

The Essential Elements of 4-H Youth Development

The Power of the Wind curriculum is designed to engage youth in learning opportunities that promote positive youth development. In 4-H, the critical components of a successful learning experience are a sense of Belonging, Independence, Mastery, and Generosity. Across the curriculum, each of the 4-H Essential Elements (Belonging, Independence, Mastery, and Generosity) are embedded through the learning experience. In this Facilitator's Guide, opportunities are provided to put the Essential Elements into practice. It is your role, as the facilitator, to foster growth of the Essential Elements through the learning experience.

Belonging

Youth need to know they are cared about by others and feel a sense of connection to others in the group. As the facilitator, it is important to provide youth the opportunity to feel physically and emotionally safe while actively participating in a group. In the facilitator's guide, tips are provided on how to create a safe and inclusive environment and how to foster a positive relationship with youth learners. Under the sections in the youth guide titled *Learning from Each Other*, there are discussion questions that encourage youth to learn from each other, synthesize, and use ideas collaboratively.

Independence

Youth need to know that they are able to influence people and events through decision-making and action. They learn to better understand themselves and become independent thinkers. Throughout this curriculum, youth are given opportunities to reflect, design, and journal their thoughts and responses to the challenges, explorations, and investigations. Youth begin to understand that they are able to act as change agents with confidence and competence as a result of their learning.

Mastery

In order to develop self-confidence youth need to feel and believe they are capable and they must experience success at solving problems and meeting challenges. Youth need the breadth and depth of topics that allow them to pursue their own interests. Through this curriculum, youth are introduced to expert knowledge. In the sections titled *Engineering Design with Sue Larson*, youth are given an expert perspective that is practical and relevant to their age and explorations. Across the curriculum, youth are encouraged to think and act like engineers and scientists and use tools to examine, experiment, evaluate, and draw their own conclusions.

Generosity

Youth need to feel their lives have meaning and purpose. Through this curriculum, youth examine the use of wind power across the United States. They are encouraged to broaden their perspective, find relevance in it, and bring ideas back to their community. In the sections in the Youth Guide titled *Learning from Each Other*, they learn to work together as partners or teams and learn to value the contributions of others.

Adapted from 4-H Essential Elements of 4-H Youth Development, Dr. Cathann Kress, 2004.