



4-H Study of Positive Youth Development: Replication Study Findings Report for Missouri

TUFTS UNIVERSITY & BOSTON COLLEGE

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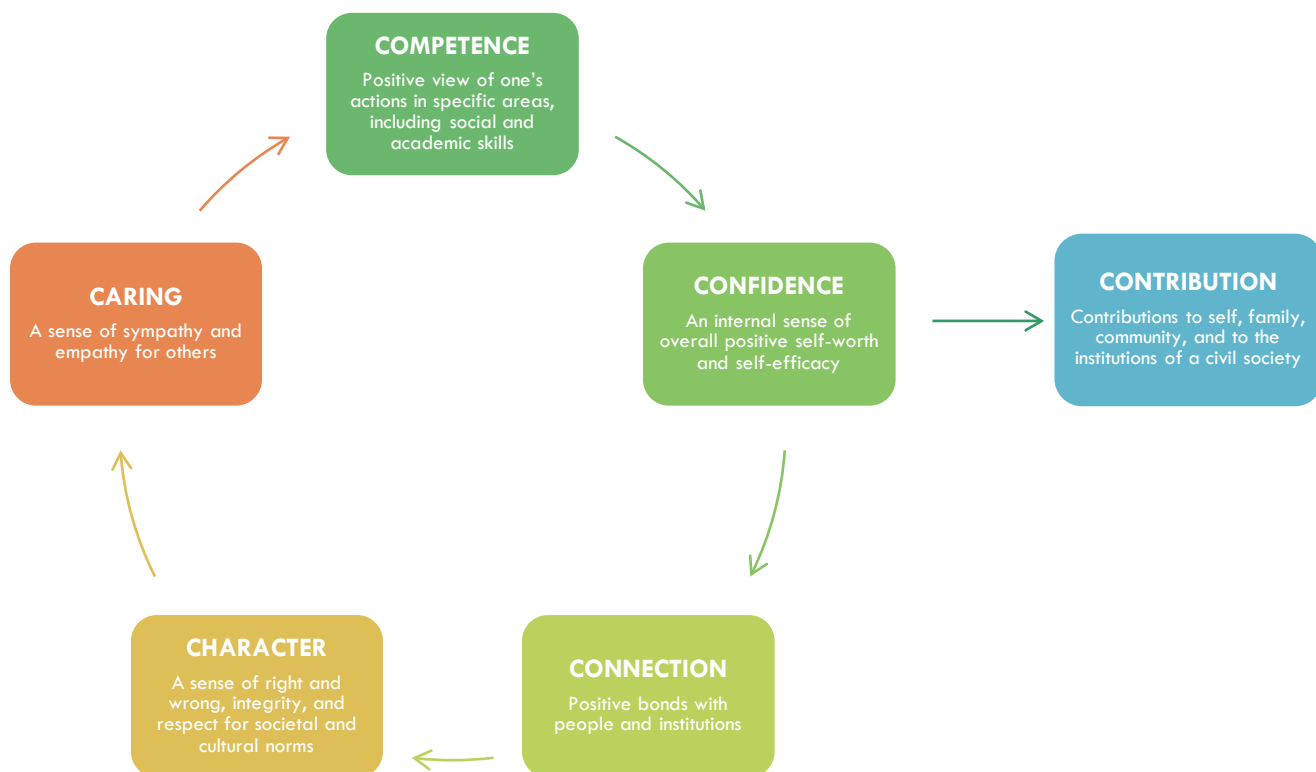
Table of Contents

I.	Introduction	2
II.	Demographic Information	5
III.	Program Engagement	6
IV.	The Big Three and Program Safety	8
V.	Positive Youth Development	10
VI.	Health and Well-being	12
VII.	4-H Common Measures	13
VIII.	Relationship Skills	14
IX.	Intentional Self-Regulation	15
X.	Known and Loved	16
XI.	Hopeful Future Expectations	17
XII.	Contribution	19
XIII.	Summary	22

I. Introduction

About the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development: Replication

- From 2002 to 2012, Richard M. Lerner and Jacqueline V. Lerner conducted the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development (PYD), the first longitudinal study of positive youth development in the world.
- Findings from the study suggested that 4-H was an exemplar of a youth program that promoted PYD through: 1. Positive and sustained relationships between a young person and an adult; 2. Life-skill building activities; and 3. Opportunities for youth participation in and leadership of valued activities in family, school, or community settings (the “Big Three”). When PYD—defined as Competence, Confidence, Connection, Caring, and Character—was promoted by youth development programs, youth would contribute positively to their communities and, by the end of the high-school years, become active and engaged citizens.



I. Introduction

- We conducted the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development: Replication to extend the youth development leadership of 4-H programs to the current generations of American youth by assessing current 4-H engaged youth across adolescence. In this study, we capitalized on refinements in measurement that have occurred in the past decade in regard to indexing constructs central to the original 4-H Study of PYD (e.g., PYD, intentional self-regulation skills, the Big Three), as well as including new constructs (e.g., empathy, growth mindset) to the set of PYD-related constructs.
- The study began in 2021 and concluded in 2022. At three time points, youth were asked to answer survey questions about activities, opinions, behaviors, and involvement in youth development programs. This report presents findings from your students' responses.
- It is our hope that this research will lead to the development of important curricula that youth development programs can use to help support the positive development of young people.

