

To **change** the odds for youth
by **changing** the way we do business



All youth ready for
college, work & life.

The Challenge

About the Forum for Youth Investment

The Forum for Youth Investment is a nonprofit, nonpartisan “action tank” dedicated to helping communities and the nation make sure all young people are Ready by 21™ – ready for college, work and life. Informed by rigorous research and practical experience, the Forum forges innovative ideas, strategies and partnerships to strengthen solutions for young people and those who care about them. A trusted resource for policy makers, advocates, researchers and practitioners, the Forum provides youth and adult leaders with the information, connections and tools they need to create greater opportunities and outcomes for young people.

The Forum was founded in 1998 by Karen Pittman and Merita Irby, two of the country’s top leaders on youth issues and youth policy. The Forum’s 25-person staff is headquartered in Washington D.C. in the historic Cady-Lee House with a satellite office in Michigan and staff in Missouri, New Mexico and Virginia.

About the Ready by 21™ Challenge

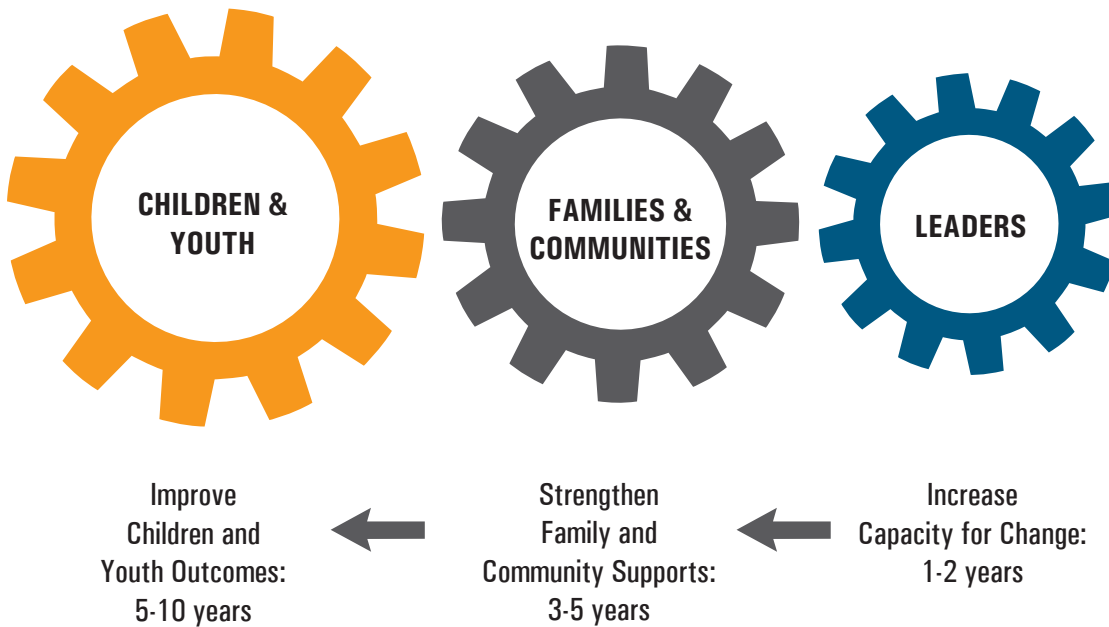
The Ready by 21™ Challenge calls on states and communities to change the odds for children and youth by changing the way they do business. This requires broadening definitions of what it means for youth to be ready, for schools and communities to be supportive and for all leaders to be engaged. Working in partnership with the business, government, education and nonprofit sectors, the Forum for Youth Investment provides frameworks, coaching and tools to help leaders think differently, act differently and act together. The Ready by 21™ Big Picture Approach helps leaders – from young people to parents, program directors to policy makers – bring precision to their passion, ensuring that all young people are ready by 21 – ready for college, work and life.

The five year goal is to have a critical mass of leaders in every state across the country who have learned to focus and prioritize differently so that they can set bigger goals, use bolder strategies, be better partners, and work together to ensure that their individual efforts add up rather than simply add on.

For more information on the Ready by 21 Challenge, please contact Andrea Felix, Special Assistant to the Managing Director, at 202-207-3328 or andrea@forumfyi.org.

TO CHANGE THE ODDS FOR YOUTH BY CHANGING THE WAY WE DO BUSINESS

SO ALL YOUNG PEOPLE ARE READY FOR COLLEGE, WORK AND LIFE



MOVING THE SMALL GEAR MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE

It sometimes takes a decade to make significant progress on an intractable problem. But changes in community supports can happen more quickly and changes in leadership can happen even sooner.

Ready by 21 isn't a program or a campaign or even an initiative. It is a challenge to all who care about children and youth to think differently – to learn a different way to approach all of the tasks associated with trying to manage, make or measure change at any level from the classroom to the capitol – so that they can act differently. Specifically, so that they can make decisions that lead to bigger goals, bolder strategies, better partnerships.

