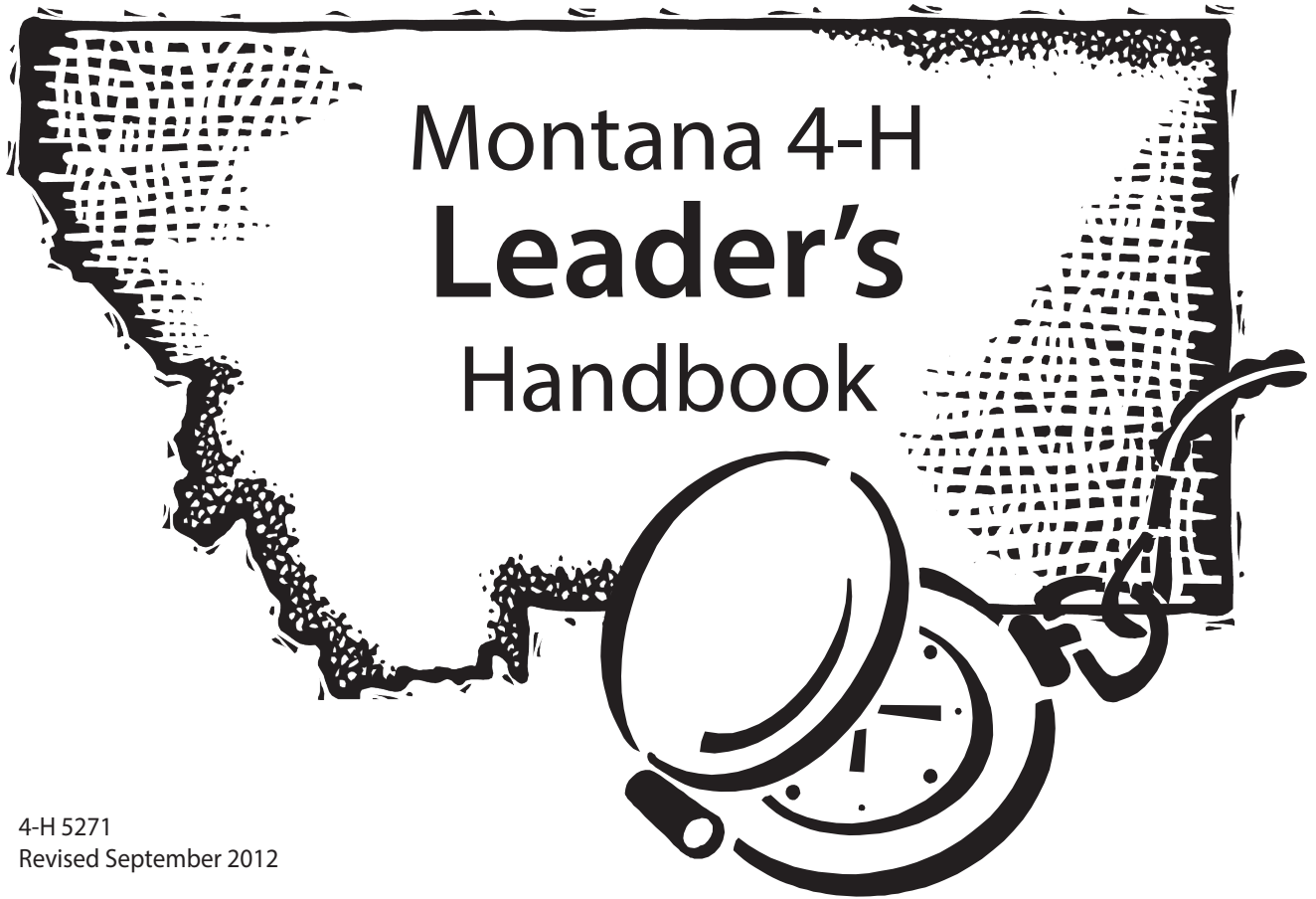




Montana 4-H Center  
FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



# Montana 4-H **Leader's** Handbook

4-H 5271  
Revised September 2012

**Montana 4-H** is a part of Montana State University Extension which is a part of the U. S. Department of Agriculture and your local county government. 4-H members are youth who chose to participate in Extension sponsored educational programs which are open to all youth.

The goal of Montana 4-H is to develop life skills and educate youth and adults for living in a global and changing world by using the resources of the Land-Grant Universities and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Montana 4-H Educational programs include 4-H Clubs, after-school programs, 4-H camps, school enrichment, community service, and other events and activities for young people and adults as they work towards attaining life skills such as:

- Fostering positive self-concept
- Learning decision-making skills and taking responsibility for choices
- Developing an inquiring mind
- Relating to self and others
- Acquiring a concern for communities – both local and global

The emblem of the 4-H program is a green four-leaf clover with a white H in each leaf. The four H's stand for Head, Heart, Hands, and Health and represent the development of life skills.

**HEAD:** Learning to think, making decisions, understanding 'why', gaining new and valuable insights and acquiring knowledge.

**HEART:** Being concerned with the welfare of others, determining values and attitudes by which to live, and learning how to work with others.

**HANDS:** Learning new skills, improving skills already developed, instilling pride in work, and earning respect for work accomplished.

**HEALTH:** Practicing healthful living, protecting the well-being of self and others, and making constructive use of leisure time.

This four-fold development is vital to every individual. Each of the H's should be an important part of the goals youth identify as they participate in 4-H sponsored programs and educational activities.

**Material adapted by:**

Lea Ann Larson, Montana State University

**Thank you to the following for letting Montana 4-H use their resources in this book:**

Ohio 4-H Youth Development, Ohio State University Extension  
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Iowa 4-H, Iowa State University Extension

**Designed by:**

Montana State University Extension



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# Welcome

This guide is designed to provide basic information about being a leader and outlines the responsibilities that organizational leaders have when helping youth in a club setting. It may not answer all your questions but the hope is that it will be an important resource that answers many of them. The 4-H Center for Youth Development has developed two leader trainings that will supplement this booklet and the staff at the center strongly encourages leaders to attend them. These trainings, "Essential Elements of 4-H Youth Development" and "FUNdamentals of Positive Youth Development: Leaders College", are taught by Extension staff and volunteer leaders and provide an opportunity for leaders to learn more about the 4-H mission and how to successfully promote positive youth development.

## A 4-H Creed for Leaders

I believe:

- The 4-H member is more important than the 4-H project.
- 4-H members should be their own best exhibit.
- No award is worth sacrificing the reputation of a member or a leader.
- Competition should be given no more emphasis than other fundamentals of 4-H work.
- Enthusiasm is caught, not taught.
- To learn by doing is fundamental in any sound educational program and is characteristic of the 4-H program.
- Generally speaking, there is more than one good way to do most things.
- Every 4-H member needs to be noticed, to feel important, to win and be praised. (Volunteers, too!)
- Our job as a 4-H volunteer leader is to teach 4-H members how to think, not what to think.



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# CHAPTER 1

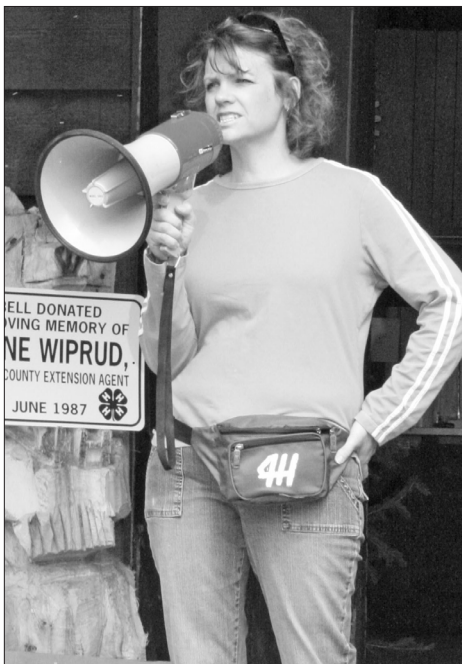
# A 4-H Leader's Role

**V**olunteer Leaders are organizers, teachers and mentors to the youth in the 4-H program. Leaders work with Extension to create educational programming through club meetings, community service projects, events, activities, and learning-by-doing projects. Leaders give of their time and resources while working with the local 4-H Extension Agent to create programs in their community.

To be a 4-H Volunteer Leader, you must be 19 years of age and have completed the Volunteer Leader Application, 4-H Volunteer Disclosure and Consent Form, 4-H Volunteer Agreement and Standards of Behavior, pass the leaders certification process, and be approved by Extension. Leaders under 21 cannot chaperone youth on overnight trips. Check with the local county extension staff for more information on becoming a leader.

## LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES - CLUB LEVEL

Leaders at the club level are the principal leaders for the 4-H program. Clubs typically have three volunteer leader positions - Organizational, Project and Activity. Project and Activity Leaders assist the Organizational Leader in providing a more complete program. Job descriptions for each type of leader are found on the following pages. Each job description outlines the purpose, time commitment, responsibilities and training opportunities and resources available. Local county Extension offices may have more county-specific descriptions for leaders that reflect the local community. Clubs that have leaders in all three roles working together with youth are more successful. Having several people in the leadership roles of the club allows delegating the time required to be a leader to more people.



## Organizational Leader

**Purpose:** Guide the overall organization of the club, help it function smoothly and maintain communications among the member families, the club and the county. Be the primary club contact person with the county Extension staff.

**Time and commitment required:** 10 to 15 hours monthly (depends on club size and activities) through the 4-H year, October to September.

### **Responsibilities:**

- Complete certification process for Montana 4-H Leaders.
- Help members select projects.
- Turn in enrollment forms for members and leaders to the Extension Office in a timely manner.
- Help club officers prepare meeting agendas, learn leadership skills, and carry out their other duties.
- Help club members set annual goals and plan the yearly program and activities, including community service and service learning opportunities.
- Secure and distribute project manuals and other resources for members and leaders.
- Conduct group activities and events with risk management plans for each.
- Share information about activities with club members and parents.
- Maintain regular and timely contact with the county Extension staff.
- Attend trainings and keep up-to-date on county and state events.
- Report enrollment and other requests to the Extension office.
- Help other club leaders plan and implement learning experiences with members and families.
- Assist youth in recognizing other volunteers and supporters of the club.

### **Training Opportunities and Resources available:**

- Orientation, training, guidance, and support from county Extension staff.
- Support and assistance from other leaders, mentors, volunteers and parents.
- Printed 4-H materials for members and organizational leaders.
- Workshops and conferences throughout the year.

## Project Leader

**Purpose:** Work with members enrolled in a specific project or project area, assisting them to plan and carry out experiences that will help them reach their learning goals. Support the positive growth and development of each youth involved. Develop important life skills and create opportunities for youth to learn, lead and serve.

**Time and commitment required:** Two to four hours for planning, working directly with youth, and follow up for each project meeting. More time can be spent, if desired, by volunteers and members in the project group. Project leadership can be a short-term opportunity. A variety of options are available, such as working once a month, once a week, or for the 4-H year (October to September).

### **Responsibilities:**

- Complete certification process for Montana 4-H Leaders.
- Become familiar with project literature and sharing knowledge of the project.
- Assist with enrollment by introducing the project to all members and parents.
- Help members establish goals and plan for their project work.
- Conduct project meetings and workshops.
- Give support to members in planning and carrying out projects as needed.
- Encourage members to complete their project work as planned.
- Involve experienced youth in teaching.
- Encourage parents to support project work at home.
- Help members identify additional resource materials to expand learning.
- Assist members with exhibits, demonstrations and other sharing activities.
- Provide member recognition for the project accomplishment.
- Help members complete activity guides and record books to evaluate their progress on projects.
- Keep members informed of other opportunities related to projects.
- Be aware of risks and use risk management strategies related to project work.
- Update your own project skills by attending relevant trainings.
- Assist with other project-related activities on the county and state level.
- Help identify, select and support new volunteers.

### **Training Opportunities and Resources available:**

- Orientation, training guidance, and support from county Extension staff.
- *Getting Started As a 4-H Project Leader*, #L90530.
- Support and assistance from other leaders, mentors, volunteers and parents.
- Printed 4-H materials for members and project leader guides.
- Related workshops and conferences throughout the year.



## Activity Leader

**Purpose:** Work with members in planning and carrying out specific activities for the club or the county while supporting the positive growth and development of each youth involved.

**Time and Commitment Required:** Time will vary with the nature of the activity. Activities take place throughout the year. Most activities will require several meetings to plan, implement and evaluate the activity.

### **Responsibilities:**

- Complete certification process for Montana 4-H Leaders.
- Provide leadership to 4-H committee members organizing the activity.
- Assist committee in setting goals and developing a plan for the activity.
- Assist committee members in selecting age/developmentally appropriate activities.
- Identify and secure activity resources (people, materials, funds, transportation, etc.).
- Coordinate all aspects of the activity including effectively delegating responsibilities.
- Assist members in reflection on the development of life skills through this activity.
- Identify and manage risk.
- Recruit other volunteers and plan for supervision.
- Communicate regularly with other leaders and volunteers.
- Coordinate scheduling of activities with clubs and the county Extension office.
- Help identify, select and support new volunteers.
- Support projects that may relate to the assigned activity.
- Encourage/facilitate participation in related activities on the county and state level.
- Celebrate the successful completion of the activity.

### **Training Opportunities and Resources available:**

- Orientation, training guidance and support from Extension staff.
- Support and assistance from other leaders and parents.
- Printed 4-H materials for leaders and members.
- Workshops and conferences throughout the year

## LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES - COUNTY LEVEL

### County 4-H Council Representative

The county 4-H Council brings together adults and youth to work with the county Extension agent to develop, implement and evaluate educational programs based upon the needs of the youth in the county. Most county councils have a representative membership made up of adult and teen leaders from different clubs in their county; how the representation is formed varies from county to county.

Membership of the council will be defined in the county council bylaws. Club organizational leaders are asked to be members of the county 4-H Council in most Montana counties. Check with the local Extension Office for more information.

### County Project and Activity Leaders

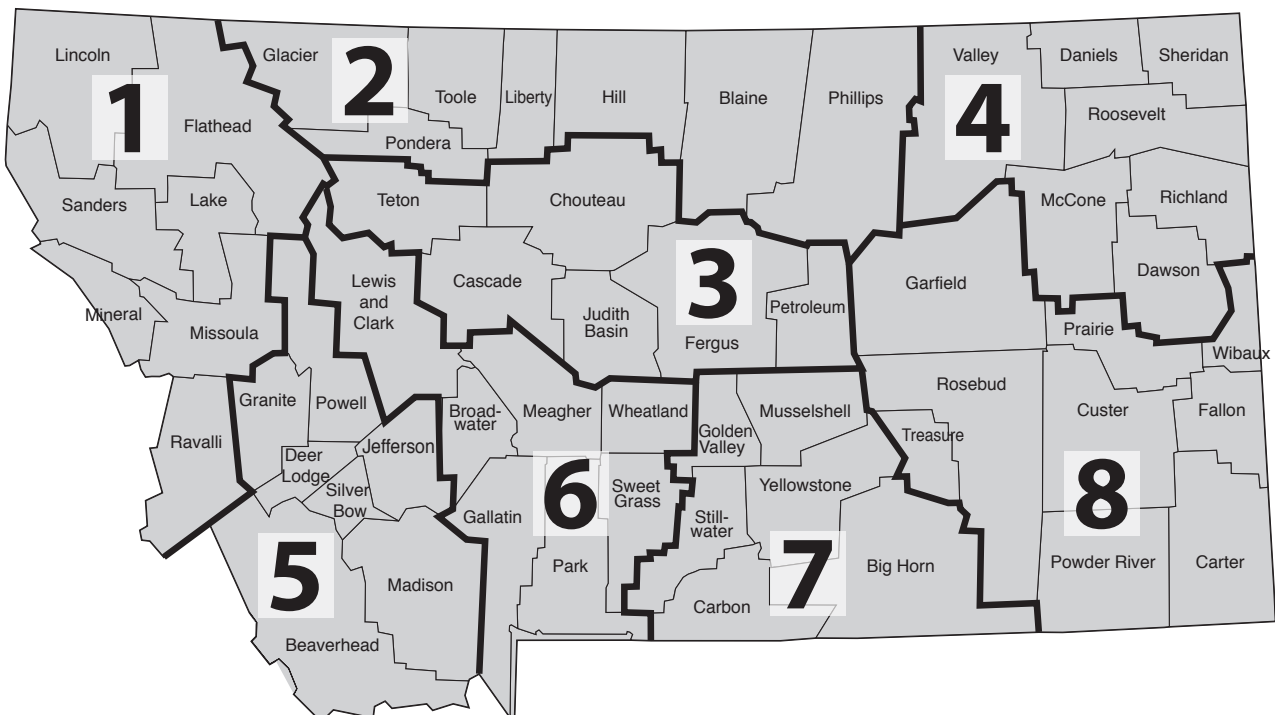
Project and activity leader titles and responsibilities will vary by county so it is best to check with the county staff for job descriptions if you are interested in helping or being a leader on the county level.

## LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES - DISTRICT LEVEL

Montana 4-H is divided up into eight districts. Each district has a leadership board with adult and teen leaders that represent each county in the district. How the leadership board is formed, when they meet, and what activities they sponsor are set by the districts.