I. Introduction

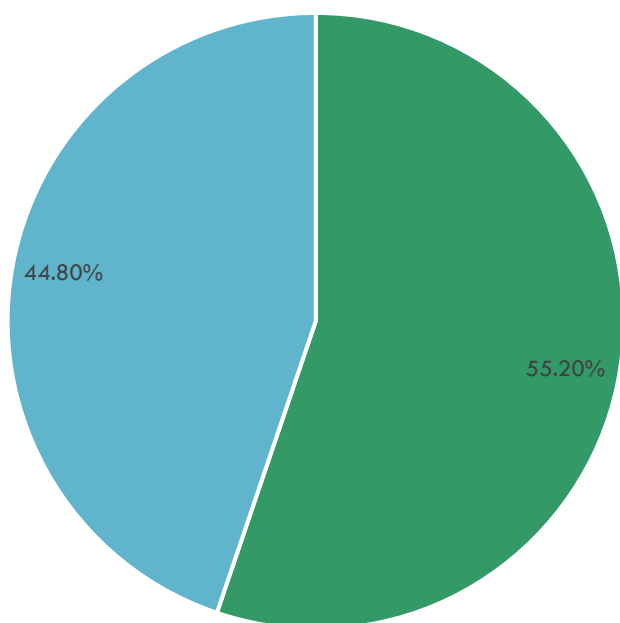
About this Longitudinal Report

- For the purposes of the present report, we focus on participants for whom three waves of data were collected. Development cannot be assessed with only one time of measurement but, as well, when only two times of measurement exist, it is not possible to determine if any change is due to statistical problems (i.e., a phenomenon termed regression to the mean) or true change. This problem is largely eliminated once three times of measurement exist.
- For this report, we included 29 youth in Missouri who participated in 4-H programming and in all three times of data collection for the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development: Replication. Any differences between times of data collection in the average scores may or may not be statistically significant. The only fluctuation that was significant was life-skills-building activities (presented in bold on p. 8).
- This report presents aggregate data in tables. It is important to note that although aggregate data might have been increasing, stable, or decreasing over time, individual youth might have shown variation in scores across time. Please refer to the graphs presented in this report for examples of this variation.
- The data presented in this report are intended to provide information about the strengths of your programming, so that you may continue to support the positive development of youth.

II. Demographic Information

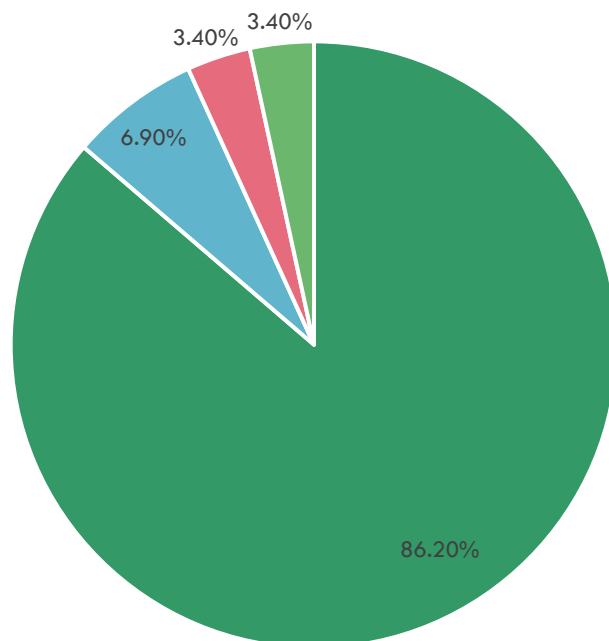
- Twenty-nine youth from Missouri participated in all three times of data collection.
- At Time 1, 16 youth identified as girls and 13 youth identified as boys.
- For racial/ethnic information, 25 youth identified as White or European American. Two youth identified as Asian or Asian American. One youth identified as Black or African American, and one youth identified as multiracial/multiethnic.
- Below is the breakdown of demographic information by percentage.

Gender



■ Girl ■ Boy

Race/Ethnicity



■ White or European American
■ Asian or Asian American
■ Black, African American or of African descent
■ Multiracial/multiethnic

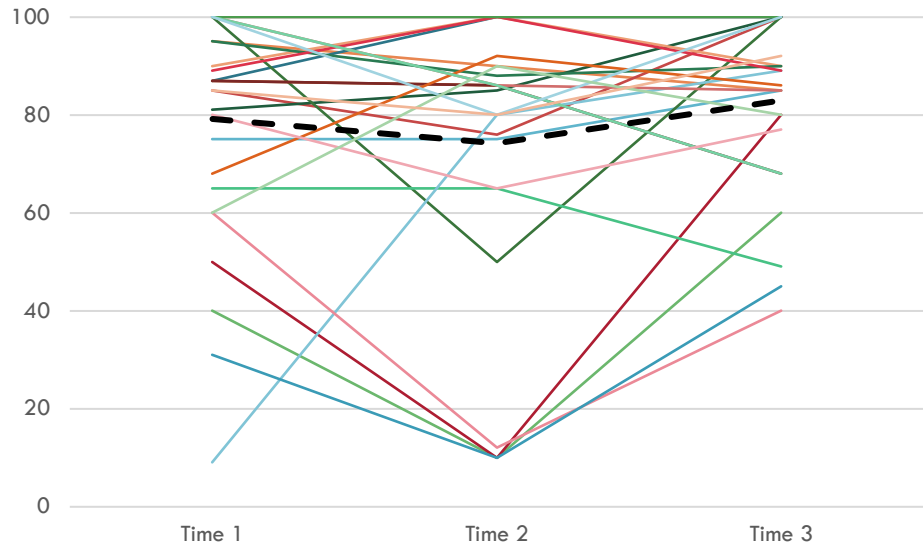
III. Program Engagement

- Understanding the different dimensions of program engagement can help provide insight into how youth are engaging in their programs.
- Youth rated their levels of engagement in 4-H programs. The average responses for each time of data collection are presented below, on a scale of 0 (Low) to 100 (High).
- Overall, the average scores for behavioral engagement, affective engagement, and cognitive engagement were high and remained quite stable over time.
- Finally, youth were asked how important being in 4-H is in their lives. The average responses for each time of data collection are presented below, on a scale of 0 (Low) to 100 (High).
- Overall, the average scores for perceived importance of being in 4-H were moderate-high and increased slightly over time.

