Prepping for YCISL: Go for Breadth

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This document offers recommendations for preparing elementary and middle school students for a YCISL workshop in their high school years. At the base of the CSDGC Youth Development leadership objectives framework is the Pre-High School stage. This is a stage at which our model encourages parents to be involved in guiding and supporting their child to explore a diverse array of extracurricular activities. This is how one starts to build emotional intelligence.

Parenting is life's most challenging and potentially fulfilling responsibility. That was a message for children as well as parents. It takes a high level of mindfulness, understanding and cooperation to be successful. It also takes enormous emotional intelligence.

Full stride parenting usually takes place when a child is from 10 to 14 years old when the child experiences rapid physical and emotional changes. And perhaps because of the pace of change in the child's appearance, it is also the time when many parents worry most about future academic and social placement. According to our leadership objectives framework, this is the age for a child to sample a wide range of extracurricular activities and find where their curiosity leads them. We call this objective "Placement." The parent's role in Placement is to create a schedule to realize this sampling – in balance with all the other parental responsibilities. The child's role is to play a participating role in the activities.

What should be on the sampling menu? Possibilities abound from arts, crafts, games, sports, social and community service, writing, technology, communications, gardening, etc… With a growth mindset in place, one approach to activity selection is to adopt a simple YCISL innovation framework:

Brainstorming – Between the parent and child, use PostIt brainstorming to unveil all the possible activities. Do not filter at this stage.

Prototyping - Matters of access, convenience and affordability will come into play. Work with the twenty to thirty candidates and filter out the ones that even conceptually

would be non-starters. Seek the top five to ten candidates and actually give them a try. Use a "Fail early, fail fast" mindset and drop the ones yielding neither enjoyment nor demonstration of aptitude. The time horizon is one day up to a few weeks. Narrow the list down to one; if none survive, start with a new list.

Engineering - If one candidate makes it out of prototyping, it is time to focus on learning more about the activity, taking it from novice to amateur. The parent takes a step back at this stage and allows the child to put all the energy to sustain this effort. Make a commitment to pursue this activity for 9 to 12 months (school year or calendar year). Get feedback and set goals. Evaluate yourself.

Rollout - Prepare to present your accomplishment in the activity. Going through the rollout will help develop your personal identity and add to your personal story. Think about your knowledge intelligence and emotional intelligence with regards to learning more about yourself and your placement. Compose a positioning statement to help others understand what you are offering to contribute.

Sustaining – Decide whether to continue with this activity after the first rollout. Does it deserve to have an extended presence on your roadmap? Can it lead to new activities or relate to current and past activities?

This would mark the end of one cycle. Repeat this cycle up to the last year of middle school. Once in high school, the objective changes and sampling is no longer a priority. By the end of this pre-high school age, hopefully more than 25 activities would have been sampled and at least one will be a great candidate for the high school pursuit of proof.

How many parents can list 25 activities they tried when they were a youth?

**A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH
TO THE YCISL PLACEMENT STAGE**

START PLACEMENT STAGE → ALL POSSIBILITIES → FEW POSSIBILITIES

RESTART PROCESS ↑

FAIL EARLY, FAIL FAST ↓

ONE OR NONE POSSIBILITIES ← FEWER POSSIBILITIES

ENTERING HIGH SCHOOL? ↓

ENTER PROOF STAGE