

Club Structure

There are many ways to develop a club structure. 4-H clubs commonly have officers, including president, vice president or president-elect, secretary or reporter, treasurer, recreation chairperson, and parliamentarian. Officers may be elected for the entire 4-H year or for 3 months at a time. Or, officer duties can be assigned to a different member every month or shared by two members. This allows members to learn from one another and share responsibilities.

There are many creative ways for young people to practice decision making and leadership. **It is important for adults not to make decisions for youth during club meetings.** The process of making decisions takes time and requires practice. 4-H volunteers are mentors and guides while youth are learning.

Learning in 4-H

Members and volunteers can choose to learn about any topic, as long as the learning can occur safely and within the risk management guidelines established by the State 4-H Office. For example, Cloverbuds (kindergarten through third grade) can enjoy learning about small pets but may not be involved with large animal projects (e.g., dog, horse, or beef) because they are not developmentally prepared to manage the animal or consistently practice good judgment for everyone's safety. Another example is that annual 4-H accident insurance covers most educational activities but not activities that are in the air (e.g., airplane lessons or rides).

Project materials for 4-H members and volunteers are listed in the "projects" section of the Oregon 4-H website (<http://oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/projects>). Some projects have leader guides that provide ideas for teaching methods and learning activities. Explore ideas with your county Extension staff, too. Many 4-H materials are available online or provided at no charge; others are available for a small fee.

Summary

Starting a 4-H club is exciting for youth and rewarding for volunteers. It is a time to make friends and learn together. There are many people who are willing to help. Start today by contacting your county Extension office.

Resources

Oregon 4-H website:

<http://oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/>

Fact sheets and information from National 4-H Headquarters:

<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/youthdevelopment4h.cfm>

(To view a fact sheet, click the title below.)

- *Essential Elements of Youth Development*
- *What is a 4-H Club?*
- *Naming a 4-H Club*
- *Charters: The Key to Official Recognition*
- *Granting Authorization to Use the 4-H Name and Emblem*
- *Kindergarten–3rd Grade Programs in 4-H*
- *Developmental Appropriateness*
- *4-H's Public Partnership: USDA & Land-grant Institutions*

Your county Extension office:

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/find-us> or your telephone directory (Look under 4-H, Oregon State University Extension Service, or [County Name] Extension Service.)

Ask for these materials:

- 4-H enrollment forms
- Insurance information
- 4-H project materials
- *Welcome to the World of 4-H: Basics for New Leaders* DVD (PNW 003-DVD)

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