



# 4-H Leaders' Digest



## Welcome to 4-H



Thank you for volunteering to share your time and talents as a 4-H leader.

There are many reasons to become a volunteer. Some people want to become involved in their children's activities, others want to help children in their community or have a skill to share, and others were 4-H'ers as children and want to share their experiences. Regardless of the reason, the 4-H program is glad you have joined the team.

This 4-H Leaders' Digest will help answer some of the questions you may have concerning your new role.

You do not have to read it from beginning to end right now. Just look for the articles that interest you most and become familiar with the topics for later reference.

*The 4-H mission is to "engage youth in reaching their fullest potential while advancing the field of youth development."*

### What is 4-H?

The 4-H Youth Development Program (4-H YDP) is an educational program of the University of Vermont Extension. 4-H membership includes youth, ages five through nineteen.

As a 4-H leader you can help youth develop into responsible, self-directed, productive citizens of the world. Projects have a focus on **citizenship, leadership, and developing life skills**, using the experiential learning model of "learning by doing."

Youth can participate by joining a community 4-H club, participating in special interest programs, participating in a sponsored school enrichment activity, or enrolling

in an afterschool program.

### The 4-H Project— A Cornerstone of 4-H

*Learning by doing* is a basic philosophy of 4-H. A 4-H project is one of the areas where learning-by-doing takes place.

As members gain experience, the scope of their projects may be increased and/or they may choose to take on additional projects.

### A 4-H Project Is:

- Planned work in an area of interest to the 4-H member
- Guided by a volunteer who is the project leader
- Aimed at planned objectives that can be attained and measured
- Summarized by some form of record keeping

Most project work occurs over a period of several weeks

or months during a year. A minimum of six hours of project work is required to complete a project. Check with your County Educator for specific guidelines.

Any project a 4-H member selects should be based on:

- Their interests, needs, and time available
- Suitability to their age
- The availability of necessary materials, tools and equipment

A 4-H project consists of meetings, field trips, and related activities with the guidance of a volunteer and with the support of the member's parents, but it is important that the 4-H members do the actual work themselves.

\* Cloverbuds should not be participating in projects. See p. 8.

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# Essential Elements... of Effective 4-H Youth Development Programs

*Recent research on youth development has documented the important role that youth development programs like 4-H play in the lives of young people. From that research the Vermont and national 4-H Youth Development Programs have determined the Essential Elements that form the foundation of the program's approach to positive youth development. The 4-H Youth Development Program fosters an environment for young people to develop a sense of **Belonging, Mastery, Independence, and Generosity**.*

## BELONGING

Youth need to know that others care about them and they need to feel a sense of connection to others in the group. Current research emphasizes the importance for youth to have opportunities for long-term, consistent relationships with adults other than parents. This research suggests that a sense of belonging may be the single most powerful positive ingredient we can add to the lives of children and youth.

4-H gives youth the opportunity to feel physically and emotionally safe while actively participating in a group by:

- Affiliating with local programs, clubs and projects
- Forming short- and long-term relationships with adults, peers, and youth of different ages
- Being a member or participant of a recognized group in the community

## MASTERY

In order to develop their self-confidence, youth need to feel and believe that they are capable and they must experience success at solving problems and meeting challenges to develop their self-confidence. Additionally, youth need to have a safe environment for making mistakes and getting feedback, not just through competition but also as an ongoing element of participation. Finally, youth need sufficient breadth and depth of topic to allow them to pursue their own interests.

Through 4-H projects and activities, youth master skills to make positive career and life choices by:

- Having the opportunity to learn-by-doing through experiential education
- Concentrating on topics and projects of interest over multiple years to develop mastery
- Developing a wide range of "life skills" such as teamwork, problem-solving, planning/organizing, record keeping, goal setting, financial management, and other marketable skills.

## INDEPENDENCE

In order to develop their self-confidence, youth need to feel and believe they are capable, and they must experience success at solving problems and meeting challenges. They need to know that they are able to influence people and events through decision-making and action. They need opportunities to understand themselves and become independent thinkers.

Through 4-H leadership development opportunities, youth mature in self-discipline and responsibility and become independent thinkers by:

- Practicing decision-making through participating as a club or unit member
- Assuming responsibility of a club officer
- Providing leadership through participation as a Junior or Teen Leader or as a committee member at the local, state, or national level

## GENEROSITY

Youth need to feel that their lives have meaning and purpose and that they do not live in a secluded world, but instead in a global community, which requires awareness and compassion for others. They need experiences that provide the foundation that will help them understand the "big picture" of life and find purpose and meaning.

