

Guide to Youth Bids

Critically Being With involves foregrounding the present reality of youth. This means pausing to actively listen to youth lived experience, and then moving to more fully center, make space for, and honor it. This shifts relationships and insights by humbly moving towards common ground with youth.

What are youth bids? Youth take actions to prompt and seek attention from educators and peers. When youth make a bid to be with us critically, they seek to share their experiences and perspectives more honestly or deeply.

This guide provides:

- One example of how to enact the Core Equitable Practice (CEP) of Critically Being With as described in the Critically Being With Insights 2.6 document.
- Examples of how youth may seek to critically be with adults, drawing on our partner educators' implementation of informal STEM programs.
- Ways to notice these bids and readily respond to them in ways that value youth for who they are and what they bring to the learning environment.

Questions for Group Discussion

- How have youth had **opportunities to express** their lived experiences, including experiences of injustice? How has youth **expression disrupted normative habits** in my/our program? How have youth been **denied that opportunity**?
- How have I/we **responded to such bids**? Which **new learning outcomes**, if any, emerged from my/our response to bids for authority sharing?

Things to Keep In Mind

- Youth bids can require multiple responses at once. For example, youth bids to critically be with adults by sharing their lived experience can also require the core equitable practice of adults embracing youth humanity.
- This tool can be used alongside the Equity Compass tool to enhance discussions on youth bids goals and outcomes.

Why do youth make bids? Youth often actively seek to do the following:

- To **disrupt** the ways in which everyday knowledge and practice of STEM and schooling position students as deficient, or without power and authority.
- To **amplify** their already-present brilliant and agentic acts of everyday knowing and practice and to have their transformative potential made visible.
- To be **rightfully present** and legitimately belong as fully human in ISL.

Examples of Youth Bids

Disrupting: Asking to be Respected + Trusted

In a Forensic session, **Chloe resisted** writing answers to a 3-question assessment that seemed to keep youth from engaging in more **meaningful reflective conversations** about what they learned that day. She asked, "Why should we only write? Why not discussing or debating, or expressing what we learned via drawings?"

Addison noticed Chloe's reaction and **took a second to think about her critique** more seriously. Realizing that verbal assessment could be powerful too, she decided that the group could follow Chloe's recommended option, to more actively and dynamically **share the knowledge** they had built that day.

Bid: Asking for more meaningful options for engagement

Response: Noticing the bid and agreeing, following youth idea

Critically being with: Youth share more of themselves and their learning

Amplifying: Wanting to Do STEM projects that matter

In STEM club, William was making a bookmark, one of 3 e-textile options presented to youth that day (bookmark, phone holder, or pennant). His bookmark was colorful and creative, with an LED light as the fire under a spaceship rocket. Suddenly, **William exclaimed** as he threw down his bookmark, "This is stupid. I'm going to make a fanny pack!"

In **asking followup questions and actively listening** to William's ideas, **Maria learned** that William wanted to make something that **mattered in his life**. A friend's money had been stolen that day and William wanted to make a fanny pack so people could keep their belongings safe. So, Maria worked with William to support him in doing a project that **mattered more to him**.

Bid: Requesting an opportunity to address an injustice experienced

Response: Noticing bid, listening to the story and idea and taking it seriously

Critically being with: Youth enacts making that matters

Rightfully Present: Wanting to fully belong in ISL (Informal STEM Learning) spaces

In a group discussion about how STEM makes youth feel and why, **Maria asked Louise to volunteer her thoughts** on what aspects of their program were helpful and which aspects needed changing. Upon hearing this question, **Louise ran full-speed** to a red couch pushed against one wall of the makerspace, jumping down onto it and patting it with her hand as she explained its importance.

Maria was startled by the unsanctioned running and jumping in their learning space, but she realized that this was a **fully-embodied way to share** her enthusiasm in answering the prompt. **Louise cared that deeply** about the physical design of her shared learning space, and she was excited to show it. Maria did not scold Louise for running and jumping in the learning space, and she listened carefully to Louise's excitement.

Bid: Running and jumping to share thoughts in an embodied way

Response: Realizing context of youth embodied action and allowing space for it

Critically being with: Multiple forms of expression as legitimately OK

Reflecting:

- Which example of youth bids resonates with your experience?
- Share and add youth bids for critically being with that you have experienced.
- How might you respond to critically be with youth in your space?