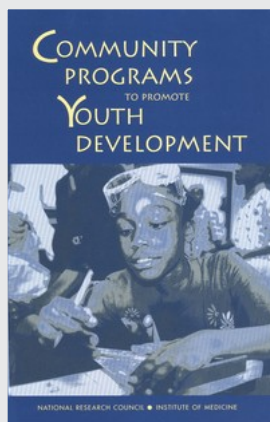


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CHAPTER 4

Features of Positive Developmental Settings

Picture a diverse group of American adolescents: girls and boys; rural, urban, suburban; affluent and disadvantaged; youth living with one parent, two parents, a foster parent, a grandparent, or on their own; adolescents with and without physical disabilities; adolescents who are lesbian and gay; youth who are introverted and extroverted; youth with parents who are Chinese immigrants, Mexican migrant laborers, Laotian, Dakotan, Salvadoran, African American, European American.

Now picture each of them walking through the front door of a community program. How do we make sure that this program engages all these youth and supports their development? What can a program do to give each person who walks in the door the best chance possible of growing up to be a healthy adult and have the personal assets described in the last chapter? Having described assets of positive development in Chapter 3, this chapter summarizes what is known about the daily settings and experiences that promote this development in young people.

Before starting, we need to recognize that even with the best staff and best funding, no single program is going to succeed in helping every participant. Adolescents have many other, often more powerful influences in their lives;

some will be more ready for change and growth than others. In addition, any given program will work better for some teens than for others. Finally, we need to recognize that there is very little research that directly specifies what programs can do to facilitate development, let alone how to tailor it to the needs of individual adolescents and diverse cultural groups. Few studies have applied the critical standards of science to evaluate which features of community programs influence development.

Despite these limitations, there is a broad base of knowledge about how development occurs that can and should be drawn on. Research demonstrates that certain features of the settings that adolescents experience make a tremendous difference, for good or for ill, in their lives. For example, research on families and classrooms shows that the presence or absence of caring relationships affects whether an adolescent thrives or has problems. We think it is valid to hypothesize that this will be true in community programs as well.

This chapter employs this wider base of knowledge from developmental science to generate a list of features of adolescents' daily settings and experiences that are known to promote positive youth development. We suggest that these eight features should be seen as a provisional list—subject to further study—of the processes or “active ingredients” that community programs could use in designing programs likely to facilitate positive youth development. We stress that the implementation of these features needs to vary across programs precisely because they have diverse clientele and different constraints, resources, and goals.

There are numerous theories in developmental psychology, sociology, public health, anthropology, and other fields that direct attention to a panorama of individual, community, and cultural processes that are related to positive development. Appendix B is a review of the theories of human development that highlight ways of seeing the full framework within which development takes place for different youth. It describes how development includes multiple processes: an adolescent's active creativity, thoughtful mentoring and management by others, acquisition of social capital, and socialization into a culture. The opportunities an adolescent has for development are shaped by numerous personal, institutional, and cultural factors (see Damon, 1997; Feldman and Elliott, 1990; Grotevant, 1998; Steinberg, 2000; Steinberg and Morris, 2001). The major implications of these theories of human development for community programs for youth include the importance of good developmental, cultural, and personal fit; the important role that community organizations can play in helping adolescents build the social capital and life

skills necessary to successfully manage their lives in a very complex social system; and the importance of community programs being interconnected with each other, with families, and with other youth-serving institutions and programs in the community.

FEATURES THAT MAXIMIZE POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT

In this section we present a provisional list of eight features of daily settings that are important for adolescent development. This list is based partly on theories of positive developmental processes and partly on empirical research on the many types of settings that youth experience—families, schools, neighborhoods, and community programs. We have also drawn on lists of features created by other scholars and practitioners (e.g., American Youth Policy Forum, 1997; Benson, 1997; Connell et al., 2000; Dryfoos, 1990; Gambone and Arbreton, 1997; Lipsitz, 1980; McLaughlin, 2000; Merry, 2000; Roth and Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Zeldin et al., 1995). Table 4-1 is a summary of the eight features. In assessing the evidence for these eight characteristics, we relied on the most recent peer-reviewed literature reviews (e.g., those published in the 1998 *Handbook of Child Psychology*, edited by William Damon, 1997; the recent *Annual Reviews* for psychology, sociology, and anthropology; the major review journals in each of these fields as well as recent articles published in the major peer-reviewed journals in these fields). Instead of a lengthy list of citations following each conclusion, we cite representative articles and reviews.

Two qualifications need to be kept in mind. First, we emphasize that this list is provisional: it is based on the current research base, thus it is likely to have omitted features important to various cultural groups. Second, the boundaries between features are often quite blurred. This list, then, is only a step on the path toward formulating a more comprehensive framework; more research needs to be done. Although we describe these as features of settings, this is really shorthand for saying that they are features of the person's *interaction with* the setting. Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) have decried a recent tendency for scholars to discuss the setting without the child and to discuss the child without the setting. We want to avoid encouraging these shortcomings. It is the experience of the adolescent-in-setting—the *processes* of interaction—that is critical to development. When adolescents walk in the door, it is not what they see that is important, but rather it is how they become engaged.

Physical and Psychological Safety

At the most basic level, safety is essential for positive development. Safety is both a physical and a psychological phenomenon. Starting with the physical side, positive settings must be free from violence and unsafe health conditions because of their direct impact on physical health and survival. Childhood sexual abuse appears again and again as a causal factor in numerous adult psychological disorders (Finkelhor, 1990; Briere and Runtz, 1991); it is a profound breach to the trusting relationships that attachment and object relations theorists see as critical to positive development. Both school health professionals (Institute of Medicine, 1997b) and professionals working in the area of youth development programming design, implementation, and evaluation (Pittman et al., 2000b) have articulated a variety of other safety issues, including freedom from exposure to environmental hazards, infectious agents, and both unintentional and intentional injuries. The corollary is that adults in charge of youth need to do more than just mouth the importance of safety; they need to take extra steps to instill practices that reduce the probability of unforeseen threats. Having guns in the home, for example, increases the likelihood of their use by adolescents (Blum and Rinehart, 1997). Similarly, fears of physical hazards and violence have made parents wary of their children's schools and community centers.

The psychological side of safety is also of great importance. The experience, witnessing, or even the threat of violence sends psychological ripples through a community of adolescents that can be severe and long-lasting. Youth who are victims of violence, as well as those who witness violence, show continuing symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder, including depression, dissociative reactions, helplessness, emotional dysregulation, aggression, intrusive thoughts, and flashbacks (Dubrow and Garbarino, 1989; Martinez and Richters, 1993). Experience of violence and harassment in school (being picked on, hit, or talked about unkindly) are related to skipping school, more negative attitudes toward school, lower achievement levels, and fewer friendships (Jackson and Davis, 2000; Scales and Leffert, 1999). Finally, biological research shows that prolonged stress, such as that from experience with the threat of violence, is associated with suppression of immune response and deleterious effects on the brain, with likely effects on the capacity to learn (Cynader and Frost, 1999).

There are also community-level effects of violence. Violence tends to breed more violence. When youth are victimized by others, they often

TABLE 4-1 Features of Positive Developmental Settings

	Descriptors	Opposite Poles
Physical and Psychological Safety	Safe and health-promoting facilities; and practices that increase safe peer group interaction and decrease unsafe or confrontational peer interactions.	Physical and health dangers; fear; feeling of insecurity; sexual and physical harassment; and verbal abuse.
Appropriate Structure	Limit setting; clear and consistent rules and expectations; firm-enough control; continuity and predictability; clear boundaries; and age-appropriate monitoring.	Chaotic; disorganized; laissez-faire; rigid; overcontrolled; and autocratic.
Supportive Relationships	Warmth; closeness; connectedness; good communication; caring; support; guidance; secure attachment; and responsiveness.	Cold; distant; overcontrolling; ambiguous support; untrustworthy; focused on winning; inattentive; unresponsive; and rejecting.
Opportunities to Belong	Opportunities for meaningful inclusion, regardless of one's gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or disabilities; social inclusion, social engagement, and integration; opportunities for sociocultural identity formation; and support for cultural and bicultural competence.	Exclusion; marginalization; and intergroup conflict.
Positive Social Norms	Rules of behavior; expectations; injunctions; ways of doing things; values and morals; and obligations for service.	Normlessness; anomie; laissez-faire practices; antisocial and amoral norms; norms that encourage violence; reckless behavior; consumerism; poor health practices; and conformity.
Support for Efficacy and Mattering	Youth-based; empowerment practices that support autonomy; making a real difference in one's community; and being taken seriously. Practice that includes enabling, responsibility granting, and meaningful challenge. Practices that focus on improvement rather than on relative current performance levels.	Unchallenging; overcontrolling; disempowering, and disabling. Practices that undermine motivation and desire to learn, such as excessive focus on current relative performance level rather than improvement.

TABLE 4-1 Continued

	Descriptors	Opposite Poles
Opportunities for Skill Building	Opportunities to learn physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional, and social skills; exposure to intentional learning experiences; opportunities to learn cultural literacies, media literacy, communication skills, and good habits of mind; preparation for adult employment; and opportunities to develop social and cultural capital.	Practices that promote bad physical habits and habits of mind; and practices that undermine school and learning.
Integration of Family, School, and Community Efforts	Concordance; coordination; and synergy among family, school, and community.	Discordance; lack of communication; and conflict.

react with retributive violence, and gang formation or membership is often not far behind (Prothrow-Stith and Weissman, 1991). A high prevalence of violence changes the social norms of a community. Even when a community program is safe, getting to and from it without risk is critical.

In conclusion, physical and psychological safety are prerequisites to all the categories of positive development we described in the last chapter. In addition to the direct effects of harm on physical well-being and development, violence or the threat of violence interferes with the allocation of attention to intellectual, psychological, emotional, and social development. They create psychological trauma that requires adolescents to cope in maladaptive ways, psychologically, emotionally, and behaviorally.

Clear and Consistent Structure and Appropriate Adult Supervision

One of the first things a new participant experiences in a community program for youth is whether the environment is structured or chaotic. According to theories and empirical research, development requires that a child experience a stable, predictable reality. Cognitive theories (Piaget, 1964, 1971; Piaget and Inhelder, 1973) stress the need for a stable environment to which children can assimilate and accommodate their emerging cognitive structures; object relations theorists also stress the predictabil-

ity of caretakers as essential to the development of trust and confidence (Mahler et al., 1975; Winnicott, 1975). Similarly, applied researchers have shown that, in all settings studied, adolescents benefit from experiencing clear rules, discipline, and consistently enforced limits on their behavior (Connell and Wellborn, 1991; Dryfoos, 1990; Jackson and Davis, 2000; Lipsitz, 1980; Roth and Brooks-Gunn, 2000). More classroom and school discipline is a major cause of poor academic achievement and psychological disengagement from school.

Structure is a critical feature of all settings. On one hand, research on families shows that firm parenting and clear behavioral expectations, when coupled with warmth and emotional support, are associated with more positive developmental outcomes than lax parenting (Steinberg et al., 1992; Steinberg, 2000). Evidence is also emerging that the best adolescent outcomes are associated with parents gradually reducing their control over their adolescents and providing them with increasing opportunities to help establish family rules and participate in family decision making. Adolescents desire both consistency and structure and increasing opportunity to manage their own behavior. They appear to do better in families that over time provide both of these experiences (see Eccles et al., 1993, for a review).

Similarly in classrooms, maintenance of discipline, control, and organization by the teacher is related to student satisfaction, growth, and achievement. Once again, however, as they grow older, students desire increasing opportunity to have input into classroom and school governance and rules. Evidence suggests that their motivation is optimized when they experience this type of change in classroom and school management over time (Epstein and McPartland, 1979; Jackson and Davis, 2000; Lipsitz et al., 1997; Maehr and Midgley, 1996; see Eccles et al., 1998, for a review).

On the other hand, research on peer relations shows that the amount of time adolescents spend with peers in unstructured activities, like driving around in cars, predicts increases in involvement in problem behaviors (Osgood et al., 1996). One important study found that participation in community programs that lacked structure predicted greater involvement in problem behaviors both in the present and 20 years later (Mahoney et al., in press).

A critical element of structure is consistent monitoring and enforcement of rules and expectations. Across settings, there is more positive development and fewer problem behaviors with consistent monitoring by parents (Grotevant, 1998; Pettit et al., 1999; Steinberg, 2000), teach-

ers (Eccles et al., 1993; Maehr and Midgley, 1996), and community members (Fisher et al., 1998; Scales and Leffert, 1999). In sports-based community programs, for example, a distinctive feature of effective coaches is that they repeatedly emphasized adherence to the rules of the game (Heath, 1994). Finally, a key characteristic of successful community programs is that they have clear rules about expected behavior when in the program, and the staff are regularly involved in monitoring participants' behavior, even when youth are elsewhere (Dryfoos, 1990; Heath, 1999; McLaughlin, 2000; Merry, 2000; Roth et al., 1998a).

As with all eight features, it is critical that structure be developmentally, ecologically, and culturally appropriate. With regard to age, as individuals' mature, they need less external structure and control to support their well-being. In most cases, they become increasingly able to create their own structure and to provide adequate self-control over their behavior. Consequently, the exact extent of structure and adult supervision needed to support positive behavior and development will change as children and adolescents grow older. Younger youth need more structure than older youth; older youth may balk at leadership that is too rigid, overcontrolling, or authoritarian. Consequently, structure must permit age-appropriate levels of autonomy. The way this shows up in studies is as a curvilinear relation between structure and outcomes: both too little and too much adult-imposed structure is related to poorer outcomes than moderate levels of adult-imposed structure. The exact optimal point in the curve moves toward less adult-imposed structure as the population being studied gets older (see Eccles et al., 1993, for an example of this dynamic relation in classroom research).

Both neighborhood conditions and culture also influence what is the most optimal level of structure and adult control. Greater limits on behavior may also be necessary in dangerous neighborhoods, where the costs of stepping outside the bounds of authority are higher (Steinberg et al., 1992; Sampson and Morenoff, 1997, cited by Roth and Brooks-Gunn, 2000). We should also recognize that cultures differ in their expectations regarding appropriate levels of structure. For example, in India, a more hierarchical culture than that of the United States, Cub Scout troops define obedience to leaders as a fundamental obligation; in contrast, in the United States, the Cub Scout pledge focuses on "obeying the law of the Pack."

Much evidence indicates that appropriate structure is a necessary condition to positive development. Without stability and order, adolescents cannot engage in physical, cognitive, emotional, or social growth,

and they are at risk for the development of negative behavioral patterns. It is notable that Csikszentmihalyi (1975, 1990) found structure to be a prerequisite to engagement itself. To become psychologically engaged in an activity, people need structure and predictability. But too much adult control can drive older youth away. Youth participation is increased when opportunities are provided for them to take on more active roles in governance, rule setting, and leadership as they get older and more experienced in the setting (McLaughlin, 2000; Merry, 2000; we discuss this more in Chapter 5). Nonetheless, without sufficient structure, all the other features of good environments become irrelevant.

Supportive Relationships

Whether you ask a researcher, a theorist, a practitioner, or an adolescent, the quality of relationships with adults comes up again and again as a critical feature of any developmental setting. Researchers speak of the importance of warmth, connectedness, good communication, and support (Blum and Rinehart, 1997; Brooks-Gunn and Paikoff, 1993; Dryfoos, 1990; Eccles et al., 1998; Ford and Harris, 1996; Grotevant, 1998; Lipsitz, 1980; Roth and Brooks-Gunn, 2000). Theorists talk about adults who provide secure attachments, are good mentors and managers, and provide scaffolding for learning (Bowlby, 1969; Furstenburg et al., 1999; Vygotsky, 1978). Practitioners talk about caring and competent adults. Adolescents themselves may use more evocative terms to describe positive adults—like being loving or just “cool” (McLaughlin, 2000).

As a whole, these descriptions suggest a family of related qualities that make for good relationships with adults. They include interrelated qualities of emotional support (e.g., being caring and responsive) and qualities of instrumental support (e.g., providing guidance that is useful to young people). On the surface these appear to be objective qualities, but research suggests that these qualities reside less in the adult than in the adolescent’s *perception* of the adult and in the adolescent’s *experience of interactions* with the adult (Clark, 1983; Eccles et al., 1992; Noller and Callan, 1986). This is an important point, because it suggests that there is not one perfect type of adult for all adolescents and all settings (i.e., there is no single template of a good parent, teacher, or leader) but rather that different adolescents are likely to respond to different elements within this family of desirable qualities. This point is also important because it suggests that, inasmuch as there is an underly-

ing essential element here, it consists of attentiveness and responsiveness to adolescents' subjective worlds.

The largest body of research on relationships with adults focuses on the qualities of parents that are associated with positive development. Longitudinal studies consistently show that parental support is associated with positive school motivation (Clark, 1983; Eccles et al., 1992; Epstein and Dauber, 1991; Eccles and Harold, 1996; Henderson and Berla, 1994; Booth and Dunn, 1996; Marjoribanks, 1979), better mental health, and lower rates of drinking, drug use, delinquency, and school misconduct (Furstenberg et al., 1999; Grotevant, 1998; Steinberg, 2000). Similar findings are suggested for feeling connected to a parent or parents (Blum and Rinehart, 1997) and having good communication (Brooks-Gunn and Paikoff, 1993; Steinberg, 2000). Parental support provides a buffer against the effects of negative racial stereotypes, and parental guidance promotes cultural pride (Comer, 1988; Fisher et al., 1998; Ford and Harris, 1996; Romo and Falbo, 1996). On the negative side, ambiguous and insecure relationships with parents (e.g., when there is fear of rejection as well as substantial disruptions in parenting relationships) are associated with adolescent involvement in problem behaviors.

Similar findings show the importance of supportive relationships with adults in other settings. In the classroom, positive support from teachers is related to greater educational success, and when teachers have positive expectations for students, they do better (Comer, 1988; Eccles et al., 1998; Ford, 1996; Ferguson, 1998; Jackson and Davis, 2000; Lee and Smith, 1993; Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968). In addition, when students care about what teachers think and expect of them, they do better both academically and socially and care more about doing well in school (Jackson and Davis, 2000). The importance of one caring adult at school has also been documented by studies of resilience and of the role of school advisors (Masten, 1994; Galassi et al., 1997). In sports programs, youth develop greater self-esteem and lower anxiety when coaches focus on the development of skills rather than winning (Seefeldt et al., 1995; Roberts and Treasure, 1992). For example, Smoll et al. (1993) found that a three-hour intervention that trained coaches to be emotionally supportive was effective in increasing the self-esteem of their Little League players. Similarly, an evaluation of the Big Brothers, Big Sisters program, in which a relationship with an adult is the heart of the program, showed that adolescent outcomes were especially positive for mentors who developed "youth-centered" relationships with adolescent mentees, rather than more controlling relationships (Grossman and

Rhodes, in press). Research in other settings reinforces the finding that adult overcontrol is related to less positive outcomes (Eccles et al., 1993; Grolnick and Ryan, 1987, 1989; Hauser et al., 1991; Roth and Brooks-Gunn, 2000). Grossman and Rhodes also found that longer-term relationships were associated with better youth outcomes (indeed, relationships that were terminated quickly were associated with decrements in several indicators of functioning). These findings underscore the importance of qualities of communication, respect, and long-term stability.

We stress again that these qualities have to be fit to the adolescent; this is implicit in the notion of responsiveness. Different cultural groups have different models of adult-adolescent relationships, and hence support needs to fit with the cultural model of the adolescent's social group. For some, this will involve more deference to authority (e.g., Doi, 1990); for others, it will involve the granting of autonomy in conjunction with strong emotional support (LaFromboise and Graff Low, 1998). Appropriate types of mentoring may vary by the gender, age, or previous experiences of the adolescent. In general, adolescents need less direct guidance and minute-to-minute support as they grow older and become better able to regulate their own emotions and behavior (Rogoff et al., 1995).

In summary, supportive relationships are critical "mediums" of development. They provide an environment of reinforcement, good modeling, and constructive feedback for physical, intellectual, psychological, and social growth. Parental support strengthens a child's ability to take on challenge (Csikszentmihalyi and Rathunde, 1998). In Vygotsky's theoretical view (Vygotsky, 1978), the attentive, caring, and wise voice of a supportive adult gets internalized and becomes part of the youth's own voice.

Opportunities to Belong

Research across settings substantiates the importance of opportunities to develop a sense of belonging. Families that provide multiple opportunities for the children to be actively involved in family decision making and activities have adolescents who are less antisocial and who exhibit better self-regulation and social responsibility (Grotevant, 1998). Similarly, teachers who provide opportunities for all students to participate and feel valued have students who do better on a wide range of academic outcomes (Goodenow, 1993; Ford and Harris, 1996; Eccles et al., 1996b, 1998; Maehr and Midgley, 1996). Adolescents who feel connected to their schools report lower levels of emotional stress, violent

behavior, and substance abuse and are more likely to delay initiation of sexual intercourse (Blum and Rinehart, 1997). Conversely, students who feel alienated and left out or rejected by their teachers and schools are more likely to drop out of school (Fine, 1991; Roderick, 1991, 1993). Adolescents who perceive peers as prejudiced report higher levels of emotional stress than those who do not (Blum and Rinehart, 1997). Research with American Indians has found that bicultural school curricula that bridge Indian and European cultures had a positive influence (LaFromboise et al., 1993). Gambone and Arbreton (1997) concluded that settings that provide a sense of membership and belonging to a group and allow for adolescents to be recognized and valued decrease the likelihood that they will become involved in high-risk behaviors, increase their sense of responsibility, and improve self-competence, school attitude, and performance. Finally, similar though incomplete findings suggest the value of opportunities to belong in community programs. Programming strategies for positive bonding have proven effective for adolescents at risk for antisocial behavior (Catalano et al., 1999; Dryfoos, 1990; Lipsitz, 1980; Merry, 2000).

In a multicultural society like ours, the issue of belonging is especially important. One of the first issues for an adolescent walking through the door or even thinking about trying a community program is whether he or she can belong to this group of people: “Will I fit in, will I be comfortable?” The adolescent may ask, not only is my ethnic group welcome, but also will the people here accept someone of my gender, sexual orientation, disability status, or the peer crowd that people think I belong to (e.g., jock, nerd)? Research suggests that these considerations can be significant barriers that keep adolescents from joining youth activities (Larson, 1994). Beyond the issue of interpersonal comfort, we also discuss here the constructive role that community programs can play in helping adolescents address underlying developmental issues related to sociocultural belonging. Whether one is a member of a minority group, the dominant culture, or has not decided, there are important issues to be faced about how one fits into the diverse and sometimes conflicting marketplace of cultural messages and identities. Along with schools, community programs provide a particularly valuable setting for youth to work on these important developmental tasks (Merry, 2000; National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2000a).