Becoming fluent in Big Picture thinking is similar to becoming fluent in another language. It's a skill that broadens one's capacity to respond. Those who master Big Picture thinking can use it in their personal, professional and public lives, creating sharper agendas for action.

This is a guide to the key ideas and resources behind the Ready by 21 Challenge:

The Dilemma. Too few young people are entering adulthood ready and our collective efforts to make a difference are far too fragmented to have a big impact.

The Solution. Changing the way we do business means that we need to throw out old assumptions about how change happens and engage youth and adult change makers with the ideas, resources and tools that help them

*Think Differently...*learn to focus and prioritize differently using a Big Picture Approach, so that together they can

*Act Differently...*set bigger goals, use bolder strategies and be better partners, within an overall Blueprint for Action.

The Delivery System. Partners, places and products are key to the five year plan of creating a critical mass of youth and adult leaders in every state across the country. Leaders have many opportunities for getting started in taking up the Ready by 21 Challenge.

The

Diller

COMPLACENCY & FRAGMENTATION

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Rhetoric and Reality Don't Match

THE AMERICAN DREAM:

All youth are ready.

Every family and community is supportive.

Each leader is effective.

THE AMERICAN REALITY:

Only 4 in 10 youth are ready for college, work and life.

Nationally, only two-thirds of high school students graduate on time – only half in urban areas. Employers report that 4 in 10 high school students lack the skills needed for work. And research analyses by Gambone, Connell and Klem suggest that only 4 in 10 young adults are really doing well, meaning they are in school or working, healthy and connected to community.

Only 1 in 3 youth feel they have the supports they need.

The Every Child/Every Promise survey commissioned by America's Promise Alliance found that only one third of 5 to 17 year olds were receiving four or more of the promises that they needed for positive development.

Too few leaders are effective.

Given this evidence, it is relatively easy to see that leaders are not being as effective as they hope to be in making a difference for America's youth.

THE AMERICAN DILEMMA:

Competing priorities, fragmented services, unstable funding and low expectations – for children and youth, families and communities, and public and private leaders – combine to create complacency.

Too Few Young People are Ready

Researchers Gambone, Connell & Klem (2002) estimate that **only 4 in 10** are doing well in their early 20s.

22% are doing poorly in two life areas and not well in any

- **Productivity:** High school diploma or less, are unemployed, on welfare
- **Health:** Poor health, bad health habits, unsupportive relationships
- **Connectedness:** Commit illegal activity once a month



43% are doing well in two life areas and okay in one

- **Productivity:** Attend college, work steadily
- **Health:** Good health, positive health habits, healthy relationships
- **Connectedness:** Volunteer, politically active, active in religious institutions, active in community



Too Few Young People Have the Supports They Need

- According to the National Promises Study commissioned by America's Promise Alliance, **only 3 in 10 young people get the developmental resources they need** to succeed.

- Caring Adults
- Safe Places
- Healthy Starts
- Education for Marketable Skills
- Opportunities to Give Back



THE AMERICAN DILEMMA IS A LEADERSHIP DILEMMA

CHILDREN AND YOUTH CAN ONLY ACHIEVE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL IF TOGETHER WE OPERATE AT OURS.

We Need to Change How We Think About Change

The new mantra is “focus, focus, focus.” Pick a population, pick a problem, pick a solution. Public and private leaders are told to find a niche and stick with it in order to direct limited resources towards a manageable goal.

Left unchecked, however, leaders can create too many initiatives that don’t necessarily add up to have a big impact on the problems that are thwarting family and community efforts to support their children.

Think of the number of separate change-focused initiatives, task forces and coalitions underway even in a small community. Part of the dilemma is that

- the more we *focus*** on narrow pieces,
- the more we *fragment*** the responses,
- the more we *fail*** our children and youth.

But it doesn’t have to be this way. The Center for the Study of Social Policy found that community change initiatives focused on big goals were as likely to succeed as those focused on small ones. The difference was in the planning, not the visioning.

