



# Making the Best Better

4-H Center for Youth Development

## Volunteer Orientation

### Print Version

(Size 12 font, most photos left out in order to decrease file size)

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## Table of Contents

<b>Overview .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Unit 1 – History .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Unit 2 – Youth Development and Essential Elements .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Unit 3 – Learning Life and Project Skills through Experiential Learning .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Unit 4 - Ages and Stages .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Unit 5 – Competition.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Unit 6 – Character .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Unit 7 - Safety (Creating Safe Environments).....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Closing Remarks and Credits.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Online Feedback Form Information .....</b>	<b>27</b>

## Overview

### **Why does 4-H require volunteers to participate in this orientation?**

- Volunteers deserve to be well prepared
- We value you and the work that you do for 4-H
- Our children and youth are worth our time in training
- Trained volunteers are essential to a quality 4-H program
- We want to lay a foundation for success in your 4-H work with young people.

Many seasoned volunteers may ask, "Why do I have to take this orientation?" We believe that it is the right thing to do. We ask a lot of 4-H volunteers. We want to provide as much training as possible so Missouri's youth have the best possible 4-H experience.

### **What is in the orientation?**

There are seven (7) units covering specific topics. Please read them in order, 1-7.

#### **Unit 1 - History**

Understanding where we have been and how that helps shape where we are going will lay the foundation for "What the Missouri 4-H Program Is all About." The basic history and philosophy of the Missouri 4-H program are explained.

#### **Unit 2 – Youth Development and Essential Elements**

The principles and philosophies of positive youth development, including the four essential elements found in quality 4-H youth development programs, are highlighted.

#### **Unit 3 – Learning Life and Project Skills through Experiential Learning**

In 4-H, we believe young people learn by doing. Children and youth learn two related but separate skill sets in 4-H: project skills and life skills. By doing fun 4-H projects under the guidance of a volunteer, youth are also learning important skills that are transferrable to other areas of life.

#### **Unit 4 - Ages and Stages**

You work on the front lines with children and youth from many different age groups - and often at the same time! We'll show you the basic characteristics of the various age groups to help make your job of working with young people easier.

#### **Unit 5 - Competition**

4-H holds many competitive events. The Missouri 4-H philosophy regarding competition will be addressed in this unit.

#### **Unit 6 - Character**

Character development is a key component of 4-H programming. Character Counts, as part of 4-H programming, is explained in this unit.

#### **Unit 7 - Safety (Creating Safe Environments)**

This final learning unit includes with basic steps to insure the safety of everyone.

### **Closing Remarks and Credits**

This section includes Volunteer Wisdom: A Summary, credits and instructions for the required feedback form.

### **Required Feedback Form**

The online feedback form is required for volunteers participating in the online or print volunteer orientation. You will need to return to the Online Volunteer Training site at <http://blackboard.missouri.edu/>, login and select the Required Feedback Form link on the left of the screen. All feedback is confidential and will be used to improve the 4-H volunteer program.

Volunteers wishing to complete a print version of the Feedback Form should obtain a copy from the local 4-H faculty or staff.

### **Optional Resources**

To reinforce your learning experience and make the course more enjoyable, Optional Resources are provided online. They include:

- Downloadable documents
- Web links
- Flash based games (crosswords, flash cards)
- Audio/video links

**Technical Tips** provides helpful information related to the computer connection needs of online orientation participants.

## Unit 1: History

Understanding where we have been and how that helps shape where we are going will lay the foundation for "What 4-H is all about." The basic history and philosophy of the Missouri 4-H program is covered in this unit.

### Learning objectives:

1. You will understand the development of America's land grant universities and their connection to community-based education.
2. You will understand 4-H and how it fits into the University of Missouri system.
3. You will be able to identify the main partners of the 4-H organization.
4. You will understand the proper use of the Clover and who has authority over how the Clover is used.

### In the beginning: educators attempt to extend the knowledge

Around 1904, university educators began to ask themselves, "How does our research help farmers in the rural areas?" Many educators were already reaching and teaching citizens the latest corn growing techniques. Some farmers were not open to these new ideas – especially from university staff they did not know. This is why many university educators focused on teaching the youth. Youth were more than willing to participate in school-based Corn Clubs for boys and Canning Clubs for girls. Did you know that by 1912, 73,000 boys and 23,000 girls were already enrolled in club work nationwide? The youth shared what they had learned with their parents. Through this effort, the latest techniques and technology began to move from campus labs to counties. Missouri's first recorded Corn Club was organized in Iron County in 1914.

### Key dates and events:

Late 1850's - few colleges in our country

1862 - President Lincoln signed the Morrill Act to grant land to every state to create "land grant" universities to teach low income citizens practical education (e.g., agriculture and home economics).

1870 - University of Missouri (MU) awarded land-grant university status

1890 - Morrill Act Amendment added historically Black colleges such as Lincoln University (LU) in Jefferson City

1866 - Lincoln Institute officially founded by members of the 62nd and 65th United States Colored Infantry

University educators became key agents in extending the knowledge of the university. In 1914, the Smith-Lever Act formalized and connected this outreach service as a core mission of all land grant universities. The outreach education later became known as University Extension. Today, county Extension offices serve as the local, front door to the University of Missouri system.

## **From Corn Clubs to 4-H: the early days of youth development**

Because the Corn Clubs for boys and the Canning Clubs for girls had successfully taught adults through teaching their youth, these clubs were included in University Extension. No one individual is credited with originating the 4-H program but rather the program was founded through collective efforts of several individuals over the course of a few years.

## **Head, Heart, Hands and Hustle?**

Around 1908, the first emblem used nationally was designed by O.H. Benson as a three-leaf clover. It stood for head, heart, and hands. In 1911, Benson suggested that the fourth H should be hustle, and the 4-H design was adopted. Later O.B. Martin suggested that health replace hustle. There have been several changes to the Clover that will be described later in this unit, but the 4-H emblem still stands for head, heart, hands, and health.