4-H community service projects and citizenship activities allow 4-H members to see that their efforts to help others is important and valuable by:

- Connecting to their community and feeling a part of something larger than themselves
- Sharing time and other resources to assist others
- Acknowledging and working with those with whom they share space and resources
- Learning to accept differences, resolve conflict, and empathize with others.

**Apply What You Learned** List two ways you can promote each of the essential elements in your club.

Belonging: \_\_\_\_\_

Mastery: \_\_\_\_\_

Independence: \_\_\_\_\_

Generosity: \_\_\_\_\_

# Mission Mandates... the Educational Foundation of 4-H

The mission of 4-H is to provide meaningful opportunities for youth and adults to work together to create sustainable community change. This is accomplished within three primary content areas, or mission mandates, - citizenship, healthy living, and science. The educational foundation of 4-H lies in these three mission mandates. These mandates reiterate the founding purpose of Extension (e.g., community leadership, quality of life, and technology transfer) in the context of 21st century challenges and opportunities.

Each community and state faces diverse needs in these initiative areas. Each 4-H program brings unique resources and priorities to this work. In the cooperative spirit of the Extension Service, collaboration among state 4-H programs on curriculum, training, and evaluation will strengthen each program and enhance the outcomes of each initiative.

## Citizenship

Since its inception, 4-H has placed emphasis on the importance of young people being engaged, well-informed citizens. By connecting to their communities and community leaders, youth understand their role in civic affairs and expand their role in decision making processes. It's clear that civic engagement provides that foundation that helps youth understand the "big picture" of life and find purpose and meaning. The core areas of citizenship are: civic engagement, service, civic education, and leadership.

## Healthy Living

Healthy food and nutrition has been addressed by 4-H since its inception in 1902. Having a long history of promoting healthy living among youth and their families, 4-H has become a national leader in health-related education. The 4-H Healthy Living Mission Mandate engages youth and families through access and opportunities to achieve optimal physical, social, and emotional well-being. The core areas of healthy living are: nutrition, fitness, social-emotional health, prevention of injuries, and prevention of tobacco, alcohol and other drug use.

## Science

The need for science, engineering, and technology education is essential for today's young people. 4-H programs prepare youth for the challenges of the 21st century by engaging them in a process of discovery and exploration. The core areas of science are: animal science and agriculture, applied mathematics, consumer science, engineering, environmental science and natural resources, life science and technology.

These three mission mandates—citizenship, healthy living, and science—all intertwine and can be integrated across project areas and activities. The content development of the mission mandates is closely tied to the research and teaching of the land grant university system, and provides the educational foundation of 4-H.

### **Apply What You Learned** *Integrate the 4-H Mission Mandates into your project.*

List how you will integrate Citizenship into your project:

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List how you will integrate Healthy Living into your project:

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List how you will integrate Science into your project:

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# Focus on... Citizenship, Leadership and Life Skills

*All 4-H projects and activities should be designed to lead to the development of citizenship, leadership, or life skills. No matter the subject of the project, at least one of these skill areas should be a part of what members are learning.*

## Citizenship

Citizenship is more than voting and understanding how government works. Citizenship incorporates concepts of “youth in governance,” “civic engagement,” and uses strategies such as service learning and community service to foster young people’s sense of connection to communities. Our citizenship activities can and should foster the development of “generosity” as described on Page 2. They may also help develop important life skills; inspire an appreciation for the history and heritage of one’s family, community, state and nation; help develop knowledge of the principles, processes, and structures of government; develop awareness and understanding of environmental, social, or other issues; and encourage understanding of how societal issues impact oneself and others.

## Leadership

The Vermont 4-H Youth Development Program believes that all youth have the potential to become leaders and that there are multiple ways to be an effective leader.

Leadership can be defined as “the ability to influence and support others in a positive manner for a common goal.”

It is critical that youth hold the primary leadership roles throughout the 4-H program. 4-H creates opportunities not just to learn about leadership but to practice it as well. Participating youth should have opportunities for goal-setting, program planning, problem-solving, team-building, and decision-making.

Youth should be adequately prepared for those roles, and would have opportunities to reflect on their leadership experiences in ways that will enhance their learning. 4-H YDP believes that youth are not only the leaders of tomorrow, they are also the leaders of today!

Leadership opportunities for youth exist at the local county, state and national levels, and provide increasingly challenging and responsible roles for young leaders. Leadership development can begin as soon as a club or other group forms, so that youth can:

- Learn how to become effective officers
- Develop skills that prepare them for future roles
- Make decisions at the local, county, state, and national levels

## Life Skills

4-H YDP fosters development of a wide variety of life skills and provides increasingly challenging opportunities for youth to practice those skills and achieve a sense of mastery.

