4-H Members Thrive!

Through Self-Regulation and Goal Setting

Thriving youth have their eyes on the future and set goals to get them where they want to go. Self-regulation, or the ability to make choices with a goal in mind, is a key skill for goal setting and a future orientation. Thriving youth are able to make choices and take actions for both short and long-term success, especially when it means letting go of short-term gratification in exchange for achieving a longer-term goal. Thriving youth also persevere to reach their goals, even when the going gets tough. This perseverance is known as "grit" and research shows that grit is a bigger predictor of success than innate intelligence or ability.

When working with 4-H youth:
- Encourage and help youth to set goals for what they want to achieve. Start with modest achievable goals that gradually get more difficult.
- Help youth identify steps they will take to achieve their goals.
- When youth struggle, remind them of the idea of grit, and that with effort, their goals are achievable.
- When youth reach roadblocks to their goals, encourage them to reflect on what didn’t work and develop new strategies for achieving the goal.
- Remind youth of the importance of delaying short-term gratification for longer-term goals.
- Recognize youth for the achievement of their goals and the effort they put in to making their goals a reality.

Thriving youth set goals and persevere in achieving their goals. They also make self-regulatory decisions that lead to better short-term and long-term success.

Mary E. Arnold, Ph.D.
Professor and 4-H Youth Development Specialist
College of Public Health and Human Sciences
105 Ballard Hall
Corvallis, OR 97331
mary.arnold@oregonstate.edu

“Grit is passion and perseverance for very long-term goals. Grit is sticking with your future, day-in, day-out. And working really hard to make that future a reality. Grit is living life like it’s a marathon, not a sprint.”

Angela Duckworth, Ph.D.
Distinguished Professor of Psychology
University of Pennsylvania

Oregon State University
College of Public Health and Human Sciences
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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