	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
Behavioral engagement	88.86	88.89	89.08
Affective engagement	88.11	83.67	89.38
Cognitive engagement	79.21	74.15	83.00
Perceived importance	68.07	73.00	73.42

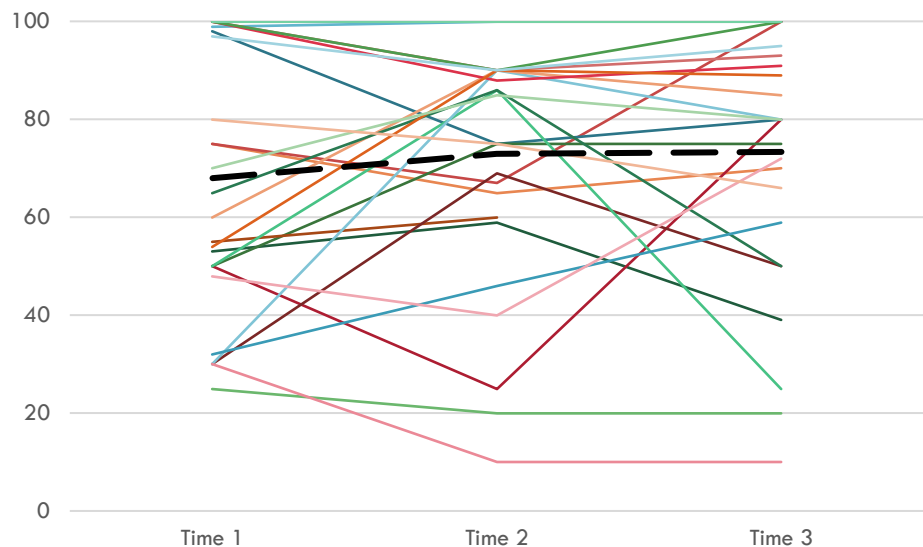
III. Program Engagement

Cognitive engagement in 4-H programming



The black dashed line represents the mean at each time point for all youth, and the other lines represent the mean at each time point for each individual youth

Perceived importance of being in 4-H



The black dashed line represents the mean at each time point for all youth, and the other lines represent the mean at each time point for each individual youth

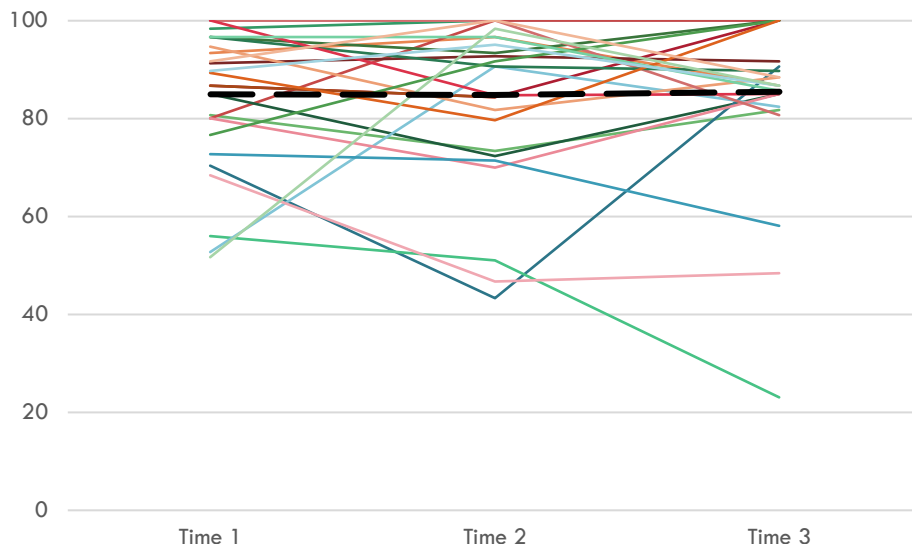
IV. The Big Three and Program Safety

- High-quality youth programs provide youth with sustained adult–youth relationships, life-skill-building activities, and opportunities for participation in and leadership of valued activities in a safe space.
- Youth were asked to rate these effective programming features in their own 4-H programs. The average responses for each time of data collection are presented below, on a scale of 0 (Low) to 100 (High).
- Overall, the average scores for the Big Three features of effective programming and program safety were high. The average scores for positive and sustained staff-youth relationships, opportunities for youth contribution to and leadership of valued activities, as well as program safety remained quite stable over time. Life-skill-building-activities is bolded to indicate that the fluctuations in the scores for this feature across time were significant.

	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
Positive and sustained staff-youth relationships	84.89	84.75	85.51
Life-skill-building activities	76.15	72.82	82.43
Opportunities for youth contribution to, and leadership of, valued activities	86.74	88.52	91.82
Program safety	98.55	97.65	99.62

