

4-H Life Skills

Oklahoma 4-H Volunteer Development Series



Selecting the Life Skill to be Taught and Practiced

Learn More...

4H.VOL111 Developing 4-H Project Work

4H.VOL.118 Experiential Learning

4H.VOL.109 Planning: a key to success

4H.VOL105 Recognition Model

One of the primary goals of the 4-H program is to help youth develop important life skill. Life skills are tools youth (and adults) use to cope with daily situations, make important decisions and enhance the quality of life. Life skills are developed as a member learns a “skill” and/or gains “knowledge” through a 4-H project or program. A “**skill**” is a learned ability to do something well. A “**life skill(s)**” is the ways we apply the information learned to real life situations. The 4-H life skills can be seen in the Targeting Life Skills Model (Hendricks 1996).

When the 4-H program began, the purpose was primarily to teach youth project skills, such as how to raise corn, livestock and vegetables, as well as how to cook a meal. Today the primary purpose of 4-H is youth development. 4-H uses a variety of program methods and areas of interest (known as projects) to reach and teach youth.

As youth explore projects or participate in programs they are experiencing an activity and learning subject matter. As the child processes the experience they learn to generalize and relate the experience to their daily life, as well as applying what was learned to new situations. For example, to teach decision making skills, youth actually practice decision-

making and discuss/process the experience.

The Targeting Life Skills Model developed by Iowa State University Extension (1996) targets life skills in a bull’s-eye – aiming 4-H youth toward life skills development using the four H’s of the Clover. A well-balanced 4-H experience for

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Life skills help youth become competent, capable and contributing individuals.



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the individual, club, activity or event will focus equally on all four quadrants of the model.

In designing an educational experience, it is suggested that the parent, volunteer or educator select and focus on one skill from each quadrant and integrate it into the subject matter content. The key to “life skills” development is the individual having an opportunity to talk about (reflect) and apply an experience to other aspects of their life. Example – How are following directions for a recipe and measuring ingredients applicable to other experiences in life?

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| Head | Thinking | Service Learning — gaining skill and experience through active participation in organized service experiences, that meet actual community needs and that are coordinated with the school and community; learning linked with real life. |
| | | Critical Thinking — strategies for analyzing, comparing, reasoning, and reflecting focused on deciding what to believe or do; discovering meaning; building connections with past learning. |
| | | Problem Solving — clearly identifying a problem and a plan of action for resolution of the problem. |
| | | Decision Making — choosing among several alternatives. |
| | | Learning to Learn — acquiring, evaluating and using information; understanding the methods and skills for learning. |
| Managing | Resiliency — adaptability; the ability to recover after experiencing misfortune or disease; coping with change; overcoming problems and difficulties. | |
| | Keeping Records — recording selected useful information, usually focused for a specific purpose. | |
| | Wise Use of Resources — using sound judgment; not wasteful; being responsible; setting priorities. | |
| | Planning/Organizing — a method for doing something that has been thought out ahead of time; how the parts can be put together. | |
| | Goal Setting — deciding on the purpose or desired result; something to work toward. | |
| Caring | Nurturing Relationships — two or more people form a connection that contributes to their mutual well being, each providing care and attention to the other person. | |
| | Sharing — to have, use or do together with another or others. | |
| | Empathy — being sensitive to or identifying with another person’s situation, feelings or motives. | |
| | Concern for others — to worry about, give attention to, the well being of others. | |
| Heart | Relating | Accepting Differences — <i>to recognize and welcome factors that separate or distinguish one person from another.</i> |
| | | Conflict Resolution — finding and applying creative and non-destructive ways to resolve differences between two or more persons; getting along with others. |
| | | Social Skills — skills people use when interacting with others and to behave in the accepted manner or customs of the society in which they live; adapting well to one’s social environment. |
| | | Cooperation — to work or act together for a common purpose or mutual benefit. |
| | | Communication — exchange of thoughts, information or messages between individuals; sending and receiving information using speech, writing, gestures and artistic expression. Public Speaking is not a life skill in the Hendricks model. For those who want a definition Public Speaking — the ability to effectively communicate in front of a group of people. |

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| Hands | Giving | Community Service/Volunteering — to donate one’s time and/or effort of one’s own free will for the benefit of the group without guarantee. |
| | | Leadership — to assist the group in meeting its goals by showing or directing along the way; using personal influence to guide the group in reaching its goals. |
| | | Responsible Citizenship — an individual demonstrating love and devotion in response to duties, rights, and privileges as a member of a community or country. |
| | | Contributions to group efforts — to give or supply along with others for a common purpose. |
| Health | Working | Marketable Skills — to have the abilities wanted by employers and needed to hold a job. |
| | | Teamwork — work done by two or more people, each doing parts of the whole task. |
| | | Self-motivation — able to make the needed effort to carry out a task or a plan; personal will to take action. |
| Health | Being | Self-esteem — pride in oneself; proper regard for oneself as a human being; valuing oneself; a feeling of ability to cope; learning to accept and like oneself. |
| | | Self-responsibility — taking care of oneself; being accountable for one’s behavior and obligations; choosing for oneself between right and wrong. |
| | | Character — a person’s moral strength; integrity, fortitude, reputation; a person’s usual qualities or traits; adherence to a code of values or ethical principles. |
| | | Managing Feelings — expressing one’s feelings appropriately and in proportion to circumstance. |
| | | Self-discipline — control of self and one’s conduct in line with moral character (what is right and wrong), personal values (what one considers important), and societal expectations; control before acting in a hurtful or harmful way. |
| | | Healthy Lifestyle Choices — increased knowledge, attitudes and behaviors that insure current good health, as well as those that assure future well-being such as: exercise, nutrition, disease prevention, personal safety and stress management. |
| Health | Living | Stress Management — to direct or have control over physical or mental strain and pressure, or one’s reaction to it; coping with change. |
| | | Disease Prevention — to anticipate and ward off conditions that keep the body from functioning normally, such as infection or stress that impairs normal physiological functioning. |
| | | Personal Safety — taking care to avoid danger, risk, or harm; self-protection; being cautious, careful; physically and emotionally safe. |

Resources:

Pat Hendricks, 1998 4-H Life Skill Inventory, Appendix A