# Centering Youth Thriving

Thriving Families - Thriving Systems - Thriving Communities

**When Youth Thrive We All Thrive**

5 minutes | 5 slides

Deconstructing the NLC |
Afterschool Alliance
"Communities as Learning Hubs"
Graphic

How do we optimize the people, places and possibilities hidden within and between these institutions in ways that ignite learners, strengthen communities, and reverse inequities?
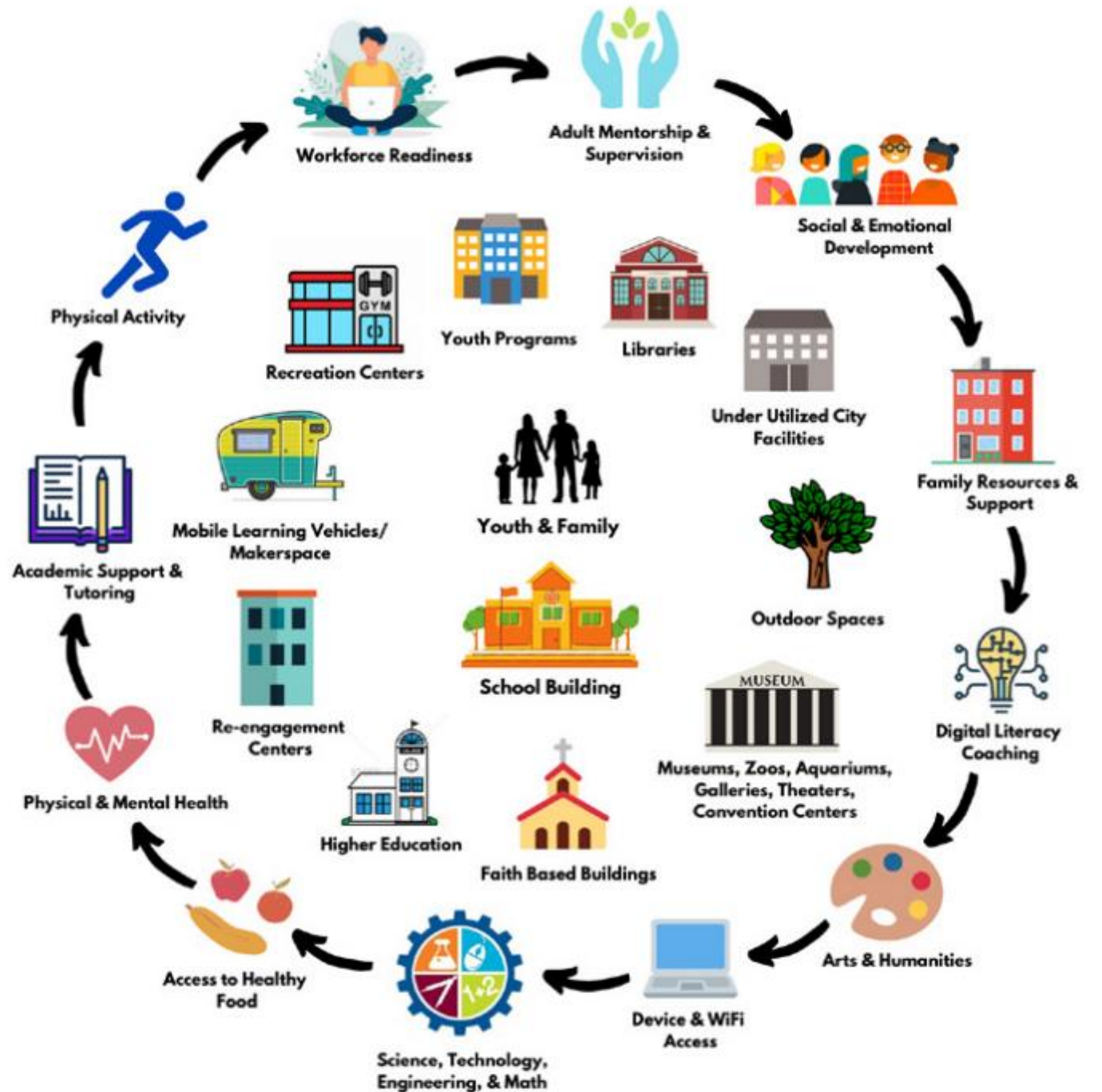
Schools are the primary institution responsible for core academic preparation of ALL children & youth. Because they have custodial responsibility during school day and year, they have taken on a host of other functions.
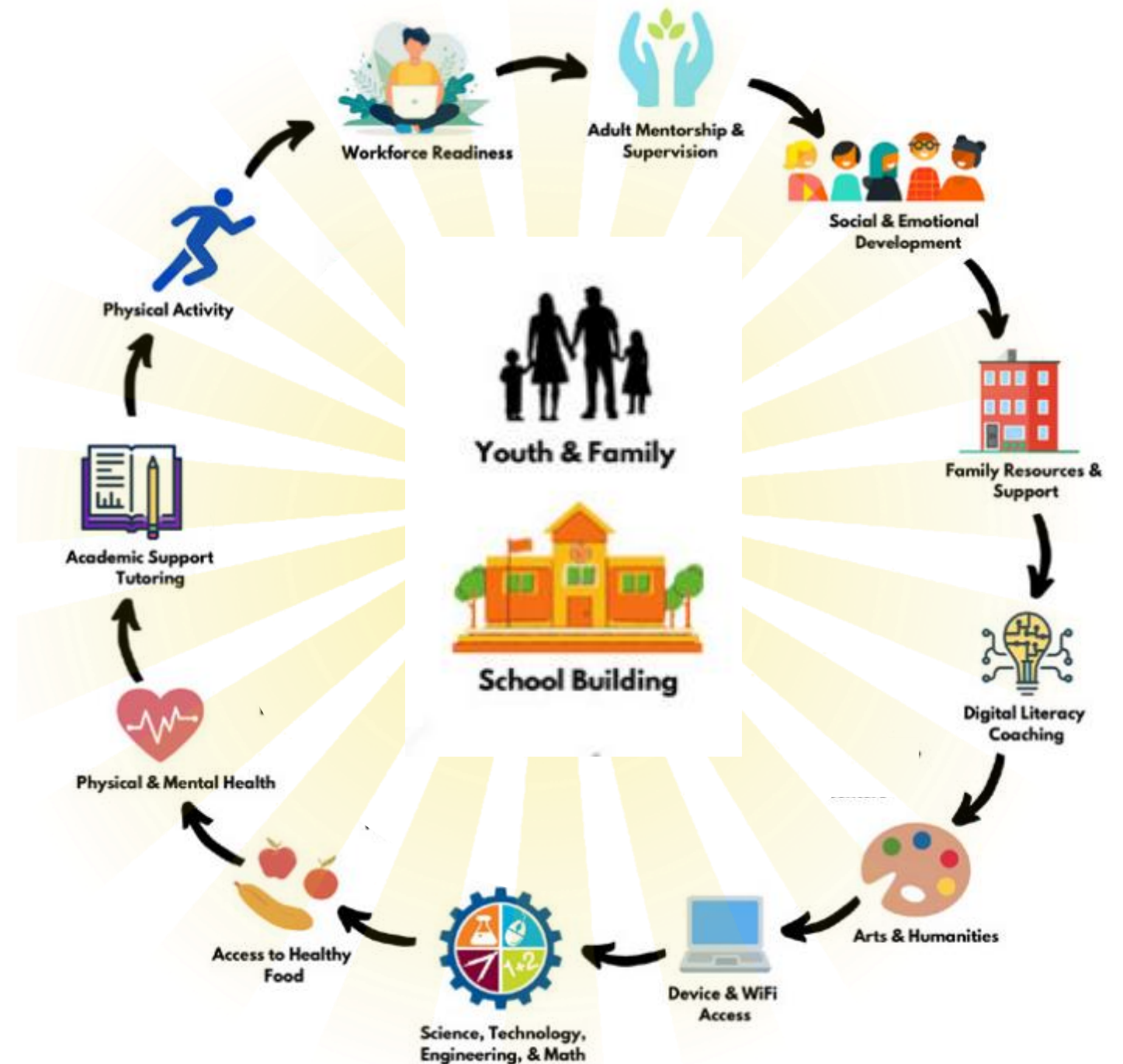
Community Schools are an established approach for schools to engage community partners in helping them meet the broader needs