

CONTACT:

Tina Papatsos, Senior Marketing Manager
SAGE Publications
805-410-7730
tina.papatsos@sagepub.com
<http://jea.sagepub.com>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT STUDIES OFFER INTRIGUING IMPLICATIONS FOR YOUTH SOCIAL POLICIES AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Thousand Oaks, California (January 6, 2005) --Positive Youth Development (PYD) is a rapidly emerging approach in adolescent studies that looks at youth as resources to be developed rather than as problems to be managed. The February 2005 issue of SAGE Publication's **The Journal of Early Adolescence**, on *Positive Youth Development*, offers the results of university and community-based laboratory field studies based on the PYD perspective and its "Five Cs" -- competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring-- and their implications for the role and nature of community programs and social policies related to youth. Among the results are the documentation of the usefulness of applying the PYD approach within diverse youth and communities, the individual and ecological assets associated with PYD, and the adequacy of the Five Cs for predicting youth contributions to their communities.

Positive Youth Development is a strength-based theory that focuses on the potential of youth to thrive within their social and ecological contexts rather than on the storm and stress of adolescence. In particular, even though someone is growing up in a less than desirable environment, it does not mean someone will fail to thrive. The PYD perspective suggests that if young people have mutually beneficial relations with people and institutions of their social world, they will be on their way to a hopeful future marked by positive contributions to self, family, and community.

Among the exciting findings are the first results from the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development of over 1,700 fifth-graders and their parents from across the United States, carried out by Richard M. Lerner *et al.* of Tufts University. Lerner, one of the foremost exponents of PYD, and his colleagues present an initial study that validates the empirical reality of PYD and the Five Cs and describes their relationship to civic contribution, risk and problem behaviors, and youth development program participation.

Other aspects of PYD are validated by King *et al.*, who contrast the terms used to describe PYD among scientists, practitioners, parents, and youth, and Theokas *et al.*, who use findings from 50,000 middle school and high school participants in the Search Institute Profiles of Student Life Attitudes and Behavior Survey conducted in 1999-2000, to identify 14 new internal and external assets linked to thriving among youth.

Taylor *et al.* describe individual and ecological developmental assets (such as commitment to learning, positive identity, empowerment, and constructive use of time) that exist among African American male adolescents in inner-city Detroit gangs or community based organizations (CBO). The researchers link these assets to thriving among both groups and offer innovative ideas for new policies pertinent to promoting PYD among diverse youth.

Together these four articles constitute a veritable textbook for understanding and implementing PYD in our schools, after-school programs, and community programs.

For 25 years, **The Journal of Early Adolescence** has provided demanding researchers and practitioners with the latest work concerning original theories, empirical research, literature reviews, and science-based practices regarding the early adolescent developmental period (10 through 14 years of age). Consistently well-ranked in developmental psychology by the ISI Journal Citation Reports, **The Journal of Early Adolescence** clarifies and analyzes significant advances and issues from diverse developmental contexts (peer, family, and community), such as education motivation and achievement, identity development (self-esteem and self-concept), problem behaviors (health risks, reactions to stress), sexuality, the importance of culture, as well as in-depth discussions on research design and methodology.

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