



Exciting Meetings for Great Groups

Organizational and Planning Techniques and Tools for Your 4-H Group/Club

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Organizing and managing a 4-H group can be an exciting opportunity for both new and experienced leaders. Young people are more engaged and interested members if their club meetings “come alive” for them. This could mean using a variety of methods to teach project skills and knowledge, involving members in all parts of the group, and remembering to make each meeting fun. Helping to plan 4-H group meetings and activities also gives young people a chance to develop productive life skills.

Organizational tips

This publication is written for you, to help you succeed as a 4-H club leader. As the leader of a 4-H group, one of your main responsibilities is to provide guidance for the organization and operation of your club. You will discover that the members (and other leaders) of the group will learn more and be able to serve more if the 4-H club is well-organized. An organized group provides a structured learning environment that can help youth learn more efficiently.

What is a 4-H group/club?

In Oregon, 4-H is conducted in both project clubs and community clubs. In a **project club**, youth work with adult volunteer leaders on a single project, such as clothing, horses, or gardening. Some clubs are organized to include

What is 4-H?

- 4-H is an experiential education program for boys and girls in grades K–12. In Oregon, 4-H is a part of the Oregon State University Extension Service. At the national level, 4-H is under the leadership of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This relationship is described in more detail in *4-H and the Extension System* (4-H 0245L), a publication available through your local Extension office.
- In 4-H, volunteer leaders encourage youth to gain knowledge and learn practical life skills and to apply both in their project area. Members learn to work together as a team and to develop a sense of fair play. 4-H members learn decision-making skills through project work, judging contests, and other 4-H activities.
- As 4-H members mature, they have opportunities to learn and practice leadership skills within their own club and through county activities. They also begin to develop an appreciation and understanding of their community through individual or club service projects.
- Members improve their communication skills through club interaction, 4-H record keeping, and presentations. They also develop positive attitudes about themselves and others, learn basic health and safety practices, acquire educational and vocational experiences, and learn how to set realistic goals for themselves through individual time management.
- Members learn important social skills and make lifelong friends through their 4-H experiences. Members “Learn By Doing” and make friends at the same time!

more than one project, such as a livestock club that includes members with projects in beef, sheep, and swine.

In a **community club**, members are enrolled in a wide variety of projects. The community club leader provides overall leadership for the club, and other volunteer leaders work with the members on individual projects.

When organizing a 4-H club, consider the following:

- Many clubs meet in private homes, while others meet at schools or community centers.
- Club size is typically 7 to 17 members.
- Some clubs have several adult volunteers providing leadership. A good guideline is eight members per adult leader.
- Clubs usually meet regularly throughout the year. It is suggested that a 4-H club meet at least 10 times during the year. Some projects can be taught on a short-term or seasonal basis.
- Clubs can enroll at any time during the year, but there may be enrollment deadlines in order to participate in county or state events. Check with your local Extension office for specific details!

See “Why 4-H Clubs are Valued” (page 11). It outlines some of the developmental needs of youth and how 4-H assists in meeting these needs.

Effective leadership styles

4-H clubs often look different due to the number of members in the group, projects offered, and number of leaders and parents involved. The way a group functions also depends on the style of leadership used by the club leader. Leaders often switch from one style to another, depending on the group and the situation. The three basic leadership styles are: **autocratic**, **democratic**, and **laissez-faire**.

Autocratic leadership centers around one person. An autocratic leader takes complete responsibility and exercises full authority over the group. This leader makes all the rules and expects members to follow them without question. Autocratic leadership isn’t entirely negative. You can use this style effectively in the following sample situations:

- In a new group, to set guidelines and start a group meeting, then quickly switching to democratic and laissez-faire leadership after the guidelines have been set
- In potentially dangerous situations where personal safety is a concern
- In a situation where children aren’t knowledgeable about a certain task

Democratic leadership is the most common leadership style. It's also the most difficult style to develop and the most effective with young people. A democratic leader helps youth develop the tools to make decisions. The leader encourages interaction, which builds a sense of security and self-confidence. A democratic leader is people-oriented, helping others achieve their potential. When using this leadership style, leaders need to be open-minded, patient, and flexible.

