

# 4-H Clover Kid Leader Manual



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## **Background Information**

### **The development of 5- to 7- year-olds**

What it means to 4-H programming in Missouri

#### **Why provide a 4-H program for 5- to 7- year-olds?**

Where can we find more energy or more enthusiasm than with a 5-year-old. In addition to their zest for life, this age group is learning rapidly for formally and informally. The Missouri 4-H Youth Development Program is expanding to meet the needs and harness some of the energy of these 5- to 7-year-old: the 4-H Clover Kids.

#### **The Development of a 5- to 7-year-old**

The following information is intended as a mini-guide for programming with 5- to 7-year-olds in an informal setting.

Children in this age group come in all shapes and sizes. There are many things happening to them and within them that we need to know about in order to program for them in the best ways. What are the cognitive (or thinking), physical, and socio-emotional developmental needs of children this age?

In order to program for these youths, we need to ask ourselves, ‘What is the “whole” child like?’ We also need to know where they live, where they go to school, and who their friends are. By answering these questions, we can see what is going on inside the children, as well as outside. We can get a good idea of what it is like to be their age and how to develop sound programming for them.

When considering 5- to 7- year-olds, there are a few things we need to remember about their development in general. First, although there is a lot of difference between five-year-olds and seven-year-old, there is also a lot of difference between one five-year-old and another. In general, children ages five to seven may exhibit behaviors similar to some 4- to 10- year-olds. This “gap” may be shown by children in their social and cognitive development. For example, a child may be able to read well but unable to interact with peers in a positive manner. This example points to two related facts:

1. Sometimes different areas of development are not “in sync” with each other;
2. One area of development may affect another. For example, children who don’t feel good about themselves may be capable of learning-and yet not do so.

#### **Cognitive (Thinking) and Academic Development**

What are the thinking abilities of this age group? It’s important to know that they are very much in the here and now.

- Five- to seven- year-olds are called “concrete” thinkers and need real experiences on which to base their learning. Through studying a bean seed growing in a cup, a five-year-old can learn about life, food production, or colors.
- This age group is sensitive to color; yet, they cannot think about color and a large number of attributes all at once.

- Five- to seven- year-olds are curious and eager to learn. They have many interests and are often eager to try new things. Their attention span varies and depends upon their level of interest at the time.
- Most Five- to seven- year-olds can read, although the level of reading ability may vary.

### **Physical Development**

Physically, children between the ages of five and seven are developing their large muscles by learning to gallop, skip, climb, wrestle, and hop. They are outside more than any other time in their lives and their sports interests are often beyond their skills. They need to be able to use their large muscles both to develop them and to use up the tremendous amount of energy children have at these ages. Games involving running, skipping or hopping will encourage muscle development.

They are refining their small muscle use. How much control they have with a pencil when they write their name is an indicator of how they are doing with this. Children need practice using pencils, scissors, knives, and other small utensils and tools in order to develop their small muscle control.

### **Social-Emotional Development**

Children become increasingly social between the ages of five and seven; they realize that the world doesn't begin and end with them. They develop friendships: usually with children of the same gender.

Keep this increasing need and desire to be with other children in mind. They want and need to talk and work with one another to enhance their development. Plan activities they can do together.

Children need to test out who they are and how they interact with other children. Remember, also, that they are in the process of learning social skills and will need to be with other children in order to do this.

Emotionally, children in the 5- to 7- year-old stage are firming up tendencies that began in their younger years. They want to please adults and know that they are liked. This means that what adults say to children and how they say it is important. It is important that children know when they have done a good job. Programming for 5- to 7- year-olds should address this need. Volunteers need to help children learn that when things aren't going well it is their behavior (You're goofing around too much.) that is not acceptable, not them ("You're just a bad kid".)

### **Relationships with Adults**

The most important people in the lives of 5- to 7-year-olds are their parents and teachers. Because children these ages are still so dependent on adults, they will try to please them and are usually quite cooperative. These are fairly easy years for families and schools.

When children enter school, they begin to see themselves as learners and are often receptive to new ideas and experiences. They will especially enjoy the informal situation of a 4-H club where they can socialize in ways that they may not be able to in school, and yet be learning about their expanding world at the same time.