The theoretical foundation for this feature lies in a number of cultural theories: anthropologists’ emphasis on intrinsic links between person and culture (LeVine et al., 1988), sociologists’ insights into integra-

tion versus alienation (Durkheim, 1951), educational psychologists' emphasis on the importance of belonging for school engagement (Goodenow, 1993), and Erikson's descriptions of identity development as a process of situating oneself within a sociocultural milieu (Erikson, 1968). Cultures provide meaning, and meaning is fundamental to well-being. Research shows that youth with stronger ethnic identity have more positive self-esteem, stronger ego identity, and greater school involvement (Phinney et al., 1997a; Wong et al., submitted), and they are less likely to engage in violence (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 1999c). But a sense of belonging to a group becomes a two-edged sword if it means exclusion or hostility in relation to others. LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton (1993) suggest that the desirable developmental outcome is "bicultural competence," which involves development of abilities to function and be comfortable in multiple cultural settings (see also Phinney et al., 1997b). Although issues of ethnic identity are found to be least salient for European American adolescents (Roberts et al., 1999), awareness of intergroup processes is important for them, too. The ability of other youth to achieve and enjoy bicultural competence is dependent on whether people in the majority culture are sensitive to and knowledgeable about other cultures and aware of the ways in which their privilege is experienced by others.

Interestingly, some of the best evidence for the importance of belonging comes from studies of programs designed to be welcoming to adolescents often ignored by mainstream programs. A study of a drop-in center for lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth in Chicago, for example, found that the opportunity to be connected to a community of similar youth and adults made a great difference in the well-being of these youth and helped them adjust to their sexual minority status (Herdt and Boxer, 1993). Another study found that community programs that were sensitive to the special needs of youth with disabilities had positive benefits for the youth, their families, and other participants (Fink, 1997).

Other good evidence comes from programs designed to be welcoming to adolescents from multiple cultural groups. For example, black adolescents living in predominantly white neighborhoods and participating in Jack and Jill, a program for black youth, reported that this program facilitated their adjustment to the challenges of the situation (Nicholson, 1999). Similar evidence of the negative consequences of feeling devalued by one's teachers and school peers because of one's cultural background, language, ethnicity, and religion provides more sup-

port for the importance of belonging for a wide variety of positive outcomes (Fisher et al., 1998; Jackson and Davis, 2000).

How is inclusiveness across cultural groups achieved? Simply bringing different groups into contact with each other does not necessarily lead to mutual understanding and respect; the conditions of contact are critical (Merry, 2000; National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2000b). Experimental studies introducing multiethnic cooperative learning groups have demonstrated that such experiences increase cross-ethnic group friendships and, in turn, increase a sense of belonging in the school and the classroom (Slavin, 1995). The following elements were identified by a recent gathering of scholars as critical to cultivating positive intergroup relationships through inclusiveness (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2000b: 15):

- Interactions between different groups must be on a level of equal status;
- Activities must be cooperative rather than competitive, involving pursuit of a shared goal;
- There must be individualized contact between members of groups;
- Institutions and authority figures must support the goal of intergroup understanding; “institutional silence,” an atmosphere in which race is never mentioned, can lead to unspoken perceptions of discrimination and intergroup tensions; group differences must be acknowledged; and
- Adults have an important roles, as “role models, pathfinders, arbitrators, peacemakers, interpreters, mentors, promoters of civic ethics, and administrators.”

As with all other features, issues of person-environment fit are important here (see Appendix B for more details). Adolescents have different attitudes, past experiences, and levels of readiness. For example, research suggests that issues of ethnic identity become more salient with age (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2000b), and thus younger adolescents may have different concerns from older ones. In addition, stage theories of ethnic identity formation suggest that some youth from nonmajority cultures may need intense periods of immersion in their own culture as a step toward being able to function in a multicultural environment (Phinney, 1990). Similar issues can be important for male and female youth and for youth with different sexual orientations.

Positive Social Norms

Every group of people that has sustained interaction develops a set of habits, norms, and expectations that govern their behavior (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Coleman, 1990; Shweder et al., 1998). Whether we are talking about a family, a peer group, a classroom, or a community program for youth, the group develops a way of doing things and not doing things; deviations from these group norms are often strongly sanctioned. The group “culture” includes not only the formal organizational culture but also the informal habits and expectations that arise from daily interactions; these informal norms may diverge from the official organizational norms and expectations. Research across multiple settings suggests that adolescents’ perceptions of these kinds of social norms have immediate and lasting effects on their behavior. For example, when adolescent girls perceive that their parents disapprove of sexual activity, they are less likely to become pregnant (Blum and Rinehart, 1997). In discussing opportunities to belong, we stressed the role of the group culture in relation to identity and meaning. Here we stress its role in shaping behavior.

The impact of peer norms on adolescent behavior has often been discussed under the rubric of “peer influence.” While adults often demonize the negative effects of peer pressure, research suggests that peer influence is typically more subtle and multidimensional. Rather than being pressured, adolescents often perceive certain behaviors to be normative and so come to view them as appropriate ways of acting (Brown, 1990). Research also shows that peer influence toward *positive* behavior (finishing school, excelling at something, not using drugs) is much more common than influence toward deviant behaviors (Brown, 1990; Scales and Leffert, 1999; Steinberg, 2000). For example, peer modeling is an important motivating force for participation in service activities (Stukas et al., 1999). Nevertheless, for a subset of teens, peers are an important influence on use of substances, delinquent behavior, and sexual activity (Brown, 1990; Scales and Leffert, 1999). Most of the research is based on adolescents’ perceptions of their peers’ behavior, and their *perceptions* of peer norms often do not correspond very closely with the actual behaviors of their peers. For example, adolescents who take up smoking or initiate sexual intercourse often overestimate the prevalence of these behaviors by their peers (Scales and Leffert, 1999). But whether accurate or inaccurate, perceptions of peer norms do have a lasting influence on behavior (Guerra et al., 1994), and interventions designed to change stu-

dents' perceptions about peer norms regarding problem behaviors do reduce their incidence (Cook et al., 1993).

Although not a social group itself, the media is also an important source of adolescents' views about social norms. Youth and adults who watch more television believe the world is a more violent and dangerous place than do those who watch less television, and they are more likely to believe that violence is an appropriate problem-solving strategy. They also score higher on a scale of sexism and have more distorted views of the world of work (Gerbner et al., 1994). On the positive side, health education programs that incorporate mass media intervention as a way of changing perceived social norms are more effective at reducing adolescent smoking than health education programs without media (Elster and Kuznets, 1994). In addition to their effect on perceived social norms, the media must be recognized as an important competing influence on adolescents' internalization of the prosocial norms advocated by schools, families, and other traditional socializing institutions, such as faith-based institutions.

Research on community programs also indicates that social norms are critical. On the positive side, Cook et al. (1993) reported that acquiring conventionally positive social norms did a better job of explaining the results of one prevention program than did social skills training. Smoking prevention programs that taught both how to resist peer pressure and support health behavior changes are among the more effective youth health promotion programs (Sallis, 1993). Efforts at teaching social norms against early steady dating and against sexual intercourse were also related to reductions in dating and pregnancy in three studies of the Girls, Inc., Preventing Adolescent Pregnancy Project (Nicholson and Postrado, 1992; Postrado et al., 1997). A more rigorous evaluation of these programs is now under way.

Promotion of certain types of positive social norms may be particularly strong in faith-based youth settings: religiosity is positively associated with what developmental psychologists call prosocial values and behavior (see Eisenberg and Fabes, 1998) and negatively related to substance abuse, premature sexual involvement, and delinquency (Benson et al., 1997; Catalano et al., 1999; Elder and Conger, 2000; Jessor et al., 1991; Werner and Smith, 1992).

On the more controversial side, two in-depth observational studies have documented the reinforcement and reproduction of gender stereotypes in sports and extracurricular activities; for example, both studies found that sports promoted masculine aggressive and competitive norms

(Eder and Parker, 1987; Fine, 1987). And on the more negative side, participation in sports is associated with lower rates of altruism (Kleiber and Roberts, 1981).

Finally, Dishion and his colleagues have shown that adolescents who are grouped together for an intervention with a large proportion of peers demonstrating problem behaviors often show increases in a variety of problem behaviors as a consequence of participating in the intervention (Dishion et al., 1999a). This negative impact has been explained by pointing to the impact of the antisocial norms created by the large number of youth heavily involved in problem behaviors. The bottom line is that, whether they are intentionally cultivated or not, community programs have an internal culture of social norms that shapes youths' perception of appropriate behavior for good or ill, depending on the social norms that emerge. Program personnel need to carefully consider exactly what social norms are being created and reinforced in their programs.

As with all our features, it is critical to consider how the influence of social norms varies across cultural groups and individuals. Cultures and subcultures, of course, are an important source of social norms, and groups differ in the norms they hold most highly. Many cultures share fundamental moral values (for example, against murder and harm to others), but they vary in norms related to conventions, and these norms often carry moral weight during adolescence, when group belonging is so important (Turiel, 1983). Leaders of community programs need to be sensitive to how congruent the norms of their organization are with norms of the culture of their participants.

Such cultural variations also make it difficult to identify a single set of positive social norms that should be supported in all community programs for youth. Communities will differ in the norms they hold most dear. We include this feature of settings not so much to outline a particular set of social norms as universally critical but more to highlight the significance of social norms for development in settings such as community programs for youth.

Before leaving this section, it is important to note two additional important considerations about social norms. First, research suggests that the strength of different sources of influence may vary across cultural groups. Landrine and colleagues (1994) found that peers had a stronger influence on smoking for white youth than for Hispanic and Asian youth, and peers had no influence on smoking among black youth.

Second, individual differences are also important. Susceptibility to peer influence is a critical mediator of the effect of peer norms on behav-

ior (Fuligni and Eccles, 1993), and susceptibility to peer pressure is higher among younger adolescents and those with less confidence in their social skills (Brown, 1990). People with low self-esteem, low self-confidence, low autonomy, and an external locus of control are more likely to be influenced by social norms (Cook et al., 1993). Susceptibility to peer influence also varies across youth from different family structures and parenting styles (Brown, 1990). Children who are more integrated into cohesive families or peer groups are more resistant to the influence of media (Gerbner et al., 1994) and are likely to be more resistant to negative peer influences as well.

How do norms influence development? Both sociologists and psychologists describe a process in which observation of, and participation in, behavior becomes internalized to form values, morals, and “cognitive schemata” (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Coleman, 1990; Huesmann and Guerra, 1997). This process begins earlier in life, through interactions with family and peers. Huesmann and Guerra (1997) concluded that normative beliefs about aggression get formed in childhood and become more difficult to change as children move into adolescence. Once internalized, Guerra et al. (1994) suggested, behavioral patterns become automatic (i.e., they are followed without reflection or evaluation). The experience of positive social norms is therefore important to the development of good habits in all areas of positive development. We think norms are particularly important to social, psychological, and emotional development because they shape morals, present ways of relating to others, and provide templates of self-control.

Support for Efficacy and Mattering

A critical contribution of psychological theories, such as those of Piaget and Erikson, is the recognition that positive development is not something adults do to young people, but rather something that young people do for themselves with a lot of help from parents and others. They are the agents of their own development. To foster development, then, it follows that settings need to be youth centered, providing youth—both individually and in groups—the opportunity to be efficacious and to make a difference in their social worlds—we refer to this opportunity as “mattering.” We combine under this feature multiple elements drawn from other researchers and practitioners: the importance of actually having the opportunity to do things that make a real difference in one’s community, the idea of empowerment, and support for increasingly au-

tonomous self-regulation that is appropriate to the maturing individuals' developmental level and cultural background. After some discussion, we added the opportunity to experience meaningful challenge to this feature, because success at such experiences is critical to developing a sense of personal efficacy (Bandura, 1994). Efficacy results not just from turning power over to youth, but from seeing that they are challenged to stretch themselves in demanding, novel, and creative activities (Bandura, 1994; Gambone and Arbreton, 1997). It must be emphasized that "opportunity" is not experienced as "challenge" unless youth identify with it: adolescents need to be engaged by opportunities for efficacy and maturing that are meaningful to them.

Evidence for the importance of this feature comes from research on multiple settings. Research on families shows that when parents support their adolescent children's autonomy by allowing them to express their point of view and to have serious input into family decisions, they develop more positive motivation, engage in more identity exploration, and show higher ego development (Deci and Ryan, 1985; Grolnick and Ryan, 1987, 1989; Grotevant, 1998; Hauser et al., 1991; Steinberg, 2000). Conversely, overcontrolling and restrictive parenting are associated with constricted development of ego functions and greater likelihood of internalizing problems (Baumrind, 1971; Epstein and McPartland, 1979; Steinberg, 2000). Challenge and the demandingness of parents are a part of this. There is a well-established link between the educational expectations of parents and a child's self-esteem, locus of control, sense of personal efficacy, academic motivation and performance (Eccles et al., 1992; Marjoribanks, 1979), and some protection from emotional distress (Blum and Rinehart, 1997). Parents' encouragement and acceptance of their adolescent children's desire to take some risks, learn new skills, and take responsibility, combined with consistent parental support, careful monitoring, and good communication, are predictive of growing competence and motivation in adolescents (Csikszentmihalyi and Rathunde, 1998).

Support for efficacy and mastery is also important in school and adolescent work settings. Mastery-oriented classrooms that focus on self-improvement rather than social comparison foster higher motivation and perceptions of oneself as more capable; in contrast, overly controlling classrooms that do not provide opportunities for autonomy undermine motivation, self-concepts, expectations, and direction and induce learned helplessness in response to difficult tasks (National Research Council, 1999; Eccles et al., 1998; Jackson and Davis, 2000; Maehr and Midgley, 1996; Newmann and Associates, 1966; Eccles et al., 1996b;

Wehlage et al., 1996; Wiggins and McTighe, 1998). A poignant example is the finding that low teacher expectations for academic performance of ethnic minority children conveyed in teacher-student interactions in elementary schools lead to alienation from learning experiences and underachievement (Jackson and Davis, 2000; Fisher et al., 1998; Romo and Falbo, 1996). In the workplace, adolescents in jobs that use their skills show more positive outcomes than those in unchallenging jobs (Mortimer et al., 1999).

Although less likely to involve longitudinal designs, research with community programs suggests similar relations. Participation in decision making is correlated with positive developmental outcomes, such as a sense of sharing and respect for others (Dryfoos, 1990; Gambone and Arbretton, 1997; Lipsitz, 1980; Merry, 2000; McLaughlin, 2000). In school settings, the opportunity to participate in making and enforcing school rules leads to an increase in students' willingness to follow the rules and in their attachment to the school (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Adolescents in youth-centered activities develop new cognitive skills that increase their confidence and ability to make positive decisions (Heath, 1999; McLaughlin et al., 1994). For example, a group of adolescents who planned alcohol-free activities showed less subsequent alcohol use (Scales and Leffert, 1999). Similarly, the experience of challenging activities predicts greater likelihood of participating in a community program for youth and less high-risk behavior (Dryfoos, 1991; Gambone and Arbretton, 1997; Merry, 2000). A description of what it means for a community program to be youth centered is provided in Chapter 5 (see also McLaughlin, 2000). Finally, both longitudinal survey-type studies and experimentally evaluated small-scale intervention studies have shown the positive consequences of participating in a wide variety of well-designed community service activities (Dryfoos, 1991; Merry, 2000; Lipsitz, 1980; Scales, 1999; Youniss, 1997; Yates and Youniss, 1999).

