

# New Family Orientation Guide



## **Ohio State University Extension - Mercer County**

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Extension Educator

4-H Youth Development

Dear Parents:

We would like to welcome your family to the Mercer County 4-H program. 4-H can provide an exciting, fun, interesting and rewarding experience for your children. 4-H is a family project!

Parents of 4-H members play a major role in the growing experience their children can have in 4-H. Your interest and support of 4-H programming will help your child to grow. One gets no more out of something than they put in it.

4-H needs your help and assistance and you have an opportunity to profit along with the youngsters. Find out more about 4-H so you can help your family members "MAKE THE BEST BETTER" through 4-H.

Sincerely,



Beth Guggenbiller  
Extension Educator  
4-H Youth Development

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

4-H .....is Cloverbud activities in a noncompetitive program for a child when they have reached age 5 and are enrolled in kindergarten, first or second grade as of January 1 of the current year.

4-H.....is an informal program for all youth who are at least age 8 and enrolled in 3rd grade as of January 1 of the current year.

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 to create desirable citizens and leaders. The main objective is the development of boys and girls through participation in projects, events and various activities.

## WHY DO YOUTH ENJOY 4-H?

While all youth are different, they are also alike in many ways. All people wish:

1. TO BELONG
2. TO ACHIEVE
3. TO BECOME INDEPENDENT
4. TO EXPERIENCE NEW THINGS
5. TO HAVE AFFECTION



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

## 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 the 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 interest of rural youth.

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

## HAVE 4-H OBJECTIVES CHANGED SINCE ITS EARLY DAYS?

Yes! Following the *"teach improved practices to farmers and homemakers through their children"*, ideas came from World War I and the *"food for victory"* theme. Following World War I, the *"keep them on the farm"* objective was foremost in people's minds. Food production was emphasized again during World War II.

Today, the objective is the positive 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 in the country.

## WHO OVERSEES THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE 4-H PROGRAM?

The Ohio State University Extension is a cooperative understanding by the United States Department of Agriculture, the land-grant colleges (in our case, The Ohio State University), and the Mercer County Commissioners.

OSU Extension is responsible for carrying up-to-date information from the classroom and laboratory to the people of the state, and to bring back to the university those problems that can be solved only by careful study and research.

The purpose of the county Extension program is to provide instruction and practical demonstrations in agriculture, marketing, home economics, 4-H and youth development work, and community development to **ALL** people in the county. Extension Educators work with local volunteers in conducting county programs and events.

### MOTTO

*"TO MAKE THE BEST BETTER"*

### EMBLEM

The 4-H emblem is the four-leaf clover with the letter "H" on each leaf, standing for head, heart, hands, and health.

### COLORS

The 4-H colors are green and white. Green symbolizes nature's most common color and represents life, spring-time and youth. White symbolizes purity.

### 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.

## 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 adult leaders (advisors) under the sponsorship of the 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**. Community clubs may have members interested in all types of project areas or may be a specialized club in which members take only one type of project. In Mercer County, there are specialized clubs in horses, beef and dogs. A member can take horses, beef and dogs in a multi-project club, but many members chose to join a specialized club that fits their interest.

Children in grades K-2 (as of January 1) are eligible for 4-H membership and participation. An activity rather than a project format is used with this program. This is called **Cloverbud 4-H**. All cloverbud activities are non-competitive.

## 4-H Club Meetings

### PURPOSE OF 4-H CLUB MEETINGS

The purposes of 4-H meetings are to help boys and girls:

1. Acquire new information
2. Learn creative use of leisure time
3. Develop social skills
4. Acquire desirable leadership and citizenship traits.
5. Strengthen self esteem

4-H members are given the opportunity to learn and practice group decision-making situations by using the knowledge and skills acquired at these meetings. 4-H members are expected to attend the monthly meetings. **PARENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND MEETINGS WITH THEIR 4-H'ERS.** 4-H is a family affair.

### LEADERSHIP

Adults serve as volunteer leaders. Adult leaders are called advisors. Adult advisors work with club officers in directing their club. There are three types of leaders:

1. Organizational - This leader organizes meeting location, enrollment, club program and serves as the club's contact with the OSU County Extension Office.
2. Project - This leader provides direction and support for member's project work.
3. Activity - This leader coordinates club wide activities outside of the project area.

## **HOW OFTEN DO CLUBS MEET?**

Most clubs meet 8 to 10 times between enrollment time (March 1) and the county fair. In order to be eligible to show as a 4-H member in Jr. Fair, a member must attend 6 4-H activities a year or have valid excused absences with the local 4-H club advisor. Most clubs meet monthly. Clubs are free to establish their own schedule based on what works best for the membership.

## **WHAT IS A CLUB MEETING LIKE?**

The 4-H meeting is balanced between business, educational program and recreation. 4-H meetings normally don't last over 1-2 hours, with the time divided about equally between the three parts.

