

Getting Started As a



4-H Project Leader



Cooperative Extension Service

University of Illinois—Urbana-Champaign

L90530

This publication was prepared by Dr. Gerald G. Gast, Extension Specialist, 4-H/youth with the cooperation of Jeannae Shier, County Extension Adviser, and Pat Yaegle, Volunteer 4-H Leader. Edited by Stephanie Hearn Walters and designed by Marisa R. Meador and Lisa Vanden Eynden.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, D.L. Uchtman, Director, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The Illinois Cooperative Extension Service provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

Getting Started As a 4-H Project Leader

Team Up with Young People Through 4-H

Young people need relationships with adults... adults who can help fulfill youths' needs of feeling good about themselves.

Young people can develop positive self-esteem by acquiring subject-matter knowledge, developing physical skills, improving decision-making abilities, and carrying out new responsibilities.

Leaders can work with individuals or groups of young people to meet these needs if they care about young people and are willing to give their time and knowledge to help them develop to their greatest potential.

The Project Leader's Role

Project leaders can help organize and support youth who are learning in a 4-H project in a variety of ways, including:

- introducing the project to members and parents
- helping members decide on things they want to do for their project work, review progress, and recognize their accomplishments
- conducting project group workshops, one-on-one teaching, tours, and/or field trips
- helping members develop leadership skills, keep necessary records, and prepare for exhibits

- informing members of additional educational activities related to the project
- participating in learning and keeping up-to-date in project subject matter.

Understanding 4-H Learning Experiences

Effective 4-H experiences are those that include:

- **Action.** Involve 4-H'ers in doing rather than watching or listening.
- **Interaction.** Provide opportunities for 4-H'ers to interact with people, things, and ideas.
- **Resources.** Guide 4-H'ers to learn what resources are available to them and how they can be used.
- **Shadow Helpship.** Help 4-H'ers, but don't do their projects for them.
- **Decision-Making.** Work with the members to set goals, plan things to do, and assess progress.
- **Flexibility.** Plan activities to meet the variety of young people's needs. Plan alternative activities and allow plans to be changed or modified.

Understanding Young People

Leaders will be more successful in their work as a project leader if they remember these things about young people:

- Individual 4-H'ers have different abilities, interests, learning speeds, learning methods, and personalities.
- Every 4-H'er is growing and needs help in this process.

As a leader, you can help members grow in skills for living, such as:

- physical abilities
- mental processes — thinking, reasoning, and decision-making
- personal development — likes, dislikes, abilities, skills, and feelings
- social development — thinking and playing with others
- self-worth — feelings of accomplishment and recognition

Understanding Families

The 4-H member's family is important to his or her success. Remember that children grow and develop as part of a family. Families have the most influence on what children learn, including their attitudes toward success and failure. Thus, families need to be involved with the 4-H member and with 4-H project activities.

Time Involved

Generally project leaders hold project workshops at least six times per year (once a week for six weeks, or twice a month for three months) for approximately two hours per meeting.

Preparing for Projects

Reviewing Project Materials

In reviewing project materials, project leaders should:

- Contact 4-H club enrollment coordinators to get project booklets. There is usually something for both leaders and members. Leaders should also ask coordinators for the names, addresses, and phone numbers of the 4-H'ers enrolled in their project.
- Review the materials to learn what the project is about and what the leaders are expected to do.
- Come up with additional ideas for things you'd like to try.

4-H Files

To successfully set up 4-H files, project leaders need to:

- Select a place like a cardboard box to store 4-H materials.
- Use this place to store:
 - leader guides
 - member booklets
 - your notes
 - project plan folders
 - member information folders with names, addresses, phone numbers, ages, etc. of members and their families. (May even include skills family members can share with the project group.)
- Save resources found in newspapers, magazines, folders, brochures, or other Extension materials.

Getting Started

To get the project under way, leaders should call a meeting of the members who will form their group and ask their parents to attend.

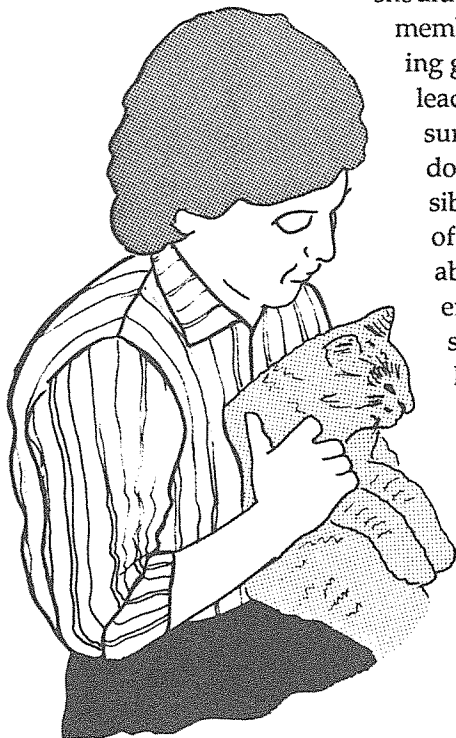
Project leaders may wish to ask members to perform certain duties at each meeting, such as providing materials, arranging work space, or providing refreshments. Leaders may ask for volunteers, or may assign duties on a revolving basis. Having members help out will develop a cooperative attitude and will give them the opportunity to participate in their own group.

The project leader, with assistance from the parents or other members, needs to help each member decide exactly what he or she wants to learn by doing. Use the 4-H project planning forms to assist you. To obtain activity ideas, the project leader and member should review any 4-H publications dealing with the project, any pertinent material that is available from other sources, and other resources in the community.

Among the topics that should be discussed during this goal-setting process are 1) what kind of help is available, 2) what materials are needed, 3) how expenses are handled, 4) when the project will be conducted, and 5) what steps need to be taken to achieve project goals.

After thoroughly discussing all the options, the member then decides on and records specific learning goals. The project leader

should encourage the member to set challenging goals, but the leader should make sure that the member does not set impossible goals in terms of the member's ability, age, experience, and family situation. (For more help in goal setting, see "Helping Members Achieve Progress," Appendix A.)



When all the members of a project group have decided their goals, the project leader should help them select materials or animals and teach members the skills needed to conduct the project. The project leader can perform these tasks or use experienced members or adults in the community. Group meetings, demonstrations, illustrated lectures, tours, discussions, and workshops are among the teaching tools the project leader could use. Group workshops of members pursuing the same project are particularly important for sharing ideas, praise, and encouragement.

Project Workshop

Project workshops should involve all members (and parents) in a learning-by-doing activity where they can cooperate with each other to maximize the opportunity to develop life skills that can be transferred to other situations like decision making. The key is doing rather than watching or listening to someone or something. Leaders have cited several successful workshop activities:

- Members helped choose the topic and plan the meeting.
- The meeting was centered on one specific topic that could be shaped into a learning-by-doing activity in the time allotted.
- Members interacted and shared ideas with each other.
- The leader found out what members knew and then built on that base by asking questions and allowing members to figure out the answers.
- The leader supported and assisted members as they worked on their projects.

The leader had a clear idea of what he or she wanted each 4-H'er to learn from the session. The leader selected a teaching method that met these goals. To be successful, leaders may want to use the "Project Workshop Checklist," Appendix B.

