

Targeting Youth Populations in Ag Programming

UF | IFAS Extension
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

Florida
AgrAbility
Cultivating Accessible Agriculture

 **Center for Independent Living**
OF NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA
EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

USDA




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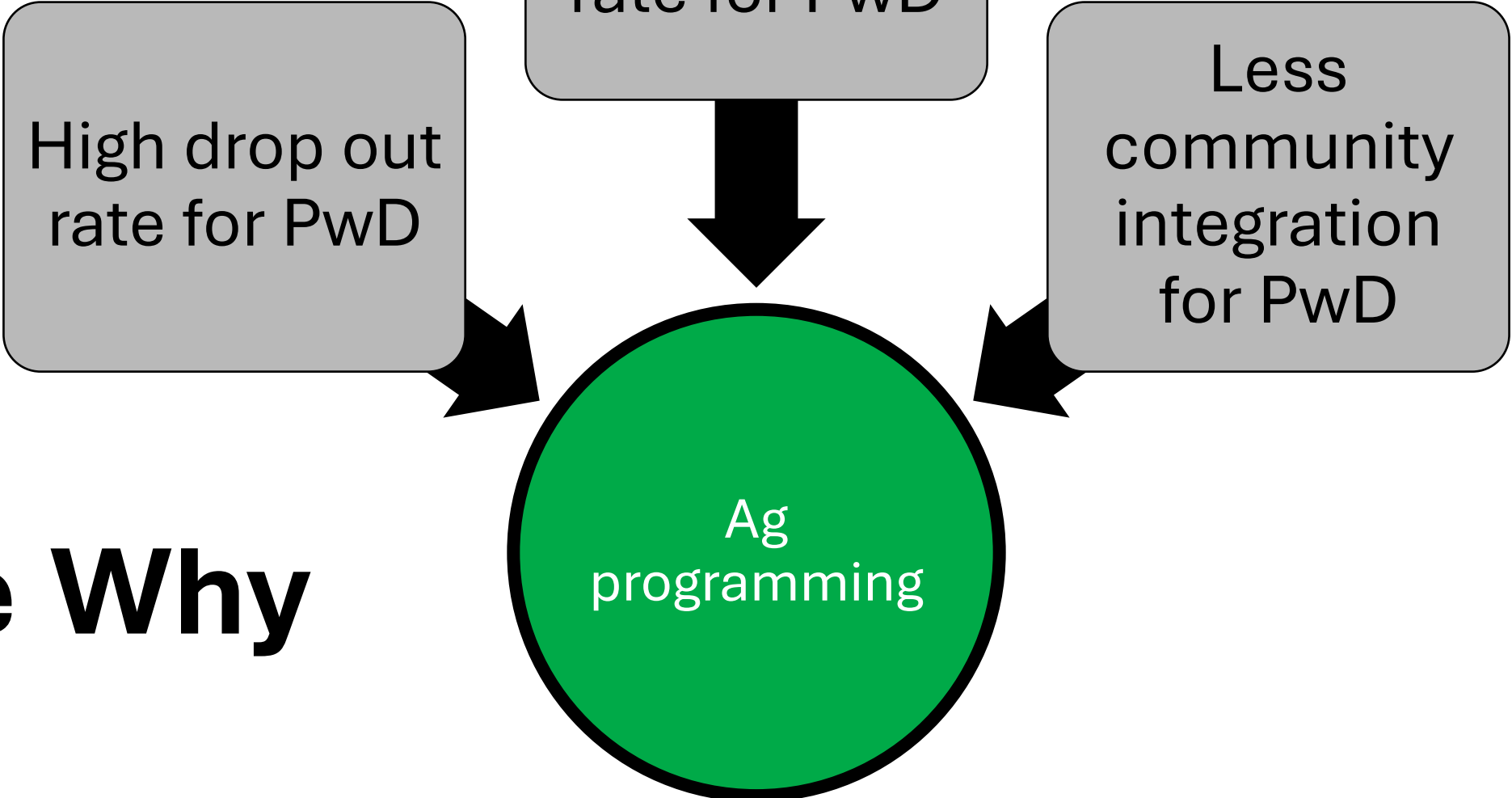
Overview

Why target youth in AgrAbility programming

How to incorporate youth into programming

Sharing of a successful program

PwD = Person
with a disability



The Why

Opportunities in Ag

Administration

Engineering

Labor

Sales

Science

A couple of questions...

- Who are your current clients?
- What are the specializations within your AgrAbility programming team (employees, advisory members, partners, etc.)?
- What are some of the goals for future programming?

**Planning to work
with youth?
Are you working
with 4-H?**



Positive Youth Development



Gootman & Eccles, 2002

Where do we start?

START

A wide-angle photograph of a dirt road winding through a dry, hilly landscape. The road is the central focus, leading the eye from the foreground towards the horizon. The terrain is arid, with sparse, low-lying vegetation and rocky patches. The sky is a clear, bright blue with scattered, light clouds. In the foreground, the word "START" is painted in large, bold, white capital letters on the road surface, positioned at the bottom center of the frame.

Recommendations* to Incorporate Youth

Increasing **knowledge** through training programs

Building **awareness** of disability in the community

Fostering a sense of **belonging** through program design

FL AgrAbility Initiatives

Knowledge: Training professionals and staff

Awareness: Being present at events

Belonging: Developing programs

Research says...

- Supporting opportunities to increase the level of knowledge for providers is important (Farrell et al., 2023; Kentiba, 2013; Taylor-Winney et al., 2018)
- Emphasizing the needs of youth with disabilities to participate in programs is a necessity (Farrell et al., 2023; Geidne & Jerlinder, 2016; Kentiba, 2013)

Professionals (n=23) surveyed post-reflectively after participating in trainings on disability (terminology, behavior, communication) and/or program accommodations, showed an average increase in knowledge gain and comfort levels pertaining to disability of >24% .

