

FUN WITH CHILDREN  Leader's Guide
4-H Child Development Project

Fun with Children is a project designed for 4-H members (grades 4-7) to learn about pre-school children. Members choose a pre-schooler as a "fun-friend" with whom they can carry out various play activities.

The project is divided into four parts which don't have to be done in a specific order:

* Stories and make-believe activities
* Art and music activities
* Toys and play activities
* Nature and animal activities

Members may

* Do one part or more than one part of the project during a year.
* Work on activities by themselves or with other members.
* Enroll in a child development club or do activities as part of another project club (foods, for example.)

Each project part has many activities from which members may choose. No specific number of activities is required. Older children can handle more freedom in their choices than younger children. Leaders will need to help younger members plan their activities.

The project is designed to help 4-H'ers to:

* Develop positive attitudes toward preschool children.
* Learn skills and techniques of working with preschool children.
* Provide satisfying experiences for preschool children.
* Develop concern for others.
* Cooperate with one another as club members.

EXHIBITS AND DISPLAYS

Clubs are encouraged to display some of the things they or their fun-friends have done in order to tell the story of their project. Displays should tell what club members have done with and for children.

Club displays, rather than individual displays, further the objective of encouraging club members to cooperate with one another. Displays might be a part of a fair exhibit or other community showcase opportunity.

PROJECT RECORDS

The 4-H Record - Fun With Children (4-H 911R) provides a format for reporting project activities.

Have members fill out as much of each report as possible at each meeting so that it doesn't become a difficult chore. Every space needn't be filled. A "joyful" three lines is a better learning experience than a "resented" dozen.

At each meeting, encourage members to talk about their fun-friends and share some of their experiences. This sharing of experiences or oral reporting can be used in place of the written report for some activities.

Encourage members to express themselves in their own way. When they write their reports, don't fuss about spelling or neatness. Some members may want to sketch in pictures or include snapshots of their fun-friends sharing the activities.
WORKING WITH BOYS AND GIRLS AGE 9 TO 12

In the normal course of development, boys and girls go through various stages appropriate to their age. Although there are great individual differences, certain behaviors tend to be characteristic.

Most boys and girls age 9 to 12 have a short attention span. They want to do something, finish it, and move on. They often lose interest in activities which take a long time.

Boys and girls of this age are not interested in perfection. There's considerable evidence that they become discouraged from trying if too much emphasis is placed upon perfection.

Over-emphasis on perfection can create a dislike for the activity rather than a desire to continue building their experiences. As they grow older, children become more concerned with doing a job well and higher standards become more important.

Nine- to twelve-year-olds like to talk and visit. Encourage them to share some of the amusing things their fun-friends said or did. They can also tell some stories about themselves when they were small.

Boys and girls of this age like to do things as a group. Many of the project activities can be practiced in the club and shared with one another. Whenever possible, encourage members to work together and help one another.

Some boys and girls find it difficult to read, sing, act or teach finger games when others are present. Don't force them to do so, but encourage practice at home.

As you work with 4-H members in this project, stress the fact that the members are learning these activities to teach younger children: "These are things you had fun doing when you were little. These are things you can use when you are caring for children when you are older."

OUTLINE FOR A YEAR'S PROGRAM

How do you plan a program for a year's work? What do you do at each meeting?

At the first meeting of the club, work with the club members to decide which of the four parts of the project to do. (Or, which part to do first.) Check through the materials to see the possibilities.

Next, select the specific activities club members want to do. Ideas are listed at the beginning of each project book. (Or, you and the members may want to include your own ideas.)

When these decisions and choices have been made, begin to plan how the activities and subject matter can be worked into the year's program.

The amount of time (or number of meetings) to allow for each activity depends to some extent on the ages of club members, their abilities, and their previous experiences.

The following publications, available at your county Extension office, provide useful information for planning purposes: Organizing a 4-H Club (4-H 0242L) and Planning a 4-H Club Program (4-H 0240L).

Junior leaders can do some of the teaching for you. Resource people are another source of help in presenting subject matter to club members.

The outline on the next page shows one example of a plan for a series of twelve meetings. The plan is based on activities from the Stories and Make Believe portion of the project. The "reporting" refers to the member project records.