As a highly recognized image, the 4-H Name and Emblem has been given a federal mark in the same category as the Presidential Seal and the Olympic emblem. This federal protection is greater than trademark or copyright protection. Our U.S. Congress charges the Secretary of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) to oversee the use of the 4-H Name and Emblem. If you look closely at an official 4-H clover below, you will see the congressional code 18 U.S.C. 707 to the right of the base of the stem or below the lower right leaf. As you might guess, there are rules regarding the use and display of the 4-H clover. 4-H clubs in Missouri must submit an annual 4-H Name and Emblem Request Form Y633 in order to use and display the 4-H Name and Emblem. With such a long history and prestigious status, today's youth and adult 4-H leaders can be proud to wear the 4-H Clover.

4-H partners and decision-making

Through the years the 4-H program has developed into a huge organization reaching six million people worldwide each year. So who makes up today's complex 4-H program?

- It all starts at the **local** level, where 4-H involves volunteers, parents, youth, staff, 4-H Councils, county and regional Extension Councils.
- On the **state** level, 4-H includes individuals such as the state program leader, state specialists, vice-provost of Extension, university president, legislators and the Missouri 4-H Foundation.
- At the **national** level, 4-H involves the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), National 4-H Council and the United States Congress.
- It also involves other partners who impact the 4-H program such as USDA's Children, Youth and Families at Risk Initiative.

When you serve as a 4-H volunteer you are acting on behalf of the University of Missouri and, by extension, the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The University supports your efforts as long as you adhere to what is appropriate to support the program. Decisions governing the program are made by those employed by the University. Making a decision in 4-H is often like making a

decision as a family. Patience and time are required and sometimes the outcome does not make everyone happy.

Are you thinking, "This family has a lot of rules!" Actually, county 4-H programs have lots of flexibility in designing the program. Those decisions are made through the youth development staff, the County 4-H Council, the County Extension Council, and the youth themselves. Local due dates, county scholarships, and county fair requirements are examples of some of the policies established locally.

### **Is there any benefit to being part of this big 4-H family?**

4-H began primarily as a youth education program. That is still true today! 4-H offers youth over 100 project areas from which to choose as well as many diverse campus based conferences, contests and camps such as Teen Conference, Camp Food and Fitness, Fashion Revue, Architectural and Interior Design Workshop and more. Educators on both the University of Missouri (MU) and Lincoln University campuses teach the newest technology and techniques during workshops at these and other events to thousands of 4-H members each year. Through the experiences on campus, many youth choose to attend college at MU where Mizzou Collegiate 4-H, a college-level 4-H group, thrives.

### **4-H looks different**

Just as families differ, the 4-H program can look different according to the location. Regardless of the delivery format, all 4-H programs should include experiential learning and the four essentials of youth development that will be described in Unit 2: mastery, belonging, generosity and independence. Some of Missouri's 4-H programs include:

- Community clubs (multi-project clubs)
- Operation Military Kids for children of military parents
- Home School Clubs
- Choices 4-H Program for special needs children in St Louis
- Afterschool 4-H programs throughout the state
- 4-H LIFE program for children of offenders
- Special interest or single project clubs
- Competitive Events such as fairs and judging
- Non-Competitive Events such as dances and lock-ins

Regardless of how today's 4-H program looks or where it meets, 4-H still focuses on the youth being served and what will benefit them.

## **Unit 2: Youth Development and Essential Elements**

This unit explains the principles and philosophies of positive youth development, including the four essential elements found in quality 4-H youth development programs.

### **Learning objectives:**

1. You will understand the Positive Youth Development Model as the foundation for all 4-H programs.
2. You will learn the four essential elements for positive youth development.

### **Preview question:**

1. What can 4-H leaders do to ensure that the four essential elements are part of every 4-H program?

### **Positive Youth Development Model**

4-H is designed to support the positive and successful development of all youth. The Positive Youth Development Model is the foundation for all 4-H programs.

Youth development is the natural process of developing one's abilities. As youth take part in 4-H programs, positive youth development occurs as the youth experience positive results because they are provided opportunities, healthy relationships and strong support. 4-H programs help youth gain the life skills they need to succeed as adolescents and adults. The 4-H program uses the positive youth development model because it is:

- A continuous process, not a “special program.”
- For all youth, not just those who are labeled “at risk” (getting their basic needs met).
- Committed to involving youth in the process.
- Based on youth needs and interests rather than adult needs.
- A series of meaningful experiences, not a one time fix.

Research shows that youth who are developing skills and competencies are less likely to develop at-risk behaviors such as using drugs or joining gangs.

### **Four Essential Elements**

According to research accumulated by the National 4-H Council, there are four (4) essential elements that youth need in order to grow and thrive. The four essential elements are:

#### **1. Independence**

Youth need to see themselves as active participants in their future and able to determine what they will become. They need to understand that when they have independence, they must also take responsibility for their decisions and actions.

4-H helps young people recognize the connection between independence and responsibility. In a successful 4-H club, youth can learn to set priorities as they develop their club program. They can also learn to manage their time so that they can choose among many worthwhile opportunities.

## **2. Belonging**

Youth have a strong need to be a part of a safe group of friends who accept them for who they are. Youth also need at least one positive relationship with a caring adult. The need to belong is so strong that if youth don't have access to positive groups, they will join less desirable ones such as gangs.

Positive groups like 4-H help fulfill this need to belong. Volunteer leaders and club members provide this fellowship by showing interest in, actively listening to and encouraging 4-H youth.

## **3. Generosity**

Youth need to feel that their lives have meaning and purpose. They need opportunities to connect to their communities and learn how to give back to others. Service builds bonds between youth and the community, and doing something valued by others helps youth feel worthy and competent.

By taking part in 4-H community service and citizenship activities, youth can connect with and serve their communities. 4-H helps youth develop concern for others and take action to demonstrate that concern.

## **4. Mastery**

Youth need to feel they are capable and successful. Mastery means that youth develop skills, knowledge, and attitudes followed by the competent demonstration of these skills and knowledge. When young people realize they are capable, they develop self confidence and a sense that they matter.

4-H youth develop mastery through the Experiential Learning Process. In this process, they experience, share what happened, process what was important, generalize the experience to the real world and apply what was learned to other situations. They develop a sense of mastery or achievement through 4-H project work such as building a birdhouse, preparing a meal or participating in a positive evaluation experience.

