

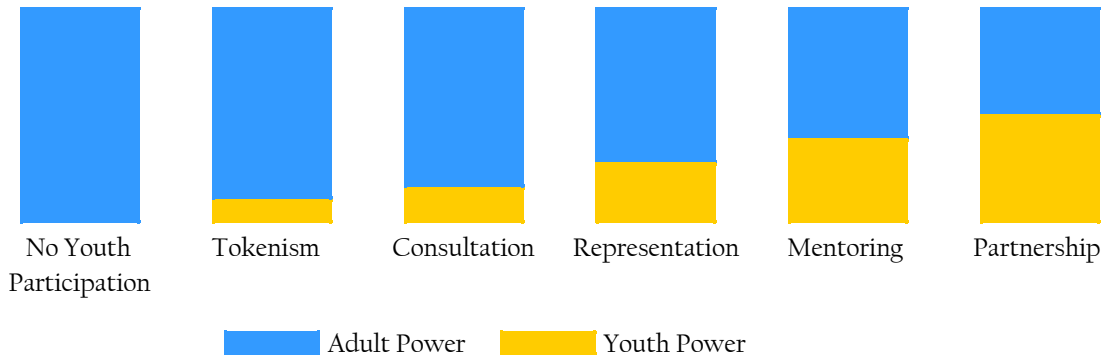


**CALIFORNIA**  
C E N T E R  
FOR CIVIC PARTICIPATION  
AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

# Power Continuum Table

## In Youth/Adult Partnerships

This Tip Sheet contains information and definitions regarding Youth/Adult Partnerships. The table below presents a range of ways to make decisions and shows the division of power between youth and adults. Information was taken from *Youth Voices in Community Design: A How To Guide for Adults on Involving Youth in Community Planning*, see reference information below.



### Power Continuum Details

**No Youth Participation:** Unchallenged authority of adults.

**Tokenism:** Adults set the agenda and make all the decisions. One or two young people may be included, but often without training and without a promise that their suggestions will be taken.

**Consultation:** Adults seek advice from young people, but on terms set by adults.

**Representation:** A select number of young people are put forward as representing their peers, usually through a committee system and with varying degrees of accountability.

**Mentoring:** Adults provide encouragement and impart skills/values to help a young person achieve success.

**Partnership:** Young people and adults set the agenda together, decide on issues and activities, and have joint accountability and shared responsibility.

### Which is right for your organization?

Only your organization can decide which approach is right for you. Obviously “tokenism” is not the place to start, but based on your organization’s climate and resources, you may not be ready for true “partnership”. The important thing is for your organization to decide in advance the nature of the youth-adult relationship.

For more resources on youth involvement and youth development visit:

- California Center at [www.californiacenter.org](http://www.californiacenter.org)
- Youth Service America at [www.ysa.org/yvi](http://www.ysa.org/yvi)

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California Center for Civic Participation and Youth Development. *Youth Voices in Community Design: A How-To Guide for Adults on Involving Youth in Community Planning*. Sacramento, CA: Author, 2004. [www.californiacenter.org/voices](http://www.californiacenter.org/voices)

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