



Youth engagement traffic light

This resource will help guide conversations between adults and young people who are planning for organizational, community and system-level youth engagement.



ENGAGEMENT TYPE	WHAT THIS MEANS	EXAMPLE	POSSIBLE EFFECTS
STOP!	Manipulation Young people are directed by adults, without genuine opportunities to provide input.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A young person is given a script to speak on behalf of an organization but has little to no understanding of the issue at hand. 	DISENGAGING AND NEGATIVE Young people may feel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> anxious uninformed belittled pressured drained frustrated unheard purposeless
	Decoration A young person is invited to the table, but given little to no purpose, influence or decision-making power.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A young person is asked to join a team of adults, but not given space or tools to contribute meaningfully. The adults may occasionally ask for the youth's ideas but do all the actual planning and implementation themselves. 	
	Tokenism A young person is included for the sake of saying youth are included—especially those with diverse identities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A young person with a diverse identity (e.g. a queer youth or indigenous youth) is asked to sit on an advisory committee and is expected, by default, to speak for all young people that share their identity. 	
PROCEED WITH CARE	Informed Young people are kept aware of programs, services or policy changes without contributing to the process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people receive information about changes via newsletters, presentations or emails. 	POSITIVE OR NEUTRAL Depending on how they're engaged, young people may feel heard and valued, or only selectively heard and under-used.
	Consulted Young people have roles, provide input and are told how their input impacts adult decision-making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult staff write a document and send to young person to review and make suggestions for changes. Adults provide feedback on how and why young people's suggestions were or weren't used. 	
GO!	Co-development & partnership Young people jointly develop all projects, services and processes that impact or interest them. They have the opportunity to lead activities, share in decision-making and work as equal partners with adults. Young people and adults have authentic relationships (genuine, trusting, collaborative) in which youth expertise and experience is respected and valued.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults support young people to co-facilitate meetings or events or to co-create a safe, inclusive and accessible space Multiple young people sit on a board, providing advice, direction and input on strategic plans, policies and programs alongside adults. 	POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, BETTER SERVICES & OUTCOMES Young people may experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased abilities sense of purpose confidence motivation to contribute meaningfully