

Illinois 4-H Cloverbud Leader Guide



University of Illinois Extension
College of Agriculture, Consumer and
Environmental Sciences

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Illinois 4-H Cloverbuds

Table of Contents

Welcome to the Illinois 4-H Cloverbud Program

This leader guide is intended to provide 4-H Cloverbud volunteers with accurate, accessible information. The book explores the philosophy and objectives of the program. It also suggests methods of enhancing the healthy development of children ages 5-7. The book provides strategies for successfully implementing the 4-H Cloverbud program and curricula as well as outlines ideas for volunteer and parental involvement.

Section I -- An Overview

- Philosophy & Objectives I-1
- Guidelines for 4-H Cloverbuds in Illinois 4-H I-2
- Illinois 4-H Cloverbud Basics I-4
- PYD through the 4-H Cloverbud Program I-5
- PYD Evaluation I-6

Section II -- Understanding Youth Ages Five to Seven

- Developmental Characteristics of Youth With Implications for Program Delivery II-1
- Characteristics and Implications for Children Ages Five to Seven II-2
- Things to Remember About 5-7 Year Olds II-5
- Positive Guidance for 4-H Cloverbuds II-6
- Techniques of Guidance II-7
- How to Have Effective Adult-Child Communication II-9
- Encouragement: Building a Child's Self Worth II-10

Section III-- Using the 4-H Cloverbud Curriculum

- 4-H Life Skills and Program Areas for Children Ages 5-7 III-1
- Skills Addressed Through the 4-H Cloverbud Curricula III-2
- Creating a Positive Learning Environment III-4
- What is Experiential Learning III-6
- Using Experiential Learning III-7
- Planning for Success with Experiential Learning III-8
- Ohio State University 4-H Cloverbud Curricula Level 1 & 2 III-9
- Using the Ohio 4-H Cloverbud Curricula III-10

Section IV -- Program Management

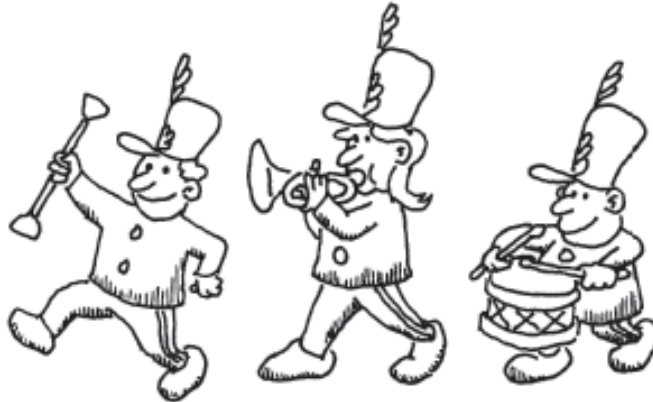
- Enrollment Procedures IV-1
- Publications IV-1
- Additional Projects Available IV-1
- Consumable Supplies IV-1
- Policies IV-2
- Risk Management IV-2
- Insurance IV-2
- Parental Involvement IV-3
- Junior Leaders IV-3



- Sharing Opportunities IV-3
- Recognition and Awards IV-3
- Transition to Community Clubs IV-5
- Story Sheets IV-6
- Graduation Ceremonies IV-7
- Certificates IV-7

Section V -- Volunteer Management System

- Volunteer Role Descriptions V-1
- Volunteer Orientation, Training, and Support V-2
- The Role of Parents in the Illinois 4-H Cloverbud Program V-3
- Families are Important to the 4-H Cloverbud Program V-4



Section I -- An Overview

Philosophy

The purpose of the Illinois 4-H Cloverbud program for youth ages 5-7 is the same as that for older youth - positive development of youth to become competent, caring, contributing citizens. A positive learning experience is provided through curricula that is developmentally appropriate for this age group. In addition, the program:

- values cooperative learning and individual learning as effective educational strategies for 4-H Cloverbud youth;
- views 4-H Cloverbud youth in the context of family and community;
- is dynamic, flexible, open, and accessible to all youth through a variety of delivery modes;
- values ongoing relationships between the youth and caring adults and older youth;
- is based on research in the area of youth development, educational theory, and relevant subject matter; and
- provides training on child development, educational methods, and subject matter content for people who work with 4-H Cloverbud youth.

Objectives

Youth ages 5-7 participating in the 4-H Cloverbud program will:

1. Develop competencies in life skills for self-understanding, social interaction, decision making, learning to learn, and mastering physical skills.
2. Gain knowledge in sciences, literature, and the arts through the experiential learning process.
3. Develop positive attitudes about learning.
4. Develop ongoing relationships with caring adults and older youth who serve as positive role models.
5. Explore family and community relationships.
6. Develop understanding of and appreciation for social and cultural diversity.

Adapted from: R.D. Safrit & G. Gibbons (Eds). *Supporting Youth in Grades K-2*, Columbus, OH: OSU Extension Publications (1995).



Guidelines for the Illinois 4-H Cloverbud Program

A 4-H Program for Youth Ages 5-7

1. Illinois youth ages 5-7 (as of September 1 of the program year) are eligible to enroll in the Illinois 4-H program. Youth in this age group will be called 4-H Cloverbuds.
2. The 4-H Cloverbud program is activity-based. “Activity-based” means a variety of short experiences for youth that create an eclectic, cooperative, and fun approach to learning. Youth receive an immediate, positive feedback response to involvement in the activity.
3. It is not the intent or the objective of the Illinois 4-H Cloverbud program to duplicate the 8- to 19-year-old Illinois program experience, nor to create a mini-4-H concept. While many 4-H Cloverbuds will continue to be involved in other 4-H experiences, the 4-H Cloverbud program is designed with specific educational objectives focused on 5-7 year olds.
4. Illinois recommends Ohio K-2 Cloverbud Program Curricula for community-based club use. These curricula are leader guides.
5. Counties are expected to utilize age-appropriate, cooperation-based methods to give feedback and recognition, while minimizing failure in the activities of the 4-H Cloverbud curricula. The focus of this feedback is to promote the child’s confidence in meeting new challenges. Research on these age levels indicates that the best way to build confidence is to provide many opportunities through activities that emphasize success however small. Competition with self and others is inappropriate for the 4-H Cloverbud age level; therefore, Illinois 4-H Cloverbud members should not be eligible for any competitive events.
6. County fairs provide a wonderful opportunity to provide reinforcement to the success building of 4-H Cloverbuds. County fairs are open to participation by 4-H Cloverbuds as **non-competitive** exhibitors (4-H Cloverbud group displays are encouraged). Agricultural premium funds are **not** available for this age group.
7. Units and clubs should create special volunteer positions to deliver separate programs to 5-7 year old youth and to support these 4-H Cloverbud leaders within University of Illinois Extension. These roles include 4-H Cloverbud leaders, area 4-H Cloverbud coordinators, and county/unit 4-H Cloverbud coordinators and/or committees.
8. Volunteers working with the Illinois 4-H Cloverbud program will be oriented and trained in:



- a. The policies of the Illinois 4-H Cloverbud program
 - b. Learning and developmental characteristics of this age youth
 - c. Use of 4-H Cloverbud curricula
 - d. The Illinois 4-H Volunteer Behavior Guidelines, with particular attention to a sensitivity of working with the younger age group
 - e. Planning/creating group learning experiences for 5-7 year old youth
 - f. Volunteer development skills specific to their roles
9. 4-H Cloverbuds may participate through separate 4-H Cloverbud groups, subgroups of larger multi-age clubs, school enrichment programs, school-aged child care, or special interest groups, depending on the needs and resources of the individual group and the unit's 4-H program. They may NOT enroll in projects offered for 8-19 year olds or be a single 4-H Cloverbud in a community club. It is strongly recommended that, whatever method is used, the ratio of youth to adult be small (approximately six to one or less).
10. If the Illinois 4-H Cloverbud program does not match an existing club's direction or resources, it will be the individual option of the Extension unit and/or club volunteer leader(s) whether they will work with this program.



Illinois 4-H Cloverbud Basics

- 4-H “**Cloverbud**” is the name of an Illinois 4-H member age 5-7. These individuals enroll in a 4-H **Cloverbud project**.
- 4-H Cloverbud education is **activity-based**.
- 4-H Cloverbud learning is based on age-appropriate research and involves **cooperative, experiential, and non-competitive** activities.
- The 4-H Cloverbud program provides youth with a **variety** of activities at which they can be successful.
- 4-H Cloverbuds are given **immediate, positive feedback** to their involvement.
- Fair participation should be used to provide **positive reinforcement** only. No competition, scoring, or activities beyond those approved through the Illinois 4-H Cloverbud curricula are acceptable.
- Members, age 5-7, are **not** eligible to enroll in 4-H projects that are not designed for the age group (example: current *Illinois Clover* listings for ages 8-19). Projects available for 4-H Cloverbuds are listed in a separate section of the *Illinois Clover*.
- Members, age 5-7, are **not** eligible for premium funds.



Positive 4-H Youth Development through... The 4-H Cloverbud Program

Positive Youth Development and 4-H Cloverbuds

Staff may help strengthen 4-H Cloverbud groups by using the eight critical elements of positive youth development in their program planning and evaluation. The eight elements are:

- A positive relationship with a caring adult
- A welcoming/inclusive environment
- A physically and psychologically safe environment
- An appropriately structured environment
- Opportunities to achieve competency/mastery
- Opportunities for self-determination
- Opportunities to value and practice service to others
- Active participation in the future

Positive Relationships with Caring Adults by:

- children learning and developing in an adult leader-directed environment;
- the volunteer leaders creating a positive learning environment that is caring, supportive, and fun;
- providing volunteer training for the adult leaders to have successful 4-H Cloverbud programming.

A Welcoming/Inclusive Environment by:

- using cooperative-learning techniques as the children work on activities together;
- engaging the children in curricula that are noncompetitive without setting up categories or classes; and
- valuing and respecting the diversity of all participants.

A Physically & Psychologically Safe Environment by:

- following a developmentally age-appropriate program to meet the emotional, physical, social, and cognitive needs of children;
- taking special considerations to ensure the safety of 4-H Cloverbud children with low risk and safe activities; and
- having a low ratio of children to adults - about six to one.

An Appropriately Structured Environment by:

- involving youth in reviewing the group's behavior guidelines;
- creating a consistent meeting structure and format for each group session; and
- using structured curricula to provide age-appropriate activities.

An Opportunity for Mastery/Competence:

- allowing the children to be creative in different subject areas;
- utilizing the experiential learning cycle through the activities as children experience, share, process, and generalize; and
- having developmentally age-appropriate curricula and activities.



An Opportunity for Self-Determination:

- conducting success-oriented activities to help children gain confidence;
- using noncompetitive activities to foster intrinsic motivation; and
- focusing on the process of doing activities, rather than the product.

An Opportunity to Value & Practice Service to Others by:

- fostering the appreciation of community service through 4-H Cloverbud activities;
- cleaning-up after activities and children helping each other; and
- sharing materials and respecting fellow 4-H Cloverbud members.

An Opportunity to See One’s Self as an Active Participant in the Future by:

- giving the children choices in upcoming activities;
- exploring a variety of future career options; and
- discussing and role-playing the reality that what one does today often determines what happens tomorrow.

Adapted from materials developed by Scott Scheer, 4-H Extension Specialist, Preadolescence Education, Ohio State University Extension, 2001.

Positive Youth Development Evaluation

Once 4-H Cloverbud groups have had an opportunity to learn more about the PYD elements and to incorporate those into the 4-H Cloverbud group setting, staff may want to offer the 4-H Cloverbud volunteers an opportunity to assess their efforts and identify their successes. It is difficult for younger youth to understand and respond effectively to survey questions, even when helped by an adult (it’s also very time consuming). Therefore, a special survey has been developed for adults who work with 4-H Cloverbud group. Since the group environment is the most critical concern for 4-H Cloverbud-aged youth, the instrument focuses on the critical elements one to four.

4-H Youth Development staff should be familiar with the evaluation tools and be prepared to work with local 4-H Cloverbud groups to implement the PYD assessment process utilizing the 4-H Cloverbud Adult Survey.



Section II --

Understanding Youth Ages Five to Seven

Developmental Characteristics of Youth With Implications For Program Delivery

Middle childhood, ages 5-7, is an exciting time for children. It is often the time when first memories are made and when much development occurs. During this period, children are maturing in many ways: physically, cognitively, socially, and emotionally. They acquire new skills and knowledge and begin to branch out socially and build new relationships.

Development during this time is not the same from one child to the next, nor is it consistent within development domains, even within a single child. All children grow and develop at their own rate. Some may acquire many capabilities earlier than their peers. Others may physically outpace their classmates, but be behind in cognitive, social, or emotional development.

During middle childhood, adults can greatly assist in children's development by guiding their involvement in educational activities. They can enrich the learning experience by soliciting the children's ideas, responding to their questions, engaging them in conversations, and challenging their thinking.

The following guide outlines the general characteristics and capacities of children ages 5-7. The left column lists physical, cognitive, emotional, and social characteristics, while the right column lists important implications for applying this information in a non-formal, youth program. This is not intended to be used as a criteria for assessing development; but, as a guidepost for selecting activities that will promote the healthy development of middle childhood youth. It is important to remember that each child is unique and will mature in a unique way.



Source: R.D. Safrit & G. Gibbons (Eds). *Supporting Youth in Grades K-2*, Columbus, OH: OSU Extension Publications. (1995).



Characteristics and Implications for Children Ages 5-7

CHARACTERISTICS

Physical Development

Muscular coordination and control is uneven and incomplete. Large muscles are easier to control than small muscles.

Able to handle tools and materials more skillfully than during preschool years.

Most can learn to snap fingers, whistle, and wink.

Period of slow, steady growth.

Will be able to throw ball better than able to catch ball.

May repeat an activity over and over to master it.

Cognitive Development

Ask questions and answers them in literal terms.

Can distinguish their left and right, but not in other people.

Define things by their use, i.e. pencil is for writing.

Most are just learning letters and words. By six, most can read words or combinations of words.

Short interest span.

May spend more time alone doing projects, watching television, or day dreaming.

IMPLICATIONS

Physical Development

Plan physical activity with each session.

Introduce new physical activities that require coordination such as roller skating, bike riding, jumping rope, and simple outdoor games.

Plan activities that use large motor skills and introduce fine motor skills, one at a time.

