

Essential Elements of 4-H



<p>BELONGING</p> <p>Youth need to know they are cared about by others and feel a sense of connection to others in the group. This “fellowship” has always been an important part of a 4-H experience. 4-H gives youth the opportunity to feel physically and emotionally safe while actively participating in a group. Current research emphasizes the importance for youth to have opportunities for long-term consistent relationships with adults other than parents. This research suggests that a sense of belonging may be the single most powerful positive ingredient we can add into the lives of children and youth.</p>	<p>MASTERY</p> <p>To develop self-confidence youth need to feel and believe they are capable, and they must experience success at solving problems and meeting challenges. By exploring 4-H projects and activities, youth master skills to make positive career and life choices. To do so, youth must have access to quality research-based content and have the opportunity to learn by doing. Youth also need a safe environment for making mistakes and getting feedback, not just through competition but also as an ongoing element of participation. Finally, youth need the breadth and depth of topics to pursue their own interests.</p>
<p>INDEPENDENCE</p> <p>Youth need to know that they are able to influence people and events through decision-making and action. By exercising independence through 4-H leadership opportunities, youth mature in self-discipline and responsibility, learn to better understand themselves and become independent thinkers.</p>	<p>GENEROSITY</p> <p>Youth need to feel their lives have meaning and purpose. By participating in 4-H community service and citizenship activities, youth connect to communities and learn to give back to others. It’s clear that these experiences provide the foundation that helps us understand the “big picture” of life and find purpose and meaning. Community-service projects allow 4-H club members to see that their effort to help others is important and valuable. Youth learn that they do not live in a secluded world, but in a global community that requires awareness and compassion for others.</p>

Source: The National 4-H Impact Design Implementation Team identified these essential elements as the critical elements in a 4-H experience.

Essential Elements of the 4-H Experience

The Kansas 4-H Youth Development Program uses several primary delivery modes in fostering positive youth development. These major delivery modes are community clubs, project clubs and camping. While each delivery method is unique in its implementation, all are designed based on the essential elements.



	ELEMENT	COMMUNITY CLUB	PROJECT CLUB	CAMPING
BELONGING	<p>Caring Adult A caring adult is actively involved as an advisor, coach, guide, or mentor.</p> <p>Safe & Inclusive Environment Youth will participate in 4-H activities without the fear of physical or emotional harm.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program facilitated by club leaders, parents, community volunteers; •VIP registered adult leaders and volunteers; • Physical meeting space analyzed; •Supervision ratios of youth/adults. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program facilitated by trained group leaders, parents, community staff and volunteers; •VIP registered adult leaders and volunteers; • Physical meeting space analyzed; • Supervision ratios of youth/adults. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program facilitated by trained camp staff, volunteer helpers, parents, legal guardians; • VIP registered camp staff, adult staff, leaders and volunteers; •Physical space analyzed annually for safety; • Supervision ratio of youth/adults for overnight generally 10/2; depends on age.
MASTERY	<p>Engagement in Learning and Opportunity for Mastery The process over-time of building knowledge, skills, attitudes, and wisdom, and demonstrating their uses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hands-on club activities, project experiences, presentations; sequential, long-term learning may occur over several years; • Broad knowledge learned in one or more project area; life skill development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hands-on group activities; short or long-term; • Knowledge learned in a specific area of interest; life skill development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hands-on camp activities and project experiences, journaling.
GENEROSITY	<p>Service Youth actively value and practice service to others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Club community service projects, individual service activity; •Members determine and plan activities; •Members help each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group community service projects, individual service activity; • Members may help determine activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teamwork with other campers, campground service projects.
INDEPENDENCE	<p>Self Determination Youth feel a sense of control over their lives and exercise their potential to become self-directing, independent adults</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation, project choices, goals, leadership opportunities; •Selection of hands-on club activities, project experiences; • High level – Member choice of project and activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of hands-on group activities and individual project experiences; • Groups available for different interests, skills allow choice ; • Moderate/High-Topics may be adult or member determined. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of opportunities based on interest and experience; • Hands-on camp experiences; • Camps available for different interests, skills – allow choice.

Source: The National 4-H Impact Design Implementation Team identified these essential elements as the critical elements in a 4-H experience. Information adapted from: UW Extension, Feedback Form, and Positive Youth Development: The Eight Essential Elements of a 4-H Experience, Iowa State University Extension Helping Leaders Be 4-H Savvy: Positive Youth Development by Sheri Seibold, Extension Educator, University of Ill and Alaska 4-H Volunteer Handbook, University of Alaska