HS511B: CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN POLICIES AND PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

FALL 2019
MONDAYS, 9:00 AM – 11:50 AM
Classroom: Heller-Brown, Classroom G55

Susan P. Curnan
The Florence G. Heller Associate Professor of the Practice
Director, Center for Youth and Communities
Chair, MPP & MBA concentration

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For appointment, contact: Lanni Isenberg, Executive Assistant, lanni@brandeis.edu, Ph: 781-736-4835

“The logic of ideas must always yield to the logic of realities.” – Justice Louis Brandeis

OVERVIEW

Creating and managing systems, policies, and programs to benefit children, youth and families in America today requires a combination of leadership, science, and cross-sector partnerships in a time of high stakes accountability and dramatic political, economic, social, technological and environmental (PESTE) change – including challenges to democratic principles and the role of government, demographic shifts, persistent poverty, persistent and growing inequalities, changes in the structure and functions of households, environmental degradation, and the structure of work. To address these issues requires leadership grounded in reality as much as scientific evidence.

This is also a time of great knowledge development, emergence of evidence-based practice, civic innovation and mobilization.

Students will be engaged in critical thinking, dialogue, and debate about the contemporary problems, theories, policies and programs in their chosen field. The course provides some of the information that is essential to understanding the challenges facing children, youth and families in the U.S. and the social policies and programs that have been, or might be, developed to improve their well-being. Particular attention will be paid to those who are vulnerable as a result of economic insecurity, inequality of access, opportunity and outcomes, and various types of prejudice and discrimination. Analysis of different assumptions and values embedded in policies and programs will illustrate the degree to which they promote social and economic justice and serve underrepresented populations. Students will also be introduced to policy and management tools and theoretical frameworks designed to strengthen their knowledge, skills and ability to use knowledge to advance social justice in different environments.
LEARNING QUESTIONS

1. What are the characteristics of America’s children, youth and families? Are we helping? How do we know? What are the political, economic, social, technological, and environmental (PESTE) conditions surrounding them?

2. What do we know about risk, resilience and protective factors associated with healthy development? How might we inform and improve social policies and programs with principles of risk, resilience, and ecological systems theory? What other theories and evidence based practices improve social impact of policies and programs?

3. What can we learn from policies supporting Children, Youth and Families in other countries?

KNOWLEDGE & COMPETENCIES TO BE GAINED

1. Build content knowledge related to the state of America’s children and youth and the policy and program conditions surrounding them.

2. Develop analytical research skills through applications of various models and theories to CYF policies and programs.

3. Understand and evaluate social policies and interventions.

4. Enhance communication skills through presentations, writing, team work and class participation.

5. Apply and practice defining the problem, identifying policies, theories and programs to address the problems with logic, science and soul.

TEACHING & LEARNING CULTURE: THINK-LEARN-APPLY-REFLECT

This course is designed to address the questions and competencies through a highly interactive teaching and learning community. As a learning community, we will examine our own histories and beliefs, research contemporary problems, explore theoretical frameworks and investigate current policies and programs being suggested or implemented at the federal, state, local levels.

The classes will be a combination of facilitated discussion, brief lectures on key concepts, small group/team exercises, individual research projects and presentations, and weekly written reflections. Assignments are primarily student-centered and project-based.

For an example of what is meant by student-centered and project-based, consider the substantial “Poster Project”:

Following a series of introductory CYF classes, students choose a burning social justice CYF issue to address for a deep dive into defining the problem through a research scan, identifying relevant national, state and local policies that intend to address the “problem” and analyze how and to what extent that is happening, and finally, to prepare a case study and logic model on a related program that has been designed, implemented, and evaluated to demonstrate effectiveness.

Learning will be shared and reinforced through collaborative group/class work, deepened through authentic problem solving and finally, shared with the Heller community in a CYF Poster Session and
Past projects have been far ranging, including college access, youth employment, kindergarten readiness, student mental health, LGBTQ equality, hate crimes & violence prevention, mass incarceration, gun violence, #BLM, education equity & access, women’s rights, environmental justice, water rights, hunger & nutrition, housing, homelessness, STEM learning, early education and care, and child welfare. – A wide range of issues reflecting the diversity of CYF concentrators.

