



# Introduction to Teens as Teachers

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program has the opportunity to expand program delivery by using the teens-as-teachers model.

## Teens as Teachers

The teens-as-teachers model is used by 4-H to train and prepare teens to teach a curriculum or lesson to younger children. EFNEP may partner with its local 4-H representative to use the teens-as-teachers model in delivering nutrition education. This partnership combines 4-H expertise in youth development with EFNEP's expertise in nutrition.

In this model, teen teachers are responsible for lesson preparation and delivery alongside an adult partner. Several programs have demonstrated that this technique increases student knowledge, leadership skills, sense of purpose and contribution (Hammond-Diedrich & Walsh, 2006; Bird & Subramaniam, 2011; Arnold, et al., 2016; Worker et al., 2018). The teens-as-teachers model provides an opportunity for adolescents to take an active role in their learning and in their community. The experience of teen teaching can have an impact on teens, specifically those from low-income or other underrepresented groups. Seeing themselves in the role of educator creates a sense of accomplishment and autonomy over their learning process, which makes learning more engaging and improves self-confidence.

## Positive Youth Development

Positive Youth Development (PYD) supports youth in making decisions about their learning and development; this type of engagement can improve developmental success (Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sesma, 2007). PYD practices are embedded within the UC 4-H Positive Youth Development Program (UC 4-H PYD), specifically in the teens-as-teachers model, through opportunities for youth to participate in positive partnerships with adults, build skills, and contribute to their community.

## Implications

Teens that have experienced a youth leadership program like teens-as-teachers, which are specifically designed to support teen identity formation, empowerment, and agency, will be better positioned for life-long educational and civic engagement. If young people see themselves not only as learners but also as teachers, then they are empowered. This is particularly important for teens who have not experienced enough success and achievement in the traditional classroom environment and educational system.

By working together, EFNEP and 4-H can reach new audiences, combine resources, and improve participant outcomes.

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