University of Chicago Consortium on School Research's Foundations for Young Adult Success

Overview

The framework identifies three desired outcomes of youth development, the "key factors" to life success:

- **Agency:** The ability to shape the course of one's life rather than simply react to external forces.
- **Integrated identity**: A strong sense of who one is and the social identities which inform one's self, which provides an internal compass for actively making decisions consistent with one's values, beliefs, and goals.
- **Competencies:** The abilities that allow people to be productive, effective, and adaptable to the demands of different settings.

These three key factors rest on four "foundational components," malleable qualities that adults can directly influence from early childhood through young adulthood:

- **Self-regulation:** The awareness of oneself and one's surroundings, and the ability to direct one's attention, emotions, and behaviors to achieve one's goals.
- **Knowledge and Skills**: Information or understanding about oneself, other people, and the world, and the ability to carry out tasks. Knowledge is the sets of facts, information, or understanding about self, others, and the world. Skills are the learned abilities to carry out a task with intended results or goals, and these can be either general or domain-specific.
- **Mindsets**: Beliefs and attitudes about oneself, the world, and the interaction between the two. They are the lenses individuals use to process everyday experiences.

**Foundations for Young Adult Success:
A Developmental Framework**

University of Chicago Consortium

If educators understand that ultimately what they are trying to do is support young people to develop agency, a positive integrated identity, and a range of socially-valued competencies, they can expand their role from being only a teacher of academic skills to becoming an essential provider of developmental opportunities, experiences, and supports.

- Camille Farrington

The briefs in this 10-part series each describe an individual framework currently in use. They are intended to illustrate how frameworks can be analyzed and help practitioners learn to evaluate frameworks on the types of criteria that matter most in their settings. The briefs are not an endorsement of these frameworks.

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- Values: Enduring, often culturally defined, beliefs about what is desirable and what one thinks is important in life. Values serve as broad guidelines for living and provide an orientation for one's purpose and desired future.

History of the Framework

The University of Chicago Consortium on School Research was selected by the Wallace Foundation to identify the competencies most critical for college and career success, as well as when and how these competencies develop from early childhood through young adulthood. Early in the process, the project broadened its scope to young adult success across multiple domains of work and education, as well as family, civic engagement, and health, to provide a more holistic view of a person. The Foundations for Young Adult Success framework expanded upon a 2012 report by the Consortium entitled *Teaching Adolescents to Become Learners: The Role of Noncognitive Factors in Shaping School Performance*, which focused on mindsets, learning strategies, and perseverance, and synthesized the literature specifically related to academic performance among children ages 10-20 years. The Foundations for Young Adult Success framework broadened the scope beyond academic success, extended the age range to early childhood through the young adult years, and added a developmental component, providing information on how critical competencies develop over time.

Purpose and Intended Audience

The University of Chicago Consortium on School Research sought to synthesize existing research, practice, and theory to provide a comprehensive framework to describe the developmental factors that predict and promote young adult success. The framework was designed to build a common understanding of these factors and promote greater alignment and coordination of efforts to support them among leaders who work with young people.
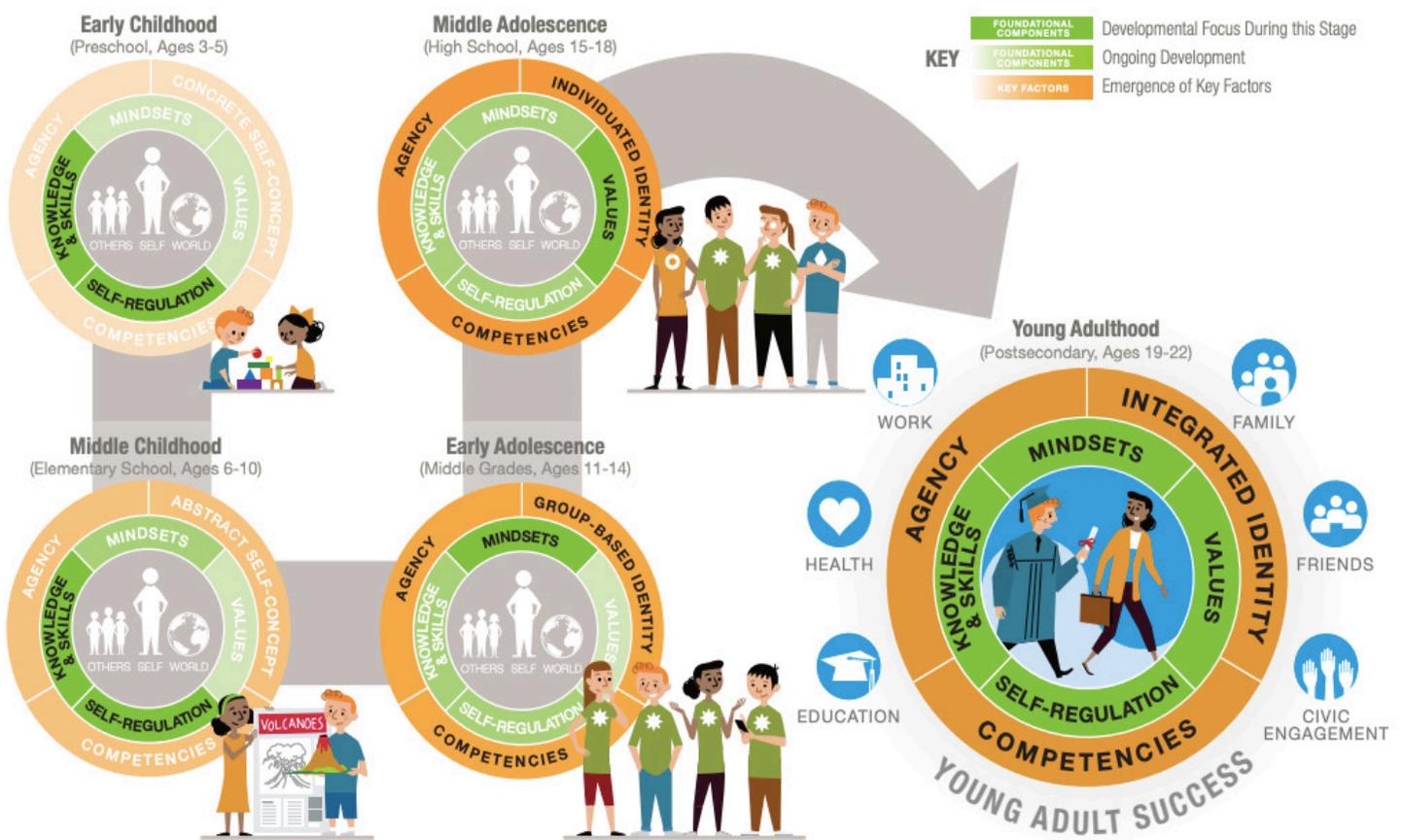
The Wallace Foundation wanted the framework to support school practitioners and those who work with young people broadly, including schools, districts, and policymakers in the education space, out-of-school time (OST) providers, and practitioners in youth development.