The First Session

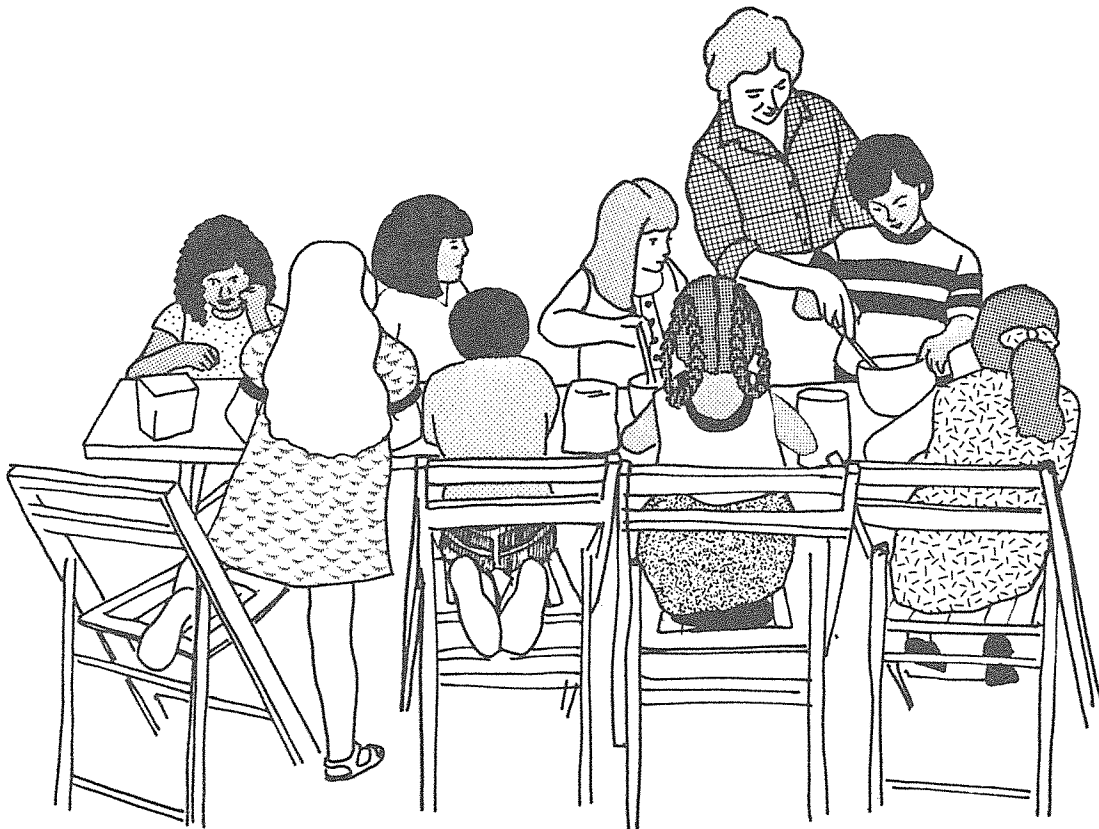
At the first meeting, leaders should:

- Introduce themselves and describe their background. Briefly explain the 4-H project and suggest some things the group may want to do in the program. Be enthusiastic and positive in their remarks so that members and their parents will anticipate a successful and useful experience.
- Have members introduce and tell a little about themselves, their hobbies, and other things they have done in 4-H.
- Be sure members have a copy of their 4-H project book and point out its principal divisions.
- Talk individually with members and their parents to decide which activities they would like to do.
- With the help of members and parents, decide how often and how many times the group will meet (it is suggested that six or more meetings be held during the year), when and where to meet, and how long the meetings will last.

The Following Sessions

At each project workshop, leaders should:

- Make sure that everyone knows everyone else.
- Have something to do for those who arrive early.
- Ask members what they have done, seen, or read about the project since the last meeting.
- Review or show projects or activities from the previous session.
- Outline what the group has decided to do at the session and why. (See "4-H Project Meeting Planning Outline," Appendix C).
- Most of the session should be spent having members make and do things in their project. The project leader provides guidance and shows members how to improve their efforts. For ways to make sessions more interesting, see "Teaching Can Be Fun," Appendix D.
- With the help of members, summarize the important points that were covered.



-
- Evaluate the results.
 - Encourage members to put into practice what they have learned. At home they could prepare a list of things to do for the next meeting.
 - Review plans for the next meeting, including the time, place, subject, and any advance preparation necessary.
 - Have a brief social period or refreshments if members wish.

Refer to Appendix E for help with planning for 4-H demonstrations and assisting members to prepare for exhibits.

Your Final Group Meeting

The following are some suggestions for the last group meeting:

- Have members invite their parents, friends, and any young people who may be interested in taking part in the project next year. Also, invite anyone who assisted with the project.
- Display the members' projects.
- Have each member discuss his or her original goals and tell what was accomplished. Leaders can assist by pointing out the things that each member learned.
- Ask each member what he or she learned from the activities that were done by the group, from any activities done individually, and from exhibiting the project or giving talks about the project.
- Have the members and their parents work in small groups to complete the "4-H Project Form."
- Help the members and their parents develop a feeling of pride and satisfaction. Suggest that the members convey special thanks to their parents and others who assisted.
- Discuss ideas for next year's 4-H project.

For a month-to-month sample meeting plan, see Appendix F.