The full array of topics and assignments for the semester are shown on the following schedule:

### HS511B: CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN POLICIES AND PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES
#### FALL 2019 Class Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment Timeline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Introduction to the Course, the Concentration and the Center for Youth and Communities; Students and Instructor</td>
<td>Share burning social justice issues or questions you feel are important and urgent</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sept. 9</td>
<td>Share burning social justice issues or questions you feel are important and urgent</td>
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<td>-Select team and topic and Prepare PowerPoint for Class #2</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Characteristics of America’s Children, Youth and Families</td>
<td>TEAM POWERPOINT PRESENTATION DUE</td>
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<td>Sept. 16</td>
<td>Kids Count Team PowerPoint Presentation DUE</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Trends and Conditions Influencing Children, Youth and Families</td>
<td>-Confirm burning social justice issue to present in Class #6</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sept. 23</td>
<td>National Indicators of Well-being &amp; Social Determinants of Health</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-Confirm burning social justice issue to present in Class #6</td>
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<td>NO CLASS, MONDAY, SEPT. 30th</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>THURS. Oct. 3</td>
<td>Intro to Social Policy for Children, Youth and Families: A Risk &amp; Resilience Perspective</td>
<td>E-MYOGRAPHY DUE</td>
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<td>E-MYOGRAPHY REFLECTION PAPER DUE</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Monday Oct. 7</td>
<td>Comprehensive Community Initiatives</td>
<td>-Prepare to lead Class #6 on burning social justice issue</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>TUES. Oct. 15</td>
<td>STUDENT-LED DISCUSSIONS on Burning Social Justice IssuesBrief (draft) - Include Problem Statement, Learning Questions, Relevant Policy and Bibliography</td>
<td>STUDENT-LED DISCUSSIONS ON BURNING SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES</td>
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<td>Intro to Logic Models for Case Study Applications</td>
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<td>NO CLASS, MONDAY, OCT. 21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Oct. 28</td>
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<td>Child Welfare Policies and Programs</td>
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<td>- Select International Team, Policy Focus and Country and Prepare PowerPoint</td>
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<td>- Prepare Poster on burning social justice issue for Class #10</td>
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<td>NO CLASS, MONDAY, NOV. 4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>FRI. &amp; SAT.,</td>
<td>NATIONAL CONFERENCE: 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Annual Re-envisioning Foster Nov. 1 - 2 Care in America (REFCA)</td>
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<td>Foster Care Innovators: Shaping the Future</td>
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<td>(Brandeis campus)</td>
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<td>- Attend conference at Brandeis</td>
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<td>- Prepare Conference Reflection Paper</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Nov. 11</td>
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<td>Debrief on Conference</td>
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<td>CASE STUDY/CONFERENCE REFLECTION PAPER DUE</td>
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<td>- Provide Reading List and Prepare Memo on International Team Topic</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Nov. 18</td>
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<td>International Examples</td>
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<td>INTERNATIONAL POLICY PERSPECTIVE TEAM POWERPOINT PRESENTATION &amp; MEMO DUE</td>
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<td>FINAL BURNING SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUE POSTER DUE to Lanni by Wed, Nov 20&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; at 3pm</td>
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<td>INTERNATIONAL TEAM POWERPOINT PRESENTATION &amp; MEMO DUE</td>
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<td>Note: FINAL BURNING SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUE POSTER DUE to Lanni by Wed, Nov 20&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; at 3pm</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Nov. 25</td>
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<td>STUDENT POSTER PRESENTATION &amp; BRIEF</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Dec. 2</td>
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<td>STUDENT POSTER PRESENTATION &amp; BRIEF (CONTINUED)</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Dec. 9</td>
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<td>STUDENT POSTER SESSION &amp; LUNCH RECEPTION</td>
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GRADE POINTS & GRADING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Points</th>
<th>Portion of Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Characteristics of America’s Children, Youth and Families/ Kids Count</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Team PowerPoint Presentation</td>
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<td>2. E-Myography Reflection Paper</td>
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<td>3. Case Study/Conference Reflection Paper</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>4. International Policy Perspective – Team Presentation &amp; Memo</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Burning Social Justice Issue Poster Project &amp; Brief</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Weekly Reflections, In class Participation, Free Writes</td>
<td>Required/Not graded</td>
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Grading
Details/specifications for each assignment including purpose, task description and criteria will be posted on the LATTE course page. Guidelines for writing style and citations will also be posted on LATTE.

Please note: Success in this 4-credit course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of nine hours of “study” time in preparation for class per week.

COURSE GRADES AND ACADEMIC STANDING
Graduate students are expected to maintain records of distinction in all courses. Letter grades will be used. Any letter grade below B- is considered unsatisfactory and will not be counted toward credit for degree requirements. There is one exception to this rule. For masters programs in which students are in residence for four semesters or more, students may receive a grade of C+ in two courses throughout their program and still earn graduate degree credit for such courses. For masters programs in which students are in residence for two or three semesters, a student may receive only one grade of C+ throughout their program and still earn graduate degree credit. Students are not allowed to receive a grade below B- in the capstone course of their respective programs. If a student receives two grades of C+ in one semester and one of the C+ grades is not eligible for degree credit (e.g., masters programs in which students are in residence for two or three semesters), the Program Director may decide or create a committee to decide which course will count toward degree requirements. If a student receives a grade below C+, the student is required to retake the course to receive a passing grade for MBA degree credit. Students who receive 2 or more grades of C+ or lower in one semester, or over two semesters, will be required to meet with an Academic Review Committee to determine whether or not they may continue in the program.