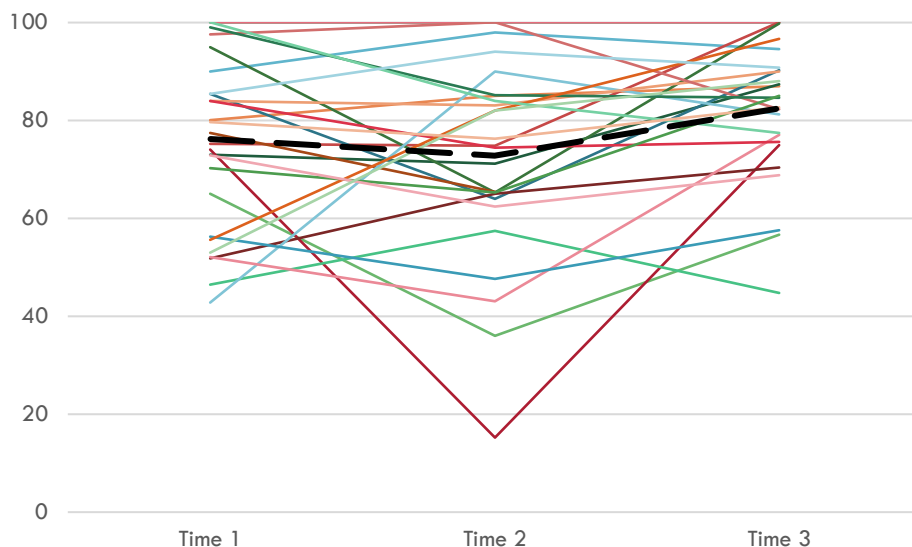
IV. The Big Three and Program Safety

Positive and sustained staff-youth relationships



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Life-skill-building activities



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V. Positive Youth Development

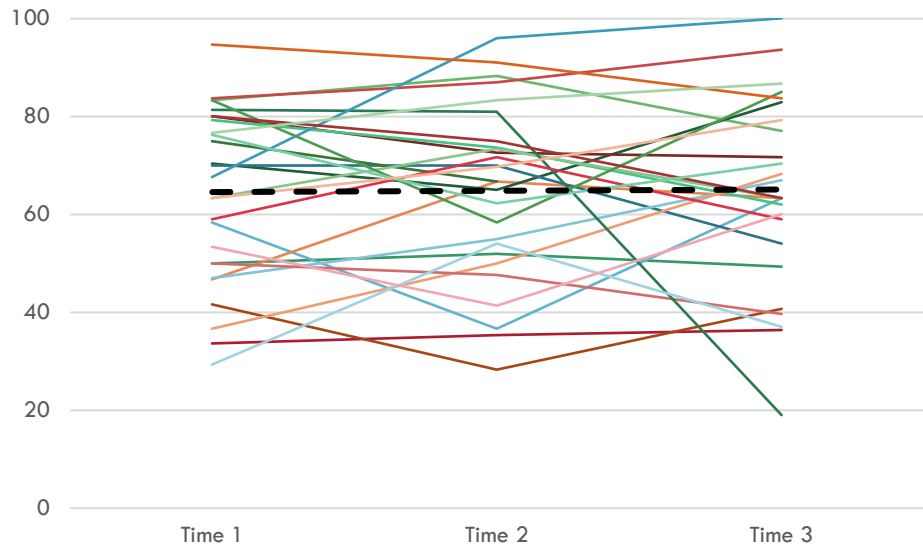
- Positive Youth Development (PYD)¹ is the lens through which we study how adolescents can best thrive in their contexts. PYD is a strengths-based perspective that asserts that all youth can develop to their full potential when each individual's strengths align with resources from their environment. There are 5 core components of PYD, called the "Five Cs": Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character, and Caring.
- Below are the average PYD scores of students from your state who took part in our study, on a scale of 0 (Low) to 100 (High).
- Overall, the average scores for Competence were moderate and remained stable over time. The average scores for the other Cs as well as overall PYD were high and remained stable over time.

	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
Competence	64.55	64.89	65.11
Confidence	81.51	82.65	84.85
Character	80.15	80.68	84.04
Caring	86.65	85.88	87.96
Connection	78.86	81.32	83.94
Overall PYD	78.48	79.31	81.51

¹ Lerner, R. M., Lerner, J. V., Bowers, E. P., & Geldhof, G. J. (2015). Positive youth development and relational-developmental systems. In W. F. Overton, P. C. M. Molenaar, & R. M. Lerner (Eds.), *Handbook of Child Psychology and Developmental Science: Theory and method* (pp. 607-651). Hoboken, NJ, US: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

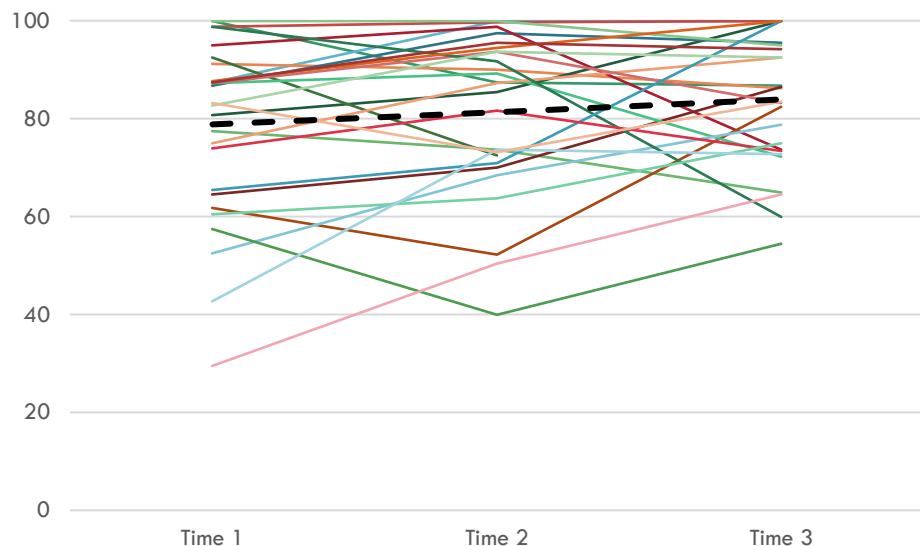
V. Positive Youth Development

Competence



The black dashed line represents the mean at each time point for all youth, and the other lines represent the mean at each time point for each individual youth

