



CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES AT-RISK
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER

CYFAR Program Quality Instrument, Youth (PQI–Youth) Survey and Administration Guide

The CYFAR PQI was developed by:

The Center for Research and Outreach (REACH)

The University of Minnesota

Lynne M. Borden, PhD

Mark Otto, MPA

Samantha Grant, MA

Jaime Ballard, PhD

For additional information, please contact:

Lynne M. Borden, Ph.D.

Associate Dean, Research and Engagement

University of Minnesota Extension

lborden@umn.edu

Funding provided by the United States Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA–NIFA) through a cooperative agreement with the University of Minnesota and Pennsylvania State University under Grant 2022–41520–38160.

CYFAR Program Quality Instrument, Youth (PQI-Youth)

Directions: The following statements describe how your program may work. Please pick the number that shows how frequently the following happens in your program. For example, if a statement happens all the time, select “5” for “Always.”

	Never 1	Rarely 2	Some- times 3	A lot 4	Always 5
Adults in this program are good listeners.					
Adults are eager to help young people.					
Adults treat young people fairly.					
Young people feel accepted.					
Young people feel like they can be themselves.					
Adults get to know young people by interacting with them.					
Young people are encouraged to be leaders.					
Young people learn from activities that are challenging.					
Young people learn about different cultures.					
Young people learn new ways to communicate their ideas.					
Young people choose the activities they want to do.					
Everyone's family gets invited to come to the program's activities.					
Young people learn about community resources (e.g., libraries, parks, and health department).					
Young people contribute to the community by helping others.					
Young people are willing to help each other.					
Young people are kind to one another.					
Young people feel safe when they are at the program.					
The program has rules about what sorts of behaviors are expected.					
Guidelines and rules are enforced daily.					

CYFAR Program Quality Instrument (PQI) Administration Guide

Survey Overview

This survey is aligned with Eccles & Gootman's (2002) eight essential elements of high-quality programs for youth. The 19 items measure whether the program provides physical and psychological safety; appropriate structure; supportive relationships; opportunities to belong; positive social norms; support for efficacy and mattering; opportunities for skill building; and connections to family, school, and community.

Measure Reliability

Internal consistency/reliability:

- Overall $\alpha = .93$
- Subscales $\alpha = .72 - .84$

Measure Validity

Exploratory factor analysis using parallel analysis identified six factors, explaining 56% of variance, including: Supportive Relationships, Opportunities to Belong, Skill-building & Efficacy, Community & Family Integration, Positive Norms, and Structure & Safety.

Survey Administration

Preparing the Survey

The CYFAR Program Quality survey can be administered as a:

- Hard copy/paper survey
- Electronic survey through CYFAR Survey Builder at <https://suite.cyfar.org/>

Sometimes the best approach is to take multiple approaches. For instance, you might have computers or tablets for electronic surveys in addition to paper options.

Administering the Survey

For all measures, staff can provide accommodations to increase accessibility for all. Strategies that work well include group administration, reading items aloud, and defining words from the surveys.

Survey Scripts- Introducing the Survey

It is important to give clear instructions to participants as they complete the survey.

Those with reading challenges will benefit from the survey being read aloud to them. Administrators of the survey should be ready to further explain the survey questions. This is not a test.

The following scripts are provided to introduce the survey and make sense of the questions as needed. Please adapt these to your specific group.

“Today I’m asking you to complete a survey. We want to learn about you and your experiences in this program. We plan to use your feedback to talk about why programs matter and to make the program better.”

***This survey is optional.** If you do not want to fill out the survey, you do not need to. However, we hope you will take a few minutes to fill it out because your answers are important. Your answers will help make programs better for youth in the future.*

***This survey is private.** No one at your school, home, or CYFAR program will see your answers. Please answer all of the questions as honestly as you can. If you are uncomfortable answering a question, you may leave it blank.*

***This is not a test.** There are no right or wrong answers, and your answers will not affect your participation or place in the program in any way.”*

Survey Scoring

Subscale scores allow us to explore specific elements of a broader experience. For example, a youth may experience their program as being high quality overall but give it a low score in the subscale of Community and Family Integration. Subscales can be useful for exploring participants' experiences in specific areas.