COMMUNICATION
Changes in the syllabus will be discussed in class and noted on LATTE – Expect updates from the instructor & peers as invited.

As a CYF concentrator you have priority for advisory appointments with Prof. Curnan and with Lanni
Isenberg as needed. Contact Lanni for appointments, lanni@brandeis.edu or 781-736-4835.

**ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION**

Full attendance & participation is expected for all classes. We want to co-create a learning community together. If you have to miss one class, or are going to be late, or need to leave early, please let the instructor know ahead of time.
UNIVERSITY NOTICES

ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMMODATIONS:

Brandeis seeks to welcome and include all students. If you are a student who needs accommodations as outlined in an accommodations letter, please talk with me and present your letter of accommodation as soon as you can. I want to support you.

In order to provide test accommodations, I need the letter more than 48 hours in advance. I want to provide your accommodations, but cannot do so retroactively. If you have questions about documenting a disability or requesting accommodations, please contact Student Accessibility Support (SAS) at 781.736.3470 or access@brandeis.edu.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Every member of the University community is expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. A student shall not submit work that is falsified or is not the result of the student’s own effort. Infringement of academic honesty by a student subjects that student to serious penalties, which may include failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension from the University or other sanctions (see section 20 of Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities). Please consult Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities (see https://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/srcs/rightsresponsibilities/index.html) for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Students may be required to submit work to TurnItIn.com software to verify originality. A student who is in doubt regarding standards of academic honesty as they apply to a specific course or assignment should consult the faculty member responsible for that course or assignment before submitting the work. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Department of Student Rights and Community Standards. Citation and research assistance can be found at Brandeis Library Guides - Citing Sources (https://guides.library.brandeis.edu/c.php?g=301723).

PRIVACY:

This class requires the use of tools that may disclose your coursework and identity to parties outside the class. To protect your privacy you may choose to use a pseudonym/alias rather than your name in submitting such work. You must share the pseudonym/alias with me and any teaching assistants as needed. Alternatively, with prior consultation, you may submit such work directly to me.

PROFESSIONALISM POLICIES

Please respect the following policies:

- **Cell phones**: Turn off all cell phones before coming to class. If you are experiencing an emergency and need to be reachable, please let the Professor know before class.
- **Laptops & Mobile Devices**: Please don’t have them out during class. If you have a need...
for accommodation for note taking, please discuss with the Professor.

- **Wireless network:** No engagement in netsurfing, email, Facebook, tweeting, or other distractions for yourself or fellow students should occur during class time. If this does occur, the Professor will ask all students to take responsibility to ask the individual to close the applications or bring it to the Professor’s attention.

**PROVISIONS FOR FEEDBACK**

The student’s written assignments will be returned within two weeks of submission with comments.
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FALL 2019
READING LIST

Note: All CYF Students are invited to join the Center for Youth and Communities Dropbox Reading Room. The electronic copy of the Dropbox Guide and Annotated Bibliography is available on the LATTE course page. All assigned readings outside of the textbook are also on LATTE or online via listed weblink.

COURSE MATERIALS:

One textbook is required and available for purchase at University Bookstore:

All other readings are posted on LATTE and periodically updated.

If you are having difficulty purchasing course materials, please make an appointment with your Student Financial Services or Academic Services advisor to discuss possible funding options and/or textbook alternatives.

READING ASSIGNMENTS BY SESSION:

Class #1 – No Advance Readings for Monday, September 9th
Introduction to the Course, the Concentration and the Center for Youth and Communities; Students and Instructor

Class #2 – Readings for Monday, September 16th
Characteristics of American Children and Youth


https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/98725/kids_share_2018_0.pdf

https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2012/may/24/robert-kennedy-gdp


http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/beyond_the_poverty_line


**Class #3 – Readings for Monday, September 23rd**

Trends and Conditions Influencing Children, Youth and Families

National Indicators of Well-being & Social Determinants of Health


LGBT Demographic Data Interactive. (January 2019). Los Angeles, CA: The Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law. 
https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/visualization/lgbt-stats/?topic=LGBT#demographic


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**NO CLASS, MONDAY, SEPT. 30th**

**Class #4 – Readings for THURSDAY, October 3rd**
Intro to Social Policy for Children, Youth and Families: A Risk & Resilience Perspective

- **Introduction** p. 1-4
- **Chapter 1** p. 5-21, Risk & Resilience Framework
- **Chapter 2** p. 22-50, Antipoverty Policies and Programs
- **Chapter 4** p. 97-124, Education Policy for Children, Youth and Families
- Students bring their **written answers** to the discussion question to class (p. 34 & 120-121)