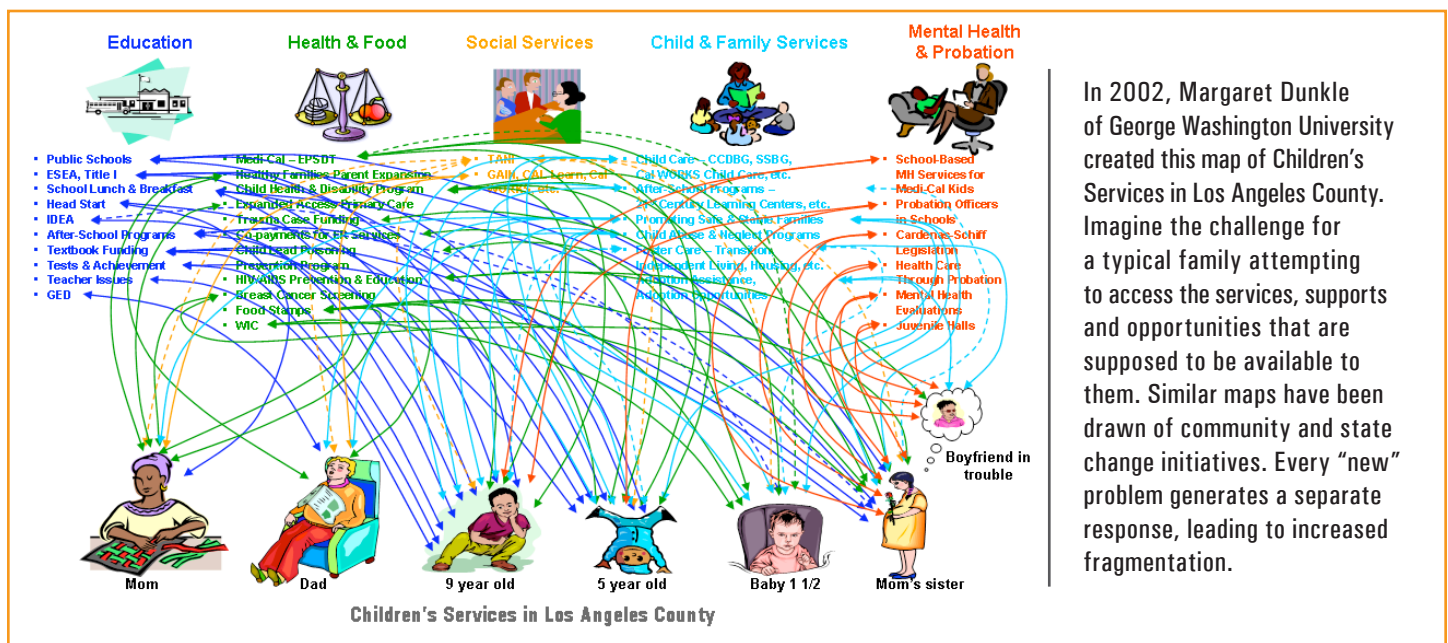
Change = Dissatisfaction x Vision x Plan

The Harvard Change Model helps us understand why. Harvard Business School researchers have found that the level of organizational change equals the level of dissatisfaction with the status quo times the clarity of the vision, times the adequacy of the plan.

Disconnected change efforts within a community or network may actually dissipate the energy for change. The response to lackluster change results should not be to focus in on smaller pieces, but to crank up the demand for a bolder vision and a better plan.

Leaders need to learn to focus differently in a way that lets them see both the forest and the trees. Rather than only zooming in on one piece at a time, leaders need to learn to zoom out to see the big picture to make sure current efforts add up before they simply add on new programs, new solutions, new initiatives.

**Leaders
Need to be
Challenged to
See the Forest
and the Trees**



In 2002, Margaret Dunkle of George Washington University created this map of Children’s Services in Los Angeles County. Imagine the challenge for a typical family attempting to access the services, supports and opportunities that are supposed to be available to them. Similar maps have been drawn of community and state change initiatives. Every “new” problem generates a separate response, leading to increased fragmentation.

The

Solution

CHANGING THE WAY WE DO BUSINESS

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The Big Picture Approach:

LEARNING TO *THINK* DIFFERENTLY

Helping Leaders Put Their Principles into Practice

Research, practice and public opinion offer a set of principles that can help us think more broadly about what it means to have ready youth, resourceful families and communities, and responsible leaders. But are we really compelled to act on this knowledge?

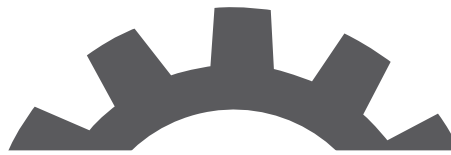
These principles are not just suggestions about ways to improve our efforts. They are the instructions for doing business differently. Moving these principles consistently into practice requires establishing a new system of checks and balances to counter learned habits that keep us doing the same things even when they aren't working just because they are safe.

FROM CORE PRINCIPLES



ABOUT CHILDREN & YOUTH

- Invest early and often.
- Support the whole child.
- Focus attention on those most in need.
- Build on strengths, don't just focus on problem-reduction.



ABOUT COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

- Recognize children don't grow up in programs, they grow up in families and communities.
- Support a full range of learning opportunities, formal/informal, in school and out.
- Assess and improve quality, reach and impact across all places young people spend their time.
- Recruit, train and retain good staff.



ABOUT LEADERS

- See youth and families as change agents, not clients.
- Engage all sectors and stakeholders.
- Coordinate efforts, align resources.
- Inspire and inform the public.



