

# QUALITY TIPS FOR QUALITY PROGRAMS

## YPQA HELPFUL HINTS

Quality Tips for Quality Programs (QTQP) is a series of short tips created by the Youth Development Advisory Committee (YDAC) for YEN programs to consider. YPQA Helpful Hints are designed to help programs score better on the Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) one item at a time.

November 30, 2017

### A LOOK



### AT THE YPQA ITEM

#### STAFF USE NON-EVALUATIVE LANGUAGE

##### Your activity will score a 5 if:

Staff support at least some contributions or accomplishments of youth by acknowledging what they've said or done with specific, non-evaluative language

##### Your activity will score a 3 if:

Staff support many contributions or accomplishments of youth but use subjective or evaluative comments, such as "Good job!", "I like it!" or "You're so smart!"

##### Your activity will score a 1 if:

Staff don't support contributions or accomplishments of youth in either of the ways described for a score of 3 or 5 or simply don't support youth at all.

### STAFF USE NON-EVALUATIVE LANGUAGE

This is the first item of the "encouragement" scale found under the Supportive Environment domain. Imagine your group participants thinking about their work, explaining it to others, and sharing their successes. Using non-evaluative language is one strategy to support this. When staff use non-evaluative language to encourage youth, they give them the opportunity to evaluate their own work and accomplishments, rather than solely rely on staff for approval. While praise from staff is meaningful for youth, teaching them to—in essence—praise themselves is a skill that they can use for the rest of their lives.

#### DOS and DON'TS to score a 5 almost every time:

**Do** praise youth often. General praise like "Way to go!" is good, Specific praise like "You did a really good job carefully painting your project." is better. Both of these praise statements will help you score a "3" on this item. Incorporating specific, objective, non-evaluative language like "You painted your project various shades of blue. What inspired you to make that choice?" is an excellent way to support youth to acknowledge their own accomplishments and will score a "5."

**Do** use both non-evaluative statements and questions.

Non-evaluative questions examples:

- "How did you decide what method to use for your experiment?"
- "What were the steps you took to master this technique?"

Non-evaluative statements examples:

- "You used teamwork to solve that math problem."
- "You're painting is very colorful. Lots of different hues of blue."

**Don't** be afraid to ask youth what they think. Often times, youth seek staff's approval by asking "What do you think about my project?" Experiment with a response like, "What do you think about your project?" Follow it up with praise for fairly appraising their own work.

**For questions or more information on these YPQA Helpful Hints, contact Project RISE's Associate Director of Youth Development, Dr. Diana Lores, at [dlores@nova.edu](mailto:dlores@nova.edu).**