Provide patient guidance and encouragement for fine motor activities such as gluing, cutting, hammering nails, bouncing balls, etc.

Provide opportunities to practice skills, but use projects that can be completed successfully by beginners.

Cognitive Development

Give instructions verbally and visually. Don't expect them to read.

Avoid a lot of paper and pencil activities that require writing. Can introduce some written activities as children develop reading skills.

Plan a series of small activities with physical exercise in between rather than one longer more intense session.

Provide a variety of materials and mediums for learning (i.e. paper, paint, brushes, glue, building blocks, manipulatives).

Plan activities that require sorting, organizing, or classifying.

CHARACTERISTICS

Cognitive Development (continued)

- Beginning to take in perspective of others.
- Beginning to tell time.
- Humor takes on new meaning.
- Enormous curiosity and delight in discovery.
- Are able to collect, sort, organize, and classify.
- Can recognize some similarities and differences.
- Can do some abstract thinking, but learn best through active, concrete methods.

Emotional Development

- Strong desire for affection, like adult attention.
- Cooperative and helpful; want to please.
- Get upset with changes in plans and routines.
- Say what they think and feel i.e. “you stink”, “you’re ugly”, etc.
- Increased awareness of themselves, more sensitive to others.
- Enjoy being part of the family.
- Worry about failure or being criticized.
- Will try themselves out on others to see how they are accepted.
- May claim tasks are too hard rather than admit being scared.

IMPLICATIONS

Cognitive Development (continued)

- Encourage children to create collections.
- Encourage projects that can be done over and over in different ways.
- Use lots of activities that require the children to participate in a “hands on” way.
- Guide the children in reflecting on their learning experience.

Emotional Development

- Provide many encouraging words for effort.
- Provide many opportunities for adult interaction with children.
- Provide opportunities to help in meaningful, real ways, such as setting up for an activity.
- Give clear description of activity or schedule and stick to it.
- Plan activities to make gifts for family.
- Involve them in doing things for others.
- Be sensitive when teaching a new concept or skill that a child may resist. Break the concept or skill down into small steps and provide reinforcement for learning at each step.



CHARACTERISTICS

Social Development

Developing cooperative play. Prefer to work in small groups of two or three. Still like to focus on own work and play. May begin to pair up to have a “best friend”. Best friend may change frequently.

Mother (or parent) is still social focus as prime caregiver; however, may “fall in love” with kindergarten teacher.

Like being part of and around family.

Can engage in group discussions.

May have need to be “first”, to be the “best”, and may be bossy.

Can be unkind to others, but extremely sensitive to criticism of self.

Like to practice different roles.

Have high expectations of parents and adults and are critical when parents “mess up”.

Value adult interaction and may actually be more polite to adults.

More outgoing, curious, and talkative.

Begin to internalize adult feelings toward religion, ethnic groups, and money.

Begin to develop friendships that involve sharing secrets and possessions.

IMPLICATIONS

Social Development

Organize projects and activities that involve two or three children. For a large group, break activities into sections so that only two or three are involved at one time.

Help children develop friendships, through learning to share, to take turns, to follow rules, and to be trustworthy (not tattling).

Organize activities with high adult/child ratios.

Develop projects and activities that involve or focus on the family.

Avoid competition or activities that select a single “winner” or “best person”.

Use imaginary play that involves real-life situations. (Playing store, playing house.)

Introduce the “art of social graces” -- table manners and other social niceties.

Select activities that involve the child’s curiosity and creative abilities.

Provide opportunities for children to name their group or “coin phrases” to describe their activities.

Promote social activities that appreciate and emphasize diversity of families and lifestyles.

Use a variety of songs, rhymes, fairy tales, stories, and comics to help socialize the group.

Provide learning activities that stimulate .

Source: R.D. Safrit & G. Gibbons (Eds). *Supporting Youth in Grades K-2*, Columbus, OH: OSU Extension Publications. (1995).



Things to Remember About 5-7 Year Olds

- The 5- to 7-year age period is a time to try out abilities and interests and to gain self-confidence and self reliance. Protecting and building the fragile self esteem of children is a crucial function of youth leaders.
- The “try anything once” attitude of most children of this age urges them to use all their senses in impulsive ways.
- Boundless child energies require much space for the development of skills, interests, and activities stimulated by active imaginations.
- Belonging is important. To be accepted, a child needs to “act his/her age” as defined and seen by peers.
- Children need to feel approval and acceptance.
- Children do not understand or value the social expectations adults thrust on them.
- Children must understand the aims, if discipline is to be meaningful, helpful, and effective.
- Some typical problems and challenging characteristics of 5-7 year olds are:
 - teasing, squabbling, tattling;
 - boisterous, noisy, energetic, rowdy;
 - dawdling;
 - whining, sulking;
 - short attention spans.

Tips for Leaders

- Limit group size -- one to six children per leader works well.
- Lead meetings in an informal, relaxed way. Groups can “personalize” by selecting names for themselves.
- Hold brief business meetings; plan lots of activities.
- Develop the practice of talking things over with the children.
- Be prepared for children to come out with “shockers” -- questions about sex, tall tales, private family business, etc.
- Let children grow as they will and respect them as individuals.
- Use all available resources; add your own good ideas. Have lots of variety in meetings.
- Encourage and involve interested parents. They can be a big help!



Positive Guidance for 4-H Cloverbuds

Positive reinforcement ...

- is important in helping youth develop.
- is not easy to maintain and requires continuous practice.
- is an effective tool in motivating youth.
- must be practiced and be shared equally among all group members.
- can be verbal or non-verbal.
- is important in discipline.
- is specific and sincere.

When giving positive reinforcement, let the child know why he or she is receiving it and mean what you say. Don't say "Johnny, you've done a good job". Tell Johnny exactly what it is that he did well, "Johnny, you did a very good job making the carrot cake. It looks and tastes great." Being too general with positive reinforcement may appear artificial or insincere to the youth involved. Youth need reinforcement of their positive activities.

The leaders should feel good about themselves and have confidence in their abilities. It may be difficult for some leaders to be effective positive reinforcers when society is often so negative. Unfortunately, negative statements are often much easier to make than positive ones. Some examples of positive reinforcement include:

- A pat on the shoulder.
- Nodding.
- Specific verbal praise.
- Certificates.
- Writing a note to a parent, friend, or other significant person about the child's progress or accomplishments.
- Saying "thank you".
- Providing an opportunity for a group member to make a decision.
- Asking a group member to demonstrate skills or projects to the rest of the group.
- Providing an opportunity for the group to share their skills and projects with the community through a special exhibit or in a **non-competitive** event at a fair.
- A smile.
- Enthusiastic encouragement concerning a child's work.

There are literally thousands of ways to show positive reinforcement. The effective youth leader is always aware of the importance of positive reinforcement and practices it as much as possible.



Techniques of Guidance

This is More Effective

State guidance positively

I want you to sit on the chair.

Keep the sand in the box.

Drive around Johnny's tricycle.

Give reasons and explanations

You need to sit on the seat in the car because, if I stop suddenly, you may bump your head.

Give simple but specific directions

You need to clean up now. Put the paper here, the crayons in the drawer, etc.

Use physical contact in guiding child.

Put your arm around the child.

Get down at his/her level -- kneel, sit.

Look the child in the eyes when talking.

Reflecting feeling.