County staff can give more information on district events and leadership opportunities. Districts have some responsibilities in common; the first is to assist the state with conferences for youth and adults that rotate by district. Rec-Lab and Leadership Forum are two such events. The other shared responsibility is to elect two leaders per district to be on the State 4-H Council.

### Montana's eight 4-H Districts



## **LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES - STATE LEVEL**

There are many opportunities for leaders to be involved on the state level; listed below are major opportunities. Check with the local county Extension Office or the Montana 4-H Center for Youth Development for more information on these.

### **International Programs Advisory Committee**

IPAC was formed in 2009 in order to provide oversight to the Montana 4-H International programs. The members represent the 4-H Center for Youth Development, the Montana 4-H Foundation, the International Foreign Youth Exchange (IFYE) program, the summer inbound and outbound programs, and the 4-H agents. IPAC meets at least twice a year and is charged with raising funds for international programs, managing existing funds, establishing program priorities, and marketing and curriculum development related to the existing 4-H international exchanges. There are no formal selection criteria at this point, nor are there criteria for length of service. If interested in serving on this committee or for more information contact the International Program Coordinator at the State 4-H Center for Youth Development.

### **Montana 4-H Council**

All volunteer adult and teen leaders in good standing are members of the Montana 4-H Council. The Council provides key advice and direction to the 4-H Center for Youth Development and the Montana 4-H program.

The executive committee of the Montana 4-H Council consists of two volunteers from each of the eight 4-H districts in Montana. These district representatives serve on the Council along with a youth representative from the Ambassador Officer Team, a young adult representing collegiate 4-H, and one from the state at-large.

The Council meets four times a year and they actively support various initiatives and programs deemed important to furthering the work of Montana 4-H.

### **Montana 4-H Curriculum Advisory Team**

This committee is an advisory committee to the Montana 4-H Curriculum and Outreach Specialist. The membership of the committee is made up of county Extension agents and volunteer leaders. The members serve three-year terms and the committee meets at least twice a year. For more information contact the Curriculum Specialist at the State 4-H Center for Youth Development.

### **Montana 4-H Foundation Board**

The Montana 4-H Foundation was established in 1969 to help 4-H youth by raising funds, managing financial resources and partnering with MSU Extension to fund educational opportunities for Montana 4-H youth, volunteers and staff.

The Board, composed of up to 25 members, has representation throughout the state, with members from a variety of professions and experiences. A director can serve two consecutive three-year terms. The Board also includes two county agents (a three-year term) and three youth; one state Ambassador officer (one-year term) and two at-large youth members (two-year term).

Anyone can recommend a person to be a Board Director. The Nominating Committee seeks recommendations from the 4-H community in which the candidates reside before the new directors are voted on at the Foundation Annual Meeting during State 4-H Congress in July.

### **Montana 4-H Foundation Representatives**

The State 4-H Foundation was organized in 1969 to help fund the state 4-H program. Currently it raises money and supports many activities on which Montana 4-H youth participate. People Partner Grants, State 4-H Congress, State Rec-Lab, Citizenship Seminar, and National 4-H Congress are just a few of the events the State 4-H Foundation monetarily supports. Each county is asked to have a representative that assists the foundation at the county level to raise awareness and funding for the foundation.

Contact the Montana 4-H Foundation for more information at (406) 994-5911 or email, [4hfdn@montana.edu](mailto:4hfdn@montana.edu).

## **State Ambassador Advisors**

The Ambassadors work with the State 4-H Office and the State Ambassador Officer Team. The State Ambassador Advisor Leaders are selected at pre-congress by the Ambassador Officer Selection Committee. State Ambassador Advisors serve a four-year term. Check for details on the Montana 4-H website, [montana4h.org](http://montana4h.org).

## **State Horse Committee**

This committee assists the State 4-H Program Coordinator for Agriculture and Natural Resources with policy, curriculum and statewide activities for the horse project. They work to educate members in the care, training and use of their horses with the goal of improving skills and enhancing the abilities of 4-H members and leaders.

Committee membership consists of two 4-H horse volunteer leaders and two 4-H horse project teen leaders from each of the eight 4-H districts and up to four Extension agents. The term for adult leaders is three years and they may serve two consecutive terms. The term for youth leaders is one year and they may serve consecutive terms while they are a member of 4-H.

Members of this committee are nominated by their local county 4-H horse committee and county agent. The nominations are then reviewed and voted on by the State 4-H Program Coordinator for Agriculture and Natural Resources and the current members of the State Horse Committee.

If interested in this committee, contact the local Extension office or the Montana 4-H Program Coordinator for Agriculture and Natural Resources at the Montana 4-H Center for Youth Development.

## **State Events Planning Committees**

Special projects and events come up from year to year. When they do come up, the State 4-H office will ask for volunteers (youth and adult) that would like to work on the event or project. Check for details on the Montana 4-H website, [montana4h.org](http://montana4h.org).

## **State Livestock Committee**

This committee was formed in 2008 to serve as an executive and decision-making body on behalf of 4-H livestock project members. It also organizes and supports statewide activities to educate members in the care, training and use of their livestock with the goal of improving skills and enhancing the abilities of 4-H members and leaders. The board meets twice a year and membership consists of two 4-H livestock leaders and two 4-H livestock project teen members from each of the eight 4-H districts, as well as Animal Extension specialists from Montana State University and Agricultural Extension agents from around the state.

Committee members are selected through a nomination process. Check for details online at [montana4h.org](http://montana4h.org). If interested in this committee contact the local Extension office or the Montana 4-H Program Coordinator for Agriculture and Natural Resources at the Montana 4-H Center for Youth Development.

## **State Shooting Sports Committee**

The Montana State 4-H Shooting Sports Advisory Committee is made up of any 4-H shooting sports leader who has attended a National 4-H Shooting Sports Training to become qualified as a state level instructor. In order to be a 4-H shooting sports leader in Montana, county volunteers must attend a training workshop taught by a nationally trained instructor.

The purpose of the State 4-H Shooting Sports Advisory Committee is to set policy for the Montana 4-H shooting sports program, plan and implement at least three statewide trainings per year, oversee the general rules of the state 4-H shooting sports tournament, and advise the Montana 4-H Program Coordinator for Agriculture and Natural Resources on all shooting sports related issues within the 4-H program. There are no term limits assigned to members of the Montana State 4-H Shooting Sports Advisory Committee.

If interested in this committee, contact the local Extension office or the Montana 4-H Program Coordinator for Agriculture and Natural Resources at the Montana 4-H Center for Youth Development.

# CHAPTER 2

# Working with youth

**W**hen leaders and youth work together in groups it makes learning relevant and more fun. As an adult leader, your role is to help young people develop a sense of autonomy and personal and social responsibility. Why is autonomy so important? A sense of autonomy enables youth to make decisions for themselves. It gives young people the confidence to make good decisions when dealing with day-to-day situations. All youth need nurturing, supportive and protective environments where they can grow to be healthy, contributing adults.

Each young person needs to:

- Know they are cared about by others: that they *Belong*.
- Feel and believe they are capable and successful: that they can demonstrate *Mastery*.
- Know they are able to influence people and events: that they have *Independence*.
- Practice helping others: that they can demonstrate *Generosity*.

The developmental needs of youth differ as they mature. It is important that 4-H volunteers understand how young people grow, develop and learn. This knowledge will aid in planning more effective programs for all members.

## AGES AND STAGES OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

4-H leaders work with youth in informal educational settings to create a caring, safe environment where youth can learn. The role of adult leaders will change depending on the members' ages, knowledge level and projects involved. This overview of how children develop and grow discusses common physical, cognitive (thinking), social and emotional characteristics. There are ideas on what types of programming works best at different ages and developmental stages. It is important to understand that all children develop differently and no two children are exactly the same.

Leaders can help make 4-H a rewarding and fulfilling experience for members by helping them grow and develop. Leaders do this by accepting youth at their current developmental stage and by offering challenging experiences that will help them make the transition into their next stage of development.

## Early Childhood, ages 5 to 8 - Cloverbuds

5 to 8 year-olds are just mastering physical skills; they can control their large muscles better than small muscles and generally have lots of energy. Socially, they are learning how to be friends and may prefer to be in gender specific groups.

Emotionally, they are self-centered and seek approval from adults. They will go out of their way to avoid punishment and are very sensitive to criticism.

Intellectually, they are concrete thinkers. The "here and now" is important and they have not mastered abstract thinking. Right and wrong are important concepts for them. When starting a project, it is important to demonstrate, not just verbally describe how to do it.

