



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

CCE 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Introduction



The Guiding Principles is an internal program planning document that builds upon the goals of the NYS 4-H Strategic Plan that were developed in 2000. They provide the framework that supports what we do, what we value, and what we hope to accomplish. These Guiding Principles will help to inform program priorities and give direction to how we accomplish the important work that we do to meet the needs of all youth throughout New York State.

Vision



4-H Youth Development in New York State is a leader in enabling youth to develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and abilities to become productive citizens and is a catalyst for positive change to meet the needs of a diverse and changing society.

Through 4-H Youth Development, youth will practice effective problem-solving and decision-making skills. Youth will:

- possess positive work attitudes and skills.
- value diversity.
- accept community and social responsibility.
- contribute to positive relationships with families, peers, and community members.
- demonstrate communication and leadership skills.



Values



Cornell Cooperative Extension values:

- 4-H Youth Development as the focus of all youth development program activities.
- partnerships for supporting, conducting, and extending the program.
- volunteerism as a cornerstone of the program.
- diversity and the strengths it brings to CCE programs.
- engagement of youth in program determination, implementation, evaluation, and policy development.

Mission



The mission of Cornell Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development is to create supportive learning environments in which diverse youth and adults reach their fullest potential as capable, competent, and caring citizens.



Three Goals for the 4-H Youth

Development Program

4-H Youth Development is an American idea – the world's largest, dynamic, informal educational program for young people based on democratic principles. The real essence of the 4-H Youth Development movement is defined by the following goals:

Goal #1: To engage young people in the work of Cornell University and the Land-grant University System.

From its' early beginnings, the uniqueness of the Cooperative Extension 4-H program has been in its' connection to the land-grant university system and USDA reinforced by strong collaborations with state and local governments and through private support. Our 4-H programs have evolved, as society has progressed and changed over the years, to expand beyond educating youth to encompassing the greater mission of helping youth to reach their fullest potential as capable, competent, and caring citizens. Our approach to 4-H Youth Development today looks at the educational content in relationship to the youth development context that focuses on the essential elements that we know are necessary for youth to succeed.

Today we have embraced the catch phrase that "4-H Connects Kids to Cornell". As our Land Grant University in NY, Cornell has a mission to extend the resources of the University to the residents of the state, and that mission includes our youth. For more information about the Land Grant focus of the University, go to the following link on the Cornell University website. <http://www.cornell.edu/landgrant/>

The Cooperative Extension system evolved from the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 that along with the earlier Hatch Act of 1887, allocated federal dollars to the Land Grant Universities to support agricultural research and extension. The oversight of this allocation comes through USDA under the direction of the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service or CSREES. Our National 4-H Headquarters are housed in CSREES and provide program and policy guidance for 4-H. <http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/>



Goal #2: To teach knowledge and life skills that enhance quality of life.

The development of life skills through experiential learning is the foundation of 4-H programming. Healthy youth development strives to help young people develop the inner resources and skills they need to cope with pressures that might lead them to unhealthy and antisocial behaviors.

The 4-H subject matter focused project is the tool that is used to help youth master knowledge and skills. The 4-H program is centered on the use of project materials to engage youth in learning. Curriculum design takes in to consideration the need for hands on learning and incorporates the best practices for building life skill competencies.

Over the past four years, considerable effort has been spent on a curriculum review process and the development of the *New York State Resource Directory*. The online directory provides educators and volunteers immediate access to hundreds of state and national curriculum and educational resources to support program.

Goal #3: To create opportunities which promote positive youth development.

Youth Development is defined as an ongoing process through which young people meet their needs and develop competencies necessary for survival and transition to adulthood. Youth development refers to the development of the whole person and is not focused on the single attribute, skill, or characteristic, but rather the mastery of competencies needed for happy and productive adulthood. It occurs from an intentional process that promotes constructive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, choices, relationships, and the support necessary for youth to fully participate. In 4-H we talk about this intentional process in relationship to the essential elements that are necessary to ensure optimum development. Those essential elements that are critical to youth development and central to the 4-H experience are:

