

Information and Instruction For Faculty, Extension Educators, Staff, and Volunteers Who Work with 4-H Youth Development Programs in Indiana



“Those who believe in and work with youth have confidence in our future.”

The Cooperative Extension Service is an educational system with a tradition of shared accomplishments. The people involved — faculty, Extension educators, staff, and volunteers — share the responsibility and opportunity for success. The system has high standards. As faculty, Extension educators, staff, and volunteers rededicate their commitment to the well-being of youth so, too, does the system rededicate its commitment to providing support for the well-being of the people involved.

The Cooperative Extension Service and the 4-H Youth Development Program will:

- Provide assistance, support, and encouragement to help achieve the success of the 4-H Youth Development Program.
- Implement ongoing affirmative action policies and assist those at the local level to do the same.
- Provide education and training related to issues and the needs of faculty, Extension educators, staff, and volunteers.
- Involve individuals when establishing policies and procedures that affect program design.
- Provide up-to-date, relevant, and useful information which helps faculty, Extension educators, staff, and volunteers succeed.
- Provide position descriptions and reasonable feedback related to the performance of individuals.
- Provide leadership training and proper orientation to organizational goals and visions.
- Provide appropriate personal recognition for accomplishments and energy devoted to 4-H Youth Development Programs.
- Set an educational tone that allows for enjoyable and meaningful 4-H Youth Development Programs.
- Facilitate appropriate community-wide recognition of 4-H Youth Development Program goals and accomplishments.

Adult Behavioral Expectations to Promote the Well-Being of Youth

All faculty, Extension educators, staff, and volunteers who work with 4-H Youth Development Programs will sign a statement agreeing to comply with the Adult Behavioral Expectations (4-H 785).

The Adult Behavioral Expectations listed below give 4-H Youth Development faculty, Extension educators, staff, and volunteers the opportunity to reaffirm their

commitment and dedication to the well-being of young people. When all faculty, Extension educators, staff, and volunteers sign a copy of this document, individuals will be making a collective statement that youth in the 4-H Youth Development Program are treated with respect, dignity, and attention to individual needs. The faculty, Extension educators, staff, and volunteers who work with the 4-H Youth Development Program in Indiana are proud of the quality educational programs provided to youth of this state and their personal commitment and responsibility to nurture the positive growth and development of youth. The statement reads as follows:

In my role as a 4-H Youth Development faculty, Extension educator, staff, or volunteer, I will:

- Respect, adhere to, and enforce the rules, policies, and guidelines established by the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service including all laws related to child abuse and substance abuse.
- Conduct myself in a courteous, respectful manner, exhibit good sportsmanship, and demonstrate reasonable conflict management skills.
- Be truthful and forthright when representing the 4-H Youth Development Program.
- Under no circumstances allow, consume, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at 4-H Youth Development Program events or activities.
- Recognize that verbal or physical abuse, failure to comply with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination laws, or committing criminal acts are not acceptable practices in 4-H Youth Development Programs.
- Accept my responsibility to represent 4-H Youth Development Programs with dignity and pride by being a positive role model for youth.
- Will accept supervision and support from salaried Extension staff or designated management volunteers.
- Will participate in orientation and training, which includes youth protection standards, sponsored by the Purdue Cooperative Extension Service.
- Operate machinery, vehicles, and other equipment in a safe and responsible manner when working with youth participating in 4-H Youth Development Programs.
- Will treat animals in a humane manner and teach program participants appropriate animal care and management.
- Will use technology in an appropriate manner that reflects the best practices in youth development.

- Accept my responsibility to promote and support the 4-H Youth Development Program in order to develop an effective county, state, and national program.

For the Well-Being of Youth and Adults Who Work with 4-H Youth Development Programs

As 4-H Youth Development faculty, Extension educators, staff, and volunteers we have many rights and responsibilities related to our opportunity to teach, guide, nurture, enable, support, encourage, and inspire youth who participate in the 4-H Youth Development Program. We have the right to learn with youth, to have our own opinion, to have freedom of speech, to share learning from our personal experience, and to have fun. We also have the responsibility to be positive role models, to abide by laws that relate to child welfare, and to observe the emotional and physical status of the young people we contact.

Youth in Crisis and Recommended Action

Relatively few youth suffer serious adolescent problems such as delinquency, running away, suicidal depression, and severe eating disorders. These problems, however, can put a teenager in a position where he/she may destroy his/her life or that of a family member. The sincere interest and attention of a caring adult can be a positive part of a young person's life and thus a protective factor in helping to prevent youth in crisis. The strategy outlined below is a universal procedure adults can use to demonstrate understanding and support for a young person.