This age group typically has a shorter attention span, so it's best to use more activities that last a short time. Choose activities that encourage use of gross motor skills, such as running and playing active games. Also try arts and crafts projects that allow them to practice the fine motor skills that are important for developing coordination. Projects and meal times can be messy because Cloverbuds are still learning these motor skills.

Small group activities, such as role-playing, help children gain empathy and lets them practice social skills. It is important to plan activities where all members can experience some successes.

***Activities should foster cooperation, not competition.***

## Middle Childhood, ages 9 to 12

Physically, 9 to 12 year-olds are growing and becoming more coordinated as fine motor skills increase. They can now do activities such as hammering, sawing and playing musical instruments.

Socially, peers become very important. Their desire to be independent from adults is also increasing. The concepts of right and wrong are continuing to be defined. They are starting to discuss and evaluate others; they start to see things as "fair" or "unfair." Be aware that this is the age when children begin to show prejudice towards others.

Emotionally, this can be the beginning of disobedience, back-talk and rebelliousness of youth. They have a strong attachment to their own sex and may show antagonism towards the opposite sex. Abstract thought is possible, plans can extend over several weeks, and they can evaluate activities with insight.

When planning activities for this age group plan for physical involvement. Use hands-on activities that allow youth to make and do things. Activities at the club level are important, because they allow youth to make decisions about what to do or make. Group youth by gender when possible. Use simple, short instructions while including real-life objects when demonstrating.

***Emphasize progress and achievement over competition.***



## **Early Adolescence, ages 13 to 15**

This age group is going through many changes. Physically, they are growing at an increased rate and may become clumsy until coordination catches up with growth. Socially, they still depend on rules that adults initiate, even though they may protest. Peer group pressure increases. Crushes are common and interest in activities involving the opposite sex is increasing, although interest is often shown by contrary behavior. This group will also have strong emotional ties to, and aspire to be like, an older peer or adult.

Intellectually, youth are developing a growing capacity to reason and think abstractly. They want to be part of something important and they have the ability to persist until desired results are achieved. Youth can and want to take on more responsibility in planning and evaluating their work.

When planning activities at this age, include things that require more physical coordination but do not compare youth's physical characteristics. It is important for this age group to help determine the rules for their activities. Their active participation in youth organizations may decline if they feel they have no influence in the organization. Provide opportunities for youth to succeed, and avoid comparing performances with others. This age group may show interest in activities with the opposite sex, but also want to interact with their same-sex peers. It is important that the 4-H program provide opportunities for both kinds of interaction.

Youth at this age also need opportunities to work with adults in partnerships. Service-learning projects support these partnerships and foster feelings of inclusiveness.

***Use simple short instructions, while including real-life objects when teaching.***

## **Middle Adolescence, ages 16 to 18 - High School**

Physically, changes are slowing for both boys and girls, and they are accepting of changes in their appearance while gaining physical coordination and confidence. Socially, they can be self-centered, while still capable of feeling empathy. Acceptance by members of the opposite sex is important to them. They may be spending more time on school and less on club and group activities - they want to belong to clubs, but also want to define their own uniqueness.

This is an age where youth are defining their identity and want to be autonomous from parents as they start to prepare for the future. They like to set their goals based on their own needs, and may reject goals imposed by others. They may see adults as fallible but still want adults to provide consistency in their lives.

When designing programs for high school members, be willing to answer questions about physical changes and avoid comments that criticize or compare. Let teens plan programs, allow them to assume responsibility, and expect them to follow through. Give them real-life problems to figure out because they want to be able to make their own decisions and be a part of evaluating the outcomes. Encouraging service-learning will help them focus on others instead of themselves. Establish a climate that is conducive to peer support and encourage them to work with other teens. This is a time when friendships can be intense, close and long-lasting.

***Holding youth accountable and experiencing consequences (good and bad) helps prepare teens for adulthood.***

## DEVELOPING DECISION-MAKING SKILLS

Often, adults make most of the decisions for children and then expect them to start out in the world at 18 or 19 years of age as model decision-makers without giving them any experience in making decisions for themselves. It is not surprising that some 18 year-olds may not make good choices if they have not been allowed to participate in making choices at a younger age.

4-H club work counters this trend and teaches youth to become decision makers. Members make decisions each time they meet and those decisions can influence the success or failure of their activities. The decisions that young people make in their club work allow them to be in meaningful, decision-making roles. Letting youth make their own decisions can also help keep youth connected to their communities and create an atmosphere where they feel empowered instead of isolated and alienated.



## CHILD-CENTERED APPROACH

4-H promotes positive youth development and encourages good decision-making by encouraging leaders to use the child-centered approach. The child-centered approach means that the focus is on the interests and needs of youth as they:

- Set their own goals.
- Make plans to reach their goals.
- Carry out their plans.
- Assess progress towards reaching goals.

These tasks should be carried out with guidance, understanding, encouragement and recognition from parents and leaders.

Programs that have a youth centered approach work well in youth/adult partnerships where young people are involved in planning and decision-making roles at all levels of the organization while being supported by caring adults. Bringing young people into leadership roles within the 4-H program has many benefits for youth, for adults, and for the program itself. By working in true partnership, the developmental needs of young people are met. Youth gain leadership experience while they are in leadership roles, improving the community and organizations in which they live and operate.

As a leader, your role will change from a leader that makes most of the decisions to a facilitator where youth make decisions. How much input leaders have will depend on the ages and ability of the youth as discussed in the previous section.

Youth like to be involved in planning their own activities. Leaders working with younger children may need to give the group ideas and allow them to choose what they would like to do. Conversely, leaders working with older youth will want to let the youth brainstorm their own ideas. If activities are planned and executed by members they are more likely to be involved and take pride in their accomplishments. **As a leader, remember when empowering youth to make their own decisions you may be required to let go of preconceived ideas and traditions.**



## EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

4-H is based on the concept of “learning by doing”. Leaders and members say and hear the phrase, but what does it mean and how do we use it in 4-H? The Experiential Learning model focuses on three stages: **Do, Reflect, Apply**.

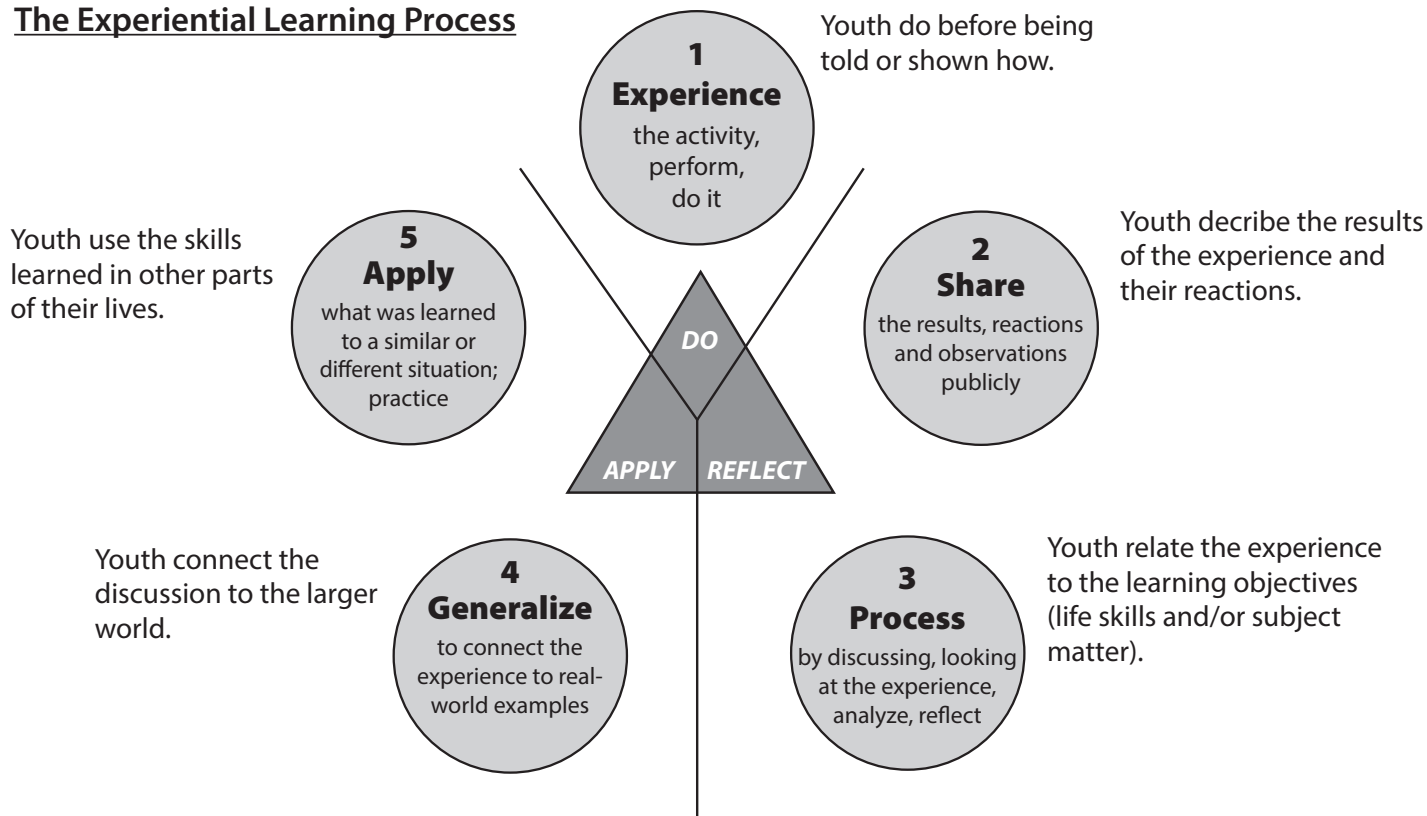
1. Youth engage in an experience or activity of interest and **do** it.
2. Then they share the results and make observations and process or **reflect** on their experiences. They may ask why did it work this way or how do I change it to make it better?
3. From their experiences, youth connect the information learned to their world. Then, using the knowledge and skills they have learned, they **apply** their knowledge and skills to similar situations.