You're really angry, aren't you. Come, tell me about it.

Allow them time.

In five minutes you'll need to clean up because it's time for us to leave.

Respect your child's individuality.

What lovely colors you have in your picture, Nancy.

Than This

Don't stand on the chair.

Don't throw the sand.

Don't bump into Johnny.

Don't stand on the seat.

Take care of that mess.

Don't yell at him/her across the room.

Don't hit Suzie again.

Clean up, right now!

Don't compare the child with others.
Jim's picture looks neater than yours.

Source: R.D. Safrit & G. Gibbons (Eds). *Supporting Youth in Grades K-2*, Columbus, OH: OSU Extension Publications. (1995).



Do

1. Speak in a calm, kind voice.
2. Speak directly to the child; do not call to the child across the room.
3. Speak in short, meaningful sentences which the child can understand.
4. Try to express your request in a positive way.
5. Get down to the child's physical level if possible.
6. Keep your voice and facial expressions pleasant.

Don't

1. Make fun of a child.
2. Give the child a choice if he/she cannot have one.
3. Compare the child with another child by saying, "See how clean Jim's hands are." (This might make the child dislike both Jim and you.)
4. Be dishonest with the child. Do not say, "Jerry didn't mean to hurt you." (The child may be aware that Jerry did mean to be hurtful.)
5. Make a child feel guilty by saying something like, "Only bad children do things like that". (Accept the child even though you do not condone his/her actions.)
6. Make a child feel inferior by saying, "You're a big boy/girl now. You shouldn't act like a baby."

Source: R.D. Safrit & G. Gibbons (Eds). *Supporting Youth in Grades K-2*, Columbus, OH: OSU Extension Publications. (1995).



How to Have Effective Adult-Child Communication

- To communicate with a child an adult should:
 - √ Begin with the child's feelings.
 - √ Pay strict attention to the child when the child is speaking.
 - √ Maintain good eye and body contact.
 - √ Allow negative feelings and positive feelings to be expressed.
 - √ Understand that feelings are transitory, not permanent.
 - √ Know that expression of feelings, especially negative feelings, serves a purpose by helping a child finish with that feeling.
 - √ Be in the mood to listen responsively.
- Avoid threatening, judging, lecturing, and ridiculing.
- Treat your child with respect and dignity.
- Accept the child as a person with feelings.
- Learn to use responsive listening techniques so that you provide a mirror for the child to see himself or herself more clearly.
- Learn how to express yourself and your feelings positively.
- Learn to discriminate between your problems and the child's problems.

Source: R.D. Safrit & G. Gibbons (Eds). *Supporting Youth in Grades K-2*, Columbus, OH: OSU Extension Publications. (1995).



Encouragement: Building a Child's Self Worth

- Focus encouragement on the assets and strengths of the child.
- See the positive in a situation, first, before finding the negative.
- Accept the child for what the child is, not what you want the child to be.
- Show faith in the child's abilities and his/her attempts to do tasks. Lack of faith will only help the child to fail.
- Provide realistic standards to live up to and, from time to time, re-evaluate these standards.
- Replace discouraging words in your vocabulary with encouraging words.
- Praise is reserved for a job well done. Encouragement is used when continuation of a task is wanted or when a task is poorly done.
- Encouragement:
 - √ focuses on helping the child feel worthwhile.
 - √ will have a long lasting effect on the child's behavior and self confidence.

"Knowing you, I'm sure you will do all right."

"I really appreciate what you've done for me."

"You're doing much better."

"I can see you've done something about that. Are you ready to start?"



Source: R.D. Safrit & G. Gibbons (Eds). *Supporting Youth in Grades K-2*, Columbus, OH: OSU Extension Publications. (1995).



Section III-- Using the 4-H Cloverbud Curriculum

4-H Life Skills and Program Areas for Children Ages 5-7

Youth Development

Youth development has been defined as “the ongoing process in which all young people attempt to meet their basic personal and social needs and to build assets and competencies necessary for successful lives.” This process does not happen in isolation. Development occurs in the environments in which young people live and socialize.

The charge of 4-H is to positively impact the natural youth development process so that children and adolescents lead positive, secure, fulfilling, and happy young lives while they are developing the skills, knowledge, and competencies necessary for fulfilling, contributing adult lives. 4-H utilizes the research base of the Land Grant University System to develop and deliver nonformal youth development education programs, which focus on life skills.

Life Skills

Life skills are defined as abilities, knowledge, attitudes, and behavior that must be learned for success and happiness. Life skills enable people to adapt to and master their life situations. The 4-H program gives individuals a frame of reference for perceiving and responding to life situations and enables them to achieve an inner satisfaction of happiness.

Through development of life skills, children learn to live comfortably with others, express their own feelings safely, love life, and welcome new experiences. These are the experiences that 4-H Cloverbud volunteers will provide young people in their groups.

4-H has identified seven basic life skills: understanding self; communicating; relating with others; problem solving/decision-making; acquiring, analyzing, and using information; managing resources; and working with others. Some skills are more important than others at different ages. Five specific life skills are appropriate for younger children:

Understanding Self

Learning to Learn Skills

Social Interaction Skills

Mastering Physical Skills

Decision-Making Skills

By focusing on these life skills, 4-H can help its youngest participants grow and develop the competencies necessary for positive and happy young lives as they prepare for productive, secure, and contributing adult lives.

Source: R.D. Safrit & G. Gibbons (Eds). *Supporting Youth in Grades K-2*, Columbus, OH: OSU Extension Publications. (1995).



Skills Addressed Through 4-H Cloverbud Curricula

Self-Understanding Skills

Each child is unique. Each has different interests, personality traits, skills, learning styles, and temperaments. Each newborn child is a new creation without a sense of self-awareness, but eager and ready to learn all it can about him/herself and others.

A child's self-concept is not innate but develops as a result of the many differentiated and accumulating experiences over time. Five to seven year olds need to try new things so that they can begin to test themselves, build their base of experiences, and begin to master skills.

To foster self-understanding, adults working with 5-7 year olds need to nurture creativity and curiosity and help them see and appreciate the differences and similarities of people.

Social Interaction Skills

Children become increasingly social between the ages of 5 and 7. They begin to realize that the world doesn't begin and end with them and they develop friendships with their peers. They experience an increasing need and desire to be with other children and they need to talk and work with one another to enhance their development.

Five to seven year olds need to develop communication skills including listening skills. Social interaction also illustrates the need to learn how to work together cooperatively, share, and resolve conflicts.

Decision-Making Skills

Children and adults face decisions and problems every day. The ability to make wise decisions and take positive action is an important part of growing up. They need to learn the step-by-step processes of problem solving and decision making and to develop a sense of vulnerability and cause and effect. Children need the opportunity to identify and explore their values, beliefs, and attitudes and understand how all of these influence making decisions.

Children need to understand how their decision can affect themselves and others and be willing to accept the responsibility of their actions. For 5-7 year olds, it is also good to focus on decisions that provide for their personal safety (going with strangers, taking drugs, etc). They need to have opportunities to practice problem solving and decision making with guidance and in relatively safe situations.

Learning to Learn

Five to seven year olds are "concrete" thinkers and need real experiences on which to base their learning. Experiential learning promotes this. For instance, by planting a bean seed in a cup, children can learn about bean seed germination and growth, nutrients, bean plants, and a new generation of bean seeds. Once these concepts are learned about the bean, they can be generalized and applied and tested with other plants and eventually with other living things. With guided reflection, children can understand not only what they learned, but how they learned it.