Strategies for Action

Use **AIM: Accept, Identify, and Move**

- **Accept** the teenager regardless of his/her behavior. Show that you care for him/her by listening non-judgmentally. If the behavior is life threatening, however, immediately remove physical danger if possible.
- **Identify** the youth's feelings through open, reflective, and interactive communication. Help youth determine if he/she is angry, sad, hurt, lonely, afraid, confused, or a combination of these feelings.
- **Move or act.** Do something. If the person is in physical danger, help him/her secure a doctor, get to the hospital, or notify the proper authority. If the person is emotionally distraught, help him/her make a phone call to set up an appointment for counseling. If at all possible, help the teenager to do something for himself or herself.

Evidence of severe youth crisis

Child may:

- demonstrate dramatic changes in behavior
- become withdrawn and spend increasingly longer periods of time alone
- seem very tired, unkempt, restless, or hyperactive
- have unexplained emotional outbursts
- have a dramatic weight change

Legal Requirements Related to and Recommendations for Action on Underage Drinking and Illegal Use of Drugs

Not only are the consumption of alcohol by minors and the use of illegal drugs violations of Indiana law, they are also serious concerns of many communities. Therefore, they cannot be condoned in association with any 4-H Youth Development Program activity. Any faculty, Extension educator, staff, or volunteer can be liable both criminally and/or civilly if underage drinking associated with an Extension 4-H Youth Development Program activity is condoned, ignored, or accepted. The liability coverage carried by Purdue would not provide protection to an employee or volunteer who violated state or local laws or ordinances concerning alcohol or illegal drugs.

The best news since 1980 is the steady decline of overall drug (including alcohol) use among high school youth. On the other hand, the use of drugs by adolescents in the United States is among the highest of all industrialized nations. An alarming number of high school youth drink and use tobacco. Teenagers are very likely to ignore the potential risks of drugs, especially tobacco and alcohol, because they often believe they are not vulnerable to injury and especially to death.

It is strongly recommended that adults act as a positive role model for youth and expect the laws and organizational rules to be followed. It is important that adults recognize and continue to help communicate the negative health and safety consequences of drug and alcohol use.

Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action

Extension faculty, educators, staff, and volunteers do not consciously exclude people; nonetheless, the law requires that programs associated with public money need to seek ways to regularly and consciously include people. Faculty, Extension educators, staff, and volunteers in 4-H Youth Development Programs must make sure programs are open to those desiring to participate and accept minorities and individuals from varied backgrounds. Faculty, Extension educators, staff, and volunteers should use all reasonable effort to make individuals aware of program opportunities.

The backdrop for this responsibility is the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Current regulations prohibit discrimination in programs with respect to race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability.

It is acceptable to have requirements for participation in certain activities, but they must be reasonable. Requirements may not be based on personal characteristics listed in the Civil Rights Act. The goal of anti-discrimination is to make sure programs are fairly and equally delivered to the people who have funded them: the public.

ADA (The Americans with Disabilities Act)

The Americans with Disabilities Act, signed into law on July 26, 1990, prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in employment, transportation, public accommodation, communications, and activities of state and local government. This law has very special implications for 4-H Youth Development Programs since they are sponsored and financially supported by state and local governmental agencies. Therefore, all facilities, services, and communications associated with 4-H Youth Development Programs must be made accessible, according to specific guidelines.

Information Regarding Volunteer Liability and Insurance Recommendations

Insurance coverage is a serious consideration for many who work with youth. The liability policies carried by Purdue University are endorsed to provide coverage for volunteers involved in activities under the auspices of and approved by the Purdue Cooperative Extension Service (CES).

It is critical that roles and responsibilities of those who work with 4-H Youth Development Programs be documented in written form before an accident happens. Extension faculty, educators, staff, and volunteers must endeavor to record activities and related plans through written programs, meeting minutes, personal notes or letters, memos, annual reports, job descriptions, and rosters.

It is important that individuals act in a reasonable and prudent manner when working with 4-H Youth Development Programs. This means that a person is acting in a way that others who have similar background and training would act in a similar circumstance. Negligence is conduct in which a reasonable and prudent person would not have engaged. Using this document to understand personal obligations and responsibilities related to promoting the well-being of youth in the 4-H Youth Development Program is a step toward preventing negligence.

Volunteers also should review carefully their personal automobile liability coverage to be certain limits are adequate for the exposures they face. County youth professionals can advise of limits recommended by the University. The Purdue automobile liability coverage is *excess only* and would become effective only if the volunteer's personal coverage limits become exhausted through claim settlement or court judgment. Purdue provides no coverage for physical damage to vehicles owned by volunteers. It is also recommended that all faculty, Extension educators, staff, and volunteers review their personal coverage with an insurance professional and consider the purchase of personal umbrella liability coverage.

