



## Director's Year in Review

I am honored to work with the AIPC team. Their hard work, dedication and passion have helped us flourish this year.

In October, AIPC was joined by the staff of the Anchorage Youth Development Coalition. We all benefited from the enthusiasm of our new hire, Jill Dutton as we moved in together at our lovely new location, with windows and offices for all.

Shortly afterwards, I left for a glorious 3 month Sabbatical, compliments of the Rasmuson Foundation. I returned at the end of January, refreshed, invigorated, with memories that will last a lifetime.

Time didn't stop for staff while I was away. The enormous task of completing the Anchorage Collaborative Coalitions' assessment was accomplished. The State gave it its blessings, allowing us to move forward with strategic planning to help make sure youth in Anchorage thrive.

The Second Order Change project kicked into full gear with the gathering of the Executive Director Cohort. With funding from Cook Inlet Tribal Council, we are providing training and coaching for all levels of staff in youth serving organizations throughout Anchorage.

Traffic safety projects around the State improved participant knowledge of safe cycling, inspired an increase in seatbelt use by teens and helped 300 children become safely secured in child passenger safety seats.

After Deborah Williams' departure for lovely Santa Barbara, we were fortunate to hire Lindsey Hajduk as the Director of the Anchorage Youth Development Coalition.

In the summer, we received a \$90,000 contract to provide assessment services for a new effort to reduce opioid misuse and heroin use. This will provide AIPC a chance to further our strengths and reputation as a data driven organization.

In July, all Staff, AIPC Board Members and the AYDC Leadership Team gathered to get to know each other better, hear about successes and challenges of the past 9 months, and begin dreaming and planning for our shared future.

I am excited as we move into our new year. The opportunities are invigorating, and inspiring. All of what we have accomplished, and all of what we have to look forward to is due to the synergy of all of our shared efforts.

With much gratitude and optimism,

Marcia



The **Anchorage Youth Development Coalition** is a group of over 60 youth serving organizations and individuals that are committed to the AYDC Vision and Mission. In 2015, AYDC became a program of the Alaska Injury Prevention Center (AIPC).



## Convene Coalition

Convening the Anchorage Youth Development Coalitions is a primary responsibility for the AYDC Director with the support of the Program Manager and Administrative and Communications Assistant. AYDC staff convene **monthly coalition meetings**, offer a series of **professional development** trainings, and facilitate networking and resource sharing.

## AYDC Projects

The AYDC program has supported projects throughout the community, including the “**Start the Conversations @ Mealtimes**” toolkits, **Graduation Wristbands** program in high schools, and the **#LovAlaskaYouth** fundraising campaign. AYDC is also a driver of the **90% by 2020 Partnership** to support community networks in increasing youth assets to achieve success and graduate.

## Strong Leadership

The **AYDC Leadership Team** supports and advises the Director on strategy-related work with input from the coalition. The Leadership Team is comprised of members representing public and private organizations, which reflect the programs, services, and opportunities available for Anchorage children and youth. They bring the heart and the head together on coalition work.

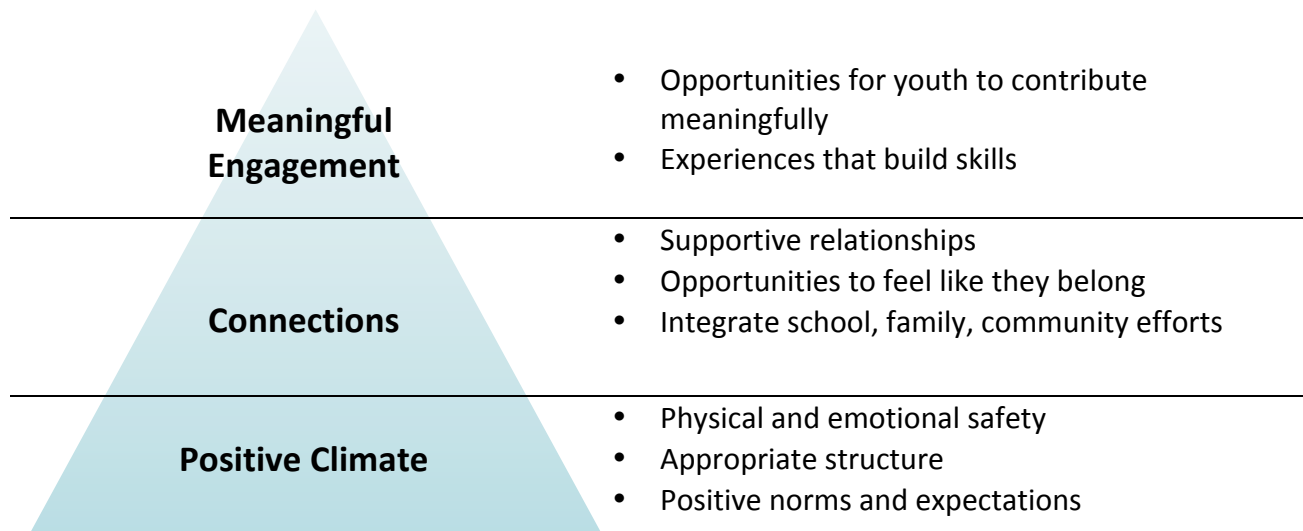
## Shared AIPC Projects

The AYDC program staff work together with AIPC staff on important projects, including the **Anchorage Collaborative Coalitions** to prevent bullying in Anchorage, as well as the **opioid and heroine prevention** work with the Healthy Voices, Healthy Choices coalition. AIPC staff also participate in the **Second Order Change** professional development series.



## Positive Youth Development

Positive Youth Development is an approach to helping young people grow into adulthood through relationships and experiences that build their capacities to meet their personal and social needs. ALL YOUTH can grow up healthy and happy and contribute to their families, schools, and communities. We can achieve PYD by creating:



### Our Vision

All of Anchorage's youth thrive.



### Our Mission

The Anchorage Youth Development Coalition promotes and integrates strength based strategies through advocacy, resources, networking, and training to ensure that all Anchorage youth thrive.



### Our Purpose

Advance positive youth development.

# Second Order Change:

## Developing Relationships and Climate for Quality Youth Programming

Youth need developmental environments, relationships, and experiences that help build social, emotional and other critical life skills. As youth serving organizations, we can provide this. As staff, professional development in these same skillsets for ourselves improves our ability to do so.

### So what skills are we talking about?

In Second Order Change, our focus is on the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning competencies (shown at right). We can support youth both through modeling these skills, and through using those skills to better do our work from day to day.

### How is Second Order Change Building these skills?

Social and emotional learning (SEL) happens throughout our lives, and we learn best with the chance to practice and reflect. Second Order Change facilitators are leading cohorts of staff from diverse agencies across Anchorage through a pilot series that provides guided, inquiry-based learning, practice and reflection. Cohorts have the chance to explore SEL in their work between sessions.

This professional development is intended to both support skill building, and foster greater understanding of SEL and its potential to support youth programs.

**What makes this a good fit for Anchorage youth serving organizations?** To make sure the cohort experience connects with what staff really experience in their work, a team of AYDC partners reviewed training curricula from across the U.S. and chose promising youth development practices in which we can explore SEL skills in a hands-on way. Examples of session topics include:

- Effective communication with youth
- Culturally responsive practice
- Building professional relationships with youth and staff
- Conflict resolution
- Self-care
- Staff coaching
- Trauma informed practice



Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is a process for helping children and adults develop the fundamental skills for life effectiveness, building our ability to handle ourselves, our relationships, and our work, effectively and ethically.

**Who's involved?** There are three Second Order Change cohorts this year:

- Executive level staff (Executive Directors, COOs)
- Management staff (Supervising those on the front lines)
- Direct service staff (Interacting with youth)

The following youth serving organizations currently have staff participating in each level of the cohort series. Participants have committed to attending monthly professional development sessions over a 10 month period.





# PREVENT BULLYING IN ANCHORAGE



## Anchorage Collaborative Coalitions

The Anchorage Collaborative Coalitions (ACC) are a group of organizations working together to prevent bullying behavior by promoting respect and inclusion. Members of the coalition are Alaska Injury Prevention Center – Anchorage Youth Development Coalition, along with Spirit of Youth and Healthy Voices, Healthy Choices. Since 2014 these coalitions have been working together to improve mental health for youth and young adults in Anchorage.

### Key 2016 milestones:

- February 2016: Department of Behavioral Health approved the ACC Community Assessment.
- March 2016: Hosted community public forums.
- May 2016: Community-driven strategic planning
- September\* 2016: Department of Behavioral Health approves Strategic Plan; ACC will move into Implementation phase of the program.

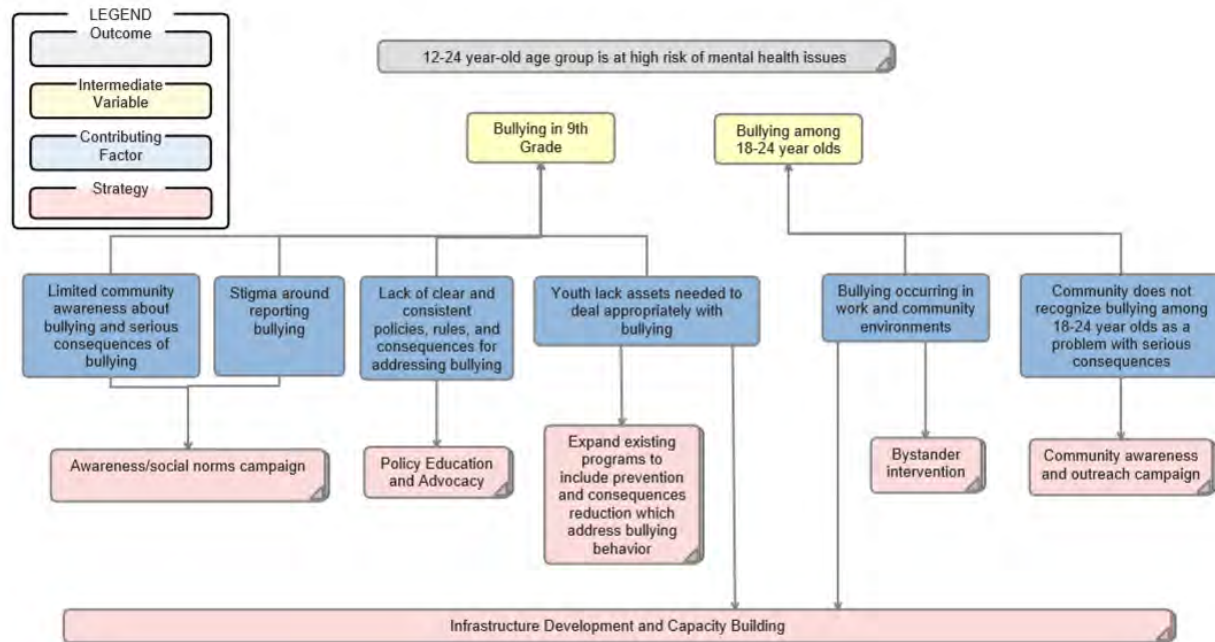


**ACC Vision Statement:** *Together creating communities where youth and young adults thrive and are resilient.*

## Implementation Phase

The State's Department of Behavioral Health is using the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Strategic Prevention Framework in this grant process. The ACC has completed the 1) Assessment, 2) Capacity Building, and 3) Planning and now we are moving in to the 4) Implementation and 5) Evaluation phases.

Through Strategic Planning, the ACC has created an overarching logic model for implementation (pictured below), along with corresponding models for the strategies listed below with brief descriptions of activities the ACC will carry out to achieve its vision.



### Strategy 1: Infrastructure Development and Capacity Building

- Support coalition member programs that increase youth who feel they matter in the community.
- Build capacity within youth-serving organizations to use best practices to promote health and wellness and protective factors.
- Create advocacy plan to address policies, procedures, and practices that address young adult bullying at work places and postsecondary institutions.