TO COMMON LANGUAGE

| Expect adequate progress across outcome areas: | Support all age groups & populations: | Address range of goals using range of approaches: | Ensure adequate supports: | Across times: | Enlist full range of settings: | Implement all change strategies: | Engage all stakeholders: |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|
| Learning Working Thriving Connecting Leading/ Contributing | Early Childhood School Age Middle School High School Young Adult <i>such as</i> Low Income Disabled Rural Minority | Problem-Reduction Prevention Preparation/ Development Engagement/ Leadership | Caring Adults Safe/ Structured Places Healthy Start & Supports Effective Education Opportunities to Make a Difference | During School Weekends Before/ After School Summers Evenings Holidays | Families Schools Community Organizations Parks & Rec Faith Juvenile Justice Child Welfare Work/Business Neighborhoods Other | Increase Demand Align Policies & Resources Engage Youth/Families Improve Systems, Services & Programs | Educators Funders & Catalysts Advocates Providers Faith Business Policy Makers Public Agencies Parents Youth |

The Big Picture Approach encourages leaders to start with developing common language that can be translated not only into vision and goal statements, but also into planning frameworks that provide a new youth-centered way of looking at information. Once they have learned this new way of thinking, they are able to take it into the basic steps of action planning – taking aim, taking stock, targeting action and tracking progress – but in a big picture way.

In addition to looking at youth outcomes and community supports, the framework challenges leaders to assess their own change efforts – are they and their partners employing the full range of strategies necessary to really make a difference? What strategies are missing? And what stakeholders?

Please note: The detailed lists above are provided as examples and draw on commonly used language (e.g., America's Promise Alliance 5 Promises). The Big Picture Approach doesn't prescribe the specific language in each list but rather challenges leaders to be intentional in addressing all of the categories.

The Big Picture Approach:

LEARNING TO *THINK* DIFFERENTLY

One way to move this common language into practical frameworks is to take the categories two at a time and make them into a “dashboard.” The “developmental dashboard” shown here starts by applying two basic principles – young people need supports from when they are little until they are big (invest early and often) and they need supports across a full range of developmental areas (support the whole child) – and turns them into a simple age by outcomes grid. The example below is used to ask the question, “How well are young people doing?” The cells can be filled in with public perceptions or hard data. Communities and states have used the dashboard process to define and select indicators of child well-being, developing report cards that track progress against their Big Picture Goals.

...and Bring Precision to Their Passion

Big Picture assessments are important, not only because they help identify the red cells, but because they map progress in all areas. It is important to pick a few things for all stakeholders to focus on (e.g., academic success for high school students, physical health of preschoolers, parent education and supports for families). But consider what happens if leaders throw away the rest of the picture. A few red cells may move to yellow. But without monitoring, in that same time period, yellows may shift to red and greens may shift to yellow. The net result: limited overall change. The challenge is to make overall improvements in the “Big Picture.” This is why it is important to focus on the forest and the trees.

These frames, or lenses, help leaders not simply zoom in to focus on one problem at a time, but also zoom out and keep the full picture in focus. They help bring precision to our collective passion to change the odds for youth.

| | | Early Childhood 0-5 yrs | Elementary Age 6-10 yrs | Middle School 11-13 yrs | High School 14-18 yrs | Young Adults 19-24 yrs |
|-------------------|------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| READY FOR COLLEGE | Learning | Red | Yellow | Red | Red | Yellow |
| | Working | Green | Green | Red | Yellow | Yellow |
| READY FOR LIFE | Thriving | Red | Yellow | Yellow | Green | Green |
| | Connecting | Yellow | Yellow | Green | Yellow | Red |
| | Leading | Yellow | Green | Yellow | Yellow | Yellow |



