



Unit 2: Learning in 4-H



Welcome back! In this unit we'll be talking about how young people learn in 4-H.

Essential Elements of Positive Youth Development



In 4-H, we focus on providing for the basic needs of youth to develop and thrive. We call them the four *Essential Elements of Positive Youth Development*. These elements include belonging, mastery, independence and generosity.

Youth must feel like they **BELONG** to and are part of the group and are connected to peers and adults in the group. **INDEPENDENCE** is met when youth make decisions that affect their lives. To achieve **MASTERY**, youth explore ideas and activities and learn skills in a non-threatening atmosphere. Finally, youth learn that **GENEROSITY**, or helping others, is a way for them to apply what they have learned, while also connecting to their communities and giving back.



Belonging, mastery, independence and generosity-- as a volunteer, you will be creating an environment where 4-H youth will learn through these Essential Elements of Positive Youth Development.



Learning in 4-H



Learning is the essential core of any 4-H program. Learning within 4-H can be seen in a variety of ways.

Learning in 4-H is about gaining knowledge and developing new skills and positive attitudes; developing and using creative talents; learning to make intelligent decisions and to solve problems; and learning to develop a feeling of self-worth, while respecting the rights and privileges of others.

Our shared goal is for young people to have opportunities to follow their dreams and direct their own learning. Youth learn in different ways and in different places. As a volunteer, you play an important role in guiding that learning.

Non-Formal Learning



A movement that began in the late 1960s acknowledged the importance of learning and education outside of the formal school setting. Today, 4-H still contributes to education mostly during out-of-school time.

4-H programs create this out-of-school education through intentional learning linked with community groups, a process called **non-formal** learning.

The physical location of this non-formal learning may be in a number of venues, such as school buildings, community centers, and libraries, among others.

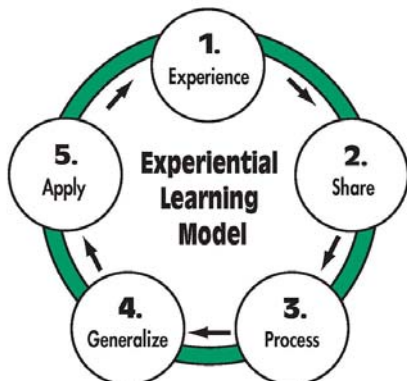
4-H Programming



The goal of 4-H programming is for young people to experience something new and develop life skills; to practice those skills until they are learned; and to be able to use those skills throughout their lifetime.



Experiential Learning



Pfeiffer, J.W., & Jones, J.E. "Reference Guide to Handbooks and Annuals"
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Youth learn most successfully when they use and connect new knowledge to other life experiences. This “learning by doing” model is called Experiential Learning. Beginning with the experiences of the learners, experiential learning involves learning by doing in five basic steps of a continuous cycle.

The first step is to do or experience an activity. The second and third steps are to share the experience and process what happened. Fourth, the members identify what they learned and how to connect this new knowledge to real life. Finally, the fifth step asks youth to apply the knowledge they have gained to new or different life situations.

Learning in 4-H



This complete process allows youth to learn new skills, cultivate new attitudes, and develop new ways of thinking. By incorporating Experiential Learning into the 4-H program, we can ensure that learning is self-directed and that young people can evaluate their own learning through processing and applying what they have learned.

As a 4-H volunteer, you will be asked to create learning opportunities where youth learn through this experiential learning model.

Extension staff and other volunteers are available to help you put these steps into action. This concludes the unit on learning in 4-H.