The notion that this feature must fit with the adolescents being served is particularly important here. For a setting to support efficacy and the sense that one is making a useful contribution, it must be developmentally and culturally appropriate. Most young adolescents are not cognitively or emotionally ready to take full responsibility for a community program. Empowerment involves gradually increasing freedoms and responsibilities as young people mature (McLaughlin, 2000; Scales and Leffert, 1999). Culturally, a setting must be attuned to the level and modes of efficacy and mattering that are normative in the adolescents' larger cultural system. As we noted earlier, people differ in the amount of value

they place on autonomy. Many American Indian tribes, such as the Navajo, place high value on letting children make their own decisions (LaFromboise and Graff Low, 1998), whereas other ethnic minority groups in this country do not (Fisher et al., 1998). People also differ in the degree to which they conceptualize efficacy as individualized action rather than a collective process. Programs need to take these characteristics into account.

The challenges must also fit with the adolescents' level of competence. Research in classrooms shows that students are more motivated to learn when material is appropriate for their current levels of competence (Maehr and Midgley, 1996). Challenges that are too high or too low for a given person will undermine sustained engagement (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Vygotsky, too, theorized that growth is most likely when people are challenged at a level somewhat above but not too far beyond their skills. In community programs, it appears that the availability of a variety of novel and interesting activities increases youth's active participation (Gambone and Arbreton, 1997; McLaughlin, 2000). Culture is important here, too, because it determines what will make for a personally meaningful challenge.

Like structure, support for efficacy and mattering are *necessary* features for development in any setting. If adolescents do not experience personal engagement and a sense of mattering, they are not likely to grow personally. These features, then, are prerequisite to all types of development described in Chapter 2, but they have a particular relevance to psychological, emotional, and social development. Theory suggests that it is through acting, taking on challenges, and making meaningful contributions that a person's sense of self and identity develops.

Opportunities for Skill Building

Good settings provide opportunities to acquire knowledge and learn both new skills and new habits of mind. We include here cognitive, physical, psychological, social, and cultural skills. Of course, some community programs specialize in promoting the development of specific skills, such as athletic or artistic abilities. But good programs encourage learning in other areas as well. They can encourage the development of good habits and a wide range of competences and life skills, from media literacy to acquiring job skills through the use of an "embedded curriculum" and a curriculum that systematically cycles through planning, practice, and performance (McLaughlin, 2000). The specific skills promoted

should vary across cultural groups, depending on the outcomes different groups see as most important. For individuals who are or who will be participants in multiple cultures—as is increasingly the case across America—skill training should involve learning how to function in several different cultural systems (LaFromboise et al., 1993; Phelan and Davidson, 1993). Involvement in activities with embedded curricula leads to gains in both social and cultural capital (Clark, 1988; McLaughlin, 2000).

Research on how curricula function in community programs is found in diffuse literatures, employs diverse paradigms, and is generally underdeveloped. Some studies show that sports programs develop athletic skills and music programs develop music skills. More important is newer research showing that programs that teach basic life skills, such as coping, assertiveness, and problem solving, predict improved emotional well-being, better school performance, and reduced risk behaviors (Compas, 1993; LaFromboise and Howard-Pitney, 1994). More research is needed on how these opportunities to learn basic life skills can be effectively woven into activities of community programs.

On a more positive note, studies of schools and nonschool community-based programs show consistent evidence of the importance of learning new cognitive and life skills (Coleman et al., 1966; Clark, 1983, 1988; Comer, 1980, 1988; Murnane and Levy, 1996, see also Chapter 2 for evidence of the importance of good academic outcomes). McLaughlin (2000) concluded that having an intentional learning environment was one of the critical characteristics of the successful community-based programs she and her colleagues studied. Similarly, Merry (2000), in her Chapin Hall report, concluded that educational supports and career exploration programs are characteristics of community-based programs with positive outcomes for their participants. A similar conclusion was reached 10 years ago by Dryfoos (1990) and more recently by the Carnegie Corporation in its report *A Matter of Time*. Schinke and his colleagues provided additional evidence of the positive impact of well-designed educational enhancement programs in Boys and Girls Clubs in a public housing development on both school outcomes and reductions in drug-related activities (Schinke et al., 1993). The reports by Dryfoos and Merry also stressed the positive linkage between programs designed to teach adolescents peer-pressure resistance skills, such as those taught in the Girls, Inc. Will Power Program. We discuss some of these programs in more detail in Chapter 5.

Abundant research now exists for educational settings on how to

best teach new skills, new knowledge, new understandings, and new habits of mind (see, for example, Ames, 1992; Bransford et al., 1999; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Eccles et al., 1998; Jackson and Davis, 2000; MacIver et al., 1995; Meece, 1994; Newmann and Associates, 1996; Pintrich and Schunk, 1996; Wehlage et al., 1996; Wiggins and McTighe, 1998; Zemelman et al., 1998). A full review is beyond the scope of this report, but there is growing consensus that the following teaching strategies and techniques are important:

Authentic Instruction

- Active construction of knowledge in which students are asked to construct or produce knowledge rather than just reproducing or repeating facts and views expressed by teachers and textbooks;
- Disciplined inquiry in which students are encouraged to engage in deep cognitive work “that requires them to rely on a field of knowledge, search for understanding, and communicate in ‘elaborated forms’ their ideas and findings” (Jackson and Davis, 2000: 69). This characteristic also includes active instruction in the meta-cognitive skills needed to monitor one’s own learning and progress;
- Relevance of material being studied to the student and his or her community culture. The work that students are doing in school should be valued and recognized as important beyond the school and classroom;
- Regular feedback on progress so that students understand what they know and what they still need to learn and master. The feedback needs to focus on progress and on new learning needs, rather than one’s current performance level compared with others in the class or learning group;
- Abundant opportunities to rethink one’s work and understanding;
- Ongoing reflective practices by teachers and instructors that involve a careful examination of “what kinds of knowledge, skills, habits of mind, and attitudes are prerequisites for successful final performance, then deciding what instructional activities will give all students the chance to be successful, while engaging their interest and allowing for exploration” (Wiggins and McTighe, 1998: 124);
- Differentiated instruction that recognizes the individual differences in levels of current knowledge, interests, and learning styles

and provides multiple ways of learning new material and demonstrating that learning; and

- Cooperative and highly interactive learning activities that allow students to work with and tutor each other and allow instructors to work with them in designing learning activities that provide the kinds of experiences listed above.

Practices that support positive motivation

- Grading practices that stress improvement rather than social comparison;
- Teaching practices that stress mastery and improvement rather than current levels of knowledge;
- Practices that reflect high teacher expectations for all students' performance;
- Practices that make sure all students are expected to participate fully in the learning activities of the classroom; and
- Practices that involve hands-on activities (like laboratory exercises and field-based data collection efforts).

Perhaps the most striking research findings concern ways in which athletic community programs can fall short in establishing skills and habits that would seem to follow naturally from physical activity. Findings regarding the association of participating in organized sports as a youth and physical activity as an adult are conflicting. A number of reports show an association; others find no significant relations (Elster and Kuznets, 1994). On one hand, many sports teams do not prepare adolescence for life-long physical activity and can lead to excessive exercise and eating habits or the use of steroids (Sallis, 1993). On the other hand, adolescent physical activity is associated with higher short-term levels of fitness, greater resistance to cigarette and alcohol use, and possibly enhanced academics and cognition (Institute of Medicine, 1997a; Seefeldt et al., 1995). In a national survey, female athletes were less likely to get pregnant than nonathletes, irrespective of ethnicity. They were more likely to be virgins, to have later onset of intercourse, to have sex less often and with fewer partners, and to use condoms (Sabo et al., 1998). In other studies, participation in sports in high school was linked to better educational and occupational outcomes in early adulthood (Barber et al., in press; Eccles and Barber, 1999). Finally, one of the coaches discussed by McLaughlin (2000) integrated mathematics, eco-

nomics, and history into his sports program by having the participants do a series of intellectual activities directly related to the sport. The basic point, however, is that participating in an activity does not mean that adolescents are acquiring the habits of and dispositions for the activity in the future. Programs need to be explicitly designed to teach these habits as well as other critical life skills.