Source: R.D. Safrit & G. Gibbons (Eds). *Supporting Youth in Grades K-2*, Columbus, OH: OSU Extension Publications. (1995).



Children are curious and eager to learn. They have many interests and are enthused about exploring new things. Their curiosity and inventiveness create a need to learn how to make order out of all of the things they discover.

Mastering Physical Skills

Physical growth in 5-7 year old youth can be described as slow and steady. Mastering physical skills is important to self-concept. This includes everything from printing with a pencil to using large muscle skills like catching a ball. Provide opportunities to practice skills, but use projects that can be completed successfully and quickly by beginners. They may need to repeat an activity over and over to master it.



Source: R.D. Safrit & G. Gibbons (Eds). *Supporting Youth in Grades K-2*, Columbus, OH: OSU Extension Publications. (1995).



Creating a Positive Learning Environment for 4-H Cloverbuds

Volunteer and paid staff must consider the developmental needs of 5-7 year olds as they plan the various learning activities. It is important to compare what is generally known about children this age with the specific behaviors of the members of the group and create a positive learning environment for them.

In general, 4-H learning activities for 5-7 year olds will be positive if they:

1. Provide one adult (or older youth) for every six children. (Some activities will require fewer children to every adult.) Because of the variation in developmental stages, it is important to have a low child-to-adult ratio so that each child receives the individualized attention needed to be successful in learning experiences. Involving parents in working with the group is beneficial and encouraged.
2. Involve the children in selecting and planning activities. When learning activities are selected by children, rather than assigned by adults, they are more likely to maintain interest and to integrate new skills and previous knowledge. Letting them be involved in the selection of learning activities builds their confidence as a learner, fosters personal initiative, and encourages the development of curiosity and creativity. Based on the planned educational objectives, educators should identify activity options and help children make decisions about what they want to do and learn.
3. Change activities often according to the needs of the children. By offering a variety of learning activities, with a variation in the pace and range of experiences, children remain interested and involved.
4. Encourage children to talk and work with each other. With guidance, children can learn skills that help them develop respect and understanding of other people, to negotiate, and to apply rules for living. Children learn best when they are actively engaged in activities that allow them to experience and process the activities.
5. Sequence activities in short blocks. Vary the pace of activities so that they are not expected to engage in one type of activity for too long. Intermix quiet activities with those that require movement and active participation. For children in this age range, the process of learning may be more interesting than the finished product.
6. Utilize adults and older youth as positive behavior models. As children begin to look outside the home for guidance and support, adults with whom they come in contact on a regular basis become influential sources of new information, new skills, and new points of view about life. They also have a tremendous influence in helping children feel good about who they are and what they can do. Saying something positive to each child at each meeting is one way of bolstering self-confidence.
7. Promote cooperation rather than competition. It is not appropriate for children ages 5-7 to par-

Source: R.D. Safrit & G. Gibbons (Eds). *Supporting Youth in Grades K-2*, Columbus, OH: OSU Extension Publications. (1995).



ticipate in contests where they are judged. Their self-concept is still vulnerable and too fragile for competition. Activities should promote practice of developmentally appropriate skills, provide an opportunity for social interaction, and help children understand and learn about fairness. It is appropriate, however, to display their work and recognize participation. If done fairly and honestly, this can promote a sense of pride and feeling of accomplishment.

8. Use positive guidance and discipline. Children in early childhood years are learning self-control. Children benefit from adults who use positive approaches to help them behave constructively and solve interpersonal conflicts. Teach skills for appropriate social behavior, such as taking turns, dividing and sharing resources, and working cooperatively.
9. Provide some individualized learning and learning in small and large groups. The learning activities should include a sufficient variety of experiences to accommodate the varied ages, stages, interests, and needs of participating children. Parallel activities may be needed to allow children at different stages to participate in a way that suits their developmental needs. Some may choose to work alone on an activity while others choose to work in groups.

Source: R.D. Safrit & G. Gibbons (Eds). *Supporting Youth in Grades K-2*, Columbus, OH: OSU Extension Publications. (1995).



What is Experiential Learning . . .

A Short Course

Informational Piece for Instructors

Experience

Begin with the concrete experience. This can be an individual activity or a group experience, but it involves “doing something.” The learning experience will most likely take place when the experience is unfamiliar or a first-time activity for the learner; pushes the learner beyond any previous performance levels; is uncomfortable; and includes the risk of failure.

Share

Next, get the participant(s) to talk about the experience. Share reactions and observations. Let the group talk freely. Acknowledge ideas. Allow time for volunteers to share responses. Encourage group members to answer questions posed by others. Avoid having the leader answer questions.

Process

Discuss how themes, problems, and issues are brought out by the exercise. Speak to specific problems and issues that the group discovers from the exercise or recalls from personal experiences. Look for recurring themes and list them in front of the group. Have small groups discuss and report back, have a panel discussion, or generate ideas individually.

Generalize

Find general trends or common truths in the experience. Draw out and identify the principles that are important - that apply to “real life”, not just the activity. This focuses on the key messages. List key terms that capture the lessons. Identify situations where the principles apply.

Apply

Concentrate on how the new learning can be applied to everyday situations. Discuss how issues raised by this activity can be useful in the future. Describe how more effective behaviors can develop from what is learned. Write personal goals for behavior changes, take turns solving problem situations in groups of two or three, or role-play situations that show how new behavior is learned. Each individual should feel a sense of ownership for what is learned.



Using Experiential Learning Informational Piece for Instructors

Use a Variety of Activities

You might consider any one or a combination of the following: tours, interviews, games, pantomimes, skits, puzzles, situations, searches, demonstrations, problems to solve, using a tool, systematic observation, creating a product, visualization, brainstorming, simulations, leading an event or activity, presenting, communicating nonverbally, or using a technique.

Develop Questions to Ask

The types of questions asked will vary with the activity. Some questions may relate to the content but others need to relate to the life skill. Questions to help move in this direction may be as straightforward as these examples:

Sharing Questions

1. What did you see happening?
2. What were you thinking and feeling during the activity?
3. What was new or different?
4. Tell me what you did.

Processing Questions (Use data generated from sharing questions)

1. What things seemed to occur over and over?
2. What happened in this activity that's similar to what you have seen or done before?
3. How was today's activity different from what you have done before?

Generalizing Questions

1. What did you learn about yourself through this activity?
2. What did you learn about (life skill, i.e., making decisions)?
3. How did you go about making your decision?
4. What differences can the things you learned today make at home, school, or in the community?

Applying Questions

1. How can you use what you learned today in other situations?
2. How will the issues raised by this activity be useful in the future?
3. How will you act differently in the future as a result of this activity?

Each of these general questions could be enhanced by adding specific language referring to the experience. Questions relating directly to the content should be used sparingly. When possible, a question about content should tie in the life skill to be targeted.

Adapted from: *Curriculum Development for Issues Programming, A National Handbook for Extension Youth Development Professional*, Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Experiential Learning, Lesson Plan, Diane Baker, Extension Unit Educator, Youth Development, Rock Island County.