The life skills model (Figure 4-1) can help you plan learning objectives or identify outcomes for projects. For more information, look online at <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4H/lifeskills/homepage.html>.

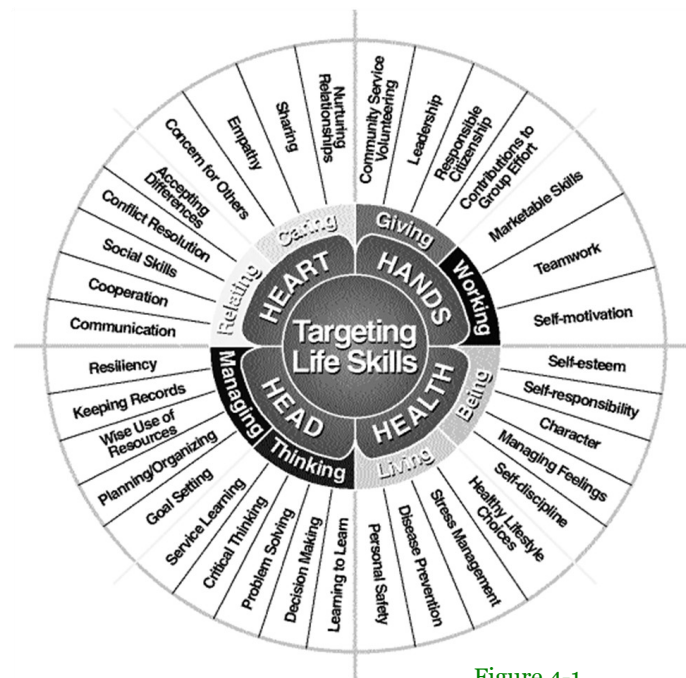


Figure 4-1

## Apply What You Learned Thinking of your club...

List two specific activities you can use to promote **citizenship**:

List two specific activities you can use to promote **leadership**:

List two specific **life skills** you can help members develop:



# Setting the Stage... for Learning

The role of the 4-H Leader has many facets. They serve as mentors, coaches, teachers, resources, partners, and positive role models for youth. Each role involves skills and knowledge of “best practices” that can help the volunteer be successful in working with youth.

As a leader, you have the wonderful opportunity of utilizing a variety of teaching environments, methods, and styles to best meet the needs of the individuals with whom you will be working.

Get to know the individuals in your group and how they learn. Analyze how they respond to different learning and teaching methods.

Ask them what they prefer. Evaluate what they have learned by engaging them in discussion, asking them to demonstrate or to teach another child.

4-H leaders need to consider the various learning strategies available to best shape the learning experience. By making selections that consider age, developmental stages, and the needs of the group, you can ensure a positive and enjoyable learning experience for everyone.

Learning is a natural, lifelong process for all of us. You, as a 4-H leader, can make a difference in what and how youth learn. Hands-on learning is a key part of 4-H. It can occur through three different strategies as follows:

## Apply What You Learned *When planning your project, balance Competitive, Individualistic, and Cooperative Learning*

List ways you can use **Competitive Learning**

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List ways you can use **Individualistic Learning**

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List ways you can use **Cooperative Learning**

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## Learning Strategies

### COOPERATIVE LEARNING

**Cooperative learning (or a group effort) encourages the development of social interaction skills but takes a greater commitment of time to promote learning.**

#### Implications:

*Positive interdependence*—Each and every member has something vital to contribute to the success of the group. Learning will not occur if group members ignore each other. A leader can promote interaction by giving each member a vital piece of information that the entire group must know before they can succeed.

*Face-to-Face interaction*—Group members must be able to interact directly with each other.

*Teaching Social Skills*—Teaching social skills should be a part of the planned activity because they are necessary for the group to succeed. Do not assume the member will absorb these skills just by participating in the group discussion.

*Processing*—Members must be able to discuss how their group worked and what they learned.

### INDIVIDUALISTIC LEARNING

**A participant works alone against established criteria to show what he or she has achieved.**

**Implications:** Individualistic learning encourages independence but does not provide participants with any information about their peers. It allows leaders to consider the developmental capability of individual members in helping them set personal goals for growth, but requires time for advising each member on their plan of work. It requires the development of standards for youth to work toward.