Through projects and activities, youth master skills to make positive career and life choices. Youth need to explore many topics thoroughly to be able to pursue their own interests. 4-H strives to create opportunities for youth to experience a sense of belonging, develop independence, and follow their interests to levels of mastery. In addition, the 4-H program encourages both youth and adults to value and practice service to others. Volunteers provide safe and supportive boundaries for positive youth development to occur.

### Unit 3: Learning Life and Project Skills through Experiential Learning

This unit explains why 4-H believes young people learn by doing. This unit also outlines the importance of children and youth learning two related but separate skill sets in 4-H: project skills and life skills. By doing fun 4-H projects under the guidance of a volunteer, youth are also learning important skills that are transferrable to other areas of life.

#### Learning objectives:

1. You will learn the components of the experiential learning process.
2. You will learn the difference between project and life skills.

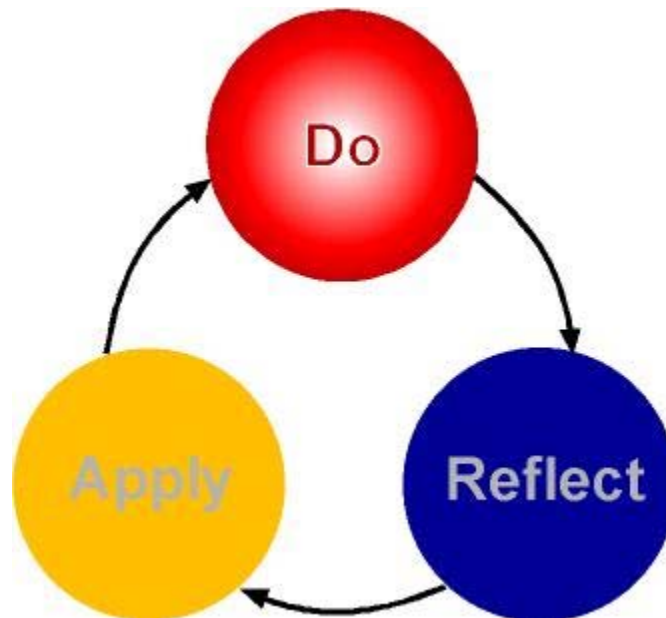
#### Preview questions:

1. What project skills do you teach 4-H members in project meetings?
2. What are some examples of life skills?
3. Can you name a life skill that can be learned and practiced regardless of the 4-H project?
4. How can we help youth process and apply real life learning when a 4-H project doesn't turn out perfect?

#### Experiential Learning

In 4-H, young people learn by doing something such as learning how to use a saw and cut a straight line or making a boot jack or birdhouse. Youth develop skills through 4-H projects, demonstrations or activities. Learning continues beyond the actual project skills because 4-H uses a deliberate process that allows youth to learn through a "doing" experience that is then followed by leader led discussion. This method of Do, Reflect and Apply is referred to as the Experiential Learning Model (Kolb, 1984).

Source: Missouri 4-H website (2007)



4-H Youth Development expanded this model to include five steps (listed as a - e below) to teach life skills. The sequential steps of the model help youth identify what they have learned from a 4-H experience and to apply that learning to other experiences or situations. The model requires that the volunteer leader be very clear about the targeted skill or concept. The follow up processing questions are not closed ended questions that can be answered with a pat yes or no response. Instead, the questions are open ended and shared to support the learning goals. (Remember the 4-H curricula authors have already created processing questions for you!)

## **DO**

A. Experience or do the activity; perform

- Youth do their projects
- Leaders watch as youth discover

## **REFLECT**

B. Share reactions, observations

- What did you do?
- What happened?
- What did it feel like to do (whatever)?
- How did you share your project with others?

C. Process and analyze the experience:

- Identify the most important thing learned.
- What did you learn about yourself by doing this project?

## **APPLY**

D. Generalize to connect the experience to real-world examples

- Now what?
- This step emphasizes the life skill practiced rather than the subject matter skill.
- This is a prime teachable moment when projects don't turn out exactly as planned ("What would you do differently the next time you work on this type project?")

E. Apply what was learned to a similar or different situation; practice

- How can you use what you learned in other situation?
- What did the experience mean to you personally?
- To your everyday life?
- Where have you faced similar challenges?

## **Volunteers and youth benefit from the experiential learning process**

Both volunteer leaders and youth benefit by using the experiential learning process. Leaders are able to assess the youth's knowledge and experience of a subject and build upon it. Leaders can also serve as a coach and perhaps learn cooperatively with the youth. Youth, regardless of their learning style, learn from each other by sharing knowledge and skills, working together, sharing information and evaluating themselves and others. Youth take responsibility for their own learning and relate the experiences to their own lives.

Note the experiential learning model begins with an experience. Action! This immediately focuses the attention on the youth learner rather than the adult project leader. The goal is for the youth to experience the activity in order to develop the targeted skills. Effective leaders always provide a safe setting and guidance throughout the experience but are not overly directive. In summary, they choose to be a "guide on the side, not the sage on a stage."

### **Building Experiential Learning into 4-H Project Work**

Many types of activities can be used to provide a learning experience, including 4-H project work. Project work appeals to youth because they have many projects from which to choose: beef, clothing, foods, arts and crafts, shooting sports, woodworking, electricity and many more. Discovering and exploring 4-H project work is the "hook" to get youth involved in 4-H. While they are having fun, they learn. As youth learn, they are acquiring two sets of skills: project skills and life skills.

### **Project Skills**

To complete a project item or exhibit, 4-H members learn a multitude of skills related to the subject matter of the project. For example, skills learned through a woodworking project would be measuring, sawing a straight line, sanding and applying a finish. In a clothing project, skills acquired would be learning to lay out then cut out a pattern, thread the sewing machine and make a buttonhole.

