



Parent Guide



Second Edition

Written by Dr. Thomas R. Lee, Project Director 1994-2004
Department Head,
Family, Consumer, and Human Development
Utah State University

Special thanks to Chris Woodbury

Cover design and layout by Ben Barnes
Utah State University Extension Graphic Designer

Copyright 2002, 2006 by 4-H YFP USU Extension



Mentor Contact Information

My Youth's Mentor Is: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Other Information: _____

Belief Statement

The goal of the 4-H Mentoring: Youth and Families with Promise program (4-H YFP) is to increase the developmental assets of youth, ages 10-14, and their families. This is accomplished through one-to-one mentoring, involvement in 4-H clubs, community service, and family activities. By uniting youth, families, dedicated staff, and screened and trained volunteers, 4-H YFP will help youth reach their dreams and potential.

4-H Mentoring: Youth and Families with Promise

Welcome to 4-H Mentoring: Youth and Families with Promise (4-H YFP), an exciting and unique mentoring program to strengthen your child and your family. 4-H YFP involves youth, ages 10-14, and their families. The 4-H YFP program is designed to increase youth's interpersonal competence, improve their academic performance and strengthen family relationships. Using the best mentoring practices and current research on youth development, USU Extension developed 4-H YFP to serve and strengthen youth and families. Careful evaluation and research show that 4-H YFP does make a difference. 4-H YFP is also part of the Utah Mentoring Partnership and the National Mentoring Partnership.

4-H YFP What You Should Know:

1. WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT
2. YOUR ROLE
3. WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME
4. WHO TO CONTACT IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS

1. What You Can Expect

Mentors

Your Youth's Mentor:

- Will meet with your youth about once a week.
- Is fully screened through background checks from the State's Bureau of Criminal Investigation.
- Has his or her references checked by our staff.
- Is a volunteer who cares about young people and wants to help them succeed.
- Will spend time each week with your youth getting to know him or her and doing positive, fun things together in safe and approved environments.
- Receives training on working with youth in the most effective ways to help them develop socially and intellectually.
- Reports monthly to the 4-H YFP staff on their activities.

A mentor is another person in someone's life who will take sincere interest in them, is a positive role model to them, and helps them become their best.

Family Night Out

Once a month, your whole family is invited to Family Night Out for fun activities and good food. Family Night Out helps strengthen family relationships because activities focus on becoming a healthier and happier family. Parents report Family Night Out has been good for their entire family. Watch for a calendar of upcoming Family Night Out activities so you can be there with your family.

4-H

4-H YFP is part of the 4-H program through Cooperative Extension. If you associate 4-H with things like cows and cooking, you are right because many 4-H members work on those projects. But 4-H has evolved over the last 100 years to include many more projects such as computers, art, citizenship, aerospace, health, and lots, lots more. Youth in 4-H YFP take part in monthly 4-H activities with their mentors where they'll learn new skills and participate in great projects.

2. Your Role

4-H YFP strengthens youth and their family relationships. Your involvement is very important in helping your child be successful.

Support youth by:

- Helping them meet at scheduled times with mentors and grandmentors.
- Helping them attend and participate in 4-H activities.
- Allowing them to meet with their mentor(s) each week. (Find ways to discipline youth other than limiting time with their mentor.) As you and the mentor give your youth positive attention, behavior problems and relationships will generally get better.

Family Night Out

- Commit to attending Family Night Out with your family. 4-H YFP will do the most for your family and your youth if you participate in Family Night Out.
- Complete end-of-year questionnaires. 4-H YFP staff will bring you and your youth questionnaires to answer.

Yearly evaluations help us know how well the program is working. Your answers will be confidential and private. You will never be identified individually, but your individual participation makes a big difference for the program.

3. What You Can Do at Home

Together we want to help your son or daughter succeed and avoid problems such as violence, drug use, or school dropout. Some things you can do as a parent/guardian to help your youth develop into a capable, caring, and productive adult are:

Be a Positive Role Model

As parents/guardians, grandparents, and mentors who care about youth, we need to remember to live our lives as if someone is watching us—because someone is. Your youth is constantly watching your example. He or she sees how you deal with sadness, frustration, conflict, and anger. If we deal with our problems in positive and constructive ways, we will help them face similar issues in healthy ways.

