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For Immediate Release
Buffalo County Extension

Developing Leadership Skills

Society has the responsibility for helping its young people to develop an array of skills related to productive citizenship. Leadership skills are an important subset of the youth development skills that are necessary to nurture. Studies show that young people who engage in youth development and youth leadership experiences demonstrate higher levels of academic achievement, community involvement, self-efficacy, self-advocacy, and self-determination, and are able to transition to adulthood more successfully than their peers who do not have these experiences.

6 Skills to Teach Today's Youth to Become Tomorrow's Leaders

Self-Confidence – This is one of the most important skills for a future leader, but it can't be taught. Kids learn self-confidence not just through praise, but also by having opportunities to learn things and do a good job.

Decision Making – Good leaders have to be able to make good decisions. Giving youth the opportunity to make decisions for themselves is therefore very important. When children are supported to make responsible decisions, it helps them manage their own behavior and relate more effectively to others.

Problem Solving – Problem solving is another important skill for good leaders to have. Helping kids learn how to identify their options can help them ensure they are making healthy decisions for themselves.

Teamwork – The ability to work together with others as part of a team is not simply a skill needed at school, it is a vital skill used in all areas of life. Although we envision leaders as being above their peers, they also need to be able to work well with others.

Money – Being able to manage money, on a personal level as well as on a business or corporate level, is important for youth to be a leader someday. High-powered leadership positions almost always have some sort of financial or budgeting aspect to the job.

Passion and Motivation – Passion and motivation aren't really skills, but they are important for future leaders nonetheless. Encouraging these traits can be accomplished by helping them to pursue and develop their interests when they are young, so that they learn what it feels like to do something because they want to, not because they have to. A supportive learning environment can go a long ways in shaping the future generation of leaders.

Opportunities provided through 4-H Clubs, such as being a club officer or committee chairperson are a great way to begin to develop leadership skills. For additional methods to strengthen your leadership skills through 4-H contact Kerry Elsen at 308-236-1235 or kerry.elsen@unl.edu.