

YOUTH SHIFT

**Action Team 3: Quality and Professional Development
Final Recommendations
September 2016**

Action Team Objective

By August 31st, 2016, prepare a recommended action plan for how to coordinate, expand, and sustain efforts to define, measure and support program quality in services to New Orleans children and youth.

Action Team Contributors

Sherah Alaimo, New Orleans Kids Partnership

Holly Bell, Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities

Jonathan Bennett, Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children (FFLIC) / Black Men Rising

Ashana Bigard, Black Alliance for Educational Options

Kirsten Breckinridge, YouthShift

Alan Brickman, Brickman Nonprofit Solutions

Derek Brumfield, FFLIC / Black Men Rising

Jon Cospers, Young Audiences of Louisiana

Maggie Daly, Youth Rebuilding New Orleans

Marti Dumas, Educator, Consultant and Trainer

Samantha Francois, Louisiana Public Health Institute

Kellie Greene, Greater New Orleans Foundation

Sonji Hart, FFLIC

Jeremiah James, FFLIC / Black Men Rising

April Johnson, Recovery School District

Anne Kiefer, Orleans Parish District Attorney's Office

Denali Lander, Youth Run NOLA

Chandler Nutik, Community Works of Louisiana

Rickie Nutik, Young Audiences of Louisiana

Stephen Phillippi, LSU Institute for Public Health & Justice

Jean Pinney, Communities in Schools for Greater New Orleans

Dana Reed, Upturn Arts

Jennifer Roberts, Baptist Community Ministries

Farrell Sampier, FFLIC / Black Men Rising

Jamie Schmill, Laureus Sports for Good Foundation

Hamilton Simons-Jones, Converge (Facilitator)

Michael Smith, Metropolitan Human Services District

Shonnda Smith, New Orleans Recreation Development Commission

Theodore Thompson, FFLIC / Black Men Rising

Antonio Travis, FFLIC / Black Men Rising

Tom Trouve, Community Member and Parent

Ann Wanserski, New Orleans Kids Partnership

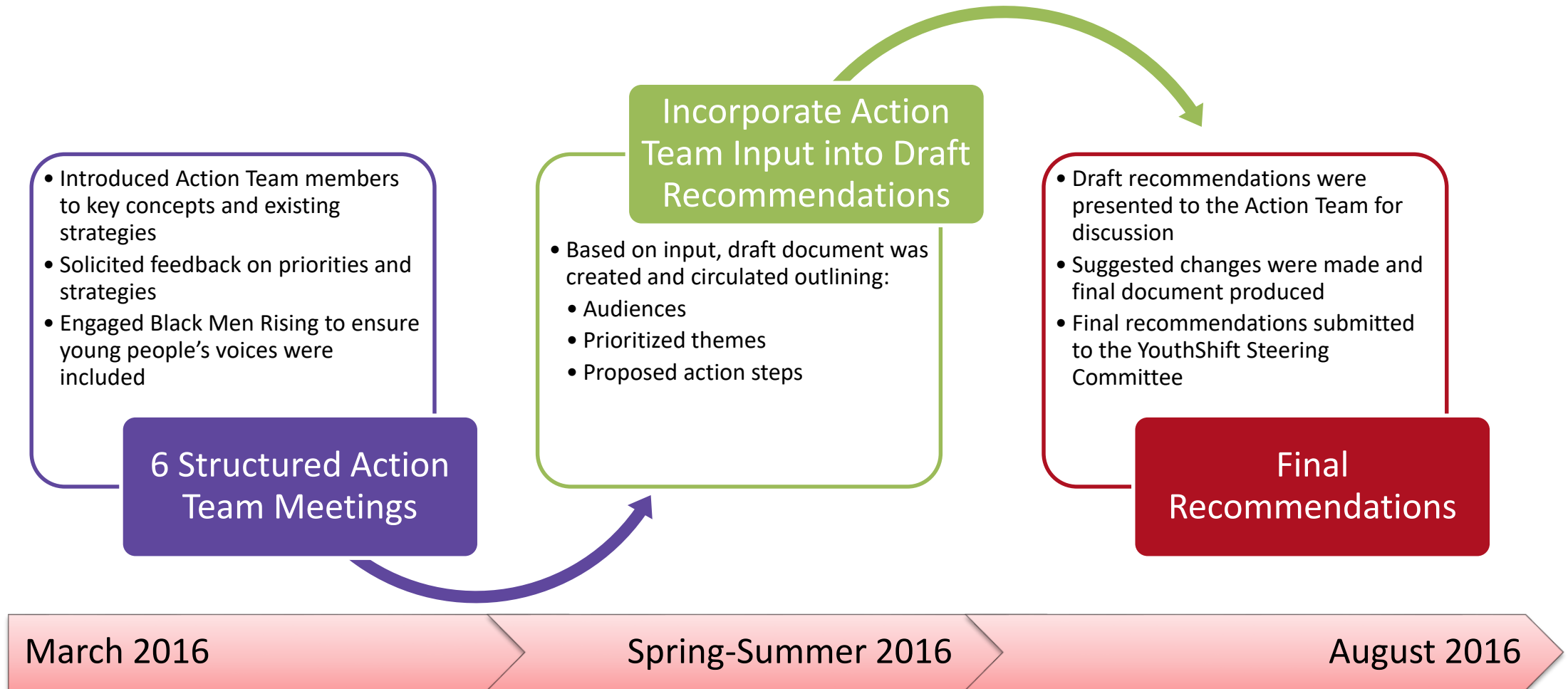
Nahliah Webber, Orleans Public Education Network

