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Clothing and Textiles Implementation Leader Guide

What's new for 1999–2000

Effective September 1999, the Oregon 4-H Program introduces new clothing and textiles publications for 4-H members and leaders. There are a number of features in these publications that are different from the previous publications in ways that will be important to you as a leader. These changes signal differences in the expectations of volunteer Clothing and Textiles project leaders.

Why does the Leader Guide come with an extra cover sheet?

These new publications were developed by the Washington 4-H Program. Initially, the Oregon 4-H Program purchased the Washington materials and printed Oregon cover sheets. As any member or leader publication is reprinted in the future, it will become a new Pacific Northwest Publication (PNW) and will incorporate changes mutually agreeable to Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. Until the first PNW reprint takes place, there are some significant differences in how the literature is being used in the two states. Please read on for details.

What are the major changes from previous publications?

The first change is an overall strengthening of the relative emphasis on clothing selection, care, and accessorizing.

The second change is a broadening of the development and application of sewing skills. Under the previous publications, after the first year or so, members focused primarily on sewing skills related to garment construction. The new publications provide a more flexible framework for sewing on a broader variety of final products at all levels.

Comprehensive leader guides at three levels (Skill Level 1—Beginning, Skill Level 2—Intermediate, and Skill Level 3—Advanced) provide leaders with

material to cover 3 years of member project involvement at each level. This change to a three-level project is part of a general trend in this direction across most Oregon 4-H publications as they are updated or replaced. This three-level approach is now used by most states and is congruent with the Junior, Intermediate, and Senior member enrollment categories.

These new materials have been evaluated carefully for use in the Oregon 4-H program with Skill Level 1 (*Fun with Clothes*), for youth in grades 4–6; Skill Level 2 (*Clothing Capers*), for grades 7–9; and Skill Level 3 (*Clothes that Click*), for grades 10–12. Washington uses these same materials with youth at the slightly younger ages printed in the leader materials (the member materials contain no references to ages, so 4-H'ers will not be aware of this difference between the two states' uses of the publications—unless you bring it to their attention). In Oregon, we have the 4-H Adventures Program for 4-H participants in kindergarten through grade 3, rather than participation in an actual project curriculum. This difference between the two states in targeted age groups should not be a problem for you as a leader. The activities included in each leader guide include a wide range of challenges. If one activity seems too easy for your members, choose another one!

Division of the project materials into three (rather than the former nine) skill levels gives leaders much more flexibility than with the former materials, which covered 1 year of member project participation. Leaders, members, and parents must learn to think in this new three-level format and not expect or encourage members to rush through any level, but rather to fully explore each level before advancing to the next one. Because the Clothing and Textiles project addresses skills development in a sequential and cumulative manner, it's important for members to enroll in the

Prepared by Mary Ann Sward, Extension specialist, 4-H youth development, Oregon State University.



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skill level appropriate for their sewing skills and not jump into a skill level because their age/grade peers are already at a higher skill level in the project.

For most 4-H youth, this will mean being enrolled at each level for 3 years. The general exception would be when intermediate- or senior-aged 4-H'ers (those in grades 7–9 and 10–12) enroll in the Clothing and Textiles project for the first time. They would enroll in Skill Level 1 of the project, but would be anticipated to cover more material in a year than younger 4-H'ers and could potentially “catch up” with their age/grade peers over time.

Member materials are different, too!

Members no longer have a project manual for each level of the project. Instead, they receive a basic sewing skills publication (*Let's Sew*), a checklist of construction and other skills broken out by project level (*Sewing Skills Checklist*), and a comprehensive listing of construction standards for sewn items (*Measuring Up: Quality Standards*), plus their member records form (*4-H Clothing Record*).

Members also receive selected materials as considered appropriate by their leader.

What other support is available for 4-H leaders?

Small teams of volunteers from each county (some counties approached this as a multi-county team situation) were trained in early fall 1999. These teams

are responsible for offering training to Clothing and Textiles leaders in their county each year. Check with your 4-H agent to determine what training opportunities are scheduled in your county.

Each county is provided with a resource notebook developed specifically for Clothing and Textiles leaders. This is a good resource to check out before you start looking elsewhere for additional resources to use with your 4-H members.

Changes in expectations for the 4-H Clothing and Textiles leader

At one time it simply was assumed that all 4-H Clothing and Textiles project leaders were sewers themselves. Today, when fewer individuals have the time or skills for sewing, some leaders may be learning basic sewing skills right along with their 4-H'ers. These new leader materials and the support available at the county level recognize that many leaders will fill the role of guide rather than being the source of all answers for their members. For all leaders, the emphasis shifts from how to sew to the development of sewing skills as one part of the overall process of selecting and maintaining a wardrobe that fits the needs of the individual 4-H'er. Leaders or advanced 4-H'ers with exceptional skills in construction, embellishment, or other aspects of the project are encouraged to explore the possibility of serving as a resource leader in their area(s) of expertise. Check with your local 4-H agent about opportunities in your county.



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