### Strategy 2: Awareness and Social Norms Campaign for Middle and High Schools

Create youth-led campaign to increase community awareness and concern of bullying.

### Strategy 3: Policy Education and Advocacy for Middle and High Schools

Develop policy recommendations for schools and youth-serving organizations to adopt.

### Strategy 4: Expansion of Existing Programs for Youth Aged 12-18 Years Old

Expand of existing programs to include bullying content, including “Start the Conversation.”

### Strategy 5: Bystander Intervention

Implement the Green Dot program to include bullying content for young adults.

### Strategy 6: Community Awareness and Outreach Campaign for Young Adults

Create messaging and media plan to increase community readiness to address bullying among young adults.



# Raise Your Voice 2016

Raise Your Voice is a program of the Alaska Injury Prevention Center. As part of Raise Your Voice, AIPC works with student groups across the state of Alaska to create safe driving messages to share with young drivers.



## Meet the Groups

Where is everyone from?



Safe Driving

Crashes

Raise Your Voice groups create videos that promote safe driving behaviors to prevent motor vehicle crashes amongst their peers.



**Noatak**

Napaaqtugmuit  
Multimedia  
Production Class



**Anchorage**

South High  
Student  
Government



**Wasilla**

Mat Su Central  
Creative  
Technologies Media



**Anchorage**

East High Student  
Government



**Anchorage**

Dimond High  
Senior Class



**Wasilla**

Mat Su Central  
Creative  
Technologies Media



**Fairbanks**

Hutchison High  
School Stream  
Team



**Chugiak**

Chugiak High  
School FCCLA

## Activities

Student groups were required to meet at least twice with AIPC in person or over Skype, submit a storyboard and video draft, show their video to at least 50 students, and complete a project summary and individual reflections.



*Distracted driving was the most popular video topic in 2016.*

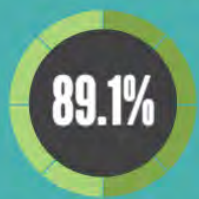
## Encouraging Safe Driving as the Norm

Nationwide, leading risk factors for teen crashes include: driver inexperience, driving with teen passengers, nighttime driving, not using seat belts, distracted driving, drowsy driving, and driving reckless.\* Groups were encouraged to pick a driving topic that mattered to them and their school community. Students in Anchorage, Chugiak, Wasilla, and Fairbanks chose to make their videos about distracted driving. Students from Noatak focused their video on speeding through town on snowmachines.



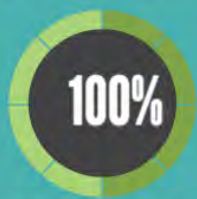
# %

With help from AIPC, Raise Your Voice groups create a brief survey to evaluate their peers knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about driving issues. The results from each group's survey show that the majority of teens are aware of the risks of driving.



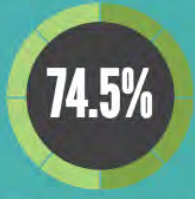
## Pay Attention

Students at Dimond identified the parking lot as a hazard at their school. The majority of their peers agreed that it is important to pay close attention in parking lots.



## Know the Risk

100% of students asked at Chugiak agree or strongly agree that texting while driving is dangerous.



## Stay Focused

Most students asked at East High School feel like teen drivers are rarely or never able to multitask while driving without becoming distracted.



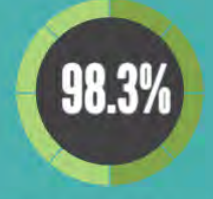
## Speak Up

The majority of students surveyed in Fairbanks agreed that they feel comfortable speaking up if a friend is texting and driving.



## Slow Down

Most students in Noatak responded that they feel like driving fast in town could injure or hurt others.



## Protect Others

Almost all students asked at South High School agreed that they would stop driving distracted if a friend asked them to.

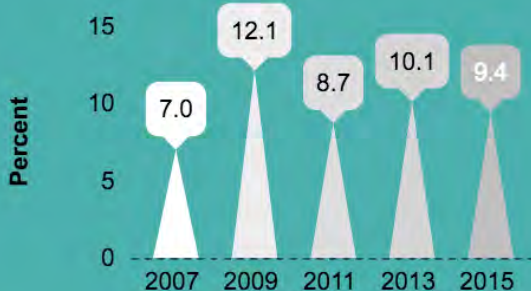
## Teen Driving Trends in Alaska



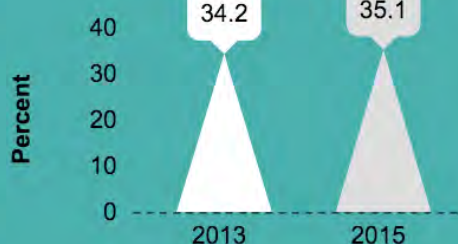
The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance monitors the health behaviors of youth in the United States. In Alaska, a survey is administered to a sample of high school students every other year. Results from the 2015 survey show that 9.4% of students report rarely or never wearing a seat belt. A total of 5.6% of students reported that they had drove when drinking alcohol. Just over one third of students [ 35.1% ] reported that they had texted or emailed while driving a car or other vehicle.

## Percentage of Alaska High School Students Who:

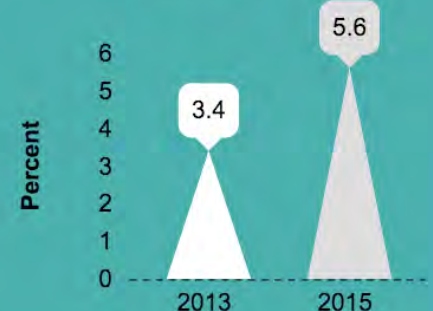
### Rarely or Never Wore a Seat Belt\*\*



### Texted or E-Mailed While Driving a Car or Other Vehicle\*\*



### Drove When Drinking Alcohol\*\*



\*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved from: [http://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/teen\\_drivers/teendrivers\\_factsheet.html](http://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/teen_drivers/teendrivers_factsheet.html)