Connection

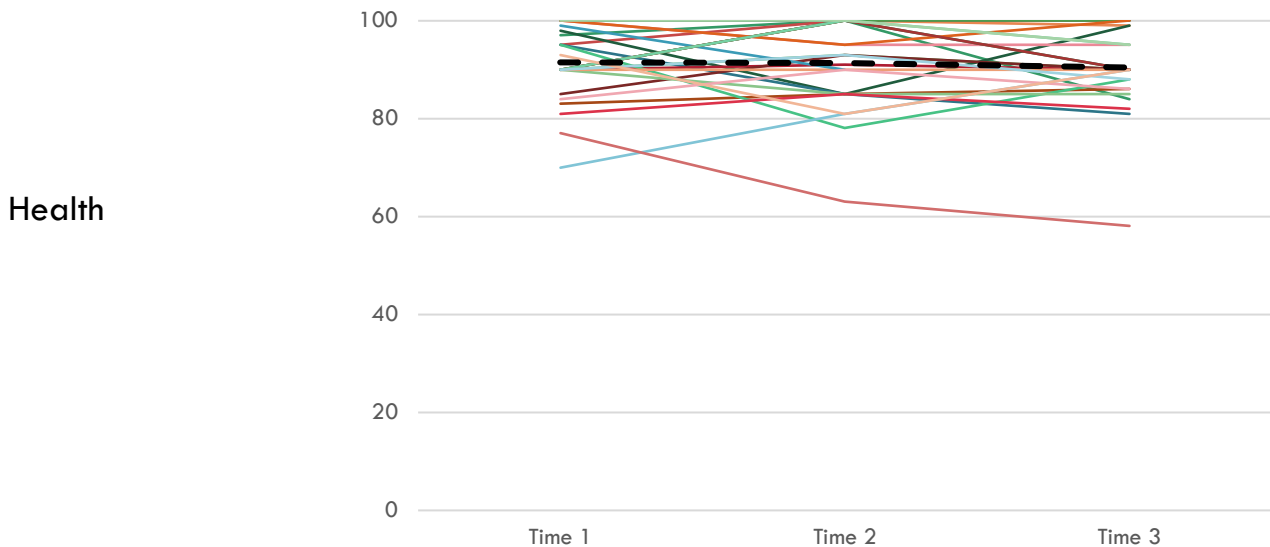


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VI. Health and Well-being

- Health and well-being are important aspects of youth thriving.
- Youth were asked to rate their overall health and well-being. Below are the average scores of youth from your state who took part in our study, on a scale of 0 (Low) to 100 (High).
- Overall, the average scores for health and well-being were high and remained stable over time.

	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
Health	91.48	91.36	90.41
Well-being	80.54	82.25	83.51



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VII. 4-H Common Measures

- Youth with high levels of life skills, such as social skills, are more likely to lead productive and satisfying lives.
- Youth were asked to rate their growth mindset and social skills. Below are the average scores of youth from your state who took part in our study, on a scale of 0 (Low) to 100 (High).
- Overall, the average scores for growth mindset and social skills were high and remained quite stable over time.

	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
Growth mindset	76.53	75.92	78.29
Social skills	77.86	78.46	79.79

VIII. Relationship Skills

- Relationship skills, such as perspective taking, can guide youth towards moral and prosocial actions, and may also enhance their capacity to contribute to those around them.
- Youth were asked to rate their perspective taking and empathic concern. Below are the average scores of youth from your state who took part in our study, on a scale of 0 (Low) to 100 (High).
- Overall, the average scores for perspective taking and empathic concern were moderate and remained quite stable over time.

	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
Perspective taking	66.97	65.35	70.08
Empathic concern	61.71	65.92	67.00

IX. Intentional Self-Regulation

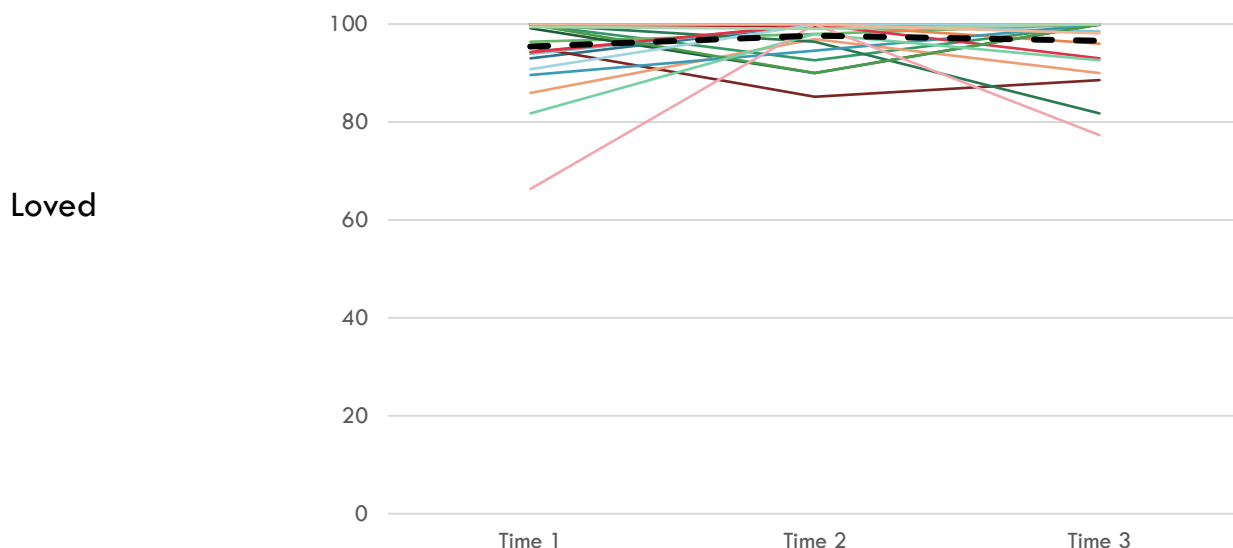
- Youth with high intentional self-regulation skills are more likely to see solutions to a problem, learn from their mistakes, effectively manage expected and unexpected events, and persevere through challenges.
- Below are the average intentional self-regulation skills scores of youth from your state who took part in our study, on a scale of 0 (Low) to 100 (High).
- Overall, the average scores for intentional self-regulation skills were moderate and remained stable over time.

