difference because steady pressure is needed to get multiple systems moving in the same direction toward the same goals. This is why the Ready by 21 Partnership is committed to meeting leaders where they are and providing them with the tools and capacity-building services they need to get further faster.

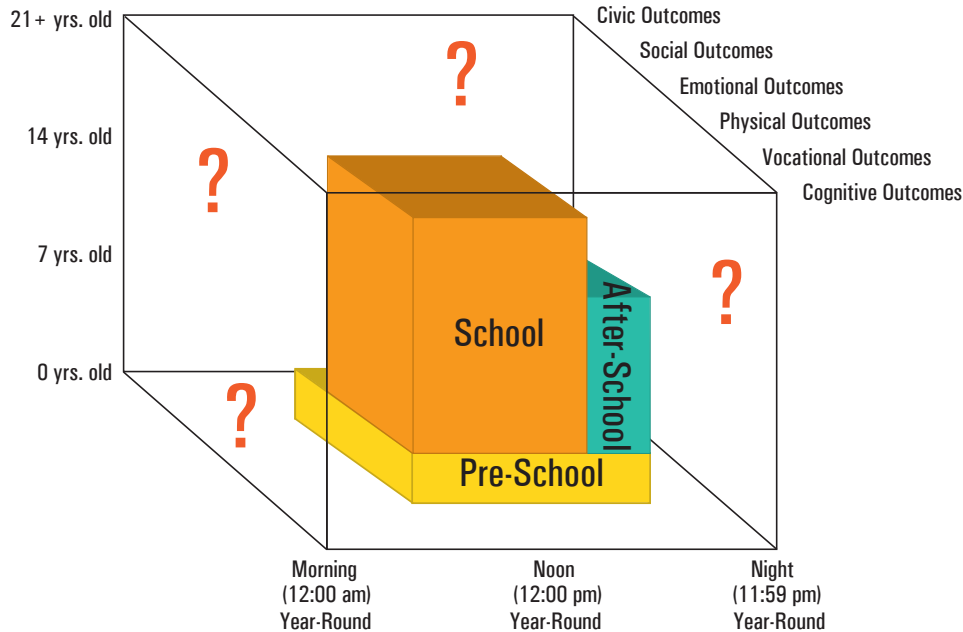


Think Outside the Box in Order to Really Fill the Inside.

Improving student success requires school reform. But school reform is not enough.

Improvements are needed in the “big box” that represents a child’s developmental space –the sum of all the settings and systems where children spend their time year round, from birth to their 20s, building the competencies and connections they need to be effective contributors.

Who fills the rest of this space? Families, neighbors, community nonprofits, faith organizations, libraries, public service agencies, civic organizations, businesses, the Internet, peers, gangs, etc.



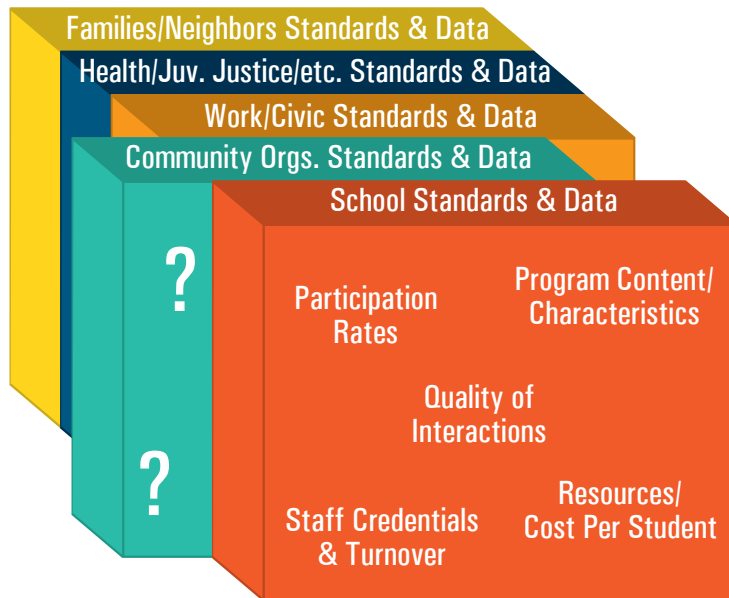
Get Good Information.

In order to make good decisions, leaders need information that helps them answer important questions that cut across the 3 gears, such as: who and where are young people and how well are they doing, what are they participating in and is it any good and what policies and resources support these efforts and are they coordinated. Leaders need complete data that adds up across the settings and systems where young people spend their time.

We know a lot about students and schools – attendance rates, test scores and grades, teacher qualifications, school

performance ratings and per pupil costs. At best, school fills only one quarter (27%) of this space. After-school, narrowly defined as 3-6 p.m. programs for elementary and middle schoolers, fills only a fraction more. We need information on the big box and on the total child, not just on academic success.