Integration of Family, School, and Community Efforts

In Bronfenbrenner's and various other models, adolescent development is facilitated when there is meaningful communication and synergy among the different settings of adolescents' lives and among the adults who oversee these settings. Optimal conditions for development exist when there is cohesion and information flow between systems—for example, when parents know what is going on at school and with peers and when principals, community leaders, and parents are in touch and have a shared perception of community standards for behavior. This communication facilitates acquiring social capital, and it increases the likelihood of adequate structure in the setting. It also adds to the fund of developmental resources that adolescents can draw on. Communication and integration also facilitate the processes of management described by the family management perspective (Furstenburg et al., 1999). When it is lacking, when different parts of adolescents' worlds are out of touch and on different wavelengths, there is increased likelihood that developmental opportunities will be missed, that adolescents will be confused about adult expectations, and that deviant behavior and values will take root.

Research substantiates the importance of this integration between the settings and institutions in adolescents' lives. This is evident, first, in the links between home and school. When young adolescents receive reassurance, assistance, and support from their parents, they are more likely to believe that their in-school effort will pay off (Eccles et al., 1992; Feagans and Bartsch, 1993; Marjoribanks, 1979). Parent involvement and interest in children's school activities are related to better school motivation and performance as well as more successful school transitions (Baker and Stevenson, 1986; Comer, 1980, 1988; Eccles and Harold, 1996; Epstein and Dauber, 1991; Henderson and Berla, 1994; Booth and Dunn, 1996; Jackson and Davis, 2000; Romo and Falbo, 1996; Stevenson and Baker, 1987). We also see it in the links between family and community. Rural adolescents whose parents were actively

involved in the community showed higher academic and peer success (Elder and Conger, 2000; Grotevant, 1998). Darling and Steinberg (1997) found similar results in a study of six communities in the San Francisco Bay area: they found that positive development was clearer in communities that had strong shared prosocial norms.

We also see it in the links between schools and communities. School programs that included one or more community program components have longer-lasting and larger effects on adolescent drug use and smoking than school programs alone (Dryfoos, 2000). Health messages that are reinforced through multiple settings, such as school, home, and health care facility, have greater effects than those delivered by only one source (Elster and Kuznets, 1994).

The opposite side of the coin is research showing that lack of integration among these settings is associated with more problem behavior in adolescents. Lack of communication and conflict between parent and school values are related to lower school achievement (Comer, 1988; Fisher et al., 1998; Peshkin, 1997; Romo and Falbo, 1996). Conflict between family values and community values is related to more adolescent problem behavior (Schwartz, 1987; Romo and Falbo, 1996). Part of the reason is that it is harder for parents to play a management role when they are out of touch with the other parts of adolescents' lives. Among a Southeast Asian immigrant population in Minnesota, Detzner found that parents had difficulty asserting themselves with their adolescents in a social setting they did not understand. This appeared to be related to increases in delinquency, juvenile arrests, and gang activity among adolescents in the community (Grotevant, 1998; Hughes and Chen, 1999).

The potential for communication and integration varies widely across communities. Those that are small, are culturally homogeneous, and have more resources are likely to find it easier to maintain integration. It is a common observation that a sense of community is harder to achieve given the fast-paced, anonymous, culturally diverse, urban lifestyle that has taken over much of the United States. However, pessimism and passivity are not warranted. There are numerous examples of contemporary communities that have come together to establish communication, bridge differences, and find common ground for facilitating adolescent development (Benson, 1997; Damon, 1997; Dryfoos, 2000; Merry, 2000). Even when there are intransigent problems, parents can make a difference. Parents of middle-class black children often engage in deliberate strategies of "racial socialization" to help protect their chil-

dren from the effects of racism (Stevenson, 1995). Parents with more limited resources often face fewer choices and more constraints in managing their children's experiences, yet Jarrett's (1997) research shows that effective parents in disadvantaged neighborhoods are active in monitoring their children, seeking resources, and developing in-home learning strategies (see Furstenburg et al., 1999).

There has been limited conceptual work and systematic research that examines integration across community programs; however, given past research in other settings, there is every reason to believe that community programs will be more effective when they coordinate their activities with parents, schools, and communities. Exciting efforts in this direction are emerging and are discussed in more detail in Chapters 5 and 6.

ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS OF GOOD PROGRAMS

In concluding this chapter, we consider what developmental science suggests about the essential components of community programs in terms of three points of view: the program perspective, the individual participant perspective, and the perspective of the community in which programs reside.

Perspective of the Program

The evidence, although incomplete, suggests that the more of the eight positive features described in this chapter that a community program has, the greater the contribution it will make to the positive development of youth (Dryfoos, 1991, 2001; Merry, 2000; McLaughlin, 2000). Although each feature is related to positive processes of development, they also work together in important ways. For example, adolescents' experience of attachment to adult leaders is likely to magnify the influence of the social norms and organizational culture of the program. Likewise, not experiencing one of these features or experiencing the negative aspects of one of the features is likely to undermine the effects of other features. Programs cannot focus only on promoting the positive; they need to be attuned to limiting the negative. Empowering young people is not enough to keep them from abusing drugs; one needs to communicate the message that drugs are harmful and actively cultivate social norms that discourage their use.

Programs, of course, differ in their objectives. Some may choose to give more emphasis to particular features and the processes of develop-

ment that follow from them. Nonetheless, we consider all of the features to be highly desirable. Adequate structure and safety, for example, are necessary to any community programs for youth. Little development can occur in an environment that is chaotic or where adolescents fear harm. Positive social norms and messages about relations between diverse groups (belonging) are going to exist in all youth environments; the question is whether they will promote positive behavior and group relationships. Supportive relationships with adults and integration of the program with other institutions in the community are highly desirable, but they may not happen in all instances. Sometimes youth persevere even if they do not like the leader, and sometimes organizations cannot work well with each other. Likewise, the specific skills that youth learn will vary across community programs: sports programs focus on physical skills, chess clubs on intellectual skills. However all community programs need to be attuned to the social, psychological, and emotional skills they are imparting.

We are not suggesting here that all youth programs and youth-serving organizations must have a wide variety of different activities. A program or organization can be quite focused on one activity, such as sports or tutoring or music instruction, and still have all eight of the features discussed in this chapter. Both McLaughlin (2000) and Merry (2000) provide many examples of both comprehensive and focused programs that provide structure, close relationships with caring adults, opportunities to learn new skills, opportunities to develop feelings of efficacy and mattering, opportunities to belong, exposure to positive social norms, and strong connections to either school or family.

A point we have stressed throughout is that these features also need to fit well with the individual participants' needs and characteristics. They are features of a youth's *interaction with* the setting; they do not exist independently of the individual. Two adolescents walking in the door at the same time may have very different experiences of the same community program. One may find it friendly, whereas the other finds it hostile. One may find it empowering, whereas the other finds it stifling. Within their capability, community programs need to be sensitive and adapt according to gender, age, developmental readiness, sexual orientation, and culture, so they can provide these eight features for as many youth as possible. Research in nontraditional classrooms shows that students are more motivated, develop more autonomy, have better self-concepts, and capitalize better on their strength and preferences when they can choose among activities according to their ability level (see

Eccles et al., 1998, for a review). Likewise, a mismatch between an adolescent's needs and the characteristics of the school may be causally related to reduced self-esteem and academic achievement (see Eccles et al., 1998; Feagans and Bartsch, 1993). Any program that is not sensitive to the participants' culture is not likely to succeed (Ford and Harris, 1996; LaFromboise and Howard-Pitney, 1994; Romo and Falbo, 1996; Goldenberg and Gallimore, 1995).