of students and families, including wrap-around services, expanded learning, and deeper family engagement.
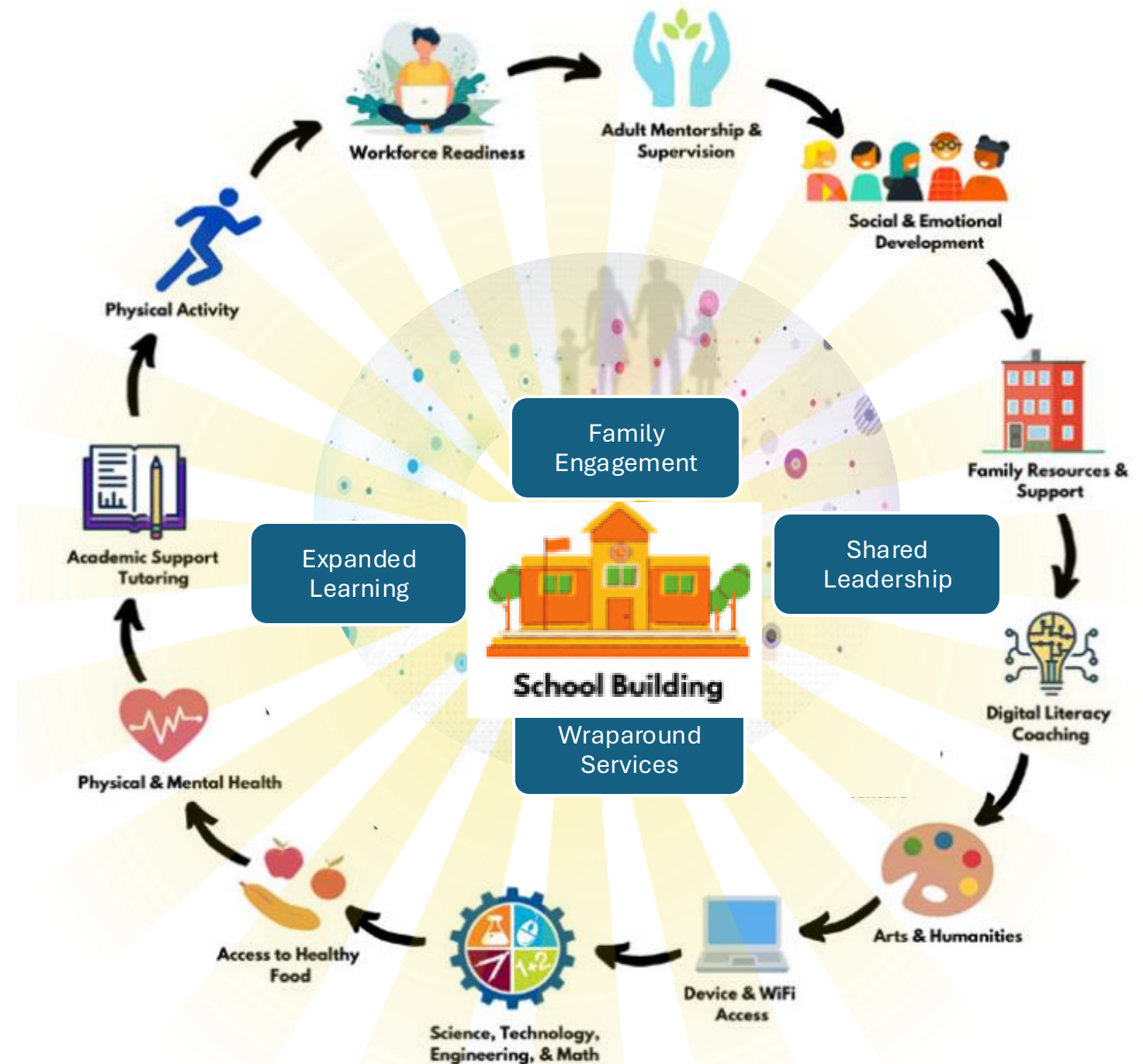
But there are other organizations in the community that support learning and development, offering basic services and voluntary enrichment & engagement opportunities directly to youth and families, primarily in the out-of-school hours and outside of the school building.