At the end of the year, the club may want to invite their fun-friends for an afternoon of play. Activities might include reading stories, doing finger games, acting out stories, or playing with hand puppets.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At the Meeting</th>
<th>Member Activities Between Meetings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Invite members' parents to attend. Discuss the four parts of the project</td>
<td>1-2. Choose a fun friend.</td>
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<td>and select one to work on. Discuss suggested activities and decide how</td>
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<td>many and which ones to do. Explain how to choose a fun-friend.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Members report on fun-friend selection and write or tell a story about the</td>
<td>2-3. Select book and read it to parent or other</td>
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<tr>
<td>fun-friend. Leader teaches selection of story books and shows examples.</td>
<td>family member. Bring book to meeting.</td>
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<td>3. Members bring story books to club. Leader teaches how to read to children.</td>
<td>3-4. Read to fun-friend. Collect old magazines</td>
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<td>4. Members fill out report on reading. Leaders explain how to make picture</td>
<td>and bring to meeting.</td>
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<td>books. Members cut out pictures.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Members complete report on picture books. Leader teaches finger games.</td>
<td>6-7. Learn one or two finger games.</td>
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<td>7. Members teach each other finger games. Leader discusses how to teach finger</td>
<td>7-8. Teach finger game to fun-friend.</td>
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<tr>
<td>games to fun-friends.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>directions for making and using it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>use them with a fun-friend.</td>
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<tr>
<td>for acting. Members practice acting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>fun-friend's parent. Members role play such a visit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Members write story about their visit with their fun-friend's parent.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluate the year's work and make plans for further activities or projects.</td>
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STORIES AND MAKE BELIEVE ACTIVITIES

Discuss suggested activities with the members. At each meeting, encourage members to talk about their fun-friends and share some of their experiences.

Stories

Check your local library to see what children's books are available. Librarians, as well as first grade teachers, are excellent resource people.

Members may ask about using comic books with young children. Explain that it's important to encourage books which help a child develop reading readiness and which have good illustrations and content geared to age level.

Don't put yourself in the position of saying children shouldn't read comic books, but rather point out the importance of providing another type of experience.

When evaluating stories for a young child, consider

* The style in which the story is written. For example:
  - Sound words - pitter-patter, drip-drip
  - Action words - jump-jump, run-run
  - Repetition of words and phrases
  - Simple, correct English

* The length of the story. A small child has a short attention span, while older children are able to listen for longer periods of time.
  - Two year olds - two or three minutes
  - Three year olds - three to five minutes
  - Four year olds - 12 to 15 minutes
  - Five year olds - 15 to 20 minutes

* The illustrations.
  - Are they colorful?
  - Are they childlike and appealing?

* The effect of the story.
  - Will it build fears? Fear of being poisoned, deserted, or hurt.
  - Will it lead to confused meanings?
  - Will it help to understand the world in which the child lives?

* Stories suited to the child's age - especially important for very young children.
  - Two- and three-year-olds like stories that deal with familiar backgrounds or their own daily routines. They like the pleasure of recognizing familiar objects and naming them.

  - Four- and five-year-olds are interested in things that happen to others like themselves. They also like stories about animals, machines, and other children.
Help members try to think of a story from a young child's viewpoint. When they read to a child, here are some things to consider.

* Read slowly.
* Use a moderate amount of expression.
* Hold the book so the child can see the pictures.
* Develop techniques for holding interest.

Young children rarely tire of the same story - it can be repeated again and again and enjoyed each time.

**Picture Books**

If 4-H'ers choose to make picture books for their fun-friends, encourage them to help one another find pictures. If group work is planned, be sure there are enough scissors to go around.

For variation, try making a picture book using plastic coffee can lids (of uniform size) as "pages". Punch one hole in each lid, then string the lids loosely together so the "pages" will turn. Use rubber cement to glue pictures to the plastic pages.

**Finger Games**

Finger games are an activity that adults and children have shared together for generations. These games consist of songs and verses which can be used to distract a child or to get attention. (For example - to catch the interest of a child crying at being left by parents.)

Several finger games suitable for pre-schoolers are included in the member material. Four additional games are described in the next column.

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**HERE'S A BUNNY**

Here's a bunny with ears so funny.  
(Make a fist with right hand and hold up bunny, extend two fingers for the ears)
And here's his hole in the ground.  
(Make hole by placing left hand on hip)
A noise he hears and pricks up his ears,  
(Raise hand and point up ears)
And hides in his hole in the ground.  
(Put bunny hand in circle)

**HAPPILY TO BED**

This little girl is ready for bed.  
(Thumb of right hand up)
Down on the pillow she lays her head  
(Thumb horizontally lays on palm of left hand)
Wraps herself in covers so tight  
(Curl fingers of left hand around thumb)
And this is the way she sleeps all night.  
(Hands up to cheeks, eyes closed)

**MERRILY AWAKE**

Morning comes, she opens her eyes  
(Open eyes)
Back with a toss the covers fly  
(Uncurl fingers quickly)
Up she jumps, gets dressed and away  
(Pretend to dress thumb)
Ready for a happy play day.  
(Dance thumb around)

**OPEN, SHUT THEM**

Open, shut them, open, shut them  
(Open and close hands)
Give a little clap  
Open, shut them, open, shut them
Lay them in your lap.  
Creep them, creep them  
Right up to your chin.  
Open wide your little mouth  
But do not let them in!
ART AND MUSIC ACTIVITIES

Discuss suggested activities with the members so that they understand the possibilities for choice. At each meeting, encourage members to share some of their experiences with fun-friends.

