

# Essential Elements of 4-H Youth Development Fact Sheet

The eight Essential Elements of 4-H Youth Development are basic principles under which the 4-H Youth Development Program operates. Incorporating these elements enables the 4-H Program to focus on positive outcomes desired for youth; provide programs for all young people; view youth as central actors in their own development; and consider the development of the whole young person.

## *Essential Elements of 4-H Youth Development*

The table below lists the eight Essential Elements of 4-H Youth Development categorized in four concepts.

 	
<h2>Essential Elements of 4-H</h2>	
<h3><u>Belonging</u></h3>	<h3><u>Mastery</u></h3>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A positive relationship with a caring adult</li> <li>2. An inclusive environment</li> <li>3. A safe environment</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Engagement in learning</li> <li>5. Opportunity for mastery</li> </ol>
<h3><u>Independence</u></h3>	<h3><u>Generosity</u></h3>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Opportunity to see oneself as an active participant in the future</li> <li>7. Opportunity for self-determination</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Opportunity to value and practice service for others</li> </ol>

## *Meeting youth needs*

As we meet youth needs in positive ways through these Essential Elements, they develop strong moral character that will serve them well throughout their lives. Youth whose needs are met are characterized as cooperative, achieving, confident, caring, trusting, problem-solving, responsible, and loyal.



4-H Youth Development Programs meet each of the above concepts in the following ways:

### ***Belonging***

- Encouraging ties with family and community
- Respecting the value of diverse cultures
- Providing multiple opportunities for youth to develop relationships with adults and peers

### ***Mastery***

- Utilizing hands-on activities, projects and exhibitions to build life and vocational skills
- Supplementing competition with cooperative activities and games
- Focusing on long-term goals of learning, including feedback and learning from mistakes

### ***Independence***

- Including youth in planning discussions
- Giving youth responsibilities to carry out with a minimum of reminders
- Sharing power with youth through self-governance in significant areas

### ***Generosity***

- Offering opportunities for youth to serve their communities with peers and adults
- Encouraging bonds of friendship among youth and between youth and adults
- Reinforcing gestures of caring and concern for others

### ***4-H Impact Studies***

- Research has been conducted in multiple states to measure the impact of 4-H participation.
- Primary life skills developed through 4-H include :
  - Sense of responsibility
  - Leadership
  - Working with others
  - Setting goals
  - Self-confidence
  - Making decisions
- 4-H alumni agreed that 4-H made a difference in their lives because they:
  - Were involved in planning club activities (Belonging)
  - Were free to develop and use their skills (Mastery)
  - Had an opportunity to lead others (Independence)
  - Had an opportunity to contribute (Generosity)