

Planning with a Group

A Guide for Leaders



Why Do You Need a Plan?

Some of the most important experiences 4-H'ers have will be in helping plan and carry out a club program. By being involved in decision making, each 4-H'er will learn that his or her ideas are wanted and needed. He or she will also learn to be responsible for helping carry out the plan the club made as a group.

A good 4-H plan must outline member responsibility. As an adviser, you can help each member learn what his or her responsibility is. Having a plan that was designed by the group members will ensure that each 4-H'er has an opportunity to express his or her interests and desires.

Having a plan in each member's hand makes it easier to involve parents in the program, too. You can invite a parent to help with a specific activity in a specific way. If parents are aware of the responsibilities of their children, they can help keep them on track.

How Can You Involve Members?

Start by talking one-on-one with club members. 4-H means something different to each member, so what a member does should reflect individual goals and desires. The things done by the club as a whole should be determined by the things the members of the club want to do. One way to find out what members want from their club is to have each member design his or her own clover. Ask your 4-H agent for copies of Information Sheet 701 *Design Your Own Clover*. Make sure you have enough for each member to have a copy.

Design Your Own Clover

In each of the four petals of the 4-H clover, list things you would like to learn, ways you can help your community, your hobbies, and what you'd like to do just for fun.



I would like to learn...

List things you want to learn about here.

We could help our community by...

Think about what your community needs. What can you and the other club members do to help meet the needs of your community? List your ideas here.

My hobbies...

What are your hobbies? By writing down what you do for fun, other club members learn about you and you may find someone who shares your interests.

Just for fun we could...

Every 4-H club needs some activities that are just for fun. List your ideas about some fun things your club might do.

Now What?

Collect the ideas from each member's clover. Summarize by writing the ideas on a chalkboard or flip chart under the four headings:

- learn
- hobbies
- community service
- fun

Before you do anything else to the list, you will want to help the group make these decisions:

- How many meetings (and when) do you want to plan for learning?
- How many meetings do you want just for fun?
- How many community service projects do you want to conduct?

Hobbies indicate a personal interest. This is another way to let members get acquainted with each other and their talents. It is possible that group members will be interested in learning about another member's hobby. In fact, several members may have similar interests and they may want to plan a meeting to learn more about a particular hobby.

Getting It All Together

Look at the summarized lists as a group to decide how many meetings members want for learning. Then choose the subjects for these learning meetings by voting on the items listed in the "learn" section of the clover. Do the same for "fun" and "community service."

When discussing ideas for possible community service projects, some members may not have a broad view of the needs of the community. You may offer suggestions such as an afterschool tutoring project or a recycling project.

When a junior leader assumes responsibility for this community service project, that leader and his or her committee may use local resources to identify needs and make plans for a specific project.

Often, educational and fun meetings can be combined; look for ideas and appropriate combinations.

What If?

What if three or four members are interested in a particular subject but there is not enough interest to involve the entire club? You should encourage those interested to plan a special interest meeting. Not all club members will be involved in this meeting, but it can be listed on the club plan in the Special Interest column.

Who Does What?

Up to this point, everyone has been involved in the decision-making process. Now, individuals need to work out the plan. Ask volunteers to be responsible for a meeting or activity. The junior leader responsible for

the Community Service projects should serve as chair of a committee.

Remember, members who accept responsibility for a meeting or activity are identified as junior leaders for the activity. Being responsible for a meeting or activity does not mean that the junior leader actually teaches or leads the meeting or activity; it simply means that he or she is responsible for ensuring that the meeting or activity gets done.

Encourage junior leaders to involve other members in planning and presenting the program. Sometimes the junior leader will invite a resource person to present all or part of the program. For more information about how junior leaders can help you and the club members, ask your 4-H youth agent about the 4-H Junior Council Program and other youth leadership opportunities.

Youth-Adult Partnership Tips

Some people may be resistant to the idea of full participation by youth or may lack the necessary skills to make it work. Orientation and training to help youth and adults work together is essential to a good start.

Tips for Youth

- Ask questions! Get involved!
- Honor your commitments.
- Listen, and be open to others' ideas.
- Ask adults for advice or help.

Tips for Adults

- Treat youth with respect and dignity.
- Listen—*really* listen—to what young people have to say.
- Give youth real decision-making opportunities rather than commands.
- Curb your inclination to take over; let the youth lead.
- Be careful about interrupting. Youth tend to stop talking when adults do this.
- Be energetic, positive, and open.
- Remember that youth often depend on adults for transportation, and there are times (like during school) when they cannot meet.
- Remember that your role is not to be a parent.
- Be a role model, and be consistent and fair in your actions.

(Excerpted from Health Rocks! Community Action Guide by Mary Lee Wood.)

Record the Club Plan

When you have planned the program and everyone knows who is responsible for each part, the club secretary should record the plan in the secretary's record book. Extra blank pages are available so that each member can have a personal copy of the plan.

Use three pages of the form to outline a 12-month program. Modify it to fit your needs.

Suggestions for Using the 4-H Club Program Plan

Month

Enter the month in which the activity will be held.

Date

Write the date of the event or activity.

Program and junior leader responsible

In this column, list the regular meetings that will involve the entire club. In the narrow column, add the initials of the 4-H member who will lead this program.

