

4-H Youth Development Communication

Situation

As communities seek to improve the opportunities for young people to develop life skills, reduce risk factors, and build assets, they are turning to quality programs designed to extend in-school learning to out-of-school opportunities for youth, and resources for adults who support children and youth. These programs take place both in schools and in the community. They provide children and youth with an opportunity to develop skills and interests in a wide range of domains by offering high interest activities designed to extend the learning day for participants and provide opportunities to apply in-school learning to real life situations.

Additionally, according to ACT fewer than three in 10 graduates are career ready. Employers have also indicated major discrepancies in the readiness of their employees. In a report by the partnership for 21st century skills the following areas were identified as major skill needed by incoming employees: • Professionalism/Work Ethic • Oral and Written Communications • Teamwork/Collaboration and • Critical Thinking/Problem Solving.

As the premier Positive Youth Development organization in Kansas, K-State 4-H is committed to building outstanding leaders with marketable skills to succeed in today's global society. 4-H empowers youth to reach their full potential, working and learning in partnership with caring adults.

What We Did

Efforts to build communication skills within K-State Research and Extension 4-H Youth Development programming as reported included having youth research, write and present a speech for local 4-H Day competition or attend a community conversation, communication boot camp or public speaking academy.

Outcomes

Outcomes as reported by 354 youth who completed the survey included:

- 97% strongly agreed or agreed: I have improved my communication skills
- 95% strongly agreed or agreed: I ensure that others understand the message
- 90% strongly agreed or agreed: I can use technology to help me express my ideas
- 89% strongly agreed or agreed: I have used the communication skills I have learned in a leadership role
- 84% strongly agreed or agreed: I am comfortable sharing my thoughts with other
- 82% strongly agreed or agreed: I have the confidence to speak in front of groups
- 75% reported yes: As a result of being in 4-H, I have given a prepared presentation at school

Success Story

When asked to describe a 4-H experience that has had the greatest impact on your ability to speak in front of others, or describe the 4-H experience that has had the greatest impact on your ability to speak in front of others, responses given were:

An experience where 4-H communication skills have helped me is when I give reports. I don't get nervous in front of people. Talking in front of people has gotten easier for me because of all the activities that 4-H offers. 13 year old from Central Kansas District

Even though I am still extremely nervous about speeches, 4-H has helped me get through and speak loudly and clearly. 13 year old from Geary County

Presenting at meetings made me more confident at presenting for school projects. 15 year old from Johnson County

When I first joined 4-H, I couldn't speak in front of anyone. Now I can easily do my project talks. 13 year old from Sunflower District

The Community Conversation had the greatest impact on my ability to speak in front of others. I'm interested in social problems, so I really enjoyed today's conversation. 17 year old participant at a Community Conversation

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