Communities and states don't have complete or comparable data on other systems and settings. This means that everyone, from the individual teacher to the city council, is making decisions inside of a "black box," adding new programs and initiatives without adding up the current ones to assess their adequacy and impact.



Illuminate the box.

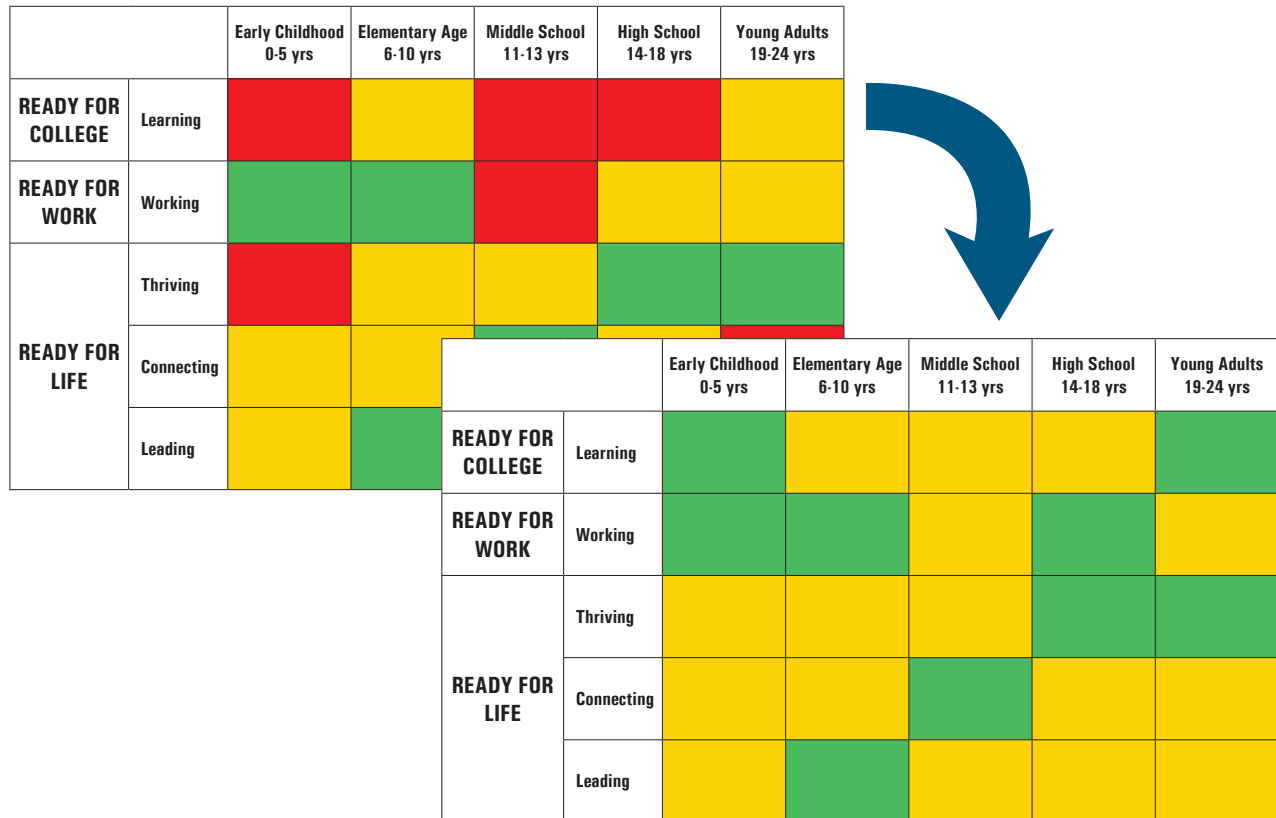
Integrate the data.

Align efforts.

Track Progress Against Big Picture Goals

Thinking outside the box is the first step. Tracking progress inside the box is the second. If we are going to commit to improving academic, vocational and social-emotional outcomes across, at least, the first two decades of life and commit to improving supports and services across multiple systems, then we need precise but simple ways to visualize our goals.

Dashboards (grids showing relationships between age groups and outcomes or settings and supports) are simple ways to present data so that we can see where we are, decide where we want to be and track progress along the way. Individual leaders can take responsibility for improvements in certain areas, but everyone is linked to the big picture.



Ready by 21

Powerful Solutions for Passionate Leaders

Broader Partnerships | Bigger Goals | Better Data | Bolder Strategies

† Pittman, K. (2008, May). "Precision Engineering." Washington, DC: The Forum for Youth Investment.
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