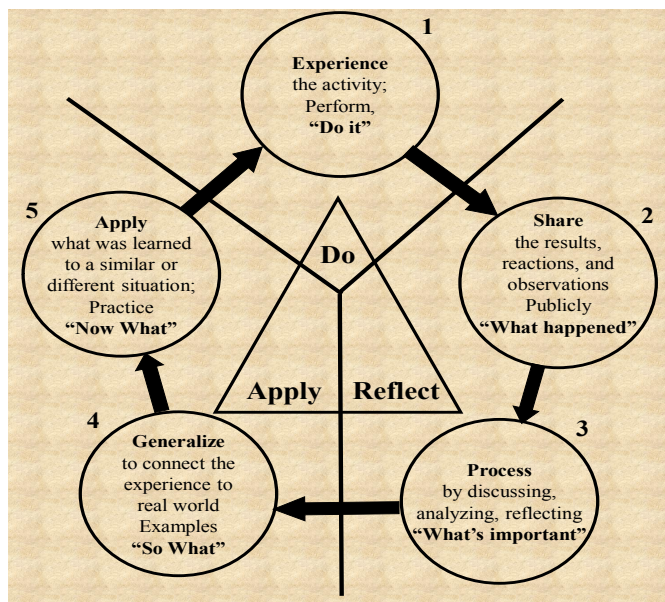
### COMPETITIVE LEARNING\*

**Participants take part in a competition and are scored, placed or ranked subjectively based on opinions of evaluators or judges or based on an objective scoring system (or a combination of both), and provided with positive feedback.**

**Implications:** Competitive learning encourages high levels of individual achievement but may lead youth with low self-esteem to feel badly about themselves. It is very important to stress working toward meeting individual goals in competitive situations and recognizing the achievement of or progress toward those goals regardless of the outcome of a competition.

*\*Remember to avoid using this method with Cloverbuds—see page 8.*

# Learning... in 4-H Youth Development



## Learning Method

4-H promotes youth learning-by-doing and utilizes a methodology called Experiential Learning, which engages learners in an activity that

- Is direct and hands-on
- Uses open-ended questions that invite further discussion and interaction
- Allows participants to discuss the experiences they had doing the activity
- Results in active reflection and discussion of the activity by the participants
- Makes connections between the activity and the real-world examples
- Applies the outcomes of the activity to one or more independent situations

## Experiential Learning Cycle

The most widely used model of experiential learning in the 4-H YDP utilizes the following 5-step cycle.

**Experience: Do It!** Begin with a concrete experience. This can be an individual activity or a group activity, but it involves doing something with little or no help from the leader. Ask youth to rate an item. For instance, "which product costs more?" Additionally, you can create exhibits, role-play, give a demonstration, problem-solve, or play a game.

**Share: What Happened?** Get the group or the individual to talk about the experience. Share reactions and observations in the group. Answer the questions: "What did you do?", "What did you see?", "Feel?", "Hear?", "Taste?", "What was the most difficult part of the experience?", "The easiest part?" Let the group talk freely.

**Process: What's Important?** Discuss, analyze, reflect on, and look at the experience. Youth should talk about how themes, problems and issues are brought out by the experience and how they were addressed. Discuss how questions are created by the activity. Ask more questions! Analyze the experience.

**Generalize: So What?** Support youth in finding trends or common lessons in the experience that can be applied to the real world, not just the specific topic. Identify key terms or real-life principles that capture the meaning.

**Apply: Now What?** Talk about how the new information can be applied to everyday life now or sometime in the future. Apply what was learned to a similar or different situation. Practice what was learned.

Providing a hands-on learning experience alone does not create "experiential learning." The experience itself comes first. The learning comes from the thoughts and ideas created in sharing, processing, generalizing, and applying the experience.

## Learning Styles

People have different learning styles.

Some of use are **visual** or spatial **learners**. We think in pictures and learn best from visual displays, such as diagrams, illustrated books, overhead projections, videos and DVDs, handouts, and flip charts.

The skills visual learners are best at include puzzle building, reading, writing, understanding charts, demonstrating a good sense of direction, painting, designing practical objects, and interpreting visual images.

Some of us are **auditory learners**. We learn best through verbal lectures, discussions, talking things through, and listening to what others have to say. Written information may have little meaning until it is heard or read aloud. The skills auditory learners are best at include listening, speaking, explaining, writing, using humor, remembering information, or telling a story.

**Kinesthetic learners** learn better through moving, doing, and touching. They take a hands-on approach, actively exploring the physical world around them. Youth may find it hard to sit still for long periods and may become distracted by their need for activity and exploration. The skills these learners may master easily are physical coordination, dancing, sports, hands-on experimentation, crafts, acting, or using their hands to create or build.

