



What is 4-H Youth Development?

What is the essence of 4-H Youth Development?

To create opportunities which promote positive youth development

To teach knowledge and life skills which enhance quality of life

To engage young people in the work of the Land-Grant University

Caring Relationships – Community Spirit

The traditions of 4-H are organized around the notion of building community spirit and *social capital* –or connections among individuals. All youth need caring, supportive relationships in their lives and 4-H Youth Development programs create opportunities for long-term relationships.

A Cooperative Venture

The authority for the 4-H Youth Development program is vested in a cooperative structure between youth, interested adult volunteers, and the professional expertise of the land-grant universities and the United States Department of Agriculture. Creating opportunities for youth to develop skills and confidence for leadership and self-discipline is a cornerstone of 4-H.

Taking the University to Youth in Communities

4-H Youth Development is the only youth program with direct access to technological advances in agriculture and life sciences, home economics, human development, and related areas, which result from land-grant university research. The foundation of 4-H Youth Development is in the practical application of the land-grant university knowledge by youth in their communities.

Constructive Learning Experiences – Learning by Doing

The 4-H Youth Development program creates opportunities for youth to develop skills, practical knowledge and wisdom through observing, doing and living through experiences. The 4-H Youth Development emphasis is on practical application of knowledge or “learning by doing” to develop skills and acquire a sense of responsibility, initiative and self-worth. Youth learn how to discover knowledge and develop themselves by personalizing experiences, raising questions and seeking answers important to themselves, their families, peers and their community.

Creating Opportunities for Youth by Educating Adults

4-H Youth Development professionals create opportunities for young people to build skills, exercise leadership, form relationships with caring adults and help their communities. The 4-H Youth Development program believes that “youth development” is not something you do TO youth, but is the result of programming WITH youth and is dependent upon the family and other adults in the community. As a result, 4-H Youth Development focuses on educating adults to important youth development principles and practices to ensure that 4-H Youth Development programs create positive opportunities for young people to reach their full potential.

For more information, contact National 4-H Headquarters at 202-720-4087 or <http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov>