

Multi-State 4-H Youth Retention Study: Qualitative & Quantitative Findings

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Background

Enrollment in 4-H is declining nationwide.

The 4-H Youth Retention Study explores first-year experiences in 4-H from both member and adult perspectives. This multi-state research project seeks to understand why youth and families join and stay in the program. This poster provides an overview of the study's qualitative and quantitative findings. Specifically, reasons for joining 4-H, the best part of 4-H, and reasons for leaving 4-H.

Methods

- Over four years (2015-2019), data were collected from eight states to understand youth retention in 4-H
- Data were collected from 4,371 youth 4,823 adults
- Online surveys were sent to 4-H members and parents (guardians) after their 1st year in 4-H
- Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected
- Survey details are described in Lewis et al. (2018)

Implications and Key Points

- Understanding why youth join 4-H, the best parts of 4-H, and reasons for leaving 4-H can be useful to 4-H staff in identifying ways to retain members.
- Utilize results to develop resources and methods to better orient new families into the program and to develop strategic plans and materials to improve organizational practices and communication among leaders, families, and staff within the program.

Findings

Why Youth Leave? (Quantitative Data)

The top four reasons that youth indicated that may not continue in 4-H were:

> Didn't feel connected to other youth in the club (20%)

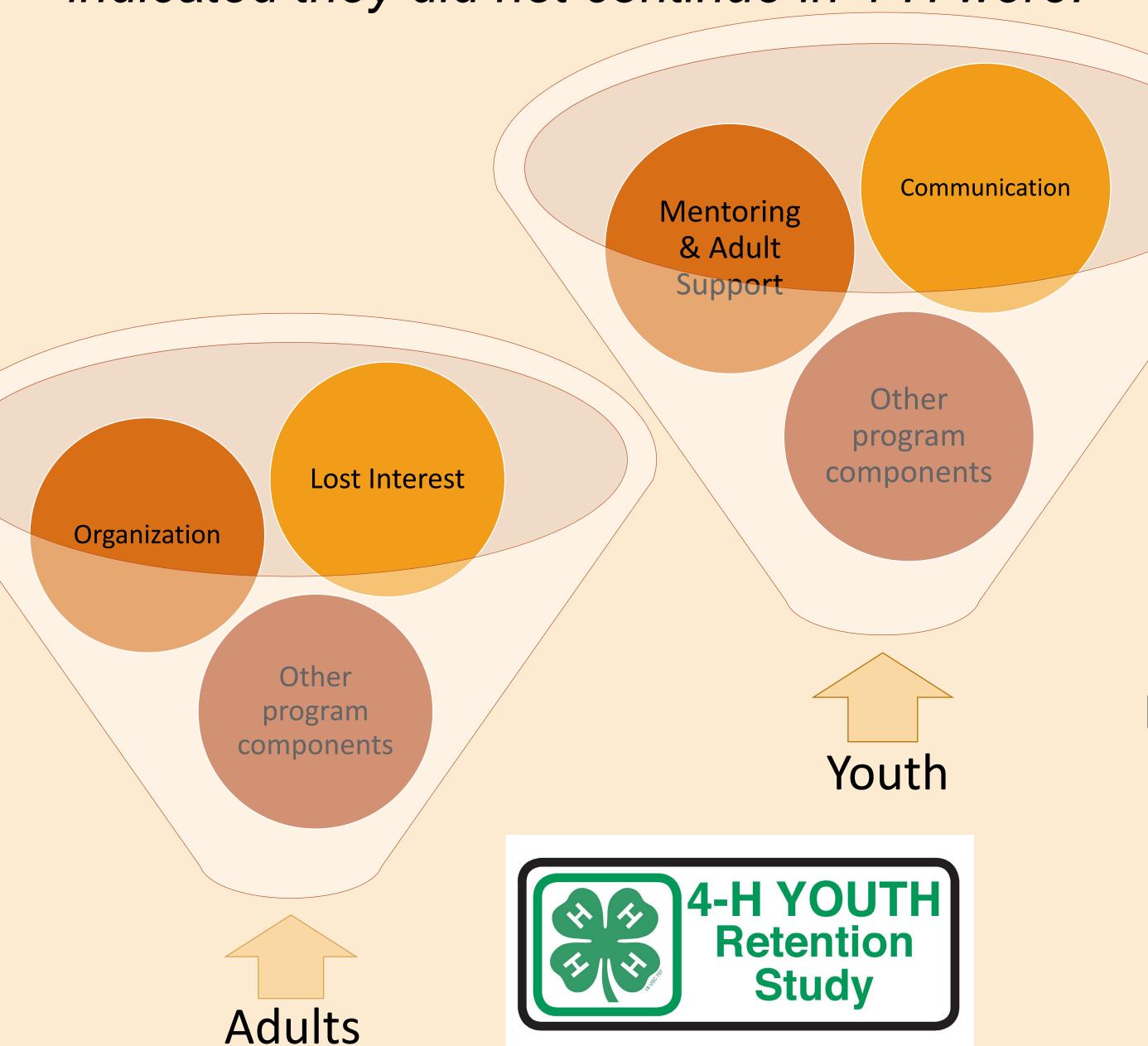
> > Don't have time for 4-H because of other activities (18%)

> > > Didn't know when club or project met (13%)

> > > > Didn't feel welcome (9%)

Why Youth Leave? (Qualitative Data)

The top three reasons that youth and adults indicated they did not continue in 4-H were:



To learn more about the study visit: http://ucanr.edu/4-hyouthretentionstudy

What is the Best Part of 4-H?

Youth and Adults BOTH identified their top three reasons as:

Topic or **Events** Learning Subject Area

Why Did You Join 4-H?

Youth and adults report the same top reasons for having youth join 4-H:

> To try new things *youth-56% *adults-61%

To have fun *youth-45% *adults-47%

Skill building *youth-32% *adults-40% Personal growth *youth-31% *adults 40%

Family or personal influences *youth-30% *adults-27%

To make friends *youth-28% *adults-29%

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Keeping Members in 4-H: A Look at Why They Join





Youth Retention Study: Keeping Members in 4-H