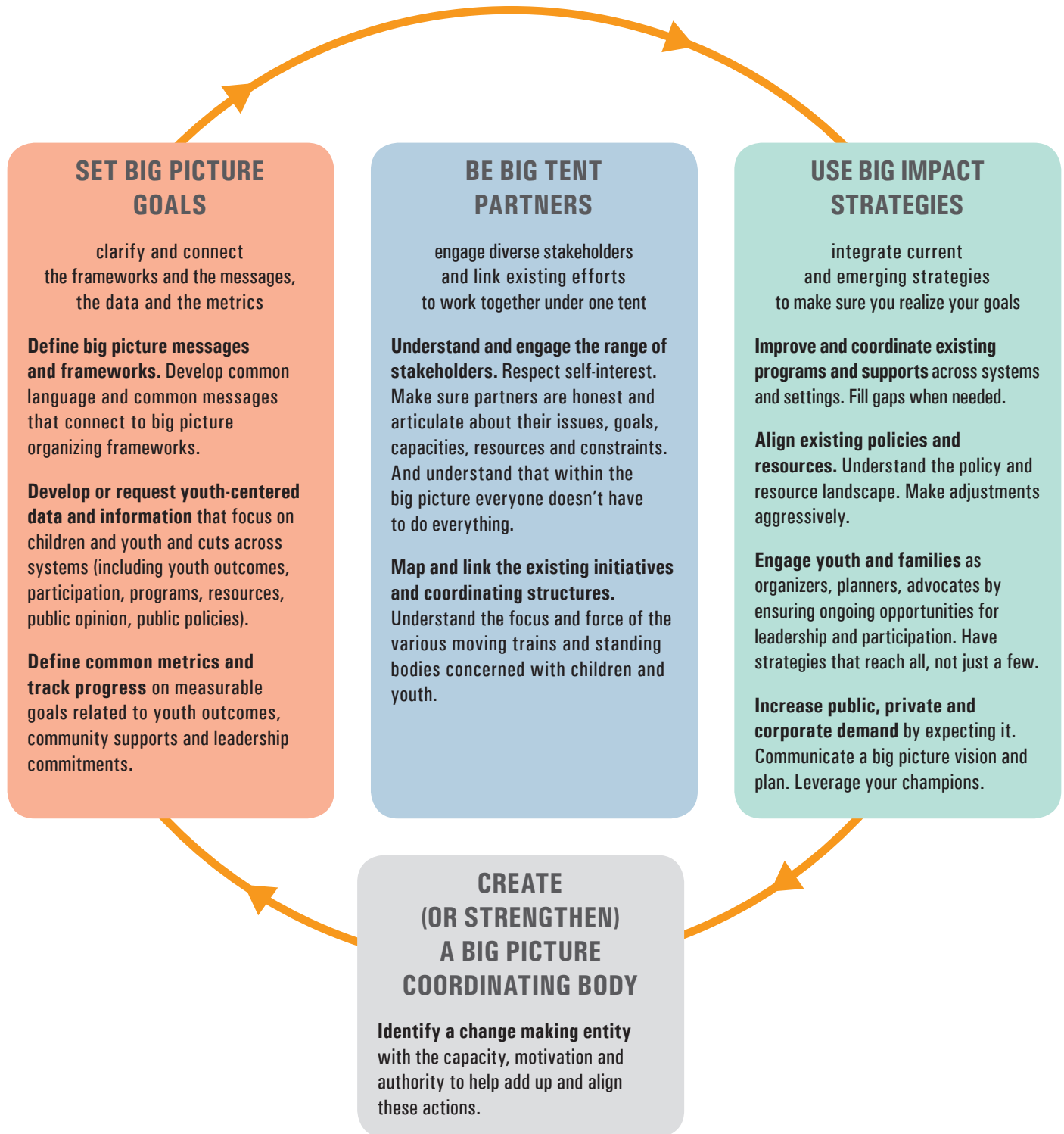
| | | Early Childhood 0-5 yrs | Elementary Age 6-10 yrs | Middle School 11-13 yrs | High School 14-18 yrs | Young Adults 19-24 yrs |
|-------------------|------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| READY FOR COLLEGE | Learning | Green | Yellow | Yellow | Yellow | Green |
| READY FOR WORK | Working | Green | Green | Yellow | Green | Yellow |
| READY FOR LIFE | Thriving | Yellow | Yellow | Yellow | Green | Green |
| | Connecting | Yellow | Yellow | Green | Yellow | Yellow |
| | Leading | Yellow | Green | Yellow | Yellow | Yellow |

The Blueprint for Action:

LEARNING TO ACT DIFFERENTLY

Leaders need to use the Big Picture Approach – sharpening the focus of the whole picture while setting priorities within it – to plan for and tackle each of the following 10 action steps that make up the . . .

