University of California
Agriculture and Natural Resources
4-H Youth Development Program

Promising Practices for Programs Serving Latino Youth:
FACT SHEET FOR 4-H ACADEMICS AND STAFF

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THE REALITY

The UC ANR 4-H Youth Development Program recognizes that youth programs provide

- safe environments—emotional and physical
- appropriate structure
- supportive relationships
- youth engagement
- positive social norms
- opportunities for leadership and skill building

RESEARCH AND PROMISING PRACTICES

Sustained participation and positive outcomes among Latino youth and communities result from programs that

- include communities and families in the program delivery and design
- consider the interests, skills, and knowledge of caring adults in determining their role in working with youth
- recognize the widespread values in different communities, such as collective accountability, gender roles, family structure, hierarchy, and other norms
- focus on positive ethnic identity, social justice, and healthy multicultural interactions
- identify projects that affirm local Latino cultures
- focus on the interests and skills of the families
- address possible safety concerns that may include unsafe meeting places and distrust of individuals or organizations

"Scholarts emphasize employing locally and regionally specific knowledge of Latino youth, families and communities to create responsive youth development programs."

(Erbstein and Fabionar 2014)

4-H FACT SHEET SERIES

"Scholars typically do not argue for separate or segregated youth programs…they make the case that a strong local infrastructure for healthy Latino youth development provides options to participate in a variety of activities …"

(Erbstein and Fabionar 2014)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Safe Environment

- Build trusting relationships with Latino community members and families.
- Invite adult family members to participate in the program.
- Engage parents and extended family as collaborators/helpers and frame Latino community leaders as role models.
- Identify safe program spaces. Use facilities that are comfortable for families.
- Have an introductory meeting with families before the program starts at the time when caretakers are available.
- Recognize, celebrate, and reinforce Latino youth's cultural and linguistic heritage and assets.
- Learn and utilize preferred modes of communication.

Structure

- Adapt the program's structure to bridge cultural differences.
- Account for impacts of widespread poverty.
- Consider the norms of the program and their compatibility with the norms of local Latino. cultures. Develop ways to bridge differences.
- Help youth and families understand the program's culture.
- Be sensitive to prospective adult volunteers who may not have a California driver's license or a social security number to complete background screening.

Engagement

- Focus community engagement strategies on civic participation and social justice activism.

- Learn about and participate in Latino community events.
- Select adult volunteers that share interests and experiences with local Latino youth.
- Be sensitive to, interested in, and knowledgeable about cultural differences (including gender differences) and aware of ways in which the dominant culture is experienced by the local Latino population.

Skill Building

- Utilize curricula that support ethnic/racial identity development, leadership, and empowerment.
- Include group contest at all levels. Reward group effort.

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