

# IMPACT STUDY

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## 4-H: Continuing to Make a Difference

**The purpose** of this study was to measure the impact that the 4-H Youth Development experience has had on Colorado's young people. As state and county budgets become tighter and tighter, the 4-H Youth Development program must demonstrate its effectiveness with sound data to enhance the rich anecdotal information more easily available. Research-based information is critical to future 4-H Youth Development programs. Also examined were students who were active in out-of-school-time activities other than 4-H and their involvement in at-risk behaviors.

**Data** were collected from 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students in Colorado. Students were selected from up to four randomly selected schools in each of the 15 counties selected in a statewide stratified random sample. There were 1906 useable surveys returned. The data were entered, coded and analyzed by the spring 2005 BK 410 Marketing Research class in the College of Business at Colorado State University. The data were reviewed by the university's Department of Statistics for data entry accuracy and additional data analysis.

**Results confirm** that youth who participate in any organized out-of-school activities are less likely to engage in a variety of at-risk behaviors. 4-H Youth Development members were less likely than their non-4-H Youth Development classmates to use drugs, or smoke. 4-H Youth Development members also had a significantly more positive outlook on life and the world around them than did non-4-H Youth Development members.

### 4-H Youth: Making Contributions... Being Successful

4-H members are more likely than other youth to report that they:

- Succeed in school, getting more A's than other students
- Are more involved as leaders in their school and community
- Are looked up to as role models
- Help others in the community

Performance in school -- 4-H and non-4-H youth

Grades	4-H **	Non-4-H
Mostly A's	38.2 %	26.0 %
A's and B's	36.2 %	32.3 %
Mostly B's	5.5 %	6.1 %
B's and C's	11.4 %	18.8 %
Mostly C's	2.5 %	3.1 %
C's and D's	4.7 %	8.8 %
Mostly D's	0.5 %	2.4 %
Less than D's	1.0 %	2.5 %

### 4-H Youth: Confident

Colorado 4-H members have a positive self-identity that gives them confidence to succeed in life. These members are more likely to report that they:

- *Have control over the things that happen to them* \*\*
- *Like themselves* \*\*
- *Have much to be proud of* \*\*
- *Have a sense of purpose in their life* \*\*
- *Are glad they are who they are* \*



The study also revealed that 4-H members feel more self-assured than other youth and are able to do things on their own.

Percentage of youth agreeing with leadership statements

Statements	4-H	Non-4-H
I volunteer in class to lead activities	45.9%**	34.1%
I feel other kids look up to me and follow my example	53.5%**	40.6%
I can meet and greet new people easily	64.2%*	58.1%

### 4-H Youth: Competent

Research shows that Colorado 4-H youth are more socially competent and more likely than other youth to develop practical skills needed to become capable and contributing adults. They are more likely, for example:

- *To be able to speak with ease in front of others* \*\*
- *To set goals* \*\*
- *To plan ahead* \*
- *To manage money wisely* \*\*

4-H'ers are more likely to take on leadership roles in their school and community.

Percentage of youth holding leadership positions

Variable	4-H	Non-4-H
Elected leadership	30.6%**	20.6%
Held leadership position	27.0%*	20.6%
Committee member	22.2%**	13.8%

### 4-H Youth: Connected

Colorado 4-H'ers are more likely to view their role in the community and the future more positively than youth who have not been involved in the program. 4-H members were more likely to report that adults look at them as valuable assets to the community. Members credit the program with making a significant difference in their own lives, in the quality of their family life and in the quality of their community.

\* Represents a significant difference (95 percent confidence level) from the values or groups to which they are compared.

4-H members were more likely to report:

- *Adults in their town make them feel important* \*\*
- *Adults in their town or city listen to what they have to say* \*
- *In their hometown, they feel like they matter to people* \*\*
- *Within their own family, they feel useful and important* \*
- *They are given lots of chances to help make their own town or city a better place to live* \*\*

### 4-H Youth: Caring and Compassionate

Colorado 4-H'ers are more likely to develop a deep sense of compassion and caring for others. Research shows that 4-H members are more likely to empathize with others in difficult circumstances and significantly differ from their peers in how much they care about others' feelings. 4-H members in the study were more likely to report that they care about other people's feelings than non-4-H members.

4-H'ers also report that they were more likely to be involved in a project to make life better for other people; give money or time to a charity or other organization that helps people; and to have spent time helping people who are poor, hungry, sick or unable to care for themselves.

Percentage of youth who helped others

Variable	4-H	Non 4-H
Involved in a project to help others	64.3%**	47.0%
Given money or time to charity	67.7%**	53.4%
Helped poor, sick or others	52.8%**	44.9%

### For More Information

Visit our web site at [www.4h.colostate.edu](http://www.4h.colostate.edu)  
Or contact your county extension office.

\*\* Represents a highly significant difference (99 percent confidence level) from the values or groups to which they are compared.