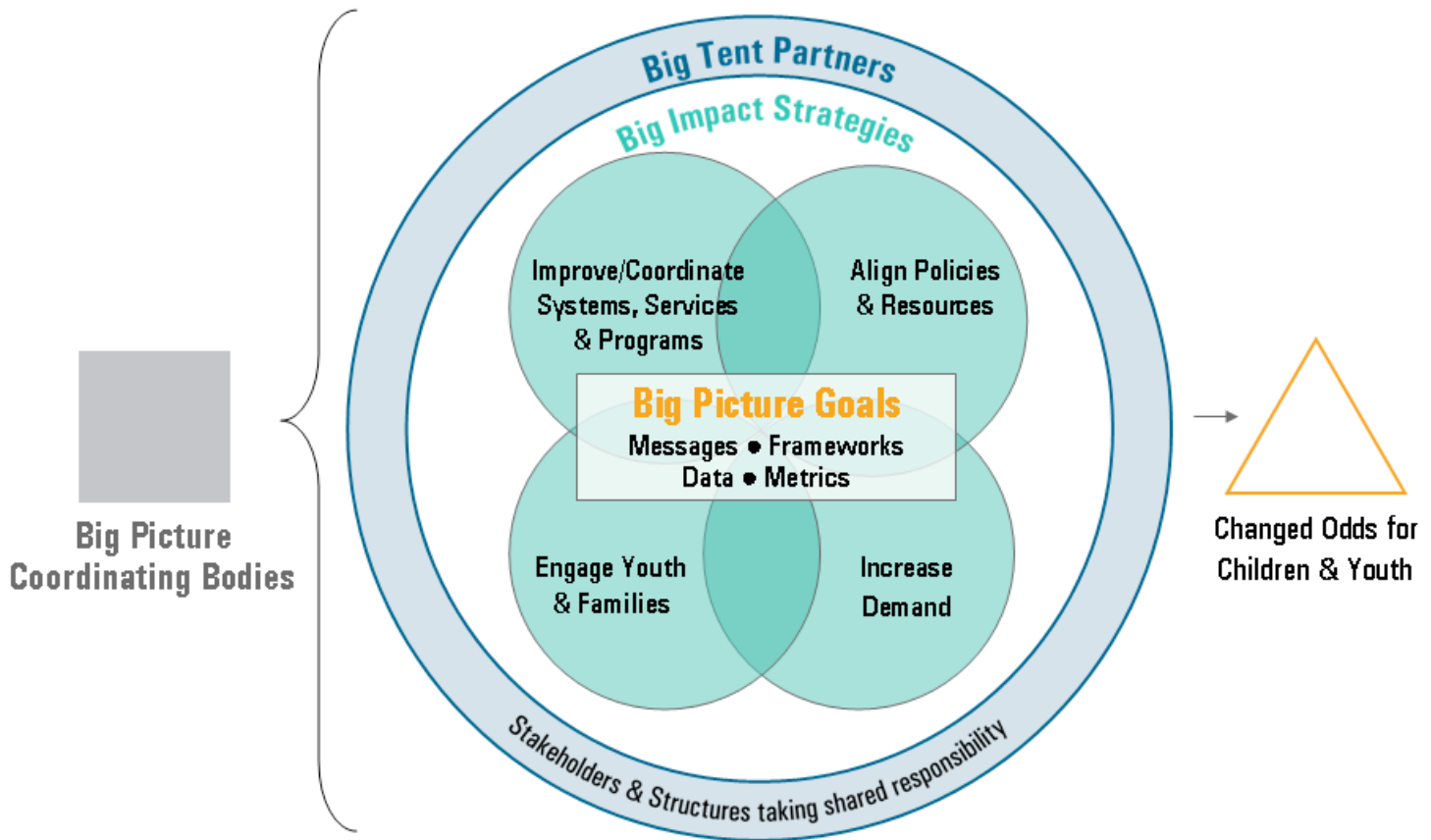
BLUEPRINT FOR ACTION



FOCUS DIFFERENTLY SO THAT TOGETHER WE CAN ACT DIFFERENTLY

The Blueprint for Action:

LEARNING TO *ACT* DIFFERENTLY



In every community and state across the country, you can find people tackling the ten tasks that are part of an overall Blueprint for Action (see list at left.) The Blueprint diagram above shows the relationship among these tasks. It helps leaders think about how their work fits together so that they can increase the collective horsepower of their efforts and get better returns on their investments.

The **Big Picture Goals** provide the critical focal point for the work. The **Big Impact Strategies** are interconnected and need to be focused on achieving the goals. The **Big Tent Partners** are the circle of actors coming together to leverage their efforts to make change happen. These partners need to take on shared responsibility for changing the odds for children and youth. They also need to support the **Big Picture Coordinating Bodies** asked to manage change.

Partners are depicted in a circle not only to signal shared responsibility but also to signal the need for containment. Perhaps the biggest challenge for Big Tent Partners is to keep their efforts

inside the tent. A story that frequently plays out at the state or local level goes something like this: A coordinating group is established with a broad mandate to create a plan for children and youth, but the group is not really given the capacity or authority to do so. A crisis happens – an outbreak of gang violence, an increase in the dropout rate – and a separate task force is set up, charged with creating a plan and implementing strategies that are not connected to the efforts going on in the circle. Rather than bringing new energy, another competing effort is created, adding to the cacophony of messages and activity.

One of the primary indicators that people are thinking and acting differently is that they not only coordinate existing efforts but, when the need arises to address a new problem, they voluntarily bring it inside the tent to ensure that they build on efforts that are currently underway.

Just as communities and states are challenged to add up and align the Big Picture around youth outcomes and community supports, they are also challenged to map their collective efforts within the Blueprint. Harnessing the energy inside the tent and focusing it towards the Big Picture Goals is the most effective way to improve returns on investment by increasing your horsepower for change.

The Ready by 21 Tool Box includes diagnostic tools that help stakeholders assess the overall change horsepower of their state or community. Additional tools help them actually map their existing and emerging work and look for ways to leverage and align their efforts.

The
Deliver
System

PARTNERS, PLACES AND PRODUCTS

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Moving from ideas to implementation takes effort, even if the ideas are convincing. Experience suggests that leaders need four things to help them “take the ideas home:”

- 1) information to share and continue learning,
- 2) examples of places implementing the ideas,
- 3) confirmation that their peers find the ideas useful, and
- 4) access to funds, even modest funds, to jump start the work.

The Forum for Youth Investment has made an effort to create these supports – developing information and tools for the Ready by 21 Tool Box, building partnerships with organizations like United Way of America and the National Collaboration for Youth, supporting and coaching leaders like state Children’s Cabinet Directors and supporting places like the Ready by 21 Quality Counts sites who are receiving technical assistance and challenge grants.