Total Score: All items in the CYFAR Program Quality measure can be averaged to gain a total program quality average score, ranging from 1 to 5.

Subscales: This instrument is grounded in the National Research Council's elements of program quality (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). The elements are grouped into the following subscales. Items in each subscale can be averaged, for a subscale average ranging from 1 to 5.

Supportive Relationships ($\alpha = .84$)

- Adults in this program are good listeners.
- Adults are eager to help young people.
- Adults treat young people fairly.

Opportunities to Belong ($\alpha = .83$)

- Young people feel accepted.
- Young people feel like they can be themselves.
- Adults get to know young people by interacting with them.

Skill-Building and Efficacy ($\alpha = .80$)

- Young people are encouraged to be leaders.
- Young people learn from activities that are challenging.
- Young people learn about different cultures.
- Young people learn new ways to communicate their ideas.

Community and Family Integration ($\alpha = .74$)

- Young people choose the activities they want to do.
- Everyone's family gets invited to come to the program's activities.
- Young people learn about community resources (e.g., libraries, parks, and health department).
- Young people contribute to the community by helping others.

Positive Norms ($\alpha = .72$)

- Young people are willing to help each other.
- Young people are kind to one another.

Structure and Safety ($\alpha = .74$)

- Young people feel safe when they are at the program.
- The program has rules about what sorts of behaviors are expected.
- Guidelines and rules are enforced daily.

A note about missing data. If a participant is missing some of the items, this can bias results. We recommend the following [overview of methods to address missing data](#). A walkthrough of how to address missing data in R is available [here](#).

Acknowledgements

This instrument is a revised version of the Program Quality Instrument - Youth, which was developed by team members and coaches from:

The Center for Research and Outreach (REACH)
The University of Minnesota

Children, Youth, and Families At-Risk
Professional Development and Technical Assistance Center (CYFAR PDTA)
Lynne M. Borden, PhD, Co-PI; Daniel F. Perkins, PhD, Co-PI

Arizona Center for Research and Outreach (AZ REACH)

Publications using the PQI-Youth

Original version (2003)

Borden, L. M., Wiggs, C. B., Schaller, A., & Schlomer, G. L. (2012). Engaging youth in evaluation: Using clickers for data collection. *Journal of Youth Development*, 7(1), 147–151.

<https://doi.org/10.5195/JYD.2012.159>

Smischney, T., Roberts, M., Gliske, K., Borden, L. & Perkins, D. (2018). Developing Youth Competencies: The Impact of Program Quality. *Journal of Youth Development*, 13, 29–48.

[10.5195/JYD.2018.587](https://doi.org/10.5195/JYD.2018.587).

Shortened version (2013)

Gliske, K., Ballard, J., Buchanan, G., Borden, L., & Perkins, D. F. (2021). The components of quality in youth programs and association with positive youth outcomes: A person-centered approach. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 120. doi: 10.1016/j.chilyouth.2020.105696.

Ballard, J., Borden, L. M., & Perkins, D. F. (2021). Program quality components related to youth civic engagement. *Children and Youth Services Review*, vol. 126(C).

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2021.106022>

Children, Youth and Families At-Risk Professional Development and Technical Assistance (CYFAR PDTA) Team. (2016). *2016 CYFAR Evaluation Report*. <https://cyfar.org/resource/2016-cyfar-evaluation-report>

CYFAR version (2023)

Children, Youth and Families At-Risk Professional Development and Technical Assistance (CYFAR PDTA) Team. (2022). *CYFAR Youth Common Measures 2022*. <https://cyfar.org/resource/cyfar-youth-common-measures-2022>

Borden, L. M., Ballard, J., Grant, S., Ealy, P. & Perkins, D. (in preparation). *Program Quality Instrument for Youth (PQI - Youth): Validation of a brief, self-report measure.*