## Apply What You Learned How would you include each step of experiential learning into a project or activity?

Experience	_____
Share	_____
Process	_____
Generalize	_____
Apply	_____

# How to Be.... in the Know

## Age Requirements

*Cloverbuds*—Five to seven years old by January 1 of the program year which runs from October 1 to September 30

*4-H Members*—Eight to eighteen years old by January 1 of the program year

*Participation in Shooting Sports, Livestock Projects and Competitive Events*—4-H members only; no cloverbuds

*Membership in 4-H is offered without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religion, disability, political beliefs, and familial status.*

## Club Bylaws & Charter

To become an official 4-H club members and their leaders must decide on a club name, develop club bylaws and submit them to their 4-H County Educator. The Educator will forward this on to the State Office to get the club an official charter. Once the charter has been issued the club is formally recognized as being a part of 4-H.

## 4-H Policies

See “*UVM Extension Policy Guide for 4-H Volunteers and Staff*” for policies regarding:

- Chaperones
- Club & Committee Monies
- Clubs and Club Property
- Contracts
- Corporate Sponsorships
- Definition of a 4-H Club
- Dress Code/Behavior
- Driving
- Insurance/Risk Management Procedures
- Mandatory Reporter

- Name and Emblem
- Naming 4-H Clubs
- Raffles, Lotteries and Gaming
- Religion and 4-H
- Tax Exemption
- Volunteer Conduct
- Youth Protection

## A Quick Look at Who We Are and What We Offer:

UVM Extension has a number of staff persons who are engaged in youth development work. Below is a list of positions; ask your 4-H Educator for more information about what each person does for 4-H and Extension.

- 4-H Director
- 4-H Educators
- Youth Ag Coordinator
- Operation Military Kids Coordinator
- Youth Farm Safety Coordinator
- 4-H Livestock Educator
- 4-H Shooting Sports Coordinator
- 4-H Teen & Leadership Program Coordinator
- 4-H Youth & Family Program Coordinator
- 4-H Science Liaison

And, within 4-H there are several groups that provide financial and/or program support to the county & statewide 4-H clubs and activities:

- County 4-H Foundations
- State 4-H Foundation
- Cooperative Extension
- State 4-H Office
- State 4-H Horse Committee

## 4-H Pledge:

“I pledge  
My HEAD to clearer thinking  
My HEART to greater loyalty  
My HANDS to larger service, and  
My HEALTH for better living,  
For my club, my community, my country and my world.”

## 4-H Slogan:

“LEARN-BY-DOING”  
This slogan expresses a belief in a way of learning that allows individuals to practice and use new knowledge and skills.

## 4-H Motto:

“TO MAKE THE BEST BETTER”  
This motto encourages individuals and groups to improve their opportunities, skills, and knowledge for the future.

- State 4-H Dairy Committee
- State 4-H Working Steer Committee
- State 4-H Sheep Committee
- Shooting Sports Council

4-H also recognizes the importance of giving teens opportunities to develop and practice their leadership abilities.

Opportunities that exist are:

- Teen Congress Teen Board
- Mini Congress Teen Board
- VT 4-H Youth Environmental Council
- Teen Leader @ Big E
- County Teen Leadership Councils

Teens can also serve on foundations, councils and advisory committees.

No matter where you live and what your club does there are events & activities that happen annually in 4-H, either at a county, regional, state or national level.

- Regional Day & State Day
- Achievement & Recognition Events

- Knowledge & Skill Contests
- Teen Congress
- Teen Leadership Weekend
- Mini Congress
- Natural Resources Management Academy
- Citizenship Washington Focus
- Day at the Capitol
- Livestock & Other Skill Clinics
- Communication Contests
- Fairs & Field Days
- National 4-H Week
- National Youth Science Day
- Embryology in the Classroom
- 4-H Volunteer Training
- Shooting Sports Jamboree
- Becoming an Outdoor Family Weekend



# Working... with 4-H Members



## Youth Characteristics

Youth mature in many ways: physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially.

To be successful, youth must acquire new skills, knowledge, and abilities. It is also during childhood and adolescence that youth begin to branch out socially and build new or additional relationships.

Development during this time-frame can vary from one child to the next. Every child grows and develops at his or her own rate. Some children may acquire certain capabilities earlier than their peers, while others may outpace their classmates in physical growth but be behind in other developmental areas.

## Ages & Stages

**K-3rd grade:** usually have a relatively short attention span. They have limited manual dexterity and hand-eye coordination, as well as limited reading and writing skills. As a result, these members can be sensitive to personal criticism.

**4th–5th grade:** can have boundless energy along with an increased attention span. They tend to have a need for self-expression through self-directed activities, and they enjoy both cooperation and limited degree of competition.

