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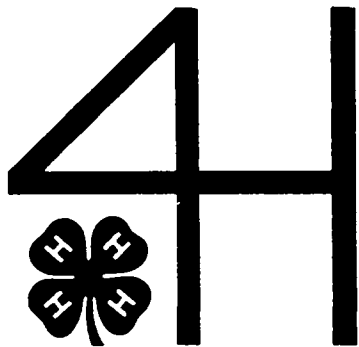
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# Teen Leadership Advisor Guide

D. P. Johnson and B. Boltes

## The Teen Leadership Project

The teen leadership project is a planned experience to encourage and help young people develop leadership skills and abilities. The teen leadership project is designed to build on those experiences 4-H'ers may have had as club members or junior leaders. The program is designed to pro-

vide youth the theories and principles of leadership and also provide a laboratory (club) in which they can carry out the skills of leadership. The project is also available to youth who may have not had any previous 4-H experience. If they have not had any leadership experience, it is recommended they start as junior leaders.

## Teen Leadership vs Junior Leadership

The following is to help you understand the difference between a teen leader and junior leader.

	<i>Junior leader</i>	<i>Teen leader</i>
Members' grade levels	7th through 12 grade	10th through 12th grade (after completing 9th grade)
Experience required	1 year of 4-H or equivalent experience	Interest in younger members
Enrollment	4-H member	4-H member (use 4-H leader enrollment form)
Leadership function	Work with an adult or teen leader	Work alone or with another teen leader (advisor available for counsel)
Purpose of project	Give teenage youth satisfying experiences and training that will enable them to become effective leaders. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help others</li> <li>• Develop basic leadership skills</li> <li>• Assume increased responsibility</li> <li>• Develop ability to work with others</li> <li>• Develop self confidence</li> </ul>	Give high school teens satisfying experiences, in line with their developmental needs, which will further their leadership skills. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with younger members</li> <li>• Develop competence in planning</li> <li>• Provide for independent initiative of youth</li> <li>• Develop positive self concept</li> </ul>

The teen leader project is a member leadership experience. Youth who assume teen leadership responsibility are not eligible for the Leader Recognition Program.

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## **Opportunity for a Teen Leader Advisor**

This is an opportunity for adults to assist teen leaders in developing leadership skills. Successful teen leader advisors are “in tune” with the developmental needs of today’s teenage youth.

Some of these are:

- A philosophy of life that is composed of beliefs and values consistent with today’s society.
- A social competence that gives the individual status in social groups.
- Personal skills adequate to develop a positive sense of self worth.
- Mental and physical health adequate to develop the needs of a functioning human body.

## **Teen Leadership**

Teenage youth who have completed the ninth grade may enroll and participate in the teen leader project.

Since there is a wide difference in the maturity of teens, advisors need to match leadership responsibilities to a member’s ability. Beginners in leadership cannot be expected to do the same jobs as the more experienced. Some youth will feel more comfortable working with an adult, or two teens may work better as a team. Some youth may work better as junior leaders for a year or two as they develop their skills and confidence. Advisors should provide guidance and advice. They know best when the individual is ready to assume extra responsibilities as a teen leader of a club. Here are some of the indications:

- Willingness to accept responsibility.
- Ability to get along with his or her own age group and with younger members.
- True desire to be helpful to a group.
- Ability to plan ahead and carry out activities.
- Stability of behavior.

## **Goals of the Teen Leadership Project**

The primary goal of advisors is to help young people develop into mature, well-balanced adults. Specifically the goals of the teen leadership project should be considered in three categories:

- The Teen Advisor
- The Advisor
- The 4-H Club

## **Goals for the Teen Leaders**

- Gain satisfaction from helping others.
- Learn basic leadership skills important to democratic society.
- Increase leadership responsibilities as skills and knowledge increase.
- Develop an understanding of working with others.
- Gain self-confidence through adolescent years.
- Move towards independence in leading a group.

## **Goals for the 4-H Advisor**

- Share skills, experience, and ability with young people.
- Share responsibilities among more leaders for a more effective program.
- Give teen leaders opportunities to succeed and learn from experience.

## **Goals for the 4-H Club**

- Expand the range of experiences that meet the basic needs and interests of members by increasing the number of leaders.
- Attract additional members through recruitment by teen leader.
- Challenge older members to continue in 4-H.
- Take advantage of the increased enthusiasm of the 4-H members working with teen leaders.

## **The Advisor and Teen Leader**

The advisor should be a person who can:

- Listen to and encourage young people.
- Create an atmosphere in which the teen leader feels free to express himself and herself.
- Communicate clearly. To use another’s ideas requires that one understand those ideas. The teen leader and advisor must have a clear understanding of each other’s goals.
- Treat the teen leader as a young adult.
- With guidance, give full responsibility for the leadership of the club to the teen leader.
- Be concerned about the individual teen leader as well as the group’s growth.
- Meet regularly with the teen leader. Regular evaluation and planning will enable the teen leader to have a more satisfying experience.
- Be available for advice and counsel when needed. The teen leader needs to feel free to contact the advisor as needed.

## Teen Problems and Concerns

As a 4-H teen advisor, it is important to appreciate the way a teenager sees and feels in different situations. Before you can do this, first be aware of concerns as seen by a teenager.