Luella Williams, Up2Us Sports

Gina Womack, FFLIC

Tom Zolot, Center for Restorative Approaches

How Were Recommendations Developed?



Action Team meeting and workplan

The Quality Action Team held 6 meetings over the course of six months. Through these meetings, team members gained insight into research and best practices, participated in discussions about the definition, value, and goals for quality improvement initiatives, and provided critical locally-informed feedback.

Meeting	Topics
1	Overview and Data Needs
2	Review of National Information on What Works
3	Discuss adjustments to Action Team and Impact of Who Defines Quality
4	Review of Local Data, Local Context and Discussion of Barriers
5	Youth Presentation, Action Plan/Recommendation Development
6	Finalize Action Plan Recommendations

Youth Input provided by Black Men Rising



The Black Men Rising Movement (BMR) is a national campaign to encourage all people of color to define, reach, and excel beyond their own vision of success to become stakeholders in their community. BMR is a youth group affiliated with Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children (FFLIC) and was contracted to advise the YouthShift Quality Action Team.

BMR offered these observations and recommendations:

- “Impacted families have been disenfranchised, disrespected and left out of the conversation.”
- Youth program staff and administrators should participate in Trauma Sensitivity training to understand environmental effects that have taken a toll on our youth, our families and our communities.
- BMR and other peer groups should be given access to the same research and information as decision makers and allowed to share their personal experiences.
- BMR will facilitate focus groups over the next 2 months within the FFLIC organization through our partnership with New Orleans College Prep.
- BMR volunteers is prepared to serve in a capacity of Youth Assessors/Advisors as part of the YPQI pilot program.

Summary of Action Team Discussion and Input

Quality is hard to define. [The] definition depends on who is asking the questions and who gets to define it. Participants, family, and constituencies need to be engaged on defining what quality is. Users need to define it.

Marginalized populations when they are not involved in the definition of quality, and what the output of quality looks like, then they can be further marginalized because they don't have access to the same resources. We need to consider the Implicit bias in creating quality.

[There is an] unfunded mandate to implement the quality – smaller organizations may not have infrastructure, resources, training, staffing, etc. to compete with larger organizations that have evaluation departments. Where is the investment in operational support and infrastructure? How can funders think long term?

Evidence based, professional development, etc. all equals cost. Funders often think, whatever money they invest in capacity building is a dollar not spent on services so it becomes a secondary priority.