Families recognize the value of these opportunities for their children, but often lack the time, information, and financial resources needed to assemble them. Quality and access are consequently highly inequitable.

Municipalities are establishing children's cabinets and coordinating bodies charged with assessing community needs, developing community plans and engaging public and community agencies in supporting child well-being & youth success.
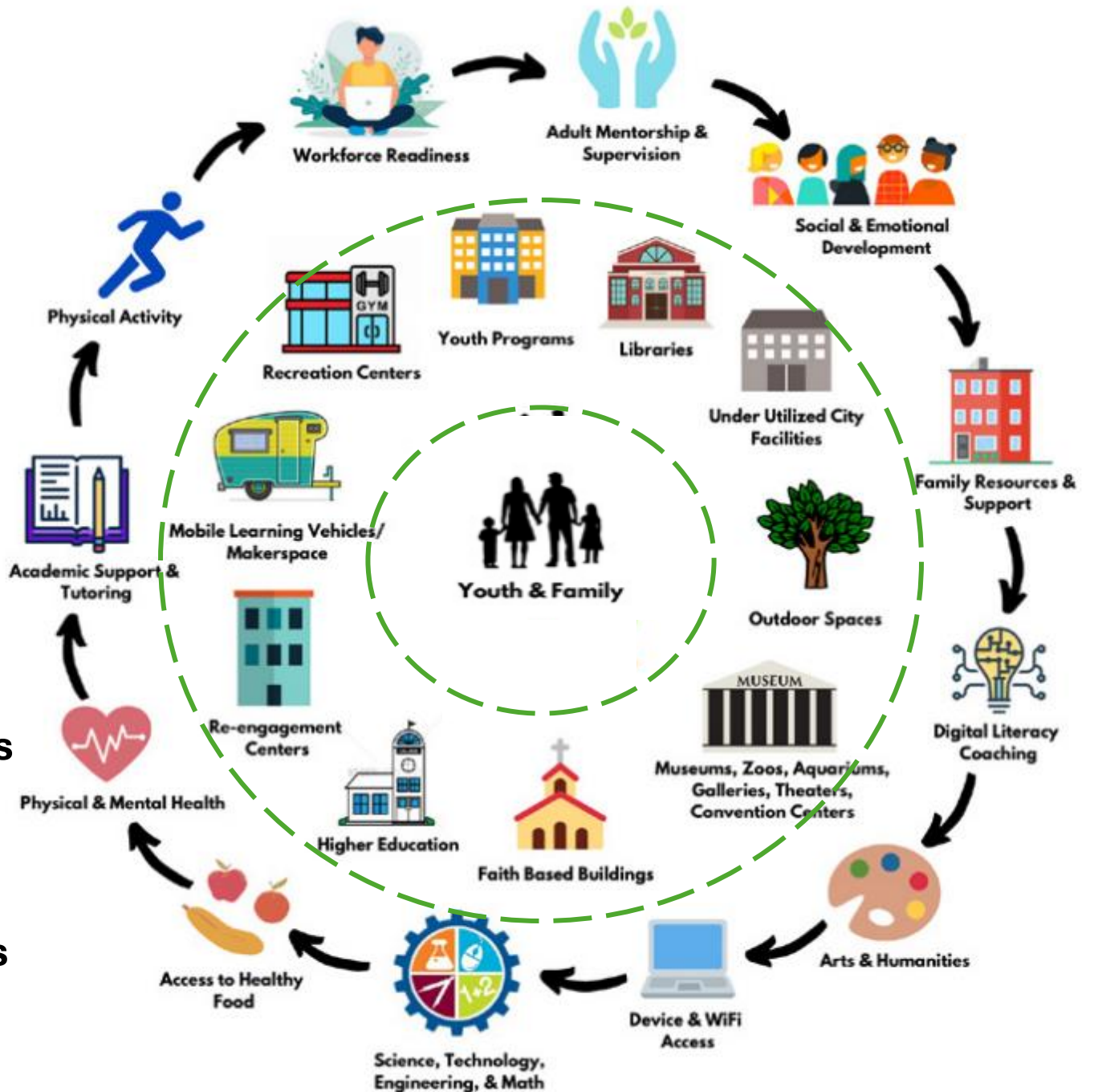