Others Can Help

Project leaders should involve others in helping 4-H project members and parents understand that they should assist their child at home in doing various things in the project. Leaders should encourage the idea of "shadow helper". Experienced 4-H'ers are a great help when asked. People with special talents in the community may help with specific parts of a 4-H project.

Feeling Good As a Project Leader

Project leaders know they are doing a good job when:

- They see personal development in the members.
- They find themselves complimenting project members and their parents.
- They involve others in helping young people learn.
- They involve the more capable members in helping the less capable.
- They recognize that each child is unique.
- They help members measure their success against goals they've set for themselves.
- They plan activities that allow kids to talk with each other and with them.
- They help family members to be "shadow helpers" as they work with their child.
- They help 4-H'ers apply what they learn to everyday living.
- They are known to be thoughtful, concerned, respectful, and creative.

Questions Project Leaders Ask

As a 4-H project leader, is it OK just to tell members to call me if they need help?

No. The project leader should take the initiative and meet with 4-H members. First, the leader should help them identify what they want to do and who will help them. Then, the leader should assist them and be involved to provide continuous praise and motivation.

As a project leader, how do I decide what the project members will do or make?

Ask the project members what they would like to do. Agree on specific items that you will help them do and items they will work on at home. Be sure to involve parents in this decision. Ideas may also be obtained from 4-H project books, former project members, libraries, specialists in the community, subject-related magazines, and by visiting with other project leaders at training meetings.

How can I keep 4-H'ers interested and motivated?

Try "action" learning experiences where 4-H'ers do projects and accomplish goals. First, get them involved in deciding what they would like to do or make. Success is another motivator; help members be successful and help them feel good about what they are doing. Kind words and a pat-on-the-back from project leaders, other project members, and parents help to encourage members to keep trying.

How do I find out who is in the project group I will be assisting?

Talk to the organization leader or the enrollment coordinator of your 4-H club. If you would like to assist, and there are no 4-H'ers enrolled in your selected project, contact your county Extension adviser. Advisers have lists of 4-H'ers interested in each 4-H project.

As a project leader, where can I get help?

There are a number of places to get help and ideas: Attend 4-H leader training meetings in your county and be sure to share ideas with others who attend. Ask your county Extension adviser for names of successful leaders in your project; then phone some of them and get their ideas. Read the 4-H member's publication and the leader's guide in your project. Ask your county Extension adviser for ideas and other Extension bulletins about your subject.

Look in your own community for knowledgeable people and visit your library. Ask parents and older 4-H members who have been in the project for a number of years for their input.

Who pays for materials that 4-H members need in their project work?

The members and/or their families pay for materials. You might help them secure and select materials, but you are not expected to pay for them. Members can cooperate on a fund-raising program to earn money to purchase their own project materials. If you know your members have limited resources, help them find low-cost projects.

What if there are only one or two members enrolled in the project?

Your responsibility is to contact members enrolled and assist them in their project learning experience. If you desire more members, have the members ask friends to join or contact neighboring 4-H groups.

What if I don't have all the answers?

First, find out if the members can find the answer and report back. Ask community resource experts, call the library, or contact your county Extension office.

Helping Members Achieve Progress

Achieving progress by accomplishing part or all of a goal is a sure way to build self-esteem in youth. 4-H'ers write many goals, but what does a goal include?

A Goal Has Three Parts:

1. **How/What** How is a verb, the action of the goal. What describes the specific plan. Use numbers here when possible.
2. **Who** Who identifies one or more people who will help the 4-H'er accomplish his or her goal.
3. **When** When is especially important; it is the deadline and time to see how far the 4-H'er has gone toward accomplishing the goal.

Examples

How/What	Who	When
To finish my birdhouse for my Woodworking I exhibit	My Grandpa, Dad	By June 1
To select a pattern and fabric for my Clothing I exhibit	My Mom, Fabric Store Employees	By March 1
To read three articles on selecting and raising breeding gilts	My Project Leader	By December 1
Outline my project demonstration	My Jr. Leader/Helper	By January 1

Goals Should Be Ones the 4-H'er Can Control

A 4-H'er CANNOT control the ribbon he or she receives for that project.

WRONG: By June 1, have five photos ready to win a blue ribbon at the State Fair.

A 4-H'er CAN control what kind and how he or she will make the project.

