



Welcome to 4-H!

A guide for new 4-H club members and their parents



We're pleased you joined 4-H! 4-H clubs are for all boys and girls, grades 1-13 (one year out of high school), wherever they live. Youth, grades 1-3, can be 4-H Prep members. Youth, grades 4-13, can be standard 4-H club members and enroll in many different 4-H projects. In a standard 4-H club, members choose projects that interest them. This guide is especially for new standard 4-H club members and their parents. 4-H is a family affair that includes learning **and** fun.

What a New 4-H Member Needs to Know

What is 4-H?

4-H is boys and girls getting together to learn new things, meet new friends, and have fun!

What is a 4-H project?

A topic that a member chooses to work on in a 4-H club. Different clubs offer different kinds of projects, such as rocketry, food and nutrition, gardening, and dog obedience. A 4-H project is something a member learns to do with the help of leaders and parents.

Some facts about 4-H

4-H Emblem - A green four-leaf clover, with a white 'H' on each leaflet

4-H Colors - Green and White

4-H Pledge (Members say it while saluting the 4-H flag)

I Pledge

My Head to clearer thinking,
 My Heart to greater loyalty,
 My Hands to larger service, and
 My Health to better living,
 For my club, my community, my country,
 and my world.

4-H Motto - To Make the Best Better

4-H Slogan - Learn by Doing

4-H is worldwide with about 10 million members!

My club name is _____

It meets _____

My club leaders are _____

Phone _____

Phone _____

Members of my 4-H club are:

Name

Phone





A 4-H Club Member's Responsibilities

Tips to Help Make You and Your Club Successful



A 4-H club is a group of kids working with an adult volunteer leader toward common goals. These goals are chosen and accomplished by the entire club working together. The officers and leaders can't do it alone. This means that every member of the club needs to pitch in and do his or her part! Below are some reminders to help you help your club be successful.

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- 1. Attend all of your club meetings.** You can't be an active member if you're not around. Arrive on time, and plan to stay until the meeting ends. If you miss a meeting for an important reason, let your leader or an officer know in advance if possible.

Remember that, in 4-H, meetings are held to:

- Get things done
- Bring up new ideas
- Build leadership skills of all members
- Be a change of pace from everyday activities
- Get to know other members
- Learn and have fun

- 2. Follow an agenda** during each meeting and don't get off the subject.
- 3. Go to meetings with your ideas** and share them with others.
- 4. Raise your hand** and be called on before speaking. Only one person should talk at one time.
- 5. Listen** to what others have to say. Even if you don't agree with their opinions, it lets you hear other points of view. No matter what, you should respect their freedom of speech.
- 6. Be a friend.** Get to know other members. Help out when needed. Not all members are the same, but no one is more important than another. Be a friend and you'll have a friend!

- 7. Tell your parents about important dates** in advance so they can get you to the meeting or event.

- 8. Know how to run a good meeting.** "Parliamentary procedure" is used to make sure that:

- One thing at a time is discussed
- Courtesy is given to everyone
- Rules of the majority are followed
- Rights of the minority are protected

The "official" way to suggest something in a meeting is to "make a motion." This is done by being called on (recognized) by the president and then saying, "I move that the club does..." Another club member seconds your motion. Then there is discussion and the club votes on the motion. That's really all there is to it. It just takes practice.

- 9. Read your county 4-H newsletter!** It is written for you. There is news about other 4-H clubs and upcoming 4-H events for you and your club. Keep your newsletter and other 4-H materials in a safe place. This will help you be a better member.

- 10. Give a club and county public presentation.** Are you afraid to speak in front of a group? Don't worry, you can learn how in 4-H. Public speaking skills will not only help your club, but also help you succeed in everything else you do. It's not hard once you get started.

- 11. Enjoy your 4-H club.** Have fun and learn at the same time!

What Parents of New 4-H Members Need to Know

The Mission of 4-H

The Rutgers Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development Program uses a learn-by-doing approach to enable youth to develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to become competent, caring, and contributing citizens of the world. This mission is accomplished by using the knowledge and resources of the land grant university system, along with the involvement of caring adults.