The flip side of engagement and constituent voice is you need leadership and champions who are going to carry the torch in a sustained way and who is part of the change process. You need capacity and resources to do this.

Key Themes from Action Team Member Discussion

How to Approach Quality Improvement Efforts?

- Cultural competency needs to be included in quality frameworks and it needs to be clearly defined.
- Relationships between adults and youth are really critical to quality programming across settings.
- Quality work needs to be inclusive of both formal and informal settings in which children and youth are served – informal providers are often the most culturally competent and can make the biggest impact as they are closest to the community.
- We need transparency about who is leading the effort to improve quality in New Orleans. The leaders need to be inclusive and representative of the community.

How to Implement Quality Improvement Efforts?

- Misaligned incentives and accountability goes across all age levels and settings – it needs to be addressed.
- We need to incorporate a means for tracking and rewarding growth into any accountability system.
- We need to learn from early care and education and the focus on adult-child interactions in that space, which has focused on what adults are providing versus how kids are performing. Focusing on the relationship and practices in this way shows better outcomes in terms of racial equity in discipline referrals.
- There should be some kind of licensing for standards or permission to operate for youth development programs – but it needs to be considerate of type of organization, capacity, etc. and be cautious about effects of high-stakes approaches.
- Workforce issues in Youth Development and Education are an important influence on quality and need to be addressed: hiring standards, pay, turnover, compensation, etc.

Our Recommendations: Audience & Suggested Structure

1. Overarching recommendations – for anybody who cares about quality in settings where children are.
2. Recommendations for specific efforts - primarily focused on quality improvement initiatives:
 - Youth development intermediary recommended by Intermediary Action team
 - New Orleans Youth Program Quality Initiative (youth development)
 - New Orleans Early Education Network/LA Dept. of Education (early childhood)
 - Orleans Parish School Board/LA Dept. of Education (K-12 schools)
 - Other providers and advocates

Final Recommendations

1. Ensure youth, families and providers are full and active participants in learning about, defining, measuring and evaluating quality and quality improvement system-building efforts.
2. Focus quality efforts on adult-child relationships, trauma-informed approaches and cultural competency as key components of quality programming for New Orleans children and youth.
3. Establish strong career and professional development pipelines for people who work with children and youth (i.e. child care workers, educators, youth workers and others).
4. Ensure quality improvement efforts provide incentives and supports for quality, not just consequences. Balance standardization and individualization.
5. Ensure the long-term sustainability of quality improvement systems with organizational and community champions, stable funding and clear roles and accountabilities that support system-building and implementation.

#1: Detailed Recommendations

1. Ensure youth, families and providers are full and active participants in learning about, defining, measuring and evaluating quality and quality improvement system-building efforts.

All

- Create structures that ensure ongoing input from children, youth and families into defining, measuring and supporting quality programming for children and youth on an ongoing basis.
- Ensure what children and families say about the quality of programming they experience is incorporated as important data for quality assessment and improvement efforts.
- Involve youth, families and providers in evaluating the effectiveness of quality improvement system-build efforts.

NOLA-YPQI

- Involve youth and families from strategically selected community-based organizations in program quality improvement trainings and site visits to learn about best practices in program quality.
- Create a cadre of youth assessors to conduct assessments of youth development programs and gather feedback directly from young people about their experiences of quality.
- Engage more informal providers who work with children and youth in quality improvement efforts (i.e. recreational, faith-based or volunteer-run programming).

#2: Detailed Recommendations

2. Focus quality efforts on adult-child relationships, trauma-informed approaches and cultural competency as key components of quality programming for New Orleans children and youth.

All

- Incorporate cultural competency assessments into all quality assessments.
- Focus quality improvement and professional development efforts on supporting educators, youth and child care workers who reflect the children and youth being served in the programs based on their community, cultural, racial and socioeconomic background.

Intermediary

- Ensure training in trauma-informed approaches and cultural competency is a part of professional development trainings and pathways for youth workers.

