

## 4-H VALUES

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4-H is grounded in the following values:

**Democratic Participation**—youth are recognized as contributing members in their communities and in organizations like 4-H. Democracy is a social condition that leads to equity, respect and tolerance for the individual and his/her views. 4-H encourages youth to join or share with others while promoting equity, respect and tolerance.

**Informal Education**—learning occurs in many different settings. Informal education occurs in casual conversations, hands-on projects, and a myriad of other settings that help youth gain the knowledge, skills and competence for living their lives. Meeting youth in their own settings is critical to 4-H youth development.

**Relationship Building**—4-H youth work is about building positive relationships of trust, confidence, respect, equity and feelings of well-being. Relationship building is a cornerstone to youth work. It's not so much about the activities or the content of the activities as much as it is about the connections made between people.

**Empowerment**—4-H youth development is about empowering individuals to have control over the decisions that influence their lives and well-being. A goal of 4-H youth development is to give youth a voice, to give them the opportunity to have influence in the affairs related to their lives. Empowering youth often involves assisting them in developing a sense of ownership as well as giving credence to their ideas, values, opinions and interests.

**Learning and Engagement**—Activities are not seen as ends in themselves, but as vehicles for building skills

and competencies (learning) and solidifying relationships and commitments (engagement). The creation of safe, non-threatening, nurturing environments is essential to learning and engagement.

Participation and Choice—in 4-H, youth need opportunities to be active participants in the design, management, implementation, and assessment of the activities, structure, institutions, and environments that affect their lives. Youth need opportunities to choose how, when, in what and with whom to be engaged. 4-H youth development is grounded in voluntary participation.