## **Programming**

Keep the above information in mind as you program for youths, and consider the following:

- Focus on the whole child, not just a learning activity.  
All too often materials are developed with a focus on the cognitive or academic part of the child. While this is part of the child, it is certainly not the “whole” child. Activities can and must be developed which focus not only on cognitive development, but also physical and socio-emotional development of children. An example is a game like “Upset the Fruit Basket” which allows children gross motor movement while reinforcing foods and nutritional facts.
- Package the program so that both males and females will want to be involved.  
It is important that young children have time to interact with both men and women as they grow up. This allows them to experience a wider variety of people and personalities and offers them same-gender models. With a growing number of single-parent families, experiences with volunteer leaders of both genders is more important than ever.
- Design your activities so they are:
  - Hands-on, using many different senses,
  - Short, you should complete the activity within the meeting
  - Uncomplicated,
  - Stimulating to the imagination,
  - Varied,
  - Fun,
  - Open minded, so that children can approach them at their own level,
  - Make sure the activities include all developmental areas (cognitive, physical and socio-emotional)
- The materials you use should:
  - Include lots of graphic work with color,
  - Be at a first or second grade reading level
- Volunteers:
  - May be male and female adults or older teens,
  - Need to have information and training on working with youth this age, especially on development of self-esteem

Also, consider:

- Low leader/child ratios (5-8 children per adult),
- Activities for children and parents,
- Offering options,
- Limiting competition,
- Incorporating learning activities into games, songs, poems, pictures, word games, art projects and creative dramatics,
- Programming across project areas as well as within them.

Written by  
Mable J. Grimes, Ph.D.  
State 4-H Youth Specialist  
Assistant Professor of Child and Family Development

*Material for this paper adopted from “Six to Eight Year Olds: Their Development and Implications for 4-H Programming” by Christine Nelson, Ph.D., Department of Family and Child Ecology, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan (1986-87)*

## **4-H Clover Kids Club Leader**

### **General Description**

“4-H Clover Kids” is the title given to the 4-H Club model for 5 – 7 year-old-youth. The neighborhood is the base for this group. Children walk to and from the club leader’s home or other convenient location. Five to eight youth is considered the ideal number for a 4-H Clover Kids Club. The group may be boys, girls, boys, and girls, depending on the neighborhood make-up. All youth, regardless of race, sex, national origin or religion are welcome in 4-H groups. A team made up of an organizational leader plus one or more assistant leaders will provide the leadership for the club.

### **Duties**

- Meet with Assistant Leader(s).
- Organize a tentative program for the year with Assistant Leader(s).
- Set up a program schedule based on a theme with enough flexibility to allow member input. Meeting schedule is October through May. Allow for vacations, breaks and snow days.
- Hold parents meeting/
- Complete necessary enrollment forms, records, and reports.
- Arrange for meeting places and necessary supplies.
- Arrange for field trips and tours as well as necessary transportation and chaperones.
- Encourage participation
- Attend training meetings.

### **Competencies Needed**

- General knowledge of 4-H programs
- Organizational abilities
- Interest in and ability to work with youth 5 to 7 years old

### **Relationship**

4-H Clover Kids Club Leader will maintain a close working relationship with the Neighborhood Organizer, the Assistant Leader(s) and parents of the 4-H members.

### **Other**

Five- to eight-year-old youth are full of energy and love activity. The 4-H Clover Kids Club Leaders must continue to study the age group and look for new and innovative ways to involve them in meaningful activity.

### **4-H Clover Kids Club Meeting Outline**

- One hour is a good time span for Clover Kids.
- Allow time at the beginning to greet all members and make them feel welcome.
- Open meeting with the 4-H Pledge and an action song.
- Talk about and do the project activity. Remember “theme activity” does not necessarily mean that the member will have a finished product. An outdoor project, for example, would teach the members about “their own back yard”. The member will have gained understanding and awareness of the environment around them, but would not have made a finished product.

Because the members have short attention spans, be sure to keep the activity simple and have plenty of “adult hands” to help members.

- Refreshments and a short time for play and games should be a part of the meeting.
- Before going home, the 4-H’ers should help clean up and put away any clutter that was made.

