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DEVELOPMENT

What does a career in Youth Development look like in the Y? What sort of things do you work on day-to-day?

A career as a Senior Director of Youth Development at the YMCA involves:

- Designing, implementing, and evaluating programs for youth, including childcare, before/after school care, summer camps, and special events.
- Recruiting, training, and supervising staff to ensure high-quality program delivery and adherence to safety standards.
- Overseeing program budgets and ensuring financial sustainability while seeking funding opportunities and grants.

What do you enjoy about working in Youth Development?

I enjoy building relationships- connecting with youth and families, being creative- designing programs and activities that promote learning, creativity and social interactions, and the opportunity to make a difference.

How did you become qualified to work in Youth Development?

When I turned 16, I was hired as a YMCA lifeguard and swim instructor. I loved working with youth and began my college journey in Elementary Education. Through my college years I volunteered as a tutor with an afterschool program, and worked summers as a camp counselor.

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How do I become a Youth Development professional?

- **Childcare Roles:** Work in daycare centers or preschools to gain experience with young children.
- **After-School Programs:** Engage in before and after-school care settings to gain insight into educational support and recreational activities.

What will make me more marketable to employers?

- **Gaining Experience:** Seek internships or volunteer opportunities that provide hands-on experience in youth development settings.
- **Pursuing Certifications:** Obtaining relevant certifications can demonstrate commitment and knowledge in the field. (Child Development, CPR/First Aid)
- **Building Skills:** Developing skills in communication, leadership, conflict resolution, and program planning will make you a strong candidate.

What characteristics should someone possess to find success in a career in Youth Development?

- **Compassion and Empathy:** Understanding and relating to the needs of children and families.
- **Strong Communication Skills:** Effectively communicating with youth, parents, and colleagues.
- **Creativity:** Designing engaging programs and activities that captivate young audiences.
- **Patience and Adaptability:** Being able to handle challenges and changes with a positive attitude.

What can I do now to prepare myself for a career in Youth Development?

- **Volunteer:** Get involved with local youth organizations, schools, or community centers.
- **Pursue Relevant Education:** Take courses related to child development, education, or youth services.
- **Seek Mentorship:** Connect with professionals in the field who can offer guidance and advice on your career path.