



AI in Youth Development

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AI in Youth Development - Right Now

- Youth are already using AI tools like ChatGPT and AI-powered apps
- Not “emerging” — AI is here and now
- Key question: How do we intentionally guide use, not just react?



What We're Grappling With

- Authenticity: What counts as “their work”?
- Thinking vs. generating: Are youth problem-solving or copying?
- Adult readiness: Many youth may know more than we do
- Equity: Who has access to tools and guidance?

Keep Positive Youth Development First

- AI is a **tool, not the outcome**
- Shift focus: *“Did they use AI?”* → *“How did they think and learn?”*
- Core skills to emphasize:
 - Critical thinking
 - Creativity
 - Decision-making
 - Ethical reasoning



What AI Looks Like in 4-H Programming

- Brainstorm, draft and explore ideas
- Present data, models, processes and results
- Design newsletters and other communication tools
- Draft & edit social media posts, storyboards, talking points
- Learning happens when youth **question, create, revise and reflect**



A Simple Practice — AI as a Thought Partner







**Outcome: Youth stay active thinkers,
not passive users**



Opportunities & Risks







Risks:

-  Over-reliance
-  Misinformation
-  Reduced confidence
-  Equity gaps



Opportunities:

-  Expand access to ideas
-  Boost creativity
-  Prepare youth for future careers
-  Strengthen youth-adult partnerships



Our Role Moving Forward

- Be **co-learners**, not just experts
- Provide safe spaces to **experiment and question**
- Focus on **process over product**
- Keep youth **centered in reflection and decision-making**
- Ground work in relationships, experiential learning, and youth voice

Closing — Key Takeaway

- AI changes how youth access answers
- Our role: Ensure youth still ask questions, think deeply & critically, use trusted sources and lead with intentionality
- **Challenge:** Try one AI activity with youth. partner with them, provide guidance - and **observe & reflect on process, not output**