CORRECT: By June 1, have five photos developed to enter as a photo series at the county fair as a Photography I exhibit.

Break Down Long-Term Goals into Shorter Ones

Long-term Goal: *On the third Saturday of each month until September, I will write down a record of dog project expenses.*

Short-term Goals: *On January 15, I will read my dog project information. On January 21, I will fill out the January expense record sheet.*

Help 4-H'er Review Goals Throughout the Year

Suggest that 4-H'ers make any changes in the **How/What**, **Who**, and **When** that seem appropriate. Congratulate them when they make progress toward accomplishing their goals.

Project Workshop Checklist

As you plan and have project workshops, take a few minutes to consider each of the following. Try to build these ideas into each session and note additional items that need to be considered.

Before the session:

- Check with your county Extension office for available materials.
- Have enough materials for all members who plan to attend.
- Plan meeting in an area with plenty of work space.
- Have materials organized when presenting a project demonstration.
- Plan how to involve members during the session.
- Know what the 4-H show exhibit expectations are for this project area.

During the session:

- Have a short get-acquainted activity.
- Explain briefly the goal of the session.
- Share specific project skill(s) expected at this session.
- Use "hands-on" learning experiences whenever possible.
- Have members demonstrate or repeat what they have learned.
- Plan for interaction among all members.
- Make plans for the next session.

After the session:

- Keep a record of activities and topics to accomplish at the next session.
- Evaluate what the members accomplished versus what you intended to demonstrate.
- Occasionally contact members to stay informed of their progress.
- Have resources and references available for members wanting additional information.

Notes:

4-H Project Meeting Planning Outline

Meeting #: *Wildlife Habitat #1*

Time: *1:00 p.m.*

Date: *Wednesday, November 12, 1990*

Place: *Smith's Garage*

What I want to accomplish:

- 1) *construct a bird feeding station*
- 2) *stimulate an interest in bird observation*
- 3) *help 4-H'ers understand the fundamentals of station placement*

Materials and equipment needed:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1) <i>instructions</i> | 5) <i>ice pick or nail</i> |
| 2) <i>plastic jugs</i> | 6) <i>county fair photos</i> |
| 3) <i>string/twine/wire</i> | |
| 4) <i>cutting tools</i> | |

Tasks I must do:

- 1) *furnish and review instructions*
- 2) *tell 4-H'ers to bring materials*
- 3) *instruct and demonstrate*
- 4) *give encouragement*

How will the members participate:

- 1) *listen*
- 2) *respond to questions*
- 3) *make bird feeding station*

Assignments for next meetings:

- 1) *put up station and fill with food*
- 2) *keep record of birds visiting station*

Announcements:

Audubon Bird Seed Sales
contact Anne Griffeth for details
(include phone number and address here)

Teaching Can Be Fun

IDEA

EXAMPLES OF PROJECT USES

1. BALLOONS WITH WORDS

Write terms pertaining to the topic you will be discussing at your group meeting on small pieces of paper. Insert these papers into balloons. Give each member a balloon, ask the member to blow up the balloon, and after breaking it, discuss the term written on their piece of paper.

Various gardening tools—hoe, spade
House plants
Nutrients
Camera parts

2. BINGO

Ask each member to prepare a bingo card on a blank piece of paper. Decide what the 5 headings will be on the card that pertains to the topic you are teaching. After the 5 headings have been selected, have each member fill in terms under each heading. Starting with one of the members, have each give an answer from their card and describe the answer given. Continue having members give terms until someone bingos.

Headings for Gardening may be:

- root crop
- equipment
- seed varieties
- aboveground crops
- food for gardens

Headings for Livestock may be:

- beef breeds
- swine breeds
- horse breeds
- sheep breeds
- dairy breeds

Headings for Foods might be:

- high fiber foods
- high sodium foods
- low calorie foods
- high calcium foods
- long preparation foods

3. OPEN-ENDED STATEMENTS

A fun way to obtain 4-H members' ideas about a topic is through open-ended statements. On a large sheet of paper, write the first half of a sentence and ask each member to write how he or she would react or complete the sentence. The statements can be quite general and can help with further discussion at the meeting.

Caring for a garden includes ...

A steer being shown at the fair should be ...

Good snack foods are ...