### **4-H Curricula: An Existing Tool to Help Volunteers Build Project and Life Skills**

It is important that project leaders teach and transfer the most current information and methods to the youth during project meetings. This can be accomplished by using research based, jury-approved 4-H curricula that includes youth manuals and adult leader guides. All curricula have step-by-step instructions on how to use the materials, general information on the project, procedures for conducting each activity, questions to process each experience, and suggestions for related activities. Developmental outcomes and learning indicators are included in addition to the life skill being targeted. The 4-H curricula are like an intricate woven tapestry that has been created by a team of national university faculty and youth development specialists. Together, these experts have created a vast amount of curricula that includes all the necessary threads for a high quality 4-H project experience:

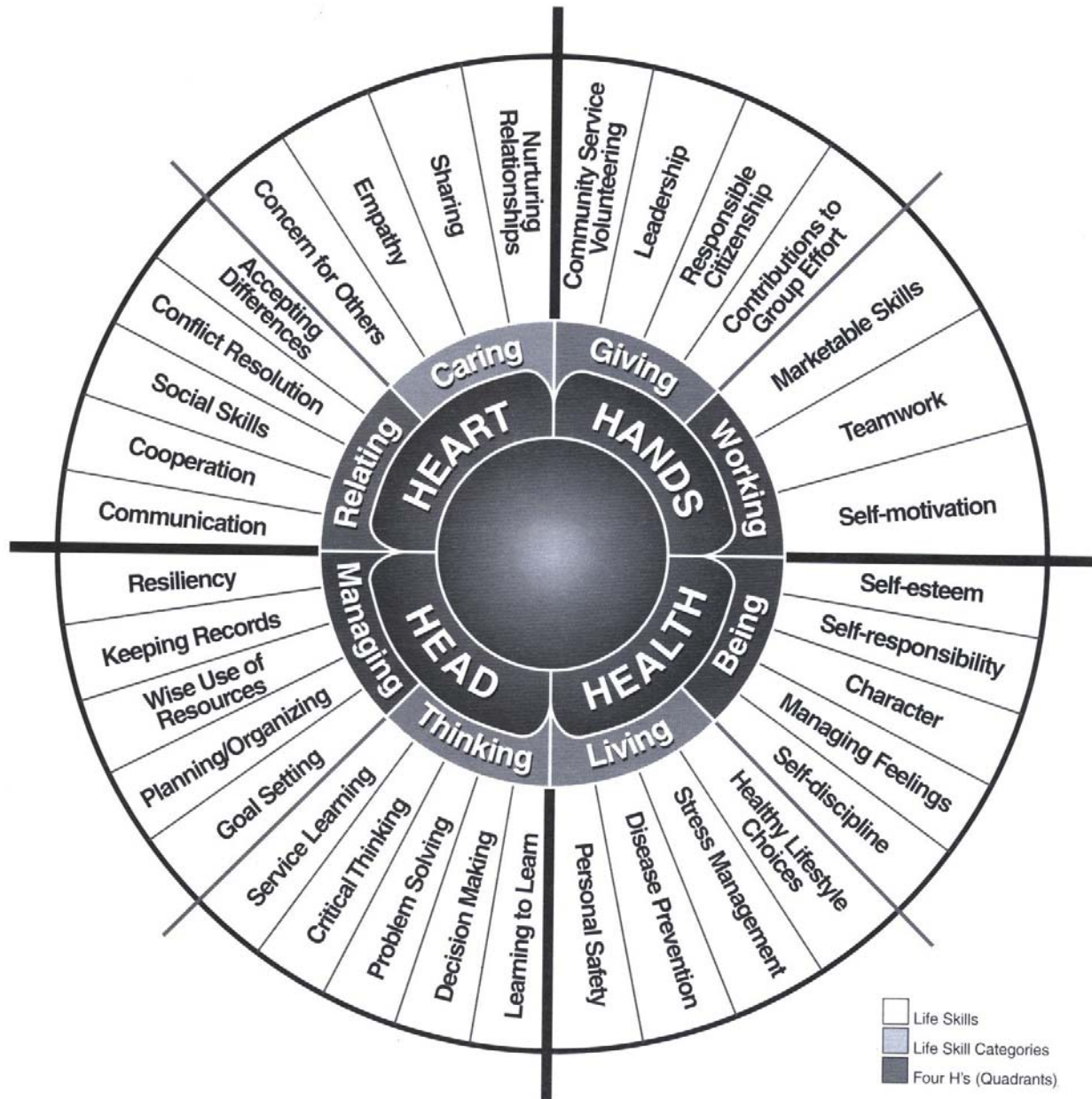
- the latest research-based knowledge on the subject
- hands on activities that are developmentally appropriate (Unit 4)
- do-reflect-apply questions
- ideas for related community service activities (generosity, Unit 2)
- extended learning suggestions (mastery, Unit 2)

### **Life Skills**

When youth participate in a project, activity, or club meeting, they develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are needed for life long success—no matter what job, career, or interest. For example, leadership in a 4-H club and giving presentations can lead toward mastery in communication, a life skill. Over the years, there have been thousands of 4-H members who have acknowledged that their skill of communication was acquired as a result of their participation in 4-H projects and exhibits. Communication is one of the most important life

skills youth learn in 4-H. Did you know that some resources state that as many as 40 percent of American adults fear public speaking more than death?

Life skills are divided into five major categories: subject matter knowledge, self-awareness, decision-making, social interaction and physical skills. View Iowa State University's 4-H: Targeting Life Skills Model (Hendricks, 1996) below or log on at <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4H/lifeskills/previewwheel.html>.



## Unit 4: Ages and Stages

You work on the front lines with children and youth from many different age groups - and often at the same time! This unit describes the basic characteristics of the various age groups to help make your job of working with young people easier.

### Learning Objectives

1. You will understand how youth grow and develop at different ages and stages.
2. You will better understand how to prepare and plan 4-H activities and programs for youth in different age groups.

### Preview Questions

1. How do volunteers benefit from understanding how youth grow and develop at different ages and stages?
2. How do your 4-H members benefit from you understanding how youth grow and development at different ages and stages?

