



**What is 4-H?** 4-H is a voluntary, informal education program for young people ages 8 - 18. The 4-H Cloverbud Program is a program for younger children who are 5 - 7 years old.

**Why do young people like 4-H?** 4-H provides a chance to learn new things, develop new skills, travel to new places, experience new situations, make new friends, and most importantly have lots of fun.

**What are the 8 Critical Elements for a Positive 4-H Youth Development Program for 4-H Members?**

- A Positive Relationship with a Caring Adult
- A Welcoming/Inclusive Environment
- A Physically and Psychologically Safe Environment
- An Appropriately Structured Environment
- Opportunities to Achieve Competency/Mastery
- Opportunities for Self-determination
- Opportunities to Value and Practice Service to Others
- Active Participation in the Future

**Isn't 4-H just for farm kids?** No! 4-H is for all young people, regardless of where they live, what their backgrounds are, or what interests them. Today in Illinois, most 4-H members are from urban or small town areas and they participate in projects to learn many different life skills.

**What's expected of parents?** Children need parental encouragement to get them started in 4-H and to keep them involved in the program in later years. Parents can help by:

**Sharing** - provide encouragement and take interest in 4-H projects and activities. Listen, look, and offer suggestions, but avoid the temptation to "take over" and do things. Children learn by their mistakes as well as successes.

**Preparing** - assist by helping children understand the value of doing projects, having duties in the club, and following through on responsibilities as expected by others.

**Being there** - Children gain more from 4-H by attending meetings regularly and getting involved in 4-H activities. Parents are welcome at meetings and are encouraged to stay and observe. Lend a hand whenever possible. However, remember that 4-H clubs are for kids.

**Caring** - arrange to participate whenever possible. Parents' presence shows the child that what he or she is doing is very important.

**What do the H's stand for?** Head, Heart, Hands and Health. At each meeting members recite the 4-H Pledge: "My head to clearer thinking; My heart to greater loyalty; My hands to larger service; My health to better living, for my club, my community, my country and my world."

**What are the 4-H emblem, motto, and slogan?** A green four-leaf clover with a white "H" on each clover leaf is the 4-H emblem. Green and white are the colors. The 4-H motto is "To Make the Best Better." The 4-H slogan is "Learn By Doing."

**Who conducts 4-H?** The Illinois 4-H program is conducted by University of Illinois Extension at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. County and state programs are directed by Extension staff who train and support volunteers who work with 4-H members. Offices are located in every county in Illinois. An Extension Council comprised of local residents serves in an advisory capacity to the Extension staff to coordinate, organize, and plan programming in the unit.

**Who funds 4-H?** University of Illinois Extension receives funding from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the state of Illinois, and local county boards. A variety of private donors also fund Extension.

**What does it cost to join?**

4-H has a no required uniform or projects you have to take policy. You get to pick for yourself but we do have a yearly program fee. It is \$20 for the First Child in a Family and only \$10 for the Second and Third Child with a maximum of \$40 per family no matter how many children they have enrolled in sustained 4-H Clubs, Special Interest Groups, 4-H

Cloverbud Groups, After-School Programs or 4-H Independent Memberships. **Ask about our donation discounted 4-H Program Fee Program.**

**What does the yearly 4-H Program Fee include?**

4-H Clubs, Special Interest Groups, and After-School Programs for 4-H'ers ages 8 - 18 will receive up to 3 project books per year, bi-monthly 4-H Newsletter, and monthly club meetings. 4-H Independent Members are usually junior or senior high youth who have first been a 4-H Club member and now are not able to attend monthly club meets. They meet with their parent for at least 4 times a year, receive up to 3 project books per year, and bi-monthly 4-H Newsletter. 4-H Cloverbud Group youth ages 5 - 7 have monthly meetings with at least six cloverbud activities per year and bi-monthly 4-H Newsletter. **All 4-H Fee participants will have community service and award opportunities.**

**What do 4-H clubs do at meetings?** 4-H clubs usually participate in four general kinds of activities during the meeting. They have a business meeting, special interest programs, project work, and recreation or social activities. Clubs may have a little business to conduct, may work on their projects for a while, and then play a game or two. Sometimes the whole meeting is devoted to one topic.

**What is a club?** A club is a group of five or more young people ages 8 to 18, guided by a screened adult leader. Clubs meet for at least six sessions during the year and have a planned program. Members elect officers and each member chooses one or more projects. Each club develops a yearly plan. A club may explore a single subject or several subjects. 4-H members elect club officers, conduct their own business, work together on community service activities, meet new friends, and most important, have lots of fun.

**How do I learn more about 4-H once my child joins?** The Williamson County 4-H Youth Development bimonthly Newsletter is mailed bimonthly to the 4-H member's home and is usually addressed to the child, because kids like to get mail, but it is a family newsletter for all to enjoy and read. On the county web site there is all kinds of information and activities to do for kids. In addition, ask questions of the club or cloverbud leader, the U of I Extension Williamson County office staff, or other parents and members.