Laissez-faire leadership occurs when the leader gives complete freedom to the group for the solution of problems. The leader provides resources and materials to do the job and participates only when asked. The aim is to give the club members free rein in making decisions and reaching goals. This leadership style is appropriate for the following situations:

- When members of the group have the experience necessary to make decisions
- When communication skills need to be developed without leader input
- When it is necessary to establish group ownership of an activity

Much more could be written about leadership and which style best fits your situation. This guide is only an introduction to the concepts. As a club leader, you need to assess the group situation and use a combination of autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire styles of leadership, as appropriate.

You may find it helpful to learn more about leadership roles by talking with an experienced 4-H leader or a local 4-H staff member. They will be glad to answer your questions.

Group leadership

Members get an opportunity to take on leadership roles within the club by serving as club officers. Officers help plan and run the club meetings, organize club activities, and learn how to be in charge of an organized discussion. Officers can help each member feel important and that they are a part of the whole group. This can be accomplished by including all members in committee work, by calling on different members at the meetings, and by planning member presentations at each meeting.

Meetings seem to run more smoothly if officers understand their roles. The *4-H Club Officer Handbook* (4-H 035) can help officers understand their specific responsibilities. This handbook outlines the role of each officer and includes several worksheets that may be helpful in organizing specific responsibilities.

The following publications also are available through your local 4-H office:

- *4-H Secretary's Book* (4-H 036)
- *4-H Club Treasurer's Book* (4-H 0361)
- *4-H Reporter* (4-H 037/PNW 325)

As a leader, you can help club officers evaluate the effectiveness of their roles in the club by spending time talking with each of them about the things he or she has done well and the things he or she could improve upon. Use the "Evaluating Your Meeting Leadership" form in the *4-H Club Officer Handbook* to help the club president identify his or her strengths and ways to improve his or her own leadership style.

Suggested 4-H club officers are president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer (if needed), and reporter. Other possible officers are recreation leader, sergeant-at-arms, and scrapbook coordinator. Many leaders like to give each member the opportunity to be an officer or a committee chairman sometime during the year. This can help members develop their leadership skills.

If your club decides it is necessary to have a fundraising activity to establish a treasury, be sure to check with your local Extension office about guidelines and policies. There are specific policies about handling money in the name of 4-H, opening bank accounts, and submitting annual financial reports.

Parental involvement

4-H is a family activity. It involves parents with their children at home and in the club. Parents need to understand the 4-H program to help make it the best possible experience for their children. The publication *Framing 4-H for Families* (4-H 0279L) was developed to help all family members better understand their roles in the 4-H Youth Development Program.

Club leaders can assist parents by helping them understand the purpose of 4-H and the opportunities available in the program. Be sure to talk with parents about 4-H, invite them to attend meetings (especially the first meeting), and discuss club guidelines and programs. If parents are involved with their children's 4-H projects, the members, club, and leader will benefit.

Help parents see that the 4-H club needs their help. Give parents a chance to get involved. They could share a skill, provide transportation, or offer their home for a meeting or special activity. See the "4-H Parent Interest Finder" (page 12) to help you identify specific interests and talents.

Leadership opportunities for members

As a 4-H member learns more about his or her project area, he or she may be interested in taking a leadership role in the club. As leader, encourage and work with members interested in greater involvement in the 4-H program. By taking on more roles within the club, a member may be more likely to remain in the program and will learn the importance of "giving back" to the club and community.

At the club level, an older member can become a junior and/or a teen leader. Junior and teen leaders can give direction for a 4-H club of younger kids by sharing leadership with the adult leaders.

At the county level, older youth can be involved with countywide 4-H community service projects, promotion and recruitment, or as a county 4-H ambassador. Some counties offer regional teen leadership retreats, which allow older youth to attend leadership classes and meet 4-H members from other counties.

The real reward for being a 4-H leader comes from watching young people grow into happy, mature adults. As young people move into adult roles, they will realize the influence you had on their lives. You serve an important role in your community and play an important part in the lives of many people.

At the state level, older youth can participate in 4-H Summer Days, 4-H Know Your State Government, and other valuable programs. There are many opportunities for older members to become involved and expand their leadership skills. Contact your local Extension office for more information about these opportunities.

Member recognition

Everyone needs recognition—it's a basic human need. Providing recognition opportunities is an important part of the 4-H program's commitment to help individuals develop self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-worth. Club leaders can keep morale and interest high by recognizing their members' efforts.

