



# Four Essential Elements of Positive Youth Development

In 4-H, the critical components of Positive Youth Development and a successful learning experience are a sense of Belonging, Independence, Mastery, and Generosity.

## Belonging

### A Positive Relationship with a Caring Adult

A caring adult acts as an advisor, guide and mentor. The adult helps set boundaries and expectations for young people.

### An Inclusive Environment

An inclusive environment is one that creates a sense of belonging, encourages and supports its members with positive and specific feedback.

### A Safe Environment

Youth should not fear physical or emotional harm while participating in a 4-H experience whether from the learning environment itself, adults, other participants or spectators.

## Mastery

### Opportunity for Mastery

Mastery is the building of knowledge, skills, and attitudes and then demonstrating the competent use of this knowledge and skills in the manner of a proficient practitioner. The development of mastery is a process over time.

### Engagement in Learning

An engaged youth is one who is mindful of the subject area, building relationships and connections in order to develop understanding. The engaged learner has a higher degree of self-motivation and an inexhaustible capacity to create.

## Independence

### Opportunity to See Oneself as an Active Participant in the Future

The ability to see oneself in the future is to have hope and optimism to shape life choices to facilitate the transition into participating in the future.

### Opportunity for Self-Determination

Youth must exercise a sense of influence over their lives, exercising their potential to become self-directing, autonomous adults.

## Generosity

Opportunity to Value and Practice Service to Others Finding one's self begins with losing yourself in the service of others. Service is a way for members to gain exposure to the larger community, indeed the world itself.



An EEO/AA employer, University of Wisconsin Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title IX and American with Disabilities (ADA) requirements. Developed by Deb Ivey, Iowa County 4-H Youth Development Agent and René Mehlberg, Winnebago County 4-H Youth Development Educator. © 2018 by the Board of

Regents of the University of Wisconsin System Developed by the Wisconsin 4-H Office, 431 Lowell Hall, 610 Langdon St., Madison, WI 53703. The 4-H name and emblem are federally protected under Title 18 US Code 707.