



Effective practices to increase autonomy in youth

- Acknowledge youth perspectives
- Be responsive to young people’s interests
- Encourage initiative
- Invite youth to consider, share, and develop personal goals that are relevant to their life planning
- Provide a rationale for rules
- Offer meaningful choices, including options for youth to leave a program if they are no longer motivated to be involved
- Provide opportunities for planning and decision making within programs
- Ensure decision-making opportunities are meaningful, but not too stressful
- Offer more structure and guidance to young people who are already dealing with a high level of responsibilities
- Ensure deliberate use of unstructured time in positive social contexts

To improve young people’s experiences of autonomy without adding stress to their lives, ask more questions. For example, in addition to encouraging young people to share their ideas, and take the lead on planning and decision-making, ask questions about whether they would like additional support and how they would like to be involved.

Back

Next: Effective Practices: Relatedness

Resources

[Youth Who Thrive \(full literature review\) \[PDF\]](#)

