Safe and Secure Places to Live, Learn, and Play

SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES AND SCHOOLS

Schools, neighborhoods, and community settings can foster and support healthy adolescent development across the spectrum, including physical and mental health, social interactions, and cognitive growth. Young people are also spending an increasing amount of time living, learning, and playing in a digital environment.

The Partnership recognizes the need for young people to feel like they belong and are valued. How young people are perceived and supported in these environments plays a significant role in their feelings of connectedness and investment as part of the community. Schools, neighborhoods, and communities can foster this sense of connectedness to support healthy development across the spectrum, including physical and mental health and cognitive growth. We also recognize that the overuse and misuse of technology has impacted young people's health and learning outcomes. Now is the time to provide opportunities for young people to learn about the addictive nature of devices, increase life skills and positive habits that support healthy and balanced use of technology, and discuss digital well-being practices in the community.

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DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH

Supportive Communities and Schools

Partner with schools and communities to ensure all young people are welcomed, engaged, and connected.

When young people feel connected to school and they feel like adults and peers in the school care about their learning, they are more likely to engage in healthy behaviors and succeed academically. Schools and communities where young people feel like they belong, and matter provide a solid foundation for young people to flourish. The goal of this recommendation is to strengthen and support schools and communities to create safe, engaging, and welcoming opportunities that help young people envision a promising future and are an integral part of the community. The action steps focus on viewing young people as an integral part of their community and collaborating to create environments where young people safely learn, experiment, contribute and thrive.

Action Steps

- Support the adoption of the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model.
- Support positive and safe school climates and communities.
- Bring a youth-centered perspective to school improvement efforts.
- Connect and align youth programs across communities.
- Offer guidance to young people on healthy dating and relationships and ways to identify the signs of intimate partner and dating violence.
- Promote intergenerational community activities that bring together people across the lifespan.

2x

Rates of **depression** and **anxiety** are twice as high among students who **do not feel safe at school** compared with those who do feel safe.