THE 5 YEAR GOALS

Over the next five years, the Forum has committed to work together with the Ready by 21 Challenge Co-Chairs and National Partners to deliver on the following goals:

Streamline Ready by 21 Tools. By 2009, complete the development and compilation of a suite of affordable, customizable on-line tools.

Engage Ready Partners. By 2010, up to 20 national partners committed to bringing more people into the Ready by 21 Leadership Network.

Support Ready Places. By 2011, 200 states and localities with leadership teams that are taking on the challenge.

Coach Big Picture Leaders. By 2012, 2000 leaders using an integrated set of field-tested conceptual and practical tools.

Increase the Ready by 21 Challenge Fund. By 2013, a \$21 million Challenge Fund built by public, private and corporate funders to provide support to people, places and partners ready to manage, make and measure change.

This Challenge is long overdue.

We need to challenge our leaders – public and private – to be accountable for the lives they touch directly or indirectly. These goals are ambitious, but doable, because of the groundwork that has already been laid.”

Former Congressman Dick Gephardt
Ready by 21 Challenge Co-Chair

“The Ready by 21 Challenge supports state and local leaders to put their own work in the context of the big picture of everything needed to change the overall array of community supports.

**The Ready by 21 tools help.
The Ready by 21 partnerships help even more.”**

Former Governor Tom Ridge
Ready by 21 Challenge Co-Chair

NATIONAL PARTNERS

In 2007, six partners made formal commitments to work with the Forum to advance the Ready by 21 Challenge. These Ready by 21 National Partners represent the education, government, nonprofit, business and community philanthropy sectors. Each was chosen because they pledged to do business differently and sought out the Forum to help in some way. These organizations have agreed not only to work with the Forum for Youth Investment but to work with each other. The Partners have shared work plans and identified concrete ways to work together to challenge and support their members and affiliates in states and communities across the country. Combined, they have the capacity to inform, support and champion state and local leaders whose commitments are critical to any major change effort:

- United Way of America
- American Association of School Administrators
- America's Promise Alliance
- Corporate Voices for Working Families
- National Collaboration for Youth
- National Conference of State Legislatures

Together, these partners have committed to reach out to other national organizations to help build a strong national partner network that represents all of the key stakeholder groups that need to be involved at the state and the local level. They have also made the commitment to bring their expertise, perspectives and clout into the places where the Ready by 21 Challenge currently has traction.

PLACES

In 2007, 12 places – 7 communities and 5 states – made formal commitments to use Ready by 21 tools and technical assistance to improve the quality and reach of community programs for youth. The Ready by 21 Quality Counts sites took on this challenge with the understanding that long-term success would require not only work with programs directors, but with policy makers and the public. 2007 also marked a step-up in our commitment to strengthen support for state children's cabinets and councils. These coordinating bodies have the potential to change the way their states do business. In 2008, our goal is to strengthen the connections between these state level policy bodies and local level planning and to connect our partners to both groups.

State and Local Coordinating Bodies

The Forum for Youth Investment connects with state and local cross-agency coordinating bodies in more than 20 states across the country. These coordinating bodies include children's cabinets, commissions, or councils and are systematically changing the fragmented and ineffective way states typically do business for children and youth. Typically, these bodies are made up of heads of state agencies with child and youth-serving programs, who meet on a regular basis with the collective goal of coordinating services, developing a common set of outcomes, and collaboratively developing and implementing plans to foster the well-being of young people. The coordinating body model provides a long-term and sustainable structure for ensuring that young people are physically and emotionally healthy, academically successful, civically engaged, and prepared to enter the workforce.

Quality Counts

The Ready by 21 Quality Counts Initiative provides community, agency and elected leaders from select cities and states across the country with a bold challenge, an infusion of national and local momentum, and an accompanying suite of policy-building strategies and tools. These supports are designed to help improve the quality and reach of community programs and strengthen and align policies that guide resource allocation, accountability and workforce development. Ready by 21 Challenge grants were made in late January 2008 to seven communities and five states committed to improving the quality and reach of community learning opportunities for children and youth. Support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Atlantic Philanthropies is allowing each of these sites to receive training and technical assistance and up to \$100,000 each over two years in matching grants. The selected communities are: Austin, TX; Columbus, IN; Georgetown Divide, CA; Grand Rapids, MI; Indianapolis, IN; Nashville, TN; and St. Louis, MO. The selected states are: Iowa, Kentucky, New York, Oklahoma, and Rhode Island.

READY BY 21 UPDATES

Regular e-news updates about partners, places, research, tools and upcoming events.

- **Forum Flash.** The latest news from Ready by 21 partners, sites and events sent bi-weekly through Forum Flash (the Forum's bi-weekly e-newsletter) and archived at www.forumfyi.org.
- **Connect for Kids.** The latest research and field reports on everything from early childhood literacy to youth employment delivered by Connect for Kids Weekly (a collaborative e-news and web-based information center managed by the Forum) and archived at www.connectforkids.org.
- **Youth Policy News.** Periodic updates on state youth policy from the National Conference of State Legislatures and the Forum.