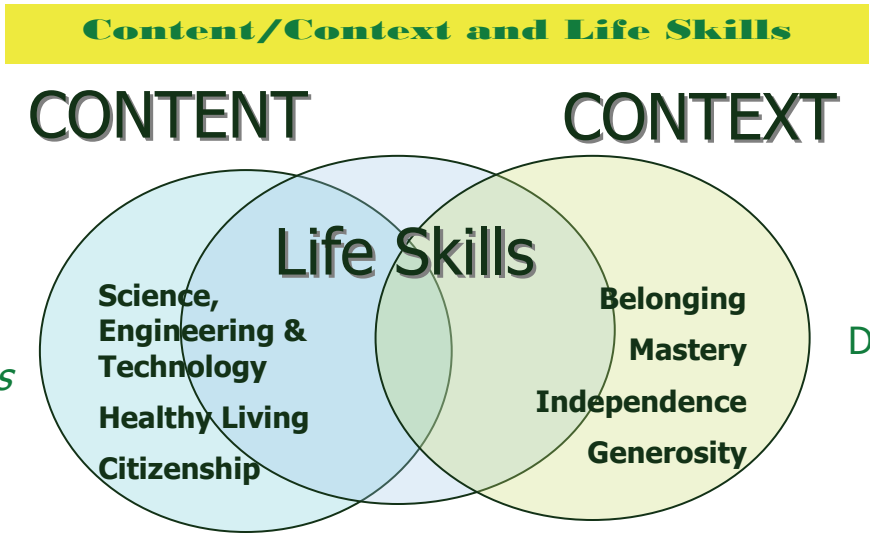
- The opportunity to experience independence
- The opportunity to experience belonging
- The opportunity to experience generosity
- The opportunity to experience mastery

Opportunities to promote positive youth development take place through a variety of delivery methods. The primary delivery methods include 4-H clubs, afterschool programs, school enrichment, special interest, and camps. (see page 8 for discussion of delivery methods)

Research shows that youth whose basic needs are met in positive ways are likely to grow into active citizens and contributing members of their families and communities. 4-H helps children fulfill these needs. By combining project activities with opportunities to go to camp, publicly show their work, travel, and participate in regional, state and national events, 4-H provides a framework on which young people can build self-confidence, responsibility, and generosity.

Components of 4-H Youth Development

How we approach 4-H Youth Development work is based on the integration of content (subject matter resources) with context (youth development best practices) and our focus on the development of life skills (impact). The national model below helps us to visualize the many components that make up the intentional process of delivering programs through different delivery methods.



Content: Education - Mission Areas and Plan of Work Priorities

Science, Engineering and Technology

Too many young Americans do not have the science, engineering and technology career skills necessary to succeed – and meet our country's needs – in the future. In the next decade, our nation will face a significant workforce shortage in the critical science, engineering and technology fields that will put our leadership at risk – unless action is taken. With 4-H and the Cooperative Extension System's direct connection to the cutting-edge research and resources of the nation's 106 land grant universities and colleges, we are strategically positioned to strengthen the United States' global competitiveness and leadership in this area. The combination of content and context inherent in 4-H is proven to have a positive effect on youth, resulting in young adults who are prepared to contribute, excel, and lead their communities and work places. The 4-H SET program is the priority of the 4-H Youth Development Program nationally for the next five years.



Anticipated Outcomes:

- Increase in numbers of youth enrolled in Science, Engineering and Technology projects with focused attention to reaching youth through clubs, school enrichment, camps, and afterschool delivery methods.
- Participants demonstrate increased knowledge or skill gain related to science and technology.
- Participants demonstrate improved success in school science and/or increased interest in science and technology.
- Youth become contributing participants in science and technology related issues in their commitments and/or choose science and technology related professions and attribute same at least in part to involvement with the program.
- Increased number of youth who choose science and technology related college majors/ careers.
- Increase in volunteers recruited who have knowledge and skills in science and technology areas.
- Strong campus/county partnerships developed to enhance educational curriculum with focus on new areas of science, engineering and technology.



Youth Community Action/Citizenship involves young people and adults working together in partnership to make valuable contributions to strengthen or enhance communities. In its broadest sense, YCA refers to the authentic and meaningful engagement of young people in programs, organizations, and communities, where they have or share voice, influence, and decision-making authority. Youth-adult partnerships are more than good youth development. Young people's fresh ideas, conviction and willingness to work hard make them ideal partners in community change and social justice initiatives. Real youth-adult partnerships require young people and adults to share both power and responsibility, to listen and really hear one another, and to set aside all the stereotypes that each group represents to the other. Youth community action empowers youth and adults by building life skills through experiential learning.