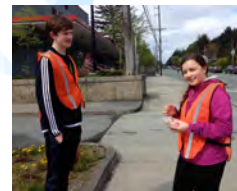
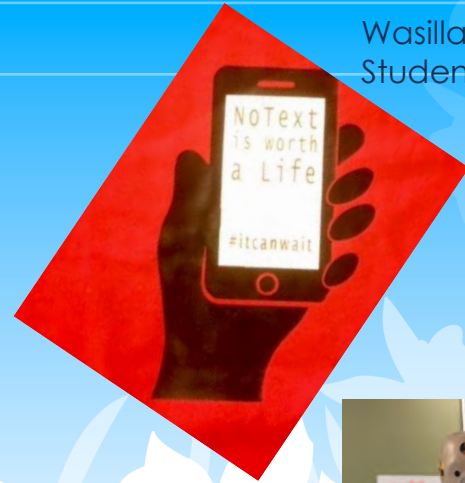
\*\*Data reported can be viewed at: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/chronic/pages/yrbs/yrbs.aspx>



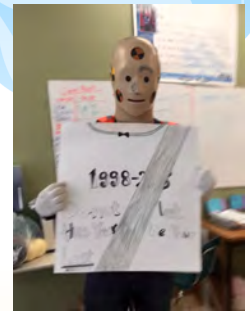


# Phone down Buckle up

2016 High School campaign



Juneau Douglas  
Freshman Council



Service  
BioMedical Career

## 10 Alaska high schools raised awareness of teen driving safety & earned \$200

Teen high school groups were tasked with influencing their peers to increase seat belt use and limit distractions. At the conclusion of the campaign student drivers were observed at a 91.4% seat belt use rate, higher than the statewide general public average of 89.3%.

All groups are applauded for their effort and enthusiasm in increasing teen driver safety.

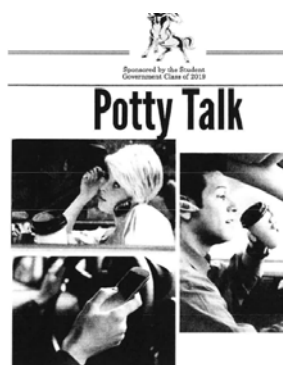
### Additional \$200 awards:

Highest Overall  
Seat Belt Use  
South @ 94.4%



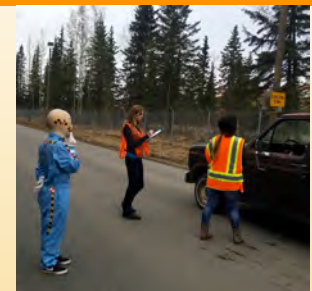
Thank you sponsors!

Most Improved  
Seat Belt Rate  
Chugiak up 8.7%



Seat Belts Save Lives  
Did you know that 58% of car crashes involve distracted drivers?

Voted Best PSA  
Jingle  
East ~winner 3 years in a row



Bartlett JROTC



West Spanish Club

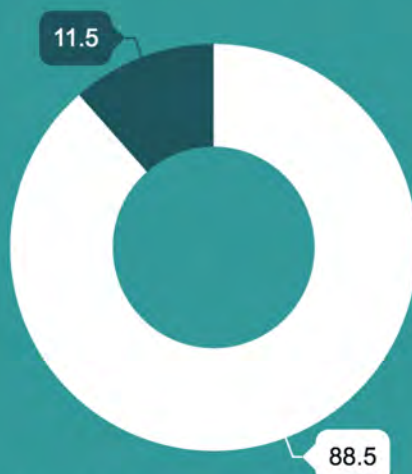


Dimond Student Govt.



# SEAT BELT USE ALASKA 2016

88.5% overall seat belt use rate in Alaska.

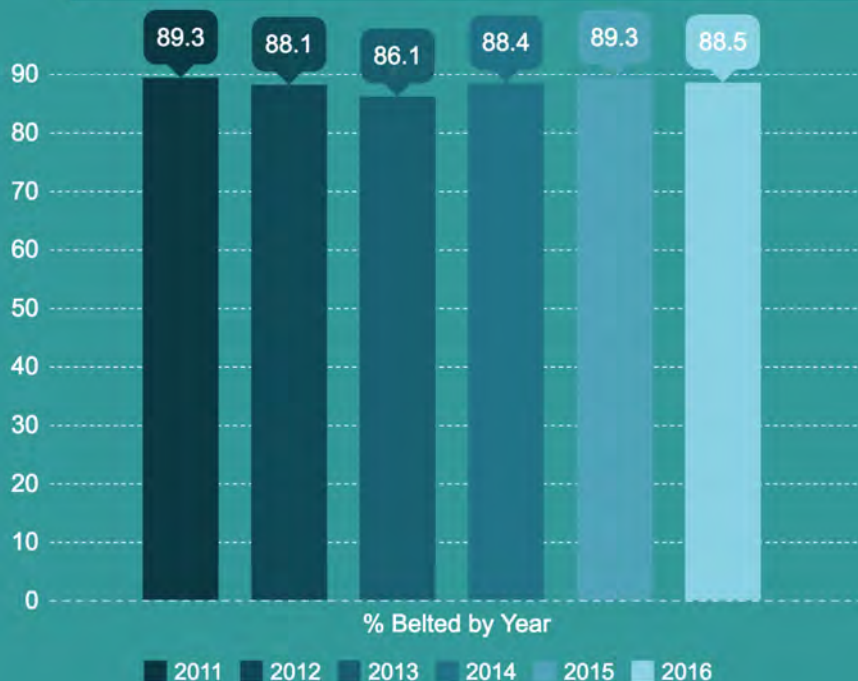


Over 45,000 vehicle drivers and front seat passengers were observed in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Kenai, and MatSu during the 2016 observations.

## Seat Belt Use by Borough



Drivers and passengers in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough had the highest seat belt use rate at 95.0%.



## Seat Belt Use Over Time

The Alaska Injury Prevention Center has coordinated the State of Alaska's seat belt observation study for the Alaska Highway Safety Office since 2002.

The seat belt use rate has remained relatively stable over the past six years. The highest seat belt rate of 89.3% was observed in 2011 and again in 2015. The lowest seat belt use rate in the past six years was 86.1% in 2013.



