

# Positive Youth Development

## ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE FUTURE

### Meeting Plan

#### Background



Active participation in the future describes opportunities for youth to participate in activities that shape their lives and make contributions to their communities. Youth engage in meaningful challenges that support their interests and thus impact their long-term goals. This is done through participation in leadership and community activities and by pursuing various career topics.

#### **Assessment: Does our environment encourage active participation in one's future?**

- Do youth feel they are in control of their futures? Help them to realize that what they're doing now is shaping their life choices as they learn more about their likes and dislikes.
- Do youth have opportunities to teach or help others? Involve older youth according to their interests by helping them become 4-H mentors. They can serve as a big buddy in orienting new club members as well as help established members begin new project areas.
- Are older youth assisted in setting goals related to career or future aspirations? Incorporate discussion of careers and other future involvements into project learning activities, club programs, and field trips. Encourage youth to keep a journal of all the possible careers related to a project in which they are enrolled. WOW! Wild Over Work, a 4-H career curriculum for grades K-6, can be used as a group project or theme for a series of club meetings.
- Are resources available to youth after they leave the program? Help youth evaluate their participation in 4-H by reflecting on their past experiences. What might they miss most about their 4-H involvement? Encourage them to pursue other avenues where they might continue to build on these interest and skill areas.

**Anything shared here we need to discuss and work on together?  
(Write it down.)**

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**Roll Call Suggestions**



Name your favorite project or hobby and a career that might be associated with it.

Name one skill or interest area that you could teach or share with another 4-H'er.

Name a skill you have learned or acquired (or something you know how to do) and how that skill will help you in the work force.

State the career or job title of your parent or another family member.

**Activities to Encourage Opportunities for Self-Determination**

*Refer to the following Activities Guides:*

**Life Line  
Managing  
Nudge Your Neighbor**

Lessons borrowed from: National 4-H Council  
Unlock Your Leadership Potential  
Building Assets Together

# Activity Guide for ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE FUTURE

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## Life Line



### Materials needed:

8x14 paper (2 sheets per person),  
tape, pens or pencils.

Time: Variable.

This activity allows 4-H members to share life events, which influence development, build empathy and trust among group members, and gain understanding that some events are beyond our control (how to cope, etc.). 4-H members also gain insight into events within our control (problem-solving), and realize that others may have had similar events (they are not alone, should feel group support, etc.). The difference lies in how individuals cope and problem-solve.

- Explain to youth that they should tape two pieces of paper together and then draw a horizontal line across the paper. Ask them to put their birth date at the left end and today's date at the right end. Along the line, place marks to represent significant life events, such as when they started kindergarten, the birth of a sibling, the death of a grandparent, when they learned how to ride a bicycle, etc. Under each mark, write a brief description and approximate age (e.g. 3 yrs./mumps, 4 yrs./brother born, 5 yrs./kindergarten, 6 yrs./1<sup>st</sup> grade . . .)
- After their lifelines are complete, write beside each event whether it was within their control or not (N=No Control, C=Control). Once the group completes their lifelines, take turns sharing.
- Optional Activity: If time permits, have youth continue their life line into the future with projected events such as their first job, marriage, birth of children, death, etc. Once again, have them indicate whether each event is within their control. Encourage the youth to discuss what things they would need to do to "accomplish" these events.

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## "Life Line" Processing Questions

### *Sharing*

- What did you like about this activity?
- How did you decide what to choose?
- What surprised you about this timeline?

### *Processing*

- What did you learn about yourself by doing this activity?
- How have these events been important in your life?
- Give an example of a challenge you had and what you did to solve it.

### *Generalizing*

- Why is it important to know about these various events in your life?
- How would you describe your coping and problem-solving skills?
- What common events did most group members place in their timelines?

### *Applying*

- How could these skills that you practiced help you in other ways?
- What did you learn about yourself that will help you in the future?
- How will you deal with situations (both within and outside of your control) differently in the future?
- How might you begin planning for future life events that are within your control?



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## Managing

### Materials needed:

Goal Setting Activity  
Sheets, pens or pencils  
Time: Variable



This activity allows youth to reflect on what is important to them and identify goals toward which they are striving. The objective is to prioritize goals that they should be focused on now and determine strategies to attain these goals.

Good time management means doing important things now, *not* later. Using your time to pursue goals has many payoffs - increased satisfaction, relaxation, and much less stress!

Managing time is actually a matter of managing yourself. One of the first steps to managing yourself and making your goals attainable is to know where you are going. *"Failing to plan is planning to fail."*

- Hand out copies of the *GOAL SETTING* Activity Sheet to youth, and have them fill it out.
- Discuss as a group their answers to the questions.

### "Managing" Processing Questions

#### *Sharing*

- How did you feel when writing down your goals? Did you become aware of goals you had that you had not realized were yours?
- Was it difficult to break down your most important goal into smaller, more manageable tasks?
- What kinds of things did you discover about yourself?

#### *Processing*

- How are your current goals different from your long-term goals?
- Do your current goals lead to those goals?
- Why is it important to think through and decide what goals are important to you?

#### *Generalizing*

- Does listing your goals help you prioritize them? Why or why not?
- Why did you rank your goals as you did?
- How would you describe your *managing* skills?

#### *Applying*

- How can listing and prioritizing goals help with goal achievement in your life?
- What are some strategies you use right now to ensure you reach your goals?
- When is a good time to start planning to achieve your long-term goals? Why?

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## Nudge Your Neighbor



In this exercise, youth answer questions about the kind of future they hope for. They are challenged to evaluate what is most important to them and clearly communicate these aspirations to their peers in this individual/group activity.

Have youth form teams of four and sit in a tight circle (their knees should be touching as they sit with their legs crossed). Have teams answer the questions below (write their answers on newsprint or a chalkboard).

Designate a person to start answering each question. That person must speak and then elbow the person on his/her right to signal that it's that person's turn. Continue until everyone has answered the question. Then the team should address the next question.

Ask the following questions of each participant/team:

- What will your financial situation be like in the future?
- What will your family be like in the future?
- What kind of career or job do you think you'll pursue in the future? Why?
- What kind of education do you need so that you can pursue the career or job you want?
- Where do you think you'll live in the future?
- Which issues will you be most concerned about in the future?
- What will be your biggest challenges in the future? Why?
- How do you expect to deal with what the future presents to you?

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## "Nudge Your Neighbor" Processing Questions

### *Sharing*

- What was it like to have to make quick decisions about what is important to you and then share that information with your peers?
- Did your peers' reports influence your decisions at all? If so, how?

### *Processing*

- What did you learn about yourself by doing this activity?
- Why is it important to know what you want out of life?

### *Generalizing*

- What do you feel you need to work on to be effective in reaching these life goals you shared with others today?
- Where can you find assistance or special resources to help make some of your decisions about your life goals (finances, education, careers, etc.)?

### *Applying*

- How did this activity change your thinking about your own future?
- What did you learn from this experience that will help you relate better to others in the future?