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UC 4-H Volunteer Educators' Guide: For Those Facilitating 4-H Educational Experiences

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UC 4-H Volunteer Educators' Guide: For Those Facilitating 4-H Educational Experiences

Welcome to 4-H

Thank you for volunteering to share your time and expertise as a 4-H volunteer educator. There are many reasons to become a volunteer: Some people want to become involved in their children's activities, others want to support and educate children in their community, some have skills to share, and others want to help youth reach their fullest potential. Regardless of the reason, the University of California (UC) is glad you have joined our team.

The **4-H Volunteer Educators' Guide** will help you understand your role and responsibilities as a 4-H volunteer educator. This guide is for volunteers who facilitate educational experiences in community club projects, afterschool club programs, day camps, special interest (SPIN) clubs, teenagers-as-teachers (teens-as-teachers) programs, and other educational experiences. You do not need to read the guide from beginning to end. Look for the topics that interest you, or that pertain to where you are in a project or program you are working on. That said, it might be useful to become familiar with the topics in this guide so you can refer to them later.

The purpose of 4-H is to help young people discover and develop their potential by learning to set goals, make plans and decisions, overcome obstacles, build self-confidence, and understand others.

4-H Vision

A world in which youth and adults learn, grow, and work together as catalysts for positive change.

4-H Mission

The University of California (UC) 4-H Youth Development Program (YDP) engages youth in reaching their fullest potential while advancing the field of youth development.

UC 4-H provides meaningful opportunities for all youth and adults to work together to create sustainable community change.

UC 4-H engages young people in three primary content areas: civic engagement and leadership, healthy living, and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.



What is 4-H?

4-H is the largest youth development program in the nation, operated by the Cooperative Extension System—a century-old partnership between the U.S. Department of Agriculture, public land-grant universities, and county governments. The University of California administers the 4-H Youth Development Program in California; the program's statewide vision is implemented locally through county-based academics and professionals.

The 4-H mission is to “engage youth in reaching their fullest potential while advancing the field of youth development” and to realize the vision of youth becoming “healthy, happy, thriving people who make a positive difference in their communities.”

4-H uniquely prepares young people to step up to the challenges of a complex and rapidly changing world. The purpose of 4-H is to help young people discover and develop their potential by learning to set goals, make plans and decisions, overcome obstacles, build self-confidence, and understand others. Over the past one hundred years, 4-H has created leaders who make positive changes to improve their communities—and will continue to do so for the next hundred years. 4-H does this by combining high-quality educational content with a process designed to empower youth to achieve their dreams and contribute responsibly to our world.

4-H members are young people aged five through eighteen. 4-H is open to everyone and provides equal chances for participation. Staff and volunteers work together to ensure equitable opportunities for all. Youth can take part by joining a community 4-H club, participating in a special interest group or a sponsored school enrichment activity, attending a camp, or following a 4-H curriculum in an existing afterschool program. 4-H offers an opportunity to enjoy learning with family and friends.

Learn by doing—a cornerstone of 4-H

“Learn by doing” is both the 4-H program slogan and a foundational philosophy of 4-H. Educational experiences, such as those found in 4-H projects, SPIN clubs, or teens-as-teachers programs, are where learning by doing takes place. Through these educational experiences, youth learn skills that help them thrive by building, making, constructing, and exploring. This learn-by-doing



approach, known as experiential learning, is the educational basis for 4-H projects and activities.

Educational experiences in the 4-H program vary—but regardless of the topic, these learning opportunities should focus on integrating science and engineering, civic engagement, healthy

living, and leadership. Any area of interest to a youth can become a 4-H educational experience, and we can integrate the focuses mentioned above into any topic! As a 4-H volunteer, you will use the learn-by-doing philosophy to help youth develop into responsible, self-directed, productive adults.

A 4-H educational experience

- consists of planned work in an area of interest to the youth
- is guided by an adult educator
- is aimed at planned learning objectives that are attainable and measurable
- is summarized by some form of recordkeeping

Most 4-H educational experiences occur over a period of several weeks or months during a year. We require a minimum of 6 hours of instruction to complete an educational experience, such as a project or specific program, although some experiences may require more time.

The educational experience that 4-H youth select should be based on

- their interests, needs, and time available
- suitability to the area in which they live
- the availability of necessary tools and equipment
- the youth's financial resources (or resources made available by their club or program)

As a 4-H volunteer educator, and with the help of 4-H youth serving as junior or teen leaders, or teen teachers, you may organize a sequence of meetings, field trips, visits by guest speakers, or related activities to help youth deepen knowledge and skills related to their educational experience. You may or may not be an expert on the topic, and it is perfectly fine to bring in guest speakers and learn right alongside youth. While we do not require adult caregivers to attend, caring adults enhance learning. Communicate clearly what sort of participation you expect from parents and guardians and what additional support you need. It is important that 4-H youth do the activities themselves for the sake of learning, fun, and engagement.

4-H emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are essential elements of 4-H's goals related to positive youth development and organizational sustainability. Diversity is the presence in the 4-H program of differences in race or ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and more; equity concerns promoting justice, impartiality, and fairness within the 4-H program; and inclusion is ensuring that people from diverse backgrounds feel welcomed and that 4-H is truly inviting to all. We can think of DEI as the lenses in a pair of glasses. These glasses help you see things from a new perspective and become more aware and effective as a 4-H volunteer. With these glasses, you can contribute to ensuring that all 4-H learning opportunities, including 4-H activities, are inclusive, equitable, and diverse, so that all youth in your community feel welcome.

Throughout this 4-H Volunteer Educators' Guide, you will see that we have highlighted opportunities to

put on these "DEI glasses." You will examine potential barriers to participation within the 4-H program; consider the ways in which 4-H is or is not diverse, equitable, or inclusive; and learn potential ways to reduce obstacles often experienced by community members. The goal is to create positive and respectful learning opportunities so all youth feel appreciated, welcomed, and celebrated.

DEI lenses help us recognize that California youth represent a diversity of races, ethnicities, nationalities, gender expressions and identities, sexual orientations, physical and mental abilities, and religions. As an inclusive 4-H program, we hold ourselves responsible for creating a 4-H community that honors and includes all youth; for creating a place that welcomes all youth so they may learn, grow, and thrive; and for creating and delivering programming that is sensitive and culturally competent and responsive.

The 4-H Youth Development Thriving Model

Youth development programs play an important role in supporting and shaping the lives of young people. Research has shown that the 4-H Thriving Model of Positive Youth Development (developed by Mary Arnold, published in 2020) forms a solid foundation for the 4-H approach to positive youth development.

The 4-H Thriving Model predicts that youth thrive when they take part in 4-H programs that are supported by caring relationships with adults and high-quality educational experiences. Thriving youth achieve key developmental outcomes. These developmental outcomes, over the long term, help young people grow into capable, community-oriented adults. Exceptional 4-H programs embrace the concept of developing sparks (personal motivation); focus on program quality, with an emphasis on belonging; and foster youth-adult partnerships in which adults care about youth, challenge them to grow, and share power with them.

The 4-H Youth Development Program provides 4-H volunteer educators with in-depth training in the 4-H Thriving Model (fig. 1). The information provided here is an overview.

The 4-H developmental context

As a 4-H volunteer educator, you help youth thrive when you:

- provide a place for youth to explore their passions and interests—their **sparks**
- emphasize five key elements of **developmental relationships**
 - express care—demonstrate to individual youth that they matter to you
 - challenge growth—in supportive and helpful ways, encourage youth to learn, grow, and get better through practice and effort
 - provide support—help youth complete tasks and achieve goals
 - share power—treat youth with respect and ensure that they have a voice in things that affect them
 - expand possibilities—connect youth to people, places, and organizations that broaden their world

- consistently improve program quality, with a focus on belonging

Research shows that youth programs must be implemented well if they are to make a positive difference in the lives of youth. Program quality includes:

- physical and psychological safety
- appropriate structure
- opportunities to belong

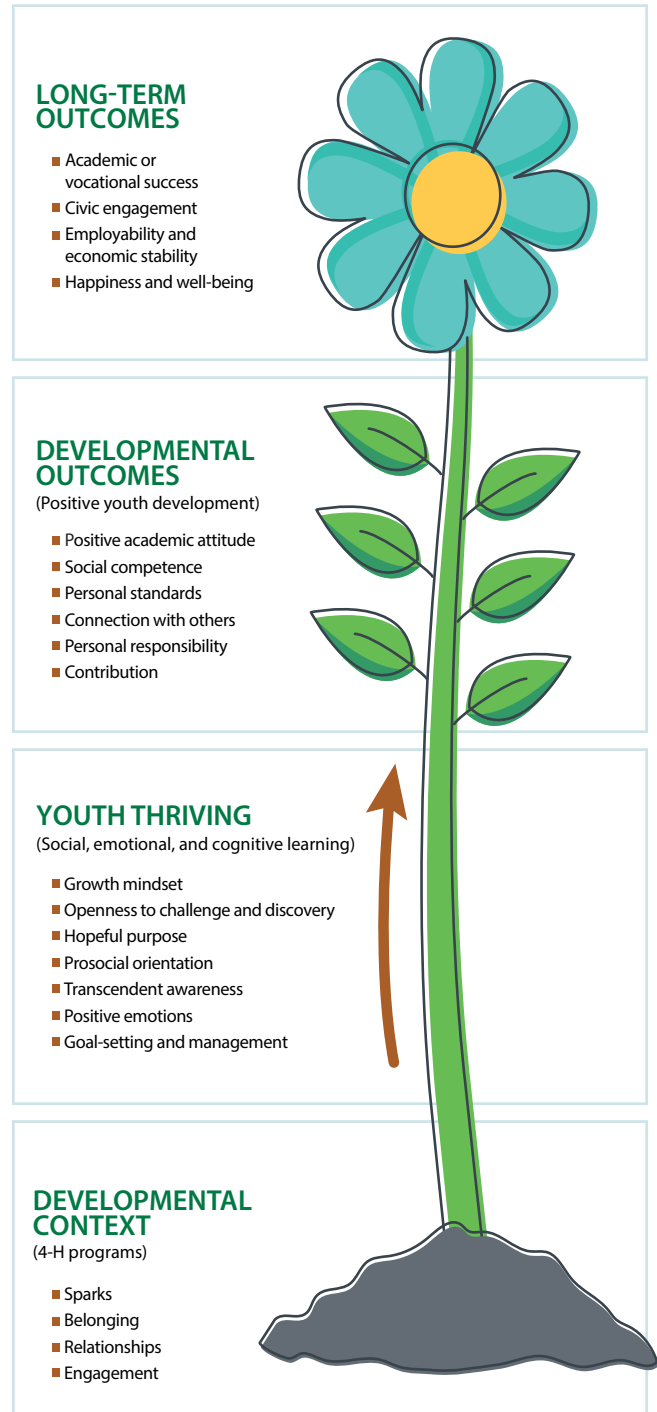


Figure 1. 4-H Thriving Model.