Planning for Success with Experiential Learning

Arrange for at least one adult or teen helper –

Set up the Room —

- Room and physical space are important.
- Find a space large enough for the group to be active and work freely.
- Have all the supplies and “props” available – not in view.
- Check room for obvious hazards and remove them or rearrange.

Set up the Situation —

- Give a broad overview of what will happen.
- Provide further instruction in small segments as the group progresses.
- Always keep the learning goal and objectives in mind — Look at the life skill and project skill listed on each lesson. You’ve got to know what you want to achieve in order to do it.

Facilitate the Process —

- Maintain a supportive atmosphere; be aware of learners’ feelings and reactions.
- Give everyone something to do at all times.
- Become involved whenever possible, but don’t “over direct.”
- Let the group help you.
- Clearly explain or show the youth what to do.
- Have examples at various stages of completion.
- Give kids warnings of time/transitions to other activities.
- Be sure to have “transition activities” on hand to do with those who “get done quickly.”

Facilitate Learning (save at least 10 minutes at end of activity for this) —

- Talk about what happened.
- Turn whatever happens into a learning experience.
- Ask open-ended questions.
- Avoid discussions that are “too deep.”
- Give every child a chance to share and be proud of his work.
- Be sure adults and youth provide positive feedback to each child.
- Give each individual recognition for his efforts.

Adapted from Training Trainers to Teach, Cooperative Extension 4-H System.



Ohio State University
4-H Cloverbud Curricula

Series I*

Science and Technology Unit

Making Air Work
Weather Fun
Experimenting with the 5 Senses

Environmental/Earth Science

Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle
Nature Fun
The Problem of Pollution

Citizenship

Our Flag
Food Drive
Heart to Heart

Consumerism/Family Science

Managing Time
Television: Making A Choice
Be Smart with Money

Plants and Animals

Our Feathered Friend
Super Seed Fun
Pets

Healthy Life Style

Making Healthy Food Choices
Safe at Home
Fitness is Fun

Community Expressive Arts

Planning a Community Art Exhibit
Cloverbud – One Act Play
Cloverbud Display

Personal Development

My Feelings
Experiencing Disabilities
I am Special

Series II

Science and Technology

Good Vibrations: The Science of Sound
The Wonder of Water
Bubble-Mania

Community Expressive Arts

Home Hobbies
Storytelling
Sports

Healthy Lifestyle

Food Fun
Looking your Best
Fall Festival...A Harvest of Fun

Environmental/Earth Science

Digging Those Dinosaurs
Habitats are Homes
Wildlife

Personal Development

Celebrations Around the World
Valuing Family
Building Character

Citizenship/Civic Education

Rules and Reasons for All Seasons
Our Country
Democracy, Voting, & You

Consumerism and Family Science

Just the Food Facts, Ma'am
Mall Mania and the Sharper Shopper
Weaving and Dyeing

Plants and Animals

Ant Antics!
Bugs, Butterflies, Worms and Spiders
Have You Eaten a Flower Today?
Incredible Egg – Chicken Embryology

*Series I is also available in Spanish. Download the Spanish version at <http://www.ohio4h.org/youth/cloverbud/handbook/seriesone/esp/frontpage.htm>



Using the Ohio 4-H Cloverbud Curricula

The Ohio 4-H Cloverbud curricula is organized as a series of lessons addressing such subjects as Citizenship, Expressive Arts, Consumerism, the Environment, Healthy Lifestyles, Personal Development, Plant and Animal Science, and Science and Technology.

Every consideration has been given to making these lessons as user-friendly as possible including accessible supplies and ample activities that easily adjust to your personal teaching style and the needs of your members.

For your convenience, each lesson includes a background information section (first page) followed by a recommended teaching plan. The following is an overview of the teaching plan learning activities:

Learning Activities — Consists of Three Main Components:

1. **Getting Started** (three to four activities ranging from four to seven minutes each)—Activities that introduce, familiarize, sensitize the learners to the topic.
2. **Digging Deeper** (three to seven activities ranging from four to ten minutes each)—Activities that involve exploration of the subject. Focused, hands-on activities or curriculum activity sheets that the learners can color or complete support this section.
3. **Looking Within** (two to three activities ranging from three to five minutes each)—Activities that help learners understand how to apply what they learn to their daily lives. This includes circle time where learners share their feelings and experiences.
4. **Bringing Closure**—Designed to help members celebrate their experience with the group. It can be as simple as a follow-up game or a snack idea that relates to the topic or a form of participant recognition.
5. **Going Beyond**—Ideas for follow-up at home or after the meeting, that might include a letter to parents outlining what was taught, discussed, and experienced.

When designing your activity period, plan to use at least one activity from each of the first three components of the teaching plan. Of course, this will vary depending upon the amount of time available, the skills of the instructor, and the age and interests of the members.

It is also difficult to predict how individual members will respond to the various activities offered. The most important thing to remember is to plan ahead, plan for more than what your time allows, stay flexible, and allow the members to move at their own speed.

Source: Horton, Robert L. and Gary E. Gibbons. *4-H Cloverbud Program: The Activity Period* in R.D. Safrit & G. Gibbons (Eds). *Supporting Youth in Grades K-2*, Columbus, OH: OSU Extension Publications. (1995).



Section IV -- Program Management

Enrollment Procedures

4-H Cloverbud groups and members may enroll through the 4-HDMS process. The 4-H Cloverbud group, whether a stand-alone group or a project group affiliated with a community 4-H club should complete the Illinois 4-H Group Enrollment/Re-enrollment Form. Using the 4-H Cloverbud section of the *Illinois Clover*, the leader should indicate which age-appropriate 4-H Cloverbud projects the group will be enrolled in and whether publications are needed. Each 4-H Cloverbud member and leader should complete the Illinois 4-H Individual Enrollment Form.

Publications

Publications for the the 4-H Cloverbud program can be ordered through the 4-HDMS. They are listed in the *Illinois Clover* in the 4-H Cloverbud section. It is important to remember to select only from these projects as they are age-appropriate for 4-H Cloverbud members.

New 4-H Cloverbud groups are strongly encouraged to enroll in the 4-H Cloverbud project Level I or II from Ohio State University Extension. These offer a variety of activities in seven different curricula areas. They may enroll in additional projects in later years.

Additional Projects Available

Several additional 4-H Cloverbud projects are available through the *Illinois Clover*. Refer to the latest issue of the *Illinois Clover* or to the project section on the Illinois State 4-H Web site (<http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/state4h/cloverbuds/projects.cfm>) for a more detailed explanation of 4-H Cloverbud projects.

Consumable Supplies

The Ohio curricula requires lots of consumable materials for group activities. Some possible creative ways to get these are:

- Donation of craft supplies, etc. by Home and Community Education (HCE) groups, 4-H families, and members of the community. These may be left at the Unit office and checked out by the 4-H Cloverbud leaders when needed.
- Provide “4-H Cloverbud Enrichment Kits” with extra resource materials and supplies to be loaned. Several regions/counties have kits that were financed by grants from the Illinois 4-H Foundation.
- Approach local businesses for donations for 4-H Cloverbuds of small items for activities.
- Collect a “voluntary assessment” from members (cost should not limit participation -- keep it small and affordable) or assign each family a few items to provide for the group to complete the activities.



Policies

All Illinois 4-H policies apply to both 4-H **clubs** and **groups**. Therefore, 4-H Cloverbud groups are subject to the same rules as other 4-H clubs.

