



YOUTH AS PARTNERS APPROACH



Providing opportunities for youth and adults to work as partners in making decisions that impact a variety of components in 4-H programs.

YOUTH AS PARTNERS APPROACH

The youth as partners approach involves:

- Youth who will develop and enhance decision-making skills and leadership skills.
- Adults who will accept youth as valuable resources, develop skills to promote youth decision-making, and foster youth leadership competencies.
- Youth and adults together who will develop positive attitudes about working together.

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

YOUTH BENEFITS

- Stronger sense of self.
- Critical thinking, teamwork, and organizational skills.
- Long-term commitment to service.

ORGANIZATION BENEFITS

- Involving youth positively impacts culture, structure, and programming.
- Youth and adults gain deeper connection to mission and vision.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

- Youth take active roles alongside adults in community planning and organizing.
- Communities with involved youth report less violence and enhanced overall public health.

CHECKING ASSUMPTIONS

- Adults need to be willing to share power and responsibility with youth.
- Youth need to be willing to accept responsibility.
- Both adults and youth need skills to successfully work together.
- Organizations need a clear vision of the purpose of the partnership.

ADDRESSING BARRIERS

- Accommodate youths' schedules when planning meetings.
- Meeting locations should be easily accessible to youth.
- Ensure appropriate consent forms have been obtained for participation.

SUSTAINING PARTNERSHIPS

- Share decision-making by creating youth advisory boards
- Communicate openly by developing clear roles and expectations while being flexible.
- Make it fun! Allow youth to be themselves, encourage laughter, and actively listen to youth.

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach does not discriminate on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, pregnancy, race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or status as a U.S. veteran, or other protected classes. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies may be directed to the Diversity Advisor, 2150 Beardshear Hall, 515 Morrill Road, Ames, Iowa 50011, 515-294-1482, extdiversity@iastate.edu. All other inquiries may be directed to 800-262-3804.



YOUTH AS PARTNERS PHILOSOPHY

- In a democracy, people of all age groups have a right and responsibility to participate.
- Adults and youth need to identify and agree upon common values, then learn how to work together as partners and benefit from their diversity.
- Collaborative power, rather than unilateral power, is the focus.
- Youth develop sense of personal worth and competence by performing tasks that contribute to well-being of others.
- Leadership skills are best learned through experiential learning.
- Youth leadership in decision-making is vital to the future of clubs and communities.
- Investing in human capital is critical to the future of clubs and communities.
- Young people are the center of youth organizations.
- Specific program elements are essential to meet youth needs and support 4-H outcomes (see the 4-H Equation).



SUCCESS INDICATORS

CHANGE IN ATTITUDES

- Youth feel they have influence in the decisions that affect them.
- Adults feel youth are competent and effective decision makers.

ENTHUSIASM

- Youth and adults are actively engaged in programming and share ownership of activities.
- Youth show evidence of thriving.

MEMBERSHIP

- Recruitment and retention rates increase as a result of youth communicating positively about their experience to their peers.
- Adults share confidence in partnering with youth and mentor new adult members.
- Programming includes actively engaged youth and adults.

RESOURCES

- Making it Work - A Guide to Successful Youth-Adult Partnerships: <http://4h.ucanr.edu/files/2423.pdf>
- Quality Matters in 4-H - Voice and Engagement: http://4h.missouri.edu/documents/QM_toolkit_VoiceandEngagement.pdf
- Youth-Adult Partnership Rubric: <https://cerc.msu.edu/yaprubric>
- Youth-Adult Partnership Self-Assessment: <http://agrifecdn.tamu.edu/od/files/2010/09/Youth-Adult-Partnership-Self-Assessment.pdf>
- Youth-Adult Partnership for Youth Empowerment: <https://fyi.uwex.edu/youthadultpartnership/>
- The 4-H Equation: <https://store.extension.iastate.edu/product/12565>

SELECTED REFERENCES

- Lawford, H. L., & Ramey, H. L. (2017). Predictors of early community involvement: Advancing the self and caring for others. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 59(1-2), 133-143. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12120>
- Scales, P. C., Benson, P. L., & Roehlkepartain, E. C. (2011). Adolescent thriving: The role of sparks, relationships, and empowerment. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 40(3), 263-277. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10964-010-9578-6>
- Scheve, J., Perkins, D., Mincemoyer, C., & Welsh, J. (2005). Say YES to youth: Youth engagement strategies. University Park, PA: Penn State (cyfar.cas.psu.edu/resources.html)
- Zeldin, S., Christens, B. D., & Powers, J. L. (2013). The psychology and practice of youth-adult partnership: Bridging generations for youth development and community change. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 51(3-4), 385-397. doi: 10.1007/s10464-012-9558-y

Revised from VI950902H *Youth as Partners: Mission and Statements in Support of Philosophy, 1995*, by Shane Kavanaugh, Ph.D., 4-H Postdoc Research Associate; and Brenda Allen, Ph.D., 4-H Youth Program Specialist, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.