As a leader, your role in experiential learning is to review and practice the activities and to become familiar with the subject. When working with youth, encourage and guide them to find the answer and solutions for themselves. Ask youth to reflect on the experience and look for ways to apply what they have learned. To guide youth, leaders can develop questions that ask:

- When you did \_\_\_\_\_, what happened?
- So when you did that, what was important? Why was it important?
- So now that you have done this, what now? How will this information be used in the future?

Adapted from New Jersey Leader Training Series, *Learn by Doing the 4-H Way* (4th ed.)

### The Experiential Learning Process



## RISK MANAGEMENT

While it is important to let youth make their own decisions, as a leader you have the responsibility to ensure that the decisions youth are making are emotionally and physically safe for all members. This means evaluating each event for risk.

Risk management is important in insuring the safety of youth and adult program participants. Risk includes the many unexpected things that can happen to the participants, spectators, properties and reputation of 4-H as part of the program. Risk also becomes an important educational component of the program by focusing on safety and prevention.

A process of evaluating each event should be used to protect assets by minimizing the potential for negative outcomes. It means that 4-H clubs, groups or planning committees anticipate potential risks as the activity is planned and decide on ways to manage the risks.

The first step in Risk Management is to identify the potential risks involved in the project or event. Then an evaluation should be made by the group how to manage the risk; should it be assumed, reduced, transferred or avoided.

- **Assume the risk.** When looking at the event or project, the group has decided that all necessary precautions have been taken and the level of risk is low. They decide to conduct the event as they have it planned; this means they are assuming the risk.
- **Reduce the risk.** When looking at the event, the group decided to make some changes to reduce the degree of risk by modifying the program or facility. For example, a fair livestock committee may decide to add a fence to separate the public from animals in a show ring at a fair to reduce the risk to the spectators.
- **Transfer or share the risk.** Another method to help manage risk is to transfer or share the risk. Supplemental insurance, informed consent forms, and assumption of risk forms are commonly used in the 4-H program. For example, parents of participants at summer 4-H camps may be asked to complete an informed consent/assumption of risk form in

order for their youth to participate in higher risk activities such as rock climbing or challenge course activities. Furthermore, camp organizers may acquire supplemental accident insurance to further share the risk of injury.

- **Avoid the risk.** If a group looks at an event and takes steps to remove a hazard or transfer risk but the risk is still high, the best solution may be to engage in an alternative activity or avoid the activity completely. For example, a night hike at camp could be completely cancelled or replaced with a day time hike.

After an event it is a good idea for the committee or group to review the risk management plan, evaluate it and make changes to further reduce risk at the next event.

## Accident Insurance

County 4-H programs may purchase accident insurance for volunteer leaders and members or events. Contact the county office for information on member accident insurance. It is a good idea to know what the insurance does and does not cover so that approved activities can be planned into a club or event risk assessment. A company that has accident insurance for groups such as 4-H is American Income Life ([www.americanincomelife.com/who-we-serve/4-H-insurance](http://www.americanincomelife.com/who-we-serve/4-H-insurance)). Contact them for more information on their products.

## Volunteer Protections

In Montana, 4-H volunteers acting in an official capacity for Montana State University Extension are in part carrying out the business of Extension. To that extent they are covered by Section 2-9-305, Montana Code Annotated, which provides them with the immunization, defense and indemnification while acting within the course of their official capacity as a 4-H volunteer leader. More limits are available online in the aforementioned section of the code (<http://data.opi.mt.gov/bills/mca/2/9/2-9-305.htm>).

Adapted from the Wisconsin 4-H Club Training Series ACTcc065, *Risky Business: Risk Management Essentials*, and from the Ohio 4-H Clubs Advisors Handbook, *Ohio 4-H Youth Development Risk Management Checklist*.

# CHAPTER 3

# Helping Youth Achieve

Leaders play an important role in helping youth select a project(s) for the year. 4-H projects build life skills such as critical thinking and a sense of responsibility in decision-making. Youth familiar with 4-H may come to the meeting knowing what projects they want to do and there will be other youth that need help finding an interest. In 4-H, youth have the chance to learn about a project area in depth over several years or may enjoy learning about something that interests them for only a year or two. Sometimes it may be a combination of the two.

## SELECTING A 4-H PROJECT

Selecting a 4-H project can be a big decision for 4-H members and their parents. To have a more rewarding 4-H experience, parents, leaders and youth should be involved in this process.

When looking at which projects to take, four major factors should go into the decision:

- **Time.** With sports, extracurricular activities, and other youth programs youth are busier than ever today. Be realistic about the amount of time a 4-H'er has for projects they are interested in.
- **Interest.** This may sound too simplistic, but what is the 4-H member truly interested in? What skills do they already possess? What do they want to learn about?
- **Space.** What is the space required for a project area? Does it require a large backyard, barn or work space? How can things be arranged so there is enough space?
- **Resources.** Are there adults who are willing and able to share their knowledge? Are there financial constraints? (Many projects have start-up costs.) Is it possible to fundraise to do this project? Is transportation an issue?

A common question that is asked is, how many projects can a member take? It is recommended that new members limit the number of projects so that their projects can be completed and not become overwhelming. Members, along with their parents, should evaluate the time, interest, space and resources of each project and decide on a realistic number of projects that fits their family's lifestyle. Also, check with the local 4-H Extension agent for any county policies regarding projects.

## GOAL-WRITING FOR 4-H MEMBERS

A big part of the 4-H year is setting goals. Having goals is like going on a trip - you need to know where you want to go so you know when you've arrived! Goals are important and are useful for any 4-H project. Record books have a place for youth to record their goals at the beginning of the 4-H year.

Hints for setting and working towards goals:

- Use a club meeting early in the year to help youth set goals. An educational program for the meeting can focus on setting project goals.  
*Idea:* Have the members bring their books to the club meetings, then ask questions that get members thinking about what they would like to learn and accomplish in their project for the year.
- As a leader to be ready to give advice on what are some reasonable goals for the youth in the different project areas. When making suggestions or giving ideas, make sure you are letting youth make the final decision.

## How to Write a Goal

Goals have three parts that can be measured or checked:

1. **The action:** how you are going to do it.
2. **The result:** what you will do.
3. **The timetable:** when you plan to have it done.

**For example,** for the goal, "I want to learn how to sew with wool and model my project in the county fashion revue."

1. **The action:** "I want to learn"
2. **The result or what a 4-H'er intends to do:** "sew a project using wool fabric"
3. **The timetable or the amount of time:** "participate in the County Fashion Revue"

When youth are setting goals and they are not certain they can carry out a goal easily, give it a control test.

- Does the MEMBER have control over what he/she wants to do?
- Does the action part of his/her goal tell what the member will do?

For example, the youth has control over a goal such as "I will learn to put in a hand sewn hem." However, if the action mentioned in the goal is what someone else will do, it does not pass the control test.

The goal statement, "I will have a champion steer at the County Fair" does not pass the control test because the judge provides the action that decides whose steer will be the champion. "I will compete with my steer at the country fair" does pass.

A goal setting worksheet is provided in the Appendix on page 27. It can be used by individuals or a club to set goals for the upcoming year and could make a good educational program for a 4-H meeting.

As a leader, use a club meeting near the end of the 4-H year to talk with members about which goals they have met and which ones they may need some help with. Sometimes goals change during the year and that's okay! If they don't meet a goal, they can keep it for next year.