Spend Time and Be Involved

The most important things to give your children are not things at all, they are simply your time and attention. To a child, your time and interest are the most valuable things they can have. It can be hard to find the time for your youth, be involved in their activities and in their education, but your influence can make a difference in their health and success.

Teach Values

Friends have a lot of influence, but youth still look to parents and other adults for guidance about important decisions and values. Take time to talk about your values. There are opportunities every day at home, in the neighborhood, at church, and at school to teach respect for the rights of others, respect for self, and responsibility for one's own actions. Other important values you will have opportunities to be examples of are: honesty, fairness, trustworthiness, and kindness.

Monitor Media

Video games, the Internet, movies, and popular music influence youth, and not always in a good way. Youth get ideas about how to treat other people, what kinds of people are more important than others, and what is really important in life from popular media.

- Talk to youth about messages in the media and help them see other points of view.
- Be aware of the media your youth are listening to and watching.
- Limit access to negative media by keeping TV's, computers, and video games out of youths' room. Keep them in common areas in your home so you can see what they see.
- Watch TV with them, listen to their music, and discuss their entertainment choices.
- Limit the total amount of TV, video games, and computer time and encourage other activities.
- Read a good book together as an alternative to TV or the Internet.

Provide Opportunities to Succeed

Youth who don't believe they can succeed in life are much more likely to engage in risky and negative behaviors. They may not be excited about their future and may not care about preparing for it. But youth who believe in their own potential, and know that hard work pays off, will accomplish worthwhile goals. They also avoid harmful or dangerous behaviors that keep them from achieving their dreams. Help youth identify their talents and provide opportunities where they can develop them. 4-H activities can help this happen. Experiencing positive success is very important for youth.

Teach Kindness

Children aren't born knowing how to get along with others, but research shows that even babies have a natural sense of empathy or concern for others. Children learn through everyday experiences at home, at school, at church, or in a youth group to develop kindness or unkindness. If children are treated with kindness, they will treat others kindly and learn to live with kindness and respect for others.

Parents Make a Difference

The problems facing youth today are serious. Smoking, drinking, and drug use affect too many. Youth violence is a big problem. Sexual activity among youth continues to result in lifelong consequences that affect youth and their families. Solutions are not simple or quick. But as a parent, you can make a difference in these frightening trends through your kindness, time, example, and love. Hopefully, as a nation, we will make healthy and positive youth development a high priority. Research has shown mentoring can help achieve that goal.

Support your child's involvement, become involved as a family in Family Night Out, and look forward to positive and fun experiences. Thanks for your participation in 4-H YFP!

4. Who to Contact If You Have Questions

If any of the following problems or concerns arise, you **NEED TO CONTACT** your 4-H YFP Site Coordinator or County Extension agent immediately!

- If your mentor repeatedly misses appointments with your youth.
- If you are moving or have a new phone number.
- If you or your youth are confused or worried about what is expected or taking place in the program.

Place contact/address label for the
4-H YFP Site Coordinator here.

Place contact/address label for
the Extension Agent here.

You can also call or email the Director of the Program:
Dr. Kevin Kesler, Director of 4-H Youth Development
Utah State University Extension
Logan, UT 84322-4900
(435) 797-4444
kevink@ext.usu.edu

Notes





For More Information Contact:
Dr. Kevin Kesler
Director, 4-H and Youth Development
Utah State University Extension
Logan, UT 84322-4900
(435) 797-4444

Utah State University is committed to providing an environment free from harassment and other forms of illegal discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age (40 and older), disability, and veteran's status. USU's policy also prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment and academic related practices and decisions.

Utah State University employees and students cannot, because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or veteran's status, refuse to hire; discharge; promote; demote; terminate; discriminate in compensation; or discriminate regarding terms, privileges, or conditions of employment, against any person otherwise qualified. Employees and students also cannot discriminate in the classroom, residence halls, or in on/off campus, USU-sponsored events and activities.

This publication is issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work. Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Noelle Cockett, Vice President for Extension and Agriculture, Utah State University.