Anticipated Outcomes:

- Increase in number of youth who participate in educational programs leading to community action initiatives.
- Youth will improve leadership skills through participation in train-the-trainer programs related to youth community action.
- Youth will demonstrate having gained life skills necessary to meet challenges of adolescence and adulthood in authentic decision-making partnerships with adults.
- Adults will demonstrate knowledge, skills and abilities and behaviors necessary to assist youth developing into productive community members.
- Increased instances in which youth and adults partner to improve quality of life within the community.



Healthy Living Healthy youth development strives to help young people develop the inner resources and skills they need to cope with pressures that might lead them to unhealthy and antisocial behaviors. To successfully grow into mature, productive, and contributing citizens, young people need to acquire knowledge, attitudes and behaviors that will

ensure current and future health. Additionally they need personal skills such as an ability to understand one's emotions and practice self discipline; and interpersonal skills such as working with others and developing and sustaining friendships. Early adolescence is a time of rapid change in young people, providing an opportune time to make a positive impact on their development.

Anticipated Outcomes:

- Increase in number of youth enrolled in programs geared at healthy lifestyle education.
- Participants demonstrate increased knowledge, attitudes and behaviors that insure current good health as well as those that assure future well-being such as: healthy lifestyle choices, exercise, nutrition, disease prevention, personal safety, and stress management.
- Reduction in incidence of obesity among youth.
- Increase in number of adult volunteers recruited who have knowledge and skills related to healthy lifestyle education.
- Strong campus/county partnerships developed to enhance educational curriculum in promoting healthy lifestyle choices among youth.

Context: Youth Development Essential Elements

4-H Youth Development creates opportunities for youth to experience Independence, Belonging, Generosity, and Mastery.

To experience INDEPENDENCE

I pledge my head to clearer thinking... Youth need to know that they are able to influence people and events through decision-making and action. By exercising independence through 4-H leadership opportunities, youth mature in self-discipline and responsibility, learn to better understand themselves and become independent thinkers.

To experience BELONGING

I pledge my heart to greater loyalty... Youth need to know they are cared about by others and feel a sense of connection to others in the group. This "fellowship" has always been an important part of a 4-H experience. 4-H gives youth the opportunity to feel physically and emotionally safe while actively participating in a group. Current research emphasizes the importance for youth to have opportunities for long-term consistent relationships with adults other than parents. This research suggests that a sense of belonging may be the single most powerful positive ingredient we can add into the lives of children and youth.

To experience GENEROSITY

I pledge my hands to larger service... Youth need to feel their lives have meaning and purpose. By participating in 4-H community service and citizenship activities, youth can connect to communities and learn to give back to others. It's clear that these experiences provide the foundation that helps us understand the "big picture" of life and find purpose and meaning.

Community service projects allow 4-H club members to see that their effort to help others is important and valuable. Youth learn that they do not live in a secluded world, but instead it is indeed a global community, which requires awareness and compassion for others.

To experience MASTERY

I pledge my health to better living... In order to develop their self-confidence youth need to feel and believe they are capable and they must experience success at solving problems and meeting challenges to develop their self-confidence. By exploring 4-H projects and activities, youth master skills to make positive career and life choices. To do so, youth must have access to quality research-based content and have the opportunity to learn by doing. Additionally, youth need to have a safe environment for making mistakes and getting feedback, not just through competition but also as an ongoing element of participation. Finally, youth need the breadth and depth of topics that allow them to pursue their own interests.

An Essential Elements planning tool is available on the web at <http://4htools.cals.arizona.edu/assessmenttool.cfm>

A skill is a learned ability. Life skills are those competencies that assist people in functioning well in the environments in which they live.

Life Skill Development

In 4-H we are concerned with helping youth become competent in the life skills that will prepare them for transition to adulthood. Positive youth development programs identify the skills within five targeted competency areas that are appropriate to the age of the youth in the program and offer experiences to teach these skills. Because skills are best learned through practice, many experiences that teach or reinforce skills must be provided. Mastery of any skill requires opportunities to try, make mistakes, and try again.