Have the youth write about why their goals were not met or were changed when they are evaluating their project and finishing their record book. Not everything we plan turns out the way we expected. Have them look at the process as a learning moment and not a failure to meet the goal. Maybe the goal was just too big to accomplish in one year and needs to be broken down into segments.

If the youth expresses boredom with their goal, that's a sign it may be time to try something new or more challenging.

Adapted from the Iowa State 4-H Extension and Outreach website. "NOW is the time to start setting your 4-H goals for the year!"



## RECORD BOOKS

As a leader, one of your responsibilities is to encourage and check on member's progress toward completing their 4-H books.

Record books can be overwhelming and confusing to youth and leaders alike, and many wonder why keeping records is a part of their projects. **The simple answer is that 4-H project records teach the life skill of record keeping to youth.** Think about the records that are kept in a household - children's immunization and health records, vehicle maintenance records, checkbook registers, and farm animal birth and sire records. These are only a few of the important "record books" that adults keep when running a household or farm. Without them, children cannot go to school, taxes get delayed, and farm income can be adversely effected.

Keeping good records teaches 4-Hers to:

- Plan and organize their work
- Measure progress in their project(s)
- Identify expenses and financial gains
- Budget for their project and other financial needs
- Yearly verify all 4-H activities and experiences
- Evaluate project growth and develop a plan of action for further growth and future project work
- Observe growth over the years

Good records are also:

- A source to refer to when filling out applications for out-of-county educational events
- A guide when applying for 4-H awards and scholarships
- Assist in completing employment and/or college application forms
- A help when writing resumes for college and/or employment

Encourage youth to make their record books their own. In addition to the goals and financial summaries, they can add pictures and narratives that track their accomplishments and tell about what they did and learned for the year.

It is a good practice to plan time at club or project meetings throughout the year to check on the progress members are making on their record books. This will help members keep their records up-to-date as the year progresses and prevent them from doing their entire book at the end of summer.

Montana 4-H has record book sheets that can be found on the Montana 4-H website, [montana4h.org](http://montana4h.org). The website also has record book pages that can be filled out on a computer. To learn more about filling out record books, visit with your county 4-H Extension office.

Adapted from the New Jersey Leader Training Series, *Record Keeping in 4-H*. (4th ed.)

# CHAPTER 4

# Organizing Your Club

## MEETING PLACE

The facility for a meeting depends on the size of a club and the ages of the members. Explore available meeting places and consider how well each one will meet the needs of the club. Lighting, available space, comfort and room arrangement all influence meetings. Things to keep in mind when deciding where to meet include:

- How large is your club?
- How much room do you need for activities or recreation?
- Do any members or adults have special needs; is the location accessible to all?

## SEATING ARRANGEMENTS

Seating arrangements can make a difference in how people interact and how involved youth are in the 4-H meeting. Youth seated in rows (like school) do not talk or interact as much. Seating everyone in a circle or semi-circle creates a feeling of inclusion and

friendliness. When everyone can see and hear everyone else it encourages members to get involved and participate in the meeting.

## TIME AND LENGTH OF MEETING

The time and frequency that a club meets will vary with each club. The traditionally chartered 4-H club is required to meet 6 times a year. Special Interest clubs tend to meet more often for shorter time frames; instead of having a meeting each month of the year; the club holds a series of meetings with a focused, planned program.

How and when a club meets should be outlined in their constitution, by-laws or club plan. It is important to be respectful of everyone's time and plan meetings that are informative, educational and fun. Successful clubs set a consistent date and time, such as the first Monday of the month at 7 pm, although the date and time should be flexible enough to accommodate different activities and programs.

## A 4-H MEETING HAS 3 MAIN PARTS:

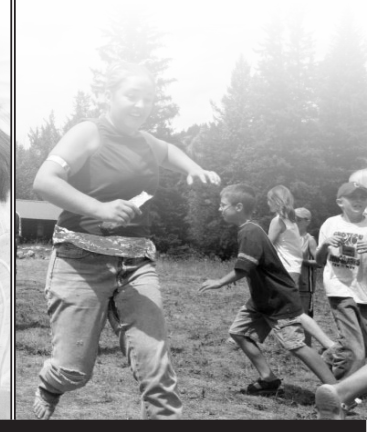
**Opening & Business**  
15 to 20 minutes



**Project Activity**  
30 to 40 minutes



**Recreation & Refreshments**  
15 to 20 minutes



## PARTS OF A MEETING

Club meetings typically include the business meeting that the officers run, the educational program and a group team-building or recreational activity. A good club meeting has three parts with definite activities in each part.

### 1. Opening and Business Session

Get acquainted activities, Mixers

Call to order

Pledges

Roll call

Minutes of last meeting by Secretary

Reports -

Correspondence Report

Treasurers Report

Committee Reports

Unfinished Business

New Business

Announcements

### 2. Educational Program

### 3. Recreation/Refreshments

See the *President's and Vice President's Handbook* (#5244) for more information on parts of a meeting.

## CLUB OFFICERS

Recommended offices are outlined in the Sample Constitution and Bylaws that can be found in the *Montana 4-H Secretary's Handbook* (4-H 5327).

The number of officers a club has is up to the club membership. When the club Constitution and Bylaws are set up you can define the term and name of officers. Some clubs rotate youth in offices throughout the year or may do a shadow system where an older member

is the officer and he/she mentors a less experienced member. The 4-H Center for Youth Development has the following manuals for club officers. They can also be found online at [montana4h.org](http://montana4h.org).

- Montana 4-H President's and Vice President's Handbook 4-H 5244
- Montana 4-H Secretary's Handbook 4-H 5327
- Montana 4-H Treasurer's Record Book 4-H 5242
- So, You are Historian of your 4-H Club 4-H 5260
- Montana 4-H Reporter's Book 4-H 5243
- Parliamentary Practice for 4-H 4-H 5303

## COMMITTEES

Committees are a representative group of members that can hold smaller planning meetings for events such as tours, community service projects, parents' nights, special parties or events, fair exhibits, camp, floats, and picnics. They are a good opportunity for youth that may not have the time, experience or desire to be a club officer but want to be more involved.

Clubs may have standing committees or special committees. Standing committees meet all year and have the same job all year, such as a recreation committee. Special committees are appointed to do one task, such as plan the club picnic. Special committee members get involved in short-term leadership roles.

The exact number of members on a committee will depend on the activity being planned. Membership should include one adult or teen leader. The adult or teen leader's job on a committee is not to chair the committee but instead outline the scope of the activity and then to keep the committee focused on its purpose and to help with the risk management plan. The ages and abilities of the members on the committee will determine the involvement level of the leader.

# CHAPTER 5 Club Goals & Yearly Club Plan

**T**he club's yearly goals and plans sets the direction that the club will take for the 4-H year. There is no one "right" set of goals or "right way" to do the Yearly Club Plan. The goals and how the club does a yearly plan will depend on the ages of the club members, the size of the club, and the interests and projects of the members. There is a Annual 4-H Club Program Planner in the *Secretary's Handbook (4-H 5327)* Appendix and it can also be found at [montana4h.org](http://montana4h.org). Members, leaders and parents should be included in the planning.

Leaders and parents will be more active in developing the goals and plans in clubs that have younger members, but it is important to keep members involved in the planning so the goals and plan are relevant to members. When clubs have a wide range of ages, encourage everyone to participate in the group decision. Be sure that activities and programs are appropriate for the ages and skill levels of the club.

One idea for involving everyone is to have the group brainstorm about the goals members would like to be involved in for the year. After the brainstorming, have the club discuss and vote on the final goals. Encourage youth to talk about the steps they need to do in order to accomplish the goals; next, use those steps in setting the yearly calendar.

## SETTING CLUB GOALS

The organizational leader will help the members of the club plan the club goals for the year. Just as with project goals, setting goals for the club is an important way to teach life skills. Working as a group toward a goal can teach youth cooperation and service to others. How many goals a club has is up to the club, but one idea would be to have the members set one goal for

each of the H's in the clover. Leaders may want to help youth review and set up steps so that the goal can be achieved. Following is an example.

**HEAD** *Learn to do something as a club.*

A sample goal would be: The club members will learn how to give a demonstration. To meet our goal we will have at least 80 percent of members give a demonstration on the club level by March, when the county contest is held.

Set up steps to meet this goal.

1. Plan a program with an experienced 4-H member giving a simple demonstration.
2. Set aside time in the Club's Yearly Plan for youth to do their demonstrations.
3. Encourage youth that are hesitant and support their efforts.
4. Celebrate success, both for individual members and as a club when you meet the goal.

Along with a Head challenge the members to set goals for:

**HEART** *Accepting the responsibilities and showing concern for the welfare of others.*

Plan a service project that the whole club does together such as a visit to a nursing home or food drive.