**6th–8th grade:** fluctuate between childhood and adulthood. They are experiencing physical, emotional, and social changes. Their project skills and communication abilities are advancing, but are often controlled by their emotions. They have a need to find

acceptance from both peers and adults and tend to enjoy competition.

**9th –12th grade:** enjoy leadership opportunities that allow them to exercise their developing skills in adult roles. They are fine-tuning their interests and explorations of career possibilities.

## Teaching Opportunities

**Publications:** 4-H publications and websites can be a big help to you in project work. Project outlines, manuals, or guides are available in many subject areas.

**Visuals:** Videos, slides, pictures, and models are useful for helping members see how to do things. Visuals also provide a change of pace in project work and may show members new areas to explore.

**Presentations:** A volunteer or older member can give a presentation to share knowledge and skills with others in a meeting. Members should be asked to give presentations before their project group on skills or knowledge they have mastered or learned. Members should also be encouraged to repeat their presentation at their club meeting before parents, at Regional Day, or for other activities and events. As they progress, members will assume an increasing amount of responsibility for choosing their presentations' subject, preparing the presentation, and evaluating their efforts.

**Identification:** Many young people enjoy learning how to identify project-related items, such as the names of the kitchen tools or parts of an animal's anatomy. Learning basic project terms may help a young person gain self-confidence as well as knowledge. If possible, have the actual items available for members to work with in a real situation when you lead an identification exercise.

**Judging:** In 4-H we use judging as a tool to help young people learn to observe, compete, make decisions, and categorize differences and similarities between things. At first, give a member two similar types of items to observe and compare to each other. Ask him or her to tell in what ways on item is different from another. As the member gains confidence in judging ask him or her to rank four related items from best to worst. Have the member give his or her reasons for ranking each item.

**Competitions:** Competitions are prevalent throughout the 4-H programs to inspire youth to do their personal best based on the goals they have set for themselves. Emphasis should be placed on positive feedback so youth can reflect and learn from the experience. Competitions develop good sportsmanship and resiliency, helping youth realize that they can overcome disappoint-

ments. Note: Cloverbuds should not participate in competitions; rather, cloverbud programs are activity-focused and not project-focused and are built on cooperative learning, not competitive activities. (See p. 5 for more information on competitive learning and other learning strategies).

**Tours:** Young people like to go places and see things. Tours of members' projects can be quite a boost for members and their families. Everyone gets a chance to compare methods and measure their individual progress. Members can discuss their experiences, display their work, or give a presentation.

Commercial enterprise such as bakeries, feed yards, retail stores, and restaurants often welcome 4-H group tours of their operations. Members should prepare ahead of time with questions to ask the owners or operators about the business.

**Record Keeping:** 4-H records give young people practice in planning and measuring progress. Be sure to explain early in the project year that members need to keep records of their experiences in 4-H. Be positive and give encouragement to help your members learn from their experiences and find alternative solutions when problems arise.

## Apply What You Learned *Use a variety of methods or opportunities in your project.*

Identify the characteristics of the ages in your project group:

List how you will involve community resources in your project:

List how you will use teaching opportunities in your project:



# Getting Started... a Leader Plan

## Your First Meeting

Your first club meeting of the year is your most important in getting your club off to a good start. Use the First Club Meeting Outline below to organize the meeting.

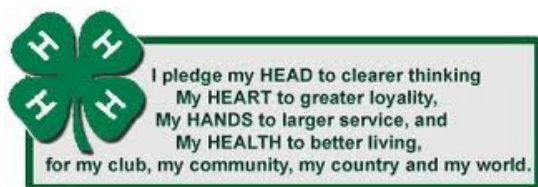
Invite parents to your first meeting. Review with everyone the calendar for the year, club expectations, project costs, rules and discipline, project requirements, and other pertinent information. Allow plenty of time for questions and answers.



## First Club Meeting Outline

Duration: 1 to 1 1/2 hrs (maximum)

1. **Introduce** yourself, other club leaders, members and parents.
2. **Review club expectations.** Discuss projects to be covered during the year. (A blackboard, posters, or sheets of blank easel paper are helpful.) Discuss project requirements, rules, and discipline.
3. **Discuss with the group:**
  - Number, frequency, place and time of meetings
  - How project supplies will be acquired
  - How expenses will be met
  - What to bring to meetings
  - Dates of special activities, and how to participate
4. **Fun activity**—Use a game, a relay, of some other fun and interactive activity to reinforce what was discussed earlier.
5. **Adjourn**



## A Meeting Outline

Duration: 1 to 2 hrs (maximum)

1. **Business meeting**
  - Call the meeting to order
  - Pledge to the American & 4-H flags
  - Roll call
  - Reading and adoption of minutes
  - Reports of committees
  - Old business
  - New business
  - Adjournment from business meeting
2. **Program**—might include one or more of the following:
  - Project talk(s),
  - demonstration(s)
  - special numbers or activities (outside speakers, movies, talent night, craft night, etc.)
  - Educational tours or a special fun activity
  - Project work
3. **Record keeping**—Allow time for members to work on record books
4. **Recreation**
  - games, sports, team-building activities, etc.

