

Thank you for your interest in 4-H!

4-H is one of the largest youth organizations in the United States and is sponsored in Missouri by University of Missouri Extension, with county, state, and federal funding. The goal of 4-H is to assist youth in acquiring knowledge, developing life skills, and forming attitudes that will enable them to become self-directed, productive members of society.

There are a few tips I like to share with prospective 4-H families. First of all, pick up or request a copy of the annual edition of *The 4-H Clover* if you don't already have one. It's a multi-color, slick publication. It tells about many the great things 4-H has to offer. Also pick up or request a list of the county 4-H "Club Leaders." This list contains contact information for each of our clubs and information on when and where each club usually meets.



A good fit between your family and the 4-H Club you choose is important for your child's success in 4-H. There are many 4-H clubs in our county and just like any family, they're all different; they all have individual strengths and priorities. Here are some things to think about when deciding on a club to visit:

- *Is your child outgoing or more introverted? Some clubs are large (25 members or more), others are small. Which would your child like best?*
- *What projects does he or she want to learn about?*
- *Is it important to your child that there are other children his/her age in the club? If so, ask club representatives about the ages and gender of their members.*
- *What days and times are most convenient for your family to attend club meetings?*

Then take time to contact club leaders of the clubs you want to know more about. Consider asking these questions:

- *When does your 4-H Club meet, and where?*
- *How many members are in your 4-H Club and what are their ages? Are there more older or younger youth? More boys or girls?*
- *Does your club have a great project leader for___(insert the projects your child is interested in most), who starts projects meetings early in the year and holds them regularly?*
- *What do you think are the strengths of your club?*

After you've talked to two or three clubs that you think might be a good fit for your family, take the time to visit the club meetings of those clubs as soon as possible. Take a minute to reflect on your visit and consider these things:

- *Were you greeted and made to feel welcome at the meeting?*
- *Consider the business meeting you'll likely see... are the youth officers conducting the meeting? Is there a fair balance of youth leadership and adult support?*
- *What is the tone of the meeting? Does it seem to be a positive, encouraging atmosphere for youth?*

Enrollment Cost: Current enrollment cost is \$20 per member.

Enrollment Process: All enrollments, for members and volunteers, are through an internet based system, 4-H Online, mo.4honline.com. Enrollment will take place October 1 through December 31. If you do not have internet capabilities at home, the Extension office can assist you with enrollment.

You are welcome to start attending club meetings at any time. I recommend that you contact the club leader to let them know that you are coming to a meeting in order to allow them to be prepared to greet you and answer any questions.

Considering these points and others that you may be thinking about already, will help you and your child make an informed decision on which club to join. And, if you know of 5-10 youth who are interested in 4-H, there is always the option of starting a NEW 4-H Club! It's easy to do and new clubs are always welcome!

Again, thank you for your interest in 4-H. Please feel free to contact us at 573-378-5358 or email morganco@missouri.edu if you have further questions or would like more information about what 4-H has to offer. Also, you might check out the local 4-H website listed below.

Sincerely,

Joni Harper
MU Extension
Morgan & Moniteau County Program Director