**HANDS** *Learn new skills.*

Plan an educational program that teaches the 4-H club members to make or build something new.

**HEALTH** *Practicing healthful living.*

Host an end-of-year picnic, emphasizing heart healthy foods.

After the club goals are set the steps the club will need to do to achieve each goal can then be added to the yearly plan.



## DOING A YEARLY PROGRAM PLAN

The planning process will be more successful if the club goals have been set before the club starts working on a plan and if the organizational leader has an idea of the county and state 4-H events that are important to the members in the club. The dates for events and activities may not be set in the fall when the club begins their yearly plan, but many activities happen in the same month each year so the planning can be done by month rather than exact date. The previous year's 4-H calendar and/or old newsletters, along with school and community calendars, will help in the process. For new clubs, the Extension office can help with dates based on the previous year. It is also a good idea to encourage members and parents to bring family calendars to the planning meeting.

To facilitate the planning process check with the meeting host and see if preprinted calendar pages for the upcoming year, one for each month, can be hung on the walls of the meeting room. As an activity or event is brought up, add it to the calendar for everyone to see. The important dates like the county fair and State 4-H Congress can be put in before the meeting starts.

Putting the approximate date of an event or the date a goal should be completed on the calendar allows the club to work the schedule backwards so that your club is planning for events in advance.

A good rule of thumb for most events is to start the planning process two club meetings in advance. For example, if the fair is at the end of July the club may want to devote part of the educational program in May to the fair. At the meeting, review deadlines and check on members' progress with projects. The June meeting may then be devoted to filling out entire forms and/or a project showcase.

When the club members have finished discussing the dates for the yearly plan they can assign a committee or person to be responsible for activities. The *Secretary's Handbook* (4-H 5327) has the Club Annual Plan that can be used to guide the leaders and club. These same sheets can be found in a fillable electronic form at [montana4h.org](http://montana4h.org). When completed, the Secretary should oversee making copies of the plan and distributing them to each member.

Sample plan for September meeting following the yearly plan sheet found in the Montana 4-H Secretary's Handbook.

Club	Component Description	Committee or Person Responsible
<b>September</b> Date: 9/10/11 Time: 7:00pm Location: Jones Family home	Opening Ideas: <i>shoe tag</i>	<i>Jon Dear</i>
	Business Items: <i>County events coming up such as Achievement Night, National 4-H week (usually the first week of October), nomination of officers for next year</i>	<i>officers</i>
	Program:	
	Fun: Recreation and Refreshment <i>Club Year in Review skit            leader and parent thank you            drinks            treats</i>	<i>teen members            members            Smith family            Jones family</i>

Work meetings are meetings the club holds between the regular meetings with a specific purpose, such as a committee meeting for an activity or a project meeting. The Montana 4-H Secretary's Handbook also has planning sheets that can be useful as guides in the planning process.

**Example of a work meeting:** The county encourages clubs to do individual club booths each year at the fair. The club plans for these work meetings in Club Annual Plan. Below is a sample entry for the meetings to get the fair booth planned and built so it is ready for the fair.

## GETTING AND KEEPING MEMBERS INVOLVED

As a leader, getting and keeping members involved in the club activities can be a challenge. Families today have many demands on their time and resources. Engaged youth will be more active so try to find ways to encourage time for involvement. Each group of youth have different interests and resources, so including youth, parents and leaders in the Club's Annual Plan is extremely important. Research has shown that a club with well-organized plans of work have better attendance and more involved members.

The Appendix has a checklist adapted from the "Eight Essential Elements of Positive Youth Development" for leaders to use in determining if youth are engaging in your club. Some pointers on ways to improve member involvement can be found in the Appendix on pages 28 and 29.

Date and Time	Place or Host Family	Project and Plans for Meeting	Person in Charge
<i>May 10, 2011</i>	<i>Smith's</i>	<i>Pick a design for the club booth at the fair based on the fair theme</i>	<i>Club Booth committee chair</i>
<i>June 10, 2011</i>	<i>Smith's barn</i>	<i>work on the club booth</i>	<i>all members</i>

# CHAPTER 6

# Recognizing Youth and Adults

Leaders and Adults need to continually recognize young people for their achievements in 4-H. Recognition comes in many forms and can be linked to participation, achievement, cooperation or competition. It is important to understand why children need recognition and how we can recognize them for their accomplishments. Below are some important points to keep in mind:

- Recognition is a basic human need.
- Recognition must be designed to build self-esteem.
- There needs to be a balance between intrinsic (intangible) and extrinsic (tangible) recognition.
- Adult support is essential.

- All 4-H'ers need to be recognized for their efforts.
- Recognition is more meaningful when it occurs soon after it is earned.
- Appropriate recognition for individual 4-H'ers varies with their stage of development, past experiences, life-style, community, and cultural heritage.
- Opportunities for self-assessment and reflection within the recognition process allow youth to learn and grow.
- 4-H'ers should be permitted to exercise individual choices in learning and participation and be recognized accordingly.



Jane Wolery and Mark Major congratulate 4-H member, Logan Hodgekiss.

## **RECOGNITION AND APPRECIATION USING THE 4-H MODEL OF RECOGNITION**

The 4-H recognition model was developed based on a national 4-H study to recognize individuals and groups, youth, adults, families, and partnerships. The purpose of recognition is to encourage and support the efforts of young people in learning to increase their knowledge and develop their life skills.

### **This model recognizes 4-H'ers in five areas . . .**

#### ***Participation***

It is important to acknowledge the participation of 4-H members in an educational activity. For younger members (grades K-3), participation is the major form of recognition.

Criteria for earning this recognition should be fairly simple and all youth who meet the criteria are recognized. Rewards could include a name in the paper, a t-shirt or ribbons of participation. Recognition can be earned several times and the awards should be part of the learning experience.

#### ***Progress towards self-set goals***

An important part of 4-H is to help members learn to set goals and plan ways to achieve those goals. Setting goals is appropriate for all ages and all activities. A 4-H member may have a goal of learning to put in a zipper or a 4-H club may have a goal of collecting food for a local homeless shelter. Personal goals set by a member allow for the unique growth of that member.

Recognizing accomplishment of steps in the process can provide motivation to continue. Setting and achieving small goals will lead to accomplishing a long-term goal, such as completing the year's project.

Adults, both leaders and parents/guardians, should be part of this goal-setting process in order to help the member set realistic and reachable goals, as well as to evaluate progress toward achieving them. Youth should be encouraged and acknowledged as they make progress toward their goals.

Examples of award recognition are positive feedback from leaders (public or private), handwritten notes, useful memorabilia, certificates, pins, or stickers.

#### ***Achieving standards of excellence***

Measuring a member's accomplishments against a set of standards is one of the most common ways that 4-H members have been traditionally recognized. Showing projects at fairs are excellent opportunities for youth to have their work compared to standards. The Danish system of judging is used at 4-H fairs and allows members to receive colored ribbons (purple, blue, red, white) based on a score determined according to established standards. However, when members are ranked against one another and an overall winner is selected, recognition becomes peer competition.

When recognizing members' achievement of standards, it is important that the standards be well defined and available to members beforehand. All participants should know and understand the standards they need to achieve. After members are evaluated, a score sheet with feedback from the judge is recommended. The evaluation should outline where they ranked against the standard and also have suggestions for improvement.

#### ***Results from peer competition***

Peer competition is a strong motivator for some, but not all, young people. Participation in peer competition should be optional and is not appropriate for younger children. Remember, most children under 12 years old are not mature enough to handle competitive events emotionally. This type of recognition is more extrinsic, with the award being a trophy, rosette or plaque. If properly designed and implemented, it showcases the best things produced by 4-H'ers at that specific time and place. The desire to win may overpower the desire to learn from the experience. **It is important to help youth remain focused on the experience rather than the competition.**

Peer competition identifies the best team or individual according to established specific selection criteria and procedures. Rules and procedures must be clearly stated, understood and enforced in order for peer competition to provide a positive learning experience for all participants. Negative stress, conflict, hard feelings and disagreement can be reduced by making sure everyone understands exactly what is expected.

**It is important to remember that this form of recognition is designed to promote the development of youth.**

### ***Cooperative efforts and skills***

Learning and working together promotes high achievement. Successful cooperation relies on the skills represented by all members in the group, as well as the process by which the group approaches and achieves the learning task or goal. Cooperation involves the contribution of all of the youth in the group. Everyone is rewarded intrinsically, and extrinsically, and each is equally important.

An example of recognition for cooperation would be all members of an event planning team having their names listed with thanks in the event program or each receiving a thank you certificate. Cooperative recognition could include a special county-wide pizza party for all members that achieved a county achievers award status.