**Should 4-H clubs have dues?** This depends on their want for money for club activities. If a club wants money for some activity it usually charges for that activity cost or has fundraising activities. If they raise money in the name of 4-H, the club must have a 4-H Checking Account, the county office will audit their treasury book, and the leader is required to fill out an Annual IRS Electronic Filing for Small Tax-Exempt Organizations report.

**What does a 4-H project cost?** Up to 3 project manuals are paid for by the county office. The members are responsible for the cost of supplies for projects. Some projects might use supplies from around the house while others might invest hundreds of dollars in their project, like a computer project or livestock projects. The cost of the project should be realistic to the family situation.

**How do you join?** Call the U of I Extension county office at 993-3304 and ask for Mrs. Etha Anderson to see if there is room in a club near you. If not, to start a new 4-H Club, Special Interest Group or 4-H Cloverbud Group it only takes five interested youth with a screened adult volunteer or two to lead them.

**How often do clubs meet?** Most clubs meet once a month all year long, depending on what the group wants to do but must meet at least six times a year. The 4-H year runs from September 1 to August 31. Sometimes members may have to be enrolled in a project by a certain time to be eligible for a certain activity such as the 4-H Shows.

**Where do 4-H clubs meet?** 4-H club/groups may be organized in a community or neighborhood basis and use local facilities or members' homes. Also, it can be organized within a school using the school's facilities, time, and staff. Any safe place large enough and convenient for the club/group members is a good choice.

**When do clubs meet and how long do meetings last?** This depends on the group. Many community clubs meet for an hour or two after school, in the evening, or on Saturday. The most important thing is to have a regular time to get together. School clubs may meet for an hour or two during the school day.

**How big should a club/group be?** This depends on the age of the members, the places they have to meet, and the leadership available. The ideal club/group is big enough to have fun together, but small enough for everyone to feel part of the group. The average Illinois 4-H club is 10 to 20 members. The more the kids the more leaders are needed.

**What are 4-H projects?** 4-H projects are challenging, but practical, planned courses of study with learning experiences centered around a specific subject. Members usually work on a project (subject area) for a year. Hands-on, learn-by-doing involvement is the most important aspect of a project. Making, growing, caring for, observing, and participating are all

involved in 4-H projects. Over 100+ projects are currently available in the Illinois 4-H program. The Illinois 4-H Clover lists projects available to members.

**What is an Illinois 4-H Clover?** This is a newspaper style publication that lists all of the projects that are available in the Illinois 4-H program. It includes a brief description of some of the things that members can do in the project, what project books are available, and what age or level of ability the project is suggested for. Depending on the 4-H'ers experience depends on the level taken. The Illinois 4-H Clover also has articles of interest and awards about 4-H.

**Are 4-H members expected to do their own project work?** Yes, with help. Members are expected to select at least one project and complete one or more learning experiences related to the project during the year. 4-H is a "learn by doing" program. Leaders, junior leaders, and parents may tell or show members how, but members are expected to learn to do things themselves.

**Are projects done individually or as a group?** Both. It varies among projects and among clubs. Some projects, like breads or visual arts, are more fun done as a group. Others, like making a dress or growing a garden, will be done individually. Some clubs have several project leaders and do specific project work at club meetings while others rely on parents and others to help members individually.

**What is an exhibit?** An exhibit is an object or display designed to show something that the members have accomplished. Ideally, it motivates members to learn and to have fun in a 4-H project. An exhibit is not an end in itself nor does it measure all the learning that takes place in a project. Self-recognition and self-satisfaction for having completed a project are important rewards. A ribbon is only one measure of success.

**How many leaders should a 4-H club/group have?** That depends on the size of the club and the age of the members. At least two are recommended. The larger the club/group the more leaders are needed.

**What are 4-H leaders?** Volunteer leaders are the backbone of the 4-H program. They are adults who work voluntarily with a group of 4-H members. Volunteers go through a youth protection application and screening process before they are enrolled as leaders. Additionally, volunteers receive training in skills they will need to become successful 4-H volunteers.

**Are there different kinds of leaders?** There are three general categories of local 4-H volunteers: organizational leaders, project leaders, and activity leaders. Organizational leaders guide the overall organization of the club, help it function smoothly, and maintain communications among the member families and between the club and the Extension unit office. Project leader's work with members enrolled in a specific project or project area, assisting them to plan and carry out experiences that will help them reach their learning goals in the project. Activity leaders work with members in planning and carrying out specific activities for the club/group as a whole.

**Can the same person be a project and an organizational leader?** Sure, if they have the time and interest. Sometimes big clubs/groups divide these jobs and have several project leaders to meet the interests that 4-H members have.

**What are 4-H Cloverbud Group Members?** They are youth ages 5-7 who are involved with 4-H through the 4-H Cloverbud Group program. They are involved in a number of group activities led by an adult screened 4-H Cloverbud Leader. There are no competitions but they do get to exhibit a group project at our 4-H Exhibit Show. They meet monthly with at least six cloverbud activities done during a year and have a planned program of activities they carry out together.