- positive social norms
- support for mattering (that is, youth are respected for their ideas and opinions—they matter)
- opportunities for skill-building
- integration of family, school, and community

Components of a thriving trajectory

Research shows that when youth participate in high-quality 4-H programs, they thrive better.

Indicators of thriving include the following elements:

- **openness to challenge and discovery**—developing an intrinsic motivation and willingness to take on new challenges
- **growth mindset**—cultivating a growth mindset that emphasizes effort in learning over innate ability
- **hopeful purpose**—believing in a hopeful future and purpose in life
- **transcendent awareness**—being connected to something greater than the self—something that provides meaning and purpose in life and shapes everyday thoughts and actions
- **prosocial orientation**—demonstrating the positive social values of respect, honesty, responsibility, empathy, and helping others
- **positive emotions**—expressing and managing emotions appropriately
- **goal-setting and management**—setting goals, managing them, and persevering toward goal achievement

Thriving youth reach key developmental outcomes

Youth taking part in 4-H

- demonstrate academic motivation and pursue academic achievements
- display social competence
- demonstrate high personal standards
- make contributions to others
- connect with others
- demonstrate personal responsibility

Diversity, equity, and inclusion lens

Youth may advance their thriving trajectory in ways that may differ from one's own expectations and experiences. Be ready to adapt your activities to youth's developmental readiness and to where youth are in their own growth, learning, and contexts (school, family, and so on). Be aware that people from different cultures don't necessarily manage emotions in the same way. Check in with your participants and their families to plan your activities and program. It is important for you to know, for example, that some cultures—because of their collective mindset—prioritize family needs above the individual needs of family members. Please keep in mind and honor those differences when working with youth.

It is also important to keep in mind that not all youth start in the same place. Some may face social, family, economic, or community challenges that may impede their ability to thrive in your 4-H environment. Be flexible and adaptable with youth and families, changing requirements and accommodating needs when possible.

The most important thing you can do to foster an inclusive environment is to be a caring and supportive adult who *always* helps youth know they belong in 4-H and asks for their input in program planning.

Long-term outcomes into adulthood

Youth who achieve youth development outcomes are more likely to

1. achieve continued academic, career, and vocational success
2. contribute to others through civic engagement
3. establish employability and economic stability
4. find happiness and well-being

Apply what you learned

All 4-H educational experiences should provide youth opportunities to learn and practice the components of thriving. No matter the subject of the educational experience, one or more of these areas of thriving should be part of the youth experience.

For each of the three categories shown below, list two ways you can provide a developmental context.

Help youth identify and grow sparks.

1.

2.

Provide a quality program with an emphasis on belonging.

1.

2.

Be caring, provide challenges, and share power.

1.

2.

When you pay appropriate attention to the items listed above, you provide **developmental context** for youth in 4-H.

Read the prompts below. Using the blank lines, describe how you could incorporate the factors shown in bold into your educational activities.

- **Challenge and discovery.** Thriving youth have the desire and ability to explore, try new things, and take on challenges. How can you encourage youth to try new things and challenge themselves?

- **Growth mindset.** Thriving youth learn from mistakes and try different strategies to achieve success. How can you help youth celebrate their mistakes?

- **Hopeful purpose.** Thriving youth have a sense of hope and purpose and see themselves on the way to a happy and successful future. How will you demonstrate a sense of hope and purpose for youth?

- **Transcendent awareness.** Thriving youth feel connected to something greater than the self—something that provides meaning and purpose in life and shapes everyday thoughts and actions. What opportunities can you provide to help youth feel connected to something greater than themselves?

- **Positive emotionality.** Thriving youth are positive and optimistic and can manage emotions in ways that lead to health and well-being. When youth struggle to manage their emotions, what can you do?

- **Pro-social orientation.** Thriving youth see helping others as a personal responsibility and live up to the values of respect, responsibility, honesty, kindness, and generosity. Thriving youth care about and give back to their communities. What strategies will you use to ensure that youth show these values?

- **Goal management.** Thriving youth set goals, know how to manage them, and persevere in achieving their goals. They also make self-regulatory decisions that lead to better short- and long-term success. When youth reach roadblocks to their goals, how can you help them?

Program content—civic engagement and leadership, science and engineering, healthy living

The focus of a 4-H educational experience may be any topic that, through safe and meaningful experiences, will help youth learn and develop. We encourage volunteers, regardless of the primary content area of the educational experience, to interweave into every activity civic engagement and leadership; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); and healthy living. The 4-H program focuses on three primary content areas:

Civic engagement and leadership

Topics in civic awareness, community service, service-learning, leadership, public speaking, and global citizenship

Engaged and informed individuals, critical to maintaining American democracy, are people willing and able to take part in government, nonprofits, and civic discussions. 4-H educational experiences support youth in learning about, and taking part in, active civic engagement. 4-H may also help youth learn about their cultural heritage, take part in government, and respond to the needs and rights of others through responsible individual and group social action. Youth need opportunities to deepen their leadership skills. 4-H offers ways for youth to serve in leadership roles—such as being junior or teen leaders for projects, teens-as-teachers in afterschool programs, and camp counselors at summer camp—and also offers ways to learn responsibility, communication, group facilitation, and public speaking.

Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)

Topics in agriculture and life sciences, family and consumer resource management, environmental education, technology, engineering, and shooting sports

Developing STEM knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes helps youth make sound personal decisions, prepares them for the workforce, and provides opportunities for youth to be active participants in science-related issues. 4-H educational experiences combine the strengths of experiential, hands-on education with the benefits of engaging youth in science and engineering practices, allowing youth to actually do science (and

not just learn science facts). By offering science programming in out of school-time settings, we provide youth with a variety of free choice and hands-on learning opportunities that promote excitement about investigating natural phenomena.

Healthy living

Topics in nutrition, physical health, safety, social and emotional health, and mental health

Youth need help learning how to live a healthy life. They need to learn healthy eating habits, physical fitness, emotional regulation, mindfulness, and the ability to develop and maintain positive relationships. With growing concerns about childhood obesity, social and emotional well-being, healthcare, and other health-related issues, the 4-H program can play a role in helping educate youth about health issues and allowing them to take an active role in their future.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion lens

Get to know the youth and families in your 4-H community (for example, a club, program, or group). Spending intentional time getting to know your youth participants and their families will help you be mindful of the cultures and family backgrounds of the youth in your group. It is also important that you spend time examining your own political and personal biases and learning to refrain from using language that is derogatory or belittling to any person or group in our diverse society. Practice using inclusive and supportive language. Start with Words Matter, a publication of British Columbia Public Service, www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/careers/all-employees/working-with-others/words-matter.pdf. Seek opportunities to expand your own understanding of cultural differences and implicit biases. Consider taking the Harvard University Implicit Association Test, implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/education.html. Help members of your group establish group norms that are positive toward and respectful of all participants. Discussing the Youth Member Code of Conduct, <https://ucanr.edu/sites/UC4-H/files/4715.pdf>, is a good place to start.



Learning in 4-H—experiential education

The *process* of education is often even more important than the *product* or subject. The ways volunteers engage youth in the material is a critical component of helping young people to learn and grow. As a 4-H volunteer educator, you should be a facilitator of learning rather than a teacher of content.

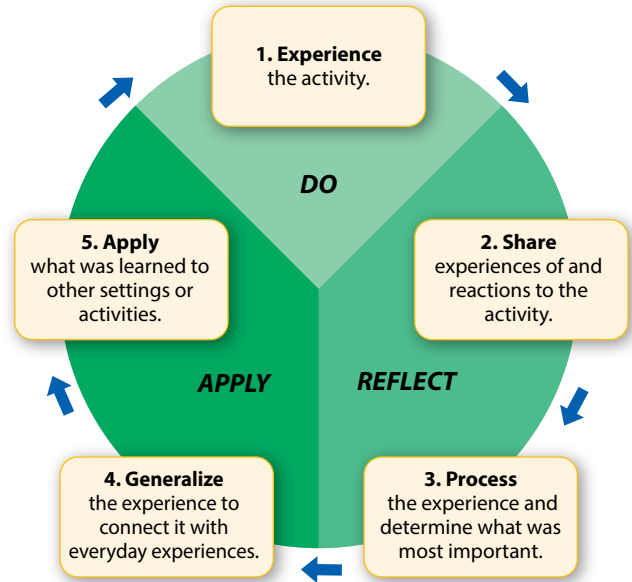
Learning method

4-H embraces a learn-by-doing and hands-on approach to learning called **experiential learning**. The basics of experiential learning include the following methods:

1. hands-on experiences that involve youth in moving around and handling materials
2. asking broad questions that invite further discussion and interaction
3. allowing youth to reflect on the experiences they had during the learning activity
4. encouraging participants to actively reflect on and discuss the activity making connections between the activity and real-world situations
5. applying the outcomes of the activity to one or more independent situations

Experiential learning cycle

The three key components of experiential learning are **experience**, **reflection**, and **application**. Among the models of experiential learning in the 4-H Youth Development Program that encompass the three



Source: Pfeiffer, J. W., and A. C. Ballew. 1988. Using structured experiences in human resource development. UATT Series, vol. 1. San Diego, CA: University Associates.

Figure 2. Model of experiential learning.

components, the most widely practiced (fig. 2) uses a five-step cycle. The five steps are described below.

1. **Experience: Do it!** Begin with a concrete experience. The activity can involve an individual or a group, but in either case it involves doing something with little or no help from the volunteer educator. For example, you might ask youth to rank items, asking questions such as “Which product costs more?” You can create exhibits, role-play, give a demonstration, problem-solve, or play a game.

2. **Share: What happened?** Get the group or the individual to talk about the experience just completed. Encourage youth to share reactions and observations. Ask them to answer the following questions, letting the group talk freely:
 - What did you do?
 - What did you see, feel, hear, or taste?
 - What was the hardest part of the experience? The easiest part?
3. **Process: What's important?** Analyze, reflect on, and discuss the experience. Youth should talk about the themes, problems, and issues they discovered in the experience and how they handled them. Discuss how the activity creates questions. Ask more questions! Then analyze the experience further.
4. **Generalize: So what?** Support youth in finding trends or common lessons in the experience that can apply to the real world, not just to the specific topic. Identify key terms or real-life principles that capture the meaning of the experience.
5. **Apply: Now what?** Talk about how the new information can apply to everyday life now or in the future. Apply what the youth learned in a similar or different situation. Practice what was learned. Providing a hands-on learning experience does not by itself create “experiential learning.” The experience itself comes first. The learning comes from the thoughts and ideas created in sharing, processing, generalizing, and applying the experience.



Inquiry-based learning: Deepening the learning experience

4-H educational experiences should involve youth-planned and youth-led investigations into phenomena, with minimal instruction from the volunteer. We call this approach science inquiry, or inquiry-based learning. When using inquiry-based learning, the key is to let youth seek answers to questions rather than giving them answers. Activities led in an inquiry-based manner help youth actively question, observe, discuss, reflect, and manipulate objects in the environment. When using inquiry-based learning, youth will be engaged in the following practices:

- asking questions and defining problems
- developing and using models
- planning and carrying out investigations
- using simple equipment or tools to gather data
- analyzing and interpreting data
- using math and computational thinking
- constructing explanations and designing solutions
- engaging in argumentation, based on evidence
- obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information

We can use both closed and open questions to guide the process of science-inquiry learning, but volunteers should use more open questions than closed questions. Characteristics of the two types of questions are shown below.

- Closed questions
 - are fact-based, or are based on previously learned information
 - promote limited discussion
 - might require only a yes-or-no response
 - are useful for testing knowledge and checking retention of information
 - usually begin with words such as *who, what, when, where, list*
- Open questions
 - have no single or correct answer
 - promote discussion and interaction
 - stimulate thinking and creativity
 - promote speculation and formation of hypotheses
 - encourage more questions from learners

- can be answered from an individual viewpoint
- usually begin with the words *how* or *why*

- taking part in a field day in which youth receive feedback and learn new skills

Extend the learning

Volunteers can extend learning through a variety of leadership opportunities, field days, presentations, and recordkeeping activities. Extended learning opportunities include

- service-learning opportunities in which young people work together to identify community issues, find partner agencies, develop a plan to address issues, implement projects, evaluate their work, and share outcomes
- presentations in which 4-H youth practice public speaking and receive feedback
- keeping records in 4-H Record Books and receiving feedback
- acting as a 4-H junior or teen leader, or teen teacher, which allows youth to serve as role models or co-educators in a 4-H educational experience
- exhibiting 4-H work at an event to receive feedback
- participating in a conference

Diversity, equity, and inclusion lens

Having youth share experiences with each other in 4-H helps them feel connected to one another. The results of reflecting on those shared experiences can be very different for different people. When youth share and process, it is important that you listen attentively and value each member's reflection.

Stay open to different ideas if youth share different experiences or use different words to describe what happened during the activity. If you need to clarify anything, do not hesitate to ask—doing so demonstrates to youth that you care and want to fully understand what youth are sharing. Finally, keep in mind that the ways youth generalize and apply what they learn can be very different for different individuals, depending on their family life, culture, and other experiences. Use these opportunities to demonstrate how 4-H values both similarities and differences.

Apply what you learned

How would you include each step of experiential learning in a specific educational experience?

Experience:

Share:

Process:

Generalize:

Apply:

Honoring individual differences—ages and stages of youth development

As a 4-H volunteer educator, you will serve as a mentor, coach, teacher, resource, partner, and positive role model for youth. Each role involves skills and knowledge of best practices, both of which can help you succeed while working with youth. In order to best support youth, you must understand that youth grow and mature at different rates, which affects how you teach them and what learning experiences you choose to use. Keep in mind that when youth mature, they do so physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially. Encourage youth to gain new skills, knowledge, and abilities; to feel safe about trying new things and learning from successes and failures; and to branch out socially to build new or additional relationships.

You will use a variety of teaching environments, methods, and styles to best meet the needs of the individuals you work with. Get to know the youth in your group and how they learn. Analyze how they respond to different learning and teaching methods. Development during childhood and adolescence can vary from one youth to the next because youth grow and develop at varying rates. Some youth may gain certain capabilities earlier than their peers. Some may outpace their peers in physical growth but lag behind in other developmental areas.

Youth characteristics

In the 4-H program, youth are grouped into four age categories.

Primary members (5–8 years old)

Primary youth must be 5 years old by December 31 of the program year. These youth are naturally curious about their immediate environment. They rely on sensory experiences, have short attention spans, depend on adults, and seek adult attention.

See the following resources:

- Primary 4-H Member Adult Volunteer Guide, ucanr.edu/sites/UC4-H/files/4718.pdf
- Primary Member Fact Sheet, ucanr.edu/sites/UC4-H/files/4719.pdf
- Kindergarten-3rd Grade Programs in 4-H, ucanr.edu/sites/UC4-H/files/296347.pdf



Diversity, equity, and inclusion lens

In addition to all the other lessons that youth learn in 4-H, they learn to interact with others, regulate their emotions, and practice new skills that help their brains develop. They may even use muscles that they've never used much before.

While the ages and stages of youth development help us understand generally acceptable developmental benchmarks, children develop at their own speed. Many factors contribute to their development. If you have a youth member with physical, social, emotional, or cognitive challenges, check with the parent or guardian to see what works at home or at school to help the child learn. For example, if a youth is easily upset or overly excited by lots of activity, talk with the parent or guardian about how best to accommodate the child.

You may need to think about adapting your lessons or meeting locations to suit the capabilities of individual members. If your meeting space won't accommodate a youth member who uses a wheelchair, you may need to relocate or modify your meeting space. Remember to ensure that all youth are accepted, included, appreciated, and celebrated.

Be mindful that not all youth identify themselves as *he* or *she*. Use inclusive language. Instead of "Hey, you guys..." or "Hey, boys and girls..." say "Hey 4-H'ers..." or "Hey, everyone..."

If you need help with adaptations, be sure to ask for help from UCCE 4-H personnel.



Junior members (9–10 years old)

Junior youth must be 9 years old by December 31 of the program year. These youth favor concrete thinking, are beginning to use reasoning skills and abstract thought, and enjoy both cooperation and limited competition.

Intermediate members (11–13 years old)

Intermediate youth must be 11 years old by December 31 of the program year. These youth are experiencing physical, emotional, and social changes; can be highly self-conscious and self-critical; can experience changes in body image that may cause anxiety and embarrassment; need to find acceptance from both peers and adults; and enjoy competition.

Senior members (14–18 years old)

Senior youth must be 14 years old by December 31 of the program year. These youth are more independent; exhibit an increased willingness to accept responsibility and fill leadership roles that involve skill; and seek individual identity—yet also seek status within their peer groups.

Youth development

Characteristics of children’s development typically fall into four developmental categories. When you develop activities, it is important to consider—as a starting place—what children can do at each age. It is also important to remember that individuals do not develop at the same rate. Below, grouped into categories, are some issues to consider when working with children of various ages.

	Characteristics	Implications for activities
Ages 5–8: Primary 4-H members		
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth are just learning to master physical skills. They have better control of large muscles (large motor skills) than small muscles (fine motor skills). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects and activities are messy. Provide youth physical activities such as running, jumping, and playing games.
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth are learning how to be friends, and may have many friends. Fighting occurs, but usually does not last long. Toward the end of this phase, boys and girls tend to prefer being in groups with their own gender. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small-group activities allow children to practice social skills but still allow for individual attention. Role-playing can help children gain empathy. Encourage children to participate in mixed-gender activities.
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth at this age tend to be self-centered. They seek adult approval and seek to avoid punishment. Youth are sensitive to criticism and dislike failing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide activities that foster cooperation instead of competition. Plan activities that allow everyone to experience some success. Provide encouragement rather than criticism.
Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth at this age are concrete thinkers who base their thinking in reality. They cannot multitask well. They are more interested in doing things than in getting a good end result. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide activities that take a short time to complete. Focus on the process rather than the final product. Allow for exploration and inquiry.

Characteristics		Implications for activities
Ages 9-10: Junior 4-H members		
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth at this age are actively moving all the time. They are starting to master fine motor skills. Females tend to mature earlier than males. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide active learning experiences that allow movement. Avoid competition between males and females.
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth at this age don't always understand others' viewpoints but try to make others happy. They strive to please adults with successful project completion instead of gaining satisfaction from completing the project itself. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use group learning as much as possible. Encourage older mentors (for example, teens-as-teachers) to work with this age group. Plan some learning experiences involving groups whose members are of the same sex identity, but avoid competitiveness between the two groups.
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth at this age start to explore their sense of individual identity. Comparisons with other youth can damage self-confidence. Justice and equality are important issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid comparing youth with one another. Help children identify their own strengths. Emphasize progress compared to past performances.
Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth at this age are starting to understand some abstract thought. They become immersed in subjects that interest them but change interests rapidly. They are able to understand new ideas, if related to previous experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use simple and brief directions and learning experiences. Offer a wide range of activities to ensure many experiences of success.

Characteristics		Implications for activities
Ages 11-13: Intermediate 4-H members		
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large and fine motor skills are well developed. Youth at this age are concerned about body image. They start to show rapid changes in appearance and often grow quickly. They are interested in sports and active games. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide experiences that involve positive body image, etiquette, and grooming. Avoid comments that criticize or compare stature, size, shape, or other aspects of physical appearance. Encourage active and fun learning experiences.
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth at this age are concerned about grooming and being liked by peers. They are moving away from dependency on parents. They are interested in activities that involve all sexes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide experiences that lead to self-discovery and encourage getting along with others. Parents may need help understanding that their children's shift in interest to peers instead of parents is a sign of growth. Provide opportunities for mixed-group activities that youth plan themselves.
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth at this age can be very self-conscious and critical. They may experience moodiness. They desire independence but still need adult help and support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan activities that build competence and help develop individual skills. Ignore some of the drama that comes with this age. Accept youth's feelings and do not shame, embarrass, or criticize them. Encourage youth to work with adults and older teens.
Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth at this age tend to reject solutions from adults. They are beginning to think more abstractly. They can think about thinking and use logic and cause and effect. They can plan and evaluate their own work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve youth in setting rules and planning. Ask questions that involve predicting something or solving problems. Offer youth opportunities to plan and expect them to follow through. Help them evaluate outcomes.

	Characteristics	Implications for activities
Ages 14–18: Senior 4-H members		
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large and fine motor skills are well developed. • Youth at this age are concerned about body image. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide experiences around positive body image, etiquette, and grooming. • Avoid comments that criticize or compare stature, size, or shape (physical appearance).
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth begin to search for intimacy and may romanticize. • They want to take on leadership roles and desire respect. • They are able to make commitments and follow through on them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for youth to plan projects and activities. • Place emphasis on personal development.
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth at this age are developing a sense of identity and an evolving moral sense. • They begin to enjoy their own uniqueness but still seek approval from peers. • They feel that their viewpoints are the most accurate even though they understand different viewpoints exist. This may cause conflict and moodiness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan activities that allow youth to try different roles. • Provide opportunities to explore different opinions and viewpoints. • Be willing to be wrong and acknowledge the error (using the error as a teaching opportunity).
Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth at this age start to master abstract thinking and can deal with several concepts at the same time. • They learn to process more complex problems, develop and test theories, make inferences, and apply information and ideas to other situations. • They are able to consider different perspectives on a given issue. • They tend to lose patience with meaningless activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve youth in making and carrying out plans. • Involve them in decision-making processes and advisory groups. • Offer vocational and career exploration activities. • Allow time and activities for youth to explore and express their own philosophies.

When considering the age-related characteristics of youth, it is important to select an age-appropriate curriculum. Some things to consider when selecting activities are:

- **The required reading level.** Select a curriculum that aligns with the reading level of youth.
- **Large-muscle and small-muscle control.** Select activities that reflect the physical capabilities in motor movements of the age group you are working with.
- **Product versus process.** Younger youth place more emphasis on the end product while older youth focus more on the process of the activity.
- **Amount of time for completion.** Younger youth have a shorter attention span, so select shorter activities for younger compared to older youth.



Be in the know—a look at 4-H lingo

4-H looks a little different in each county. So that you can easily get information you need, it is important to know who people are, what they do, and where in the organization they fit. In addition, we use acronyms and other words that may confuse a new 4-H member. The following lingo may help you navigate the organization more easily.

People

4-H Community club leader (CCL): In the Community Club Program, the 4-H Community Club Leader is a volunteer who assumes responsibility for helping youth plan, conduct, and evaluate the functioning of an individual 4-H Club. Leaders also work with other volunteers in the club to coordinate projects. They explain club, county, and state 4-H policies to the club membership.

Community education specialist (CES): Community education specialists represent the University of California in the day-to-day operations and decisions of county 4-H Youth Development Programs. They help interpret 4-H policies and work directly with volunteers in the development of the community club program, as well as assist with educational outreach. Titles may vary by county.

Regional program coordinator (RPC): Regional program coordinators supervise CES staff and help develop consistent program and policy implementations in an assigned multicounty area.

Youth development advisor: The youth development advisor develops applied research and educational programs that benefit all youth in a county. Another title used for this role is youth, families, and communities advisor.

County director (CD): The Cooperative Extension county director leads and is responsible for all UC Cooperative Extension programs and employees in a county.

Junior and teen leaders: In the Community Club Program, youth may volunteer as junior or teen leaders, assisting adult volunteers in leading 4-H projects. Junior leaders are between 11 and 13 years old. Teen leaders are between 14 and 18. 4-H junior and teen leaders get opportunities to learn about the qualities and competencies needed to be a leader. Junior leaders provide help while teen leaders assume more challenging leadership roles.



Programs

Note: Programs vary by county. We encourage you to familiarize yourself with the programs offered in your county. Also, if we don't offer a certain program currently, we might offer it in the future.

Afterschool clubs: Afterschool clubs are organized in afterschool settings, or in existing programs that serve youth in a specific school, program, or setting. 4-H staff administer these clubs. In some cases, teachers or afterschool staff volunteer to assist with the Afterschool Club.

Camp: 4-H may host day camps or overnight residential summer camps. In these camps, older youth often lead activities but partner with adult volunteers and staff who specialize in camp activities.

Community clubs: Organized in local communities and open to all youth and families, community clubs provide opportunities for youth to learn valuable skills that confer lifelong benefits and to contribute to their communities through 4-H projects guided by 4-H adult volunteers. 4-H community clubs are safe places where youth can learn recordkeeping, practice decision-making, and take part in diverse educational activities related to club projects and governance.

School enrichment: In school enrichment, youth receive 4-H curricula or other educational materials in a group or classroom during school hours. Youth are under the direct supervision of school personnel. An example of this is embryology activities that are delivered by teachers in their classrooms.

Special interest (SPIN) clubs: 4-H SPIN clubs engage youth in a specific topic of interest and offer youth opportunities to develop mastery in the topic. Volunteers who are experts in the content area often facilitate SPIN clubs. SPIN clubs offer topics that we may not offer in 4-H community clubs or other models.

Teens-as-teachers: In teens-as-teachers programs, teenagers from the ages of 14 to 18 teach 4-H curricula to younger youth, who are often taking part in an afterschool program.

Structures and groups

It is important for you to become familiar with the groups and structures in your county. Groups make decisions that affect which activities youth take part in, or not; handle county finances; and provide different learning experiences for youth. Not every county has a volunteer management organization (VMO) or a teen council. Descriptions of some groups and structures follow.

Cooperative Extension: University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) is an organization sponsored by UC as part of a partnership between the university, the United States Department of Agriculture, and local county governments. The University of California assigns university employees to county offices, where they provide various services and programs, including the 4-H Youth Development Program.

UCCE county offices: UCCE county offices house UCCE staff and programs in space provided by local county governments. County offices are the local centers for enrollment, as well as for programmatic and informational services, related to the 4-H Youth Development Program.

State 4-H Office: Staff members at the State 4-H Office provide leadership in the statewide operation of the 4-H Youth Development Program, as well as in the development and interpretation of university policies.

County 4-H councils or management committees/boards: County 4-H councils or management boards are countywide organizations made up of volunteers and teen youth. They plan, implement, and evaluate county 4-H activities in support of UCCE 4-H personnel. The relationship between volunteers and personnel is a partnership. Another name for these groups is volunteer management organization.



Diversity, equity, and inclusion lens

Working with other community-based organizations is a great way to introduce youth in your group to a variety of experiences, opportunities, and cultures. Think of organizations that may be making an impact in your community in areas that complement what youth are learning in your group. Invite someone from such an organization to a 4-H activity to share what the group is doing to make a difference. Before the interaction with the organization, have the 4-H'ers learn about the organization and the community members involved in and affected by it. This will allow youth to be actively engaged—to be curious and ask questions—when meeting organization representatives. Help youth identify how to use the skills they learn in your group to make a difference in their community. Who can they help? How can they help?

Youth or teen councils: A youth council, or teen council, is a countywide organization made up of older youth. The councils may plan, implement, and evaluate activities in the county. Councils may have different names, depending on the county.

Recognition

Volunteers play a critical role in helping youth succeed. By being aware of recognition items, you can better prepare youth in your county.

Year-completion pins and stripes: Once a year, we recognize—with a year-completion pin and stripe—every youth who completes a 4-H project. As discussed in 4-H Steps to Success, 4h.ucanr.edu/files/210544.pdf, a youth who receives this

recognition must be in good standing, complete a minimum of 6 hours of project instruction (or more, as required by the volunteer), and complete an annual project report.

Achievement ranks: Achievement ranks make up a recognition system that provides individual youth with an opportunity to set goals and record progress. Youth earn achievement ranks by completing a set number of activities or challenges.

County ambassador: Ambassador is the highest rank a 4-H youth can achieve at the county level. Ambassadors represent their county, visit 4-H clubs in their county, network with other organizations in the community, and organize and run county events and ceremonies.

Youth age groupings

Youth in your group fall into one of the membership levels below, which depend on age. We base 4-H membership levels on the child's age as of December 31 of the program year.

- **Primary members (5–8 years old):** Primary 4-H'ers must be 5 years old by December 31 of the program year. Youth enrolling or turning 9 on or after January 1 must take part as a primary youth until June 30. For safety reasons, primary youth may not enroll in large-animal activities (for example, activities involving cattle and horses), but may enroll in small-animal activities, which include rabbits, poultry, and cavies. A few other policies affect primary youth; please see the Primary Member Fact Sheet, ucanr.edu/sites/UC4-H/files/4719.pdf, for more information.
- **Junior members (9–10 years old):** Junior youth are eligible to enroll in all 4-H projects and activities.
- **Intermediate members (11–13 years old):** Intermediate youth may enroll in all 4-H projects and activities and can serve as junior leaders in the Community Club Program.
- **Senior members (14–18 years old):** Senior 4-H'ers may continue in the program until December 31 of the calendar year in which they turn 19. Senior youth may enroll in all 4-H projects and activities and can serve as teen leaders in the Community Club Program.

Financial information

You can cover expenses for learning activities by asking each youth to bring funds to each meeting, or by fundraising. Discuss the activity costs with parents at the beginning of the program year and determine the best way to cover activity costs to make activities accessible to all interested families.

County and state 4-H rules apply when fundraising is necessary.

- No raffles, wagering, or gambling is allowed.
- **All** funds must be deposited into a 4-H club, county council, or UC account.
- All equipment and materials become the property of the University of California.
- There may be limits on what a 4-H group may purchase or own. Check with the UCCE county office.
- The UCCE county office must approve all fundraisers before they take place. To get a fundraiser approved, fill out the Fundraising Approval Form, ucanr.edu/sites/UC4-H/files/19878.pdf, and submit it to your UCCE county office prior to the planned fundraiser.

Please see the financial section of the 4-H policy manual for further information about 4-H fundraising and financial policies.

Working with 4-H youth

As a 4-H volunteer educator, you have many types of learning opportunities to choose from when working with youth. This section describes some of the various ways you can engage 4-H members.

Youth learning opportunities in 4-H

Youth may learn in the 4-H Youth Development Program through a wide variety of experiences. Below are a few highlighted opportunities.

Fairs. Fairs provide opportunities for youth to exhibit the best of their 4-H work from the past year and see how their skills have grown. Fairs also inform the community about the 4-H activities taking place in their area. 4-H does not run most fairs. Instead, each fair is governed by a set of rules that families should carefully review. It is the responsibility of 4-H youth members to enter their 4-H work in county, district, and state fairs. Youth should contact their volunteers to get necessary forms, get help with completion of forms, and get required signatures. It is the youth's responsibility to find out the rules of a fair and follow them, while also representing 4-H and following the 4-H Code of Conduct.

Identification. Many young people enjoy learning how to identify 4-H work-related items, such as the names of kitchen tools or parts of an animal's anatomy. Learning basic terms may help a young person gain self-confidence and knowledge. If possible, when you lead an identification exercise, have the actual items available for youth to work with in a real situation.

Judging. Judging is an activity that helps develop a youth's knowledge and understanding of qualities



and standards in projects. When youth participate in judging, they make observations and learn how to communicate their opinions about their observations.

Presentations. A presentation is a form of teaching in which youth show or communicate their knowledge and skills to others. Presentation can take the form of a talk, demonstration of a skill, public speaking, performance of a skit, or other forms of communication. A good goal is to have every youth give at least one presentation during the year. Check out the 4-H Presentation Manual for more information.

Projects. A project is a focused area of work that a youth enrolls in each year. Several youth working in the same subject area become a project group under the guidance of a 4-H adult volunteer. A 4-H club can include several project groups. An individual youth may be the only person enrolled in a particular project and youth may choose to enroll in multiple projects.

Recordkeeping. The 4-H Record Book gives young people practice in planning and measuring progress and is a valuable and educational component of 4-H. The 4-H Record Book process is based on educational criteria and is approved by 4-H staff. To find the most recent version of the 4-H Record Book, visit the 4-H website, 4h.ucanr.edu/, and look under "Youth Member Resources." We do not require 4-H Record Books for membership or for participation in 4-H activities, such as club events and activities, or for attending 4-H camps or conferences. Record Books may not be used as a requirement for awards and scholarships.

Service learning/civic engagement. In service learning, youth plan a project that involves objectives for learning, performing a service, and analyzing and drawing lessons from the experience. Civic engagement involves learning about a community issue, taking action on that issue, and diving deeper into causes

underlying the situation. A youth or group of youth undertakes a service-learning or civic-engagement activity to help others and to make their community a better place to live. Visit the 4-H webpage, 4h.ucanr.edu/, to download a service-learning guide so that you don't need to start from scratch.

Showmanship. Showmanship is an opportunity for youth to show competency in presenting themselves and their 4-H work. It also involves behaving in a positive and supportive manner toward others.

Tours. Young people like to go places and see things. Commercial enterprises such as bakeries, feed yards, retail stores, and restaurants often welcome 4-H group tours of their operations. Ahead of time, youth should prepare questions about the business to ask the owners or operators. Also, youth may give tours of their 4-H work, discuss their experiences, display their work, or give a presentation to others, including other youth, adults, or those interested in learning more about their 4-H work.

Apply what you learned

Use a variety of learning methods or opportunities in your 4-H group.

- List how you will use various learning opportunities in your activities.

- List the 4-H resources you will use to aid in your activities.

- List the ways in which you will involve community resources in your activities.

The volunteer lesson plan

Below are two sample lesson plans. One lesson plan outlines the components of a first meeting. The other lesson plan outlines what a typical meeting may look like. These are suggestions and may be changed to fit the needs of your 4-H learning opportunity.

We recommend that all project leaders, each year, complete The Project Leader Annual Plan, docs.google.com/document/d/1X3XrwOMYBzkkUR2C-57CcVUDjdRX_URJy/copy. When you complete this plan, share it with families and your county 4-H office. This creates a welcoming environment, reduces confusion and complaints, and may potentially reduce your liability in the case of an accident.

Your first meeting

The first meeting of the year is the most important meeting in terms of getting off to a good start. Use the **first meeting outline**, shown below, to organize the meeting. Invite youth, assistant volunteers, junior and teen leaders, teen teachers, and parents to your first meeting. Review with everyone the calendar for the duration of the activity, activity goals and expectations, activity costs, rules, activity requirements, and other information. Allow plenty of time for questions and answers. A typical meeting outline appears below the first meeting outline.

First meeting outline

Duration: 60 to 90 minutes

1. Introduce yourself and others. Take attendance.
2. Facilitate an icebreaker activity to help everyone learn names and become more comfortable and to help foster a sense of belonging.
3. Review activity goals and expectations. Discuss learning objectives and topics to be covered during the duration of the activity (a whiteboard, posters, or sheets of blank newsprint are helpful). Include an overview of the activity that includes visuals, speakers, or youth who have done the activity in the past. Invite youth to share what they would like to learn in the activity.
4. Discuss requirements and rules.
5. Create group agreements (also known as ground rules).
6. Introduce the junior/teen leaders or teen teachers and discuss their roles.
7. Discuss the following issues with the group:
 - number, frequency, place, and time of meetings
 - how supplies used at meetings will be acquired
 - how to cover expenses
 - what to bring to meetings
 - dates of special activities, and how to take part
 - completion date
8. Facilitate a fun and interactive activity related to the subject area.
9. Hand out materials, answer questions, and make or give assignments.
10. Adjourn.
11. Review the meeting with your junior/teen leaders, teen teacher, or assistant volunteers. See how they feel about the meeting. Help them analyze their roles. Be encouraging. (Do this after every meeting—to make the best better!)

A typical meeting outline

Duration: 60 to 90 minutes

1. Icebreaker (10 minutes)—Ideas include name games, judging contests, relay skill games, films or slides, a tour of the host youth's 4-H work, and guest speakers.
2. Skills session (30 minutes)—Spend the bulk of the meeting time doing something—that is, learning and practicing a skill through an experiential activity. Be sure to include the elements of experience, sharing, processing, generalizing, and applying.
3. Discussion (10 minutes)—Use this time for questions and answers, coming events, comments on presentations given and assigned, and youth reports on problems related to the subject or activity.
4. Presentations (10 minutes)—Ask one youth to give a presentation at each meeting.
5. Recordkeeping (5 minutes)—Allow time for youth to work on calendars and report sheets.
6. Summary and assignments (5 minutes)—Have youth summarize the day's meeting. Plan for the next meeting—where, when, and what to bring.
7. Refreshments and recreation—Recreation and refreshments are optional, but providing them helps keep the youth interested.



Diversity, equity, and inclusion lens

As you start to communicate with youth, you need to be aware that communication styles vary among different families and cultural groups. Some individuals might prefer direct communication while some others are more comfortable with indirect communication. For example, a young member might not feel comfortable asking a question directly of an adult, and might prefer instead go to a teen leader to request that the teen leader ask a question of the project leader. Allow such situations to happen. Similarly, some youth might demonstrate respect by staying quiet; silence doesn't mean they are disengaged. Create guidelines and expectations, and prompt youth to participate, but adapt to the group's preferences. When in doubt, check individually with youth and their parents about their experiences in meetings. Ask for their feedback.

Volunteer checklist. As you prepare your plan, complete each item on the 4-H Project Leader Checklist, <https://ucdavis.box.com/s/9npt5wsocsec7mocma8ejec7m1vuftgh>.



University of California
Agriculture and Natural Resources | 4-H Youth Development Program

Project Leader Checklist

This checklist is designed to assist 4-H project leaders in preparing to implement their project(s) prior to meeting with youth (Revised 10/2017)

#	X	Item
1		Have you met your Club Leader(s) and discussed your plan for implementing your project(s)?
2		Have you completed all the steps for becoming a 4-H adult volunteer? (1. Filled out the application and paid fees; 2. Fingerprinted if a new 4-H adult volunteer; 3. Completed required online orientation)
3		Do you have a list of the youth who are going to participate in your project(s) and are they enrolled in the 4-H project(s) you are going to lead? (Your Club Leader or Volunteer Enrollment Coordinator can check for you)
4		Have you developed a project description and lesson plan for what will be covered on which dates and if there will be any cost for participants?
5		Do you have a UC ANR user agreement with the facility you will be utilizing? (Your county staff member must assist you in obtaining this document)
6		Do you have completed and signed youth and adult treatment authorization/health history form on hand for all participants? Youth: http://4h.ucanr.edu/files/4726.pdf Adult: http://4h.ucanr.edu/files/20100.pdf
7		Have you provided the dates, times, and location of your project meetings to the youth enrolled in your project?
8		Is there at least one additional adult that will be on site with you at each meeting?
9		If you are going to fundraise or secure grant support for your program, have you received approval from your county 4-H staff and County Director?
10		Is there ample drinking water available?
11		Have you reviewed the "4-H Project Leaders Digest" available online at: http://4h.ucanr.edu/files/4462.pdf
12		Do you have "Annual Project Report" forms on hand for the 4-H members to keep track of their project participation? http://4h.ucanr.edu/files/220272.doc



Photo: Nicole Marshall-Wheeler.

Online learning and digital communications

Online learning environments may provide opportunities for youth to explore a subject, experience growth, and get practice in the subject—just as physical learning environments do. When using online learning environments, you must continue to plan program goals and a sequence of learning experiences, employ experiential education, and promote positive youth development.

Volunteers not familiar with online learning may feel apprehensive or confused about choosing technologies—and about planning an approach that blends synchronous and asynchronous learning activities (that is, learning activities that occur in meetings and those that occur between meetings). You should focus on setting program goals that can be reached through an engaging sequence of group and individual activities conducted during and outside meetings. Selecting specific technology tools should come second.

- Young people often have experience in using digital tools, media, and websites. Tap into their expertise and invite them to offer options—and then, as a full group, select digital tools to enhance the learning experience.
- Youth do not need to learn all the content of the lesson—just the core concepts.

- The 4-H program includes the environment where the learners are, whether it be the home, a library, a coffee shop, or another location. When youth learn online, the educator has less control over the learning environment. Therefore, the educator must plan activities and learning experiences accordingly.
- Remember to focus on relationships. Youth-adult relationships are an essential part of learning. 4-H youth need positive, sustained, and trusting relationships with caring, competent, and committed adults, in a traditional in-person program or in an online program. Educators should be present in three ways: Creating connections with youth and noticing their interests and abilities; facilitating the learning experience; and supporting each young person's development of knowledge and skills.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion lens

Youth come from many different environments. Some may be uncomfortable sharing with others where and how they live. Do not require youth to turn on their cameras during virtual meetings. Be mindful that not everyone has access to internet services and other technology. When youth do not have resources that help them access virtual learning opportunities, provide alternate ways for them to participate and achieve the learning goals of the 4-H activity. Online learning should not be the only option provided to youth (unless such a situation is impossible to avoid). Before you finalize your learning experience, consult with youth and their families about both their interests and the resources needed for participation. Such discussions allow you to prepare to accommodate everyone in a virtual setting.

Taxonomy of experiential e-education

Volunteers may find the taxonomy shown in figure 3 useful for planning a virtual educational experience. The figure's lower levels may be considered passive learning and the higher levels may be considered active learning. Volunteers should aim to provide higher levels of learning.

For more extensive information on creating virtual meetings, see the 4-H Virtual Toolbox on the state 4-H website, ucanr.edu/sites/UC4-HResources/Virtual_Projects/.

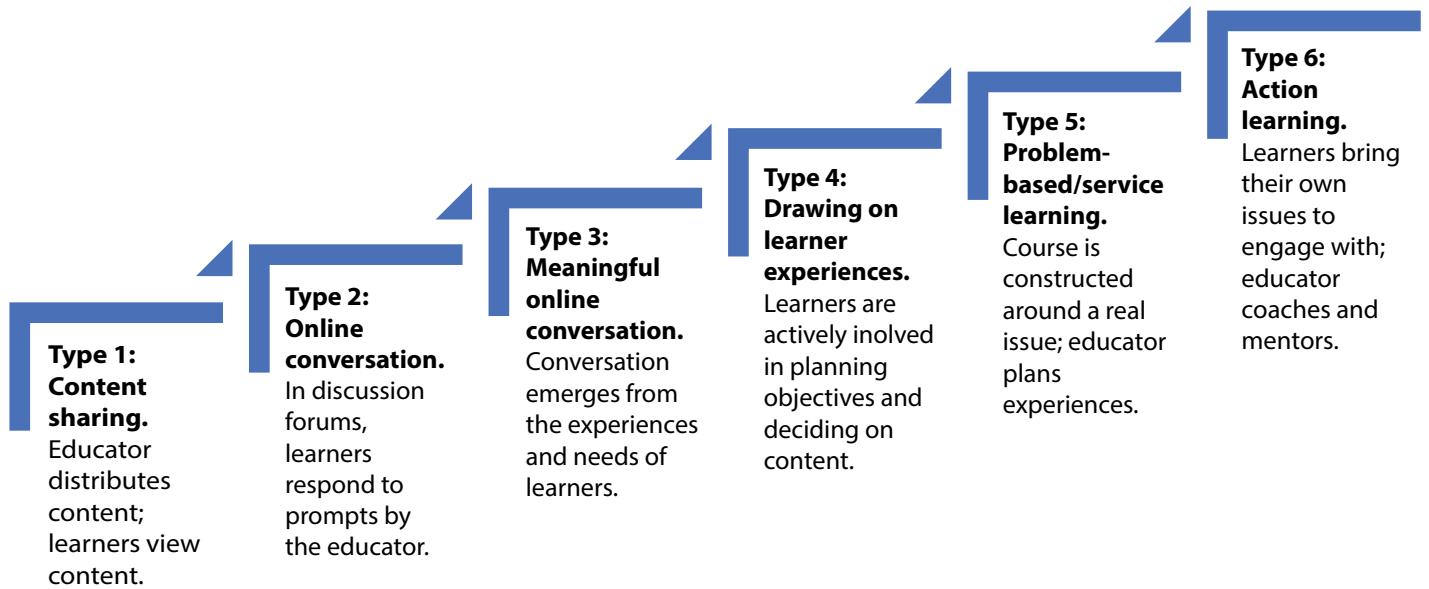


Figure 3. Online learning taxonomy

Youth-adult partnerships

Youth and adults working together are an important part of the 4-H program. In **youth-adult partnerships**, youth work with adults as equal partners, each relying on the other's strengths to help them grow together. This contrasts with situations in which adults assume complete authority—or adults take a hands-off approach and youth do everything. In 4-H, youth actively plan, teach, and lead projects, activities, and events. Youth who experience youth-adult partnerships often benefit from learning leadership, decision-making, teamwork, and communication skills, as well as from feeling a greater sense of responsibility and community.

Ladder of participation

There are multiple degrees to which youth and adults can collaborate. Hart's Ladder of Participation (fig. 4) shows the different degrees of participation that may pertain when youth and adults work together. The 4-H program recommends that you aim for rungs 6 to 8 on the ladder and avoid rungs 1 to 3.

Successful youth-adult partnerships include these elements:

- **Relationships.** Youth and adults need to foster relationships and build a cooperative environment. Learn about each other before you start the activity. This builds trust.

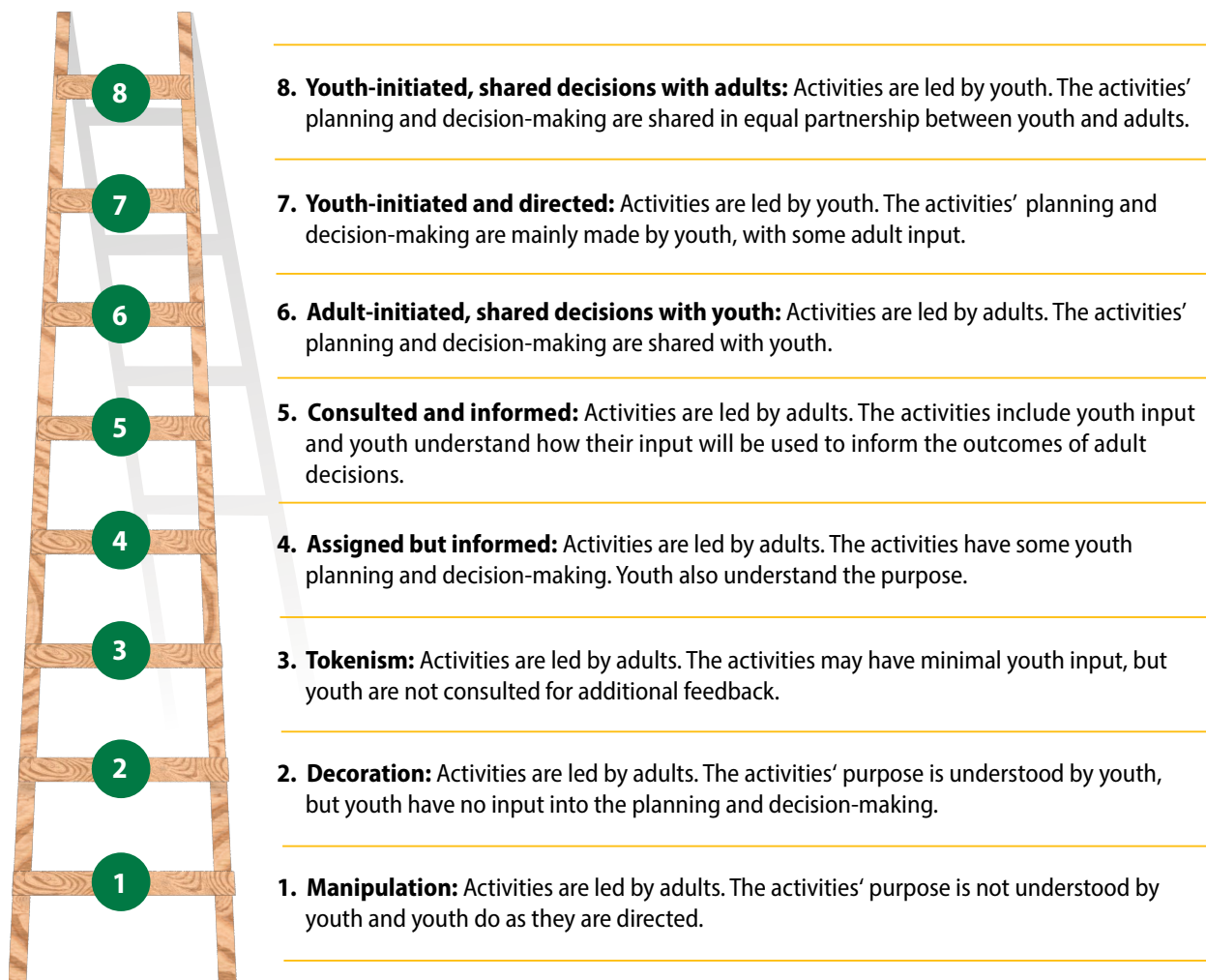


Figure 4. Hart's Ladder of Participation. *Source: Hart, R. A. 1992. Children's participation: From tokenism to citizenship. Florence, Italy: UNICEF. https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/childrens_participation.pdf*

- **Understanding differences.** Learn from one another what each of you needs and expects from others. Everyone has unique skills and can contribute to the group. Understand that each person brings gifts, talents, and resources to the partnership.
 - **Goals.** Know the goals that adults and youth have for the activity. Focus on the goals you have in common.
 - **Balance.** Find a balance of power and responsibilities to maintain while working together. Try to maintain an equal number of youth and adults.
- **Relevance.** The issues that the activity addresses should be real and relevant to youth. This helps ensure that the educational experience is meaningful to the youth involved.
 - **Recognition.** Acknowledge and bring attention to accomplishments. Recognize every person's contribution as a part of the team.

Apply what you learned

Youth-adult partnerships are a core value of 4-H. Reflect on your use of Hart's Ladder.

- Based on your experience, what rung are you most comfortable with?

- To reach the rung above the one you're most comfortable with, what steps would you need to take?

- What steps would you need to take to reach rung 8?

Best practices for working with youth leaders

Working with a junior leader, teen leader, or teen teacher is a common way to partner with youth. As a 4-H volunteer educator, you must be willing to share responsibilities and leadership before you ask a young person to serve as an assistant. A 4-H youth may be a junior leader, teen leader, or teen teacher for one or more activities or projects during the year.

In the Community Club Program, both junior and teen leaders may assist with specific projects or with more general 4-H activities and events. However, there is a difference in the tasks that are appropriate for junior leaders and teen leaders. Junior leaders provide help, while teen leaders assume more challenging leadership roles. For example, it may be appropriate for a junior leader to plan a presentation on a specific topic for an educational meeting. A teen leader may be ready for more responsibility and more complex tasks, such as planning and facilitating an entire meeting.

In a Teens-as-Teacher Program, teens will probably directly facilitate lessons for younger youth. Teen teachers typically receive training specific to the content they will teach, as well as instruction on how to facilitate and manage a group. We always supervise teen teachers while they teach—and either adult volunteers from the program or adults from a partner organization, depending on the program, provide support to teen teachers as needed.

Regardless of the program, youth and adults should work together to develop a job description that details each person's responsibilities. They should also develop a plan of work that identifies the expectations placed on the youth and adults. Planning an activity on paper will help you identify all the tasks involved.

Adults should agree to

- recognize youth as equals in making decisions and accepting responsibilities
- recognize the importance of good communication between adults and teens
- recognize the importance of encouragement and support on a continuing basis—throughout planning, implementation, and evaluation of the activity
- understand that mistakes are opportunities to learn
- ask for help when needed

Youth leaders should agree to

- get along with younger youth, their peer group, and adults
- be sincere in helping others and working with groups
- plan ahead and complete their activities
- be aware of their abilities and limitations
- ask for help when needed
- share decision-making and other responsibilities with adults

Remember that youth may not assume all the responsibilities of adult 4-H volunteers, since they are not legally adults and are not covered by 4-H liability insurance. For this reason, two appointed adult 4-H volunteers must supervise youth leaders at all times when they lead an activity.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion lens

If you have youth with different capabilities, make sure to adapt your lessons to ensure all youth can learn and feel supported in their learning and 4-H environments. It is very important that all youth are accepted, included, appreciated, and celebrated. Help youth identify the different skills and strengths that they and others contribute to the group. Be sure to include any adaptations in your meeting plans.

When communicating with a parent or guardian who is not a native English speaker, ensure that you are doing your best to make sure the youth's family feels included and welcome despite the language barriers. Help them fully understand all activity schedules, which may mean enlisting the help of someone who can translate the written word and interpret the spoken word. To the extent possible, avoid relying on the youth to be the translator or interpreter for the family. Some families might feel uncomfortable if their child is in more of a leadership role than the parents. Even when parents are comfortable with their child acting in this role, interpreting or translating may bring extra stress for youth who otherwise would be enjoying the 4-H educational experience and interacting with other youth members. It is especially important never to ask a child to translate in instances when information about someone's poor behavior or failure to meet expectations is conveyed. Asking children to tell parents about their own poor behavior is not consistent with providing a safe and supportive environment for children and does not represent positive youth development. Ask your county 4-H office for help, if needed.

Caution: Communications between youth and adults is often digital. Be sure to include a parent or guardian and at least one other adult volunteer in *all* your communications with junior leaders, teen leaders, or teen teachers, as well as with all other youth taking part in an activity.

Developing leadership skills in leaders who are youth

To support the development of leadership skills in youth who are leaders, such as junior leaders, teen leaders, and teen teachers, volunteers should work with youth on goal management plans. The acronym *GPS* (goal selection, pursuit of strategies, and shifting gears) is used to help youth remember the goal-management steps that lead to achievement. These include goal-setting, strategies to pursue goals, and brainstorming issues that may present barriers to achieving goals—as well as brainstorming ways to overcome those challenges. Encouraging youth and working collaboratively with them on recordkeeping and reports are other ways to help youth set and follow through on goals.

Working with youth on setting goals and following through

The GPS goal management system is more than just goal-setting—it's really a lifelong system for planning where you are going, how you are going to get there, and what you are going to do when things get in your way (fig. 5).

Age requirements

- Junior leaders (intermediate members) must be at least 11 years old and no more than 13 years old by December 31 of the program year.
- Teen leaders (senior members) must be at least 14 years old and no more than 19 years old by December 31 of the program year.
- The ages of teen teachers vary depending on the Teens-as-Teachers program in which they are participating. Generally, they will be between the ages of 13 and 18.

Checklist for youth and adults working together

- learn about each other before starting an activity
- develop job descriptions
- identify expectations of youth and adults
- identify goals
- identify activities and the who, how, where, when, and why of each task
- encourage and support all partners; recognize their accomplishments

Goals. Goals should be realistic and measurable, stretch the skills of youth, and help youth achieve other goals.

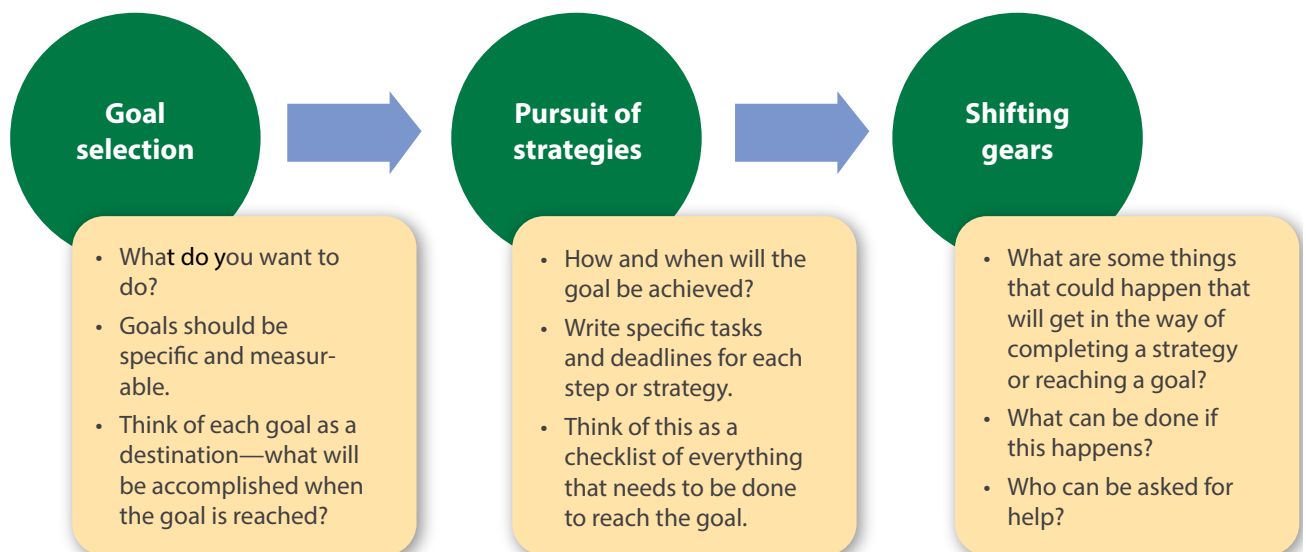


Figure 5. G.P.S. goal management model.



Pursue strategies. The strategies pursued should be *very* specific. Statements about strategies should state what exactly will be done, by whom, and by what time. This will be the longest section of the Leadership Development Report. As youth think of other things they want to do to accomplish their goals, they will add to this section.

Shifting gears. Shifting gears helps youth think of issues or circumstances that could be roadblocks—things that get in the way of achieving goals. Recording potential roadblocks helps youth think of alternate strategies they will use, if necessary, to adjust either their strategies or goals. When youth preview and list roadblocks and their strategies to overcome them, they are more likely to meet the challenges presented by obstacles.

Leadership Development Report

The Leadership Development Report is a section of the California 4-H Record Book that can be filled out as a stand-alone form to support leadership activities or as part of a complete Record Book. A Leadership Development Report allows youth to **reflect** on their leadership opportunities and skills. Filling out the Leadership Development Report is an important step in leadership development and goal management because reflection is where learning happens. In order for youth to receive credit for their significant leadership roles, they must complete a Leadership Development Report. To meet the Star Rank criteria for gold and platinum stars, youth must hold significant leadership roles that require 20 hours or more of leadership contribution. Youth count all of their training, meeting, planning, and research hours and the hours spent leading the activities and events.

The Leadership Development Report has two parts. Each part has two sections, which are completed at the beginning and end of the year. In part 1, youth explain **all** their leadership roles and why those roles are important to them. Youth set personal leadership goals to be accomplished by the end of the program year. They complete part 1 only once per year. This part is not specific to any one leadership role—it is an overarching report. Youth complete part 2 for **each** significant leadership role that they hold. If a youth is both a camp counselor and a teen-teacher, **one** part 1 and **two** part 2s must be completed.