# Child Passenger Safety



*Craig Alaska, August 2016*



- ◆ 4 CPS Technicians at AIPC
  - Beth, Mandi, Sylvia & Jill (NEW!)
  - Beth & Mandi are nationally certified Instructors for the CPS Curriculum!
- ◆ Instructed at 5 CPS Courses Statewide
  - Anchorage AFD, Anchorage AIPC, Soldotna, Craig & Fairbanks
- ◆ Over 300 individual car seat checks and over 100 car seats distributed in Alaska this year.
- ◆ 50 Technicians will attend AIPC CPS Re-Certification Conference in September.

85% of Car Seats in Alaska are used or installed incorrectly.



# EVALUATING BIKEOLOGY

An Evaluation of Bicycle Education in Schools

35 bicycles are available for ASD's physical education teachers to use in their classroom as part of the Bikeology curriculum.

AIPC worked with classroom teachers to evaluate differences in students' knowledge of bicycling basics, skills, and rules of the road before and after participating in the Bikeology unit at their school.

## 01 PROGRAM INFO

Thanks to a grant from Alaska's Safe Routes to School program, students in Anchorage are receiving bicycle education in their Physical Education Classes. This grant allowed for the purchase of a bike fleet for teachers to use to teach a bicycling education curriculum.

The Bikeology curriculum was developed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and SHAPE America.

All bikes are housed in a transportation trailer containing 35 adjustable bicycles, helmets, and gear for teachers to set up bike handling and skills drills.

## 02 EVALUATION

AIPC worked with the Anchorage School District to assess gains in students' knowledge of bicycling basics and rules of the road before and after receiving bicycle education and training.

The Bikeology curriculum contains a test that covers key lessons from the curriculum.

ASD teachers administered this test to students prior to receiving training, at the conclusion of the bike unit, and two weeks after receiving training from the Bikeology curriculum.





### 03 KEY FINDINGS



Prior to receiving training, the average test score was 16 out of 30.



After participating in the bike unit, the mean test score was 22 out of 30.



Two weeks after completing the unit, students scored an average of 21 out of 30.

130

Approximately 130 students at Wendler Middle School participated in the bike unit.

### 04 Pre and Post Test Comparison



VS



Prior to participating in the Bikeology unit, only 39% of students knew how to fit a helmet correctly.

On the pre test, 15% of students knew how to signal a right turn while riding a bike.

55% of students indicated that a bicycle is a vehicle on the road prior to receiving training.

After receiving education, 67% of students correctly identified how to fit a bike helmet.

62% of students knew the correct hand signal for a right turn when they took the post test.

After participating in the Bikeology unit, 91% of students indicated that a bicycle is a vehicle while traveling on the road.



### 05 NEXT STEPS

The ASD recently received funding to purchase an additional four fleets of bicycles.

AIPC hopes to see bicycle injury rates amongst Anchorage youth decrease as youth gain more bicycling knowledge, training, and on-the-bike experience.

# READY BY DESIGN

## KEY IDEAS

## THE SCIENCE (AND ART) OF YOUTH READINESS

Stephanie Malia Krauss, Karen J. Pittman, Caitlin Johnson

**Every young person deserves the right to be ready to take advantage of life's opportunities and meet its challenges at every age and stage.**

In the United States, too many young people move through adolescence and into adulthood without the abilities, skillsets and mindsets they need to manage life's opportunities and challenges. The numbers are stark: more than 5.6 million young people are disconnected from school and the workforce. Many more have earned a high school diploma or postsecondary credential yet still lack the competence to get by. Only four in 10 young adults are "doing well"—in school or working, emotionally and physically healthy, and engaged in civic or community life.<sup>1</sup>

The past decade has brought a growing sense of urgency and attention to the issues of readiness and equity. As a nation, we devote significant expertise and resources to addressing disparities in wealth, health and well-being and to closing gaps among groups of young people. We have made considerable progress. Yet even our best efforts remain deeply fragmented. Persistent inequities prove that we must do more.

**"Problem-free is not the same as fully prepared."**

Karen Pittman, 2001

**The Forum for Youth Investment** has renewed our commitment to making readiness a right for every young person, regardless of background, ability, circumstance or experiences. We believe we are at a critical time in history that both demands and enables those working with young people to more effectively *promote readiness* as a way to deepen and connect supports and measure progress across silos.

What will make this vision a reality? It is not a mystery. We have more than two decades' worth of research to help us act with precision. **There is a science to readiness.**

The Forum created **The Readiness Project** to make this science clear, accessible and actionable. It began with comprehensive research to define readiness and the conditions and contexts that influence whether a young person is or will be ready. We reviewed over 300 reports, studies, journal articles and books, ranging from neuroscience to systems thinking to future economic forecasts and workforce trends. We analyzed and crosswalked more than 60 of

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<sup>1</sup> Gambone, et. al. (2002). A Comparative Analysis of Community Youth Development Strategies.

**Make readiness happen by design.**

Download the full paper, stories and tools at [SparkAction.org/readiness](https://SparkAction.org/readiness)



the most credible standards and frameworks from each major youth system. The result is a comprehensive and systems-neutral science of readiness and the case for why it matters.

Going forward, we will translate these findings into concrete tools and lessons that can be used by leaders, practitioners, policymakers, advocates and others working to improve the lives of young people.

The full paper, [The Science \(and Art\) of Youth Readiness](#), presents the findings of our three-year research effort and offers a roadmap for how these findings can be integrated into and aligned with existing efforts to improve youth well-being. This key ideas document serves as a companion to the paper, introducing and summarizing our core concepts and research findings.

## The Science of Readiness

Readiness is the dynamic combination of being prepared for and willing to take advantage of life's opportunities while managing its challenges. This is not a new term, nor are we the first to use it, but our research confirms that it is accessible, neutral and galvanizing. Perhaps most importantly, it makes sense to young people and their families. *Readiness* is powerful and practical.

