

YOUTH MOVE NATIONAL PRESENTS

#THINGS2CONSIDER

Youth in Governance

Youth can play an important role in governance. With the right support, they can help design, run, and evaluate youth programs and organization! In the end, you'll have a program that's FOR youth, BY youth!

HOW CAN YOUTH GET INVOLVED?

Many times, governing boards are happy to partner with youth and invite them to participate as a member. However, youth may need training on topics like following board protocol, understanding elections and applications, social expectations, and other things that governing boards do.

Sometimes, a board may not be very welcoming to young adults. This is something you should consider. It is hard work being an advocate for youth in governance. Take your time and get to know board members. If you are able to build good relationships with them, it might open them up to change and allowing you or future youth to participate in governance.



ROLES & OPPORTUNITIES

Roles can vary from board to board. They might include being a voting member, chairing a sub-committee, or filling an elected position such as president. There are always plenty of different opportunities once you are on a board or committee. If you want to learn what each role does, do not be afraid to look for a mentor on the board to help teach you the ropes and board culture. Another opportunity and great way to learn skills is to volunteer for projects the board may have, such a sub-committee on a specific topic you are knowledgeable about.

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT COLLABORATION

This is the most challenging, and most fun, part of youth and adults collaborating together. For youth to learn about being on a board, they will need mentors and training. For adults, they may need to slow down, help explain, and be willing to put a little more time in to this partnership. When governing bodies include young adults, it is very important that they review and, if needed, update their bylaws so young adults may participate fully. This might mean shorter terms, adjusting meeting times, offering virtual meeting options, and other considerations to make board participation accessible for youth and young adults. Some boards have a tri-chair model, where they are chaired by a system representative, a family representative, and a youth representative. Others might ask youth and young adults to serve on a sub - committee and focus on specific youth projects.

Another thing to consider is the roles that youth and young adults may have while sitting on the board. It is very frustrating for everyone when roles are not clearly defined. You might draft job descriptions for youth and adult board members, so everyone can understand what is expected of them.



YOUTH VOICE BENEFIT

Ultimately, involving youth and young adults in governance is a great way to increase youth voice and be sure your organization is relevant to young people. There are many steps and things to consider, and it can be hard work, but it's worth it! Having youth members on board opens the door to:

- More effectively engaging youth audiences
- Creating policy changes to benefit youth outcomes
- Growing an initiative to meet the needs of future youth people
- Building youth leadership for the future
- Evaluating outcomes that matter to youth
- Having more fun

Check out these resources on youth in governance

[Youth Voice on Agency Level Assessment](#)

[Successful Youth - Adult Collaboration](#)

[14 Points to Successfully Involving Young People in Organizational Decision Making](#)

words by
ZACHARY KARENCHAK & COREY LUDDEN



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