



YOUTH SOFT SKILLS ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT FOR YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIP | TEXAS YOUTH ACTION NETWORK

Introduction

At the Texas Youth Action Network (TYAN), we believe effective youth leadership is grounded in the development of strong soft skills. These interpersonal and intrapersonal abilities—including communication, confidence, teamwork, initiative, and critical thinking—are essential for empowering youth to lead, collaborate with adults, and succeed in a variety of contexts.

This toolkit serves as a strengths-based, user-friendly resource to assist organizations and youth in evaluating and enhancing these critical skills throughout their involvement in Youth-Adult Partnership (Y-AP) programs.

What Are Soft Skills and Why Are They Important?

Soft skills enable young people to:

- Build and maintain positive relationships
- Communicate effectively
- Resolve conflicts and challenges
- Demonstrate leadership and initiative

With these skills, youth become confident and capable co-creators of change.

The toolkit focuses on five essential skill areas:

1. Communication & Listening
2. Confidence & Self-Awareness
3. Collaboration & Teamwork
4. Leadership & Initiative
5. Problem Solving & Critical Thinking



ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

- **Timing:** Can be administered as a pre-, mid-, or post-assessment.
- **Format:** Self-assessment with structured reflection and skill development planning.
- **Facilitation:** Conducted in a safe, supportive space by trained facilitators.

Facilitator Instructions

Preparation:

- Ensure each participant has a printed or digital copy.
- Explain the purpose and structure of the assessment.
- Clarify the scoring system: 1 = Not Yet, 5 = Always.

Administration:

- Guide participants through each skill area.
- Encourage honest and thoughtful responses.
- Provide support or clarification as needed.

Scoring:

Each skill area includes four items scored on a 1-5 scale. Total scores range from 4 to 20 per category.

SCORE RANGE	READINESS LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
4-8	Beginning	Needs foundational development.
9-12	Developing	Shows emerging skill capacity.
13-16	Proficient	Demonstrates consistent ability.
17-20	Advanced	Exhibits strong and effective skills.



YOUTH SELF-ASSESSMENT

Communication & Listening

Statement	Score (1-5)
I listen attentively when others are speaking.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I clearly express my ideas.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I ask questions if I don't understand.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I adjust my communication style based on my audience.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Confidence & Self-Awareness

Statement	Score (1-5)
I am aware of my strengths and areas for improvement.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel self-assured when speaking in groups.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I advocate for myself when necessary.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I maintain composure during stressful situations.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Collaboration & Teamwork

Statement	Score (1-5)
I contribute to group decision-making.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I value others' viewpoints.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I follow through on my commitments in a team.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I collaborate effectively with both youth and adults.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Leadership & Initiative

Statement	Score (1-5)
I step up to lead when the situation calls for it.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I assist in organizing or supporting a team.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I motivate and encourage my peers.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I seek out opportunities to engage.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Problem Solving & Critical Thinking

Statement	Score (1-5)
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I strive to maintain a positive attitude when faced with challenges. []

I generate multiple solutions to problems. []

I consider my options carefully before acting. []

I reflect on my experiences to learn from successes and failures. []

Reflection Questions

Participants should answer the following in their own words:

1. Which soft skill do you feel most confident about? Why?
2. What skill do you wish to develop the most?
3. Share an experience from this program where you felt like a leader.
4. What insights have you gained from working with adults?

DEVELOPMENT SUGGESTIONS

Facilitators may use these recommendations based on each participant's readiness level.

Communication & Listening

LEVEL	SUGGESTIONS
BEGINNING	Practice active listening and clear expression in daily conversations.
DEVELOPING	Focus on asking clarifying questions and adjusting tone for different audiences.
PROFICIENT	Continue refining speaking and listening skills through group work and presentations.
ADVANCED	Mentor others, lead discussions, and model effective communication.

Confidence & Self-Awareness

LEVEL	SUGGESTIONS
BEGINNING	Engage in self-reflection and basic public speaking exercises.
DEVELOPING	Practice self-advocacy and build stress management techniques.
PROFICIENT	Take on leadership roles and refine public speaking skills.
ADVANCED	Serve as a role model and help peers develop self-awareness.



Collaboration & Teamwork

LEVEL	SUGGESTIONS
BEGINNING	Participate in team-based activities to build reliability and empathy.
DEVELOPING	Work on decision-making and shared responsibilities.
PROFICIENT	Lead portions of group projects and facilitate collaboration.
ADVANCED	Co-lead teams and mentor others in collaborative settings.

Leadership & Initiative

LEVEL	SUGGESTIONS
BEGINNING	Volunteer for small leadership tasks.
DEVELOPING	Identify and act on opportunities to support peers.
PROFICIENT	Organize and lead group efforts with confidence.
ADVANCED	Take initiative in planning, guiding others, and innovating.

Problem Solving & Critical Thinking

LEVEL	SUGGESTIONS
BEGINNING	Practice structured reflection and basic decision-making.
DEVELOPING	Focus on generating and evaluating multiple solutions.
PROFICIENT	Apply critical thinking in complex group challenges.
ADVANCED	Mentor others in strategic thinking and problem resolution.

Conclusion

This toolkit is designed to initiate meaningful reflection and dialogue while supporting youth in strengthening vital soft skills. Facilitators are encouraged to revisit assessments periodically to track growth and adapt programming accordingly.

Texas Youth Action Network

www.texasyouthactionnetwork.org