

# User Guide for the *Developmental Relationships Survey*



*Discovering what kids need to succeed*

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# Introduction

Welcome to the *Developmental Relationships Survey*. This survey is a youth self-report survey that measures developmental relationships, critical social-emotional competencies, equitable practices, and other factors (see box below). It was developed by Search Institute for use with schools and youth-serving organizations.

By using this survey, you will:

- Discover the *developmental relationships, social and emotional competencies, and equitable experiences* that your organization provides to your young people.
- Bring in youth voice and learn from *the perspectives of young people themselves*.
- *See your work in the context* of young people's own strengths.
- Gain valuable data to guide you in *proactive and focused planning* to increase positive outcomes.

## What the Developmental Relationships Survey Measures

### THE DEVELOPMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS FRAMEWORK

**Express Care:** the degree to which [the relational target] shows them that they matter.

**Challenge Growth:** the degree to which [the relational target] pushes them to get better.

**Provide Support:** the degree to which [the relational target] helps them achieve goals.

**Share Power:** the degree to which [the relational target] shows them respect and gives them a say.

**Expand Possibilities:** the degree to which [the relational target] connects them with new people, places, and ideas.

### SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCIES

**CASEL's social and emotional competencies** (©CASEL 2017. *The five social and emotional learning (SEL) competencies were developed and defined by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). For more information, visit <https://casel.org/core-competencies/>*)

### EQUITABLE PRACTICES

**Factors that lead to equitable experiences within your organization** (e.g. Organization's Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Experiences of Bias or Discrimination; and/or Developmental Relationships in Promoting Equity).

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# A. Plan the Survey

## A.1. ESTABLISH PURPOSE AND GOALS

It is critical to have a shared understanding of the purpose and goals of the survey. These will not only affect some of the processes you use, but will also help to build buy-in and commitment to the process and using the results. Organizations conduct youth surveys for a variety of reasons, such as:

- To gather baseline information for program/curricular design
- To provide a youth perspective in program/curricular design
- To strengthen programs or curricula as part of a continuous improvement process
- To build awareness of and commitment to an issue or initiative
- To highlight inequities in experiences of your efforts
- To monitor growth or impact of your efforts
- To meet requirements of a funder or other partner

*What are you trying to accomplish with the survey?* State your purpose clearly and concisely so that all will understand and support the effort.

Be clear about how the survey results will be used and who will use them. What decisions will be made based on the data? How broadly will the findings be shared?

Once you know the answers to these questions, share this messaging with the people who will be administering the survey. It is a good idea to walk them through the survey administration procedures you expect them to follow (Section B). Search Institute recommends that you print Section B and provide it to all survey administrators. We also ask that you share a link to the [Survey Administration Feedback Form](#) for all survey administrators to complete.

## A.2. FOLLOW PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Anyone administering a survey with youth is expected to assume [professional responsibilities for appropriate conduct](#) in collecting data from young people. These principles involve commitments to:

- Protect the safety, health, and welfare of all participants;
- Know and comply with relevant state, federal, or other applicable laws;
- Follow procedures to ensure the quality and integrity of the results; and
- Perform all responsibilities with honesty, integrity, and fairness.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, see American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, and National Council on Measurement in Education (1999). *Standards for educational and psychological testing*. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.

### A.3. SEEK APPROPRIATE PERMISSION FOR YOUTH TO PARTICIPATE

The type of consent needed will depend on how you are conducting your survey and the specific requirements of your organization, state, or funder. There are two basic approaches:

- *Active consent* is required in most cases when personally identifying information (e.g. unique IDs) is linked to the survey or when elementary school youth are involved. With active consent, a parenting adult must agree in writing that their child may participate in the study. If a consent form is not returned, it must be assumed that permission was not granted.
- In cases where the survey does not contain personally identifying information and is used for improvement purposes, particularly for middle and high school youth, active consent may not be required. For this survey, as long as you are not using identifying information and don't have other requirements in place, we recommend using passive consent. With passive consent, parenting adults are informed about the survey, and they may ask that their child not participate. If they do not reply, it is assumed that the child may participate.

### A.4. SET THE SCHEDULE

Determine when you will administer the survey. Here are some factors to keep in mind:

- Determine how young people will complete the online survey and your organization's capacity for multiple youth to complete the survey at the same time. It is best to complete the survey on laptops, computers, or tablets, *not* smartphones. This survey will take young people 15 minutes to complete, on average, but this is variable based on your customizations. You will need to have a plan in place for outliers who complete the survey faster than average or for those who may need additional time. In addition to the survey time, we recommend you include time for set-up and, potentially, an icebreaker activity that helps young people relax. If you need to rotate youth through a computer lab, you will need to factor that into your schedule as well.
- If possible, schedule all the survey data collection the same day. If that is not possible, schedule it all within a one-week period.
- Do not schedule the survey immediately when you begin a new program or school year. Wait the appropriate amount of time in your context so that young people had an opportunity to establish trust and begin to form relationships with your staff.
- Avoid testing periods, holidays, or other major events when youth are easily distracted.
- Give adequate time for preparation and planning, including notification of youth and parents.

