4-H Members Thrive!

By being open to challenge and discovery

Challenging 4-H members in supportive and helpful ways teaches them that they can learn, grow, and get better through effort. Encouraging youth to take positive risks, like speaking in front of others, helps develop confidence and a growth mindset. Youth have a growth mindset when they believe that they can get better at things by working hard and putting in effort. Research shows that a growth mindset is an important quality for thriving and future success.

Becoming open to challenge and discovery is a developmental process—meaning that it increases a little bit at a time over childhood and adolescence. Helping youth develop their abilities happens by gradually increasing the challenge of 4-H opportunities.

When you work with 4-H youth:

- Identify ways to challenge learning and growth in small but steady steps
- Encourage youth to try new things, even if they are uncertain they can succeed
- Teach youth the importance of a growth mindset, and help them understand that through effort they can get better
- Use the phrase “not yet” to help youth think positively about the effort they are putting into learning a new skill
- Teach youth to support each other when they are learning challenging things

Thriving youth have the desire and ability to explore and try new things and challenges. They also possess a growth mindset that supports effort in learning over innate ability.

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"In a growth mindset, challenges are exciting rather than threatening. So rather than thinking, oh, I’m going to reveal my weaknesses, you say, wow, here’s a chance to grow."

Carol Dweck, Ph.D.
Growth Mindset Researcher
Stanford University

Oregon State University
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4-H is Positive Youth Development

4-H is based on a positive youth development (PYD) approach that recognizes all youth have interests, abilities, and strengths that can be enhanced by participation in 4-H programs. Research shows that participation in high quality 4-H programs increases thriving in youth, and thriving youth achieve important developmental outcomes, such as academic motivation and achievement.

References