Each unit office has the 4-H policies in the Unit Management Handbook. Due to its length, units may choose to discuss only those policies that have specific implications for the 4-H Cloverbud leaders.

These sections have specific information that need to be shared:

- Membership
- Curriculum
- Ag Premium Funds
- Fiscal Policy

Use the 4-H Cloverbud Policy Notes sheets from the Illinois 4-H website as your reference.

Risk Management

4-H Cloverbud volunteers are encouraged to participate in the 4-H risk management training. As part of the training, 4-H Cloverbud volunteers will put together risk management plans for 4-H Cloverbud meetings and activities. A resource bibliography, worksheets, and other tools are available to those who complete the risk management training.

An additional resource might be: *Safety-Wise*, a Girl Scout publication that is available from your local Girl Scout Council. It contains standards and guidelines for a variety of activities, many of which are similar to those conducted by 4-H Cloverbud groups.

According to the University of Illinois Office of Risk Management, 4-H liability insurance has no age restrictions and would cover leaders of 4-H Cloverbud groups. Accident and medical coverage should be obtained for any “special event” for this age group.

Insurance

One of the risk management strategies is to “share” part of the risk to others. One way to do this is through medical and accident insurance. One company that offers coverage to 4-H programs is:

American Income Life Insurance
Box 50158
Indianapolis, IN 46250
1-800-849-4820

American Income Life offers special activities coverage for accident and illness and accident coverage for 4-H members for one full year. Both of these policies cover members ages 5-7. The year long policy does not cover youth ages 5-7 enrolled in animal projects and it does not cover members under the age of 5. Minimum premium is \$10.



Parental Involvement

Children ages 5-7 want their parents to be involved with them in a variety of activities and experiences. Parents are also eager to be involved with their children's activities at this time. It is important to build on this involvement through the 4-H Cloverbud program. Additional suggestions for parental or family involvement is included in the volunteer management section of the staff guide.

Junior Leaders

"Tween"agers and teens enjoy working with the 4-H Cloverbud age group and they also can serve as positive role models for them. Utilizing junior leaders in 4-H Cloverbud groups will ease the transition into community 4-H clubs as 4-H Cloverbuds will already know some of the older members. The opportunity for junior leaders to develop their leadership skills with the 4-H Cloverbud group also adds value to the total 4-H program.

Sharing Opportunities

Positive feedback done by leaders or parents as near to the end-of-the-experience is appropriate for 4-H Cloverbud members. Adults can provide such opportunities by asking open ended questions of the members. In other sections of this staff guide, suggestions for sharing opportunities related to specific curriculums are included. For everyone concerned, it might be wise to state in all fair books which classes are open to 4-H'ers ages 8 and older. And similarly, to note and bold the non-competitive sharing opportunities which are appropriate for 5-7 year olds. Avoid words like "judging and exhibits" when writing the 4-H Cloverbud section of the local show book. Remember, 4-H Cloverbud members like to "show and tell", but they are not ready for competition. 4-H Cloverbud members do not receive premium money. A separate display area for 4-H Cloverbud members at the fair would be very appropriate. Members might receive recognition **as long as every child gets the same thing**. See sample of fair book wording below.

Recognition and Awards

4-H Cloverbud members are not eligible for competitive events or premium funds. They do need recognition in some form, however. Any item that you provide to the entire group (not just the "best") is fine. Some small items such as t-shirts, pins, certificates for a free ice cream cone, bookmarks with the 4-H pledge, and 4-H rulers are enjoyed by youth of this age. The National Association for Education of Young Children states that not only is competition bad for this age, but also, "evaluating children against a standardized group norm is inappropriate."

Consequently, Illinois 4-H recommends that 4-H Cloverbud members not work against standards, not be rated on score sheets, nor be in competition with each other. Several items are included for 4-H Cloverbud groups and members through the Recognition for Excellence program. Items may be ordered through the Illinois 4-HDMS. As funding is provided by the Illinois 4-H Foundation, recognition items are provided to Units at no cost for 4-H Cloverbud members - one ribbon per child per year. 4-H Cloverbud members may receive a 4-H Membership Card once they are enrolled, as do the older youth.



- Participation Ribbons (W90111)
- Membership card for member -- (90110) units personalize card blanks through 4-H DMS



Transition of 4-H Cloverbuds to Community 4-H Clubs

As 4-H Cloverbud members reach their last year in the program, it is important to help them understand that new opportunities are ahead for them the following year. Knowing that the 4-H Cloverbud program differs quite a bit from traditional 4-H programming, it is important to prepare these youth for this change. Ideally, 4-H Cloverbud group members will transition into 4-H clubs after reaching age 8 (as of September 1). For 4-H Cloverbud members who are a “group” within a community club this is a natural progression. Because the two groups already share a location, meeting time, and opportunities where they interact with each other, this transition is a smoother and easier adjustment.

Members who belong to separate 4-H Cloverbud groups may not be aware of the opportunities to progress unless the Unit makes an effort to encourage them. As a leader for one of these groups, you may want to work with either the Extension staff, or a local 4-H club to help 4-H Cloverbud members with this transition. By the age of 8, the members should have already had contact with older 4-H club members and know what 4-H is about. Some suggestions to help 4-H Cloverbud members and their families in adjusting to the change include the following:

- 4-H Cloverbud coordinators might encourage the 4-H Cloverbud groups to visit a community club at least once a year, perhaps for a special program or social event.
- Invite a County 4-H ambassador or a 4-H club Junior Leader to attend one of your meetings to talk about traditional 4-H.
- Develop a relationship with a local 4-H club where the two groups of youth have an opportunity to work and play together.
- Older members of a community club could plan and conduct a special “4-H Cloverbud Party” or “4-H Find Out Party” for the younger 4-H Cloverbuds. It would be a good leadership experience for the 4-H members and good exposure for the 4-H Cloverbud members.
- Community clubs could hold a special “4-H Cloverbud Graduation Ceremony” for the local 4-H Cloverbud members at which they welcome them into the traditional 4-H program. Ask that representatives of local 4-H clubs be there to help conduct the ceremony or to answer questions the youth or parents might have about moving up to traditional 4-H.
- At the county level, find out if your Extension office is going to do a graduation ceremony for 4-H Cloverbud members. If they are not going to have such a ceremony, ask them for copies of the *Illinois Clover*, a list of 4-H clubs and contact numbers, and perhaps any other promotional materials they might have about traditional 4-H programming.
- During 4-H Project Days, offer some things for the 4-H Cloverbud member and encourage them to come. Older youth could conduct the activities with them.
- Start doing more “project book type” activities in the third year of 4-H Cloverbud program—those 4-H Cloverbud projects that have a member manual so the 4-H Cloverbud members experience something similar to the regular club.



