



## Developmental Appropriateness Contact-Content-Context

When designing a 4-H learning experience for youth, it is important to consider the appropriateness of the experience in relation to the participant's developmental age, the depth of the content, and the context in which it is delivered. Experiences should be designed to be both challenging and interesting without being overwhelming.

### **Contact (Audience)**

4-H programs typically have diverse contacts (or audiences). When planning an experience for a specific audience the physical abilities, cognitive abilities, social abilities, and emotional abilities must all be carefully considered. These abilities vary with age, past developmental experiences, and some personality characteristics.

### **Content (Subject Matter)**

The three 4-H Mission Mandates provide the foundation for the content of learning experiences. These mandates – citizenship, healthy living, and science - reiterate the founding purposes of Extension (e.g., community leadership, quality of life, and technology transfer) in the context of 21st century challenges and opportunities.

### **Context (Delivery Mode)**

4-H uses a variety of delivery methods for reaching youth with opportunities to grow and develop in positive ways. (Examples include project or community clubs, afterschool programs, school enrichment activities, camps, events, and many other techniques.) Whatever context is selected for a specific learning experience needs to be appropriate for both the content and contact.

### Questions to Consider

- How much independence is needed to complete the activity?
- In what format are the directions delivered?
- How many steps will be explained at one time?
- Will individual guidance be needed?
- How long will the youth need to pay attention?
- What is the length of the activity?
- How many youth will be activity engaged at one time?

It is the appropriate combination of contact, content, and context that makes for a successful learning experience.



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