



Oregon 4-H

Junior Leader Project Adult Leader Guide

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People involved with 4-H Youth Development are passionate about the program. They believe in its 100-year history, its value, and its long-term benefits to positive youth development. And, research is proving what many have always believed: 4-H is making a difference in the lives of youth.

A Cornell University study that compares 4-H members to non-participants found that young people who participate in 4-H clubs:

- Do better in school and are more educationally motivated
- Are more motivated to help others and place more emphasis on having a value system
- Achieve more than other kids, even kids who participate in other kinds of group programs and clubs
- Have higher levels of self-esteem and communicate at more of an adult level

The majority of young people in the study also reported that they had gained skills in leadership, public speaking, problem solving, goal setting, planning, self-confidence, citizenship, communication, and organization; as well as academic gains, expanded horizons, respect for (and from) others, patience, tolerance, and “real-world” experience from hands-on projects. (Rodriguez et al., 1999).



The results of an Oregon State University 4-H Youth Development Education impact study, “4-H: Making a Difference in the Lives of Oregon’s Youth,” showed that teen participation in “youth as partners” programming makes a significant difference in some areas that are important to healthy adolescent development. This study showed that teens who are Junior Leaders of their 4-H clubs:



- Use positive coping skills
- Care more about others
- Want to contribute to others
- Have higher self-esteem

Junior Leaders are an important part of the 4-H program. As an adult leader, you can contribute greatly to their success. This *Oregon 4-H Junior Leader Project—Adult Leader Guide* can help you understand your role as adult leader and mentor of 4-H Junior Leaders. Be sure you also read and are familiar with *Leading the Way—Oregon 4-H Junior Leader Project Member Handbook* (4-H 6520).

Junior Leaders in Your Club

What is a leader’s role when working with 4-H Junior Leaders?

The focus of this project is for 4-H Junior Leaders to build skills and gain confidence while helping you in your role as adult leader. Adult leaders help by allowing them to take responsible leadership roles within their clubs. Adult and Junior Leaders work together to create a plan that directs youth and provides leadership opportunities.



Junior Leader activities

There is a long list of activity ideas in *Leading the Way—Oregon 4-H Junior Leader Project Member Handbook*. Discuss with your Junior Leader what projects best fit the needs of each of you and your 4-H club.

Setting up a 4-H Junior Leader project

1. Within your club, meet with intermediate and senior 4-H members, grades 7 to 12, to find out who would like to participate in the 4-H Junior Leader project.
2. Once members commit to serving as 4-H Junior Leaders, be sure they officially enroll in the Junior Leader project through the local Extension office.
3. Discuss your Junior Leaders’ individual interests and skills. Determine club needs, and talk about possible goals for the year.
4. Assist Junior Leaders as they outline specific projects and activities they plan to lead. Using the “4-H Junior Leader Record” (in *Leading the Way—Oregon 4-H Junior Leader Project Member Handbook*), identify specific responsibilities and a timeline. Make sure the plan is realistic, so members can be successful in their efforts.

5. Be supportive as the members take leadership of their projects.
6. Check in on a regular basis to see if your Junior Leader needs assistance. It is important to meet with your Junior Leaders separately from other club members to teach leadership skills and review project assignments. Remember to provide encouragement and support.
7. If pertinent, ask the Junior Leader if he or she would like to review with you before doing a presentation before a group.
8. When an activity is completed, debrief and evaluate the event with your Junior Leaders. Discuss what went well and what could be improved.
9. Recognize 4-H Junior Leaders for their accomplishments through certificates, notes of appreciation, newsletter articles, and awards ceremonies.
10. Assist 4-H Junior Leaders, as needed, with the completion of their 4-H Junior Leader Record and 4-H Junior Leader Advancements.



Suggestions for using 4-H Junior Leader Advancements and Record

If needed, the 4-H Junior Leader Advancements and 4-H Junior Leader Record sheets can be copied from the Member Handbook for Junior Leaders to place in their record books. Please work with your Junior Leaders to select advancements that will help guide them in their leadership journey. Advancements are listed in progressive levels, but members may select any suggestions from the list or create their own ideas.

	<p>Self-Assessment: Am I ready to accept Junior Leaders as part of my club?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I have read <i>Leading the Way—Oregon 4-H Junior Leader Project Member Handbook</i> and am aware of what this project entails.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I am ready to help older youth in my club develop important leadership skills.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I realize that working with Junior Leaders will take extra effort, but I am willing to take the necessary time to help them be successful.</p>
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Youth/Adult Partnerships

What is a youth/adult partnership?