	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
Intentional self-regulation	64.81	65.21	68.55

X. Known and Loved

- Youth are likely to develop positively when they experience developmentally nurturant relationships with the important people in their lives. Developmentally nurturant relationships support, guide, and protect youth and allow youth to feel known and loved.
- Youth were asked to rate the extent to which they feel known and loved. The average responses for each time of data collection are presented below, on a scale of 0 (Low) to 100 (High).
- Overall, the average scores for being known and loved were high and remained quite stable over time.

	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
Known	94.46	95.83	94.70
Loved	95.48	97.71	96.67



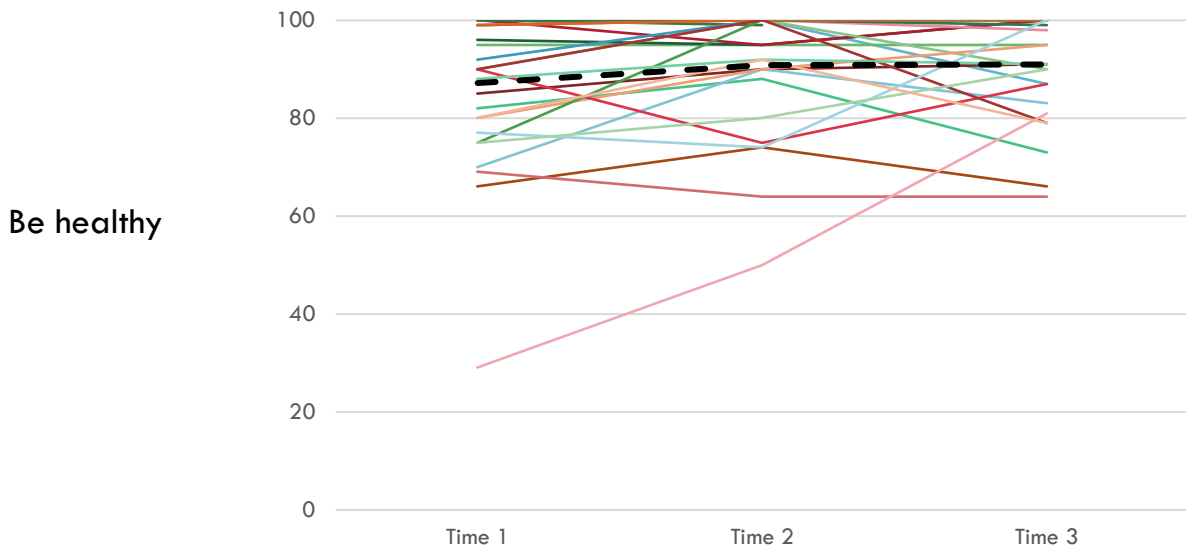
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XI. Hopeful Future Expectations

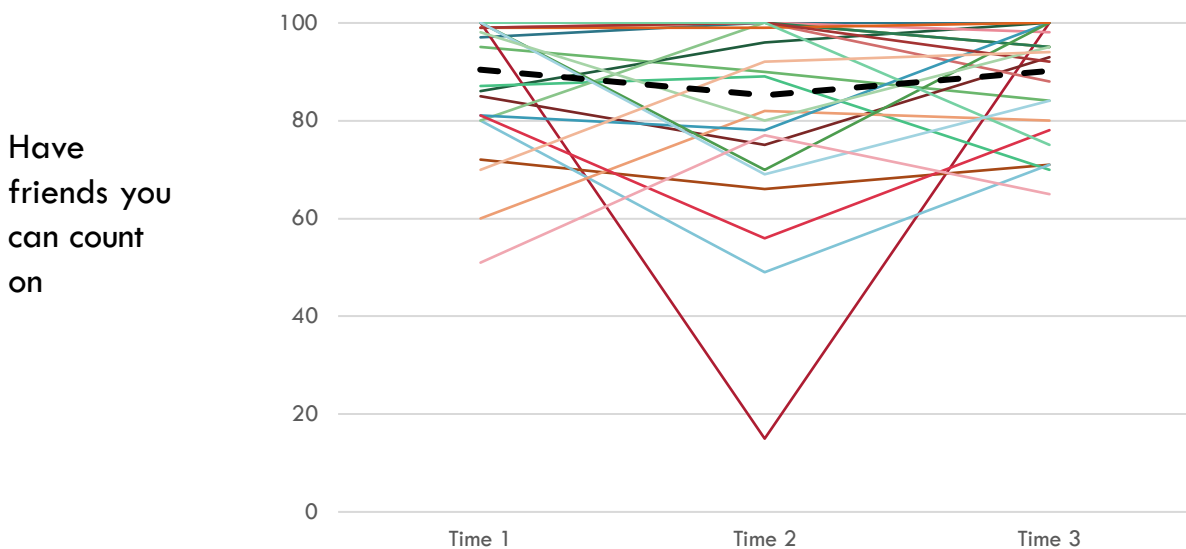
- Youth with hopeful future expectations are more likely to think positively about their future and realize their goals.
- Below are the average hopeful future expectation scores of youth from your state who took part in our study, on a scale of 0 (Low) to 100 (High).
- Overall, the average scores for the five hopeful future expectations were high and remained quite stable over time.