The Missouri 4-H Program serves all youth ages 5-18. Because this includes such a wide age range, it is important to note the differences between various age groups. How youth grow and develop at different ages is often referred to as Ages and Stages. Not all youth of the same age grow and develop at the same rate; however, the order of development is generally the same for all youth. For example, five-year-olds don't have the physical, cognitive and social/emotional ability to compete in a livestock contest but fourteen-year-olds probably do. Sixteen-year-olds have different social needs than ten-year-olds.

The challenge of planning successful 4-H activities becomes clear when 4-H leaders receive their youth club roster – typically representing several different age ranges! This unit focuses on the unique physical, cognitive, social and emotional development of youth within a similar age range. By understanding norms, volunteers will be better prepared to plan 4-H activities with children from these age groups: five to seven, eight to ten, eleven to thirteen and fourteen to eighteen.

### Young Childhood (5-7 Year Olds)

Missouri's Clover Kids program is designed for children under the age of eight. Clover Kids give this age group a variety of educational and recreational experiences in a non-competitive environment.

Children who are aged 5 to 7 are busy and fun. They are extremely concrete thinkers and process words literally. For example, a child may say, “My mommy said the moon was ‘full,’ so it must have a full tummy.” For this age group, 4-H volunteers may be more successful using these strategies:

- Give instructions that are simple and clear.
- Break tasks down into more manageable steps. For example, “We are going to make fruit salad. First, I want you to walk to the bathroom and wash your hands with soap and water. Then use a paper towel to dry off your hands”. Children aged 5 to 7 are not yet able to set

goals and carry out projects over a longer period of time. For this reason, Clover Kids do not participate in 4-H project work.

- Give rules to help this age understand new environments and expectations. Just because children are aware of rules does not mean that they will follow them! However, when they are following the rules, they quickly notice when others do not. That is why tattling is common at this age!
- Identify group rules such as "no talking when others are talking," "take turns," and so forth. Enforce the rules consistently.
- Appeal to children's curiosity and need to explore. Children have a natural joy of learning many different things. Clover Kids leaders can foster the joy of learning for this age group by having them experience science, arts/crafts, music, field trips, technology and more.
- Focus on doing. Children aged 5 to 7 are more interested in the process of making or doing something than they are with the end product. For example, children like the process of making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich more than eating it. They enjoy spreading peanut butter with a knife, experiencing the texture of the peanut butter and bread, and putting the sandwich together. Hands-on experiences for this age group are very important because they need to be doing whether it is making a snack, planting seeds, or playing games. Clover Kids should not have long periods of sitting and listening.
- Encourage cooperation, not competition. Children aged 5 to 7 simply are not ready cognitively, socially or emotionally for competition. They don't have the maturity to deal with winning and losing in a positive way. Children cannot separate who they are as a person from the results of winning or losing. In their concrete thinking, they say to themselves, "If I win, I am a winner. If I lose, I am a loser." Because self-worth can be damaged if they are put in competitive situations, Clover Kids are not allowed to compete. Instead, encourage cooperation and learning to get along with others.

Five- to seven-year-old children are still learning to control their bodies and themselves in group settings. 4-H leaders can avoid problems by providing hands-on activities and establishing clear behavior expectations that are child-friendly and engaging. Here are some simple rhyming phrases you can use to help guide behavior of groups of 5 to 7 year olds:

*"Dot, dot, not a lot"*

This helps children limit the use of glue during craft or messy cooking activities.

*"If you can hear my voice, clap your hands 3 times."*

This helps children focus their attention, quiet down, and make a smoother transition to the next activity.

*Leader says, "One two three, eyes on me." Children respond by saying, "One two, eyes on you."*

This phrase helps five- to seven-year-olds transition between activities and/or quiet down.

*"Shake out the wiggles."*

This helps children release energy so they can better focus on the activity at hand.

## **Middle Childhood (8-10 Year Olds)**

*A characteristic of the normal child is he doesn't act that way very often.*

*~Author Unknown*

4-H members aged 8 to 10 can begin to set goals and carry out projects over a longer period of time. The greater language ability allows children this age to express their thoughts and feelings. Arguments are more likely to be verbal than physical. Some general characteristics of this age group:

- Rules – Eight- to ten-year-olds are terrific at finding loop holes! Once they understand the rules, they begin to question them.
- Helping others - Eight- to ten-year-olds can help younger children understand and follow rules in club or project meetings.
- Friendships – Youth have a heightened need to form friendships and be part of a group. Forming and keeping friends requires very complex skills such as listening, supporting, communicating, and getting along with others. Youth aged 8 to 10 still need a lot of help in developing these skills. Remember that the social part of the 4-H program is just as important to foster as project work, community service, citizenship and character development. One strategy for building these skills is to encourage youth in this age group to be mentors or friends to younger children.
- Cooperative – Youth this age are generally cooperative and want to please adults. They are also easily motivated and eager to try new things.
- Same Sex Preferences – Eight- to ten-year-olds prefer to be with children of their own gender. Because they admire and imitate older boys and girls, this is a good age to have older, same sex club members help with projects and activities.

## **Early Adolescence (11-13 Year Olds)**

*We cannot always build the future for our youth but we can build our youth for the future.*

*~Franklin D. Roosevelt*

Youth aged 11 to 13, often called tweens, are moving toward more abstract thinking. They have better problem solving abilities, can imagine multiple possibilities and take on more responsibilities. The most effective 4-H volunteers provide this age group with plenty of opportunities for leadership and planning. Note that as these youth develop their cognitive and communication skills, they may argue more – mainly with parents!

Common characteristics of ages 11 - 13:

- Rules – Eleven- to-thirteen-year-olds now begin to test and break the rules.
- Friendships – “Fitting in” is very important. The “right” clothes and music is a big focus. Friendships and cliques form based on similar interests and values. Youth who do not have friends and positive groups are at risk for developing negative and anti-social behavior. 4-H provides youth with supportive and positive social opportunities. 4-H volunteers are key in helping shape a positive environment where youth feel accepted and appreciated.
- Self-consciousness – Eleven- to-thirteen-year-olds are generally self-conscious and may have difficulty in activities involving the opposite gender or older youth. They may also feel too

“cool” to be a part of experiences involving younger youth. Be sensitive to these age appropriate challenges.

