



New Mexico 4-H



Youth Development Program

The focus of the New Mexico 4-H program is youth development. In order to understand the concept of youth development, a definition is given by the Iowa State University Targeting Life Skills Model (1996) that “Youth development is a process of mental, physical, social and emotional growth during which young people prepare to live a productive and satisfying life within the customs and regulations of their society.” The New Mexico 4-H Youth Development Department strives to provide programs that will contribute to the growth and development of all youth, ages 5 – 19, in the state.

The work of the New Mexico 4-H Youth Development program is directed by the Essential Elements of Positive Youth Development seen below.



Belonging

- Positive Relationship with a caring adult
- An inclusive environment
- A safe environment

Mastery

- Engagement in Learning
- Opportunity for Mastery

Independence

- Opportunity to see oneself as an active participant in the future
- Opportunity for self-determination

Generosity

Opportunity to value and practice service for others



In the 2005 - 2006 4-H year, research was conducted by the New Mexico State 4-H Office to determine attributes of 4-H members and their involvement in risky behavior during out-of-school time. This study surveyed youth in 5th, 7th and 9th grade and youth that were involved in 4-H and other activities were compared with youth that were not involved in any activities. One analysis of the study found that youth involved in 4-H were less likely to be involved in risky behavior and found several positive attributes that follow the essential elements of youth development.

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Youth that were involved in 4-H are:

- More likely to have good grades (A's and B's)
- Less Likely to:
 - Cheat on Tests
 - Drink
 - Shoplift
 - Use drugs
 - Damage property
 - Use smokeless tobacco
 - Be involved in sexual activities

The four basic needs of youth shown below indicate survey finding in each area.

Belonging

Youth that are involved in 4-H are more likely to:

- Talk to parents and other caring adults about sex
- Stay away from trouble

Youth are more likely to feel that

- Adults make them feel important
- Listen to youth
- Adults care about youth
- Feel that they matter to Adults
- Feel that they are useful to family and the community



"4-H has taught me to stand up straight, hold my head up high with shoulders back and be proud of who I am."

-- K. O.

Dona Ana County 4-Her

Independence

Youth that are involved in 4-H are more likely to:

- Be elected to leadership positions and serve in leadership roles in school
- Set goals for themselves
- Be responsible for their own actions
- Help decide what goes on at school
- Be comfortable speaking in public
- Feel that life has a purpose

Mastery

Youth that are involved in 4-H are more likely to:

- Serve on committees in school
- Volunteer in class
- Feel that they are good role models for others
- Find ways to make a bad situation better
- Have good organizational skills

Generosity

Youth that are involved in activities like 4-H are more likely to:

- Help others in school
- Participate in community service

Youth that are involved in 4-H are involved in positive youth development and are less involved in risky behavior.



4-H is the Youth Development Program of New Mexico State University.

The New Mexico 4-H Foundation is a partner in providing educational opportunities to New Mexico youth and adults.

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