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## most frequently asked questions about 4-H and 4-H clubs.....

...if you want to know how to join, organize, sponsor, or lead a 4-H club,  
read the answers to these questions, and contact your local  
University of Missouri Extension Center

Jackson County 4-H Program  
Jackson County University Extension  
1600 NE Coronado Drive  
Blue Springs, MO 64014  
(816)252-5051

### 1 WHAT IS 4-H?

4-H is a volunteer-led organization that reaches boys and girls through small groups called clubs and sometimes in classrooms. 4-H members decide for themselves which of more than 100 projects they want to learn more about. Most projects use hands-on learning experiences to teach subject matter and life-skills such as cooperation, leadership, and decision-making - skills that can be applied over and over for a lifetime.

### 2 WHAT DO THE H's STAND FOR?

Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. This is the 4-H Pledge--

*I Pledge....*

*My head to clearer thinking*

*My heart to greater loyalty*

*My hands to larger service*

*My health to better living*

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

### 3 WHAT IS THE 4-H EMBLEM?

A green four-leaf clover with a white 'H' on each clover leaf.

### 4 WHY DO YOUNG PEOPLE LIKE 4-H?

They have FUN with friends at meetings, social activities, tours, trips, camps, and fairs. They learn to do interesting things such as take care of animals, plants, redecorate their rooms, fix their bikes, take pictures, practice cooking, and collecting rocks. And, they help others to learn more about their 4-H projects, provide leadership to younger kids, as well as serve others through community service activities.

## 5 HOW DO YOU JOIN?

Call your County Extension Office (816)252-5051 or a local 4-H leader (if you know one) to see if there is room in a club near you. If not, several interested young people with an adult or two to help them may start a new club. Check with the Extension Office to find out what projects and activities are available.

## 6 HOW DO YOU GET A 4-H GROUP ORGANIZED?

Have a meeting with the young people who are interested and the adults who are willing to help. Publicize it through the school or any place where young people and their parents can be reached.

## 7 WHO CAN JOIN 4-H?

4-H is for boys and girls who will reach their 8th birthday and will not reach their 19th birthday by December 31st of the current year. Jackson County offers a pre-4-H program called Clover Kids for youth 5-7 years old. 4-H is open to everyone, regardless of race, religion, color, disability, gender, or place of residence.

## 8 HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO JOIN 4-H?

Jackson County's dues are \$25 for one member. These funds mostly go to the state to pay for volunteer background checks and insurance for all 4-H members. There is also a \$40 optional county activity fee. The \$40 is used for county activities, awards and 4-H Council sponsored events. Clubs may conduct fundraisers to supplement their programming needs. Dues cannot be used as a barrier to keep someone from joining 4-H. Individual 4-H clubs may also charge minimal annual dues.

## 9 WHAT ARE 4-H PROJECTS?

A 4-H project is a series of learning experiences for members. More than 100 projects are available in the Missouri 4-H Program. Most projects have manuals to assist the 4-H leader and member with their project.

## 10 HOW DO YOU CHOOSE A 4-H PROJECT?

Picking your 4-H project is a hard decision. Why? Because there are so many projects to choose from. You should pick a project that interests you and will teach you something new. You will spend many months working in your project area. Your parents, volunteer leaders and others will help you learn and have fun.

## 11 HOW MANY PROJECTS CAN I ENROLL IN?

4-H Project Enrollment Guidelines

If the member is.....	Age 10 or younger (December 31 age)	Age 11 or Older (December 31 age)
1 <sup>st</sup> year of 4-H	3 projects*	3 projects*
2 <sup>nd</sup> year or higher	3 projects*	6 projects*

\*Exploring, Leadership and Entrepreneurship projects can be carried in addition to these totals.

Written requests by young people to enroll in an additional project above the guideline need to be submitted to regional 4-H specialists for approval.

## 12 WHAT IS A 4-H PROJECT MANUAL?

A project manual contains help and direction needed to complete the project. Some projects have a manual for each division. Others have one manual which is used for several years.

## 13 WHAT DOES A 4-H PROJECT COST?

It varies. A member enrolled in Visual Arts might use supplies from around the home to practice the skills he or she is learning and have no additional expense. A member who buys and keeps a horse might invest several hundred dollars. Members should consider cost as they select a project. It should be realistic to the family situation.

## **14 ARE 4-H MEMBERS EXPECTED TO DO THEIR OWN PROJECT WORK?**

Yes--with help. 4-H is a "learning by doing" program. Leaders, youth leaders, and parents may tell or show a member how, but members are expected to learn how to do things themselves.

## **15 ARE PROJECTS DONE INDIVIDUALLY OR AS A CLUB?**

Both. Some projects like *Geology* are more fun when done as a group. Others like making a dress or baking cookies will be done individually.