**Readiness is the combination of being willing and prepared to take on life's challenges and opportunities.**

The Readiness Project

The science of readiness calls for a holistic approach to youth development and learning. It takes into account the full human ecosystem in which a young person grows and develops—the relationships, environments and internal (mindsets and skillsets) and external (social and economic trends) forces that influence our daily lives. Designing for readiness requires that system and community leaders see and address the whole ecosystem. As our current social conditions demonstrate, to do otherwise will not bring about lasting change.

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### YOUNG PEOPLE AT THE CENTER

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Imagine a young person with a **backpack**—inside is everything he or she needs to get through the day. This is a useful way of thinking about the readiness research: in order to be willing and prepared to take on life's challenges and opportunities, young people must be able to reach into their packs and get what they need (the abilities). Adults must help young people fill their backpack, and teach them how to make use of what is inside (by using proven developmental practices). This is readiness.

**Make readiness happen by design.**

Download the full paper, stories and tools at [SparkAction.org/readiness](https://SparkAction.org/readiness)

Our research identifies four interrelated components of readiness, which should be addressed together:

- Ten universal **Readiness Abilities** and their associated **Skillsets and Mindsets**. Every person needs these, regardless of age, background or circumstance. Every system and setting should support their development.
- Four categories of **Readiness Practice**, which include the essential characteristics of environments, relationships and experiences for young people to develop, strengthen and demonstrate these abilities, skillsets and mindsets.
- Four common **Readiness Traps**, serious and often unintended conditions in youth systems and settings that affect some young people disproportionately, narrowing their paths forward.
- Four common **Readiness Gaps** fueled by these traps. These are deep and persistent disparities between populations of young people.

## Readiness Abilities, Skillsets and Mindsets

### What does it mean for young people to be ready?

The Readiness Project identifies ten universal abilities every person needs, regardless of age, background or circumstance and that every system and setting should support. These are the ten abilities we use every day, no matter who we are or what situations we are in.

The abilities are supported by the skillsets and mindsets—or, clusters of habits, attitudes and beliefs—that we use most often. The skillsets *prepare and equip* us to do something, while the mindsets help us become *willing* to do something.

The Readiness Abilities, Skillsets and Mindsets:

- can be learned and strengthened with the right supports and opportunities;
- can be measured using empirical, practical and observational methods; and
- are dynamic, changing depending on a young person's needs, life circumstances, developmental stage and environments.

Nearly every youth system or setting operates with a version of “readiness” criteria and goals. Some include social, emotional and interpersonal skills in addition to topic-specific skills. The Readiness Project synthesizes all of these into a universal list of abilities, skillsets and mindsets. This list represents what young people must have, regardless of ambition or circumstance. These, and the sense of agency they provide young people, are at the core of what it means to be ready.

**Make readiness happen by design.**

Download the full paper, stories and tools at [SparkAction.org/readiness](https://SparkAction.org/readiness)



## READINESS ABILITIES

There are ten broad and dynamic abilities we use every day. These abilities allow us to respond to life. They activate and adjust based on whatever is going on. Each ability has both specific and coordinated roles.



### **I CAN THINK & CREATE**

in ways that help me navigate and experience life.



### **I CAN FEEL & EXPRESS EMOTION**

appropriately and as a way to connect with others.



### **I CAN GET & STAY HEALTHY**

physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.



### **I CAN APPLY LEARNING**

in the real world and to meet life demands.



### **I CAN USE INSIGHTS TO GROW & DEVELOP**

in each stage of life.



### **I CAN WORK & STAY FOCUSED**

in each area of life.



### **I CAN RELATE TO OTHERS & THE WORLD**

by forming, managing and sustaining my relationships.



### **I CAN ENGAGE WITH PEOPLE & PLACES**

by being present and engaging in meaningful, real and honest ways.



### **I CAN PERSIST THROUGH STRUGGLES & MAINTAIN HOPE**

no matter my challenges.



### **I CAN SOLVE PROBLEMS & MAKE DECISIONS**

about the intellectual, social, moral and emotional issues and problems I face.

## SKILLSETS & MINDSETS

These are the skillsets and mindsets we use most often to express the Readiness Abilities. Skillsets prepare us to do something and Mindsets—made up of habits, attitudes and beliefs—help us become willing to do something.

### SKILLSETS

**APPLICATION** – being able to apply what is learned and practice it in real life.

**RESOURCE AND INFORMATION PROCESSING** – being able to gather, keep track of and manage information and resources.

**COPING** – being able to make it through and bounce back from hard times.

**COMMUNICATION** – being able to say what you need or want to in an appropriate and effective way.

**ORGANIZATION AND PLANNING** – being able to organize and plan life, projects, tasks and schedules.

**PROBLEM SOLVING AND DECISIONMAKING** – being able to solve problems and make informed decisions.

**REFLECTION AND SELF-AWARENESS** – being able to think about life and honestly evaluate where you are, what you need or want and what should be done.

**SELF-REGULATION** – being able to manage emotions, thoughts and behaviors so they are appropriate for who you are with, where you are and what you are doing.

**BASIC LIFE MANAGEMENT** – being able to meet foundational life demands and practical needs.

**THINKING AND ANALYSIS** – being able to think and reason critically and creatively about issues and produce thoughtful responses.

**SELF-CARE** – being able to meet physical, emotional, mental and spiritual needs, as long as there are the right supports and access.

**RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT** – being able to form, grow, manage and keep relationships.

### MINDSETS

**FAIRNESS** – being sensitive to the difference between right and wrong, and believing everyone deserves a fair chance.

**OPEN-MINDEDNESS** – being open to perspectives and experiences that are different from your own.

**FUTURE ORIENTATION** – being focused on what is ahead or possible and using that to motivate you in the present.

**HUMILITY** – being thoughtful and honest about your talents and achievements, shortcomings and mistakes. Having a healthy perspective and engaging with others even when the focus is not on you.

**PRAGMATISM** – being honest, practical and objective when considering life, problems and needs.

**AGILITY** – being able to change your mood and actions depending on what is needed, where you are and who you are with.