- **Invincibility** – These youth often feel invincible, as though they will not experience the consequences of risk-taking behavior. For example, they may think, “If I sneak out of the house at night to hang out in the park with my friends, I won’t get hurt - even though others have been hurt there in the past.”
- **Imaginary Audience** – Youth at this age tend to fall into one of two categories. Some eleven-to-thirteen-year-olds think, “The world is a stage and I am the star.” Others tend to have ongoing stage fright and are extremely self-conscious. They truly believe, “Everybody notices everything about me from the way I dress, my body type, how my hair looks and whether I have a pimple.” Adolescents aren’t making up these feelings – they’re very real to them.
- **Risk Taking** - Youth this age often want to try new things and take risks. 4-H volunteers can help by being sensitive and encouraging. The 4-H program can also help counter risk-taking desires of some youth by offering more positive alternatives such as challenge activities. 4-H experiences such as club officers, Teen Conference, camps, junior council opportunities, and other fun educational/social events can help satisfy the need to try new things.
- **Relationship with Adults** – Youth are not as interested in pleasing adults as they were earlier. They are moving toward independence, often with one foot still in the childhood camp and one foot in the teenage camp. One day they may delight in playing with an old set of Polly Pocket dolls and, the next day, they are focused on the upcoming dance and what to wear. This behavior may seem erratic; however it is critical that adults treat them with dignity and respect during this time.
- **Attitude** – Sometimes young adolescents come to us with an attitude. They may roll their eyes, cross their arms and make negative comments. Although it is disrespectful, it is normal behavior. To establish what behavior is acceptable and to have a sense of humor is one way to deal with this age group. Adults' humor can change attitude and better engage youth.
- **Hormones** – These youth have increased hormonal activity that affects moods, bodies and physical images. Even an off-hand comment about their appearance may have a very negative effect.

### **Adolescence (14-18 Year Olds)**

*The best way to keep children at home is to make the home atmosphere pleasant and let the air out of the tires.*  
~Dorothy Parker

Adolescents 14 to 18, often called teens, are better able to think in abstract terms. They are better problem solvers and able to think in shades of gray rather than right or wrong, in or out, and all or nothing. Many begin to have their thoughts and opinions about politics, government, social issues and more.

Common characteristics of the fourteen- to eighteen-year-old age group:

- **Leadership** – Fourteen- to eighteen-year-olds see leadership as a skill to be mastered. Youth look for different opportunities to practice leadership. In a 4-H setting, for example, older youth can be given opportunities to plan and carry out activities for and with younger youth.

- Group and Individual Identify – Being part of a group is still important for these youth, but individual identity is becoming essential too. This age group is focused on who they are and how they connect or fit in with society. Youth have opportunities to learn more about themselves and the world around them through interactions with caring 4-H leaders.
- Same Sex Preferences - Mixed gender activities are interesting to this group. Leaders can encourage teens to plan mixed gender activities and group oriented projects.
- Self-exploration – Youth need opportunities to try new things and learn more about themselves. 4-H leaders need to promote new experiences such as 4-H trips, career exploration, etc. Many researchers believe that adolescence is a time of “storm and stress” with parents. Current research shows that conflict may arise over things like dress, curfew, body piercing, and music; however, core values such as education and religion are often shared between the parents and the youth.
- Future Oriented – Adolescents are sometimes viewed as self-focused and selfish. No wonder this age group is often focused on themselves given the many huge life decisions looming ahead of them such as “Am I going to college, workforce, or the military? What kind of relationships do I want outside of my family? or What will the world be like as I get older?” The decisions they are making will affect the rest of their lives!
- Missouri 4-H volunteers are in an ideal position to help youth explore these important life choices while also encouraging concern for others. 4-H leaders should also note that some youth at this age are overwhelmed with these decisions and may withdraw leading sometimes to depression or risky behavior. Your concern and support can make a difference.

## Unit 5: Competition

4-H holds many competitive events. The Missouri 4-H philosophy regarding competition will be addressed in this important unit.

### Learning objectives:

1. You will understand the historical significance of competition in 4-H.
2. You will understand the Ends Focused and Mastery Focused approaches to competition.
3. You will explore strategies to help youth develop mastery skills.

### Preview questions:

1. In the early years of Extension, what audience was identified as reluctant to change agriculture practice? In society today, is there an audience that tends to be reluctant to change?
2. What is one difference between Ends Focused and Mastery Focused approaches to competition?
3. Name one strategy you can use to help a member be successful in their 4-H project work.
4. Name three life skills we hope participants will learn in competitive events.

Competition has been used as a teaching method since the early years of Extension. As described in Unit 1 (History), Extension agents set up corn growing competitions as a method to reach adults through their children who were enrolled in club work. Youth, who tended to be more open to change, used the new agricultural techniques to grow an acre of corn right next to their father's. As the yields were figured for the corn contest, the child's crop often out-yielded their father's. What was the result? Using this competitive approach, the new agriculture practices were often adopted by the adults. Do these competitive strategies apply to 4-H today? If you said "yes" to this question, you are right; however, the main purpose of 4-H is to help young people learn life skills, not win first place in project events.

One of the most frequent and most contentious discussions between Missouri 4-H program staff, volunteers and parents involves the topic of competition between individual youth trying to reach status as a 1st place winner. This module explains two distinct approaches to youth competition in 4-H: The Ends Focused approach and the Mastery Focused approach.

### Ends Focused Approach

In the Ends Focused approach to competition, members place more value on winning the prize than performing the task well. There are winners and losers often characterized by comparison with fellow members, clubs, or counties. In the Ends Focused approach, the goal would be for one member to win over another member. For example, one member's cake is made better than another or one lamb has a better showing than another. A group example would be a high school football team whose goal is to beat the town rival. While there is nothing wrong with wanting to win, it is possible for members to achieve the goal (to win) without even doing their best!

When winning or getting the award is the focus in competition and members lose, they may experience negative consequences. For example, they may feel undeserving and give themselves negative messages, leading to lower self-esteem.

