

Basic Facts About 4-H Clubs



Club Goals

The goal of a 4-H club is long-term youth development that encourages participants to learn life skills that will help them grow into healthy and productive citizens.

Clubs aim to help youth:

- Develop a zest and skill for life long learning.
- Acquire confidence and a positive attitude toward self.
- Develop leadership, citizenship and teamwork skills.
- Explore possible vocations and careers.
- Learn to manage time wisely and set priorities.
- Interact with adults who serve as role models.

Essential Club Elements

To help ensure a quality life, skill building experience for youth, The Center for Youth Development has the following guidelines or Essential Elements that should be part of every 4-H club experience.

Every club is expected to:

- Give members a chance to be an active part of the decision-making process at every meeting.
- Clearly state at least one goal decided through club programming.
- Provide all members the opportunity to publicly demonstrate their learning.

- Meet at least six times within a year.
- Maintain a minimum of three families and six members in the club.
- Support service-learning projects throughout the year that connect club members with the community.
- Ensure that all adult volunteers are screened.
- Maintain an adult-to-youth ratio of one to ten.
- Encourage and support family involvement.
- Support and provide opportunities for members to reflect on their 4-H experiences, i.e., record keeping, journaling, etc.
- Acknowledge and abide by the Equal Program Opportunity Statement of the University of Minnesota and abide by the policies and guidelines of The Center for Youth Development.
- The 4-H meeting will include:
 - * Pledges
 - * Roll call (attendance)
 - * Educational topic
 - * Business meeting
 - * Recreation
 - * Snack
 - * Project work
 - * Use of meeting management tools like Robert's Rules of Order or other group decision making models.
- Spend time during the year recognizing and celebrating the accomplishments of members.

- Utilize the curriculum and materials provided by The Center for Youth Development at the University of MN.

4-H Club Structures or “Types”

4-H clubs are groups of youth and adults who meet on a regular basis and together practice positive youth development and cooperative learning. Each club is supported with curriculum, training and development, and access to county, regional, state and national 4-H experiences.

All clubs carry out service projects that satisfy needs in the community (e.g., food drives, ESL tutoring, community beautification). These clubs meet regularly throughout the year on a schedule determined by club members. Regardless of the club type, all must abide by the Essential Club Elements (page 7).

- * **Community Club** is a program initiated and facilitated by youth and adult volunteers in the context of community (e.g., neighborhood, township). Three or more families can comprise a community club. Gathering places may include community centers, synagogues, churches, homes and many other places.

Community Clubs aim to engage youth and adults in both individual and group activities that foster learning and development in a variety of subject matter areas (e.g., aerospace, computer science, international education.)

- * **Project Club** is a program focused more deeply on specific subject matter (e.g., performing arts, animal science, photography). Project Clubs can operate within any school or community setting or as part of any of the other club types (e.g., site-based, afterschool and community). They can be facili-

tated by either volunteers or paid staff. Meeting schedules may vary within a short-term or year-long schedule. *Examples: 4-H Performing Arts Club, 4-H Shooting Sports Club, 4-H Computer Science Club, 4-H Spanish Club*

- * **4-H Afterschool Club** is a program offered to youth following the school day. Afterschool Clubs are often divided by age groups (e.g., grades 3-4, grades 5-6).

4-H Afterschool Clubs aim to complement the learning and development that occurs during the school day and to extend learning during non-school hours. 4-H Afterschool Clubs are often a part of a broader after-school initiative and may have a wide variety of partners and resources that support the program operation. This club type is facilitated by paid staff and/or volunteers. The schedule complements the school calendar.

- * **Site-Based Club** is designed to reach underserved youth in the communities where they live with year long programming. This could be a public housing site or neighborhood with a community center that can serve as the hosting location.

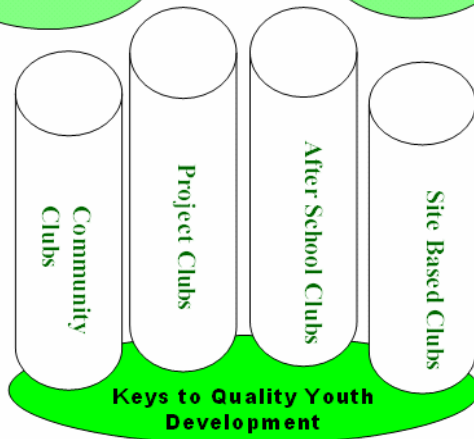
Depending on the makeup of the group, programming may be divided into two age categories (5-12 years and 13-19 years), with each group meeting separately on a weekly basis throughout the year. All age groups may also come together for intentional cross-age learning experiences. This method aims to build capacity among youth living in neighborhoods. This club is generally facilitated by paid staff, however, volunteers may also play key roles. There can be a variety of subject matter content areas.

4-H Club Structure

County, Regional, State and National Experiences provide “*Integration Points*” for club members.



“**Keys to Quality Youth Development**” must be the foundation of **all** 4-H club experiences.



Community Clubs

- Typically form when a group of families, who often know each other and/or live in the same proximity, come together to form a 4-H club in their community.



