

Ashtabula County 4-H New Family Information

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THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES



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What is 4-H?

4-H is a volunteer led, educational program that supplements the teaching of parents, church and school.

4-H is an informal program for all youth who are ages 5 - 18.

4-H is adults providing an arena for youth to learn and have fun with their friends.

What is the Primary objective of 4-H?

The basic philosophy in 4-H is to strengthen the mental, physical, moral and social development of youth, therefore helping develop more desirable citizens and leaders. The main objective is the development of boys and girls through participation in projects, events and activities.

Why do Youth enjoy 4-H?

While all youth are different, they are also alike in many ways. Your child(ren) share five inner desires with all other youth.

To belong
To achieve
To become independent
To experience new things
To have affection

The wide variety of "learn by doing" projects, activities and events that make up the 4-H program contribute to meeting these needs. Decision-making, individual responsibility, achievement and recognition further help make 4-H satisfying.

Why and When did 4-H originate?

4-H work, as we know it, began around 1900 as a means of reaching parents with improved farm and home practices. It was based upon the assumption that if new ideas were instilled in the minds of youngsters they would in turn convince their parents to try these innovations.

The second reason 4-H was developed was because the schools were not meeting the needs and interests of rural youth.

The first organized 4-H clubs were small groups covering a single topic such as beef, corn, gardening or canning. There were corn and pig clubs in Ohio as early as 1904.

Today the objective is the development of boys and girls, providing a wide variety of learning opportunities in which all youth can participate. 4-H today is for all kids, whether they live in the city or the country.

Who is responsible for the administration of the 4-H program?

The OSU Extension Office in Ashtabula County is a cooperative understanding by the United States Dept. of Agriculture, the land-grant colleges (in our case, Ohio State University) and the County Commissioners. OSU Extension has the charge of carrying up-to-date information from the classroom and laboratory to the people of the state, and bringing back to the university those problems that can be solved only by careful study and research.

The purpose of the County Extension is to provide instruction and practical demonstrations in Agriculture, Family and Consumer Sciences, 4-H Youth Development and Community Development to all persons in the county.

What is a 4-H Club?

A 4-H club is a group of boys and girls organized with officers appropriate to the group and with one or more leaders under the sponsorship of OSU Extension. The club is organized within a neighborhood, a school, a church, a business or social unit. The size of the club should be suitable to the age of the members, meeting place and leadership available. This type of club is called a community 4-H club. Most clubs hold bi-monthly meetings, normally the same weeknight each time. Also, youth are 4-H members by taking part in project clubs (one subject), special interest groups and school enrichment programs.

What is the motto?

The motto of 4-H is “ *To Make The Best Better.*”

What are the colors and emblem?

The 4-H colors are green and white. The 4-H emblem is the four leaf clover with the letter “H” on each leaf, standing for Head, Heart, Health and Hands.



What is the 4-H Pledge?

“I Pledge:
My head to clearer thinking,
My heart to greater loyalty,
My hands to larger service,
And my health to better living,
For my club, my community, my country and my world.”

When does the 4-H Year take place?

Youth may enroll in 4-H at any time, however certain restrictions apply. A new 4-H year begins in late winter or early spring. Community clubs organize around this time and prior to April 15th. If members wish to show a project at the County fair, they must enroll by April 15th. Showing at the County fair is an optional activity. Kids can join 4-H at any time of the year.

Age for Membership?

4-H membership is open to all youth who are 5 **AND** in kindergarten, as Cloverbuds, with regular membership when they are 8 **AND** in the third grade but have not passed their 19th birthday by January 1st of the current year.

4-H Fees

The current County 4-H Activity fee is \$25 per member (\$50 maximum per family, 1st year members and Cloverbuds free) to join Ashtabula County 4-H and enjoy a year full of 4-H opportunities and awards including Jr. Fair participation. The fee is used to cover costs associated with 4-H staffing, mailings, delivery of programs, awards and opportunities such as camp, skill-a-thons/ project judging, clinics, workshops, trips and much more. Some clubs make also charge a club fee to cover costs such as shirts, refreshments etc.

Leadership

Adults serve as volunteer leaders. There are three types of leaders:

1. General/Organizational Leaders
2. Project Leaders

3. Activity Leaders

The Organizational leader organizes meeting location, enrollment, club programming, and serves as the club's contact with the 4-H Agent and OSU Extension Office. The project leader provides direction and support for members' project work. The activity leader coordinates club-wide activities outside of the project area.

4-H Club Meetings

Purposes of 4-H club meetings

The purpose of 4-H meetings is to help boys and girls acquire new information, learn creative use of leisure time, develop social skills, and acquire desirable leadership and citizenship traits. 4-H members are thus given the opportunity to learn and practice decision-making in-group situations by using knowledge and skills acquired at these meetings. 4-H members are expected to attend the meetings. Parents are encouraged to attend the meetings with their children. 4-H is a family affair.



How often do clubs meet?

Most clubs meet between 8-12 times per year. Some clubs meet bi-weekly, some weekly and still others in some other combination. Clubs are free to establish their own schedule based on what works best for their membership. OSU Extension dates for events are a priority and events just for the individual club come second.

What is a club meeting like?

The 4-H meeting is balanced between business, educational program and recreation. 4-H meetings normally do not last over one and one-half hours, with the time fairly equally divided among the three parts.

What is the educational program?

This part of the program is designed to help members learn more about the subjects of general interest in the entire 4-H program. 4-H teaching is unique - it is learning by doing. Good 4-H teaching employs seeing, hearing, and doing. Generally, the educational program will include talks and demonstrations by the 4-Hers. Outside speakers may present programs for 4-H meetings.

What are demonstrations and illustrated talks?

Demonstrations are show and tell type presentations where the 4-Hers share some of the fun things they have learned in their projects. Actual articles are used to show the steps necessary for a finished product. Illustrated talks differ from demonstrations in that they tell how rather than show how. Charts, models, and other visuals are important for illustrated talks.

Business Session

The business portion of the meeting should be short and snappy. It should be a small democracy in action. The kids should be the ones running the meeting, not the advisors. The advisors should offer guidance but strive to have the members learn how to lead themselves.

Recreation Session

The recreation portion of the meeting is a fun time involving all members. Recreation may include challenges, group singing, relays, guessing games, table games, or other fun activities.

Refreshments

Many clubs in the county serve refreshments at meetings, although they are not essential. Most often, different members host each meeting. The learning experience for the members who select, prepare and serve the refreshments is the prime concern. Club members should learn how to select simple, nutritious and inexpensive refreshments. Parents can and should help by giving suggestions for guidance.

Projects

Almost 200 projects are available for 4-Hers. Members are expected to complete the projects in which they enroll. The 4-H project has been described as the member "gateway" to the rest of the 4-H programs. From our standpoint, it might be better to turn the description around to say that the project is the "gateway" to the boy or girl.

Projects provide the basis of the 4-H program by offering various educational experiences. Carrying out a project will help the member "Learn to Do by Doing" and as well learn why things happen the way they do.

Why projects?

The project is a teaching tool that can be used to develop boys and girls to their maximum potential so long as we view project work as a "means to an end" and not the end in itself. This means that the basic objective of 4-H – the development of the boy and girl – is the most important consideration, not the garment the member makes or the calf he or she raises, or the miscellaneous project he or she completes.

What are projects?

Projects are real-life experiences that help the 4-Hers learn to make sound decisions. Projects put the hands and minds to work. 4-H projects take on a wide variety of interests and activities that are designed to attract boys and girls regardless of their place of residence, economic status, race, etc.

What should projects do for the 4-Hers?

The objectives of 4-H projects are to:

- Create a sense of ownership
- Give satisfaction of achievement
- Strengthen family and community ties
- Provide opportunities for members to develop and use knowledge related to the project
- Provide a leisure time activity to help keep youngsters away from undesirable activities
- Explore career opportunities and thus the need for continued education

What are guidelines to selecting projects?

Parents and the member should know and fully understand what is expected of the 4-Her before he or she enrolls in a project. Projects are selected in the early spring when enrollment cards are filled out. Usually younger members should limit their projects to one or two. Older, more experienced, members may be able to do several different projects, including those that are more difficult. Factors that parents and leaders should consider in helping a club member to select a project are:

1. The project should meet the needs and interests of the member. The problem here, however, is that in many cases the youngster does not really know if he would like a particular project without first giving it a try.
2. The project should be appropriate for the age and ability of the member.

3. The member must have enough time to devote to the project.
4. Is the project acceptable to the family and can it fit into the family situation?
5. How much will the project cost?
6. Is there an opportunity for ownership and management responsibilities?
7. Are there leaders to help with the project in the club or are the parents willing to help the member with the project?

How are projects conducted?

Project work is conducted through various activities and events such as:

- Project meetings
- Regular club meetings
- Tours to visit projects of members
- Family activity at home
- Exhibiting products at shows, fairs, etc.
- Record keeping

Where is project information found?

All projects are listed in the Ohio 4-H Family Guide. Each family should receive one copy of this resource at the beginning of each year. The family guide includes a brief description of each project as well as a guide, which indicates the difficulty level of each project. 4-H advisors also have information on project completion requirements, judging requirements and exhibit guidelines. Project guidelines for each project are inserted into each book for easy reference. The OSU Extension office has all project books for review at any time during the year.

Responsibilities of 4-H Parents

Parental interest and encouragement are major influences on young 4-Hers. If parents are involved right from the beginning, chances are high for a successful 4-H experience. Some of the major responsibilities of 4-H parents are listed below:

- Assist the child in selecting a 4-H project he or she can do and will enjoy.
- Read the project book your child receives. You will find ways in which you can help your child with the project...not complete the project for them.
- Serve as a helper to your child. Guide and assist but do not do the work for him or her.
- Attend 4-H club meetings with you child as often as possible. This will help you understand the type of assistance your child needs.
- Read the 4-H mail that comes to your house. This will help you stay-up to date on what is going on. You will be able to remind your child of upcoming events and due dates.
- Encourage your child to attend 4-H meetings and activities. You should make sure your child has a way to get to the events.
- Offer to assist the 4-H Club leaders with specific tasks.
- Provide light refreshments for your child's club meeting when requested.
- Lend your kitchen, backyard, living room, garage or basement for an occasional 4-H club meeting when requested.
- Share a hobby, skill or interest of yours with 4-H club members during a meeting or workshop
- Assist your child in keeping records on his or her 4-H work. This includes 4-H project work, demonstrations given, awards received, leadership positions held and community service involvement.