**DRIVE** – being motivated and focused. Enjoying getting things done and accomplishing goals.

**ADAPTABILITY** – being flexible in your thinking and behavior, depending on what is needed.

**CURIOSITY** – being an eager learner with many questions.

**COMPASSION** – being moved by the struggles, situations and pain of others.

**COURAGE** – being willing to take on challenges, even when scared or confused.

**EMPATHY** – being understanding and connected to the feelings and experiences of others.

**GROWTH ORIENTATION** – believing you can get better with practice and hard work.

**OPTIMISM** – being comforted and hopeful by the positive parts of a situation.

**PERSISTENCE** – being focused and doing whatever it takes to accomplish a goal or task.

**PURPOSEFULNESS** – being committed to accomplishing something and being someone.

## Readiness Practice

What does it mean for systems, settings and adults to explicitly support youth readiness?

The Readiness Project considers four categories of Readiness Practice—developmental environments, relationships, experiences, and space and time—as essential for young people to develop, strengthen and demonstrate the Readiness Abilities. To define these areas of practice, we reviewed and compared more than a generation of discoveries on child and adolescent development, coaching and mentoring, developmental relationships, quality youth programs and effective teaching and learning.

### Making the Invisible Visible

Readiness Practice supports a range of specific developmental practices adults can use to build a young person's connections and competence. These developmental practices can be put in place in any setting where youth spend time, regardless of the focus of the service or support. For each area of Readiness Practice, we have developed criteria of effectiveness, all of which are observable and measurable.

Every system and setting has its official practices and policies—as well as cultural norms—that determine how people behave and interact with young people. These official practices dictate the range of experiences and supports that are offered, and how young people are organized to experience them (individually or in groups, in structured or unstructured time blocks, etc.). Too often, the official practices fail to support the developmental practices; in many cases, they even run counter to what we know works.

It is our hope that system and setting leaders will use the four categories of Readiness Practice, as well as the specific developmental practices, to assess their official practice and align it with the developmental. Adults and young people can use the categories of Readiness Practice to identify areas of need or advocate for improvements.

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## READINESS-RICH SYSTEMS AND SETTINGS

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We consider a system or setting readiness-rich when a young person is able to seamlessly move between environments, relationships, experiences and spaces that engage all components of Readiness Practice, thereby optimizing the development of the Readiness Abilities.

Too many young people grow up in environments that are not readiness-rich. The Readiness Project is designed to support immediate action to access needed supports as well as longer-term policy, practice and culture change.

**Make readiness happen by design.**

Download the full paper, stories and tools at [SparkAction.org/readiness](https://SparkAction.org/readiness)



## READINESS PRACTICE

A young person grows up in environments, relationships and experiences. When these are developmentally appropriate, they provide young people with the supports and services they need to build connections and competence and get ready. These plus adequate space and time enable young people to learn, develop and strengthen their Readiness Abilities.



**ENVIRONMENTS**

### DEVELOPMENTAL ENVIRONMENTS

Developmental environments are welcoming, safe and structured. These are positive places where young people want to spend time, know what to expect and know what is expected of them.



**RELATIONSHIPS**

### DEVELOPMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS

Developmental relationships are authentic, positive and productive. These relationships are caring, motivating, equipping and empowering.



**EXPERIENCES**

### DEVELOPMENTAL EXPERIENCES

Developmental experiences keep young people challenged and engaged. These experiences connect with young people based on who they are, where they are, what they need and what they want.



**SPACE AND TIME**

### SPACE AND TIME TO DEVELOP ABILITIES

Systems and settings support readiness by providing space and time for young people to learn, develop and demonstrate the readiness abilities. This includes being able to observe and explore, practice and learn from mistakes, apply and connect, reflect and continuously improve.

## DEVELOPMENTAL PRACTICES THAT BUILD CONNECTIONS & COMPETENCE

Adults can put specific practices in place to build a young person's connections and competence. Connections and competence form the bedrock for learning and strengthening the readiness abilities.

### HOW TO BUILD CONNECTIONS

**FOCUS ON THE YOUNG PERSON** – Prioritize and value young people's needs and interests.

**PROVIDE SAFETY** – Keep young people safe and free from violence. Whenever and however you can, reduce risk and prevent harm.

**BE A COACH** – Motivate young people, celebrating their growth and success and encouraging them to persist during hard times.

**CULTIVATE COMMUNITY** – Help young people feel they belong. Give them meaningful ways to contribute and participate.

**BE RELATIONAL** – Interact with young people with intention and presence. Be an active listener and respond to their needs in healthy and positive ways.

**BE ENGAGING** – Choose activities and conversation topics that interest young people and keep their attention.

**ENCOURAGE TEAMWORK** – Create opportunities for young people to work in teams. Support teams as they navigate personal dynamics and challenges.

**SHOW CARE AND CONCERN** – Express warmth and closeness to young people. Be empathetic and compassionate. Show them you are paying attention.

**GIVE THE YOUNG PERSON AGENCY** – Give young people voice and let them be decisionmakers. Help them take on developmentally appropriate roles and responsibilities.

**SUPPORT PERSONAL REFLECTION** – Provide opportunities for young people to reflect and share their thoughts. Be available to listen, process, guide and share your own experiences.

**BE SOCIALLY AND CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE** – Respect young people's identities, cultures and beliefs. Help them examine and construct their personal identities.

### HOW TO BUILD COMPETENCE

**MODEL WHAT YOU WANT** – Be a positive example for young people by modeling what you expect from them.

**FACILITATE PERSONAL MASTERY OF SKILLSETS AND MINDSETS** – Provide the space and time young people need to observe, develop and demonstrate skillsets and mindsets.

**PROVIDE RESOURCES** – Give young people access to the information, tools and supports they need. Work with others to support young people in ways you cannot.

**PROVIDE POSITIVE CHALLENGES** – Push young people to keep growing by offering opportunities to get out of their comfort zone, work hard and try something new.

**BE STRENGTHS-BASED** – Recognize, draw out and build upon young people's strengths. Create opportunities for young people to express and showcase their talents and skills.

**BE A SKILLFUL PLANNER** – Plan activities and experiences that support young people's growth and development. Design ways for young people to develop and demonstrate important skillsets and mindsets.