## **BUSINESS SESSION**

The business portion of the meeting should be short and snappy. It should be a small democracy in action. Club officers, who are elected by the members, work with the advisors in developing their business agenda and conducting the meeting. Another skill that members learn is how to lead and conduct a business meeting.

## **WHAT IS THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM?**

This part of the program is designed to help members learn more about the subjects of general interest. 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-H'ers. Outside speakers may also present programs for 4-H meetings.

## **DEMONSTRATIONS BY THE 4-H MEMBERS**

Demonstrations are "show and tell" type presentations where the 4-H'ers share some of the fun things they've learned in their 4-H projects. Actual articles are used to show the steps necessary for a finished product. Most demonstrations consist of three parts: 1) **introduction** explains the purpose of the demonstration; 2) **body** outlines subject step-by-step; and 3) **summary** reviews important points.

## **RECREATION SESSION**

The recreation portion of the meeting is a "fun" time involving all members. Recreation will vary from challenges, group singing, dodge ball, relay races, quiet games to sports. A club officer or officers give leadership to planning and conducting the club's group recreation.

## REFRESHMENTS

Several clubs in the county serve refreshments at meetings, although they are not essential. Most often a different member or a group of members will provide treats for 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 and guidance. A club officer is usually charged with providing leadership for the refreshment part of the meeting.

## 4-H Projects

Other than age, the only requirement for 4-H membership is that 4-H'ers enroll in at least one project. There are nearly 160 projects from which to choose. Members are expected to complete the projects in which they enroll. To enroll in a project, the member and parent complete a project sign up form. This form is available from the club advisor and must be given back to them so that the completed paperwork is in the Extension Office by March 1<sup>st</sup>.

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

## WHY PROJECTS?

The project is a teaching tool that can be used to develop many desirable traits in addition to the more evident project skills.

Project work is important in developing 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 they raise. In Mercer County, the goal of our 4-H program is to develop blue ribbon children while they strive to do their best in their project work.

## WHAT ARE PROJECTS?

Projects are real-life experiences that help 4-H'ers 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-H'ERS?

Projects are important. Working with projects can produce satisfaction such as:

- < A feeling of accomplishment
- < Attention
- < Challenging of abilities
- < Excelling
- < Prestige
- < Working together as a family
- < Practice decision making
- < Price of ownership

Therefore, the objectives of 4-H projects are to:

1. Create a sense of ownership.
2. Give satisfaction of achievement.
3. Strengthen family and community ties.
4. Provide opportunities for club members to:
  - a) learn skills connected with the project
  - b) develop and understand knowledge related to the project
  - c) develop desirable attitudes for a satisfying life
  - d) assume responsibilities
  - e) provide healthful competition
  - f) make meaningful decisions
5. Provide a leisure time activity.
6. Explore career opportunities and thus the need for continued education. All the projects are in a sense career explorative, giving each member a taste of the work and responsibilities that are involved in careers related to the selected project area.



## WHAT ARE SOME GUIDES TO SELECTING PROJECTS?

Parents and the member should know and fully understand what is expected of the 4-H'er before he or she enrolls in a project.

Projects are selected before the enrollment deadline of March 1<sup>st</sup>. Usually, younger members should limit their projects to one or two choices. Older, experienced members may be able to do several different ones, including those that are more difficult.

Factors that parents and leaders should consider in making project selections are:

1. Meet the needs and interest of the member. The problem can be that in many cases the youngster doesn't really know if he would like a particular project without first giving it a try!
2. Project is in keeping with age and ability (physical and mental) of the member. Will it

challenge him educationally?

3. How much time does the member have and how much time does the project require?

What season of the year is most of the activity of the project?

4. Is the project acceptable to you as parents and does it fit into the family's needs and situation?

5. How much will the project cost?

6. Is there adequate space and equipment available?

7. Is there an opportunity for ownership and management responsibilities?

8. Are there leaders to help with the project in the club or are the parents willing to help the member with the projects?

## HOW ARE PROJECTS CONDUCTED?

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

1. Project meetings (in the local club)
2. Regular club meetings (demonstrations, project talks, etc.)
3. Tours - to visit projects of members.
4. Family activity at home.
5. Exhibiting project at show, fairs, etc.
6. Record keeping.
7. County workshops in same project areas.



## WHERE IS PROJECT INFORMATION FOUND?

All 4-H projects are listed in the *Family Guide to 4-H*. Each family should receive one copy of this 4-H resource at the beginning of the 4-H year. The *Family Guide to 4-H* includes a brief description of each project as well as a guide that indicates the difficulty level of each project.

Each club advisor will also have a copy of the *Mercer County Project Summary* which contains specific project requirement information regarding what needs to be brought to project judging and what items should be displayed at the fair. This is also available on our website.

## DROPPING AND ADDING PROJECTS

A member may drop or delete a project from their record by completing a project sign up form and marking "drop" by April 1<sup>st</sup>. This form must be given to the Extension Office by that date. Any project that the member is registered for after April 1<sup>st</sup> will be the projects that we will expect the member to bring to judging. A person may add another 4-H project by completing this same form and returning it to the Extension office by April 1<sup>st</sup>.

## 4-H PROJECT EVALUATION

The member's completed work is "graded" at an activity called *Interview Judging*. At this time, the member brings their completed project materials to the judging location and shares with a "judge" what they made and learned in the project. A time is scheduled for each member to have their project work evaluated.



### Membership Completion Requirements



At the end of each 4-H year members are evaluated on the quality of their participation. To be considered complete each member must meet a set of minimum standards. Advisors evaluate member participation based on the following criteria:

Did the member:

- complete at least one project and have it judged?
- attend at least 6 meetings that year?
- provide help to the club when asked?
- carry out duties assigned?
- complete work proportionate with member's skill level?

Those who are deemed complete then receive a certificate of achievement and credit for one year in 4-H.

### Family's Responsibility

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF 4-H MEMBER

4-H parents need to know what is expected of the 4-H member in order to effectively assist their child. The goal of 4-H is to meet the basic needs of youth and help them acquire essential life skills through planned "learn by doing" experiences. The 4-H program provides its members with many opportunities. It helps develop skills and interests. It offers trips and scholarships for those that put forth that extra effort. It is the responsibility of the 4-H member to get involved and to take advantage of the opportunities provided in 4-H.

Some of the major responsibilities of the 4-H member are listed below:

1. Select a 4-H project with the help of your parents.
2. Read the 4-H project book you receive and do the activities in the book.
3. Attend and participate in 4-H club meetings and activities.
4. Attend and participate in county, district, and state activities, workshops, and programs when possible.

5. Help plan and support 4-H club activities - community service, fund raising, etc.
6. Read the 4-H mail that comes to your home. Share this information with your parents.
7. Keep a current and up-to-date 4-H calendar of meetings and activities.
8. Ask parents to remind you of upcoming events and due dates.
9. Ask your parent, relative, or other adult to serve as a 4-H project home helper to assist you with your 4-H project.
10. Serve as an officer of the club or on a committee when asked.
11. Since most groups or clubs are judged by the behavior of individual members, it is the responsibility of the 4-H member to conduct him/herself at all times during 4-H meetings and activities in a manner that would be a credit to the individual, the family, the 4-H club, the county and the state.
12. Keep your parents informed of your 4-H activities.

### Responsibilities of Parents

Parental interest and encouragement are major influences on young 4-H'ers. If parents are involved right from the beginning, chances are increased for a successful 4-H experience.

**Some of the major responsibilities of 4-H parents are listed below:**

1. Assist child in selecting a 4-H project he or she can do and will enjoy. Consider if this project fits your family's finances, in terms of time and money!
2. Read the project book your child receives. Find ways you can help your child with the project. This means you don't do the work for the child, but you guide and assist.
4. Attend 4-H club meetings and activities with your child as often as possible. This will help you understand what is happening with club activities.
5. Read the 4-H mail that comes to your home. 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. Join our Facebook group- Mercer County 4-H
6. Encourage your child to attend 4-H meetings and activities. You should make sure your child has a way to get to and from the events.
7. Provide light refreshments for your child's 4-H club meeting when requested.
8. Lend your kitchen, backyard, living room, garage, or basement for an occasional 4-H club meeting when requested.
9. Share a hobby or interest of yours with 4-H club members during a meeting or workshop.
10. Assist your child in keeping records on his or her 4-H work. A 4-H member is to keep a written record of what they do in 4-H. This includes 4-H project work, demonstrations given, awards received, leadership positions held, and community service involvement.
11. Keep a current 4-H calendar listing meetings, deadlines, upcoming specials 4-H

activities and other important 4-H happenings.

12. Ask questions. If you cannot attend a club meeting, ask your child what happened. Almost every club sends home written information with their members.
13. Help your child find a way to participate in special events that interest him such as county contests, camps, junior fair, displays or shows.
14. Get to know your child's advisor or advisors and offer assistance to them. Remember, everyone involved is a volunteer! Offer to assist the 4-H club advisors with specific tasks.
15. Plan ahead. Project work takes time and effort. Waiting until the last minute is never a good idea.
17. Avoid scheduling family vacations which conflict with your child's 4-H schedule.
18. Don't relive your childhood experiences through your child.



### HOW DO I REACH OSU EXTENSION?

\*The OSU Extension, Mercer County office is located at:  
220 W. Livingston Street Room 252B.  
Office hours are Monday through Friday - 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

\*Our phone numbers is **419-586-2179**. Fax is **419-586-3367**.

*We have voice mail if you cannot reach us during work hours.*

\*Look for information on our website at: <http://mercer.osu.edu>  
Facebook: Mercer County 4-H

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The  
**Power**  
of Youth

