

## ORGANIZING A NEW 4-H CLUB: A STEP-BY-STEP METHOD



When you decide to form a new club or assume leadership of an existing club, visit with your county Extension 4-H faculty. They can provide assistance that will make your job easier.

The number of members a club should start with may vary; a suggested minimum of members is TEN to start a club. Minimum number of members required to start a club is five. Ten members gives some flexibility should your club lose a few members.

Attend the annual club leader orientation or meet with 4-H youth faculty to obtain current club leader packet.

### **THE FIRST THREE CLUB MEETINGS:**

The 4-H meeting is one of the major tools 4-H leaders use to help boys and girls develop and learn. The 4-H meeting offers the opportunity to participate in democracy in action to develop friendships, exchange ideas, explore new ideas and areas of interest, and develop life skills. The 4-H meeting is often the first contact that 4-H members have with the 4-H program. For many youth, the experiences in the local club are the major involvement they have with 4-H. Thus, the experiences in the local club either enhance the 4-H experience for most youth or detract from it.

A 4-H club meeting is a place where members can have fun and learn. No 4-H meeting should be so concerned with education that it lacks the sounds of laughter and friendly conversation.

Planning: The 4-H club parents' leadership team should meet several weeks prior to the first 4-H club meeting and plan the first three club meetings in detail. Leadership team members and resource people they invite to assist will be responsible for conducting the club meetings until the club officers are elected and installed during the third club meeting. At the fourth meeting the club president and other officers will take over and run the meeting under adult leader supervision.

The first few club meetings should focus on acquainting 4-H members and their parents with 4-H and in getting the club off to a good start. Parent involvement is necessary for a successful club, so parent participation should be encouraged from the beginning.

Who Will Do What? During the leadership team planning meeting, a list of responsibilities for the first three club meetings should be developed. You will need people to do the following:

Contact prospective members and parents concerning the club meeting. Encourage parent participation.

Before proceeding, it should be mentioned that 4-H Youth Development Programs are open to all youth for membership and adults as volunteers. Affirmative action is special efforts to include various racial/ethnic or handicapped persons. Special considerations include:

How is information about the program disseminated? Is it easy for interested parties to find out how to join or attend the meetings?

Does the meeting place present physical or historical barriers to handicapped or minority persons?

Is the time of meeting convenient to most people?

Consider offering services such as transportation, babysitting for younger siblings, or financial support for project materials, and other things for those in need.

You may need to run a radio spot and/or newspaper article about the club meeting.

Secure and arrange the facilities for the meeting.

Secure the needed printed and human resources for each meeting: 4-H Clover, member enrollment forms, and volunteer applications.

Plan and conduct different parts of each club meeting. The club officers will not take over until the fourth meeting so leadership team members will be responsible for conducting the first three meetings.

Suggested outline for your first three club meetings follow. These outlines can be modified to fit your club situation. The important thing to remember in planning the meetings is to make sure they are well organized, that people in the program understand their responsibility and prepare themselves to carry it out, and that the meeting is enjoyed by all in attendance.

### **THE FIRST MEETING:**

All information publicizing this meeting should indicate that parents are to attend with their children.

1. Welcome and Get Acquainted: The members of the leadership team who will be presiding during the meeting welcomes everyone and introduces the get acquainted activity.

2. Suggested Get Acquainted Activity:

A. Give each person an index card or small piece of paper. Instruct them to write their first and last name in large letters in the center of the card. In the corners of the card instruct them to write the following.

1. Upper left: Where they work or go to school
2. Upper right: Hobbies or what they like to do for fun or relaxation
3. Lower left: One thing they expect to do in 4-H
4. Lower right: Facts about their family

Once they have completed the card, instruct them to find a person they don't know and discuss the information on the card with them. After a few minutes, have each pair join another pair (group of four people). Each person then introduces his or her partner to the others.

B. Distribute a copy of the 4-H Pledge to every family. Using newsprint, brainstorm for more meanings to each line of the pledge. Parents should be asked to help their children learn the pledge for the next meeting.

Hand out to each family present a copy of "The Clover". Share a personal experience you have enjoyed in the 4-H program.

3. 4-H Projects: 4-H members take projects, which teach life skills and knowledge they can use all their life. Project books are furnished to each 4-H Project Leader. There are about 63 different projects with multiple levels a 4-H member can chose from.

Refer to "The Clover" (Y603) and encourage them to look at it before leaving the meeting.

Invite two 4-H members of existing clubs, to discuss their 4-H projects. They should tell what they have done in their project, what they have learned, and how the project work has helped them develop as individuals.

Explain that the club will eventually have several project groups. The formation of project groups will be based on the interests of club members and project leader availability. A 4-H'er can take projects to work on individually if there is no group project. Review the project enrollment limitations found in "The Clover".

Advise the parents that at the next meeting everyone will be selecting projects. Encourage parents to take "The Clover" home to review with their child. Remind them to bring this back to the next meeting.

Explain that a 4-H project is something that the whole family can work on together.

4. Hand out and discuss the fact sheet entitled Parent Responsibilities (attached). Go over each point with parents

5. Enrolling Members and Leaders:

Provide volunteers with a "4-H Volunteer Application". Volunteers will need to be approved PRIOR to starting any work with 4-H Youth. Approval means their form was processed, the background check has been completed with no records returned of criminal or child abuse and neglect history (or if there is a record, the prospective volunteer may choose to withdraw their application or proceed through the approval process). In addition, all 4-H Volunteers are required to complete a one-time orientation. Several options for that are available. When a volunteer is approved, they will receive an approval card in the mail.

Members should be given the "4-H Member Enrollment Form".

These forms should be returned to the club leader with appropriate 4-H dues during the next meeting (or sooner!).