Who are we training?

- Anyone who is interested
- Extension professionals/staff
 - Emphasis on 4-H Agents, volunteers, and youth

Training Topics

(through webinars, poster presentations, etc.)

Disability awareness

- Culture
- Terminology

Program planning

- Accessible programming
- Proactive strategies

How do we build awareness?

By being present at events that target:

- Youth
- Agriculture
- Disability





Disability Event Examples

- Statewide disability conferences
- Transition fairs

Disability Specific Programs

- Focus on agriculture
- Importance of disability specific
- End goals:
 - To get youth with disabilities into agricultural programs
 - To get youth without disabilities to increase their awareness and acceptance of disability

Developing Programs

Be my guest

- Florida Youth Leadership Forum

Build your own

- Buddy Show
- Barnyard Challengers

**Building your
own program?
Are you
working with
Extension?**



Build your own

Buddy Program

- Neurodivergent youth paired up with neurotypical youth
- Partnered with a Fair
- Various species
- Shorter time frame (1-3 sessions)

Barnyard Challengers

- Neurodivergent youth paired up with neurotypical youth
- Partnered with a Fair
- Small animal species
- Longer time frame (7-10 sessions)
- Emphasis on knowledge gain, skill building, and retention

Importance of Mentors

Peer teaching models in which adolescents can work with peers with disabilities increases their tolerance for those that have disabilities

(Bosseart et al., 2011)





UF/IFAS Extension Florida 4-H Youth Development Program

Barnyard Challengers

Success

Components to the Program

- Mentors
 - Importance of peer role models
 - Develop life skills
- Youth participants (neurodivergent)
 - Attracting youth with disabilities to 4-H
 - Attracting youth with disabilities to agriculture
- Experiential learning (1-1.5 hr. sessions, 7-8 sessions total)
 - Focus on developmentally appropriate not chronologically appropriate learning
 - Culmination is entry into the Fair/competition



Session Format

Always the same format!

Ppt

- Icebreaker
- Content
- Learning stations overview
- Wrap up

Participate
in learning
stations

Wrap up

- Informal evaluation

Take home

activities
(optional)

- Encourage photo, poster entries



Results

- Two pilot programs
- 6 youth, 4 mentors
- Youth and mentors expressed interest to continue next year
- *Next year: address challenges to recruit youth*



Roots to Work?

Growing Agricultural Skills for Independence

Teaching and preparing young adults with disabilities for work in the agricultural sector



Roots to Work is here to help you grow your skills and confidence for a career in horticulture and agriculture!

WHAT

- **6-week course:** Meet on Fridays beginning February 14th.
- **Classroom + Hands-On Training:** Gain both theoretical and practical skills.
- **Field Trips:** Explore local agricultural operations and nurseries.
- **Apprenticeship Opportunity:** On completion, participants may have an opportunity to apprentice at a local nursery.

WHO

- **Targeting young adults with a disability (must be 18+)** who want to learn horticulture skills to be successful in the workplace.

WHEN

- **Fridays beginning February 14-March 21 from 9:30 am-11 am** at the UF/IFAS Brevard County Extension 3695 Lake Dr. Cocoa, FL 32926



Sneak Peak: Roots to Work

Recap

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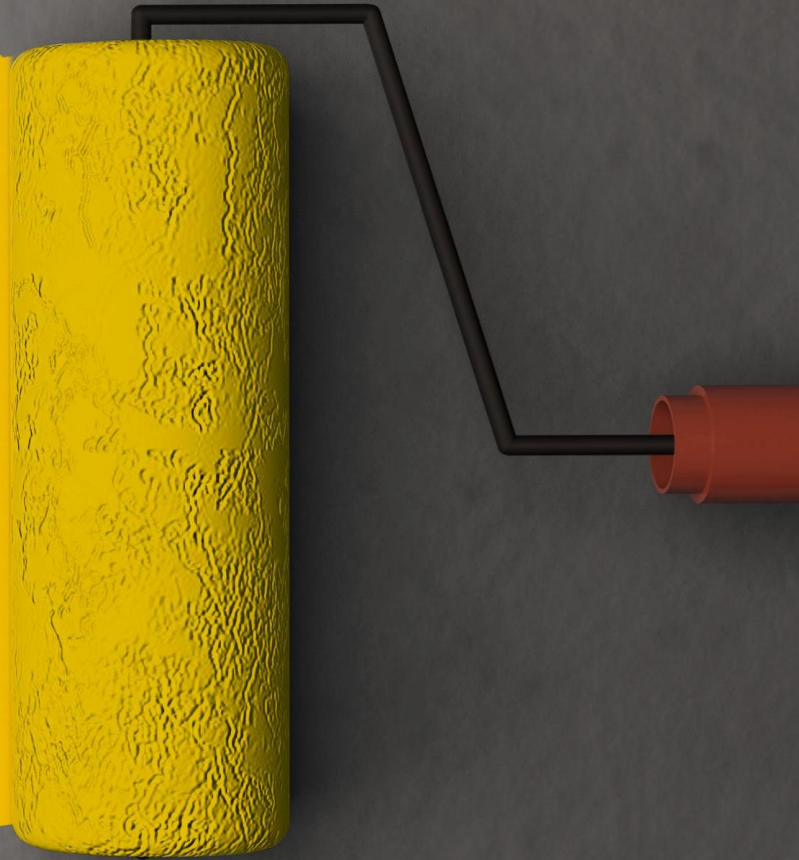
Sharing of a successful program

Application

Pick a tangible idea
you learned from
today. Email
yourself that idea!



**QUESTIONS?
COMMENTS?**



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