



# Welcome to 4-H!



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

We're pleased you joined 4-H! 4-H clubs are for all boys and girls, ages 5-19, wherever they live. Children, ages 5-8, can be 4-H Cloverbud members. Youth, ages 9-19, can be standard 4-H club members and enroll in many different 4-H projects. In a standard 4-H club, members choose projects that interest them. This guide is especially for new standard 4-H club members and their parents. 4-H is a family affair that includes learning *and* fun.

### What a New 4-H Member Needs to Know

#### What is 4-H?

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

#### What is a 4-H project?

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

#### Some facts about 4-H

- 4-H Emblem - A green four-leaf clover, with a white 'H' on each leaflet
- 4-H Colors - Green and White
- 4-H Pledge (Members say it while saluting the 4-H flag)

I Pledge

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

- 4-H Motto - To Make the Best Better
- 4-H Slogan - Learn by Doing
- 4-H is worldwide with about 10 million members!

My club name is \_\_\_\_\_

It meets \_\_\_\_\_

My club leaders are \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Members of my 4-H club are:

Name	Phone
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



# A 4-H Club Member's Responsibilities

## Tips to Help Make You and Your Club Successful



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

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

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

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

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

- 8. Know how to run a good meeting.** "Parliamentary procedure" is used to make sure that:
  - One thing at a time is discussed
  - Courtesy is given to everyone
  - Rules of the majority are followed
  - Rights of the minority are protected

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

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

- 10. Give a public presentation.**

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

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

# What Parents of New 4-H Members Need to Know

## The Mission of 4-H

4-H is a community of young people across America who are learning leadership, citizenship, and life skills. The South Carolina 4-H Youth Development Program uses a learn-by-doing approach, the involvement of caring adults, and the knowledge and resources of Clemson University and the land grant university system to empower youth to become healthy, productive, and contributing members of society.

## How a 4-H club works

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

In a **standard 4-H club**, members (ages 9-19) choose to work on at least one project in-depth. A project may be a topic like geology, photography, small animals, food and nutrition, or bicycling. It can be almost any subject that the club agrees to learn. Typically, a club will concentrate on one or two projects. Completed projects may be exhibited at the County Fair or similar 4-H event. They are judged and awards are given for quality work. **4-H Cloverbud clubs** provide an introduction to 4-H and a way for younger members (ages 5-8) to explore several projects. The Cloverbud experience is designed to be non-competitive. Ages for 4-H participation are determined as of January 1 of the current 4-H year, which spans from September through August.

## How to get your child signed up in 4-H

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

## Where to get help

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

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

## Helping your child become involved in 4-H

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

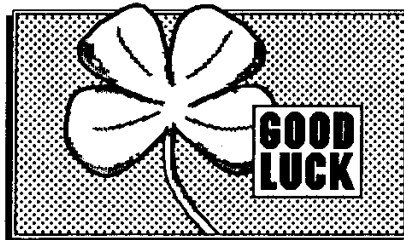
- **Public Presentations** - a great way to learn how to speak before a group without being afraid. Besides giving a presentation at the club level, some counties hold 4-H public speaking contests so members can be recognized for their efforts.
- **4-H Summer Camp** - an overnight experience of fun, friends, and learning in the great outdoors.
- **County Fair** - many counties have an annual fair that provides an opportunity for 4-H members to exhibit their completed 4-H projects each year.

## A parent's role in 4-H

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

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

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



...from your new friends in 4-H

Written by: Keith G. Diem, Ph. D., 1991. Revised 2005.  
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