Special points to remember:

- a. Try to plan meetings for the whole year or period of time the club will operate.
- b. Simple parliamentary rules should be used by all members—being recognized before speaking, making motions, discussion, electing officers, and voting.
- c. Add variety to meetings by reversing the business meeting order, singing, have special nights, tours, games, slide shows, etc.

**Apply What You Learned** *You are ready to get started. Use the checklist below for review:*

- ☐ Obtain a 3-ring binder or file for easy storage of all of your club materials.
- ☐ Get a list of your club members.
- ☐ Borrow 4-H Curricula and materials from 4-H Office or purchase from 4Hmall.org.
- ☐ Prepare club expectations for members.
- ☐ Prepare a sample Club Meeting Outline.
- ☐ Complete a calendar for your club's year, including dates of meetings and events.

# Youth and Adults Working Together

## Youth-Adult Partnerships

Youth and adult partnerships in 4-H provide an opportunity for youth and adults to share responsibility and ideas and to develop leadership skills together. Junior and Teen Leaders are involved in planning, teaching, and leading projects, activities, and events at all levels of the 4-H YDP.

Adults and youth work together to reach a common goal in a partnership. Themes that are woven through successful youth-adult partnerships include:

- **Build relationships and a cooperative environment.** Learn about each other before you start the project. This builds trust.
- **Understand differences.** Learn from one another what each of you needs and expects from the other(s). Everyone can contribute to the project. Understand that each person brings gifts/talents/resources to the partnership.

- **Know your goals, and focus on the ones you have in common.** Youth need to be involved with decisions that affect them, and adults need to understand why that is important.
- **Find a balance of power and find the importance in working together.** Try to maintain an equal number of youth and adults. Ensure that youth are decision-makers, not just participants.
- **Reveal skills and attitudes that will cultivate a successful partnership.** Youth are capable of significant decision-making.
- **Show genuine concern for issues addressed in the project.** The issues should be real and relevant to youth.
- **Recognize and bring attention to the feeling of accomplishment.** Acknowledge every person's contribution as a part of the team.



**Remember** that teens are not allowed to assume *all* of the responsibilities of adult 4-H Leaders, since they are not covered by 4-H liability insurance, which applies only to adults. For this reason, Junior and Teen Leaders must be supervised by an approved adult 4-H Leader at all times.

## Youth in Governance: A Goal to Strive Toward

Youth and adult partnership methodology fosters an environment that promotes successful youth in governance programming. Youth in Governance (YIG) is an organizational strategy in which young people have voice, influence, and decision-making authority in programmatic, organizational, and community-level decisions and activities. Programs and activities become more relevant and interesting to the youth in the program as well. Youth who are engaged in these types of programs gain a strong sense of citizenship along with life and leadership skills.

Teen and adults can work together to develop two things: First, develop a job description for each person to clearly define each person's responsibilities. Second, develop a plan of work that identifies the expectations of the teens and adults. Planning an activity on paper will help you identify all of the tasks involved.

An adult leader must be willing to share the responsibilities and leadership role before he or she asks a teen to serve as an assistant. Adults and teens both should agree to the following:

### Adult

1. Recognize teens as equals in making decisions and accepting responsibilities.
2. Recognize the importance of good communication between adults and teens.

3. Recognize the importance of encouragement and support on a continuing basis throughout the year.
4. Understand that mistakes are opportunities to learn.
5. Ask for assistance when needed.

### Teens

1. Get along with younger 4-H members, your peer groups, and adults.
2. Be sincere in helping others and working with groups.
3. Plan ahead and complete your activities.
4. Be aware of your abilities and limitations.
5. Ask for assistance when needed.
6. Share decision making and responsibilities with adults.

## Apply What You Learned

### Checklist for Youth-Adult Partnering

- ☐ Learned about each other before starting.
- ☐ Developed job descriptions, together, for all partners.
- ☐ Identified expectations of the teens and adults.
- ☐ Identified goals.
- ☐ Identified activities and the who, how, where, when and why of each task.
- ☐ Teens are partners in decision making.
- ☐ Encouragement, support, and recognition for accomplishments are important to give to all partners.