COMPETENCIES NAMED IN THIS FRAMEWORK

- ✔ Self-regulation
- ✔ Knowledge and skills
- ✔ Mindsets
- ✔ Values

Settings

The Foundations for Young Adult Success framework applies to children and young adults ages 3-22 in school, expanded learning, and home settings. The Raikes Foundation's Building Equitable Learning Environment (BELE) Network, which includes 10 nonprofit organizations working with schools and districts, uses the framework as the basis for its work focused on equity and the science of learning and development. The Consortium works directly with practitioners, providing technical assistance, advisory work, and professional development, using the Foundations for Young Adult Success framework as a foundation.

Criteria Ratings: Conceptual Clarity

FIVE CONCEPTUAL CLARITY CRITERIA			
CRITERIA	**LOW**	**MEDIUM**	**HIGH**
Specificity	The constructs in the framework are defined and explained. Brief examples and observable behaviors are provided for some skills, but not consistently for all skills.		
Balance		The framework includes self-regulation, knowledge, skills, mindsets, values, and competencies, as well as encompasses agency and identity. Further, it takes into account context and environment.	
Developmental		The framework acknowledges and explicitly discusses how skills build on and influence each other over time. The framework provides key tasks for each developmental stage from childhood to young adulthood (ages 3-5, 6-10, 11-14, 15-18, and 19-22) and explicitly discusses which parts of the framework are most salient during those stages. The report includes a chapter on developmental progression and explains how children learn through developmental experiences and developmental relationships.	
Culturally Sensitive		The report discusses in detail (and seeks to address) how race, ethnicity, culture, gender, and socioeconomic status impact access to developmental opportunities. The report discusses the resulting inequitable distributions of opportunities for developmental experiences and acknowledges the additional challenges faced by disadvantaged youth. In addition to discussing the ways in which skills are learned and used across different contexts, the report discusses the impact of dominant cultural norms on youth (e.g., integrated identity) and the additional skills that may be required to navigate them (e.g., code-switching). The report also discusses in detail how development is impacted by various settings and contexts, including the individual; everyday home, school, and organized expanded learning contexts; the community; and larger social, political, and economic contexts. However, explicit guidance on how to support youth around this topic is not provided.	
Empirically Grounded		The framework is heavily based in research, as it is the result of synthesizing research, theory, and practice knowledge from a range of disciplines and approaches. Additionally, the report discusses the research-based connections between each component and adult outcomes such as academics, social and behavioral outcomes, income, and job performance.	
These ratings are intended to help illustrate the strengths and limits of some popular frameworks. They are neither designed to formally compare frameworks nor endorse any framework. The ratings are based on criteria defined more fully in this brief and the process of rating and appropriate uses are discussed in the introductory brief to this series. We urge practitioners to review these and prioritize which criteria are most important for use in their particualr context.			

Criteria Ratings: Implementation Support

FIVE IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT CRITERIA			
CRITERIA	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
Intended for Practice	The report discusses implications for educators, youth practitioners, and parents and families, highlighting the importance of facilitating "developmental experiences" where young people have opportunities for action and reflection in the context of social interactions with others. However, no programs or strategies are provided.		
Resources for Practitioners	Resources directly and publicly available are the report, summary documents, an infographic, and a video of a Teach for America session on educating the whole child. Additional reports, current research, examples, and videos are available on the Consortium's new website on Equitable Learning and Development. Finally, a library of online tools and resources focused on building equitable learning environments using the framework as a baseline document will be available from the BELE network in Fall 2019.		
Resources for Use with Children and Youth	No resources for use with children and youth.		
Resources for Measurement and Data Use	No tools have been developed based on this framework. Developers note that measurement is important, but caution against misusing measurement tools. They suggest that practitioners can collect more actionable data by measuring learning environments and developmental opportunities rather than measuring students.		
Empirically Tested	No formal test of applying this particular framework has been done. However, developers note that current on-the-ground work is demonstrating how the framework components are associated with outcomes in various domains.		
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Summary of the Framework

The Foundations for Young Adult Success is a developmental framework by the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research, a research organization focused on student success and school improvement. The framework focuses on the key factors, knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes young people need to succeed in college and career, have healthy relationships, be engaged citizens, and make wise choices. Although resources for practitioners are limited, the framework identifies the obstacles that children in poverty and children of color may face in achieving their potential and suggests how policy and practice can help overcome those challenges.

About the Developer

The University of Chicago Consortium on School Research was founded in 1990 with a focus on conducting research and evaluation and building capacity for school reform. Based at the Urban Education Institute (UEI) at the University of Chicago, the Consortium conducts research of high technical quality that can inform and assess policy and practice in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS), as well as broader national movements in U.S. public education. The Consortium encourages the use of research in policy action and improvement of practice. It helps build capacity for school reform by identifying what matters for student success and school improvement, creating critical indicators to chart progress, and conducting theory-driven evaluation to identify how programs and policies are working.

About the Author

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Teresa Borowski is a graduate student in the Community and Prevention Research PhD program in Psychology at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), where her research focuses on social-emotional competence development, particularly through dance and other arts. She works as a research specialist with CASEL's research team and the Frameworks subgroup of the Assessment Work Group. She is also the co-editor of Measuring SEL's blog. Prior to UIC, Teresa worked as a research assistant in the Infant Cognition Lab and the Cultural Studio at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and for the Learning and Memory Lab at the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology.

References

Nagaoka, J., Farrington, C. A., Ehrlich, S. B., & Heath, R. D. (2015). Foundations for young adult success: A developmental framework. Chicago: University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research. Retrieved from: https://consortium.uchicago.edu/publications/foundations-young-adult-success-developmental-framework

Useful Links to Explore

- UChicago Consortium website: https://consortium.uchicago.edu/

- Equitable Learning and Development website: https://consortium.uchicago.edu/equitable_learning_and_development

- Building Equitable Learning Environments (BELE) website: https://belenetwork.org/

The Measuring SEL Series of Frameworks Briefs

The Establishing Practical Social-Emotional Competence Assessments of Preschool to High School Students project as guided by the Assessment Work Group (AWG) is dedicated to helping advance the effective use of data to inspire practice in SEL. In deciding how the AWG could best contribute to advancing the field and complement rather than compete with other efforts underway to address the challenges of multiple frameworks and inconsistent use of language, the AWG Frameworks Subgroup, led by Stephanie Jones and Roger Weissberg, developed four series of briefs designed for practitioners. Each series and each brief in the series is designed to help advance how people think about the issues and make reasonable choices that work best for them and their context. We hope they provide a set of "building blocks" that systems and practitioners can use to advance and improve their SEL efforts. Learn more at https://measuringsel.casel.org

Introductory Series

These briefs are about what frameworks are, how they are useful, the challenges and opportunities they present in practice, and defining criteria that are helpful when considering what frameworks to use.

Comparative Series

These briefs explore efforts underway to categorize and align ways of thinking about comparing unique frameworks. The briefs also describe tools available to aid systems and practitioners in their selection and use of a framework.

Special Issues Series

These briefs identify critical issues that frameworks must address or that influence how they are used that are important to consider when selecting and using frameworks, such as equity and SEL, and developmental considerations.

Descriptive Series

These briefs each describe an individual framework currently in use. They are intended to illustrate how frameworks can be analyzed and help practitioners learn to evaluate frameworks on the types of criteria that matter most in their settings. *(The briefs are not an endorsement of these frameworks.)*

The Assessment Work Group is committed to advancing dialogue on key issues in the field and stating a perspective when appropriate. The views and opinions expressed in these briefs reflect the general position of the Assessment Work Group. They do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of CASEL or any of the individual organizations involved with the work group.