Individual Adolescent's Perspective

If our ultimate goal is fostering positive development in youth, then it is critical to think about how community programs fit into the rest of the adolescents' lives, into the vulnerabilities and developmental assets that exist across all the settings in which they spend their days. Research suggests that adolescents with more developmental assets have greater positive development (Benson, 1997). This finding suggests that the more settings adolescents experience that have more of the eight features, the better off they will be. Redundancy of features is good; for example, adolescents who experience two settings with similar positive social norms are more likely to internalize the norms than someone who experiences conflicting norms across settings. In addition, experiencing a positive feature in one setting may be able to compensate for its absence in other settings. For example, research shows that having one warm and supportive relationship with a nonfamily member, like a leader or a coach, can make a big difference in compensating for the absence of such a relationship at home (Werner and Smith, 1982). Finally, adolescents who do not experience these features on a regular basis are likely to have more developmental problems than adolescents who do experience these features in some settings. The adolescent who does not experience any of the eight features *anywhere* in his or her daily life is at great risk for developmental delays or for heading down a negative developmental pathway.

The reality is that there are many gaps in adolescents' experience of these eight features. Many settings fall short of providing all of them. For example, schools often provide adolescents the experience of challenge but without engaged motivation (Larson, 2000). Families often provide warmth without challenge (Csikszentmihalyi and Rathunde, 1998). And some adolescents do not experience one or more of these features anywhere. Youth in disadvantaged neighborhoods may experience chaotic environments at home, at school, and on the streets. Across

social classes, there are youth who do not have any adult with whom they experience a caring relationship. The growing obesity of the population speaks to the lack of opportunity for physical development.

Community programs are important because they can provide features that are missing or in short supply in other settings. They can fill gaps. Across adolescents' daily settings, community programs are unique in consistently providing the experience of engaging challenges (Larson, 2000). They often entail connection to a group that can provide opportunities to address underlying issues of ethnic identity and intergroup relationships (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2000b). They can provide unique opportunities for youth to be involved in volunteer service activities that cultivate and internalize prosocial norms and values. They can provide opportunities for physical development, artistic development, and socioemotional development that are missing in other parts of adolescents' lives.

Advocates of community programs have promoted this abundance of developmental opportunities for more than 100 years. What struck us as researchers was the paucity of empirical evidence on how often and when adolescents actually experience conditions for positive development in community programs, much less across the whole array of settings in which they participate over time. There is a critical need for survey data that examine how often each of the eight features is experienced, which types of community programs most often provide these experiences, and how these experiences differ by age, gender, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and community. Research is needed on the role community programs play in filling gaps in adolescents' total array of experience and what gaps remain, as well as on specific groups of adolescents who are consistently underserved by the options that exist.

Community Perspective

It is unrealistic and unwise to expect that every community program will be able to provide all eight features to all youth. To begin with, many adolescents may simply not be interested in the activities offered by specific programs. Furthermore, no single community program can be all things to all people. With limited resources, they may not be able to provide programming across all ages and developmental levels. Specific programs may have particular strengths that lead them to focus on more limited experiences. Intervention provided at one stage of life

should not be assumed to work at another (Compas, 1993). Communities need to think about the full set of programs they provide and how adequately they supply opportunities for all their youth. Communities need a menu or portfolio of programs that allows adolescents and their families to select out the experiences most needed or desired.

The importance of the community as a unit of analysis for youth development is becoming increasingly popular. For example, this perspective is being encouraged by the research of the Search Institute in Minneapolis, which shows, first, that communities differ substantially in the number of psychological and social supports they have for youth and, second, that youth are healthier in communities that have more of these supports. This relation goes beyond the predictive power of the number of assets experienced by an individual youth: when a community is rich in supports, even at-risk youth seem to be doing better than in communities without such supports and opportunities (Benson, 1997; Blyth and Leffert, 1995). This perspective is also central to the work by Hawkins and Catalano (Hawkins, Catalano, and Associates, 1992; Development Research and Programs, Inc., 2000) on Communities that Care and by Public/Private Ventures on community-wide initiatives for youth (Gambone, 1997). Both of these programs are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. Finally, the community perspective is gaining prominence in prevention work, in which more and more efforts are being made to design and evaluate community-wide interventions (see work by Biglan and colleagues as one such example [Biglan et al., 2000]).

What has not been researched systematically is how community programs fit into this picture of community supports and whether they can actually cause changes in the prevalence of both positive and risky youth outcomes. The associations uncovered by Benson and his colleagues at the Search Institute could result from characteristics of the communities that were unmeasured and influenced both the communities' ability to generate and support multiple supports for their youth and the resilience of the youth themselves. Community-wide experiments are just beginning to be reported. For the most part, these experiments do not vary the number of supports but rather the commitment of the community to change and the provision of financial and person-power resources for a change initiative. In addition, there is not yet a model for how a community can assess whether its set of community programs provides good coverage for all youth, or whether there are major gaps. In general, we know that the availability of youth development focused institutions and programs vary with neighborhood socioeconomic status. Fewer

community programs are available in poorer neighborhoods (Halpern-Fisher et al., 1997). Access is also lower for minority youth and in rural areas (Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1992). Clearly more research is needed that takes the community as its focus.

There are lessons here for communities as well. They should not just sit back and assume that their youth are being taken care of. They need to actively assess whether there are opportunities for all youth and whether their range of programs provides good coverage of the eight features. This means they need to have someone or some agency that attends to the community menu of programs, who has responsibility for oversight and coordination, and perhaps even helps youth get connected to community programs that suit their needs and abilities.

SUMMARY

Research demonstrates that certain features of the settings that adolescents experiences help facilitate positive development. Research on the settings of the family, schools, and the community supports the conclusion that daily settings are more likely to promote positive developmental assets if they provide:

- Structure and limits that are developmentally appropriate and that recognize adolescents' increasing social maturity and expertise;
- Physical and psychological safety and security;
- Opportunities to experience supportive relationships and to have good emotional and moral support;
- Opportunities to feel a sense of belonging;
- Opportunities to be exposed to positive morals, values, and positive social norms;
- Opportunities to be efficacious, to do things that make a real difference and to play an active role in the organizations themselves;
- Opportunities for skill building, including learning how to form close, durable human relations with peers that support and reinforce healthy behaviors, as well as to acquire the skills necessary for school success and successful transition into adulthood; and
- Strong links between families, schools, and broader community resources.

Although there is limited research that specifies what community programs for youth can do to facilitate positive adolescent development,

the list identified in this chapter is a step toward formulating a framework for features of community programs that support the acquisition of assets of personal and social development and, in turn, support positive adolescent development.

As was summarized in Chapter 3, there is evidence that adolescents with more personal and social assets have greater positive development. Since program features typically work together in synergistic ways, programs with more features are likely to provide better supports for young people's positive development.

We need to reemphasize the limits of the research used in this chapter. First, the chapter has drawn primarily on studies of such settings as families and schools and then extrapolated the findings to community programs. Research focusing directly on these features in community program settings would increase our understanding of how community programs for youth could incorporate these features into program design and implementation.

Second, we have stressed that our configuration of these features into a list of eight is provisional. The boundaries between features are indistinct, and the titles given to them tentative. It is unlikely that another group of scholars would come up with the exact same list, although the underlying content is likely to be very similar. Research is needed that further sharpens the conceptualization of these features and does so in the context of community programs. It is also possible that new research will find features that we have not included.

Finally, there is evidence that adolescents in communities that are rich in developmental opportunities for them experience reduced risk and show higher rates of positive development. This suggests that communities need a menu or portfolio of programs that provides a fit for every adolescent. Communities need models for how they can assess whether its set of community programs provides good coverage for all youth or whether there are major gaps in who they are serving. Research focusing directly on these features in community programs for youth is essential—research that sharpens the conceptualization of these features in community program settings.