# Safety and Insurance

## Safety First

As a 4-H leader you are entrusted with a great responsibility. The skills and knowledge that 4-H members gain from project work and the development of cooperation, leadership, and community involvement through 4-H will help them develop into caring adults. An important area in this development is that of safety.

## Safety Requirements for Transporting Members

All leaders who transport youth are required to have a valid Vermont Driver License, carry their own automobile liability and accident insurance, use a safe vehicle, and have a seat belt for each passenger.

When transporting youth to or from 4-H programs, events, and activities, an adult cannot be alone in a vehicle with a youth other than their own child without advance written permission of the youth's parent.

## Liability Coverage

Coverage for appointed volunteers is provided during activities that are scheduled, sponsored, and supervised and while volunteers are acting within the scope and course of their 4-H duties. More specifics about liability are available from your 4-H Educator.

If accidental injury or property damage occurs, full details must be promptly reported to your County 4-H Office.

## What Can the 4-H Leader Do About Safety?

- Set a good example at all meetings.
- Recognize hazards and correct them.
- Demonstrate the proper use of equipment.
- Discuss safety at every meeting.

## Accident Insurance

Clubs should take out 4-H accident insurance to cover members and leaders. While directly involved in activities scheduled, sponsored, and supervised by appointed 4-H volunteers and staff. This insurance covers members and leaders only; it does not cover parents or family members unless they are also enrolled in 4-H.

If a 4-H member in your club is injured and requires professional medical attention, obtain medical attention, notify parents, and provide them with the accident insurance claim form. Report the incident to your County 4-H Office.

## Field Trips

4-H volunteers in charge of an activity must have an original signed medical release from in their possession. When planning a field trip, you should provide the parent with an itinerary and have him or her sign a permission slip for the child to participate.

Drivers for 4-H organized events may not drive just one child alone, unless the youth is the driver's own child.

## Mandatory Reporting

4-H volunteers are considered mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect in the State of Vermont. It is the responsibility of volunteers, if they suspect a child is abused or neglected, to report that suspicion within 24 hours, by contacting their County 4-H Educator, or their immediate supervisor.

## Youth Protection

There must always be at least two (2) adults present at 4-H programs, events, and activities.

These adults can be two appointed adult volunteer leaders, or one appointed adult leader and another adult (who is at least 21 years of age) or a 4-H staff person.

For overnights, youth ages 5-7 must have a chaperone sleep in the same space (tent, hotel room, dorm, etc.); chaperones for youth ages 8-11 should not share the same room or tent, with the exception being when safety may be a factor due to unknown circumstances. Chaperones for youth ages 12+ may never sleep in the same room/tent as the youth except as provided by the rules of specific events with dormitory-like accommodations. Chaperones may always sleep in the same room/tent as their own children of any age, if there are no additional children present.



*'To Make The Best Better'*

## Apply What You Learned

*Safety should come first in your club and its projects.*

List the safety precautions you will take in your club :

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List other safety information you need:

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# Resources...Where Do You Go For Help?

*There are many knowledgeable people and valuable resources available to assist 4-H Volunteers.*

## **4-H County Educators**

Addison County	1-800-956-1125
Bennington County	1-800-281-1552
Caledonia County	1-800-545-8920
Chittenden County	1-800-571-0668
Essex County	1-866-260-5561
Franklin County	1-800-639-2130
Grand Isle County	1-800-639-2130
Lamoille County	1-866-260-5603
Orange County	1-866-860-1382
Orleans County	1-866-260-5561
Rutland County	1-800-281-6977
Washington County	1-866-860-1382
Windham County	1-800-278-5471
Windsor County	1-800-278-5471



**4-H State Office** 1-800-571-0668

## **Important Websites:**

Vermont 4-H	<a href="http://www.uvm.edu/extension/youth">www.uvm.edu/extension/youth</a>
UVM Extension	<a href="http://www.uvm.edu/extension">www.uvm.edu/extension</a>
National 4-H	<a href="http://www.4-h.org">www.4-h.org</a> and <a href="http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov">www.national4-hheadquarters.gov</a>
4-H mall	<a href="http://www.4-hmall.org">www.4-hmall.org</a>

## **And find us on Facebook:**

Once you log in to Facebook, search for the following and “Like” the page. If you have trouble finding these groups, just contact your local 4-H Office.

Vermont 4-H  
4-H Shooting Sports—Vermont—University of Vermont  
Vermont 4-H Teen & Leadership Programs  
Vermont Operation: Military Kids  
UVM Extension  
Becoming an Outdoor Family—Vermont

\* Counties may also have Facebook pages, check with your County 4-H Educator