How a 4-H club works

A 4-H club is usually a group of five or more kids, guided by an adult 4-H leader. Each club has a constitution. It is approved by the club members and contains the rules by which the club operates. The club meets once or more each month. Some members serve as officers. They are elected by the club members. Dues are optional and decided by the club.

Prep clubs provide an introduction to 4-H and a way for younger members to explore several projects. Prep is designed to be noncompetitive. In a **standard 4-H club**, members choose to work on at least one project in-depth. A project may be a topic like geology, photography, small animals, food and nutrition, or bicycling. It can be almost any subject that the club agrees to learn. Often a club will concentrate on one or two projects. Completed projects may be exhibited at the County 4-H Fair each summer. They are judged and awards are given for quality work.

How to get your child signed up in 4-H

If your child hasn't already done so, he or she needs to complete a 4-H Club Member Registration Form. Your club leader should have copies of this form. This will make your son or daughter an official 4-H member and her/his name will be added to the county 4-H mailing list. Please follow instructions and make sure that all parts of this form are filled in. Your child's club leader can help. The form requires the member's, parent's, and leader's signatures. Remember to sign it before giving it to the club leader. Another form can be used later to join other 4-H clubs or to change personal information, such as address or telephone number.

Where to get help

Many people in 4-H are ready and willing to help you. Here is a list of some of them:

- **4-H leader** - An adult who volunteers to help lead a 4-H club. Leaders work with club members to plan and conduct meetings and activities. Most of all, they teach 4-H members new skills.
- **4-H volunteer organization** - Every county has a group of volunteers which helps support the 4-H program. This organization works with the county 4-H agent to plan county 4-H events and to improve and expand 4-H. The name of this group varies among counties. It is often called the 4-H Association or 4-H Leaders' Association. Parents, club leaders, and other adults are welcome to serve on your county's 4-H volunteer group.
- **County 4-H Agent** - The professional who is responsible for administering the 4-H program in your county. He or she is a faculty member of Rutgers University and is located in the Rutgers Cooperative Extension office in your county. Other 4-H staff may also be available to help with county 4-H events, or to organize new clubs.
- **NJ 4-H Website** - There are also lots of resources online at www.nj4h.rutgers.edu

Helping your child become involved in 4-H

4-H offers many things to do. Being active in the club is most important. Here are a few other exciting 4-H activities. Get details from your county 4-H newsletter or club leader.

- **Public Presentations** - a great way to learn how to speak before a group without being afraid. A contest is sometimes held so members can be recognized for their efforts.
- **4-H Summer Camp** - 5-1/2 days of fun, friends, and learning at New Jersey's 4-H camp in Stokes State Forest.
- **County 4-H Fair** - an opportunity for all members to exhibit their completed 4-H projects each summer.

A parent's role in 4-H

Children need parental encouragement to get them started in 4-H and to keep them involved in the program through their teen years. You can help if you:

- **Share** - Take an interest in your child's 4-H project and activities. Listen, look, and offer suggestions, but avoid the temptation to "take over" and do things yourself. Learning by doing is the 4-H way. Your child learns by his or her mistakes as well as successes, if you provide encouragement.
- **Prepare** - Parents can assist by helping a child understand the value of having projects, duties, and presentations done on time, in a proper way. Also, be sure your child learns the importance of letting someone know if he or she cannot follow through as expected.
- **Be there** - Your child will gain more from 4-H by attending club meetings regularly and by getting involved in 4-H Camp, 4-H Fair, and many other activities. Parents can be part of 4-H, too. Don't just drop your youngster off at meetings - sit and observe. You are welcome. Get to know the club leader. Lend a hand wherever you can. However, try to remain objective and avoid "taking over" any activities. Remember, the club is for the kids.
- **Care** - Parents are expected to support their child's participation in the 4-H program to the best of their ability and to abide by the policies, procedures, and standards of behavior set forth by the 4-H Youth Development Program. Arrange to attend programs and events where your child is taking part. Your presence shows that you consider your child, and what he or she is doing, very important.

If this club doesn't work out, try another 4-H club. Contact your county 4-H office.



...from your new friends in 4-H

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