Shared goals and increased coordination between organizations and systems helps. But it is the development of stronger connections between and among people in programs, systems, and communities – *interactions within the learning and development ecosystem –* **that really matter.**
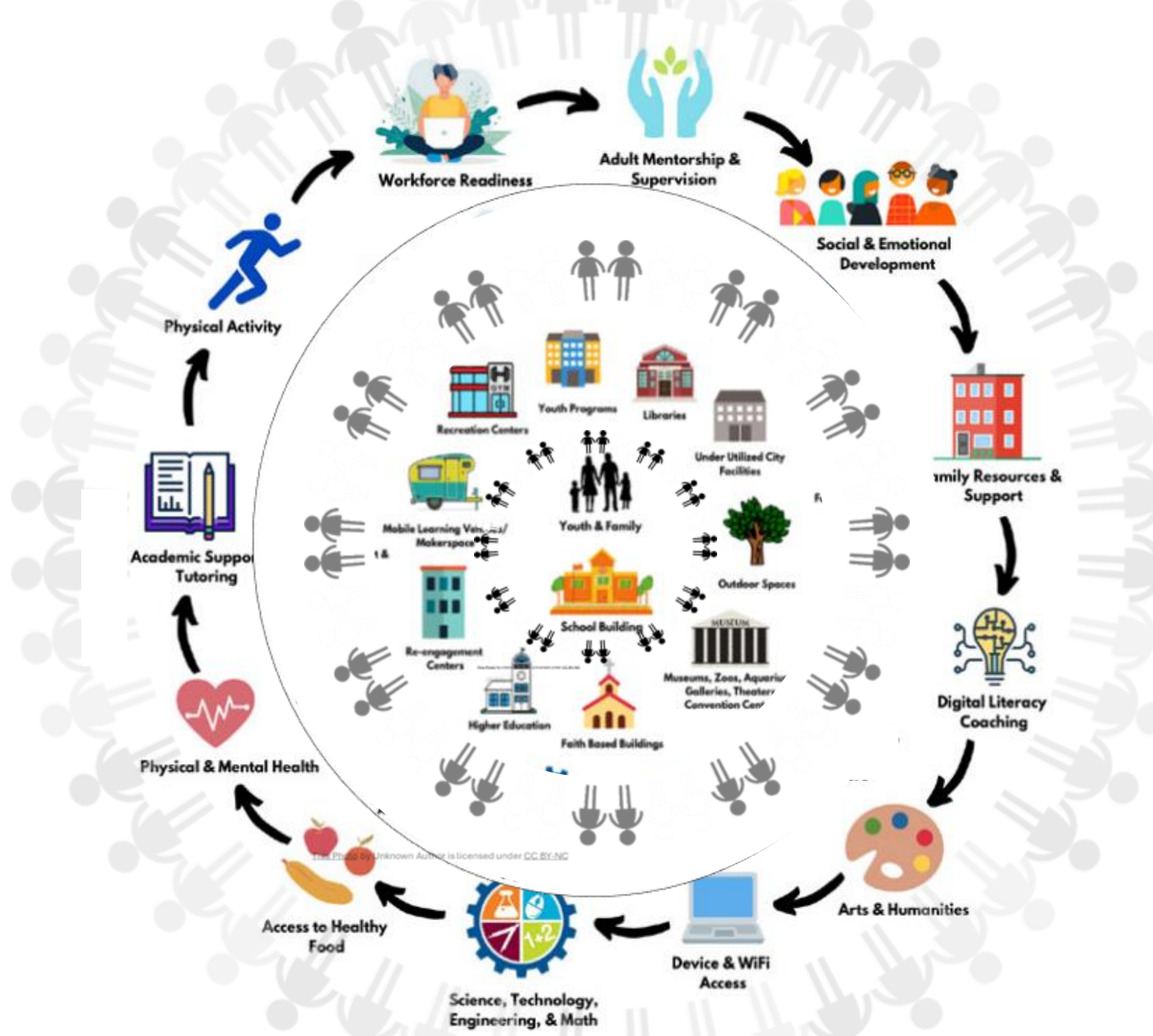
How can we help *systems* – including but not limited to school and OST systems – optimize all of the people, places and possibilities in the learning & development ecosystem?

