

Opportunity Youth Collaborative – Youth Voice Project
Ladder of Integration

1. RESPECT – gives youth a voice

Adult tips:

- Actually listen to what youth have to say and make eye contact
- Don't call young people "kids"
- Don't assume young people at the table represent *all* young people
- Share your story too
- Genuinely incorporate youth voice
- Offer a pipeline for sharing ideas/feedback
- Ask young people more about their lives and what they want to accomplish in life
- Respect youth for their ideals
- Respect that youth have situations going on in their lives too
- Host more substantive conversations that affect youth and give them a role in the conversation

Youth tips:

- Talk to different types of people
- Be less afraid to look dumb or immature by asking questions or asking for advice

2. SAME PAGE – gives youth a voice and some shared power

Adult tips:

- Don't talk in acronyms
- Explain terminology – *give extra detail*
- Check for understanding
- Be open-minded
- Encourage youth to ask more questions
- Be more engaged by listening closely to young people's goals and offer more tangible options for career and life advice
- Be more understanding of the changed economy
- Help provide scaffolding in scenarios or spaces that are new so everyone can participate
- Explain the process, not just the consequences

Youth tips:

- Don't be afraid to show your strengths
- Ask more questions and advice
- Work harder on developing relationships with adults
- Be more proactive in connecting with the adults to debrief understanding of next steps
- Listen more to people with different politics and try to figure out why they believe the things they do

3. SHARED POWER – gives youth shared voice and power

Adult tips:

- Value youth input
- Give youth an opportunity to manage
- Provide real opportunities for leadership roles
- Be a mentor

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- Allow youth to have more say in the design of programs
- Support and encourage young people
- Don't bring youth in just for optics or to rubber stamp ideas

Youth tips:

- Speak up more – don't be afraid of saying the "wrong" thing
- Take charge more of what is affecting your life
- Get more guidance around career paths/options