### **Initiation Ceremony**

Ceremonies have special significance to every organization. Ceremonies give us a way to express the values and ideas of 4-H with dignity and beauty. It is particularly important that we initiate 4-H Clover Kids into the organization, that they understand the meaning of 4-H and are welcomed members.

The initiation may take many forms. Initiations are always made more special by inviting family and friends. The use of candles, music, flowers, and pins adds meaning to the experience for the new members.

### **Parents are Important**

Parents are a vital part of 4-H. Their cooperation is essential. Often it is the 4-H leader who gets parent and child working together on a project, linking them with each other in a new sharing experience. This is one of the biggest favors leaders can do for young people.

Leaders can help parents:

- Appreciate the goals of 4-H;
- Learn how to help their children select projects;
- Understand project requirements;
- Learn how to help their children accept success and defeat;
- Become involved with clubs;
- Assist with transportation;
- Have a role in special events.

According to recent research studies, parents are willing to volunteer to help. “Nobody asked me” is the most frequent response given by people who do not volunteer. Ask parents to become involved. Get both fathers and mothers interested and active.

When you talk with parents, you learn many things about your 4-H members. Parents also like to know about the activities of their children.

Parents are a good source of help for your program. However, your attitude in soliciting help is important. You must convince parents that you need their help. They must know that you think they are important to the success of the club program.

How to interest and inform parents:

- Involve parents in the organization of the club;
- Phone or visit parents to talk about 4-H;
- Hold 4-H meetings in members’ homes;
- Invite parents to specific meetings and events;



- Plan special events for parents.

Why is it important to involve parents?

- Parents can save 4-H leaders time and effort;
- Members like their 4-H activities better when their parents are interested;
- Parents have a feeling of contribution to the club and their community;
- Parents gain an understanding of 4-H;
- Many parents become 4-H leaders.

### **Successful Parent Recruitment**

- The first cardinal rule of recruiting is to be friendly and sincere.
- A forthright recruiter always reveals the purpose of a call or visit.
- You must prove the worthiness of the proposition before the parent will act.
- Prospective volunteers need to see some challenge in a task, if they are to undertake it.
- How the proposition will benefit the volunteers, their family, their community, their income, etc, is a key point in recruiting/
- Assure the prospective volunteers that the task is achievable.
- Before volunteers are fully committed they should know what is expected of them and when.
- Review the training and help that will be available.
- When the facts are in, get the commitment.
- As soon as the volunteers have agreed to undertake the task, you should review their immediate responsibilities.
- The final and continuing step is to say thank you and continue to give support.

### **Sample Home Helper Letter**

Dear Home Helper,

The 4-H'er in your life may ask you to be a Home Helper. 4-H Home Helpers are persons who assist members with 4-H project work.

Being a Home Helper is fun and rewarding. Parents are natural helpers. It is important for parents to be Home Helpers when 4-H'ers ask.

Grandparents, brothers, sisters, friends, and neighbors can be Home Helpers, too.

Home is a natural place for helping 4-H'ers with project work. Day-to-day home activities can help members grow and learn. These activities are natural opportunities for you to help the 4-H'ers.

You can help the 4-H'er:

- Look for thing to do;
- Choose short term, realistic projects;
- Learn basic project skills;
- Complete a project agreement;
- Read and understand directions;

- Decide how well he has done.

Being a Home Helper means your will:

- Have fun learning with a child;
- Help a child accept himself and others;
- Help a child express himself;
- Help a child know success;
- Help other family members share in 4-H;
- Feel good about yourself.

### **Positive Reinforcement**

Positive reinforcement is one of the most important factors in helping youth develop. Positive reinforcement is not easy to practice or maintain. The leader must have a good self-concept and have confidence in order to be positive in-group meetings. Positive reinforcement is the single most effective tool in motivating youth. Positive reinforcement must be practiced and be shared equally among all group members. Positive reinforcement comes in two forms, verbal and nonverbal.

The most important point to remember when using positive reinforcement is to be specific and sincere with youth. When giving positive reinforcement, let the child know why he is receiving it and mean what you say. Don't say "Johnny, you've done a good job." Tell Johnny specifically what he did. "Johnny, you did a very good job of making the carrot cake. It tastes good and looks great." Being too general with positive reinforcement may appear artificial or phony to the youth involved. Positive reinforcement is important in discipline. Youth need constant reinforcement for their positive activities.