**EMPOWER THE YOUNG PERSON** – Nurture young people's sense of self and independence. Equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to take on challenges and own their behavior and actions.

**MAKE REAL WORLD CONNECTIONS** – Show young people how activities and experiences connect to the real world. Create ways for young people to safely test skillsets and mindsets in real ways.

**PROVIDE STRUCTURE** – Establish clear, consistent boundaries and a sense of predictability. Monitor young people and those around them, ensuring positivity, safety and support.

**BE A PERSONAL TRAINER** – Choose and facilitate experiences that build young people's abilities. Modify or come up with new experiences as young people progress, or their circumstances change.

## Readiness Traps and Gaps

### What gets in the way of readiness?

There are many reasons that young people transition from one life stage to the next without the readiness abilities and developmental supports they need. The Readiness Project identifies four common **Readiness Traps**, serious and often unintended conditions in youth systems and settings that affect some young people disproportionately, narrowing their paths forward.

The Readiness Traps are:

- **Access as proxy for quality** – when young people’s place of residence determines their access to quality services and supports.
- **Age as proxy for stage** – when young people are assigned to a program, group or class based on age, rather than stage of learning, development or behavior.
- **Completion as proxy for competence** – when young people are allowed to move on to the next stage, grade, system or setting because they have finished—even if they are not ready.
- **Time as proxy for progress** – when young people’s time in a system or setting triggers when they move ahead, or when time is used as a way to measure a young person’s growth and development.

Readiness traps arise when official practice—whether defined by rules and regulations, or by expectations and norms—fails to reflect what we know about effective Readiness Practice. To fundamentally change practice and support readiness for every young person, we must understand and mitigate these traps.

Traps lead to four common **Readiness Gaps**, which are deep and persistent disparities between populations of young people, and between what a young person has and what he needs for life, work, personal well-being and civic and community engagement.

The Readiness Gaps are:

- **Achievement gap** – differences in academic standing.
- **Expectations gap** – differences between what young people and their support systems expect and what happens; differences in what society expects from particular groups of young people.
- **Opportunity gap** – differences in the quality and quantity of opportunities available to young people.
- **Skills gap** – difference between what young people can do and what they need to be able to do.

In the past decade, leaders in business, education, youth development and government have begun to pay significant attention to these traps and gaps. This has resulted in interventions that are thoughtful and worthwhile, and many are effective—yet they continue to be insufficient to make readiness a right. This is largely because efforts tend to focus on a single system or youth population.

By working within the full complexity of a young person’s ecosystem, we can optimize his or her chance of readiness, now and in the future. We can enable young people to—at once—minimize gaps, avoid traps, maximize time at places and with people who are using developmental practices, and find spaces to practice and master the skillsets, mindsets and abilities that really matter. **We can make readiness a right for all.**

**Make readiness happen by design.**

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## READINESS TRAPS

Readiness Traps are cultural and policy patterns or phenomena that get in the way of young people's readiness. They pull the focus away from the young person and place it on a system proxy, which is typically more concrete and easier to monitor and measure. These traps are longstanding, entrenched and cross-cultural.



### ACCESS AS PROXY FOR QUALITY

When young people's place of residence determines their access to high-quality, services and supports. Many systems track and report on admissions and enrollment information or the number of people they serve, sometimes giving those more attention than the quality of programming.

#### Examples:

- » **Resources** – local systems and settings have resources, but that does not mean the resources are sufficient, stable, sustainable or used in the best ways.
- » **Talent** – local systems and settings have staff, but that does not mean staff are sufficient, skilled or working in the most effective and supportive ways.

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### AGE AS PROXY FOR STAGE

When young people are assigned to a program, group or class based on age, rather than on stage of learning, development or behavior. Many policies decide when young people start or stop in a system or setting, because of their age. There are few exceptions available to children and youth whose age and developmental stage do not match.

#### Examples:

- » **Social promotion** – using age as the deciding factor for placing or passing a young person into a setting, such as academic grade.
- » **Aging-out** – denying young people services because they have reached the set age of adulthood, as defined by a system or setting.



### COMPLETION AS PROXY FOR COMPETENCE

When young people are allowed to move on to the next stage, grade, system or setting because they have finished—even if they are not ready. Or, when young people are ready to move on but are not allowed because of certain policies or requirements. Many systems track and report on completion requirements—successful exits, graduations, number of young people who have aged-out—without also tracking and reporting on their proficiency in critical competencies.

#### Examples:

- » **Completing school** – a diploma means a young person has met one school's graduation requirements. It does not guarantee readiness for college or a job.
- » **Completing treatment** – finishing treatment for addictions or mental health struggles does not guarantee that a young person is or will remain sober, stable or healthy.



### TIME AS PROXY FOR PROGRESS

When young people's time in a system or setting triggers when they move ahead, or when time is used as a way to measure a young person's growth and development. Many system policies use time (for example, minutes, hours, days, months) as a way to determine where young people are placed, or when they are finished.

#### Examples:

- » **Seat-time** – when a young person earns academic credit based on time spent in class.
- » **Doing time** – when a young person is held in a juvenile justice facility after a court hearing or judicial decision, or is issued a time-based sentence.

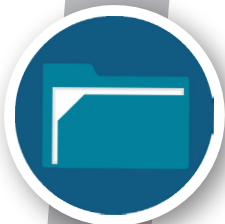
## READINESS GAPS

These gaps between populations and individuals show up and grow because of differences in opportunities, supports and personal abilities. Readiness Gaps are symptoms of young people experiencing system and policy traps, harmful practices, and having underdeveloped skillsets and mindsets.



### ACHIEVEMENT GAP

Differences in academic standing between young people, often connected to race, class or gender.



### EXPECTATIONS GAP

Differences between what young people and their support systems expect will happen from investing time and resources into a system, and what actually happens. The differences in what society expects from certain groups of young people.



### OPPORTUNITY GAP

Differences in the quality and quantity of opportunities and supports available to young people, often because of their families or where they live.



### SKILLS GAP

Differences between what young people can do and what they need to be able to do to carry out a role or responsibility.