A few things to remember about recognition include the following:

- Every child needs it.
- It needs to be real and genuine.
- It needs to happen soon after the event.
- It is best if received in front of peers.
- Appropriate recognition takes many forms.

The challenge is finding the type of recognition that matches the child's age, past experiences, and motivation. See "4-H Member Recognition" (page 13) to help identify appropriate types of recognition. Use recognition to encourage creativity and determination to reach a goal that the *member* has set.

There are various member recognition awards available. County medals are used to recognize 4-H members who have excelled in a particular project area as well as their leadership and citizenship activities. There are other recognition opportunities at the county, state, regional, and national levels. Ask your local 4-H staff for more details.

Evaluating your progress

Helping people grow is something you can feel good about. But, it may be hard to see the progress in a short period of time. When working with young people, it may take years to see the results of your efforts. That's why a good 4-H leader is a patient leader. To assess your progress, take time to think about how you're doing overall as a club leader. Consider the changes you have seen in the people you work with in the 4-H program. Think about the ways you have helped members, parents, and other leaders improve their leadership, communication, and social skills.

No leader can have all the answers and insights into what young people want, so don't be afraid to ask them. Your respect for their opinions and needs will make them feel you really care. 4-H members do appreciate your help, time, and understanding, even though it may take a long time for them to tell you how much they learned.

Exciting meetings

A variety of activities help make 4-H meetings educational and enriching for all club members. Club leaders, members, and parents should determine how a club is organized and activities planned within the club. A program planning committee can help develop the annual club calendar. Remember that 4-H is about "Learning By Doing."

Put a spark in your meetings

New and different experiences arouse interest and attention in everyone. The following are some ideas to help club members plan exciting meetings.

Parents' night

Ask the parents of your club officers (or others) to be in charge of one program. It may be serious or humorous.

Club exchange

The entire club from one area visits another club. This is especially valuable for a new club to see how an experienced club operates.

Web search project

Help members learn to use the internet for research on a topic they're studying in the 4-H club.

Partnership with seniors

Develop relationships through a seniors organization. Utilize their lifetime knowledge to teach members. For example, seniors could teach the skills of quilting or woodworking.

Collaborate with other OSU Extension programs

Master Woodland Managers, Master Food Preservers, and Master Gardeners all volunteer their skills. Utilize them in the 4-H club.

Officer experience night

Younger 4-H members perform the duties of an officer, coached by the actual club officers and junior/teen leaders.

Future 4-H'er night

Invite prospective 4-H members and their parents to the meeting.

Community program

Invite adults from civic groups or elected officials to attend a club meeting. Ask them to talk about their organization, too.

Club family picnic or campout

Hold the meeting during a family picnic or campout night with program emphasis on nature and conservation.

Election project on democracy

Have members select an office they'd like to try. Then host a campaign, election, and installation ceremony.

Social events surrounding holidays

Example: Thanksgiving, Halloween, or Valentine's Day, with the entire program centered around a holiday theme. Be sensitive to personal religious beliefs and different cultures. Invite the whole family.

Citizenship night

Have a “Know Your State Government” delegate give a speech or a flag ceremony. Invite a county government official to talk about his or her job.

4-H awards trip winners

Invite delegates who have attended National 4-H Congress, the Washington, D.C. trips, or judging trips to share their experiences.

Project tour and club activity

Hold your club’s meeting in connection with a project tour, picnic, or swimming party.

Family “favorite game” night

Have members and their families bring a favorite game to the club meeting. It’s best to have games that can be played at least once in a 30-minute time span. Playing together may help members learn to work together.

Presentation night

Have members who are preparing for county presentation competition present their demonstrations or speeches. Invite an “outside” judge to give feedback.

Potential speakers for club programs

- Law enforcement official
- Animal breed association representative
- Red Cross representative
- County health nurse
- County 4-H Leaders Council officer
- Department of Fish and Wildlife personnel
- Forestry staff member
- Volunteer or paid firefighter
- County commissioner
- Junior leader club representative
- Retired citizen
- Probation officer
- Service club and fraternal order member
- Exchange student
- Local business owner
- OSU Extension Service faculty

4-H graduation

Host a celebration of accomplishments during the previous year (October through September). Invite the whole family.