It is difficult for most leaders to be good positive reinforcers. The reason for this is that often times society is negative. Therefore, negative statements are much easier to make than positive ones. Some examples of positive reinforcement include:

- A pat on the shoulder.
- Nodding.
- Specific verbal praise.
- Certificates.
- Writing a note home to a significant other, such as parent or friend, about the progress of a group member.
- Saying "thank you".
- Providing an opportunity for a group member to make a decision.
- Asking a group member to demonstrate skills or projects to the rest of the group.
- Providing an opportunity for the group to share their skills and projects with the community through a fair or special exhibit.
- A smile.
- An enthusiastic and encouraging comment concerning a person's work.

There are literally thousands of ways to show positive reinforcement. The effective youth leader must always be aware of the importance of positive reinforcement and practice it as much as possible. Perhaps this is the single most important function of the youth leader.

## **4-H Clover Kids: The First Three Meetings**

The Clover Kids meeting is one of the major tools Clover Kids Leaders use to help boys and girls develop and learn. The Clover Kids meeting offers the opportunity to participate in democracy in action, develop friendships, exchange ideas, explore new ideas and areas of interest, and develop life skills. The meeting is often the first contact members have with the 4-H program. For many youth, the experience in the 4-H Clover Kids Club is the first involvement they will have with 4-H, thus, the experiences in the 4-H Clover Kids Club Meeting make or break the 4-H experience for many youth.

A Clover Kids Club meeting is a place where members can have fun and learn. No Clover Kids meeting should be so concentrated with education that it lacks the sounds of laughter and friendly conversation.

### **Planning**

The 4-H Clover Kids Club Leadership Team made up of the organizational leader and assistant leader(s) should meet several weeks prior to the first Clover Kids Club Meeting and plan the first three club meetings in detail. Leadership Team Members and resource people they invite to assist will be responsible for conducting the first three club meetings. At the fourth meeting, members of the club may be asked to assist with some of the ceremonial task such as the opening ceremony and calling roll.

The first three Clover Kids Meeting should focus on acquainting club members with 4-H and getting the club off to a good start. Parent involvement is always helpful for a successful club and should be encouraged from the beginning.

### **Who will do what?**

During the Leadership Team Planning Meeting, a list of responsibilities for the first three club meetings should be developed and the list divided among the Leadership Team Members. You will need people to do the following:

- Contact prospective members and parents concerning the Clover Kids Meeting. Encourage parent participation/
- Secure and arrange for facilities for the meeting.
- Secure the needed publications and volunteers for each meeting

Plan and conduct different parts of each club meeting/ Different members maybe asked to take over some jobs beginning at the fourth meeting.

### **Suggested Outlines for First Three Clover Kids Meeting**

The following are outlines that you can modify to fit your situation. Make sure the meetings are well organized, that people on the program are well prepared and understand their responsibility, and that everyone enjoys the meeting.

## 4-H Clover Kids Club Meeting #1

Make sure parents/guardians understand that they should come to this first meeting

### Display

Before the meeting begins, set up a display of 4-H project books, materials, and other 4-H items.

### Welcome and get acquainted

Members of the Leadership Team who will preside over the meeting should welcome everyone and introduce a get acquainted activity.

### Discussion with parents and new members

Now that all of the parents and members have gotten acquainted with each other, take a few minutes to discuss with the parents the time of the meeting, where the meetings will be held, the cost of being involved in the 4-H club and the parent's role. Explain to parents that the Club is more interested in the healthy development of their child than they are in making and exhibiting projects. As such, the activities included in the 4-H club meeting will include the following meeting outline.

3:30-3:35	4-H Pledge, Explanation of Day's Activities
3:35-4:05	Theme: Activity
4:05-4:10	Clean up period
4:10-4:20	Snack period
4:20-4:30	Game, puppet show, drama or role playing

Explain that the Theme Activity is something that the whole family can work on together. You may want to show the slide set *The Family in 4-H*. this can be obtained through your County University Extension Center.

Follow this with a discussion of the piece *The Home Helper*. Encourage the families to talk about the 4-H theme activities at home and to continue participation in these activities with the home-helper and other members of the family.