Art Materials.

When teaching 4-H'ers how to work with preschoolers, make sure they understand that art expression is related to the over-all development of young children. They use dough, paint, and other art media just for the fun of experimenting with it. Pre-school children are usually not concerned with making a product.

Explain that making models or drawing pictures for a child discourages creative activity. Pre-schoolers realize they can't do as well as older children (or adults) and reach the point where they want someone to "make it" for them. Children who say, "You do it," don't feel they can meet the standards of others.

Approach painting, drawing, or dough playing in terms of the experience rather than in terms of making something. Children will be willing to work on their own.

Accept what children have made or done without making suggestions for ways to improve. This, too, can give children the feeling that they can't meet particular standards. Accepting what they have done gives them a feeling of accomplishment and encourages creativity.

Each member should talk over plans for using art materials such as modeling dough, paste, finger paint, and paint with the fun-friend's parent. The parent may want special precautions taken to protect clothing and furnishings. All parents do not have the same expectations and requirements in this matter.

Members also may want to wear aprons or old washable clothes for these activities.

At the meetings relating to art activities, show examples of the modeling dough, paste, and finger paint which members can make. Compare those made from various recipes in the project book and let members decide which they like best.

Listed below is another recipe for modeling dough. It contains oil and has a nicer texture than the doughs in the project book. However, members should be advised to be careful when using it, since it can make grease spots on clothing, floors, and furniture.

MODELING DOUGH

2 cups flour
1 cup salt
1/2 cup salad oil
1/2 cup water (approximately)
Food coloring

Mix together flour, salt, and salad oil. Add food coloring to water. Add colored water a little at a time to the flour mixture. (Use just enough to make a soft dough.) Mix the dough with your hands. If it's sticky, add more flour. The dough can be stored in the refrigerator in a covered jar or plastic bag.

You also may want to try the cooked paste recipe below and compare it with the pastes made from recipes in the project book.

COOKED PASTE

1 cup flour
1 cup cold water
2 1/4 cups boiling water
3/4 teaspoon oil of wintergreen, cloves, or peppermint.

Mix flour and cold water in top of double boiler. Add boiling water while stirring the mixture. Put some hot water in the bottom of double boiler and place the top part of the boiler over it. Cook over low heat until the mixture is stiff. Remove from heat and add oil of cloves, wintergreen, or peppermint. When cool, pour into a covered container. Store in the refrigerator.
Music

Talk with members about ways little children learn. Most of what they learn comes from watching and listening to others. For example, members don't need to sit a child down to teach a song. Instead, if members sing when they are around their fun-friend, the friend may sing with them or sing later when playing.

Explain that singing is as natural for children as talking. Sometimes they like to make up little songs about things they know and do. It's not necessary that children sing an exact tune - it's enough that they enjoy singing.

TOYS AND PLAY ACTIVITIES

When playing with a child, encourage members to follow the lead of the child instead of directing the play.

Help members see the variety of things with which children play. They will find that considerable time is spent playing with things other than regular toys. For instance, chairs are often used as trains or airplanes.

Children can show pleasure in many different ways. They may use a toy, carry it around with them, show their delight through facial expressions, or in other ways give clues to satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

NATURE AND ANIMAL ACTIVITIES

Choices will depend to some extent on the season of the year, the location of members' homes (rural or urban), and the ages of club members.

Safety of young children is an important consideration in some of the suggested activities - for instance, the nature walk and domestic animals. Be sure to discuss precautions which must be taken when providing these activities for fun-friends.

RESOURCES


Here are some more ideas to consider. You may need to give members additional guidance in planning and carrying out these activities since information is not in the project materials. (Note for items with * - Groups who might be interested include: Extension study groups, PTA, or church groups; boys and girls in Scouts, Campfire, or another 4-H club; or pre-school boys and girls in a nursery school or day care center.)

**Stories and Make-Believe Activities**

1. Have a story time for two or three pre-school children.
2. Write and illustrate an original story for a child.
*3. Make a flannel board and tell a story to preschoolers.
*4. Prepare a display or give a talk on the selection of children's stories.

**Toys and Play Activities**

*1. Prepare a display or give a talk on the selection of toys for pre-school children.
*2. Prepare a display or give a talk on the meaning of play for pre-school children.
*3. Show toys made and explain why they were chosen for a specific age child.

**Art and Music Activities**

1. Try crayon drawing, printmaking, or string painting.
*2. Show others how to prepare an art medium such as modeling dough or finger paint.
3. Make a booklet of the recipes used in making art materials and give it to the fun-friend's parents.

**Nature and Animal Activities**

*1. Prepare a display or give a talk on plants which are dangerous to children.
2. Make a chart of information about how to feed and care for pets and share it with your club members.
*3. Prepare a display or give a talk on how to hold different small animals.
4. Take fun-friend to visit a zoo, a nature museum, or a "touch farm".

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