New member initiation

Plan a fun, positive ceremony carried out by junior/teen leaders.

Local club achievement night

Each 4-H member shares his or her projects. Plan this for fall to help members choose new projects.

“All club” judging night

Each member brings a judging class; i.e., clothing: a class of seams or scissors; wood-working: hammers, fasteners; beef: halters, brushes. Use official judging cards. Discuss the classes and placings.

World citizenship night

Invite participants in the 4-H Japanese Exchange program, the International 4-H Youth Exchange (IFYE) program, or other international programs to share experiences and insights.

“I Did It” night

Everyone displays something they have made or done during the past 6 months.

In the 4-H program, you are working with a wide range of youth from many different backgrounds and with different skills and abilities. From research and everyday observations, we readily can determine that a flexible and varied program is necessary to meet the various needs of youth.

Plan, participate, review, and evaluate

Plan

Thorough planning is the key to successful 4-H programs. Ask yourself: Is this program necessary? Does it have a purpose? What do we hope to gain? A special program or speaker is a method of teaching and an opportunity to learn. A program that results from the desire to **see**, **do**, and **learn** is most effective.

Interest and learning result from club member involvement. For a club of junior members (grades 4–6), the leader and parents may need to make some of the arrangements. Form subcommittees for a large club program or activity.

Highlight the upcoming special program to create interest. Publicize it with a news story to the community, if appropriate. Members on a phone committee should make reminder calls to club members.

Participate

Meet at the scheduled time and place. Appoint a member to introduce guest speakers at the beginning of the program and thank them at the end. Introduce all non-members at the beginning of every meeting. Avoid distractions. Keep the room temperature and lighting comfortable and provide adequate seating. Provide a sound system if needed.

Encourage everyone to participate in activities. Handle conduct problems courteously, firmly, and promptly. Allow time for questions and answers at the end of the program.

Review and evaluate

At the next club meeting, review what was learned at the previous meeting. Encourage club members to tell what they liked and what they learned that could help them in the future.

Have the program planning committee send thank-you letters to the speaker, host, and others who helped out. Sometimes letters should be written by each member. Other times, letters can be written by a committee chair and signed by all members.

A follow-up news story about the program may be very appropriate. Include this story (or the highlights) in the secretary's book or club scrapbook, as it will be helpful in planning future club programs. Also include those things you would like to change or do differently next time.

Good 4-H club programs don't just happen automatically. They take discussion, involvement, and planning. Work with your members and their parents to develop a variety of interesting, fun, and educational programs for your 4-H club. Learning can be fun!

Planning pointers

Planning ahead is one of the most important things you do as a leader. Take time with your members to identify goals and desired outcomes for your club. Members will participate more and will help keep you on track to accomplish the club plans. Being a part of the planning process creates greater interest and can result in shared commitment to and responsibility for the success of the club's program.

A plan is like a road map: it gives direction toward a goal. The 4-H club program plan lists what the group plans to do, when, and who is responsible. A written plan created by members serves as a yearlong guide.

Getting started

Begin your planning by involving members and parents in setting goals for the club. Members, parents, and leaders have ideas about what they would like to accomplish as a club, and they need a chance to express them.

A goal is the target members aim for while learning about their project. Goals give members markers to measure accomplishment. Goals are statements of what the members, leaders, and parents want to accomplish individually and as a club.

A wise teacher once observed, "If a child isn't interested, you can't teach him. If he is interested, you can't keep him from learning."

Don't set too many goals. Help your members set realistic goals that are a challenge to reach but that are attainable.

Setting goals that meet the needs and interests of club members promotes cooperation and provides for individual achievements. Goals can be short- or long-term. Short-term goals can be achieved in a single meeting or may take longer. Long-term goals require 3 to 6 months or more.

It is important to plan some attainable short-term goals so members (especially younger ones) won't get discouraged. Longer-term goals can provide more challenge for older members who are more experienced with a project.

Let's plan!

As a 4-H leader, you need to determine, with your club, what you are trying to accomplish (goal setting) and what experiences you are providing to meet those goals. You may need to help your program planning committee understand those goals as they identify programs for their yearly 4-H club calendar.