By emphasizing the importance of ecosystem stewardship.
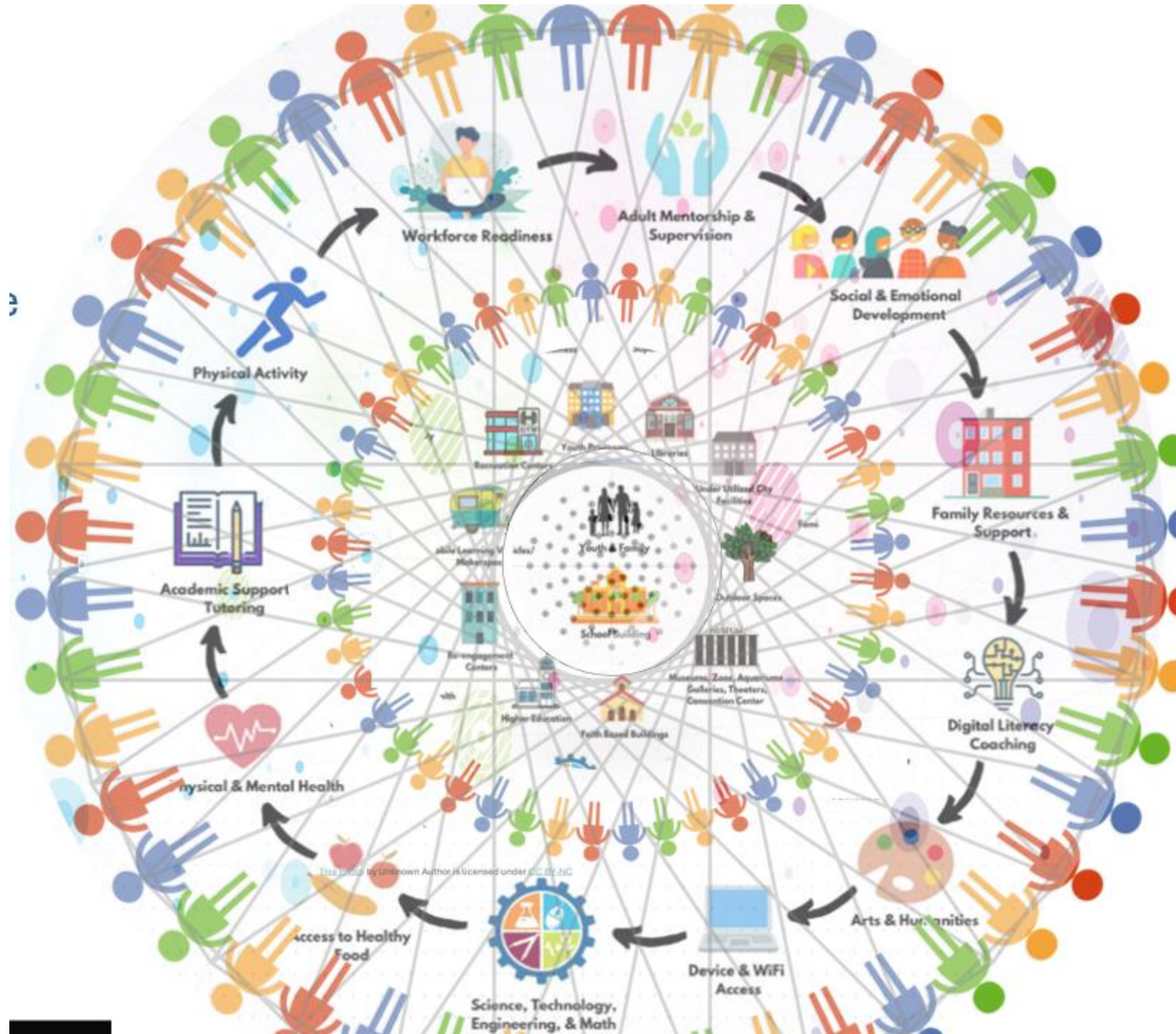
Learning ecosystems may be found anywhere, but it takes careful stewardship to help them thrive. In cities and suburbs, small towns and rural villages, communities are beginning to recognize the people, places, resources, and experiences that help young people learn as part of a complex and dynamic web of relationships. These communities are taking steps to cultivate their learning ecosystems to serve children and youth better.