### **The Mastery Focused Approach - a positive alternative!**

The alternative Mastery Focused approach helps make the best better. This approach is sometimes referred to as a task oriented approach, because it emphasizes learning to perform skills and giving 100 percent to the task at hand. Unlike the Ends Focused approach, goals are personal and not likely to include comparisons with others. Members compare their current performance to their own previous performances. Self-improvement is the targeted goal, and youth themselves are responsible for success or failure to achieve their goal. The Mastery Focused approach encourages youth and parents to focus on learning to perform skills to the best of one's ability. Winning is secondary.

There is no doubt that using the Mastery Focused approach in competitive 4-H events may be more difficult and even feel unnatural. Our society sends daily messages that emphasize winning at all costs. However, our approach to competition can change with insight and maturity. Vince Lombardi, one of the most successful coaches in the history of football, once said, "Winning isn't everything – it's the only thing." Mr. Lombardi later changed his widely quoted statement to, "Winning isn't everything - but striving to win is." We wholeheartedly support Mr. Lombardi's revised quote that encourages striving to win as a model. It is MASTERY that promotes positive life skills that last for a lifetime! Besides, most kids enjoy friendly competition.

A commonly stated example of the 4-H philosophy is, "A blue ribbon 4-H member with a red ribbon project is better than a red ribbon 4-H member with a blue ribbon project." Permit youth to determine their own involvement in age appropriate competition. Some members may practice their public speech or shooting their gun every day in preparation for the contest while others may be less intense with preparation. Some youth may choose not to compete at all. Preparation intensity should be the member's choice. If the youth becomes disappointed with the outcome of a contest, you have a teachable moment. Instead of saying, "I told you so," it is better to ask, "What would you have done differently?"

A staff member once heard a parent encourage their teen to warm up their horse in the arena before the show. The teen, who had been practicing outside in a round pen, responded, "The horse is ready." When the horse got in the arena, it spooked at a stream of light coming through the barn door. This was a teachable moment, and a wise parent might have asked, "What did you learn?" rather than saying, "I told you so."

### **Provide a variety of competitive choices.**

Most 4-H contests have built in competitive choices. If your activity does not have those choices, consider adding them so the youth have several options from which to choose in order to excel.

**Help youth choose responsibility.**

Youth can develop an attitude that they are individually responsible for their actions and have control over their views about competition.

**Additional tips:**

- Give feedback information to the youth in a one-to-one setting.
- Being a positive role model.
- Keeping expectations realistic, taking into account the child's total development (social, physical, cognitive and emotional).
- Focusing on development of individual skills and abilities, not final scores.
- Playing with, supporting, and assisting youth. Do not compete with them or through them.
- Discussing what was learned. Young people need and want specific feedback on their projects and exhibits. The recognition of their efforts in their project work gives immediate feedback and has reinforcement value.

Remember a time when your child came home from a competitive event that you were unable to attend. How many of us asked questions that encouraged Ends-Focused responses such as:

- "Did you win?"
- "What was the score?"
- "How did you place?"

**Tip:** Most of the questions above are examples of closed-ended questions, which encourage a short or single-word answer. An open-ended question encourages a full, meaningful answer using the youth's own knowledge and feelings. Open-ended questions also tend to be more objective and less leading than closed-ended questions.

- Open-ended questions typically begin with words such as "Why" and "How", or phrases such as "Tell me about...". Often they are not really a question, but a statement which intentionally asks for a response. "What ribbon did you get?"
- We should strive to ask questions that draw out Mastery Focused responses such as:
- "Did you meet your goals? How did you meet your goals?"
- "Tell me about what you learned?"
- "What was one thing you will always remember about the event?"
- "If there was one thing you would change about your preparation, what would it be and why?"

4-H strives to develop youth, not things. The Mastery Focused approach encourages development of youth. Asking a youth, "What goal did you accomplish?" can serve as both an ends and mastery of question.

Competitive events are part of our culture. There are teaching methods 4-H leaders can use to make the competitive experience developmentally valuable. Be positive and praise youth for participating. To participate for the love of the activity and to strive to win is more important than actually winning.

## Unit 6: Character

Character development is an integral component of 4-H programming. Character Counts is outlined for you in this learning unit.

### Learning Objectives:

1. You will understand character education as the framework for all 4-H programs.
2. You will review the Six Pillars of Character.

### Preview Questions:

1. Why is it important for Missouri 4-H to focus on making 4-H programs those of character?
2. Can you name the Six Pillars of Character?

Character education is a program anchor in Missouri because it is not a separate, stand alone program. Rather, it flows through everything we do – all projects, all events, everything. Being a person of good character is something we model, teach and talk about with 4-H youth. Our "Show Me Character" is based on the CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition's Six Pillars of Character, a project of the Josephson Institute of Ethics. Missouri 4-H faculty and staff, volunteers, and families are encouraged to display good character, not only while involved in 4-H programs, but as an essential part of daily living.

A person of character:

- Is a good person - someone to look up to and admire;
- Knows the difference between right and wrong and always tries to do what is right;
- Sets a good example;
- Makes the world a better place;
- Lives according to the "Six Pillars of Characters" - Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring and Citizenship.

### The Six Pillars of Character are:

#### Trustworthiness

Be honest • Don't deceive, cheat or steal • Be reliable — do what you say you'll do • Have the courage to do the right thing • Build a good reputation • Be loyal — stand by your family, friends and country

#### Respect

Treat others with respect; follow the Golden Rule • Be tolerant of differences • Use good manners, not bad language • Be considerate of the feelings of others • Don't threaten, hit or hurt anyone • Deal peacefully with anger, insults and disagreements

#### Responsibility

Do what you are supposed to do • Persevere: keep on trying! • Always do your best • Use self-control • Be self-disciplined • Think before you act — consider the consequences • Be accountable for your choices

**Caring**

Be kind • Be compassionate and show you care • Express gratitude • Forgive others • Help people in need

**Citizenship**

Do your share to make your school and community better • Cooperate • Get involved in community affairs • Stay informed; vote • Be a good neighbor • Obey laws and rules • Respect authority • Protect the environment

**Fairness**

Play by the rules • Take turns and share • Be open-minded; listen to others • Don't take advantage of others • Don't blame others carelessly • Caring • Be kind • Be compassionate and show you care • Express gratitude • Forgive others • Help people in need

## Unit 7: Safety

How do we define a successful event? One of the primary success criteria we use is that everyone is kept safe. Learning Unit 7 concludes basic steps to take to insure the safety of everyone.

