

Program Quality News

Greetings!

In the months since [*It Takes an Ecosystem: Understanding the People, Places, and Possibilities of Learning and Development Across Settings*](#) was published, we have amplified and expanded upon the book's themes through a series of blog posts by the authors and editors; [the latest of which spotlights several strategies for engaging youth in policy](#) and the value of youth-adult partnerships to foster cross-sector collaboration.

It Takes an Ecosystem is shaped by four major themes: 1) the value of an ecosystem framework for moving youth fields forward, 2) the need to better make use of the science of learning and development, 3) the aspirational idea of the allied youth fields, and 4) the critical importance of centering equity and justice. These themes are woven through each chapter, providing a set of guiding frames and insights for reimagined and more interconnected learning and development ecosystems that can support youth to thrive.

On March 29 from 12:30-2:00 PM ET, Dr. Tom Akiva of the University of Pittsburgh and I will be joined by several of the chapter authors for [People, Places & Possibilities: Building Strong Learning & Development Ecosystems to Promote Equity](#), the next in the Readiness Project's Making the Invisible Visible webinar series. In this session, we will explore how ecosystems promote equity and engage in a rich discussion on how the ideas presented in the book can come to life in our work with young people and communities.

We're also looking forward to presenting next week at the [National AfterSchool Association Convention](#) in Las Vegas, Nevada, where we will facilitate a session on March 22 to share ideas and examples from *It Takes an Ecosystem*. Together, we will consider how we can move towards a more connected, more equitable world for young people and the adults in their lives.

We hope to see you there!

Kimberly H. Robinson, Ph.D. | *(she, her, hers)*

Managing Director, [David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality](#)

Executive Vice President, [The Forum for Youth Investment](#)

kim@forumfyi.org

Mark your calendar

- Join Every Hour Counts on **Thursday, March 17, from 3:00-4:15 EDT** for [Putting Data to Work for Young People: Bridging Practice and Research through Continuous Improvement](#). In this webinar, participants will discuss why data collection is essential, how we can use data to advance equity goals, and effective practices for both. Every Hour Counts will also preview their newly released [Measurement Framework and accompanying Guidebook](#), resources to help communities set a shared vision and process

for using data for improvement—with a focus on advancing equitable systems—at the youth, program, and system levels. *This webinar is presented in collaboration with the Forum for Youth Investment, Afterschool Alliance, National AfterSchool Association, and National Summer Learning Association and is made possible with support from The Wallace Foundation.*

Resources from the field

- Two recent blogs from the Readiness Projects Partners, [Embracing the Diversity of Community-Based Settings](#) and [Are You Ready? Implementing the Design Principles for Community-Based Settings](#), aim to introduce community-based practitioners and K-12 educators to some of the key concepts described in *Design Principles for Community-Based Settings: Putting the Science of Learning and Development into Action*.
- [Let's Talk Social and Emotional Learning](#), a new podcast series from The Wallace Foundation, looks at the history of SEL, its practice, some recent developments, and its future. This wide-ranging, three-episode series breaks down the what, why, and how of SEL.
- Afterschool Professionals Appreciation Week, which will take place this year from April 25-29, is a time to recognize, appreciate, and advocate for those who work with young people during out-of-school hours. [Visit the National AfterSchool Association's website](#) to access the toolkit and gain ideas and inspiration for honoring families, staff, and communities.
- With staffing shortages causing program closures across the country, organizations are seeking to attract qualified candidates by raising pay rates – but gaining the financial resources to do so has been challenging for many. In Virginia, the City of Virginia Beach recently supported [a pay increase for all childcare employees with the Virginia Beach Parks & Recreation](#). Discover other [Funding Ideas to Boost Staff Pay](#) in the National AfterSchool Association's Staff Recruitment Toolkit.

Survey Opportunity

- Millions of professionals and volunteers work with young people every day on athletic fields, in afterschool programs, in libraries, in faith-based institutions, in the many settings where youth play, learn, and grow outside of the school day. Yet, we have little collective information about this essential workforce. Through the **Power of Us Workforce Survey**, youth-serving professionals and volunteers can contribute to a national effort to explore, define, and elevate their profession. [Take the survey today!](#)

the
forum
FOR YOUTH INVESTMENT

is the proud parent organization of:



www.forumfyi.org/weikartcenter