The Leadership Development Report is completed collaboratively between youth and adults. There are sections which you and other adult volunteers must review and sign, as well as one section for you to provide feedback to the youth regarding their leadership role.

Resources:

Leadership Development Report, <https://ucanr.edu/sites/UC4-H/files/263724.pdf>

California 4-H Record Book Manual—Adult Volunteer's Guide, <https://ucanr.edu/sites/UC4-H/files/225147.pdf>

Diversity, equity, and inclusion lens

When working with youth in leadership roles it is important to understand that there is an inherent power difference between youth and adults. Be sure to reflect on and acknowledge your own biases about the capabilities of youth and remember to share the power. Provide youth opportunities to learn and to increase their leadership skills by performing leadership activities—even if you aren't sure they can do it. And remember, leadership might look different in some cultures than in one's own culture. Have an open conversation about leadership expectations for the activity. Provide space for youth to share how leadership looks for them; listen; and express how leadership looks for you. Agree upon expectations for both of you while leading the assigned activity. Provide coaching, resources, and support to help youth succeed without doing the work for them, and without taking away the strengths and differences they may bring.

Safety and insurance

Creating a safe environment is critical to healthy development. 4-H youth need to feel that they are physically safe and protected from harm before they can learn. As a 4-H volunteer educator, you are responsible for the safety of youth during all meetings and activities. So, prior to meeting, it is prudent and necessary that you evaluate the configuration, accommodations, limitations, and hazards of the space. Once these aspects of the meeting space have been evaluated, then you can provide instructions, guidelines, or other information to manage the meeting and space. We have developed several resources to help you create physically safe environments (see 4-H Safety Manual and Clover Safe Notes, safety.ucanr.edu/4-H_Resources/).

If an unacceptable risk or hazard becomes evident while an activity is taking place, promptly change the activity, establish controls to reduce the risk to an acceptable level, or correct the hazard. You may always discontinue the activity if needed.

4-H adult volunteers can take the following steps to maintain safety:

- Set a good example—follow all safety rules.
- Recognize hazards and correct them.
- Demonstrate the proper use of equipment and tools.
- Discuss safety at every meeting.

Youth protection

There must always be two appointed adult 4-H volunteers present with youth during all 4-H activities, whether the activities are virtual or in person.

Accident insurance

When youth and adult volunteers enroll in 4-H, and including when they pay fees, 4-H accident insurance **covers them while they are directly involved in activities scheduled, sponsored, and supervised by appointed 4-H adults.** If a 4-H youth in your activity is injured and requires professional medical attention

- obtain medical attention
- notify the parent or guardian
- provide the parent or guardian with the insurance claim form
- report the incident promptly to the UCCE 4-H Office



- complete a 4-H incident report form
- help the parent or guardian with the follow-up insurance claim by giving them contact information for staff at your local 4-H office

Liability coverage

We provide liability coverage for appointed volunteers during activities that are scheduled, sponsored, and supervised, and while volunteers are acting within the scope and course of their 4-H duties. If accidental injury or property damage occurs, full details must be promptly reported to the UCCE 4-H office on a 4-H incident report form.

Verified enrollment

Before you work with youth, verify that youth have completed the enrollment process and submitted payment for program fees to the UCCE county 4-H office. This is necessary to ensure that accident and illness insurance covers them. The 4-H Online enrollment system must show youth as entered and active. As a volunteer, you will have access to the 4-H Online system to see the youth who are enrolled in your activities. If you have questions about whether or not a youth is active, or how to access 4-H Online, please contact your local UCCE County 4-H Office.

Likewise, be sure that you have completed the enrollment and application process and received your official 4-H volunteer appointment before your first 4-H meeting. Insurance covers returning volunteers until December 31 of each year, so there is a grace period that allows you to work with youth during the enrollment period. This ensures that we cover you with accident/illness, automobile, and general liability insurance.

Medical release and health history

Make sure that you get a copy of the medical release and health history form for each youth in your group. To protect and respect privacy where privileged and sensitive health information is concerned, you should keep these forms in a file or notebook that *only* 4-H adult volunteers can access. Medical release forms should be on site during all meetings, field trips, events, and activities that occur within and outside the county.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion lens

Local, state, and federal government agencies often provide translated guidelines for the use of chemicals, tools, or other implements.

In addition to physical safety, it is important for volunteers to consider emotional and cultural safety. Simple and fun ways to help youth feel emotionally and culturally safe are

- asking how youth and parents or guardians would like to be addressed and then greeting them by the name they indicate. You will likely be received with warm gratitude.
- noticing something that interests each youth. What are they paying the most attention to? It may be a spark!
- asking what holidays or special occasions each family celebrates. Provide opportunities for youth to learn about different cultural celebrations by incorporating those events into 4-H activities during the year.
- eliminating traditions that are essentially humiliating, even if they are done "in fun." If you cause harm, remember to humbly apologize, ask for forgiveness, and ask for help in understanding the error. We are all human and are continually learning.
- ensuring that parents or guardians whose preferred language is not English fully understand all safety requirements, which may mean enlisting the help of someone who can interpret or translate. Do not rely on youth in the family to be the translator or interpreter.

Safety requirements for transporting youth

When you provide transportation for 4-H youth, California law and the University of California require you to

- have a valid California driver's license
- carry automobile insurance
- use a safely operating vehicle
- provide seat belts for each passenger

UC policy requires employees or volunteers who drive on UC business to maintain insurance coverage in the following amounts: \$50,000 for personal injury to, or death of, one person; \$100,000 for injury to, or death of, two or more persons in one accident; and \$50,000 for property damage. If you maintain less than this amount and are involved in an accident while on university business and the policy limits are exceeded, you are liable for the difference between your policy limits and the university's secondary coverage of 50/100/50.

If an accident occurs, or personal injury or property damage occurs, while you are driving on UC business, immediately contact the UCCE 4-H office and your insurance carrier.

Leadership responsibilities

As a volunteer, you may work with junior leaders, teen leaders, or teen teachers. You must monitor and guide the leadership techniques used by youth in leadership roles. Youth can function in teaching and administrative roles, but they cannot assume the responsibilities of an adult volunteer. When planning a field trip, you must provide the parent or guardian with an itinerary. The parent or guardian must sign a permission slip for the youth to take part.

Safety in animal science activities

Animal science activities are very popular in 4-H. Because animals are unpredictable, they require extra attention where safety is concerned. In addition, for animal and human protection, it is important for volunteers to understand biosecurity. Remember to perform the following actions during animal science activities:

- Make sure fencing, pens, or cages are in good condition.



- Pick up items that may injure an animal—loose barbed wire, boards with nails, nails and tacks, paint cans, broken glass, and so on.
- Lock all gates, doors, and fences.
- Lock up medications, poisons, pesticides, and other chemicals.
- Practice personal hygiene and wear proper protective clothing when handling animals.
- Take special precautions when handling a sick or wounded animal.
- Practice good animal hygiene by keeping animals in clean environments.
- Eliminate pest infestations.
- Make sure youth and volunteers follow the equestrian helmet policy during horse activities or other equine activities.
- Keep all areas free of hazards such as boxes, mops, brooms, tools, and so on.
- Use a safe stepladder (not a chair) to reach places above shoulder height.
- Keep sharp knives in a rack, or separate from other utensils.
- Keep handles of pots and pans turned away from the front of the stove.
- Mop up any spills on the floor immediately.
- Unplug irons or other hot tools when they are not in use.
- Repair or discard electric cords when they become frayed or worn.
- Keep medications, chemicals, and poisons out of reach of children, properly labeled, and stored away from food.
- Use tools and machinery correctly and for their intended purpose.
- Always wear appropriate protective clothing.
- Always use the guards and other protective features that come with tools and machinery.

Resources about raising animals in 4-H are available at anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/Items.aspx?hierId=11050.

For information on basic biosecurity practices and fairs, see [youtube.com/watch?v=50iRfznuXcI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=50iRfznuXcI).

Safety in other 4-H activities

The following are some safety tips to review when organizing your activities:

- Follow all guidelines from the California Department of Public Health and your county's public health department.

Resources—where do you go for help?

Many knowledgeable people are available to assist you as a 4-H volunteer; many valuable resources are available as well. Whenever you have questions, you may contact the person in charge of an event, activity, or program, whether that is another 4-H volunteer or a member of the 4-H staff.

County 4-H newsletter

Make it a habit to read the 4-H newsletter that announces county events and activities. Refer to the newsletter's calendar and share information of interest with the youth in your group. Most counties' newsletters can be found on the county 4-H website. Alternatively, you can ask 4-H staff to add you to the newsletter mailing list.

State 4-H newsletter

Sign up to receive the state 4-H newsletter for state-level activities and opportunities for volunteers and youth. Refer to the newsletter's calendar and share information of interest with the youth in your group. 4-H has many news resources on its website.

Other adult volunteers

In some counties, appointed volunteers can provide help regarding various programs and topic areas.

Training days and events

Training days and events provide an opportunity to see firsthand how 4-H youth can take part in and learn about 4-H projects and activities. These events also give you a chance to meet other adult 4-H volunteers.

Local businesses

Contact local businesses for other resources—for instance, videos, pamphlets, and visual aids that you might be able to borrow. Before sharing these resources with youth, be sure to assess the information to make sure it is unbiased and educational.

UC ANR catalog

For more educational information related to your role in 4-H, view the UC ANR Catalog. The Catalog is available online, anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/.

4-H websites

County, state, and national websites offer many resources. Links are available at the state 4-H website for California, 4h.ucanr.edu/. Check with your UCCE county office for local websites.

Shop 4-H

The National 4-H Council offers for purchase a variety of curricula and achievement pins related to program content. The Shop 4-H catalog is available online, shop4-h.org/.



Photo: Jonnathan Salters.

Apply what you learned

Use the information in this section to create your own resource list.

Events I will attend:

Other resources I need to research or learn more about:

4-H documents to obtain:

- group roster
- attendance record
- calendar of events
- meeting plan
- 4-H annual project report
- personal development report
- leadership development report



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