



4-H SPIN Clubs

Missouri 4-H Youth Development Programs

Society changes, people change, and programs change. Missouri 4-H is no different. We too, have to evaluate our program and add components to most efficiently and effectively meet the needs of our ever-changing audiences. The Missouri 4-H program is not a “one-size fits all” program. That is why we are implementing a new club model for youth and families that may not want to participate in a yearlong experience.

What Are 4-H SPIN (Special Interest) Clubs?

4-H SPIN clubs allow youth ages 5 to 18 with common interests or hobbies to meet as a club and share their special interest. Whatever their passion is, youth can gain knowledge and enhance their skills through a positive group experience. A 4-H SPIN club can be started with a minimum of one adult volunteer and five young people with an interest in a particular topic. While the adult provides expertise and guidance, club members take an active role in planning and running their own activities. SPIN clubs reach out to youth and families with common interests and brings them together. They are a great way to introduce young people to a specific topic or interest they might not otherwise have a chance to develop within a group setting.

What Makes 4-H SPIN Clubs Appealing to New Youth and Volunteers?

The 4-H SPIN club recognizes that both youth and adults often have a limited amount of “free time” as a result of multiple interests. These clubs have the flexibility to provide positive youth development and adult mentorship through varying time frames giving both youth and leaders more flexibility in when and how long they meet. 4-H programs, at all levels, are only as successful to the extent they tap the creativity, nurturing, wisdom, involvement, and skills of volunteers. Youth who are part of a 4-H SPIN Club are considered bona fide 4-H members and have the same privileges as all other 4-H youth in Missouri.

What makes 4-H SPIN Clubs different than Project Clubs?

Timing. 4-H SPIN Clubs are truly a short-term involvement (couple of weeks or couple of months) with a specific focus. Five or more sessions, over a period of 6 to 8 weeks.

Best Practices for 4-H SPIN Clubs

- Meet where the youth are; take programming to them
- 5 to 6 sequential learning experiences (6-8 hours of total education)
- Limited to time frame needed for project or activity and is variable; Options may include
 - Meet once a week for 6 weeks or twice a week for 3 weeks
 - Meet twice a month for 3 months

- Smaller numbers so leaders/volunteers can be a mentor; 1 Adult / 5-10 Youth
- Market the specific program to an identified audience
- Recruit for specific project
- Promote to children/youth who are not already 4-H members
- Market to parents of younger children and to the youth as they get older
- Must recruit volunteers for specific roles
- Identify and recruit specific volunteer to lead project; Train for specific 4-H criteria
- Enrollment fee will be the same for SPIN Club members as with other 4-H members.
- Keep parents informed of meeting times, dates and behavioral and participation expectations.

Potential projects that could follow the 4-H SPIN Club format:

Archery, Clothing and Textiles, Consumer Education, Entrepreneurship, Food and Nutrition, Photography, Poultry, Rabbits, Cake Decorating, Robotics, Clowning, Shooting Sports, Sportfishing, etc.

Adapted from Texas A&M; Texas 4-H