**What are county 4-H Shows?** Each year 4-H members have the opportunity to exhibit their projects at a 4-H Show. Knowledgeable judges, who rate projects and award a blue, red or white ribbon, evaluate projects. By using conference judging, members have the chance to learn more about their project. In Williamson County 4-H members ages 8-18 may receive premium money for up to two projects they had judged at out county shows. 4-H Cloverbud members do not compete but may exhibit a group projects at our 4-H Exhibit Show.

**What is the Illinois State Fair 4-H Jr Show?** This is a part of the Illinois State Fair, where 4-H members from all counties in IL exhibit their 4-H projects. 4-H Exhibitors are selected at county shows and must be 10 years old or older by September 1<sup>st</sup> of current 4-H year. Livestock exhibitors are not selected by the county but are enrolled by the county when 4-H'ers say they want to participate. 4-H'ers who exhibit at the IL State Fair receive a state fair premium check and a ribbon.

**What is a Junior 4-H Leader?** They are older screened youth who take part of leadership development as a junior leader taking on leadership roles for their club and/or county level. Junior Leaders might work with a specific project, or may help members with public speaking, or other areas they are especially good at, or serve on the county 4-H Expansion and Review Committee.

**What is National 4-H Week?** This is usually the first full week in October. 4-H members and their leaders promote 4-H to the community through a 4-H Window Display Contest by putting up a club/group display that promotes 4-H.

**What are Project Planning Guides?** These guides help 4-H'ers decide what they want to accomplish in their projects. Members are required to complete a project guide for each project enrolled to be club achievement members. Different forms are used depending on the age of the 4-H'er, **Planning for My 4-H Project Work**, is for 8 to 11 year olds, **Illinois Project Plan** is for members 12 to 14, and the **Illinois Advanced Project Plan** is completed by 15 to 19 year olds. Depending on how old the member is they will receive Project, Service or Leadership awards presented to them at the County 4-H Achievement Awards Program by their leader.

**What is Recognition for Achievement of Standards for 4-H'ers?** This is 4-H members recognized as they reach certain standards that have been established for Illinois. Individual project standards are by an A, B, or C ribbon rating. Project groupings of Best of Show Ribbon Awards and IL State Fair Ribbon Awards are presented at the Williamson County 4-H Shows. 4-H Trophies, medals and certificates are presented at the Williamson County 4-H Achievement Awards Program.

**What is Illinois 4-H Award Application Competition?** This is when 4-H members compete against each other by completing an Illinois 4-H Award Application (a report of their completed projects). 4-H'ers with the best applications are presented a medal or certificate at our 4-H Achievement Awards Program. This level of the Recognition for Excellence program is riskier than the other levels because there is only one winner in each Project/Award Curriculum Areas.

**What is Recognition for Progress Patch for Clubs?** This is presented to clubs who have turned in a yearly 4-H Club schedule and made progress towards their club goals. Clubs receive a Progress Patch at the County 4-H Achievement Awards Program.

**What is 4-H Standard of Excellence Award Patch for Clubs?** This is presented to clubs that have achieved 11 of the 14 club achievement standards. Clubs receive an Award of Excellence Patch at the County 4-H Achievement Awards Program.

**What is Illinois 4-H Club/Group Report Form?** This is an IL completion for Outstanding IL 4-H Clubs. 4-H Clubs receive recognition during the 4-H Day at the University of Illinois football game.

**What is Land Grant University?** The University of Illinois is Illinois' Land Grant University, which the Illinois Extension and the Illinois 4-H Youth Development program are a part of. All counties have U of I Extension representation.

**What is University of Illinois Extension?** It is an informal education program, which is a part of the land grant University of Illinois system. U of I Extension is responsible for reaching out to the citizens of the state. 4-H is one of the four core educational areas of the University of Illinois Extension programs. The four core areas are Agriculture & Natural Resources, Family & Consumer Sciences, 4-H Youth Development and Community Economic Development.

**What is the U of I Extension Council?** They are a group of county individuals who work with the county staff to determine the needs of local citizens.

**Who are the Williamson County U of I Extension staff?** Our staff includes a county director; community workers in 4-H youth development, food nutrition program, and family and consumer sciences; and secretaries. Southern Region Center U of I Extension educators are also available to support 4-H volunteers.

**Where would one learn how to be a 4-H leader?** The U of I Extension county office is the first point of contact. Call 993-3304 and ask for Mrs. Etha Anderson. After completing the screening process, the volunteer would be enrolled and placed on the 4-H leaders' mailing list. Orientation would be provided. Leaders are invited to special training meetings and provided with the materials needed to conduct a 4-H club. An experienced leader nearby may also help with questions.

**Is 4-H Online?** Yes, 4-H Is On Line! For more information about U of I Extension Williamson County Office, visit our new website at <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/williamson/> Click on the 4-H and Youth Icon for 4-H programming.

**What is the address of our Williamson County U of I Extension Office?** University of Illinois Extension, Williamson County Office, 1306 N. Atchison Avenue, Suite A, Marion, IL 62959, located just south of the Kroger Gas Store. Phone: 618-993-3304 Fax: 618-997-1542