

PROMOTING POSITIVE ADOLESCENT HEALTH BEHAVIORS AND OUTCOMES

Thriving in the 21st Century

Highlights for Youth



Federal policymakers from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health asked the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to write a report on what works in youth programs. The expert committee who wrote the report talked to youth while writing it. Now, we want to report back to you with a summary of some of the main messages.

1. RISK TAKING IS A NORMAL AND NECESSARY PART OF GROWING UP.

For most people, the word “risk” brings to mind a lot of bad things, but the report describes it differently: there are both healthy and unhealthy risks, and the key is being able to tell the difference between them in a variety of situations.

HEALTHY RISKS	UNHEALTHY RISKS
<p>Healthy risks help people get out of their comfort zones and become independent.</p> <p><i>Some examples are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• trying a new food• trying out for a team sport• asking someone out on a date	<p>Unhealthy risks can have bad outcomes, like injuries or diseases.</p> <p><i>Some examples are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• driving under the influence• bullying• having non-consensual sex

Instead of telling youth to avoid all risks, youth need opportunities to make decisions and take the healthy risks that will help them learn, grow, and thrive.

2. YOUTH PROGRAMS SHOULD BE DESIGNED FOR YOU.

Youth participate in a lot of different programs through school, on weekends, and in the summer. While all programs are different, the report says there are certain things that the best programs have in common.

Look for programs that:

- Teach **life skills**.
- Start **early** in childhood and are provided **often**.
- Create **supportive** and **inclusive** environments.

Living my best life means to be happy and accepting of myself in all aspects. I'm free to make my own decisions and whether they turn out good or bad I know I'm one step closer to where I need to b[e] in life. Living the best life is a lifestyle in itself.

- 17-year-old from MyVoice

3. YOUR EXPERIENCES AND VIEWS MATTER.



Some or all of this information may be obvious to you, but adults need to hear it, too.

It is important that they hear from you about what you need, since YOU are the expert in your own experiences and challenges.

We want to hear what you think!

Join the conversation using
#HealthyYOUthVoices

My parents help me live my best life because they always push me to learn new things and explore new experiences. And even though we don't have a lot of money or free time, they try to take me to see places and things I haven't before.

- 16-year-old from MyVoice

Learn more and download the report and other resources for free at:
<https://www.nationalacademies.org/adolescent-health>

*Special thanks to the **MYVOICE** respondents who gave feedback on these highlights!*

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