There is a "4-H Club Planning Worksheet" on page 14 for you and your club to use in mapping out your goals for the year. See the partial sample below to help you get started.

4-H Club Planning Worksheet

20__ to 20__

Club name _____ Leader(s) name(s) _____

Club Goals for the Year

1. Teach record-keeping skills _____
2. _____
3. _____

Meeting date and time	Who is responsible?	What to do <i>before</i> next meeting	What to do <i>at</i> the meeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November 5 • 6:30 PM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary leader • Junior leaders assist • Parents assist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get recordbook supplies from the Extension office • Complete a sample recordbook as an example • Make draft copies of recordbook sheets for practicing • Notify members to bring a notebook, pencil, and paper • Talk with Junior leaders about their part in the meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the parts of a recordbook • Give members a sample completed record • Practice filling in the yearly record sheet

Getting parents connected

It is important to involve parents right from the start. Invite parents to attend the first meeting to share in club goal-setting. That way, they have input into club activities that will affect their personal budgets, and it helps them understand what will be involved in participating in the club.

Involved parents do the following:

- Provide support for your club members
- Assist you in helping other parents understand the value of 4-H
- Learn appropriate roles in working with all club members

Involved parents benefit members by:

- Enabling members to feel supported by caring adults
- Modeling relevant life skills
- Helping members increase their self-confidence

Teaching techniques

As a 4-H leader, you are a teacher. With your guidance and teaching, 4-H members learn project skills and decision-making techniques, develop positive self-esteem, learn and practice effective communication skills, take responsibility, and cooperate with others. A 4-H project is a tool to capture the interest of a child. It is through a variety of experiences that a 4-H member learns.

When you plan your club meetings and activities, keep them fun and interesting. Use a variety of methods for teaching topics. “Working With Youth of Different Ages” (page 16) outlines youth development characteristics and related teaching tips. Also, an

excellent publication to read is *Active Teaching—Active Learning: Teaching Techniques and Tools* (4-H 0259L). It explains the different ways in which we all learn, and gives ideas for making lessons exciting.

Basic principles to apply to all learning situations include the following:

- Young people learn best in an atmosphere of warmth and acceptance.
- Members want to be involved actively in setting their own goals and planning activities to meet those goals.
- Each individual has different abilities. Every activity you plan will not be successful with all members.
- Motivation is the key to real learning. Self-motivation comes from basic needs, personal preferences, and the desire to belong.
- Self-evaluation is the most meaningful kind of evaluation.

Planning hints

- Communicate activities and dates to members and parents in advance to help them plan their personal schedules.
- Include members in the planning process. They will learn how to plan ahead, cooperate, and compromise. This gives security and permanence to the club.
- Prepare well for meetings and activities by arranging in advance for visual aids, speakers, and other resources.
- Plan a series of meetings instead of one at a time to give continuity to your overall program.
- Plan meetings according to the needs and interests of members, leaders, and parents.
- Balance meetings with project work, activities, recreation, and service.
- Include parental involvement in the programs.

Why 4-H Clubs Are Valued

4-H clubs are valued because they play a major role in meeting the needs of early adolescents.

Following are seven developmental needs of young adolescents and how 4-H assists in meeting them.

1. Positive social interaction with adults and peers

Youth identify with their peer groups and want to belong, so they need opportunities to form positive peer relationships. They have a similar need for caring relationships with adults who like and respect them and who serve as role models and advisors. (Many times, however, they won't admit this.) Clubs provide an opportunity for youth to interact with their peers in a positive environment.

2. Structure and clear limits

Clear expectations are crucial to reassure young people. With clear boundaries, young people know the areas in which they are free to explore. Young adolescents often feel immune to risks and dangers so they need structure and guidance. They also need to be involved in setting limits and in the process of decision-making.

In the club setting, youth are given opportunities to participate in leadership roles as officers and committee members. There are clear expectations that accompany these roles—which is helpful during a time when it is important for youth to know what is expected of them.

Young people are given opportunities to set their goals and decide on the steps to take to reach them through club programs and activities as well as individual projects.

3. Physical activity

Youth at this age experience rapid and uneven growth and physical development. They have a tremendous amount of energy, so they have a great need for activity. 4-H club meetings provide a variety of activities in a single setting: business, program, and recreation/refreshment parts. Because of our “learning by doing” philosophy, youth become active participants in their own meetings.

