



## **4-H Project Leader Guide**

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### **Preplanning:**

Most 4-H projects include youth of various ages and developmental stages. This wide age range can present some challenges for a project leader. If the project skills and goals target a younger age group, involve older youth by giving them a more challenging roll. Have older youth plan and teach a project topic, develop and give a presentation, or design individualized project experiences outside the group meetings.

To ensure the experience is successful for you, it may be suitable to target a specific age range or limit the number of participants. For Example, younger members have short attention spans and may find it difficult to be successful in a project that requires long meetings or detailed planning. Also consider how many participants the meeting space can safely hold.

If a project leader needs to limit age or the number of youth:

- The number and /or age must be announced in advance of project enrollment
- The members must be accepted on a first-come first-served basis
- It cannot be used to discriminate against anyone.

Preplanning will help tailor the project to fit the developmental stages of the youth, and help ensure the experience is also fun and successful for you.

Use experienced members, parents and others in the community as resources.

It is helpful to have some knowledge of the project that you lead, but this is not an absolute requirement. Many leaders are effective teachers and learn along with the members.

### **Organizing the Project:**

The volunteer's primary responsibility is to provide a safe positive learning experience for the members. Most of the learning takes place during the project meeting. Be familiar with the content of the project and make definite plans for each meeting. All animal projects intended for participation at the Lake County Fair must submit a *4-H Project Planning Guide* for approval by October 15<sup>th</sup>. Other project plans may be submitted throughout the year and at least one month before the start of the project meetings. Preplanning is necessary for a smooth running and productive project.

- Contact your club's Enrollment Coordinator for a list of members enrolled in your project
- Meet with your assistant leader and jr/teen leaders to prepare project goals, skills session topics, expectations and requirements
- Submit a completed copy of the *4-H Project Planning Worksheet* to your club's Volunteer Coordinator for approval.
- Once your project plan has been approved, give each family a copy of the *Project Outline*, at your first project meeting. Letting members and parents know what will be expected of them, will help insure they can complete the project successfully.

Members and parents must know what is expected, required, and what materials are needed to insure that they can complete the project successfully. Supplying this information in the form of a handout at the first project meeting can be very helpful to members and the supporting adults. Help members have fun and enjoy their work. Volunteer's can do this by being enthusiastic about the project topics, keeping the members actively involved in the project meeting, and making the project exciting by adding variety and surprises. Above all, enjoy it yourself!

### **Expectations and Requirements:**

Each leader will identify the expectation and requirements for their project. Expectations are your concepts of the skills you would like the members to accomplish, such as learn to shear, bake, swim etc. Requirements are associated with benefits and consequences that each member will accomplish or consequences may apply; such as attend a specific number of meetings, complete a presentation, purchase specific tools or equipment etc. All project requirements need to be presented in writing at the first project meeting.

### **Recognition:**

Youth need a balance between extrinsic and intrinsic recognition. Extrinsic recognition includes praise, rewards, and awards. Intrinsic rewards are more personal such as self-satisfaction, positive self-esteem and recognizing personal accomplishments. The development of personal satisfaction through intrinsic rewards is more valuable in their development, than being motivated by physical rewards. Intrinsic recognition may simply be in the form of saying, "John, your skills at shearing your lamb have really improved," or "Jane, I appreciate you helping Tom with his project today." It may be in the form acknowledging a member or the group to make them feel recognized and important. Extrinsic recognition may be in the form of rewards such as proficiency metals, exhibit ribbons, or completion certificates. Project Proficiency metals are supplied by the Lake County Council.

### **Contact Information:**

Compile a list of emergency and general contact information each participant. Decide how members will notify about meetings or events. Some project leaders prefer to make phone calls, make announcements at the club meetings, e-mail, a notice in the club newsletter or Online Record Book (ORB), or others send postcards in the mail. Decide which will work best for the project group.

### **Assistant Leaders:**

Decide who will be the assistant leader to help supervise the youth and plan the project meetings. All 4-H projects, events and activities are required to have two appointed adult volunteers, or one appointed volunteer plus a trusted adult 21 years of age present, at all times.

### **Guest Speakers and Field Trips:**

Guest speakers and field trips add interest to the project and introduce the members to resources in their community. Community members or specialist in a field may present special topics one time. If they would like to participate more than once, they will need to contact the 4-H staff and become an appointed volunteer.

### **Community Service:**

Each project should have one community service activity. It may or may not be project related. For example: visit a senior home, road or creek clean up, sharing project information

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with a service or organization, holiday cards for seniors or Veterans, holding a judging contest or field day and invite other clubs or counties.

**Safety:**

Safety is a very important part of all projects and should be pre-planned and discussed at each project meeting. To ensure safety:

- Identify possible hazards with meeting locations, field trips, or equipment use and correct them.
- Set a good example at all meetings.
- Have a complete medical Treatment Authorization and Health History Information form with original signature for each youth and adult participant.
- Contact your volunteer coordinator for a 4-H Safety manual, Clover Safe Notes, or other safety tips.

**Experiential Learning is Learn by doing:**

Incorporate experiential learning into as many aspects of the project as possible. Experiential Learning encourages the youth to get involved with little help from the adult leader. It is direct and hands-on, uses open-ended questions to invite questions, discussion, reflection, and connect the activity to real-world examples. Providing a hands-on learning experience alone does not create “experiential leaning.” The learning comes from the thoughts and ideas created in sharing, analyzing, connecting, and applying what they learn, as they learn. For additional information on Experiential Learning, refer to the *Leaders’ Digest*.

