

## Youth Development Module

### PowerPoint Presenter's Notes

*These notes are intended to be used as a general discussion outline and not as a script to be read.*

#### Slide # 1

This training module focuses on the work of the board to support the positive development of all youth.

#### Slide #2

This module helps board members:

- better understand the field of youth development,
- acknowledge their contributions to youth development, and
- lead efforts in their communities focused on positive youth development programs, partnerships and policies supporting youth.

#### Slide #3

It is important that extension board members know that the Kansas law empowers them to support youth development through 4-H and beyond.

#### Slide #4

Extension board members can be most effective if they:

- understand what information and data reveal about youth,
- invest extension resources in the most effective practices and programs,
- provide for high quality services,
- equip paid and volunteer youth workers with training and professional development, and
- are allies, giving youth opportunities for meaningful involvement.

#### Slide #5

As youth development leaders, board members should understand what information and data reveal about the health and well-being of youth.

Information helps leaders make decisions to focus their efforts on what is needed most. Sometimes, data serve as a starting point or baseline to determine if efforts are effective. As the saying goes, "If you don't know where you've been, how will you know where you're headed, and how will you know when you get there?"

#### Slide #6

Information from the annual Kansas Kids Count survey helps community leaders know how well youth are doing in the state or in a particular county.

#### Slide #7

Information is often compiled from surveys conducted in schools. Every two years, Kansas high school students complete the National Center for Disease Control's Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS).

Though many youth challenge their communities, schools and families with negative and high-risk behaviors, the majority of youth are positive, contributing members of their communities.

#### Slide #8

Extension boards contribute to the positive development of youth through:

- understanding developmental **processes**,
- endorsing **principles** from the field of youth development, and
- supporting **programs and practices** based on youth development principles.

#### Slide #9

As children mature, they change physically and mentally. Social, emotional and moral development take place as well. Critical thinking skills are not necessarily

in step with physical development. Youth still go through cognitive, decision-making “growth spurts” in their mid-teens and even into early adulthood.

Development is the result of a give-and-take relationship between an individual’s characteristics and temperament, the environment and experiences surrounding that individual, and the person’s reactions to those factors. This dynamic relationship is described in the Social Ecological Theory.

Consequently, the “nature versus nurture” argument is less an issue since science has confirmed that this dynamic relationship between youth and experiences in various settings influences healthy development.

#### Slide #10

Until the 1990s, it was assumed that if problem behaviors were decreased or prevented, then youth would automatically develop into positive, productive adults.

Thanks to advances in the field of youth development, we now understand that both the prevention of problems *and* the promotion of positive behaviors are necessary. The national 4-H Youth Development system has led in the understanding of positive development through its support of research around the “5 C’s.” Consensus is growing among youth development experts that the “5 C’s” are the long-term outcomes or goals for all youth development practices and programs.

#### Slide #11

There is also consensus that youth workers must intentionally instill their services, opportunities and supports with the features of positive developmental settings.

#### Slide #12 (Features of Positive Development Settings)

The 2002 “Community Programs to Promote Youth Development” report, published by the National Research Council (NRC) and the Institute of Medicine (IOM), provides evidence that youth workers influence the development of youth if they intentionally enrich contexts and experiences with the positive features. This finding is based on the dynamic relationship between youth and their environments described by the Social Ecological Theory.

#### Slide #13 (4-H Essential Elements)

Well before the 2002 NRC/IOM youth development report, an expert panel identified eight elements that must be present in 4-H programs for youth to thrive. Those 4-H Essential Elements align well with the NRC/IOM report.

Ultimately, if adults in charge of programs guarantee that these elements are present in every event and opportunity, then the “5 C’s” should be results for youth participants.

#### Slide #14

It is the responsibility of youth development workers to plan and conduct programs with the features of positive developmental settings in mind. The youth worker must also use principles from the field of youth development to ensure they are contributing to healthy developmental processes. Organizational leaders are responsible for setting policies that support and reward quality youth development programs.

#### Slide #15

The Cooperative Extension Service is not alone in providing youth development programs. Allied youth organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, schools, faith groups, youth sports, American Legion programs and workforce preparation groups also help address obstacles and provide opportunities that promote development for all youth.

#### Slide #16

All youth benefit from high quality services, opportunities and supports that promote positive development. No one organization, agency or youth professional can do it all. It is important for youth development organizations to work together. It is also important for those organizations to support ongoing professional development for paid and volunteer staff, since the field of youth development continues to innovate.

#### Slide #17

The 4-H Youth Development system encourages youth workers to build competence in six areas:

- youth development;
- youth program development;
- volunteerism;
- equity, access and opportunity;
- partnerships; and
- organizational systems.

The Professional Research, Knowledge and Competency (PRKC) Model of 4-H has been a “blue ribbon standard” for other national youth development networks. The 4-H PRKC includes self-assessment tools for youth workers, plans for organizational professional development and apprenticeship opportunities.

Slide #18

Not only can boards support ongoing professional development for extension youth development workers, but board members can be advocates for youth. They can support and provide youth with meaningful leadership and decision-making opportunities.

Board members can be effective allies for all youth and give voice to young people in their communities.

Slide #19

(Resources)

Slide #20

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