

Step Up to Leadership

Supporting School-Age Accreditation and Quality Programming

Step Up To Leadership can easily support accreditation through the National AfterSchool Association and quality programming in both school-age programs and teen centers. The activities in this curriculum help youth learn and develop critical thinking skills as well as provide a fun and enjoyable way to meet other standards of accreditation and quality programming.



Opportunities for Youth Leadership and Development and Cross-age Teaching

Opportunities abound for youth leadership and development -- from learning the traits of effective leaders to actually presenting issues and ideas to those people who can bring about changes in programs. Teens can use their new leadership skills to bring about improvements in their Teen Council, as well as take those skills to School-Age Programs and help them develop their own leadership councils.



Ideas! Ideas! Ideas!

At the end of each *Step Up To Leadership* book additional ideas are given for meaningful leadership. These ideas cover field trips, service-learning and exhibit ideas. Each idea is provided in order to enhance what participants are already learning through the project.

Providing Quality Middle School and Teen Programming

Step Up to Leadership can help youth learn the basics of developing an issues action-plan that includes the creation of a presentation to communicate their ideas to others. They will also have fun learning what to do and what not to do as they conduct a mock meeting to present their ideas.



Essential Elements of 4-H Youth Development

Youth involved in 4-H know they are cared about and feel a sense of **BELONGING**; they exercise **INDEPENDENCE** by using decision-making and action to influence people and events; they develop a sense of **MASTERY** by learning skills needed in making positive career and life choices; and they experience **GENEROSITY** by helping others through community service. These elements support the Army Youth Development Components of Belonging, Success, Service and Independence.

Summary

Step Up to Leadership is a curriculum that will provide youth of any age with the skills to develop into effective and respected leaders within their school-age programs, youth centers, clubs and schools. The skills learned will give them a solid leadership foundation that will benefit them throughout their lives.

THE Army 4-H EXPRESS GUIDE TO

Step Up to Leadership



Is your Youth Center looking for young leaders to help bring about program improvements? *Step Up to Leadership* teaches leadership skills that will last a lifetime!



Project Goals

Step Up to Leadership helps children and youth from kindergarten through high school develop and enhance leadership skills by learning about themselves as well as others. The goal of the curriculum is to provide young people with the skills necessary to step into leadership roles throughout their lives.

Four Fun Activities

1 To be an effective leader, children need to be able to have an understanding of how others may feel. **Put Yourself in Someone Else's Shoes, page 12, My Leadership Workbook** focuses on physical disabilities helping children learn what some people have to deal with daily by limiting their sight, hearing and movement.

2 Some things are impossible to do alone, but working with others can also present challenges. **Tightrope, pages 26-27 in My Leadership Journal** encourages children to work together by moving a tennis ball from one location to another without dropping it.

3 Most people trust an effective leader, but that trust does not come without time and effort. The activity **You Catch My Back, I'll Catch Yours!, pages 10-11, in My Leadership Portfolio** uses this safe and fun activity to teach youth to put their trust in others by relying on others to keep them from harm.

4 To be a good leader you must also be able to be a follower. **Follow the Leader, page 24 in Mentor Guide for Grades K-5** encourages children to take turns being the leader in fun games like "Follow the Leader" and "Simon Says."



Character Connection

The *Step Up to Leadership* project is a great way to learn about and practice good character. A leader should always model the Six Pillars of Character even when making decisions of character is not the popular thing to do.

- Trustworthiness
- Responsibility
- Caring
- Respect
- Fairness
- Citizenship

Additional character resources can be found at www.4-hmilitarypartnerships.org.

Experiential Learning



Experiential Learning engages children and youth while they learn, share, and grow through their 4-H experiences. With an adult as the coach, the first step is "doing" or exploring. Next, youth share what they did and discuss the experience with their peers. After they've identified the skills and knowledge gained, help them determine how to apply these to other situations in their lives.

Project Activity Guides and Target Age Groups

My Leadership Workbook (grades 3-5) explores personal leadership traits that it takes to be a good, effective leader. Youth will learn mostly about themselves and how those personal traits can help prepare them to reach their leadership potential.

My Leadership Journal (grades 6-8) will help bring out the best in youth by taking a deeper look inside themselves and discovering what they can really do when they put their hands, head, heart and health to work. Through journaling, youth will learn what it takes to be a really good leader.

My Leadership Portfolio (grades 9-12) continues to focus on improving leadership skills as youth develop a portfolio of their work. The portfolio becomes a statement of who they are and what they stand for as a leader. Youth also learn the importance of tracking their progress through writing.

Mentor Guide (grades K-5) and **My Leadership Workbook** provides support to the project leader as well as provides a guide for kindergarten through second grade leadership activities.

Mentor Guide (grades 6-12) provides project leader support for both **My Leadership Journal** and **My Leadership Portfolio**. The guide also provides space for the mentor to write down their reflections on each experience and activity to help them grow in their role.

Related 4-H Projects

The 4-H communications project compliments *Step Up to Leadership* by helping youth develop and improve their communication skills. Many other projects such as babysitting, photography, theatre arts and foods and nutrition teach a number of leadership skills like decision making and problem solving.

Integrating Technology

Ways to use technology in leadership are limited only by imagination, because a good leader always finds ways to communicate with others.

E-mail and texting can be used to inform other club members of activities and events that would support project work.

A newsletter can be compiled to keep everyone up-to-date.

Digital photography can be used to provide a visual report, as well as marketing and advertising an event.

An Internet search can keep youth up-to-date on developments in leadership skills.



Linking to the Army's Four Service Areas and Baseline Programming

Sports, Fitness and Health Options

Conflict can cause stress and stress affects health in negative ways. Positive conflict resolution helps everyone involved feel much better once a problem is dealt with and solved. The activity on conflict resolution in the **Mentor Guide for Grades 6-12, pages 40-41**, links well to the Sports, Fitness and Health Options service area.

Arts, Recreation and Leisure Activities

Recognizing talent in people is a skill that helps a leader efficiently use human resources. Discovering hidden talents can be both fun and rewarding and can also fit in this service area. Take a look at **Talent Search, My Leadership Journal, pages 24-25**.

Life Skills, Citizenship, and Leadership Opportunities

Step Up to Leadership naturally falls under this service area. Many of the activities teach good citizenship through effective leadership. The activity on using good manners in meetings in **My Leadership Journal, pages 28-29**, fits perfectly in this service area.

Academic Support, Mentoring, and Intervention Services

Communication is a very important part of mentoring and intervention. School-age children can begin to learn good communication skills by learning about body language and non-verbal communications. By being able to "read" what someone is really saying by their body language, youth learn how to be emphatic mentors. **I Didn't See What You Said, My Leadership Workbook, pages 18-19**, fits well in this service area.

Community Service Service Learning Opportunities

A good leader is always ready to take advantage of opportunities to help the community. *Step Up To Leadership* provides several ideas for community service projects and can easily be expanded with a little imagination and good, old-fashioned hard work.

Even the youngest leaders can plan an event that will benefit others (see **My Leadership Workbook, page 32**).

Middle school and teens can build upon a contemporary issue facing the community and provide possible solutions to local authorities (see **My Leadership Portfolio, page 26**).

Life Skills

"Skills that help an individual to be successful in living a productive and satisfying life" are identified as Life Skills (Hendricks, 1996). An effective leader continues to develop skills useful throughout life. *Step Up to Leadership* teaches life skills such as leadership, responsibility, communication, goal setting, decision making, teamwork, accepting differences, and problem solving. One or two life skills are targeted for each activity, but several skills can easily be taught and practiced.