The adolescent is concerned with his or her physical appearance. For instance:

- Girls generally think of themselves as being overweight and worry about this, while boys think of themselves as about “right,” with some concern about too thin arms and chest.
- Girls generally think of themselves as too tall and boys think of themselves as being too short, and boys express a great deal of concern about being “short.” This point is particularly important for understanding the teenager, as girls have started their growth spurt about 1 to 2 years before boys.
- Boys and girls are more concerned with facial blemishes (blackheads and pimples) than with any other problem. The 15-to-18-year-old would be very concerned with this problem.

Adolescents are moving away from dependence on parents toward a wider relationship with other adolescents and adults. Conflicts may develop as they attempt to establish values with which they can live and at the same time be accepted in the wider world. Therefore, adults must learn to be patient with teen “inconsistencies.” Most of these inconsistencies will be resolved in a healthy manner for all concerned **if you don’t force a premature decision.**

The adolescent worries about grades, dating, acceptance by peers and adults, career opportunities, and his or her personality. You can help the teen leader most by showing a genuine, not a “prying” interest.

## Adolescent Development

By the late teens, physical and mental growth are nearly completed, and youth have greatly increased the ability to think for themselves. They are able to make decisions and to form opinions based on reasoning.

They are interested in group activities but may want to “pair off” with members of the opposite sex. In late teens many begin to look for a long-term relationship.

Young people must make important educational and vocational decisions about their future. Many of life’s most important decisions are made in late teens. Teenagers are moving rapidly toward becoming more adult. They like to challenge adult thinking as they search for workable beliefs. They respond readily to adults who will treat them as equals. Adults can help most by helping them see choices and the possible consequences of their decisions.

## Helping the Teen Leader Plan

Teenagers like to plan their own program and set their own goals. However, they appreciate adult guidance and advice. Some guidelines are:

- Encourage teen leader to participate in orientation training prior to organization of club.
- Prior to the organization of the club, outline and discuss responsibilities of a teen leader. This can be done with a community coordinator, Extension agent, advisor, or by self-evaluation.
- Help teen leaders outline plans for the first meeting by:
  - Contacting potential members
  - Setting meeting place and time
  - Deciding what to accomplish
  - Handling enrollments
- After the first meeting, meet with teen leader to evaluate the first meeting and establish plans for future meetings.
- Plan regular conferences with the teen leader to discuss progress and to help in planning for future experiences.
- When the teen leader has completed an activity with the members, help to evaluate that experience. Reinforce the positive experiences and thus help to build a positive self-image in the teen leader.
- Once the teen leader is functioning well, the advisor should attend the meeting only when invited.

Discuss together the following points for clear understanding:

- What is expected to be accomplished?
- What steps will be followed to accomplish a job?
- What preparation and equipment are needed?
- What help is needed?

In order to ensure success in this project, the 4-H advisor must develop and use techniques that produce teamwork between himself and the teen leader.

## Training

Teenage youth need to be prepared to participate in the teen leader program. Members should not go into the teen leader program without prior training. Older youth must receive careful training in the attitudes and skills of leadership. They should develop sympathetic, caring attitudes and skills toward youth and make them feel useful, successful, and important. Youth need reassurance that everyone needs help, and that it's not dumb to ask for help or stupid to receive it.

Without training, older youth may tend to boss rather than to help younger youth; likewise, younger youth may not feel that the older youth are capable.

### Orientation Training

A workshop experience should be provided, emphasizing the basic techniques for planning and teaching subject matter.

Training for teen leaders should emphasize:

- The characteristics of the young people with whom they will work
- Teaching techniques and methods
- Planning learning experiences
- Basic information on organizing a 4-H club
- Self-evaluation

This type of workshop should provide adequate time and experience to set goals, start the development of teaching plans, and identify ways to measure accomplishment. Additional workshops, or "one-to-one" meetings, need to be planned in order to provide for appraisal of where we are going and review how things are going.

### Individual conferences

- Spend time discussing with the teen leader the contribution he or she can make to the 4-H program. As an advisor you may be working with several young people in the teen leader

role. If so, you can guide them first in some leadership skills and later in understanding the interests of 4-H members. Help them analyze their own capabilities on the basis of division of responsibility. Generally the ability to use basic leadership skills precedes group understanding and the ability to analyze a group. Therefore, see that teen leaders become adept at leadership skills; then understanding will follow. Above all, give the teen leader the opportunity to make decisions and the freedom to carry out these decisions as much as he or she is capable of handling.

- Recognize the opportunities for a richer 4-H program which can be made possible by teen leaders. Keep in mind the teen leader will usually be closer to the thinking and the desires of the members than you as an advisor.
- Encourage a written plan. There is a feeling of commitment to carry out a plan which has been written down and approved by the 4-H advisor. Be sure that the teen leader as well as the advisor has a copy of the plan.
- Follow up the job with a word of encouragement. Take a look at "How did we do? Did we accomplish what we intended? Where could we improve? Next time let's remember to . . ."
- Teen leaders need to be aware of their strengths as well as the areas that need improvement. Advisors need to know whether they gave sufficient help or hampered the growth of the 4-H member with too much supervision.
- Never back a teen leader into a corner. Always provide a place in the plans for "save-face" action. This is as important for the advisor as for the teen leader.

### Other Helpful Materials for the Advisor

It is recommended advisers obtain and review:

- 4-H 653, Teen Leadership
- 4-H 0240L, Planning a 4-H Club Program
- 4-H 0242L, Organizing a 4-H Club
- 4-H 0243L, Leadership Skills for Success
- 4-H 0244L, Facts About 4-H



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