

# It Is the Adult's Responsibility to Ensure that Young People Have a Positive Experience

Adults who work with young people raising livestock projects have a responsibility to create a positive educational experience for them. This means demonstrating ethical practices and good sportsmanship, and making sure young people have the educational resources they need. The role of adult leaders is to teach proper practices for producing safe food products and set a good example.

### Positive role modeling

As young people develop, they begin to perceive certain individuals as “ideal” and mimic their behavior. Young people need good role models. In fact, role models are essential in the youth development process for demonstrating proper social skills and ethics.

A role model's influence can be positive or negative. For example, young people often idealize athletes, but when sports idols are guilty of taking performance-enhancing drugs their influence can be negative. Young people who model that behavior may think it is acceptable to use performance-enhancing drugs with livestock.

It is often hard for young people to find good role models in our complex society. Families are mobile and children may grow up far from their relatives. Pop culture and the entertainment world have a strong influence that may not be healthy. Because of this disconnectedness, adult leaders are encouraged to become positive role models and mentors for the young people with whom they work. Research shows that a young person who has a positive relationship with at least one caring adult is protected from multiple societal risks. These positive relationships do not have to be with parents or family members. In fact, it is best if young people have positive relationships with a variety of community leaders from churches, schools and businesses.

A positive adult role model exhibits the traits of the Six Pillars of Character:

- ◆ Trustworthiness
- ◆ Respect
- ◆ Responsibility
- ◆ Fairness
- ◆ Caring
- ◆ Citizenship