**Class #5 – Readings for Monday, October 7th**
Comprehensive Community Initiatives


**Class #6 – Readings for TUESDAY, October 15th**
STUDENT-LED DISCUSSION on Burning Social Justice Issues: Problem Statement, Learning Questions, Relevant Policy & Bibliography

H551b Syllabus – Draft 8/22/19
Curnan Fall 2019

Working Copy – subject to change
Any updates posted on LATTE
Intro to Logic Models for Case Study Applications


HANDOUTS:
Hartford & Skillman Foundation Examples

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**NO CLASS, MONDAY, OCT. 21st**

**Class #7 – Readings for Monday, October 28th**
Child Welfare Policies and Programs


- Ch. 3, p. 51-96, Child Welfare
- Students bring their written answers to the discussion questions to class (p. 86)


View: https://developingchild.harvard.edu/innovation-application/innovation-approach/ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7Tm2gb-1cg


The 2 videos (links below, 21 min and 5 min, respectively) are of Art Rolnick presenting the case for the high return on investment for investments in young children. Both of them are powerful and are very effective tools for communicating the importance and challenges of investments in early childhood:

Art Rolnick, economist and former director of research for the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, gave a presentation at TEDxTC where he discussed the Economic Case for Early Childhood Development (visit: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M02Z1vAuwBsf&feature=player_embedded). In it, he discusses how he came to support early childhood intervention as an economist, as well as the research behind these programs and policies.

In June 2011, Rolnick gave testimony at a U.S. Senate hearing and when questioned, responded to Senator Al Franken (D-MN) around the importance of investing in early childhood development and education in terms of economic development and the political challenges of doing so (http://franken.senate.gov/?p=video&id=1577).


Class #8 – Preparation for National Conference, Friday & Saturday, November 1st – 2nd
NATIONAL CONFERENCE: 8th Annual Re-envisioning Foster Care in America (REFCA) Foster Care Innovators: Shaping the Future (Brandeis campus)

NO CLASS, MONDAY, NOV. 4th
Class #9 – Readings for Monday, November 11th
Debrief on REFCA Conference

- Chapter 10 p. 297-311, Toward the Integration of Child, Youth, and Family Policy: Applying Principles of Risk, Resilience, and Ecological Theory

Class #10 – Readings for Monday, November 18th
TO BE PROVIDED BY STUDENT TEAMS
International Examples

Class #11 & #12 – Mondays, November 25th and December 2nd
STUDENT POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Class #13 – Monday, December 9th
STUDENT POSTER SESSION & LUNCH RECEPTION

WEBSITE RESOURCES

Center for Youth and Communities: http://cyc.brandeis.edu
Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research, Cornell University: https://www.bctr.cornell.edu/
CIRCLE (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement), Tufts University: https://civicyouth.org/about-circle/
Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University: https://developingchild.harvard.edu/
John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities, Stanford University: https://gardnercenter.stanford.edu/
America’s Promise GradNation http://www.americaspromise.org/program/gradnation
The Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions: http://aspencommunitysolutions.org/
Be the Change: http://www.bethechangeinc.org/
Child Trends: https://www.childtrends.org/
Forum For Youth Investment: http://forumfyi.org/
FSG: http://www.fsg.org/
Innovation Center: http://www.innovationcenter.org/
Jobs for the Future: http://www.jff.org/
Opportunity Nation: http://opportunitynation.org/
Search Institute: http://www.search-institute.org/
White House Domestic Policy Council: https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/administration/eop/dpc

America’s Promise: The Alliance for Youth: http://www.americaspromise.org/
American Youth Policy Forum – Bridging Youth Policy, Practice and Research: http://www.aypf.org/
GLSEN (Gay Lesbian and Straight Education Network): http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/home/index.html
The Fenway Institute: [http://www.thefenwayinstitute.org](http://www.thefenwayinstitute.org)
The Michigan Study of Adolescent and Adult Life Transitions: [http://www.rcgd.isr.umich.edu/msalt/](http://www.rcgd.isr.umich.edu/msalt/)
Urban Institute: [http://www.urban.org/](http://www.urban.org/)
Youth Today newspaper: [http://www.youthtoday.org/](http://www.youthtoday.org/)
YouthBuild U.S.A.: [https://youthbuild.org/](https://youthbuild.org/)

**Foundation Sites**
Barr Foundation: [https://www.barrfoundation.org/](https://www.barrfoundation.org/)
The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation: [http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Pages/home.aspx](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Pages/home.aspx)

**U.S. Government Sites**
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [http://www.cdc.gov/](http://www.cdc.gov/)
U.S. and World Population Clock, U.S. Census Bureau: [https://www.census.gov/popclock/](https://www.census.gov/popclock/)

**International Sources**
International Youth Foundation: [https://www.iyfnet.org/](https://www.iyfnet.org/)
YouthPolicy.org: [www.youthpolicy.org](http://www.youthpolicy.org)