### A.5. ACCESS TO SURVEY LINKS AND REPORTS

If you have not already done so, you can request a unique survey link here: <https://survey.search-institute.org/s3/survey-link-request-form-for-dr-survey-v3>. Once all the youth have completed the survey, you can request your report through the Survey Hub. Please use your assigned Survey ID(s) in this request. A minimum of 30 participants is required in order for a report to be generated.

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## B. Conduct the Survey

### B.1. CONFIRM THAT YOU AND THE SURVEY LOCATION ARE READY AND WELCOMING

Set up the room (or rooms) where youth will complete the survey so that they feel welcomed, relaxed, not rushed, and safe to be honest in their responses. Some ways to do this include:

- Familiarize yourself with the survey, why your organization is using it, and how the results will be used.
- Match the size of the group with the size of the space where you will be administering the survey (and the number of devices available). If you have a larger group, rotate youth through the survey process. Plan an alternate activity for the young people who are waiting their turn for a device so that they are not distracting the young people completing the survey.
- Minimize distractions, such as noise or clutter, and ensure that young people are not too close together, so their responses will be private.
- Check all the devices in advance to ensure that they are in good working order and ready for the youth to use. Ensure that the link works on these devices and matches the original link sent by Search Institute.
- If youth are completing the surveys on their own and will be able to leave when they are done, be sure that you have other activities ready to go for those who finish early.

### B.2. SHARE THE SURVEY LINK

You (or the survey leader) already should have determined how you plan on sharing the link with participants. We recommend that young people click on the link, and *not* type it into a browser. Common ways to accomplish this include: send via email, bookmarks, or a student portal. Regardless of the option chosen, it is important that the link is identical to the original link sent by Search Institute.

### B.3. GUIDE YOUTH THROUGH THE SURVEY

Remind youth to be reflective and completely honest before and during the survey administration.

- **Read the script and be clear** about the survey's purpose and how important and valuable the young people's insights are to you and the organization.
- Provide **overall supervision** of the group, making sure that young people are not distracted by (or distracting) others and that they focus on completing their survey.
- Be available to **answer questions**. Some items have audio controls and others may contain definitions that are available by "hovering over" a word, but you may need to clarify and explain the instructions, or show a participant how to use the interface. If participants do not understand a question, re-read it to them and encourage them to do their best to answer it. You may ask them what they think it means and be supportive if their answer seems to be on track. However, **do not re-word or re-phrase any questions**. If a young person still does not understand after going through the above steps, let them leave it blank and move on.

- Participants are **not required to answer** all questions, and may leave items blank if they choose. However, gently encourage youth to respond to all the questions, since the results of the survey will be stronger if all youth complete the whole survey.
- Let **nonparticipants or late participants** who try to join the group know that a survey you will talk to them later (or have someone ready to talk to them as they arrive). Ask them to wait outside of the survey administration room or give them a quiet task to complete.
- **Stay with all participants** until they have finished, excusing early finishers to leave quietly and go participate in other activities that are planned.

If you are planning to administer the survey orally, follow these additional steps:

- Let participants know that the group will be **going step-by-step** through each of the questions. Ask them not to go ahead on their own.
- **Read each item at least twice** and **repeat the response options** for each new section. Make sure they know when the response options are switching.
- **Check to see if the group is ready** to go to the next item and keep an eye open for participants who may need more time or a further repetition of the item.
- Remember, try to **use a calm and relaxed voice** so young people feel comfortable answering honestly, versus trying to please you or guess which answers you might be looking for.

#### B.4. WHEN YOU HAVE COMPLETED THE SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

As the survey proctor, please take a few minutes to complete the [Survey Administration Feedback Form](#).

### Script for Introducing the Survey

Today you have the opportunity to complete a survey to tell us about your experiences with our staff as well as how you see yourself. We will use this information to better understand how we can best support you and improve the work that we do.

It will really help us if you are thoughtful and completely honest when you fill out this survey. Don't tell us what you think we want to hear about us or yourself. This is your chance to be completely honest and to tell us what you really think. We will take your ideas seriously so please give them to us seriously.

Remember, this is NOT a test. There are no wrong answers. Your answers will be kept private. No one who knows you—adults here, parents, or anyone else—will ever see your responses without your permission. You don't have to participate in this survey if you don't want to. If any of the statements make you feel uncomfortable, you do not need to respond to that statement or you can stop.

You will have      minutes to complete the survey, but please don't rush. Some items will be underlined. You can hover over those items for definitions. There are audio buttons that you can turn on or off on most pages that allow you to listen to an item. Does anyone have any questions? *[Tell them how to access the survey and what to do when finished]*



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Search Institute is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to partner with organizations to conduct and apply research that promotes positive youth development and enhances equity.

### **Contact Us**

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