

Cloverbud Leader Guide

Facilitating Successful Groups and Activities

You are important!

Your role as a leader is an important one. A young child doesn't need a subject expert or even an expert in 4-H – they need you to provide a safe and supportive experience that guides them in exploring new things and having fun. This starts by affirming the child's own competence, reinforcing their attempt at mastering new skills, and providing encouragement and guidance when they are stuck.

As the leader, you are the connection to all of what 4-H has to offer children and families. You have a great opportunity and responsibility to communicate with children and families and encourage their involvement in the community.



Purpose and Goals of the Cloverbud Program:

The primary purpose of the Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development Cloverbud program is to provide a welcoming and safe environment that promotes children's healthy development mentally, emotionally, socially, and physically, represented in the 4 H's: **HEAD, HEART, HANDS, and HEALTH.**

We do this by creating opportunities for children to:

- **Experience the joy of learning.**

4-H has many things to try; children need to experience new things and begin to build skills that will make them successful in life.

- **Develop positive relationships with others.**

As children grow their social circle, caring adults, older youth role models, and peers can have a positive influence in their lives by introducing new information, skills, and points of view.

- **Explore 4-H.**

Cloverbud programs are an important place for new members and families to learn more about 4-H and how they can grow and learn through their participation.

Building a Safe and Positive Experience

When designing a learning experience, the focus should be on the experience of the child. Activities and projects are tools to engage children in learning – the focus of the experience should be positive youth development. In addition to ensuring **BELONGING, MASTERY, INDEPENDENCE, and GENEROSITY** are present (see Essential Elements for Cloverbud Leaders), knowledge of developmental characteristics guide how we lead Cloverbud programs.

Children this age are a fun, energetic group! Here are some things to keep in mind as you are facilitating Cloverbud activities:

BE FRIENDLY

Keep in mind how important you are to youth. Greet youth and families with a smile, and find something positive to say to each child at each meeting.

HELP THEM MAKE FRIENDS

Children this age are learning social skills, but haven't mastered them. Small group activities help kids learn how to make friends and be social, but still gives you the time to give individual attention to kids when you can. Encourage children to work and talk to each other.

Sharing group work should be fun and is an important part of the learning experience. Use bulletin boards, window displays, or events to display work.

KEEP RULES SIMPLE

Rules should be focused on safety and well being. If corrections are needed, the best practice is to start by getting the child's attention by using their name, restate your expectations, and give a specific instruction on how they can correct their behavior.

MAKE DIRECTIONS CLEAR AND SHORT

Make sure children are clear about your expectations and what they should be doing. Break activities into small segments. Children will give you about 1 minute of attention for every year of age. For example, a 6 year old can focus for about 6 minutes, which means you should be giving next steps or new directions about every 5-7 minutes.

BE PREPARED

Plan activities and have materials prepped in advance. Avoid idle time when children can easily become distracted.

FOCUS ON THE EXPERIENCE

It's about the process. Children at this age are trying to please you and take criticism personally. It is important to express positive encouragement. Even if the activity doesn't turn out how you expect, you can emphasize your appreciation of their effort.

STOP WHILE IT'S STILL FUN!

***"Success is a journey
not a destination.
The doing is often
more important than
the outcome."***

-Arthur Ashe

Hands-On Learning

The 4-H slogan is *Learn by Doing*. 4-H experiences are designed using the Experiential Learning Model: **DO, REFLECT, APPLY**. For children in grades 5K-2, the basic components are the same but the sequence and types of questions should be developmentally appropriate.

Opportunities for reflection should be presented throughout the activity. Don't wait until the end to ask children what they observe, what they think, or what might happen next.

Children at this age are very concrete in their thinking. It's important to provide real examples and help make connections to things they might already know and understand.



The format of the Wisconsin 4-H Cloverbud Activity Plans are designed to help you process the learning experience with young people and build in opportunities for reflection and application.

Format of the Wisconsin 4-H Cloverbud Activity Plans

Each Cloverbud Activity Plan shares a similar format.

On the first page, you will find an overview of the activity, a materials list, and directions for advance preparation. You will also find background information on the topic area that will help you in creating a complete lesson plan.

The instructions for the activities include the following components:

ASK: Questions to frame the learning topic featured in the activity

INVESTIGATE: A brief demonstration to dig deeper into the topic of the day

CREATE: Hands-on activities based on the topic of the day

SHARE: Time for sharing with others

MORE TO EXPLORE: Ideas to extend the learning at the meeting or at home

RELATIONSHIP TO 4-H: Key concepts for new members and families and some ideas on how to help them make connections to grow with 4-H. Remember, many Cloverbud project members are brand new to 4-H.

Welcome New Members

Cloverbud programs are often the first experience children and families have with Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development. Here are essential strategies to make sure new children and families feel welcome when they join 4-H.

Say Hi! Make sure that new members and family members are greeted at meetings, their questions get answered, and they feel included in the 4-H club meeting and activities.

This isn't just the job for the 4-H leadership team – make sure all members know that they have a role in making the club a fun and welcoming place to be.

Hold a new member and family orientation before or after one of your regular meetings.

Tell them about member and parent involvement opportunities. Briefly describe activities coming up.

Make sure to ask them questions about their expectations and interests. You'll get new ideas to keep your club fun and interesting for all youth.

Do get-acquainted activities frequently at your 4-H club meetings. This helps members and families get to know each other. Even members that know each other benefit from this interaction.

Check In. At the end of each meeting, check with the new participants to see if they have any questions or concerns.

Invite parents to help! Let the new 4-H parents know that they need to support their children's involvement in the club. Give them some options to get involved and help the 4-H club that will also help them learn more about 4-H.

Resources

For more information about Wisconsin 4-H Cloverbud Programs and to find additional resources and activities, please visit <http://fyi.uwex.edu/wi4hcloverbuds/>

References: University of Minnesota Extension Cloverbuds Volunteer Leader Guide

Authors: JulieAnn Stawicki, with Kyli Brown, Jason Hausler, and Melinda Pollen. Additional edits and suggestions from the UW-Extension 4-H Cloverbud Project Working Group: Anna Demers, John De Montmollin, Lori Laberee, Brianna Stapleton-Welch, and Heather Vierling. Thank you to Terry Boehner for design support.

