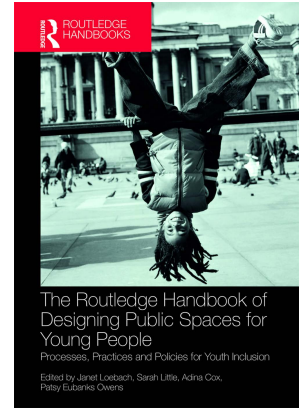


The Routledge Handbook of Designing Public Spaces for Young People

Processes, Practices and Policies for Youth Inclusion

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TAKEAWAY: CHAPTER 1

A Fundamental Need: Linking Youth Development to the Public Realm

Patsy Eubanks Owens

KEY TALKING POINTS

- Young people need places where they can complete tasks associated with their development.
- The public realm provides an important and necessary venue for the completion of these tasks.
- Current policies and design practices limit the opportunities where these tasks can be completed.
- Society in general as well as designers, planners, and policy makers need to recognize the importance of youth being able to undertake these tasks in the public settings. For example, a group of young people hanging out in an urban plaza is a sign of them engaging in healthy adolescent development.

BENEFITS FOR YOUTH

- The provision of supportive physical environments will provide places where youth can:
 - build their self-esteem and internal growth,
 - develop satisfying social relationships,
 - learn to manage their free-time, and
 - build a sense of social responsibility.
- Involving youth in design and planning decisions supports their emotional and social development.

BENEFITS FOR THE PUBLIC

- The successful transition of youth to adulthood has long-term positive implications for society.
- Providing youth with places where they feel safe and welcome contributes to them becoming caring citizens.
- Involving youth in decisions about their lives and their communities contributes to their healthy development.
- Participation in community-based activities helps youth to develop a pro-social identity and leads to life-long community engagement.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Advocate for youth activities and their presence in the design of public environments.
- Engage youth participants in community-wide and site-specific design, planning, and policy decisions.
- Rethink and change how existing public environments are designed and managed.
- Tell others that youth should be welcomed in public spaces and that their activities are necessary and healthy, and not something that warrants fear or control.

SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES

- Owens, P.E., Nelson, A.A., Perry, A., and Montgomery-Bock, K.F. 2010, November. *Youth Voice Matters: Toward Healthy Youth Environments*. UC Davis: Center for Regional Change. https://regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk986/files/inline-files/Youth_Voice_Matters.pdf