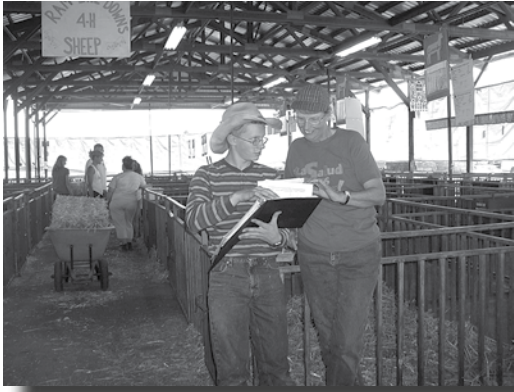
It is young people and adults bringing together their strengths to address a common goal or issue. Junior leaders work in partnership with adults at the club, county, or state level.

Why are youth/adult partnerships important?

A centerpiece of the 4-H program is the priority placed on youth and adults working together to design and implement activities. Through their experience working in partnership with adults, youth increase knowledge, develop life skills, and create friendships. Without young people's involvement, 4-H cannot successfully meet their needs.

What does a successful youth/adult partnership look like?

There are three pieces needed for successful youth-adult partnerships (Camino, 2000).



1. Youth and adults both practice principles and values that challenge the typical youth/adult relationship, in which adults hold the superior position and youth the inferior. Young people and adults both must appreciate the unique and valuable contributions each brings to the partnership.
2. Youth and adults must master the skills and competencies required for a successful partnership: communication, decision-making, teamwork, and coaching.
3. Youth and adults in partnership must develop a plan for action. The partnership works together with a common goal in mind.

Tips for working with young partners

(Adapted from "Younger Voices, Stronger Choices," Kansas City Promise Project, a Joint Effort of the Junior League of Kansas City, MO. Inc., and Kansas City Consensus, 1997.)

- **Don't expect more from a youngster than you would from an adult.**
When a young person shows up late to an event, how do you react? Do you react the same way when an adult shows up late? Or are you more understanding with adults?

- **Make sure you do not hold young people to stricter standards than adults.**
Youth have other commitments, pressures, and schedules that also demand their attention. Be understanding of their lives.

- **Don't excuse all irresponsible behavior just because you are dealing with a youth.**
Sometimes adults don't expect enough from young people. Set high expectations, and work towards achieving goals together.

- **Treat young people as individuals; don't assume that one youth represents all youth.**

Young people put a lot of pressure on themselves. They understand that adults may carry negative images of young people and may generalize from the behavior of a few. Do not make a young person feel that he or she must speak for or represent all youths. Assure young people that you are interested in their individual opinions.



- **Be careful not to interrupt when a young person is speaking.**
Kids get discouraged easily. Let them finish voicing their ideas. To create an environment that fosters equal participation, be very sensitive about interrupting a young person, and encourage him or her to persevere with a point even if he or she is interrupted. For a partnership to work, young people must feel that they are valued and respected by adults. All partners must respect each other's right to voice opinions without criticism or censure.
- **Remember that your role is partner, not parent.**
While being a parent may be the most important role that any adult can play, the purpose of youth/adult partnerships is to give young people a different way to relate to adults.
- **Let your young partner keep pace with you.**
Remember that this is new for your young partner. Don't move too fast or take action without explaining the reasons. Rushing through meetings can be a sign that adults are still trying to control the group.

Self-Assessment: Am I doing what I can to work as an efficient partner with youth?

- I show my willingness to be open and listen to new ideas.**
- I offer ideas and suggestions with a positive and encouraging attitude.**
- I am respectful of youth in my group.**

Life Skills Learned through 4-H Leadership

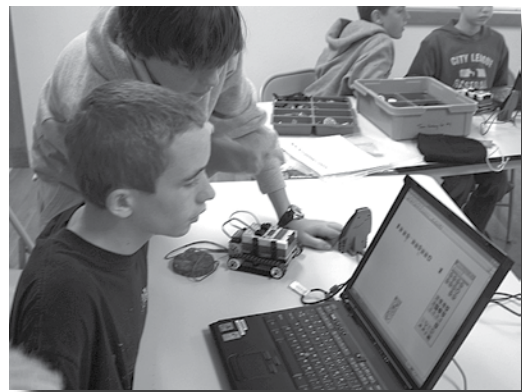
We know that learning life skills enhances young people's lives. Decision-making, communication, and teamwork are three significant life skills that youth can build through the 4-H Junior Leaders program, which will help them become productive, contributing adults.

Decision-making

It is important for youth to have decision-making opportunities so they can learn to take more control of their lives. This experience builds feelings of empowerment.

Adults also benefit from youth helping to make decisions within their organization (Zeldin et al., 2000). They:

- Experience the competence of youth first-hand
- Feel more energy and commitment to the organization
- Feel more effective and more confident in relation to youth
- Better understand youth programming needs
- Feel more connection to the community



Have Junior Leaders try the following activity with their club members.