**Making-up Missed Project Meetings:**

Decide how member may make-up a missed meeting. Some projects will not lend themselves to making-up missed meeting. Some Possible methods: Research a topic and report back to the project, 4-H Presentation presented at a meeting, attend another project’s meeting, creating and educational active for the project group.

**The Project Roster:**

Contact the Enrollment Coordinator for 4-H Staff for a project roster. The roster will list all members enrolled in the project, age, years in the project, and their contact information. All youth attending the project meetings must be on the online project roster. If they are not on the roster, they are not properly enrolled and may not be covered by accident insurance. Contact the Enrollment Coordinator or 4-H staff for corrections to the project roster.

## THE FIRST PROJECT MEETING

Your first project meeting is the most important in getting your project off to a good start.

**Duration: 1 to 1 ½ hours**

1. **Get Acquainted Activities/Games.** It is important to create a sense of safety and belonging for all members. For the first 20 to 30 minutes have the group, parents included, interact through name games, team building activities and other activities. The activity should be designed so that members can easily join in as they arrive. When a group knows each other and has bonded, they are more likely to attend future meetings.

2. **Introductions:** Introduce yourself, have your co-leader, and the Junior/Teen Leaders introduce themselves, and explain their roles. Have the members and parents introduce themselves. Include an overview of the project goals with visual aids, guest speakers, or members who have taken the project in the past. Confirm all contact information for each family on the roster.

3. **Review Project Goals and Expectations.** Invite parents/guardians to your first meeting and complete the required medical Treatment Authorization and Health History Information form for each participant. Discuss skills and knowledge to be covered during the year. Discuss how record keeping will be handled for the project, why it is important to keep records, and what information should be recorded. Review project requirements, rules, and expectations and provide each family with a copy of the *4-H Project Outline* with the following information:

- Number, frequency, place and time of meetings
- What project supplies and equipment will be needed and how they will be acquired
- Approximate costs and how expenses will be met (out-of-pocket or fundraising)
- What to bring to meetings - folder or binder, project reports, supplies or equipment.
- Dates of special activities and how to participate
- Completion date for project

Allow plenty of time to answer questions.

4. **Fun Activity** – Use a game, relay or some other fun and interactive activity to reinforce friendships and bonding. By the end of the meeting every one should know each others names.

6. **Handout project information and materials.** *Project Outline* gives an overview of what members can do in the project, answer questions, and make assignments. Handouts could include curriculum, project proficiency, *Clover Safe*, record book forms, etc.

## 7. Adjourn

8. Review what part of the meeting worked and what needs improvement with your Junior/Teen Leaders and/or assistant Leaders. See how they feel about the meeting. Help them analyze their part and your part. Be encouraging and supportive. (Do this after each project meeting.)

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## REMAINING PROJECT MEETINGS

Duration: 1 to 2 hours

### 1. **Interest Getter** (15 to 20 minutes)

It is important for members to have something to do when they arrive. The interest getter can be conducted by a jr/teen leader, who arrives 10 or 15 minutes early. Examples: get-acquainted games, mixer games, judging activities, educational videos, guest speakers, and other learning activities. The activity may or may not be relate to the skills session for the meeting. For example, at a photography meeting, camera equipment is placed on a table, and members are asked to identify the different pieces of equipment or different parts of the camera. The activity should be designed so that members can easily join in as they arrive for the meeting.

2. **Skills Session** (30 to 50 minutes) – The skills session is the backbone of the project. It is an activity period where members develop skills, knowledge, and experiences through a hands-on learning. The leader should review the subject of prior meetings as well as present new information. Members might prepare a dish, construct a simple garment, work on a craft, compare feed labels, or judge an animal or article of clothing. It is very important that each meeting have hands-on work or an activity period during which they develop or improve skills and experience new information. The instruction may be presented by a resource person, guest speaker, or by an experienced junior/teen leader. Encourage members to share and discuss what they are learning.

3. **Discussion** (15 to 20 minutes) – Answer questions, review members' project problems or concerns, discuss coming events, have members report on participation in additional project activities, and make plans for tours or field trips. Review what members are expected to do before the next meeting, the subject of the next meeting, and announce the time, date and place of next meeting.

4. **Presentations** (10 minutes) – This can be conducted by members or jr/teen leaders. The presentation may be related to the skills session, an upcoming event, introduce the topic of the next meetings or share information they learned in another project.

5. **Record Keeping** (10 to 15 minutes) – Allow time to work on calendars and Annual Project Report Forms. Help members set goals for the project. Discuss different forms of record keeping, paper copy or Online Record Book (ORB).

6. **Summary & Assignments** (10 to 20 minutes) – Giving members an assignment makes them feel more apart of the project. At the end of the meeting, ask a member to summarize what was covered and learned. Assign or remind who will be doing the interest getter, presentation, and who will bring the project equipment or refreshments for the next meeting. Each member should have the opportunity take on at least one responsibility at some point during the project. Fit the assignment to the member's abilities, interest and family support. A task can be completed by a small group or individuals.

7. **Refreshments & Recreation** – Refreshments are always appreciated. Depending on the meeting time, refreshments may be at the beginning or end of the meeting. Refreshments can be simple, a bag of apples or popcorn. As they are waiting to be picked up, it is important that members have something to do. Recreation allows time for social interaction to form friendship bonds, and opportunities to build social skills. This may be a continuation of the

interest getter from the beginning of the meeting, or additional games and activities to build social skills and bonding.

Reference:

4-H Project Leaders' Digest

California 4-H Policy and information