



ELEVATING ENGAGEMENT



QUALITY IMPROVEMENT CENTER
ON ENGAGING YOUTH IN
FINDING PERMANENCY





**ELEVATING
ENGAGEMENT**

Elevating Engagement is the shift from doing for youth to partnering with them.

QIC-EY's **five messages** guide the shift toward authentic, youth-centered engagement—rooted in trust, presence, and shared power.



From Passion to
**Proficiency in
Engagement**



From Going Through
the Motions to
**Making Moments
Matter**



From Waiting for the
Right Time to
Early and Often



From Deciding for
Youth to
**Deciding With
Youth**



From Guests at
the Table to
**Experts with
Respected Voices**

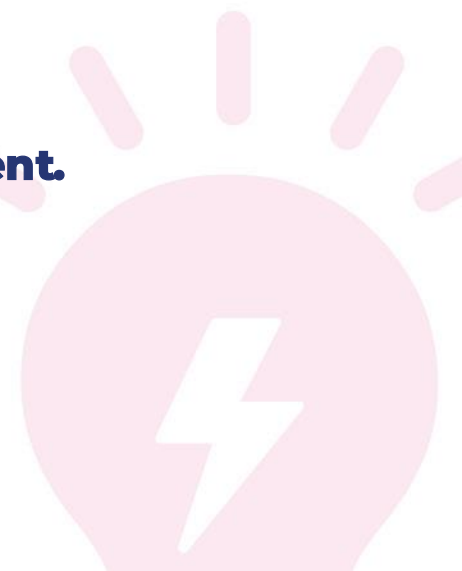


From Passion to **Proficiency in Engagement**

Transform enthusiasm into the elevated skills needed for productive and impactful relationships with children and youth.

- **Build on What You Bring** – Pair your passion with practice: use tools to invest in strengthening competencies like listening deeply, building trust, and supporting cultural connections.
- **Learn with and from Children and Youth** – Engagement isn't a checklist—it's a relationship. Create space for youth to shape how you work together, and let their feedback refine your approach.
- **Start with Small Shifts** – Authentic engagement doesn't require perfection—just presence. Try one new intentional practice, like slowing down a conversation to really listen or asking a youth how they prefer to be involved.

**Your passion is powerful—
let it fuel your skills development.**





Recommended Resources



[Workforce Training](#)

Develop Key Attitudes and Knowledge Competencies for Engagement

[Participant Tool Kit](#)

Build Core Competencies with Guides Practice



From Going Through the Motions to **Making Moments Matter**



Focus on creating intentional, impactful moments of connection, even within time constraints.

➤ **Pause with Purpose** – Carve out time during visits or meetings to be fully present with youth.

➤ **Create Meaningful Interactions** – Celebrate milestones, share experiences, and show care beyond checklists.

➤ **Reflect to Improve** – Use brief self-assessments or journaling to understand the impact of your engagement with children and youth and grow from it.

Small, intentional moments build trust and lasting connection.





Recommended Resource



[QIC-EY Now](#)

“Be Consistently Present with Children and Youth”

Real-Time Reflections & Tips from the Field



From Waiting for the Right Time to **Early and Often**



Recognize the importance of engaging children and youth early and consistently, rather than waiting for the ideal moment.

- **Start Conversations Early** – Don't delay critical dialogue; begin with age-appropriate, consistent engagement.
- **Plan Ahead with Purpose** – Be proactive and prepared. Think through how and when you'll engage, considering developmental and cultural norms. Use stories and relatable examples to support honest, open conversations.

- **Support Every Step** – Meet youth where they are. Validate their emotions and experiences while offering steady guidance and age-appropriate support.

**The right time to engage is now—
early, often, and honestly.**





Recommended Resource



[QIC-EY Now](#)

“Ensure Children and Youth are Adequately Prepared”

Real-Time Reflections & Tips from the Field



From Deciding for Youth to **Deciding with Youth**



Evolve from adult-led decision-making to working with children and youth as partners, ensuring their perspectives are valued and heard.

➤ **Co-Create Plans** – Directly involve children and youth in shaping their goals and decisions.

➤ **Respect Lived Expertise** – Recognize and honor perspectives of children and youth as essential to quality care.

➤ **Elevate Their Voice** – Establish regular opportunities for children and youth to give input, and together explore how their voices shape outcomes.

**Youth are not just participants—
they're partners.**





Recommended Resource



[QIC-EY Activity Guide](#)

A Go-to Resource for Bringing Authentic Engagement to Life.



From Guests at the Table to **Experts with Respected Voices**



While the first four messages center on strengthening relationships between professionals and children and youth, this final message elevates the role of lived experts—as essential partners in shaping the very systems and practices that define engagement.

Move beyond symbolic participation to valuing lived expertise as essential to shaping solutions.

➤ **Develop Lasting Opportunities** – Move beyond performative engagement to creating sustained, meaningful collaborations.

➤ **Create Shared Spaces** – Foster environments where professionals and lived experts work together.

➤ **Lead Side-by-Side** – Invite lived experts to shape strategy, guide policy and practice, and advise on programming.

**Lived experience is expertise—
working together is always better.**



Recommended Resource



[Lessons Learned #5](#)

Authentically Engaging with People With Lived Experience

Wisdom from the Work—Captured
and Shared



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