



# 4-H VOLUNTEER INFORMATION SERIES

N e b r a s k a 4 - H Y o u t h D e v e l o p m e n t

## **Eight Tips for Youth Working with Adults**

1. Most adults have good intentions. Remember that they are simply not used to working in partnership with young people.
2. Criticism doesn't necessarily mean adults are putting you down or that an adult doesn't value your contribution. It may mean the adult is treating you the same way he/she would an adult colleague. Remember that adults are used to critiquing each other's work and offering constructive ideas to improve a project. Just because an adult doesn't agree with someone, it doesn't mean that he/she disrespects that person.
3. Adults may not be aware of the capabilities of young people. They can be told a hundred times that young people are mature, but showing them that you can act maturely is the best way to make the case.
4. Adults often feel responsible for the success or failure of the project. This is what makes it hard for them to share power. They may need to know that you are willing to share in both the successes and the failures.
5. Adults are just as uncertain as youth. They have just learned to hide it better.
6. Sometimes adults use phrases and expressions, whether consciously or not, that annoy young people and are red flags that they aren't treating youth as partners. Like an annoying drip of water, these phrases and expressions can ruin a relationship. Be prepared to speak up and tell adults how you feel when they say certain things.
7. Don't be afraid to ask questions or have an adult go over something again. Adults often use words, phrases, and acronyms that you might not understand. Adults new to the program usually do not understand them either.
8. Don't be afraid to say, "No, I can't do that," or "No, I can't help on that project, etc." Adults will understand that you have other important commitments like your education, family, friends, hobbies, and sports.

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