4. Creative expression

Youth need opportunities to express themselves in a variety of ways: through music, writing, games, art, cooking, sports, etc. Exposure to activities such as art, drama, and literature shows youth that others had similar feelings or had similar experiences. 4-H programming efforts allow for a variety of methods of self-expression. Youth who participate in long-term units have opportunities to participate in an incredible number of projects and activities.

5. Competence and achievement

Young adolescents also need to discover what they are good at doing. During this developmental stage, youth can be exceptionally self-conscious and self-critical, so they need lots of opportunities to be successful and have their accomplishments recognized by others. 4-H clubs provide a safe environment for youth to “take risks” as they practice new social, mental, and physical skills. Young adolescents experience great satisfaction from having mastered a new skill. 4-H clubs provide many opportunities for youth to be recognized for their accomplishments.

6. Meaningful participation in families, schools, and communities

Youth need to be exposed to situations in which they can use their skills to solve real-life problems. Young people want to know that they can have an impact on the world. Youth desperately need to know that what they do is significant. Through 4-H, young people are given opportunities to make a difference through community service projects as well as club projects and activities. Helping youth become responsible citizens is part of our mission.

7. Opportunities for self-definition

Young adolescents are at a vulnerable stage in their lives and require time to reflect upon the reactions they receive from others. This is a time in which they are constructing their self-image. 4-H club meetings, projects, activities, and field trips provide opportunities for young adolescents to discover themselves.

This information is based on research on successful community-based programs, and on an extensive review of literature. The Center for Early Adolescence concluded that there are seven key developmental needs that characterize early adolescence. Early adolescents generally are defined as youth between the ages of 10 and 15. Reprinted with permission from the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service November 1995 online document, “Why 4-H Clubs Are Valued.”

4-H Parent Interest Finder

As an interested parent, I can help my child's 4-H club in the following ways (please indicate all that apply):

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Be a volunteer leader | <input type="checkbox"/> Provide transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provide refreshments | <input type="checkbox"/> Provide a meeting place |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chaperone trips | <input type="checkbox"/> Help with activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help with program planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Help with fundraising |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

The hobbies and skills I'd like to share with 4-H'ers include (please indicate all that apply):

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Animals | <input type="checkbox"/> Health/Fitness | <input type="checkbox"/> Science/Nature |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collecting | <input type="checkbox"/> History | <input type="checkbox"/> Sewing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> International experiences | <input type="checkbox"/> Small engine repair |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computers | <input type="checkbox"/> Language | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking | <input type="checkbox"/> Model building | <input type="checkbox"/> Time management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crafts | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical | <input type="checkbox"/> Organization | <input type="checkbox"/> Visual arts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Games | <input type="checkbox"/> Performing Arts | <input type="checkbox"/> Woodworking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening | <input type="checkbox"/> Photography | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Genealogy | <input type="checkbox"/> Public speaking | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Name: _____

Best way to contact me:

4-H Member Recognition

Young people who participate in the 4-H program are no different than any other youth. They need and deserve recognition for the efforts and accomplishments they make in the 4-H program, for the accomplishment of goals, and for achieving standards.

Young people should be recognized in a developmentally appropriate manner, taking care to recognize differences in the tasks of

each age group being recognized. A recognition model that supports differences in young people is encouraged.

Recognition is not to be confused with competition. All young people deserve to be recognized for their individual and group efforts. The materials provided below are designed to consider recognition for both efforts by each targeted age group.

5- to 8-year-olds need

Young children need positive feedback; catch them doing something good.

Young children understand small pieces of the whole and slowly assimilate towards the whole.

Young people are developing self-concepts; they need recognition for completing tasks.

Young children need feedback continuously and immediately following the experience.

Young children are concrete learners.

Young children are beginning to learn cooperation skills.

Implications for 4-H

Recognize as many positive behaviors during the meeting as possible.

Recognize accomplishments for completing incremental tasks as well as completion of the entire task.

Use positive words to recognize efforts and accomplishments; give pats on the back.

Provide immediate feedback; design a system in which volunteers have access to recognition materials and can distribute them during a club meeting.

Provide tangible, rather than abstract, recognition.

Recognize efforts of the entire group.