Case Studies

(From Leadership Skills You Never Outgrow, Leadership Project Book 3: Skills Working Within Groups, 4-H 65022, January 1993, p. 81)



Materials: Make enough copies of the Case Studies (below) to share one with each group.

Procedure: Divide members into groups of two or three. Have each group read the Case Studies and collectively decide what they would do in each situation. You may wish to make up your own case studies.

1. You have been chosen to serve as the refreshment-stand coordinator at the 4-H show. As part of your job, you are responsible for all the 4-H kids who are selling soft drinks during the fair. Two of your friends are planning to sneak out one night from the fair and go to a nearby mall. You really want to go with your friends, but you are also concerned about leaving your responsibilities.
2. You have been working hard in the school band and it is finally paying off. You have been invited to go to the band contest. Your family is planning to go on a weekend vacation the same weekend. Your family really needs this vacation to be with everyone together.
3. At a party, your friends are drinking and smoking. If you leave or say anything you'll be called a "chicken" or a "snitch," but you really don't want to join them.
4. You have a big test tomorrow. The gang is going out to the new group's concert that you want to hear, but you need to study.

Discussion: Could the decision-making steps (defining, gathering, listing, weighing, deciding, taking action, and evaluating) help you through these situations? Which decision-making steps are affected most by your personal beliefs? Do you think it helps in making decisions involving your friends if you have thought about the problem ahead of time?

Communication

Have you ever said something and found that others interpreted it differently from what you intended? Miscommunication can cause many problems in both personal and working relationships.

Have your Junior Leaders try the following activity with club members to help them understand how communication can vary from person to person, depending on how each person processes and interprets a message.

Tear Me Up

Materials: One 8½ x 11 sheet of paper for each participant

Procedure: Hand a sheet of paper to each member. Ask everyone to close their eyes and follow your simple directions.

1. Fold the paper in half, and tear off the upper right-hand corner.
2. Fold the paper in half again, and tear off the upper right-hand corner.
3. Fold the paper in half again, and tear off the lower left-hand corner.

If asked a question, do not give an answer, just repeat the directions. After the first few times that you do not give an answer, participants will stop asking questions.

At the end, ask everyone to open their eyes and unfold their paper.

Discussion:

1. Compare the differences in designs.
2. Discuss the fact that there are differences, even though everyone received the same instructions.
3. Discuss ways to improve our communication skills.

Teamwork

Teamwork is important in clubs. When everyone works together, they can accomplish more. Because people have all types of personalities, it takes a leader to help guide members toward a group consensus.

Have your Junior Leaders try the following activity with club members to show how personalities can affect teamwork, both in positive and negative ways.

Blockers and Builders

Preparation: Write each of the following roles on separate index cards. Make enough so there is one for each member.

- You are negative about any and all ideas.
- You always want your ideas to be “The Idea.” You won’t listen to any others or change your idea.
- You are positive about everyone’s ideas.
- You are the negotiator and try to get everyone to agree by compromise.
- You put down any ideas.
- You don’t want to get involved.

Procedure: Divide members into groups of six and hand out a different role card to each member in each group. After they read their card, they should not tell anyone in their group what role they were assigned.

Then, give the following scenario: Your school has agreed to let you spend a day together doing something outside of school ONLY IF you can decide in the next 10 minutes how you will spend that day.

After 10 minutes, stop the small groups and begin discussion.

Discussion:

1. Were all the group members trying to reach a decision?
2. Were there any behaviors that blocked the group from reaching a decision?
3. What were the results of the blocking behaviors?
4. How did members who were “blockers” feel in their role?
5. As leaders, what can we do to facilitate reaching an agreement?



Resources and References

Resources

Oregon State University Extension Service

- *Active Teaching—Active Learning: Teaching Techniques and Tools* (4-H 0259L)
- *Exciting Meetings for Great Groups: Organizational and Planning Techniques and Tools for Your 4-H Group/Club* (4-H 0256L)

For more information on 4-H programs, visit the Oregon 4-H website:

oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/index_th.html or talk to your local Extension staff.

National 4-H Cooperative Curriculum System

Step Up to Leadership

- *Leadership Mentor Guide* (4HCCS BU-07904)
- *My Leadership Journal* (4HCCS BU-07906)
- *My Leadership Portfolio* (4HCCS BU-07907)

At The Table: <http://atthetable.org/>

This website is an online clearinghouse where you can find everything you might need to know about involving youth effectively in organization and community.

Cyfernet: <http://cyfernet.org/>

Search for “youth and adult partnerships” on this website to find valuable resources from national Cooperative Extension professionals.

References

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