	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
Be healthy	87.10	90.82	91.00
Have a job that pays well	85.69	87.93	87.04
Have a happy family life	90.03	91.57	92.14
Be safe	91.14	92.75	93.46
Have friends you can count on	90.34	85.11	90.11

XI. Hopeful Future Expectations



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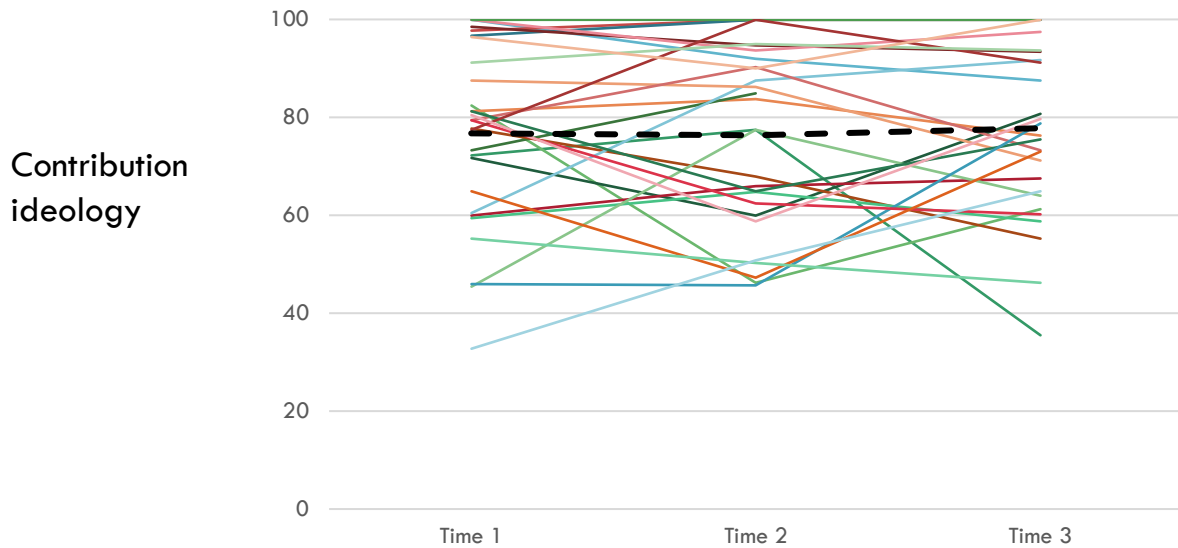
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XII. Contribution

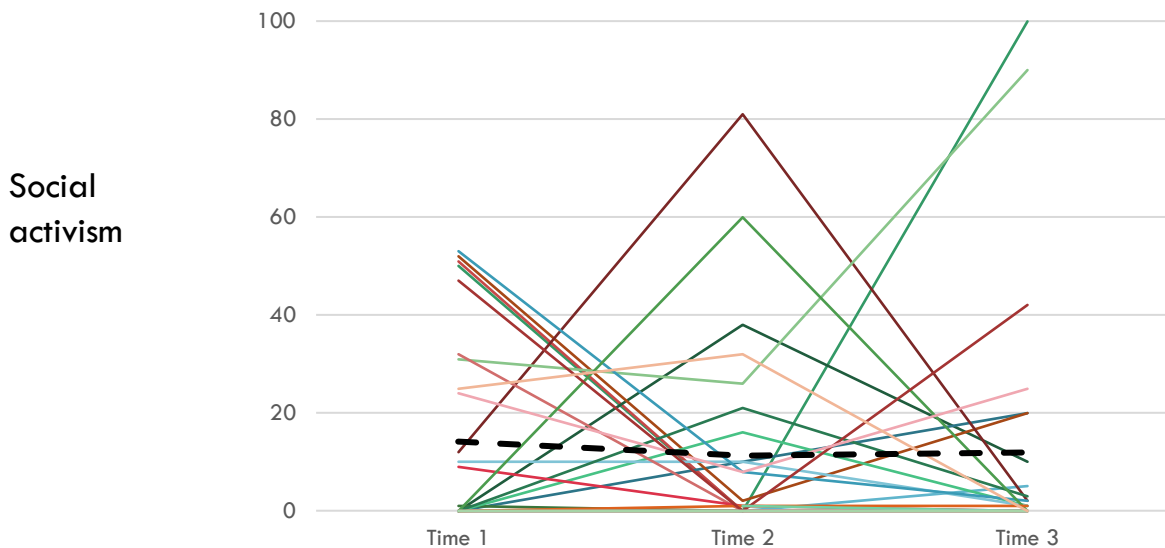
- Youth with high contribution ideology believe that it is important to make positive contributions directed toward self, family, and community. Youth may take part in various actions and activities to make these positive impacts.
- Below are the average contribution ideology scores and average scores of nine contribution actions of youth from your state who took part in our study, on a scale of 0 (Low) to 100 (High).
- Overall, the average scores for contribution ideology were high and remained stable over time.
- The average scores for helping people you know were high and remained quite stable over time. The average scores for community service, helping people you don't know, and organized sports- and arts-based activities were moderate and remained quite stable over time. The average scores for other contribution actions were low and slightly fluctuated over time.