READY BY 21 WEBINAR SERIES

A trio of webinars and audio conferences for those who learn best by hearing stories and interacting with tools. Go to www.forumfyi/readyby21.org to check schedules.

- **Blueprint for Action.** A webinar series introducing the Blueprint for Action and how each element fits together in fostering change. Guest speakers from states or communities will share their experiences on each call.
- **Big Picture Planning Approach.** A webinar series exploring tools and strategies for data collection and alignment and how to bring this information into strategic planning.
- **Engaging Stakeholders.** Web and audio conferences hosted by each of the Ready by 21 National Partners to discuss reasons and strategies for engaging business, government, education, nonprofit and community leaders.

READY BY 21 INTRODUCTORY RESOURCES

Print and virtual information (Power Points, video clips) for those who want to learn more about the Ready by 21 Challenge and the Big Picture Approach.

- **Get Started.** Download overviews, power point presentations, clips, handouts and short case examples.
- **Go Deeper.** Review dozens of reports, examples, resource guides and presentations on:
 - Promoting youth development
 - Improving program quality citywide
 - Mapping the program landscape
 - Principles for youth engagement
 - Making the case for out-of-school investments
 - Strengthening coordinating bodies
 - Aligning policies and funding
 - Improving the youth work workforce
 - Creating youth-centered children's budgets

READY BY 21 TRAININGS & INSTITUTES

2-3 day sessions for experienced individuals or teams interested in understanding and applying the Ready by 21 Challenge and Big Picture Approach. (Check the Forum web site for dates and locations).

- Two per year offered in Washington D.C. at the Cady-Lee.
- Two per year offered in coordination with partners.

READY BY 21 COACHING

Virtual and in-person customized support for those trying to use and promote Big Picture thinking. On-site presentations and facilitation are available but support can also be effectively provided via phone and e-mail.

- **Conference planning.** Help using the Big Picture Approach to plan or frame major events or to get the most out of a scheduled Ready by 21 keynote.
- **Retreat planning.** Help planning leadership retreats, planning processes or other events where a Big Picture Approach could help address real time challenges.
- **Work plan development.** Help for individuals or teams responsible for developing youth master plans, children's report cards and action agendas.

BIG PICTURE "POWER" TOOL GUIDES AND TRAININGS

1-2 day workshops on tools that help communities assess resources across settings and programs. Topics include landscape mapping (surveys and document review strategies to map current programs, initiatives, commissions and plans) and program quality assessment and improvement offered through the Center for Youth Program Quality, a joint venture of the Forum and the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation.

SUSTAINED WORK WITH SELECTED PLACES OR GROUPS

Technical assistance to places or groups that want to take on the Ready by 21 Challenge and increase their capacity to bring a new way of thinking and concrete change strategies into their long-term, intentional efforts to change the odds for youth.

Getting Started, Getting Connected

INDIVIDUALS

Contact one of our National Partners. If you are connected to one of the 6 current National Partners, call the contact person listed on the partner profile.

Call your national membership organization. Call your member organization and ask them to learn more about Ready by 21 Challenge. Or call the Forum and give us a contact person to call.

Connect to the Forum virtually. Download materials, sign up for the e-newsletters, sign-up for webinars. Go to forumfyi.org for a schedule of events.

Connect in person. Forum staff and, increasingly, Forum partners run Ready by 21 trainings and institutes at the Cady Lee and frequently offer keynotes and workshops at national and regional conferences. Check the upcoming events section of the Web site or sign up for Forum Flash.

COALITIONS & COMMUNITIES

Follow the individual route. Have a member of your network or leadership group learn more about the Ready by 21 Challenge through any of the avenues available to individual change makers.

Download the “change horsepower” diagnostic. Have members fill out the simple change horsepower diagnostic worksheet. Use the results to discuss how best to get started.

Send an e-mail/schedule a call. Forum staff members are happy to talk with you about the Ready by 21 products and services, but it helps us if we have a bit of background on what you are trying to do. Let us know that you’d like to schedule a diagnostic call. We’ll send you a brief questionnaire and a products and services guide.

Set up a conference call or webinar for your group. If you know that you’re ready to get immersed in the ideas or ready to have us help you apply them to a concrete project, a virtual visit can be just as effective and a lot less expensive than a site visit. We’ll work with you to make sure that your group has the materials it needs in advance and we can even invite other speakers to join from our partner organizations or communities.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS & FUNDERS

Follow the individual route. Have a member of your national staff or your affiliates learn more about the Ready by 21 Challenge. Make sure it fits with your organizational goals. Identify one or two ways that we could get started.

Call us. Our priority this year is identifying new national partners. If you attended the Launch, or have heard a Ready by 21 keynote, call us. A staff member will help you identify ways to connect.

Contact your members. Assess member interest. Find out how many of your members are in Ready by 21 sites, have heard or participated in Ready by 21 events, or are interested in the Ready by 21 goals and strategies.

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