- Develop a mentor system with an area 4-H club that matches up each 4-H Cloverbud member with a club member as a “4-H Friend”. This could be any member who had been in 4-H for two years or more. Use the “4-H Friend” as a mentor and helper for the transition year.
- Have a party for all 4-H Cloverbud members and leaders and do one of the “Get Real—Get Active” 4-H videos and activities with them. Make ice cream sundaes and talk about being a “4-H Club member.”
- Make sure your families are reading and getting a county 4-H newsletter. While information in this newsletter might be overwhelming at times, it may help parents get a better understanding of the variety of 4-H opportunities at the county, state, and national levels. Send all 4-H Cloverbud families the 4-H newsletter and include in it:
 - Names of all 4-H Cloverbud leaders and groups
 - A “4-H Cloverbud Corner” with news and tips just for 4-H Cloverbud members
- List 4-H Cloverbud display opportunities in the county 4-H show book and encourage 4-H Cloverbud members to come, display their work, and see “other 4-H projects” on exhibit.
- Encourage 4-H Cloverbud members and their families to attend your county’s 4-H Show or Fair. By attending the show/fair 4-H Cloverbud members will get a better feel and idea about 4-H projects and their exhibit opportunities. They will be able to get a better understanding of what these events are all about before they are actually an exhibitor.
- Have a county informational meeting night with parents and graduating members where they could ask questions and get more information from a 4-H club leader, a junior leader, or from Extension staff.
- Send the first year transition members the “New Kids in the Clover” newsletter series during the first year in a community club. Available on the Illinois 4-H web site at <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/state4h/members/resources.cfm>

No matter what your 4-H Cloverbud group situation may be, you will want to promote the excitement of growing older and the opportunities for growth in the 4-H program.

Story Sheets

My 4-H Cloverbud Story -- Level I, II, and III are available on the Illinois 4-H web site. These are optional. Each 4-H Cloverbud member might complete a story sheet for the year. Level I is for 5 year olds, II for 6 year olds, and III for 7 year olds. These sheets help 4-H Cloverbud members reflect on their experiences for the year. In addition, this is good preparation and practice for completing 4-H goal planning sheets when members turn 8.



Graduation Ceremonies

4-H Cloverbud "Graduation" Ceremonies for 7-year-old 4-H Cloverbud members who are ready to graduate from the 4-H Cloverbud program to a 4-H community club are on the web site. Sample programs and diplomas are also posted.

Certificates

Samples of certificates that 4-H Cloverbud leaders may use to recognize the participation of youth in the 4-H Cloverbud program are also on the web site.



Section V--

Volunteer Management System

Volunteer Role Descriptions

Volunteer role descriptions for a variety of 4-H Cloverbud positions are available on the Illinois 4-H web site at <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/state4h/cloverbuds/volunteers.cfm>. Please share these with potential volunteers and parents.

These roles include:

- 4-H Cloverbud Advisory Committee
- 4-H Cloverbud Organizational Leader
- 4-H Cloverbud Parent
- 4-H Cloverbud Parent Role - Snack Chair
- 4-H Cloverbud Parent Role - Recognition Chair
- 4-H Cloverbud Project Leader
- Area 4-H Cloverbud Coordinator
- Cloverbud Activities Coordinator
- County/Unit 4-H Cloverbud Coordinator
- School 4-H Cloverbud Coordinator
- School 4-H Cloverbud Leader
- School -Age Child Care 4-H Cloverbud Coordinator
- School -Age Child Care 4-H Cloverbud Leader
- School -Age Child Care 4-H Cloverbud Project Leader



Volunteer Orientation, Training, and Support

All 4-H Cloverbud volunteers should receive initial orientation and more specific training on various topics as their tenure as volunteers increases. 4-H Cloverbud volunteers are encouraged to complete the **4-H Cloverbud Leadership Development Assessment Inventory** (found on the Illinois 4-H web site) to identify their training needs. This inventory is based on the skills and competencies essential to being successful in their volunteer roles. 4-H Cloverbud training topics with lessons, handouts, and other supplemental materials are posted on the Illinois 4-H web site as is the orientation lesson. Current topics include: behavior management, community service, experiential learning, involving youth as volunteers, risk management, and working with children with special needs.

4-H Cloverbud leader meetings should be a part of your regular 4-H volunteer training program in your unit. Leaders will need help with 4-H Cloverbud group management and will need opportunities to share ideas that work. 4-H Cloverbud volunteers can be a good support group for one another and they can help plan, implement, and evaluate county events and activities that are appropriate for this age group.

Ask an experienced 4-H Cloverbud volunteer to “mentor” a new one. When a new leader learns about the 4-H Cloverbud program, be sure he/she also learns about 4-H. It is entirely possible that the 4-H Cloverbud volunteer may want to “move into regular 4-H” with his/her group of members.

Counties may want to form a 4-H Cloverbud advisory group that meets regularly to discuss needs of the county-wide 4-H Cloverbud program. A role description can be found on the Illinois 4-H web site.



The Role of Parents in the Illinois 4-H Cloverbud Program

Parents are a vital part of 4-H. They are an especially valued resource in the 4-H Cloverbud program and their cooperation is essential. Often it is the volunteer who serves as the catalyst to share the importance of the parents involvement and links the parent and child in a common work effort, sharing a new experience. This parent-child relationship linkage is one of the most important and dynamic leadership roles a volunteer leader can fill.

What are some roles parents can fill with the 4-H Cloverbud group? Here are some ideas:

- Parents can learn how to help their children see themselves as successful through positive reinforcement of the child's part in the group effort.
- Parents can serve as volunteers for special events of the 4-H Cloverbud group. Remember that the parent serves as a facilitator for the event, not one who does the work of the 4-H Cloverbud group.
- Parents can assist with transportation to and from the group meeting place or special activities.
- Parents can support the group volunteer through attendance at special events of the group.
- Parents can learn about, appreciate, and teach through role modeling the goals of the 4-H program to the 4-H Cloverbud participants.

Parents can be an excellent source of help for your local 4-H Cloverbud program. Parents will usually not automatically volunteer their time to help you, even though most are willing to help. Volunteers must ask parents to help with specific jobs they can do. You need to convince parents their time is essential to the success of the 4-H Cloverbud program.

Another important consideration when discussing the role of parents is how to keep them involved and informed about the 4-H Cloverbud group. Here are a few suggestions:

- Involve parents right from the start in the organization of the group.
- Phone or personally visit parents to talk about 4-H and the goals and philosophy of the 4-H Cloverbud program.
- Ask parents to host a 4-H meeting in their home.
- Have special events, such as a parent's tea or information night, specifically designed for the parent's involvement.

If the parents feel the 4-H Cloverbud group is your group, they will feel no obligation to volunteer. Make certain parents feel ownership of a part of the program, and that they can make a real contribution to the 4-H Cloverbud group experience. Let the parents know that the members appreciate their involvement and that the members like their 4-H activities better when the parents are interested.



Families Are Important to the 4-H Cloverbud Program

Families are a vital part of 4-H. Their cooperation is essential. The 4-H Cloverbud group can help get you and your child started in a new sharing experience.

Children in this age group are curious, active, and eager to learn! They want to explore their surroundings in their own way. The 4-H Cloverbud curricula is designed for 5-7-year olds. Activities are at the child's developmental level.

As a parent you can:

- Understand the goals of the 4-H Cloverbud program
- Discuss with the child what he/she has done
- Help him/her build thinking skills
- Feel the excitement of discovery
- Feel a sense of accomplishment as your child develops skills

Get involved with your child's 4-H Cloverbud group:

- Assist with transportation
- Help with the activities
- Accept a role in special events
- Praise club members for good work (cooperation, verbal expression, positive social interactions, following rules, etc.)
- Offer to prepare refreshments
- Volunteer to host a meeting in your home



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