

Youth's Commitment to Responsibilities in Youth Programs



Natali Gracia, Human Development and Family Studies

Research Mentor: Reed Larson, Professor, Human & Community Development

Abstract

This qualitative, grounded theory study was aimed at learning why youth remain committed to their responsibilities in youth programs and also, what role program leaders play in this process of youth commitment. The data analyzed was from the Pathways Project, which is a longitudinal study on youth, parents, and program leaders from project-based programs. Results show that in youth developing commitment, there were four themes: youth viewed their responsibilities as a team effort; youth had self-pride when responsibilities were completed; youth believed that responsibilities were achievable; and finally, youth were able to stay committed to their responsibilities when planning was done in advance. For the leaders' roles within these processes, there were three themes found, which highlighted the importance of: facilitating within a group of youth, supporting the youth through flexibility, and being present to serve as examples for the youth. In all, these factors were shown to play a role in the youth staying committed.