### Theme activity

Because time will be short, give an example of a theme activity by conducting a ten-minute activity around one of the themes in your *4-H Clover Kids Leaders manual*. This will break up the meeting activity for the younger members and show parents a sample of the educational programs that will happen during Clover Kids meeting.

### Closing

Ask for questions and thank everyone for attending. Announce the date, time and place of the next meeting. Encourage parents to attend any of the club meetings.

### Refreshments

Serve refreshments and encourage everyone to look at the 4-H display.

## **4-H Clover Kids Club Meeting #2**

### **Business**

The Leadership Team will conduct this meeting. During the business session do the following:

- Say the 4-H pledge (ask members and parents to repeat each line after you.)
- Name your 4-H Clover Kids Club
- Decide on a regular meeting date, time, and place

### **Clover Kids Club Enrollment**

Complete the group enrollment form supplied by the University Extension Center. Ask the parents to provide assistance in completing the form with complete information on the member's name, age, and address.

### **Theme Activity**

Use a shortened version of the activity. This is an excellent opportunity to send home an unfinished project for the 4-H Clover Kids and Home Helper to complete at home.

### **Refreshment**

Serve refreshments

### **Recreation activity**

Get 4-H members and parents involved together in a recreational activity? This might include a quiet inside game or "fun" song that all can sing.

## **4-H Clover Kids Club Meeting #3**

### **Business**

Members of the Leadership Team will conduct this meeting. Begin with the 4-H Pledge, a song and roll call of members (This allows the youth to continue to learn the names of other members.)

### **Presentation of Charter**

As the 4-H Neighborhood Organizer to present the official Charter to the 4-H Clover Kids Club.

### **Initiation**

The Neighborhood Organizer of the Organizational Leader may conduct this special 4-H initiation ceremony for all new members of the Clover Kids. At the conclusion of the ceremony, see that each 4-H Clover Kid sis presented an official pin, membership card, and other material.

### **Theme activity**

Conduct a theme activity. If the activity is incomplete at the close of the meeting, allow members to finish it at home with their home-helper.

### **Refreshments**

Serve refreshments

## 4-H Traditions

### 4-H Colors

The white in the 4-H Flag symbolizes purity. The green nature's most common color represents life, springtime and youth.

### 4-H Emblem

The green four-leaf clover has a white H on each leaf to represent each of the four H's: Head, Heart, Hands and Health.

### 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.

### 4-H Slogan

"Learn to do by Doing" is the 4-H member's way of acquiring new skills and learning how to get along with others. New skills come from working with the hands. The ability to get along with others comes from working and playing with the group.

### 4-H Motto

"To Make the Best Better" is the aim of each member in improving project work and in building better clubs and communities.

#### **Clover Kids 4-H is...**

- An informal educational program through which parents, other interested adults and youth themselves can help young people develop the confidence, social skills, decision making abilities, subject matter knowledge and physical skills that will lead to a richer fuller life.
- A place where members, parents and leaders have fun, learn to work together in club meetings, activities and special events.
- A program that provides education as members learn by doing.
- Supported by 4-H educational material written and developed by specialists at the University of Missouri and Lincoln University.
- Made possible through the cooperative efforts of the United States Department of Agriculture, University Extension, and local governments.  
A small yearly enrollment fee is charged to defray cost and to provide for leader education.
- Centered around the family. All parents are encouraged to become involved in their child's 4-H Clover Kids Club.

## 4-H Clover Kid Leader Assessment In the looking glass

To stimulate your thinking, take a few minutes to reflect and answer these questions.

	YES	NO	Notes on what I might do about it
Do I really enjoy helping each 4-H member to learn?			
Have I encouraged members to share 4-H with their parents?			
Have I reviewed each member's progress with his parents?			
Am I willing to change my ideas on project work and help guide each member?			
Do I allow for individual differences among 4-H members?			
Have I expressed appreciation to others who have helped me out?			
Do I provide opportunities for 4-H members to lead others in some activity or task?			
Do I encourage members to help others?			
Do I provide the "pat on the back" that every member needs?			
Do I find what happens to the member more important than the project?			

If you could answer "Yes" to most of these questions, you are helping young people and should feel great about what you are doing.