It is recommended that accident insurance be obtained on all 4-H Youth Development members for the time they are involved in 4-H Youth Development Program activities. Most counties obtain insurance on an annual basis for all members on the roster. This needs to be confirmed by checking with the county office professionals.

Any claim or legal action filed or any incident which could result in a claim must be reported immediately to the local County Extension Director who will make a report to Purdue's Risk Management Office.

Thoughts Related to Safe Operation of Machinery, Vehicles, and Equipment

Faculty, Extension educators, staff, and volunteers who are acting reasonably and prudently when participating in 4-H Youth Development Program activities and events with 4-H Youth Development Program youth must operate machinery, vehicles, and equipment in safe ways. They should use common sense and good judgment, follow accepted operating procedures, obey traffic laws including the use of seat belts, use protective clothing (helmets, ear/eye protection, etc.) when needed, and demonstrate procedures and practices that youth will learn and adopt.

Unsafe practices and behaviors may lead to immediate injury of one or more children and to the development of lifelong habits that may result in unnecessary and senseless accidents. It is especially important that adults be positive role models and demonstrate common-sense safety when working with animals and when using hand tools, power tools, agricultural equipment and machinery, lawn and garden equipment, chemicals, pesticides, and shooting equipment.

Tax Deductions for Volunteers

Volunteers may deduct *unreimbursed out-of-pocket* expenses directly related to their volunteer services *if they itemize deductions*. Check with the Internal Revenue Service and Publication #526 "Charitable Contributions" for detailed information

Legal Requirements for Responding to the Suspicion of Neglect and Abuse

Relationship with children

To protect the individual, 4-H Youth Development faculty, Extension educators, staff, and volunteers are encouraged to avoid being alone with a single young person who is involved with or has just completed a 4-H Youth Development Program activity. 4-H Youth Development faculty, Extension educators, staff, and volunteers should not discipline youth in 4-H Youth Development Programs by using physical punishment or fail to provide the necessities of care, such as food or shelter. 4-H Youth Development faculty, Extension educators, staff, and volunteers should be alert to the physical and emotional well-being of all children each time they participate in a program.

Due to changes in the larger and more complex society of which we are a part and to some unfortunate incidents in some other youth organizations, it is now appropriate that members of the 4-H Youth Development community are aware of their responsibility related to child welfare. Even though child neglect and abuse are not always easy to recognize, some children are in desperate need of help. A 4-H Youth Development volunteer who works with and cares for the well-being of a child over a period of time may notice indicators that suggest a child is in special need of services. According to Indiana law, a child is in need of services if the child's physical or mental condition is seriously impaired or seriously endangered as a result of the inability, refusal, or neglect of the child's caretaker to supply the child with necessary food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education, or supervision; is seriously injured by an act of the child's caretaker; or is a victim of a sexual offense.

Reporting Procedures

It is the legal obligation of *every adult* in Indiana to report any known or suspected child abuse or neglect. Reports of known or suspected child abuse or neglect are made to the Child Protective Services, a program of the County Office Division of Family and Children (DFC). The phone number of Child Protective Services should be listed in local telephone books. The person who reports remains anonymous, unless the report is malicious or in bad faith. Once the report has been filed, it is then up to the proper authorities to determine action. If the report warrants an investigation, a Child Protective Services case worker investigates. 4-H Youth Development faculty, Extension educators, staff, and volunteers should be

sensitive to the need for confidentiality in the handling of information in this area.

Involved faculty, Extension educators, staff, and volunteers will discuss matters pertaining to abuse and suspected abuse only with the immediate supervisor and the Child Protective Services personnel exercising the service functions.

Below is a limited list of indicators of child neglect and abuse. Additional information about recognizing child neglect and abuse is available from county family services agencies.

Indicators of neglect

- Child:
- lacks basic and necessary medical or dental care
 - lacks shelter that is safe, warm, and reasonably sanitary
 - lacks adequate clothing for winter
 - has apathetic appearance
 - has poor academic achievement and/or poor attendance patterns
 - is chronically hungry or tired

Indicators of unusual physical injury

- Child:
- has bruises on face or in unusual patterns or clusters
 - has dry, cigarette, rope, or immersion-type burns
 - has head injuries indicated by absence of hair or hemorrhaging under scalp

Indicators of sexual abuse

- Child:
- tells stories of a sexual nature or reports sexual activity
 - has sudden fear of neighbors, a relative, or a sitter
 - suddenly becomes unruly, destructive, shy, or withdrawn
 - is persistently irritable, cranky, or short-tempered
 - has pain, itching, or bleeding and may walk differently

For more information or training, contact your County Cooperative Extension office.

It is the policy of the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service, David C. Petritz, Director, that all persons shall have equal opportunity and access to the programs and facilities without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, or disability.

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