Helping your youth learn skills that will enable them to become productive, contributing members of society is a concern of parents, teachers and law enforcement officials everywhere. 4-H, a national organization with offices in each county, teaches youth life skills through hands-on experience. Through its many programs, it provides a well-rounded experience for youth development. One 4-H program focuses on leadership skills.

According to 4-H leadership project material, youth should begin accepting responsibility and taking on leadership roles at an early age. Leadership is learned, not inherited.

Leadership life skills can be broken down into seven areas.

• Understanding and developing a positive attitude about who you are and what you want to be.
• Communicating effectively by two-way sharing of information through writing, listening, speaking and body language.
• Getting along with others by meeting and accepting people and appreciating their differences.
• Learning by asking questions, finding correct information and listening to others.
• Making decisions by looking at a problem and finding possible solutions, choosing the best solution and then taking action on it.
• Managing by choosing and using the resources you have (time, money, people or things) to accomplish something.
• Working with groups by learning how they can work together and by helping them accomplish their goals.

4-H offers a leadership skills program in four age-appropriate levels from ages 9-18. The focus is to help youth take charge of their own lives, set positive goals and make healthy life choices that are not influenced by negative peer pressure.

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