### Learning Objectives:

1. You will understand that a 4-H volunteer's first concern must always be for the safety of the members.
2. You will learn the ways Missouri 4-H works to assure the safety of volunteers and youth.
3. You will become more aware of the importance of planning for safety at local 4-H events.

### Preview Questions:

1. Why is it important for 4-H to consider keeping volunteers and youth safe?
2. What are two ways Missouri 4-H plans for the safety of volunteers?

Providing everyone with a safe environment is Missouri's second program anchor.

Safe environments are created in 4-H in several ways:

- Annual volunteer application and screening process  
When volunteers take just a few minutes each year to complete the application and sign the commitment form, it helps to assure that 4-H members, as well as volunteers, are safe.
- Volunteer orientation  
Volunteers are required to participate in a one time volunteer orientation training. Beginning in 2009, the post card that volunteers receive will also indicate that they have completed this one-time volunteer orientation.
- Ongoing volunteer training  
We encourage 4-H volunteers to take advantage of training. Many county or regional 4-H programs offer a variety of trainings on different topics. Trainings provide opportunities to visit with other 4-H volunteers to find out what is helpful to them or how they have solved certain problems. One of the most beneficial 4-H volunteer training events is the North Central Region Volunteer Forum, an annual conference held in one of 12 Midwest states every fall. Workshops and presentations are planned specifically for 4-H volunteers and many are taught by volunteers.
- Medical/accident insurance  
Most counties purchase special insurance for all club members that is available for special events. The insurance is very inexpensive and provides great coverage in case someone is injured.
- Health consent form required for all events  
Some counties now ask that a health consent form be completed every year for each member and kept on file at the Extension center. State events also require that a health form be submitted per event.
- Parental permission  
Parental permission forms give 4-H and hospitals permission to treat their children, if necessary.
- Planning for the Unexpected  
Even though we do not anticipate anything unfortunate happening, it is important to have an

emergency plan in place in case of the unexpected. A written plan is always best. Take time to think through the possible risks and discuss with other adults what should happen in case of emergencies.

- Prior to a 4-H event or activity, consider the possible risks and plan ways to eliminate or lessen the risk. For example, if your club meets in a local school and there is a playground, what plans do you have for making sure members are safe on that playground? Ask yourself questions such as:
  - Are there adults assigned to the playground?
  - Are members allowed to play on the equipment?
  - If someone is hurt, who will provide medical attention?
  - Is there an adult assigned to make emergency phone calls or make trips to the emergency room?

Carrying out ALL the steps below is the best way to create a safe environment for adults and youth - regardless of the 4-H activity.

- Be sure there is a stocked first aid kit available and an adult who knows basic first aid.
- Have a severe weather plan for Missouri conditions such as tornado, fire and lightning.
- Be sure there are enough adults to carry on with a project meeting, club meeting or activity in the event that one adult needs to leave the premises for some reason.
- Always think safety first and encourage members to do the same. Consider spending the first few minutes of your next 4-H meeting talking about the safety issues related to the day's activities at project meetings. Is it possible to involve youth in assembling a first aid kit at an upcoming 4-H meeting?

## Closing Remarks and Credits

### Volunteer Wisdom: A Summary

Over the years seasoned volunteers have told us that success depends on a volunteer's ability to:

- Motivate young people.  
Youth vote with their feet. If they don't enjoy what they are doing, they will simply stop attending 4-H events.
- Build on existing knowledge and skills.  
If you lack skills in a particular project area, it does not mean that you cannot be successful - it just may take more time to prepare for your project meetings. Learning with youth can be rewarding and effective.

You can reinforce what you know about the Missouri 4-H program and youth development by exploring the online Volunteer Orientation optional resources and looking through the Missouri 4-H website <http://4h.missouri.edu/>. You can also visit, call or stop by your local Extension center for more helpful information and assistance.

- Be prepared.
- Read the county 4-H newsletter each month to learn about important dates, deadlines for events and activities and helpful tips. Make sure you have needed equipment and materials.
- Invite others to help.
- Do not try to do too much or do it all alone. The best way to recruit a parent helper with an activity is to ask in person.
- Get started!

All of us expect to do something when we volunteer; however, we all know it is easy to put things off. So, don't wait! Go out there and get started making a positive difference in the lives of youth.

In Missouri 4-H, we believe building youth is more important than building a project. The learning and development that takes place is more important than the final product. Your commitment to serve as a trained and recognized 4-H volunteer is the heart of the Missouri 4-H program. All of the 4-H Center for Youth Development faculty and staff thank you for helping us build stronger youth.

## **Congratulations! You are at the End of the Volunteer Orientation!**

You are now ready to take the required online feedback form located at <http://blackboard.missouri.edu>. Volunteers wishing to complete a print version of the Feedback Form should obtain a copy from the local 4-H faculty or staff.

Please contact your county Extension office or 4-H youth specialist to get the login and password to access the online feedback form. A list of county Extension offices is located on the next page for your reference. The Extension office may also have a public access computer you may use to complete the feedback form.

Additional information about the feedback form:

- The confidential feedback form is located on the SurveyMonkey.com web site.
- The feedback form is NOT timed, but you should complete it in one session.
- Each feedback form will be reviewed by a designated person at the 4-H Center for Youth Development to ensure volunteers understand the course content.
- Completion of the online feedback form provides us with documentation that you participated in this online orientation course.
- You should plan on about 30 minutes to complete the feedback form.
- Your 4-H youth specialist will have access to a list of volunteers who have completed the orientation feedback form. That specialist or another Extension staff member to provide you with an official Missouri 4-H name badge. (These are handed out at the conclusion of the in-person orientation training sessions.)

If you have any questions or problems taking the feedback form, contact [um4htraining@missouri.edu](mailto:um4htraining@missouri.edu) and provide your full name, email address and/or phone number. Thank you.