9- to 12-year-olds need

Pre-adolescents are continuing to build their self-concept; they believe that they are on a stage and that the whole world is looking at them.

Pre-adolescents feel awkward when being recognized and have not learned how to accept compliments.

Pre-adolescents desire immediate feedback but can wait for the feedback.

Pre-adolescents desire a vehicle for sharing accomplishments.

Implications for 4-H

Provide objective feedback to participants in a positive fashion.

Utilize self-esteem building materials to help this age learn how to accept compliments.

Recognize efforts and accomplishments often and when deserved.

Utilize Experiential Model to help equip young people in sharing skills; provide opportunities to display work.

13- to 19-year-olds need

Adolescents desire independence.

Adolescents are beginning to think about their future.

Adolescents have high needs for socialization.

Implications for 4-H

Allow the young people to design their own recognition program.

Help youth design experiences that allow them to experience the future. Design trips as recognition opportunities.

By allowing the young people to plan their own events, accept that they will design social settings and coach them to produce positive social experiences; design cooperative situations instead of always encouraging competition.

This information is based on research on successful community-based programs, and on an extensive review of literature. The Center for Early Adolescence concluded that there are seven key developmental needs that characterize early adolescence.

Reprinted with permission from the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service July 1997 online documents, "Recognition of 4-H Member."

4-H Club Planning Worksheet

20__ to 20__

Club name _____ Leader(s) name(s) _____

Club Goals for the Year

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Meeting date and time	Who is responsible?	What to do <i>before</i> next meeting	What to do <i>at</i> the meeting

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Working With Youth of Different Ages

Not all people develop in the same way at the same age, but there are certain patterns to youth development that are commonly experienced by most youth.

Grades K–2

Characteristics	Teaching tips
Thinking is in the here and now (“concrete thinkers”). Attention span is about 20 to 30 minutes.	Youth need real experiences to learn. Vary the length of activities based on how interested the youth appear.
Begin to develop friendships	Plan activities youth can do in groups rather than individually.
Want to be liked and please adults	Let youth know they have done a good job.
Learn best when physically active	Allow youth to participate in activities where they can be physically active.
Have a special attachment to older youth	Allow youngsters to choose an older youth to be their helper and role model.
Are easily motivated	Use encouragement to keep youth motivated.
Competitive activities are less appropriate.	Plan some cooperative activities.
Differentiation between fantasy and reality can be difficult.	Build in transitions and discussions to help distinguish the imaginary from the real.

Grades 3-5

Characteristics	Teaching Tips
Learn best when physically active	Allow youth to participate in activities in which they can use physical energy.
Have a special attachment to older youth	Allow youngsters to choose an older youth to be their helper and role model.
Are easily motivated	Use encouragement to keep them motivated.
Reading becomes an individual experience.	Allow time for youth to read on their own and think of activities before working with others.
Attention span is about 45 minutes.	Use varied activities to keep them interested.
Acceptance by peer group is important.	Use peer group to recognize good work; e.g., applauding completed activities and avoiding put-downs.
Interests expand from home to neighborhood to community.	Talk to youth about their friends and neighbors and what goes on in their community. Involve them in community service.
Enjoy both cooperation and competition	Plan activities so that sometimes youth work together, sometimes compete with each other.
Show independence by seeking individual attention and sometimes disrupting the group	Involve youth in selecting activities they would like. Give individual attention.
Feelings of competence enhance self-concept.	Provide activities that will let youth feel good about themselves and succeed. Recognize them for their accomplishments.
Show loyalty to members of their own sex and antagonism towards those of the opposite sex	Involve youth in choosing partners for activities or projects.

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Working With Youth of Different Ages (*continued*)

Grades 6–8

Characteristics	Teaching tips
Can take responsibility in planning and evaluating their own work	Give youth responsibility for group activities, including planning, implementing, and evaluating.
Can plan their own social and recreational activity	Provide opportunities for youth to work together. Form committees to plan recreational and social activities.
Can discuss current events, international affairs, and social issues with some help	Use discussion activities and games that encourage awareness of current events and issues.
Want to make decisions but still depend on adult guidelines	Establish guidelines that give parameters for youth to follow.
Gain skills in social relations with peers and adults	Provide activities that foster social interaction with peers and adults.
Peer pressure mounts, first from same sex, then from opposite sex	Use peer pressure to influence positive behavior. Have the group give encouragement to individuals.
Can be quite self-conscious	Avoid asking youth to share their work individually until they feel more comfortable with the group.
Strong emotional attachment to older youth and adults	Encourage youth to participate in activities with older youth and adults.
Choices are often unrealistic	Assist youth in making realistic choices. Review their plans, discuss alternatives, and help them weigh options before making decisions.