## **16 WHAT IS AN EXHIBIT?**

An exhibit is an object or display designed to help a member show what he or she has accomplished. Ideally it motivates a youth to learn and to have fun in a 4-H project. An exhibit is not an end in itself, nor does it measure all the learning that takes place from completing a project.

## **17 HOW OFTEN DO 4-H CLUBS MEET?**

Some clubs meet every month year round and others meet every week for a month or two. This depends on the needs and desires of the group. 4-H clubs organize between September and December each year.

## **18 WHERE DO 4-H CLUBS MEET?**

Any place is acceptable if it is large enough and is convenient for the members of the group. Some clubs meet in leaders or members homes. Some meet in a central location such as a community room, school or church.

## **19 WHEN DO CLUBS MEET AND HOW LONG DO MEETINGS LAST?**

This depends on the group. Many clubs meet after school, in the evening or on Saturday. The most important thing is to have a regular time to get together, one that can be remembered.

## **20 HOW BIG SHOULD A CLUB BE?**

This depends on the age of the members, the space available for their meetings, and the leadership available. The ideal club is big enough to have fun together, but small enough for everybody to feel a part of the group. The average club in Missouri has 10 to 20 members and two or three leaders.

## **21 WHO PLANS THE PROGRAM FOR THE CLUB?**

Members of the club. This might be done at a meeting of the club or ideas are collected and a committee puts together a program.

## **22 ARE THERE DIFFERENT KINDS OF MEETINGS?**

Yes. There are club meetings and project meetings. Club meetings generally meet once a month. Project meetings are scheduled by the project leader.

## **23 WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?**

**Club meetings** involve the whole club and they discuss club business, elect officers, have social activities, community service projects, pizza parties, etc.

**Project meetings** are scheduled by the project leader. Some projects meet every two weeks starting in the winter and others may only have just a few meetings during the year. The project meetings are specific to the project chosen—they concentrate on one topic—such as dog care or archery and only involve the members who selected that project.

## **24 WHAT ABOUT OFFICERS?**

4-H clubs elect officers and whatever committees they need to conduct their business. 4-H has instructional materials available for presidents, vice-presidents, secretaries, treasurers, news reporters, recreation leaders, historians, song and game leaders. The club may have any number of officers, depending on its needs. It is a good idea to wait until the second or third meeting to elect officers so members know each other better.

## **25 WHO PROVIDES LEADERSHIP IN 4-H?**

4-H in Missouri is sponsored by University Outreach and Extension, University of Missouri and Lincoln University. Nationally, it is part of the Extension Service of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture. Local leadership is provided by 4-H Youth Specialists in the county extension office, which is supported financially by county, state, and federal tax dollars.

## **26 WHAT IS A 4-H LEADER?**

An adult who works voluntarily with a group of 4-H members.

## **27 ARE THERE DIFFERENT KINDS OF LEADERS?**

Yes. Some adults teach members how to do things and are called "project leaders". They usually have a special interest or skill such as photography or clothing or gardening. Adults who help a group get organized and run its meetings are called "club leaders". Can the same person be a project and an club leader? Sure--if they have the time and interest. Sometimes big clubs divide these jobs and have several project leaders and teen leaders to meet all the interests of 4-H members.

## **28 WHO ARE YOUTH LEADERS?**

Youth leaders are 4-H members who usually work under direct supervision of an adult leader to assist with a project or special club activity.

## **29 HOW MANY LEADERS SHOULD A 4-H CLUB HAVE?**

That depends on the size of the club and the ages of its members. 4-H guidelines suggest a minimum of two leaders per club and clubs with an enrollment of 40 or more members have three to five leaders to share the workload and give individual attention to the members.

## **30 WHERE DO I LEARN HOW TO BE A 4-H LEADER?**

Your main help would come from the County University Extension Office. The 4-H Youth Specialist can discuss with you your interest in working with youth and your previous experience. The University supports recognized volunteers. Missouri 4-H is providing safe environments for everyone involved in youth activities. Volunteers are asked to complete the Missouri 4-H Volunteer Enrollment Form.

## **31 WHAT SHOULD PARENTS KNOW ABOUT 4-H LEADERS?**

It's important to understand that leaders are unpaid volunteers. Parents should attend a meeting or volunteer to hold a meeting in their home so they can see how the leader works with clubs.

## **32 HOW DO YOU GET PARENTS TO HELP?**

Ask them. Be specific about jobs the club needs help with. Think positively. People who expect help usually get it. Offer a choice of jobs as parents can provide different amounts of time and abilities. Ask the young people to ask their parents to help.

## **33 AS A 4-H PARENT, HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD?**

Counsel your child in the selection of 4-H projects that are interesting and can be conveniently financed. Continue to show interest and enthusiasm after the projects have been selected. Help your child understand how to carry out the various phases of the project. But don't do the project for them. Your job is to teach, not govern; to guide, not control. Learn to give increased freedom as your child develops.