	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
Contribution ideology	76.77	76.38	77.77
Political activities	17.00	13.79	6.26
Community service	45.71	45.25	50.81
Social activism	14.18	11.25	11.96
Helping people you don't know	49.50	51.14	44.86
Helping people you know	72.57	62.25	67.32
Cultural activities	28.96	26.50	28.33
Organized sports	34.24	37.71	41.15
Organized arts-based activities	55.71	48.57	48.86
Academic clubs	23.68	34.18	30.44

XII. Contribution



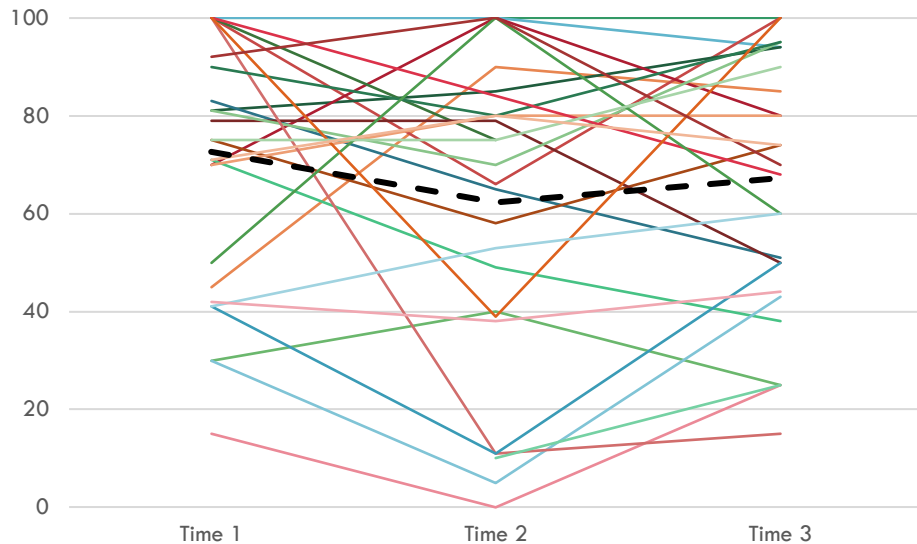
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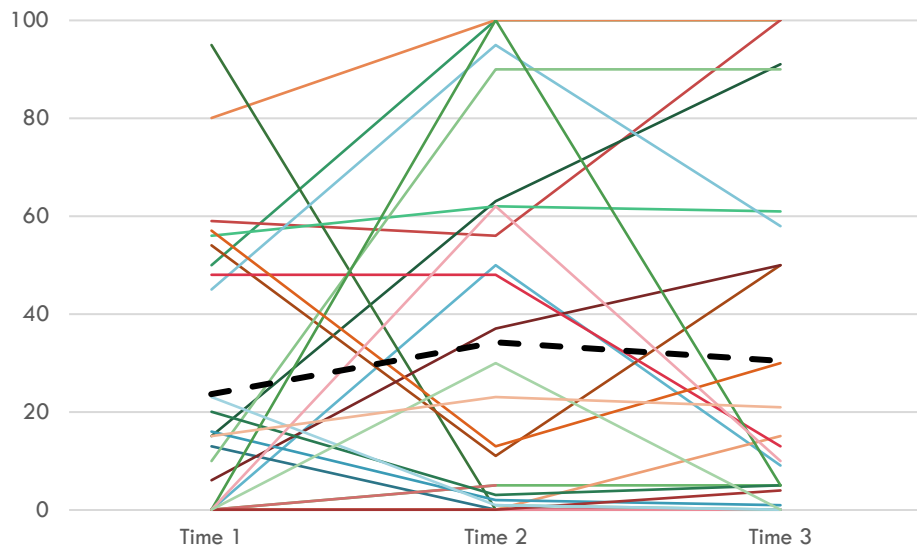
XII. Contribution

Helping
people you
know



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Academic
clubs



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XIII. Summary

Summary of Findings

- Generally, youth had favorable views of their youth development program experiences. For example, across three times of data collection, youth reported high levels of program engagement (p. 6-7 of this report) and gave high ratings on factors that are indicative of effective programming such as positive and sustained youth-adult relationship and life-skill-building activities (p. 8-9 of this report).
- On average, youth reported moderate to high levels of positive development and well-being at each time of data collection (p. 10-12 of this report).
- Generally, youth reported moderate to high levels of life skills. For example, across three times of data collection, youth reported high levels of growth mindset and social skills, and moderate levels of relationship skills and self-regulation skills (p. 13-15 of this report). Your program may want to consider providing additional opportunities for youth to further build such skills. For example, you may organize relationship-building activities to promote relationship skills among youth.
- We found that youth believed they were known and loved by the people surrounding them. They also reported feeling hopeful about the future (p. 16-18 of this report).
- On average, youth reported high levels of contribution ideology and low to moderate levels of contribution action (p. 19-21 of this report). Specifically, youth reported low levels of political activities, social activism, cultural activities, and academic clubs. They reported moderate levels of community service, helping people they don't know, and organized sports- and arts-based activities, and high levels of helping people they know. You may want to consider additional ways to provide these opportunities, or make youth more aware of opportunities that already exist in some of these areas in your state's programs.

XIII. Summary

Limitations

- The data presented are from a sample of youth that participated in our study. Surveys were not collected from all youth at your state's programs, so this report may not be representative of all youth from your state's programs.
- Data presented by time of data collection in this report are average scores or total percentages across all youth participating in our study. Individual youth may have scored higher or lower on particular measures.
- Not all youth participants responded to all items in the survey.
- We have not tested whether the differences are due to chance fluctuations in the scores of the youth who participated in the study, or the characteristics of the group of youth who completed the survey. Thus, caution should be used when interpreting scores or comparing scores across three times of data collection.
- Life-skills-building activities was the only score that significantly fluctuated across time of data collection. For this reason, caution should also be used when interpreting scores across times of data collection.
- Despite these limitations, the 4-H Study of PYD continues to yield important information about the bases and implications of PYD, information that can help launch young people into healthy and productive lives. We hope that the findings from the study will continue to be used widely by youth program professionals like you and, to an increasing extent, by policy makers.



Acknowledgments:

We would like to express our gratitude to the 4-H personnel who helped organize the collection of data at your program. We appreciate your collaboration and hope to continue working with you in subsequent research.

Thank you to all youth and their parents/guardians who participated in our study. Your contributions were extremely valuable to our efforts to understand what goes right in the lives of youth.

