



4-H Members Thrive!

Through a Pro-Social Orientation

Pro-social youth care about others and take actions that reflect this caring. Pro-social development happens through social learning, where youth observe and remember the behaviors that are rewarded, and then begin to practice them. Doing so helps youth internalize positive attitudes and actions until they become part of the young person's core values. Pro-social development is facilitated when youth feel that they belong and matter to others. It is through interaction with others that youth learn and practice pro-social values, leading ultimately to a young person who cares about others and gives back to his or her community.

When working with 4-H youth:

- Ensure that 4-H programs are welcoming to all, which sets the stage for youth belonging
- Set clear pro-social behavior expectations in 4-H programs
- Engage youth in developing a list of positive behaviors that they all agree to promote and practice in 4-H
- Help youth practice taking the perspective of others— especially when there are disagreements
- Recognize, support and encourage kindness and empathy among youth
- Help youth practice generosity to others through regular community service projects and activities
- Help older youth see that they are important role models for younger 4-H members

Thriving youth see helping others as a personal responsibility, and live up to the values of respect, responsibility, honesty, kindness, and generosity. Thriving youth care about, and give back to, their communities



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“Establishing positive social norms with rules of behavior, clear expectations, values and morals, and obligation for service is a key feature of positive youth development programs.”

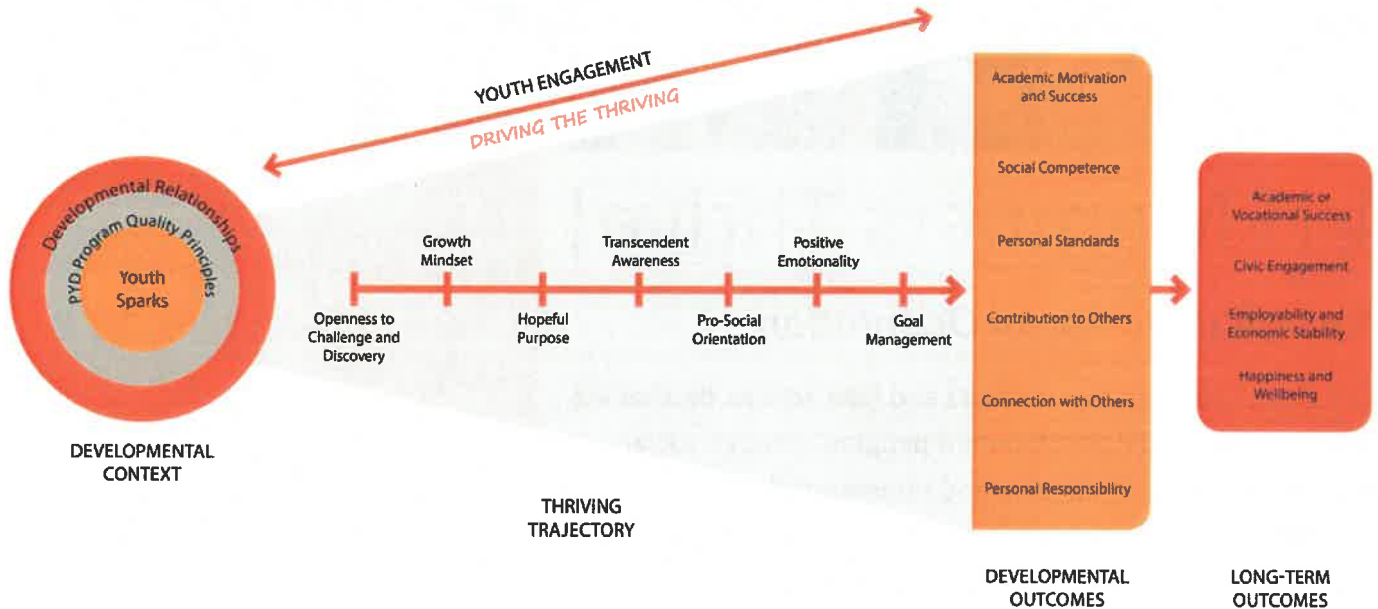
J. Eccles and J. A. Gootman, Authors
Community Programs to Promote Youth Development



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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

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