Special interests and junior leader responsible

Most club groups will include smaller "project groups" that consist of members interested in a specific project such as citizenship. One member of each "project group" should be designated as the junior leader for the activity to make sure things get done. The junior leader may locate a teacher for the group or arrange a time and place to meet. If the group is large enough, a committee of junior leaders may develop the plan with the help of an adult leader.

An example of a special interest program is a short-term bicycle activity that club members conduct for other youth in the community.

Share

Give your local 4-H agent a copy of your club's plan so he or she can plan project training sessions for junior leaders. Also give copies to each 4-H club member, parents, and club sponsors.

Community service and junior leader responsible

Every 4-H club plan should include a community service project. In this section, list the project dates and the junior leader(s) responsible on the club plan. Remember, the junior leader will not complete this project alone, but he or she is responsible for seeing that it gets done.

Special events

This column lists events from the county calendar that may be of interest to club members. The codes C D S N indicate whether the event is county, district, state, or national.

What Is Your Role as a 4-H Adviser In Carrying Out This Plan?

Your primary role is to provide the setting for 4-H'ers to identify their needs and interests and to plan and carry out a program that reflects these needs and interests.

You've done all this. Now what? You want to be sure that each member is aware of his or her responsibilities. Help junior leaders identify resources needed for programs and activities including materials, visuals, guest speakers, and visual presentations.

Encourage other club members to become involved. 4-H'ers **learn by doing**. Help junior leaders think of ways members can learn by doing in a particular program.

The more responsibility 4-H'ers assume, the more confident they become. Often, the 4-H'ers will be the teacher rather than you.

How Can You Know When You Have a Good 4-H Club Program Plan?

If you can answer YES to all the questions below, congratulations! You did it!

Did the club members make the plan?

Really and truly...or were they just there that day?

Is each part of the program planned with a specific purpose in mind?

- Having fun
- Learning about your community
- Learning a certain skill
- Developing leadership
- Increasing membership
- Providing community service

Do you have a variety of programs?

For example: tours, workshops, special interest groups, special guests, community projects.

Are the programs based on the community situation and the needs and interests of club members?

Does the plan list the name of the person responsible?

For example:

May 11, tour of courthouse: Jane Jones

Do club members know their responsibilities in carrying out the plan?

If there are any questions, review and explain. This might require special conferences with junior leaders.

Does the plan show when the different programs will be held?

A calendar-like chart that lists regular meetings and special occasions would be helpful. This chart could include the plan and the who, what, where, and when all together!

Have parents been included in the plan?

For example: parents' night, exhibit days, or some other occasion to honor parents.

Do some parents have responsibility in carrying out the plan? Have all parents had this opportunity?

Some examples include teacher or resource person for an activity, transportation chairman for a specific occasion, club representative at a leader training session.

Do parents know all this?

A special meeting of parents and leader can be very helpful. A good time to hold this meeting is immediately after club members complete the plan.

Has time been allotted to evaluate this plan and to make a new plan for next year?

Members should have been involved in making this plan and they have an opportunity to evaluate it and to make suggestions for changes to next year's plan.

Does your Extension 4-H youth agent have a copy of your plan?

Your 4-H youth agent can help you locate resources, people, and materials to help with your club's plan.

Learning how to do a project is more important than the project itself!

4-H members are more important than 4-H projects.

To **learn by doing** through a useful work project is a key characteristic of the 4-H program, and is fundamental in any sound educational program.

There is almost always more than one good way to do things.

Our job is to teach 4-H'ers **how** to think, not **what** to think.

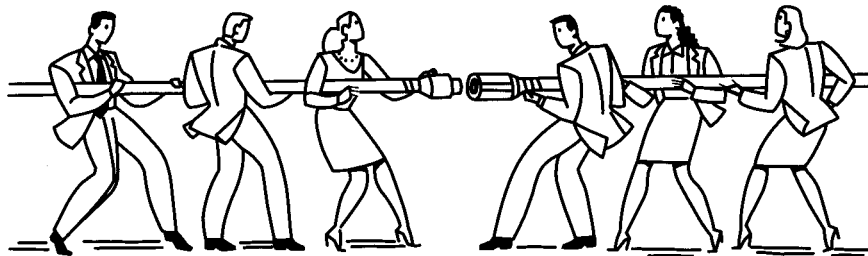
A balanced program of work and play that is geared to the individual needs of all interested youth is more important than grooming winners.

Competition is a natural human trait and should be recognized as such in 4-H work. However, competition should not be given more emphasis than other 4-H fundamentals.

Every 4-H member needs to be recognized, to feel important, to win, and to be praised for his or her efforts.

No 4-H award is worth sacrificing the reputation of a 4-H member or leader.

Successful 4-H'ers are evidence of parental involvement in 4-H.



Publication 2320 (POD-10-15)

Revised by Betty Rawlings, Senior Extension Associate, 4-H Youth Development.



Copyright 2015 by Mississippi State University. All rights reserved. This publication may be copied and distributed without alteration for nonprofit educational purposes provided that credit is given to the Mississippi State University Extension Service.

Produced by Agricultural Communications.

We are an equal opportunity employer, and all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability status, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law.

Extension Service of Mississippi State University, cooperating with U.S. Department of Agriculture. Published in furtherance of Acts of Congress, May 8 and June 30, 1914. GARY B. JACKSON, Director