Grades 9–12

Characteristics	Teaching tips
Personal philosophy begins to emerge	Choose activities in which youth search for experiences that allow them to identify their own philosophies.
Enjoy discussing world situations as well as personal activities	Encourage discussion of events and feelings.
Abstract thinking and problem solving reach a higher level	Put youth into real-life, problem-solving situations.
Strong desire for status in their peer group	Develop a climate in which youth are encouraged and supported by peers.
High interest in social activity	Encourage youth to plan and carry out their own social activities.
Need freedom from parental control to make decisions	Help youth realize that their decisions have consequences.
Widespread feelings of inferiority and inadequacy	Encourage and help youth to see their positive worth.

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Points to Look For in a Good Meeting

Leaders can use this sheet to plan and evaluate meetings. They should be able to answer YES to most of the questions under the four key points that contribute to good meetings. If leaders answer NO, these are areas they will want to improve. The four key points which contribute to good meetings are: **Planning, Involvement, Balance,** and **Variety.**

Planning

- _____ Do officers and leaders check plans before the meeting?
- _____ Are materials and equipment ready before the meeting begins?
- _____ Does the president call the meeting to order on time, keep the meeting rolling, and end on time?
- _____ Does the meeting follow an organized agenda, appropriate to the group?
- _____ Are important announcements written down by members, or copies provided to take home?

Involvement

- _____ Are guests introduced and made to feel at home?
- _____ Is there an opportunity for members to get to know each other?
- _____ Do officers avoid doing all the talking?
- _____ Do leaders avoid doing all the talking?
- _____ Do all or most of the members take part in the meeting?
- _____ Is there acceptance of all members by the group, and do they treat each other with courtesy?

Balance

- _____ Is the business meeting short and snappy?
- _____ Is there an educational program in addition to business and recreation?
- _____ Is the educational program of interest to everyone?

Variety

- _____ Is there fun, learning, and fellowship at the meeting?
- _____ Is there singing or other musical involvement or recreation during the meeting?
- _____ Does the meeting structure vary; e.g., recreation before business?
- _____ Are different methods used to present information?

Publications for Leader Support

The following publications are available through your local Extension office.

Club management

4-H Club Officer Handbook (4-H 035)

Includes the following forms:

Meeting Agenda Planning Guide

Committee Worksheet

Committee Evaluation Form

Evaluating Your Meeting Leadership

4-H Secretary's Book (4-H 036)

Includes the following forms:

4-H Club Membership and Attendance Record

Membership Participation Record

Calendar of Activities and Meetings Planned

4-H Club Treasurer's Book (4-H 0361)

Includes the following forms:

Budget Worksheet

Budget and Financial Report

Club Treasury Ledger

Income and Expenditure Request Form

4-H Financial Review Checklist

End-of-year Report

4-H Club Inventory Record

4-H Reporter (4-H 037/PNW 325)

Parliamentary Procedure: Teach Yourself
(4-H 034)

Leader development

For the Well-being of Youth and Adults
(4-H 0258L)

Para el Bienestar de Jóvenes y Adultos
(4-H 0258L-S)

Active Teaching—Active Learning: Teaching Techniques and Tools (4-H 0259L)

4-H and the Oregon State University Extension Service

Facts About 4-H (4-H 0244L)

4-H and the Extension System (4-H 0245L)

Welcome to the world of 4-H: Basics for new leaders

What is 4-H? (4-H 0271L)

Starting a 4-H Club or Group (4-H 0272L)

Planning and Conducting 4-H Club Meetings
(4-H 0273L)

Leadership and Teaching Techniques
(4-H 0274L)

Opportunities for 4-H Members (4-H 0275L)

Opportunities for 4-H Leaders (4-H 0276L)

Framing 4-H for Families (4-H 0279L)

General information

The Oregon 4-H Clover (4-H 0230)

Notes

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