



## **Quick Guide: Youth Development and K-12 Service-Learning**

*Source: RMC Research Corporation, Denver, CO March 2005*

Schools are often faced with the need to address problem behaviors in youth such as substance abuse, violence, and dropping out. Recent research on what leads youth to engage in these particular problem behaviors focuses on supporting healthy development (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 1998).

Most researchers in the youth development field concur that comprehensive approaches are essential to meeting youth needs. Current comprehensive programs examine factors related to resilience that put youth at risk of participating in problem behaviors (risk factors) and those that protect them (protective factors). These factors exist in individuals, families, schools, peers, communities, environments, and workplaces (Schinke, Brounstein, & Gardner, 2002). The most successful interventions impact multiple domains and provide youth with opportunities to experience in their environment the kinds of reciprocal interactions that promote positive developmental outcomes. Such efforts foster the development of industry and competency; connectedness to community, society, and other people; control over one's fate in life; and identity (Cairns, Grotevant, Miller, & Youniss, 1997). Interventions may include training on behavior and leadership skills, mentoring, and environmental change programs.

Social and emotional learning (SEL) incorporates health promotion, competence enhancement, and youth development frameworks and includes both general instructional programs and prevention of specific problem behaviors (Greenberg et al., 2003). Service-learning helps meet the social, emotional, and learning needs of youth by coaching life skills and boosting competency, fostering caring and support, and establishing meaningful connections between service experiences and academic curriculum.

The following collection of resources can guide your research and practice.

### **References**

Cairns, Robert., Harold, Grotevant, Fayneese Miller, & James Youniss. Understanding youth development: Promoting positive pathways of growth. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Family and Youth Services Bureau, 1997.

Catalano, Richard., Lisa M. Berglund, Jean Ryan., Heather Lonczak, & J. David Hawkins. "[Positive youth development in the United States: Research findings on evaluations of positive youth development programs.](#)" *Prevention & Treatment*, 5, Article 15, 2002.

Greenberg, Mark., Roger Weissberg., Mary Utne O'Brien, Zins, J., et al. "[Enhancing school-based prevention and youth development through coordinated social, emotional, and academic learning.](#)" *American Psychologist*, 58, Article 6/7, 2003.

Schinke, Stephen., Paul Brounstein, & Stephen Gardner. [Science-based prevention programs and principles](#). Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2002.

### **Web Resources**

#### **Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning**

<http://www.casel.org>

#### **National Clearinghouse on Families & Youth**

<http://www.ncfy.com>

#### **National Service-Learning Clearinghouse**

<http://www.service-learning.org>

#### **The National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention**

<http://www.promoteprevent.org>

#### **The Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative**

<http://www.sshs.samhsa.gov>

#### **The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children & Families (ACF)**

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov>

#### **Youth Info**

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/youthinfo/index.htm>

*Quick Guides are expert guides that provide a brief discussion and a short list of the best resources on a service-learning topic.*