

Youth engagement in research: How?

Engaging young people in research processes means that research and youth become equal partners in researching questions that are important for the youth involved. Involving young experts by experience in health research is good for both researchers and youth involved: it leads to more relevant findings and improved services and outcomes, but also to self-empowerment of youth. **But how do you organise youth engagement - in the context of family involvement - in research?**



How to answer this question?



Literature study

230 articles & reports



Case study research

Four projects about youth engagement in research in three countries



Analysis of PenCRU

An inspiration of systematic family engagement in research



Interviews

20 interviews with youth, researchers and other stakeholders



10 do's and don'ts in youth engagement in research

Bringing the existing literature and experiences of young people, researchers and other relevant stakeholders together, the ten most important do's and don'ts regarding the involvement of young people in research are identified. Yet, it is of great importance to realise that youth involvement in research is always situational and asks for customization to needs and wants of both researchers and youth involved.

DO



Do ask young people directly when, how and why they want to be involved in the research.



Do communicate clearly on what is expected, done with the input and will be done in the next period.



Do provide regular informal check-ins to ask how things are going.



Do make sure the youth engagement in research can be flexible; think about different ways and times to be able to contribute.



Do make sure that the organization or research institute doing the research fully supports youth engagement in the project.

DON'T



Don't involve young people in the research just because it seems nice; their knowledge is valuable!



Don't expect young people to adapt to ways of working of the researchers; adapt to their ways.



Don't create (a situation of) inequality between researchers and youth.



Don't overwhelm or surprise youth involved with tight deadlines, too much or too difficult information or unrealistic goals.



Don't allow for too many limitations in the project, like a too strict time schedule.

Six models of youth engagement in research

The models provide inspiration for researchers for different ways to organize youth engagement in research. But remember: always ask youth how and when they want to be engaged.



Working with existing groups

Researchers work with existing groups, like a school class.



Parents+ meetings

Researchers build upon the network of parents already involved in research. In Parents+ meetings youth joins their parents to meetings and work together on research projects.



Youth Engagement Group

Researchers establish a group of young people that is engaged in every part of the research and works collaboratively together.



Youth Advisory Council

Researchers establish an advisory Council that gives solicited and unsolicited advice about the research questions, projects and processes. They monitor if the youth engaged is truly engaged in the projects.



Family+ meetings

Research bring together the parents, young experts by experience and their siblings to be a part of an advisory council for research projects.



Sibling Engagement Group

Researchers establish a group of siblings that is engaged in every part of the research and works collaboratively together.

This is a project by Bente van Oort in commission of: