

Orange County 4-H Frequently Asked Questions



Orange County 4-H

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WHAT IS THE MISSION OF 4-H?

The mission of 4-H is to help youth grow and develop through learn-by-doing experiences. The success of 4-H in the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service evolves from this mission of 4-H and the mission of Extension, which is to “help create prosperity for North Carolina through programs and partnerships focused on agriculture and food, health and nutrition, and 4-H youth development”.

Educational programs are developed from research-based information generated at the university. Specialists who focus on youth development work closely with specialists who focus on subject matter. Together they plan hands-on learning experiences to excite the imagination and natural curiosity of youth. The group experience is a means for developing leadership and citizenship skills of youth.

The 4-H program is operated by paid Cooperative Extension Service staff together with volunteer leaders who work directly and/or indirectly with youth. Volunteers, parents, youth and community leaders provide direction to the total county program and specifically to the club program. In the process of helping youth grow, adult and youth leaders develop leadership skills as well.

WHAT IS 4-H?

4-H is an experiential youth education program for boys and girls in Kindergarten (K-5) through one year after high school graduation. Youth belong to a 4-H club or group in local communities. They plan, lead and participate in group activities and community service events. The Cloverbud program is for youth in Kindergarten through Second Grade and emphasizes cooperative learning. Youth in Third Grade and higher select areas of special interest for learning called projects. Projects include anything from aerospace to photography and beyond. Youth also participate in camps, fairs, leadership workshops or other county, district or state events.

In North Carolina, 4-H is the youth development program of North Carolina State University and North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University. Each county has an NC Cooperative Extension office that administers the 4-H youth development program and provides partnering support through local tax dollars. At the national level, 4-H is part of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the federal partner of the state land-grant university.

As a 4-H volunteer, you are a volunteer educator for the NC Cooperative Extension. Through the Orange County Cooperative Extension Office, you have access to university research and curricula developed to have the greatest positive impact on youth.



HOW DOES 4-H WORK?

The focus of 4-H is providing youth with the essential elements of positive youth development so they grow into capable, competent adults.

In 4-H, volunteer leaders encourage youth to gain knowledge and learn life skills through their project work and club/group activities. Youth members learn practical life skills like planning, decision-making, and working together as a team. During 4-H meetings, members learn how to communicate, practice leadership skills, and develop strong character traits. Through community service activities, members learn how to be responsible citizens who contribute to their communities.

Each year, 4-H members are challenged to set higher goals, become more knowledgeable about their projects, and assume greater leadership responsibilities within their club and the county 4-H program. They develop positive attitudes about themselves and others and learn how to set and achieve realistic goals.

All of this does not happen at once, but develops gradually as members continue their involvement in 4-H with the guidance of their 4-H volunteer leaders. Over time youth will look to you as a teacher and mentor, and you will gain great satisfaction as you watch them grow.

WHEN WAS 4-H FOUNDED NATIONALLY?

4-H was founded nationally in 1902.

WHAT IS THE 4-H MOTTO?

“To make the best better”

WHAT IS THE 4-H SLOGAN?

“Learn by Doing”

WHAT ARE THE 4-H COLORS?

The white in the 4-H logo symbolizes purity. The green, nature's most common color, represents life, springtime and youth.



WHAT DO THE FOUR H'S IN 4-H STAND FOR?

Head, Heart, Hands and Health are the four H's in 4-H, and they are the four values members work on through fun and engaging programs.

Head: Managing, Thinking

Heart: Relating, Caring

Hands: Giving, Working

Health: Being, Living

WHAT IS THE 4-H PLEDGE?

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.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE 4-H PLEDGE?

Over its 100+ year history, 4-H has developed traditions that help define its culture and identity, such as the recitation of the 4-H pledge. Here are some ways you can help youth carry out the 4-H pledge.

I pledge:

My HEAD to clearer thinking

- ~ Give youth opportunities to lead simple tasks at first and take on more responsibility as they grow.
- ~ Avoid jumping in to help unless you are really needed. Encourage young people to overcome obstacles on their own.
- ~ Encourage, motivate, and praise members who complete leadership roles.

My HEART to greater loyalty

- ~ Create opportunities for 4-H members to interact with each other through games, group tasks and their 4-H project work.
- ~ Develop traditions to welcome new members and celebrate individuals.
- ~ Find ways to involve family and community members in as many activities as possible.

My HANDS to larger service, and

- ~ Have the group adopt a service project that fits their interests and meets a community need.
- ~ Arrange tours of local sites and opportunities for youth to learn from others in the community.
- ~ Encourage youth to consider the feelings of others.

My HEALTH to better living

- ~ Help youth find resources to explore their 4-H projects and activities.
- ~ Provide project-learning experiences.

- ~ Model and teach that failure or frustration is not a disgrace but a part of the learning experience.
- ~ Be fair and consistent when enforcing rule and giving feedback.

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

WHAT IS THE 4-H VOLUNTEER'S ROLE?

Your responsibility is to help 4-H members learn by doing, supporting youth in educational activities and events through 4-H clubs and groups. Another way is by helping them learn specific project skills. 4-H members have fun with projects while “learning by doing”. Most people remember more if they actually experience something and have an opportunity for “hands-on-learning”.

Learning takes place within the learner. It is not something done to the learner. We encourage skills that will be useful to the young person now and in the future. We help each member develop good habits, experiment with new ideas, and practice problem-solving skills. By doing this, we help them become self-directed and contributing members of society.

Another way you can help 4-H members learn is to teach them how to think, not what to think. Volunteers help develop creative thinking in young people by giving them a chance to make decisions on their own. They'll learn from their own choices.

Finally, be sure to recognize and encourage each 4-H member so they feel noticed and important. The most significant recognition that can be given to members is sincere praise and attention. Let them know they are important and what they have done is worthwhile.

WHAT'S A 4-H CHARTER?

The NC Cooperative Extension grants a charter to 4-H Clubs to formally recognize their affiliation with 4-H. Charters grant a club permission to use the 4-H name and emblem and conduct 4-H educational programs for youth. Existing 4-H Clubs must complete a Charter Renewal Packet each year, due to the 4-H Agent by December 1.

To be a chartered 4-H Club in Orange County, the following requirements must be met and maintained:

Club Name

Five or more youth from at least 3 families

Adult leadership that has been approved through the Youth Protection Process

4-H meetings and activities must be supervised by an adult, 18 years of age or older, who has completed the Youth Protection process and is currently enrolled as a 4-H volunteer leader.

Calendar that meets the purpose of the 4-H Program

4-H Clubs must have a calendar. Clubs must develop a calendar with their members and submit it as part of the annual charter renewal process.

Youth involvement in leadership and decision-making

4-H clubs belong to the youth members and they make the decisions. Adult volunteer leaders should not be making the decisions for the members.

Meet on a continuing basis

“Continuing basis” means that a club intends to carry on as a functioning unit indefinitely. The club may determine for itself the frequency and timing of its meetings.

Open to any youth eligible for 4-H membership, regardless of race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, disability, ancestry, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital or parental status

All 4-H clubs must comply with federal and state nondiscrimination laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

WHAT ARE CLUB OFFICERS?

Election of club officers gives the members an opportunity to develop leadership skills and responsibility. Suggested 4-H Club Officers are:

President
Vice-President
Secretary/Treasurer
Reporter

Other possible officers are Historian, Recreation Leader, and Flag/Pledge Leader.

WHAT ARE THE PARTS OF A 4-H MEETING?

Business, education and recreation are the three main parts of a well-planned 4-H Club Meeting.

Business

The 4-H club's business session is when members brainstorm and make decisions regarding their club. This includes the activities and events they plan to conduct, leadership for the club, and other items. This is a powerful experience for democracy in action. Decisions can be made in a variety of ways including parliamentary procedure, building consensus, or other strategies. The members should all agree on how decisions will be made.

Education

During the educational program, members learn about their communities, observe the projects that other members are taking, and have other experiences that help them become better citizens and people. This is the time for members to give demonstrations and illustrated talks, or work on the actual “doing” of their projects. Other educational activities might include a guest speaker, community service, DVD/video, or educational tour.

Recreation

Recreation should be a part of every meeting as it provides cooperation and encourages interaction with all age groups. Recreation can include icebreakers, charades, relays, team building games, parties, hikes, music, and nutritious snacks. The 4-H club members will enjoy opportunities for field trips, picnics, tours and other special activities. These can occasionally take the place of a traditional meeting.

The 4-H club meeting format is flexible and can look however the club would like, but balancing these three areas will be the key to having fun, successful 4-H meetings.

WHAT IS THE ORDER OF 4-H BUSINESS MEETINGS?

Call to Order/Agenda.....	President
American Pledge.....	4-H Member
4-H Pledge.....	4-H Member
Thought for the Day.....	4-H Member
Call for Minutes.....	President
Reading of Minutes.....	Secretary
Approval of Minutes.....	President
Call for Treasurer's Report.....	President
Treasurer's Report.....	Treasurer
Approval of Treasurer's Report.....	President
Introduction of Visitors.....	Vice-President
Call for Roll Call.....	President
Roll Call.....	Secretary
Committee Reports.....	Committee Chairmen
Approval of Committee Reports.....	President
Old Business.....	President
New Business.....	President
Announcements.....	President and County Council Representative

Educational Program
Recreational Program

WHAT IS POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT?

Youth development has been defined as an ongoing process through which young people attempt to meet their needs and develop the competencies perceived as necessary for survival and transition into adulthood. Positive youth development focuses on providing the essential elements for youth to become caring, capable and competent adults. It occurs by providing intentional opportunities, choices, relationships and support.

WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT?

The four essential elements of belonging, mastery, independence and generosity form the foundation of positive youth development.

Belonging

Youth need to know they are accepted by others and experience a sense of connection to others in a group. Research shows that it is important for youth to have opportunities for long-term, consistent relationships with adults other than their parents. A 4-H club fosters belonging by encouraging youth to form friendships with peers and bond with caring adults who encourage and help them grow in positive ways. 4-H also allows youth to be part of a supportive environment where collaborative learning is encouraged.

In the 4-H club:

Do youth participate equally with adults in planning, implementing and evaluating club activities?

Is time provided for both youth and adults to interact and have fun together?

Mastery

Youth experience mastery when they develop skills, knowledge and attitudes that enable them to succeed. To develop their self-confidence, young people need to believe that they are capable and experience success at solving problems. Youth need safe settings for making mistakes, taking risks, and focusing on self-improvement. A 4-H club fosters mastery by providing many opportunities for project work, evaluation and feedback. Through experiential education, youth explore new skills in topics of interest to them and learn how to transfer those skills to other life situations.

In the 4-H club:

Do members have the opportunity to practice skills until they master them?

Do members receive feedback and recognition for their accomplishments?

Independence

Youth need to know they are able to influence people and events through decision-making and action. Independence refers to an adolescent's growing ability to think, feel, make decisions, and act on her or his own. By gaining a sense of independence, youth develop personal responsibility and self-discipline. A 4-H club fosters independence by providing youth with decision-making and leadership experiences including serving as a club officer, mentor, teacher, committee chair, ambassador, and youth leader.

In the 4-H club:

Are youth challenged to attempt new things or learn new skills?

Do members have the opportunity to apply what they've learned in 4-H to their everyday lives?

Generosity

Young people need to feel their lives have meaning and purpose. They need opportunities to connect to their communities and give back to others. As part of this process, they gain an understanding of others' needs and learn how to respond to these needs. Generosity

may also include the development of values such as compassion and tolerance for diversity. A 4-H club fosters generosity by encouraging members to use their skills to improve others' lives by mentoring younger members, identifying community needs, and participating in service projects. 4-H experiences should also teach youth to accept differences, resolve conflict, and empathize with others.

In the 4-H club:

Do youth and adults work together to practice service to others?
Are members recognized for their community service contributions?

WHAT ARE 4-H LIFESKILLS?

A life skill is "an ability that is necessary and useful throughout life". By planning programs with youth, you share the leadership role and help them develop the life skills they will need in their adult years. Here are some life skills that youth can learn through 4-H:

Citizenship Skills

... are developed as young people learn how government works, engage in community service, and connect to issues in their communities.

Leadership Skills

... enable youth to lead and build teams, develop motivation, set group goals, gain respect, and accommodate different styles.

Relationship Skills

... help youth interact more comfortably, accept responsibility, respect diversity, trust themselves and others, resolve conflict, and understand their strengths and limitations.

Communication Skills

... enable youth to exchange ideas and information clearly and minimize confusion for themselves and others.

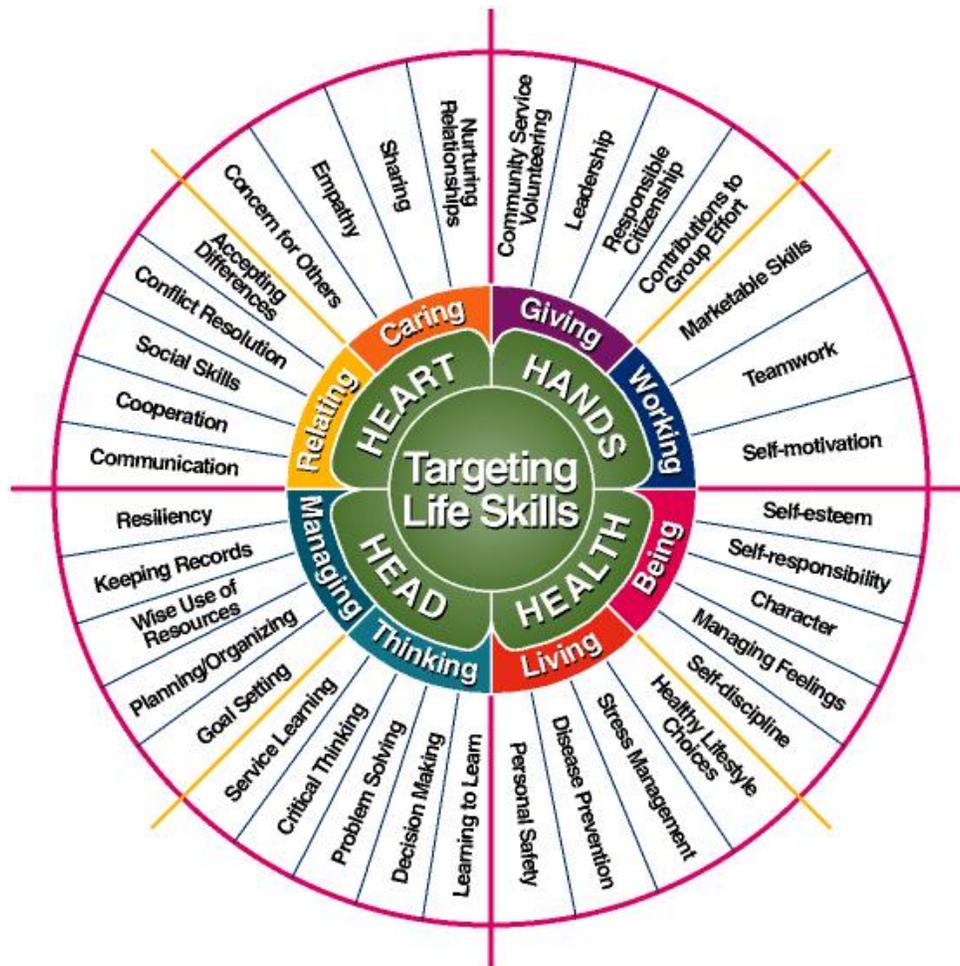
Planning and Organizing Skills

... help youth set goals, manage time, build teams, delegate tasks, and work efficiently without supervision.

Decision-Making Skills

... are developed as youth recognize how personal values influence decisions, find and use accurate information, identify and weigh alternatives, select and follow through on a course of action, and evaluate those decisions.

A 4-H volunteer leader's role is to help youth design and participate in experiences that build a variety of life skills and encourage overall positive development.



WHAT IS EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING?

Everyone has a preferred learning style or way of learning. Some learn best by listening, some by reading or observing, and some by hands-on experiences. Regardless of one's preferred learning style, experiential learning is an effective approach in helping 4-H members understand and apply new knowledge, attitudes and skills. The experiential learning process is a five-step method that engages members in an activity, and then guides them to reflect and apply what they have learned. You, the volunteer leader, play a crucial role in guiding members through the five steps in the learning process.

Step 1: Experience: Do It

The first step in the process is experiencing. This involves 4-H members doing an activity with minimal guidance from an adult. They might be creating an exhibit, playing a game, working on a project, or assuming a leadership responsibility. Often volunteer leaders and teachers spend too much time on the experiencing step and not enough time on the other four steps.

Step 2: Share: What happened?

Step two begins the reflecting part of the learning process. This purpose of this step is to have members share their feelings, observations, and reactions to the learning activity just completed. Your role is that of facilitator drawing information out of the participants.

You can ask them questions like, “What did you see happening?” or “What were you thinking and feeling during the activity?” or “What was new or different in this activity?” or even “Tell me what you did”.

Step 3: Process: What's Important?

In this step, try to focus the members' attention on what was most important about the experience. Draw out the common theme(s) and patterns of behavior your members observed.

For this step you might ask questions such as “What did you learn about yourself by doing this activity?” or “How did the group decide to ____?” or “What problems came up as you were going through this activity?” or “Did you notice any patterns or actions in common among your group members?”

Step 4: Generalize: So What?

With this step we move from reflection to application. What can we take from this learning activity and apply to other situations? Here, your challenge is to get your members to relate their observations to the outside world.

Good questions to ask for this step are: “What did you learn today that you could apply to other areas of your life?” or “How can you use what you've learned today at home or school?” or “In what other situations have you seen similar reactions or results?”

Step 5: Apply: Now What?

The final step is really two steps in one. The first part is clarifying how member can use what they've learned in other situations; the second part pertaining to the goals they make to use what they've learned.

The best way to be sure members understand and can use what they've learned is to have them tell you. Have them answer the questions, “How do you plan to use what you've learned today?” or “What have you learned that you will apply to other situations?”

You can strengthen the 4-H members' commitment by having them record their plans for what they have learned. Research tells us that learners are more likely to use what they've learned by making a “contract” to do so within a specific period of time. The contract can be oral, in which members say out loud what they will do and when. Or, you can have them write it down and share it with a partner, the group, or with you. If you want to make sure they follow through, collect their written plans and share a verbal or written reminder with them later.