A good shopper needs to ...

IDEA

EXAMPLES OF PROJECT USES

4. QUESTION BOX OR BAG

In a box or bag have several items that pertain to the topic of the day. Have the members try to determine what is in the bag by asking yes or no questions. Another method would be to have each member bring a bag and have others decide what is in it.

Fabric and notions
Convenience foods
Cleaning products
Gardening equipment

5. TIC-TAC-KNOW

Prior to the meeting prepare a variety of questions that pertain to the lesson. Divide the 4-H'ers into two groups; the X's and O's. Using string to make the lines, make a tic-tac-toe board on the floor. Going back and forth between the two groups, ask the questions. If the group answers correctly, a team member can stand on the board. If they do not answer correctly, the other group has a chance to answer. To win, a team must have three team members in a row horizontally, vertically, or diagonally.

Obtain questions (other than true and false) from project booklets.

6. NEWSPAPER SEARCH

Collect a number of daily newspapers. At the meeting, have each member find all the articles, ads, cartoons, etc. that pertain to the topic being discussed.

Energy concerns
Livestock economy
Fashion
Saving money

OTHER IDEAS:

Make a collage, play charades, go on a field trip, do group reports, create a jingle, do project judging as a way of learning, or ask members to create their own new game.

Demonstrating and Exhibiting

Demonstrating

Project leaders can help members present 4-H demonstrations at project sessions, meetings, or for community groups or at other special events.

In a 4-H demonstration, a member simply shows and tells other people how to do something. Mem-

bers should be encouraged to demonstrate something they have learned in the project. Leaders may help 4-H'ers prepare their demonstration using the following outline or they can also contact their county Extension offices and ask for more information to help 4-H'ers give demonstrations.

1. Introduction. WHY?

- a.
- b.
- c.

2. Body of the demonstration. HOW?

- | | |
|----|-----|
| Do | Say |
| a. | a. |
| b. | b. |
| c. | c. |

3. Summary. WHAT?

- a.
- b.
- c.

4. Other things to consider:

- a. Background information.
- b. Manner and appearance of demonstrator.
- c. List equipment and supplies needed.
- d. Decide if charts and posters are needed.

Exhibiting

When possible, have 4-H'ers exhibit all of the project work they have done, or let each of them select his or her best. Not all pieces can be expected to turn out "good enough for the fair". Project leaders should check with county Extension offices regarding entry deadlines, when judging will take place, types of entry categories, and any other particular items related to projects.

Leaders should practice judging with members or have experienced 4-H'ers play the role of judge. Project leaders should also help 4-H'ers prepare answers for questions the judge might ask. For example:

- "How did you make this exhibit?"
- "Why did you choose to do this?"
- "What prior experiences have you had with this project?"
- "Explain how you made this exhibit."

- "What part of the exhibit do you feel could be improved?"
- "What was the most difficult part of doing this exhibit?"
- "Were there any new things you learned?"
- "How do you plan to use this exhibit?"
- "What do you plan to make next year?"

At the 4-H show or fair each item will receive a rating. Blue indicates the project meets the standards, red indicates the project needs some improvement, and white indicates the project needs much improvement.

Leaders should help 4-H'ers understand that the exhibit is not an end in itself, nor does it measure all the learning that has taken place in 4-H. It is only one measure of success. Self-recognition, self-satisfaction, and the learning that comes from doing the project are also important rewards.

Suggested Plan for Project Leaders

August

- Work with 4-H club organization leader to identify and recruit other Project Leaders for each project that involves three or more club members.
- Work with Junior Leaders to identify specific things they will be responsible for as a Project Leader or as an assistant to a Project Leader.

November-August

- Plan and carry out six or more project meetings with members and Junior Leaders. Meetings could be held every week for six weeks or twice a month for three months or once a month for six months.
- Meet with each member the month before their project demonstration is to be presented.

September

- Assist Junior Leaders to help 4-H members select and enroll in projects.

June-July

- One month prior to the 4-H show, plan and conduct a pre-show exhibit meeting. Have members bring the actual exhibit they plan to enter in the 4-H show for a trial run. Provide suggestions and praise.
- Meet with members to complete project forms and to provide positive feedback regarding project accomplishments.

October

- Inspire every member to write down the things they will do in their project(s).