Shift. Remake Learning

Shift

How cultivating an ecosystem remade Pittsburgh's learning landscape
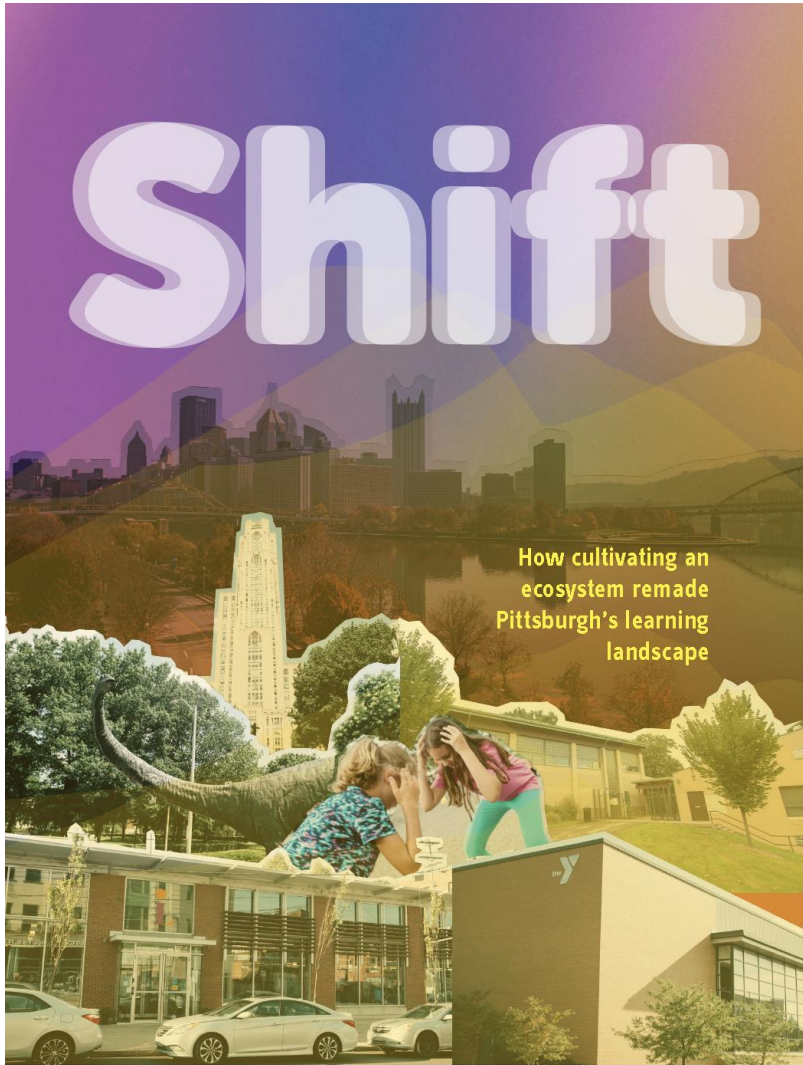
Shifting our thinking can shift our reality. By broadening our view of education to include the entire learning ecosystem, we can unlock the limitless potential for learning inherent in our communities.

We can shift how the adults that power the learning ecosystem interact

We can shift how organizations and institutions tackle problems

We can shift how systems are structured

We can shift how families engage in education

We can shift how children and youth experience learning

The Science of Adolescence

"Adolescent brains are not simply 'advanced' child brains, nor are they 'immature' adult brains – they are specifically tailored to meet the needs of this stage of life. Adolescents must explore and take risks to build the cognitive, social, and emotional skills they will need to be productive adults."