Health and physical skills – having the appropriate knowledge, attitudes and behaviors that will ensure current and future health

Personal and social skills – personal skills such as an ability to understand one's emotions and practice self discipline' and interpersonal skills such as working with others and developing and sustaining friendships

Cognitive and creative skills – a broad base of knowledge, knowledge application skills, life long learning skills and an ability to appreciate and demonstrate creative expression

Vocational skills – understanding and awareness of life options and the steps necessary to accomplish them. Adequate preparation for work and family life

Citizenship skills – understanding of the history and values of one's nation, community, race, ethnic and cultural heritage. Desire to be ethical and to be involved in contribution to the broader good.



Looking for resources for 4-H projects? The NYS 4-H Resource Directory has hundreds of educational curriculum for 4-Hers, leaders, and parents. Get involved, get interested, visit!

**NYS 4-H
Resource
Directory**
<http://www.cerp.cornell.edu/4h/>




4-H Youth Development Delivery

4-H provides youth development opportunities for youth through a variety of delivery methods.

Organized Clubs

4-H Clubs are organized groups of boys and girls who are supported by adult volunteer leaders. It has the advantage of providing long term involvement with the support of caring adults. The club conducts meetings and activities throughout the year, usually holding six or more official meetings annually. The club frequently includes opportunities for leadership, citizenship and public speaking. It may meet in any location and is authorized through the county and state to use the 4-H name and emblem. Youth ages 8-18 are eligible as members of clubs. Youth in clubs participate in one or more project areas. Clubs may be categorized in many different ways including: community clubs, special interest or single project clubs, after school clubs, home school clubs, and community service clubs. There are components and characteristics that are common to all 4-H clubs and these commonalities provide the definition of a 4-H club.



A 4-H Club:

- Is an organized group of youth
- Has a planned program that is ongoing through out all or most of the year
- Is advised by adult staff or volunteers
- Typically elects officers
- May meet in any location
- Includes opportunities to learn skills through a wide variety of project experiences
- Offers opportunities for leadership, citizenship and community service



Cloverbuds

The 4-H Cloverbud program is a special part of Cooperative Extension's 4-H Youth Development Program. Tailored to the developmental needs of five to eight year olds, it provides an exciting introduction to the 4-H club experience. The overall purpose of the 4-H Cloverbud Program is to foster the development of life skills that are essential for the cognitive, social, emotional and physical maturation of five to eight year old children. It differs from the organized club program in that Cloverbuds do not conduct formal business meetings or elect officers; the educational component of a cloverbud club meeting consists of activities rather than projects; cloverbud clubs do not conduct nor participate in competitive events; and cloverbud clubs follow a set of program guidelines based on developmental appropriateness.



4-H Afterschool

4-H Afterschool programs foster a unique combination of fun and learning that helps youth develop lifelong skills, such as leadership, critical thinking and teamwork. The programs address growing need for quality after-school programming in our country where as many as 15 million children come home to empty houses after school. Research shows that latchkey youth are at a higher risk for violent crimes, substance abuse, antisocial behavior, poor academic performance and becoming school drop-outs. To combat this, 4-H Afterschool programs offer a wealth of research-based, ready-to-use “learning by doing” curricula on a wide variety of topics. 4-H tailors programs to each urban, suburban or rural community, supporting programs in many shapes and sizes, depending on the needs and interests of local communities and the youth and adults involved.

4-H Camps

The 4-H camping system offers young people, ages 6-18 the chance to explore educational activities and classes in more than 25 subject areas, including swimming, outdoor living, environmental studies, kayaking, astronomy and drama. These opportunities are open to all interested youth. New York’s nine 4-H camps feature innovative programs, distinct natural surroundings, skilled staff, and facilities that are annually accredited by the state.

School Enrichment

4-H School Enrichment programs are the most popular way 4-H programs are delivered to youth in the state. Through collaboration with schools across the state, teachers and students in rural and urban districts have access to 4-H resources through curriculum, teaching aids, teacher trainings and special events and field trips. This method of delivering life skills to youth in the classroom uses 4-H curriculum as part of daily class lessons or as an intensive all-day special event. School enrichment programs provide several advantages — 4-H gains credibility among formal educators; students gain greater knowledge and skills in areas that might not be covered in their classroom; and a greater diversity of under-represented youth (who might not otherwise take part in a 4-H club, camp or after school program) are served.

The 4-H lessons offered through school enrichment link university research to 4-H’s experiential learning model, allowing students to do, then reflect, then apply what they’ve learned.

Cornell Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development 10/2007