#3: Detailed Recommendations

3. Establish strong career and professional development pipelines for people who work with children and youth (i.e. child care workers, educators, youth workers and others).

All

- Establish additional high-quality professional development opportunities and sustainable career pathways for people who work with children and youth, with special efforts to include former program participants.

NOLA-YPQI

- Engage more informal providers who work with children and youth in quality improvement efforts (i.e. recreational, faith-based or volunteer-run programming).

Intermediary

- Make professional development trainings for youth workers widely available and accessible.
- Champion the importance of quality and the career pathways for youth workers.
- Facilitate the development of more robust career development pathways for youth workers, including curriculum and credentialing opportunities and the development of core competencies.

#4: Detailed Recommendations

4. Ensure quality improvement efforts provide incentives and supports for quality, not just consequences. Balance standardization and individualization.

All

- Use standard data collection methods and widely accepted and validated tools that allow programs across settings to collect a common set of data on program quality that includes youth and family voice.
- Balance the use of validated research-based quality assessment tools with observations and feedback from children, youth and families.
- Tailor quality improvement efforts based on the unique circumstances, neighborhoods, populations served and focus of each program through individualized coaching, improvement planning, training and other supports.
- Provide supports for quality improvement through coaching, training, technical assistance and peer learning.
- Ensure all quality improvement systems across early childhood, K-12 and youth development settings have positive incentives to support and reward quality improvement and only use consequences when continued quality improvement efforts have been ineffective.
- Monitor quality improvement efforts to ensure they don't have negative impacts on programs operated and led by local residents of color.

#5: Detailed Recommendations

5. Ensure the long-term sustainability of quality improvement systems with organizational and community champions, stable funding and clear roles and accountabilities that support system-building and implementation.

All

- Clarify who/what agencies are responsible for each component of the quality improvement system (defining, assessing, training, data collection and management, monitoring, etc.)
- Align public and private funding to support quality and quality improvement.
- Seek to build on existing quality work across early childhood, youth development and K-12 education settings.

Intermediary

- Educate and align public and private funding with a common understanding of quality and how their investments can support it.
- Lead messaging and efforts to resource quality improvement work that shows how it adds value to child- and youth-serving organizations.
- Encourage funders to support capacity-building and system-building supports for quality, not just direct service programming for children and youth.
- Focus on engaging K-12 schools in efforts focused on quality instruction and youth development.

Implementing Recommendations: Fall 2016- Summer 2017

Initial Steps for Implementing Action-Ready Recommendations

- Implement YPQI recommendations in second year pilot program
 - Create a cadre of youth assessors to conduct assessments of youth development programs and gather feedback directly from young people about their experiences of quality.
 - Engage more informal providers who work with children and youth in quality improvement efforts (i.e. recreational, faith-based or volunteer-run programming).
- Incorporate recommendations into the implementation of the YouthShift Intermediary Support action team's recommendations
- Share recommendations with community partners
 - Share with school re-unification partners including RSD
 - Connect with Louisiana Public Health Institute (LPHI), New Orleans Kids Partnership (NOKP) and other partners involved with trauma-informed training and programming

Action Team Meeting Resources

Meeting 2 Resources

[Early Childhood Quality Rating and Improvement System](#)

[TNTP-Mirage Excerpt](#)

[ECE QRIS System Components](#)

[Strong Directors Skilled Staff-Excerpt](#)

[OST Funders Guide to Quality 2016 Excerpt](#)

[Manufacturing and Quality Control](#)

Meeting 4 Content Expert Presenters and Resources

- Deirdre Johnson Burel, Orleans Public Education Network
- Mia Orr, Louisiana Policy Institute for Children
- Teresa Falgoust, Agenda for Children
- Michael Smithers, New Schools for New Orleans

[New Orleans Quality Efforts Overview](#)

How to get/stay involved...

YouthShift will continue to post updates on the implementation of these recommendations on our website:

www.nolayouthshift.org