

Lesson 1

Introducing Youth Development

Materials:

- ❑ Overhead or PowerPoint slide or poster of Strengths 4-H Offers Partnerships
- ❑ Posters and PowerPoint slide of definitions of Youth Development and Positive Youth Development

Objectives:

1. To reinforce the recognition of the unique contributions of the non-formal youth development field to the growth and development of youth.
2. To review the role of the youth development professional in that field.
3. To provide insight into the strengths 4-H brings to partnerships formed to deliver non-formal youth development programs.

What to do -

Use a mini-lecture to review youth development and the role of 4-H in the non-formal youth development field.

Refer participants to posters on wall and PowerPoint slide.

What to Say -

The goal of all 4-H programming is the growth and development of young people. Before we can implement 4-H programming, we need to understand the youth development field in which 4-H operates. I am going to spend a few minutes highlighting aspects of youth development and the role of 4-H and the 4-H youth development professional in that field. In lesson 2 we will take this a bit further as we address some principles and practices essential to effective youth development programming.

Youth Development has been defined as an ongoing process through which young people attempt to meet their needs and to develop the competencies they perceive as necessary for survival and transition to adulthood.

Positive Youth Development is development that is positive and productive for both youth and their communities.



What to do-

What to Say-

Youth Development refers to the development of the whole person and is not focused on a single attribute, skill, or characteristic, but rather the mastery of competencies needed for happy and productive adulthood. Positive youth development occurs from an intentional process that promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, choices, relationships, and the support necessary for youth to fully participate.

Youth development is the work of youth. Adults cannot do this work for them. But caring, knowledgeable and skilled adults can contribute to the success of young people as they grow and develop. Adults do this by providing environments for youth that are safe and nurturing and by expanding opportunities for experiences that will help young people develop skills they need for adulthood. Youth development professionals guide the community in providing these experiences.

In recent years, non-formal, out-of-school programs for youth have become recognized as key avenues for delivering these environments and opportunities. Universities and youth focused organizations have identified the research and knowledge base that supports effective programming for youth development as well as the effective principles and practices in delivering these programs. Course work leading toward a graduate degree in youth development is now available from several universities and university consortiums across the United States resulting in recognition of the need for preparation for participation in the field and providing support for professional staff development throughout the career cycle. A vocabulary to advocate for the work is in place.

Many people do not know that this non-formal, out-of school youth development work has a professional knowledge base or



What to do-

What to Say-

that the quality of the program depends upon the training of professionals in the field. It is up to the youth development professional to explain the field to the community and to assure that community members recognize the vital role this profession plays in our society.

So, what is 4-H Youth Development? 4-H Youth Development is the non-formal, educational program for youth of the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It has gained national reputation for its work with youth throughout the past century. 4-H is unique in the non-formal youth development field because it is a part of the land grant university system and has access to the most current knowledge and research provided by those universities related to youth development. In addition, 4-H staff and Cooperative Extension Offices are located in every county in the U.S. and are connected through an extensive electronic network that assures access to the most current developments from the field. This blending of research and field knowledge provides noteworthy support for the 4-H Youth Development Professional.

Use overhead, PowerPoint slide or poster to present strengths 4-H brings to partnership.

Agencies who have partnered with 4-H in recent years have cited the following strengths that 4-H brings to the partnership. We will look at these more closely as the training progresses.

4-H is a nationally recognized effective youth development education program.

Cooperative Extension/4-H has a strong



What to do-

What to Say-

local, county, state and national infrastructure and international support.

Cooperative Extension/4-H outreach service opportunities support communities and community service efforts.

Cooperative Extension/4-H research-based youth curriculum materials support the mission of other youth organizations.

Cooperative Extension/4-H staff are youth development professionals trained in adult education and youth programming and are capable and accessible resources.

Cooperative Extension/4-H has a record of successful partnerships with youth serving organizations including worldwide youth programs within the military.



PowerPoint presentation

- **National recognition**
- **National and local infrastructure/
international support.**
- **Service opportunities that support
communities**
- **Research-based curriculum**
- **Trained staff**
- **Record of successful partnerships**



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