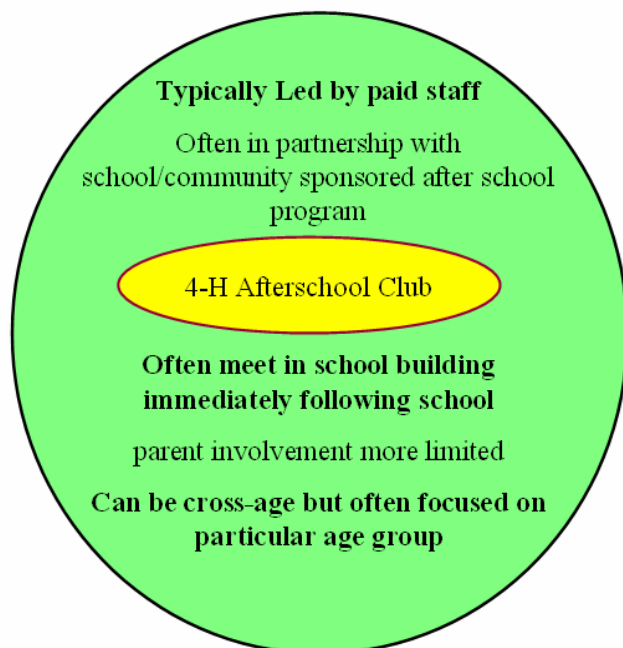
Project Clubs

- Project Clubs are formed around, and focused on, a particular 4-H project area, (i.e., horse club, aerospace club, computer club, clowning club, shooting sports club, etc.).



Afterschool Clubs

- A 4-H club experience offered in the after school hours. Clubs typically meet weekly or monthly throughout the school year.



Site Based Clubs

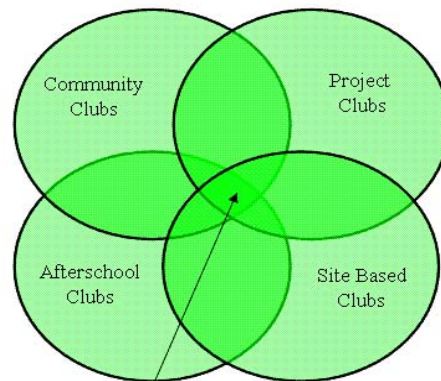
- A 4-H club experience designed to reach youth in communities where they live (i.e., public housing site, mobile home park, neighborhood community center or other host location).



4-H Club Types Have Much In Common

Club structures are flexible sharing many similarities:

- Community Clubs can meet after school
- Afterschool Clubs can focus on a project area
- A Site Based Club can meet in the after school hours
- Parents/guardians can organize and lead 4-H Afterschool Clubs



“Key Elements” of positive youth development are central to the experience in all 4 club structures

Membership

Membership is open to all youth in kindergarten through 12th grade and one year beyond high school.

All clubs will be inclusive (not exclusive) and diverse.

Equal Opportunity

Because the 4-H Youth Development Program is a component of the National Cooperative Extension System, which is supported by federal, state and county funds, it is governed by the equal opportunity laws of those three governmental entities. The University of Minnesota Extension Equal Opportunity Statement (below) is based on those regulations. 4-H clubs must abide by the standards the University sets.

The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance, veteran status or sexual orientation.

4-H Club Names

Members and leaders work together to select a name for a new 4-H club. Once your club is chartered (Toolkit 1), you will not want to change its name. Therefore, it is important that the name can stand the test of time—not too trendy or juvenile. Try to avoid names of TV cartoons, singing groups, situation comedies, etc. Also, the name should not imply membership is limited to any group protected by equal opportunity regulations. For example, names such as the 4-H Lads or Lassies, Kings or Queens would be inappropriate.

4-H Symbol

A green four-leaf clover with a white H on each leaf. The four H's stand for HEAD, HEART, HANDS and HEALTH. The stem must point to the right as you look at the image.



Clover Usage

The 4-H clover is officially protected by the United States government. The situations in which it may be used, the manner in which it may be displayed, the text style and colors required for its reproduction are all specified. Given the complexity of the regulations, you should check with a 4-H staff member whenever you want to use the clover in exhibits, promotional materials, etc.

Use of the clover on items such as T-shirts, caps, key chains, mugs, pens, etc. must be approved by the Extension Educator. For routine display of the clover within your local club setting, observe these rules of usage:

- The four-leaf clover with stem must be in green and the letter “H” on each leaf in white.
- The stem must curve to the right.
- The 4-H clover must be given a place of prominence.
- It is not permissible to superimpose any letter, design or object on the 4-H Club Emblem or to materially alter its intended shape.

Please see *Using the 4-H Name and Emblem* (Toolkit 2) developed by the United States Department of Agriculture for more information.

4-H Pledge

I pledge-

My **HEAD** to clearer thinking,
(right hand lightly touching head)

My **HEART** to greater loyalty,
(right hand placed on chest like you're saying the Pledge of Allegiance)

My **HANDS** to larger service, and
(both hands waist high, with palms up like a book)

My **HEALTH** to better living,
(both hands along sides of body naturally)

For my family, my club, my community,
my country, and my world.

Minnesota is unique when it comes to the 4-H Pledge. We are the only state to include *family* in the Pledge. T.A. (Dad) Erickson, the first state 4-H leader, was a strong believer in the importance of home and family to the 4-H program.

4-H Colors

The 4-H colors are green and white.

White symbolizes purity. **Green** represents life, new growth, springtime and youth.

4-H Motto

“To Make the Best Better”. The national 4-H motto, should be the objective of each 4-H leader and member.

4-H Slogan

“Learning by Doing”. The 4-H slogan is the educational philosophy of the 4-H program. Since young people learn best when they are actively involved in the learning process, 4-H projects are designed to provide hands-on experiences that are reinforced through personal and group reflection and Application— “do-reflect-apply.”