The Promise of Adolescence.
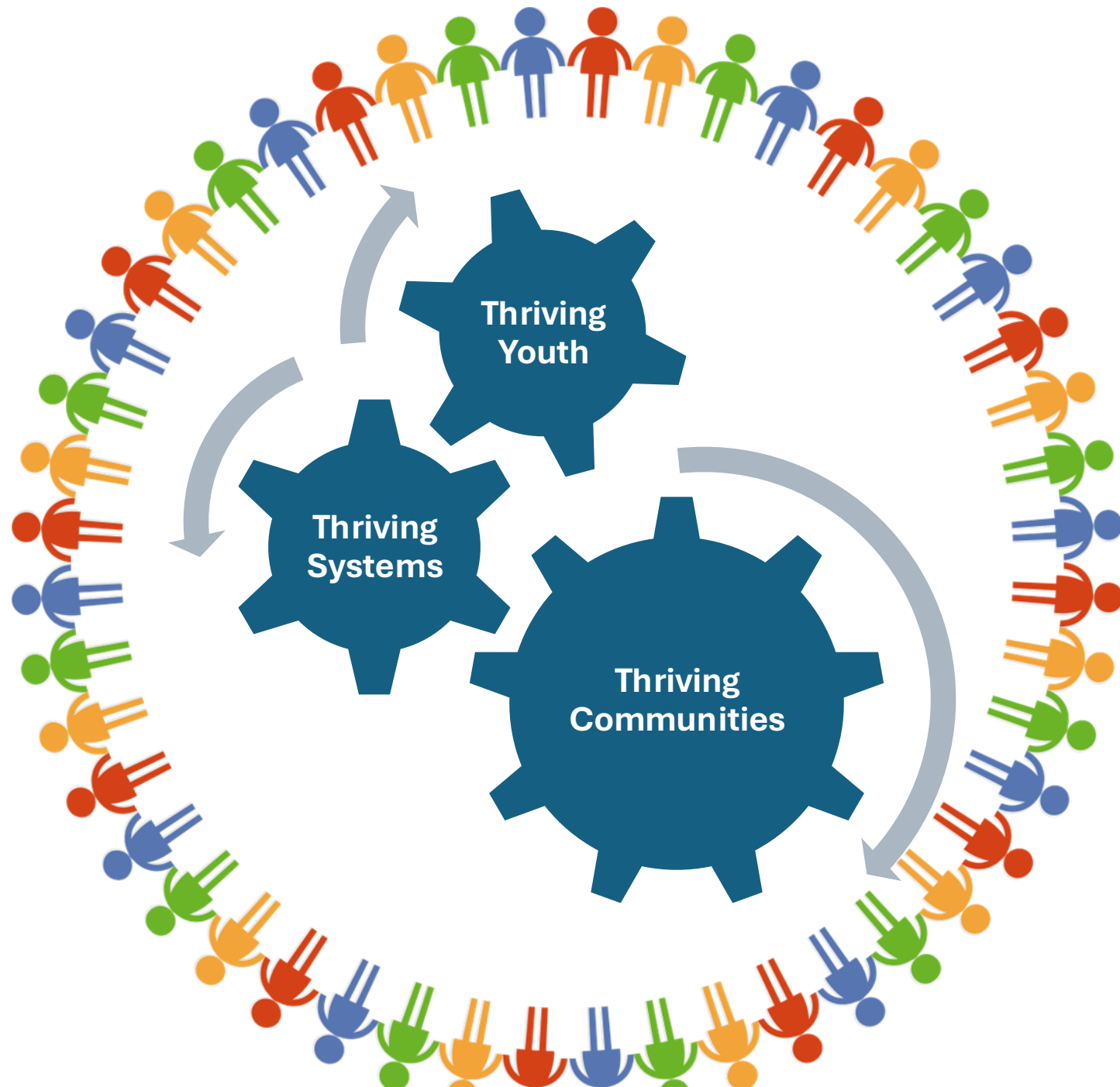
National Academy of Medicine

Centering Youth Thriving

Thriving communities need thriving youth.

Thriving youth need thriving ecosystems.

Thriving ecosystems need thriving systems.

Centering Youth Thriving

When Youth Thrive We All Thrive.

Community Action Framework for Youth Development

Healthy
Productive
Connected

KNOWLEDGE
TO POWER
CATALYSTS

Youth Development Strategies Inc.

Purpose of Education Index — 2022
Top 10 Private Priorities

① **Students develop practical skills** (e.g. manage personal finances, prepare a meal, make an appointment)

② **Students are able to think critically to problem solve and make decisions**

③ **Students demonstrate character** (e.g. honesty, kindness, integrity, and ethics)

④ **Students can demonstrate basic reading, writing, and arithmetic**

⑤ **All students receive the unique supports that they need throughout their learning**

⑥ **Students are prepared for a career**

⑦ **Students advance once they have demonstrated mastery of a subject**

⑧ **Students can demonstrate an understanding of science** (e.g. biology, chemistry, physics)

⑨ **All students have the option to choose the courses they want to study based on interests and aspirations**

⑩ **Students are evaluated by assessments through tests administered by teachers as part of a course**

Populace

KNOWLEDGE TO POWER CATALYSTS

Arnett's K-12 Value Propositions x Populace Priorities

K-12 Value Propositions	Priorities Ranks (out of 57)
▸ Provide universal access to a standardized, common body of knowledge that every child will be taught in predetermined subjects	#42 — All students study a common set of courses with few options for electives
▸ Provide instruction focused on preparing students for standardized assessments	#49 — Students are evaluated by how they rank against other students on standardized tests
▸ Provide a reliable mechanism to rank and sort learners for college and career opportunities	#47 — Students are prepared to enroll in a college or university
▸ Provide access to electives and extracurriculars (sports, photography, yearbook, band, theater, journalism) to keep learners engaged in school	#29 — Students can demonstrate artistic skills *(e.g., art, music, theater)* #56 — Students develop athletic talents
▸ Provide opportunities for youth to make friends	#50 — Students develop friendships
▸ Train children and youth to comply with the norms of schooling	#52 — Students learn social norms and appropriate behavior
▸ Provide custodial care for a portion of the day	

Christensen Institute   *Populace*