



## Getting Started with Inclusive Youth Leadership

Inclusive youth leadership may begin as guided leadership with adult support in an elementary school, continue with gradually increasing responsibility in middle school, and expand to nearly completely student-led efforts by high school. Regardless of school level, students can be taught leadership skills and provided opportunities for safe practice as they grow.

The leadership opportunities in schools vary, but a common first step is to have a planning meeting with your school's Unified Champion Schools Leadership Team. Start by discussing topics such as the ones below. Once you agree on one or more ideas for promoting inclusive youth leadership, use the **Action Plan template** found at the [Playbook Resources webpage](#) to organize your plans.

### Topics to discuss:

- 1. What types of inclusive youth leadership opportunities does our school have, need, or want to incorporate?
- 2. What leadership opportunities would be a good starting point?
- 3. Where do we already have formal and informal leadership opportunities for students? Are these inclusive opportunities, involving typical as well as atypical leaders?
- 4. What inclusive youth leadership opportunities are valued by students with and without intellectual disabilities?
- 5. How do we nurture meaningful co-leadership between students with and without intellectual disabilities?
- 6. Who will be the adult coordinator for inclusive youth leadership?

### Tips for success:

- Ensure adults are adequately prepared to foster inclusive youth leadership.
- Support all students contributing in meaningful ways. Guard against some students being “leaders” with other students being “helped.”
- Provide ongoing support for students and adults to reflect on and refine their inclusive leadership skills.
- Be intentional about developing the leadership skills of all students.
- Help students with and without intellectual disabilities model social inclusion throughout their daily interactions at school.