*Recognition to encourage and support learning is provided equally in all five areas. Cooperation is part of all four. The intent of the graphic is to show that recognition is given to individuals and people working together in teams or groups.*

A balanced program has recognition opportunities in all five of the categories. Designing a recognition system involves:

- Looking at the young people: their needs, interests, attitudes and aspirations.
- Understanding differences between people based on background and experiences.
- Using recognition that encourages and supports learning and satisfies intrinsic and extrinsic needs. It has to balance recognition for participation, progress toward self-set goals, and achievement of standards of excellence, competition, and cooperation.

This Recognition Model is appropriate and applicable at all levels of 4-H. Recognition committees and councils at the local, county, state and national levels utilize this approach in recognition programs. Using a comprehensive recognition program can lead to more youth being recognized and can provide a way to say to every youth, *“You are a valued and important member of the 4-H program.”*

Adapted from the New Jersey Leader Training Series. *Recognizing Your 4-H Members Achievement.* (4th ed.)



# Appendix



## Montana 4-H **Leader's** Forms

Forms also available online at [www.montana4h.org/#resources](http://www.montana4h.org/#resources)

# 4-H GOAL-WRITING WORKSHEET

## What is a Goal?

A **GOAL** is . . . deciding what you want to do and learn in a 4-H project.

A **GOAL** is . . . having a road map. It helps you decide how to get to where you want to go.

Goals have three parts that allow us to measure and check our progress. They are:

**The Action** How are you going to do something?

**The Result** What are you going to do?

**The Timetable** When are you going to do it

Action	Result	Timetable
<i>I want to train</i>	<i>my 4-H beef heifer to lead</i>	<i>before county fair time.</i>
<i>I want to make</i>	<i>three nutritious snacks</i>	<i>by the June meeting.</i>

**Now it's your turn.** Shown below is a worksheet that can help you set your 4-H Project goals. You can either look at it on your computer screen or print this page and write your goals on paper.

	Action (what)	Result (how)	Timetable (when)
<i>I want to</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>I want to</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>I want to</i>	_____	_____	_____

### CONTROL TEST

Do your goals pass the control test?

Do you have control over all parts of what happens? If you can answer "yes", you are ready to begin record keeping.

### Goals for the year:

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**Troubleshooting 4-H Club Problems** Is your club using a youth-centered approach? Many leaders wonder how to get the members more involved at the club level. Below is a chart that outlines some items that clubs have cited as issues and suggestions to help.

<b>PROBLEM: Our Clubs has a lack of participation in meetings and activities.</b>	
<b>Comments</b>	<b>Suggestions</b>
Members may not be interested in program or may not have had a role in planning the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve all members in setting goals and in planning the programs and activities.</li> <li>• Work in close partnership with members to plan the programs they want.</li> </ul>
Members may not understand the goals or the goals are inappropriate for members age, needs or interests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have the youth involved in creating programs they have ownership in.</li> </ul>
We have a few active members that continually make all the decisions. Younger or newer members may feel insecure and unsure of how to be more active.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a group goal that “everyone participates.” This will allow the presiding person to ask the active members nicely to wait for their turn to speak again.</li> <li>• Create a mentor program with older members. Have them give encouragement and guidance.</li> <li>• Strive to give each member the responsibility for a task you know they can be successful at.</li> <li>• Promote a friendly helpful group spirit. No one laughs or ridicules a person who “goofs”.</li> </ul>
Our members only come to the “fun stuff” or come to meetings late and disrupt.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure the members are involved in setting the club goals and yearly plan.</li> <li>• Check with the members on their schedules. Does the club need to adjust the time of the meeting, or start the meeting with the recreational activity to give youth with other commitments more time to get to the business meeting?</li> </ul>
Members may not find a satisfying role in carrying out the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that all members have challenging responsibilities that they can carry out successfully.</li> <li>• Rotate youth in roles so all youth feel a part of the process.</li> <li>• Recognize all members for their contributions.</li> </ul>
Members may be forgetful.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute a club calendar to all the members.</li> <li>• Use reminder phone calls or emails (can assign to a member or parent).</li> </ul>

<b>PROBLEM: Declining Membership - Members are dropping out or the group does not attract new members.</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	<b>Suggestions</b>
Present members may be cliquish and fail to welcome prospective or new members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strive to improve atmosphere – make it more friendly.</li> <li>• Help cliquish members recognize the results of their behavior and work at making all members feel welcome.</li> <li>• As a leader set an example of being inclusive to all.</li> <li>• Recognize all members for what they do.</li> </ul>
Program may not be of interest to current or prospective members or they may not know enough about it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure present and prospective members understand the purposes of the group.</li> <li>• Publicize the program and activities.</li> <li>• Involve members in planning.</li> </ul>



**PROBLEM: Poor Group Relationships – there are disorderly meetings or bickering among members; members want to run the show and feel that the adults dominate.**

Comment	Suggestions
Members may not know what is expected of them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage members to state expectations of themselves and of the adults involved.</li> <li>• Discuss problems openly with members, but without placing blame. Include youth in setting the rules.</li> </ul>
Meetings are not appropriately structured or are not well planned.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have an officer meeting and review responsibilities. Encourage officers to practice their roles.</li> </ul>
Individuals may not understand their own motivations or those of others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work to develop mutual understanding and trust among members and between members and leaders. When a statement or behavior is inappropriate, ask; don't assume you know the reason behind it.</li> </ul>
Individuals cannot distinguish between differences in ideas and differences in personalities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accept members as they are; don't make your approval and acceptance dependent upon their behavior.</li> <li>• Help members to focus on what is said not who is saying it.</li> <li>• Focus on contributions and application: "your contribution counts, we appreciate what you have done."</li> </ul>
Individuals may feel insecure and therefore are excessively shy or aggressive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build self confidence and feelings of worth by focusing on each member's assets and strengths. "I like the way you handled that..." "I appreciate the way you did..."</li> <li>• Let the members know their worth. Recognize improvements and efforts, not just accomplishments.</li> <li>• Encourage cooperation rather than competition.</li> <li>• Focus on the member's ability to manage his or her life and make decisions. Do not anticipate failure. "I trust you to become responsible and independent."</li> </ul>

**PROBLEM: Lack of Parental Support – Parents do not attend meetings or encourage their children, or accept their own responsibilities.**

Comments	Suggestions
Parents don't know what 4-H is all about and /or don't get timely information about club activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold a parent meeting.</li> <li>• Involve the entire family in the program planning process.</li> </ul>
Parents don't have a role in the club: they have not been asked to help with anything but the chores.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create parent committees that meet at the same time the club meets.</li> <li>• Use the job descriptions in this handbook (or create ones for your club) and ask parents to fill specific leadership roles.</li> </ul>
Parents don't understand the developmental needs of their children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk with parents about how specific 4-H projects contribute to their child's development.</li> <li>• Talk with parents about the ways they can help their child's success.</li> <li>• Encourage parents to attend the leader trainings.</li> </ul>
Parents have not been recognized or given credit for the work they've done.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thank parents when you see them, call them when they've done a bit extra.</li> <li>• Hold a parents/leaders appreciation and recognition night.</li> </ul>

**MY CLUB CHECK LIST** The checklist below can be used to evaluate the leadership style of the club. It can also be useful in determining if the club leadership is creating a safe, caring environment for youth to thrive in.

- Do leaders enjoy working with the group and a variety of fun activities?
- Do leaders have a desire to teach youth about their subject area?
- Do leaders strive to get to know youth?
- Do leaders listen to the youth and not just hear them?
- Do leaders encourage youth to help establish ground rules for the club?
- Does our club recognize new members?
- Are the seating arrangements altered at meetings to encourage positive group dynamics?
- Are fun, non-competitive, get-acquainted activities offered?
- Do members and leaders encourage teamwork and recognize those who support it?
- Is diversity and uniqueness appreciated?
- Are there multiply ways of recognizing success?
- Are there group identification items such as t-shirts that are available to all members?
- Are responsibilities divided among club members?
- Are there enough adults for the youth involved?
- Is the physical environment safe for all?
- Are trust-building activities offered?
- Are accommodations made for those with special needs?

## Resources for Leaders

Clover Selection Guide	4-H 5173
New 4-H Family Handbook	4-H 5280
Montana 4-H President and Vice President's Handbook	4-H 5244
Montana 4-H Secretary's Handbook	4-H 5327
Montana 4-H Treasurer's Record Book	4-H 5242
So, You are Historian of your 4-H Club	4-H 5260
4-H News Reporter's Book	4-H 5243
Getting Started as 4-H Project Leader	#L90530
Club Annual Planning	#2CO237
<a href="http://montana4h.org">montana4h.org</a>	



