



**UConn**  
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE,  
HEALTH AND NATURAL  
RESOURCES

EXTENSION

# UConn 4-H Fact Sheet

## Working with Youth with Special Needs, Equity & Diverse Needs

### DEFINING YOUTH WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

A disability is ...

- A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of an individual
- A condition that may require adapting an activity to the person's ability.

### TERMINOLOGY

Take time to learn and teach other 4-H'ers the correct terminology for the child's disability. Categories of Disabilities

- **Physical Disability:** A part of one's body that is weakened slightly or completely by nature, injury, disease, or accident.
- **Mental Disability:** Below normal intellectual functioning. The condition of behaving younger than one is, a slowness when learning things.
- **Developmental Disability:** Learning disabilities and emotional impairments.
- **Learning Disability:** A noticeable difference between intelligence and academic achievement and/or spoken language.
- **Hearing Disability:** A lessened ability to receive sound by the ear.
- **Visual Impairment:** The inability to see. A legally blind person can't see at 20 feet what a person with perfect vision can see at 200 feet.
- **Emotional Disability:** Inability or unwillingness to adjust to the problems and stress of daily life. People may react aggressively to or withdraw from situations rather than attempt to adjust to them.

### POSITIVE TERMINOLOGY

Use person first language, naming the individual before the condition. For example, the youth with a learning disability or the youth who is blind.

### STRATEGIES FOR INCLUDING YOUTH WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

- **Parent/Guardian Conference**  
Discuss strengths/weaknesses of youth, specific situations that may arise, strategies that have helped the youth previously, dietary restrictions and behavior modification techniques.
- **Mainstream the youth as much as possible in the same club activities, events and programs as youth without disabilities.**

- Provide opportunities for 4-H members without disabilities to work along side youth with disabilities.
- Differentiate the activity by modifying the project or activity to match the needs of the child. For example, a member with a disability could receive assistance showing from a club member.

## YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

Reasonable accommodations/modifications must be made to allow 4-H members and adult volunteers with disabilities to participate in all 4-H activities, and events as appropriate. Ensure that all participants are able to access facilities and program materials. For example, assist members with the use of the alternate record book sheets as deemed appropriate. If you are unsure of how to handle a request for accommodations or modifications please contact your local 4-H office. Never decline a request without speaking to the 4-H office first.

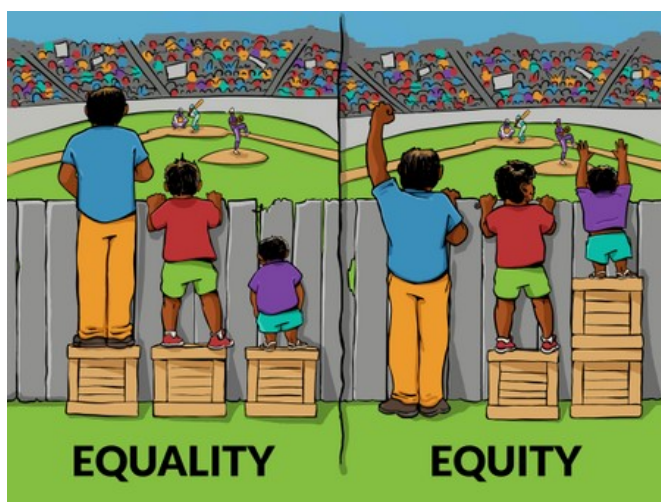
## PROMOTING EQUITY & DIVERSITY

As a 4-H leader, you have a unique opportunity to help youth increase their awareness of themselves. You also have a responsibility to help them understand people different from themselves. Please note, UConn is an affirmative action/equal employment and opportunity program provider.

## EQUITY VS. EQUALITY

Equality means every individual has access to the same amount of resources. Equity is achieved when everyone has what they need to improve the quality of their situation. This concept is depicted below.

Adapted from : Youth with Special Needs 4-H Adult Volunteer Handbook University of California  
<http://4h.ucanr.edu/files/19693.pdf>  
<https://sustainablefoodcenter.org/latest/blog/food-access-inequity-exists-in-austin-heres-why-and-how-to-help>  
 Image Source: "Interaction Institute for Social Change" | Artist: Angus Maguire



### Helpful links and information

#### UConn 4-H Website

[s.uconn.edu/4-h](https://s.uconn.edu/4-h)

#### County Contacts:

[s.uconn.edu/4-h/connect](https://s.uconn.edu/4-h/connect)

#### 4-H Volunteer information:

[s.uconn.edu/4-h/becoming-a-volunteer](https://s.uconn.edu/4-h/becoming-a-volunteer)

#### UConn Office of Institutional Equity Policies and Procedures

[equity.uconn.edu/policiesprocedures/](https://equity.uconn.edu/policiesprocedures/)

#### 4-H Youth In Action: Supporting Those With Special Needs

[4-h.org/about/blog](https://4-h.org/about/blog)

#### A Perfect Fit: Involving Youth With Disabilities in 4-H

[archives.joe.org](https://archives.joe.org)

#### Diversity, Equity And Inclusion

[4-h.org/about/impact-areas](https://4-h.org/about/impact-areas)

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UConn complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding non-discrimination, equal opportunity, affirmative action, and providing reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Contact: Office of Institutional Equity; (860) 486-2943; [equity@uconn.edu](mailto:equity@uconn.edu); <http://www.equity.uconn.edu>.