The club leader should submit Enrollment Forms and Members/Leader dues to the Extension Center by October 1, or within a few days of your meeting.

After naming your club, decide on the location of your meetings, time and day of the month, call the Extension Center so that this information can be included in the club roster.

Club dues are due November 1 to the 4-H Council along with the "Dues Form" found on our website. <http://extension.missouri.edu/adair/4hevents.aspx>

6. Closing: Ask for questions. Thank everyone for attending. Announce date, time, and place for next meeting. Remind parents to attend.

7. Refreshments: Serve refreshments and encourage people to look at project display.

**THE SECOND MEETING:**

Members of the leadership team will conduct this meeting. Follow the format found in "The 4-H Club Program Book" (Y612). You will find this book handy for recording information at the meeting. During the business portion of the meeting, do the following:

1. "Pick-A-Project" Activity: Each child should select projects with the parents' assistance. Conduct a discussion concerning what project groups are needed. Let members and parents express their ideas.

2. Discuss 4-H Club officers' responsibilities and explain that officers will be elected at the next meeting. Use "So You Are Officer Series" (Y783). Have sign-up sheets or posters for

each officer. Suggest that the members sign up for each office they may be interested in. Have them do this during refreshments.

Demonstrations and Illustrated Talk: During the program section of the meeting have a 4-H member of an existing club give a demonstration. Explain that club members will be learning to do these types of presentations and giving them at club meetings.

Recreational Activity: Get 4-H'ers and parents involved together in a recreational activity. Refer to the "Recreational Leader's Handbook" (LG582).

Refreshments: Serve refreshments and enroll members.

Collect Enrollment Forms & Dues: Issue Enrollment Forms to new members. They should bring these forms back during their next meeting.

### **THE THIRD MEETING:**

Members of the leadership team will conduct this meeting. Follow the meeting format found in the "4-H Club Program Book" (Y612). During the business meeting plan to accomplish the following:

Enroll new members: Hand out the forms to each youth and let them fill out the form. Review project enrollment limitations. Have adults complete the "Missouri 4-H Volunteer Application" (LG636). Turn the forms into the Extension Center with a completed 4-H Name and Emblem request (Y633).

Project Group Formation: Introduce the project group leaders and let them explain what their project group will be doing.

2. Election of Officers: Use "So You Are An Officer Series" (Y783) as a guide. In addition to officers, elect two adults (one must be the club leader or assistant) and three youth to represent your club at 4-H Council meetings.

3. Officers Installation Ceremony: Use "Installation of Officers" (LG800) as a guide.

4. Club Skill-A-Thon: Set up a club skill-a-thon using "Skill-A-Thon" (LG733) as a guide.

5. Set up simple stations that members and parents can try and succeed. Ask the project leaders to come with a station prepared for their project.

6. Refreshments: Serve refreshments. This is a good opportunity for 4-H'ers in the foods and nutrition project to get involved in their project by preparing and serving club refreshments.

## **PREPARING FOR THE FOURTH MEETING:**

1. Have a planning meeting with the officers before the next meeting. Plan on developing your club's by-laws. Contact the Extension faculty for guidelines. Review roles. Provide the appropriate organizational materials for the officers. See "So You Are An Officer Club Series" (Y783).

Plan for the initiation of members. Use "Initiation of Members" (LG801).

Review program planning with the officers. Prepare them to share this process with the club. The officers may want to invite a key leader, another 4-H club leader or teen leader to talk about their club program. Examples of club programs are available at the Extension Center.

Discuss what committees might be needed. Determine a committee selection process.

Introduce the "4-H Club Program Book" (Y612) as a tool for program planning.

Be very familiar with the county 4-H Constitution and by-laws. Suggestion: Give each family a copy and go over "member in good standing" rules.

### **Club Leaders**

Note: This is only a guide. Be flexible.

Congratulations on the formation of your new club! We at the Extension Center hope that the 4-H Youth Development Program will provide you with an exciting experience and lifelong skills and knowledge.

# Parents Responsibilities



## **Tips, things to remember, and other information**

The following tips are to help you and your family ease into the first year of membership, hopefully making your year less confusing and more enjoyable.

1. 4-H is a family affair; you will get the most out of it if your whole family is involved. Parents, attend meetings with your kids. Both you and your kids will learn a lot.
2. Not one person can do everything. Work as a team to get paperwork in, meet deadlines, and do projects. Remember, it takes parents and leaders who are willing to volunteer to get the job done.
3. Take pictures of everything you do. Not only will these become nice mementos to remember 4-H, but you will also need them when filling out the end of year paperwork.
4. To complete your end of the year ask your club leader for a recognition form. This form will assist you in capturing your experiences and will also be used for awards.
5. Each 4-H member should plan to give a demonstration, illustrated talk, or speech at some time during the 4-H year. Some clubs give project demonstrations while others give individual demonstrations. This experience will allow members the chance to grasp skills such as public speaking, organization, preparation, etc. In this "Welcome Packet" you will find a tip sheet on demonstration and a demonstration planning guide.
6. Serve as a project leader for not just your own child but any children enrolled in that project. 4-H is a community of learners. Working together and learning that adults care are cornerstones of the 4-H program.
7. 4-H business meetings follow a youth-friendly form of parliamentary procedures. This allows meetings to run smoothly and most of the time without problems.
8. Participation is the key to 4-H. The more that a member does the more that the member and their family will get out of the program. As a 4-H family you are invited to participate in all county and club activities, along with other activities offered at the state and national level. These opportunities are included each month in your 4-H newsletter.
9. Be sure and ask questions, we are excited about your interest in 4-H and want you to have a rewarding and successful experience.
10. Have fun!