



# Vermont 4-H Parent Guide

JANUARY 2013

## Things Every 4-H Club Parent Should Know

There are many things a 4-H Parent will want to know about 4-H. Here are some things that 4-H Leaders and Extension Staff think a 4-H Parent needs to know to help their child be successful in 4-H.



### What is 4-H?

- **Largest** non-formal youth serving organization in the country.
- An organization that reaches youth through life- and job-skill development programs, in both rural and urban settings, through a variety of learning opportunities.
- Provides **fun, educational opportunities** at the local, state, national, and international levels.
- 4-H programs are **hands-on, age appropriate, research-based**, and overseen by University of Vermont Extension staff and facilitated by volunteers.

4-H focuses on **learning-by-doing**. Our projects and activities help 4-H members have real-life experiences. (See "4-H Award System & Rules" at [www.uvm.edu/extension/4hprojects](http://www.uvm.edu/extension/4hprojects))

### 4-H Quiz Questions

What do the four H's stand for?  
Head, Heart, Hands, Health.

What are the colors of 4-H?  
Green and white.

What is the 4-H emblem?  
A four-leaf clover with an "H" in each leaflet is the emblem for the 4-H Program.

At what age may children participate in 4-H?  
Age 7 – 18. Youth ages 5 - 7 are called *Cloverbuds*, with limited, if any, competitive opportunities.

When did the 4-H program begin?  
4-H began in Ohio in 1902 and in Vermont in 1914.

What is a 4-H project?  
A 4-H project is made up of sequential learning experiences (activities) under the guidance of a 4-H volunteer that explore a general topic for a minimum of 6 to 8 hours. Often 4-H curriculum is used as part of a 4-H project and record keeping is an integral part of the experience. Some clubs offer multiple projects and members may participate in one or many of those offered. Members use Member Records & Project Records to help set goals, keep track of activities and reflect on what they have learned. Completion of record books is required to be a member in good standing and to receive project awards. Vermont 4-H record books & member records are available online. (See [www.uvm.edu/extension/4hprojects](http://www.uvm.edu/extension/4hprojects))



#### 4-H Pledge:

"I pledge  
My HEAD to clearer thinking  
My HEART to greater loyalty  
My HANDS to larger service, and  
My HEALTH for better living,  
For my club, my community, my country  
and my world."

#### 4-H Slogan:

"LEARN-BY-DOING"

This slogan expresses a belief in a way of learning that allows individuals to practice and use new knowledge and skills.

#### 4-H Motto:

"TO MAKE THE BEST BETTER"

This motto encourages individuals and groups to improve their opportunities, skills, and knowledge for the future.



COMMUNITY



4-H &amp; YOUTH



ENVIRONMENT



AGRICULTURE



FOOD

UNIVERSITY OF  
VERMONT

EXTENSION

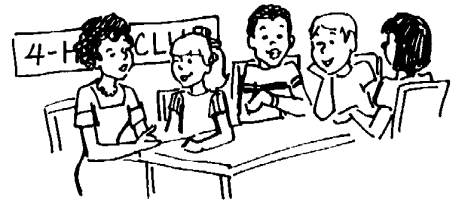
CULTIVATING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



## What is My Child Expected to Do in 4-H?

### For Club Meetings

Attend 75% or more 4-H club meetings/activities; participate in community service, fundraising, leadership and recreational activities to support their club's goals.; come with a positive attitude, eager to "Learn by Doing" through project work, demonstrations, & hands-on activities.; be willing to serve as a club officer, on a committee, or as a Teen Leader.



### For Projects

Select one or more 4-H projects to complete (see the Projects page at [www.uvm.edu/extension/4hprojects](http://www.uvm.edu/extension/4hprojects), especially the "Vermont 4-H Project Descriptions"); meet all project requirements and guidelines to be a member in good standing; attend 75% of the club's business meeting; attend 75% of applicable project meetings.; and keep and submit Member Records and applicable Project Records.

Attend required programs and events for project recognition participation. (See "4-H Award System & Rules" on the Projects page at [www.uvm.edu/extension/4hprojects](http://www.uvm.edu/extension/4hprojects))



4-H clubs meet for both business meetings and project meetings to have fun & learn in informal settings. By participating in club meetings and other 4-H activities, your child will have the opportunity to gain mastery, independence, generosity and a sense of belonging while learning leadership, citizenship and life skills.

During business meetings, whole group activities (community service efforts, fund raising, and recreational opportunities) are planned and reports are given. Generally clubs have officers and planning & decision making is youth-driven as much as possible.

During project meetings, leaders facilitate learning about selected project areas through experiential learning activities.



## What Will 4-H Cost?

**Club Dues** - While no membership dues are required to join the Vermont 4-H Program, some clubs may charge dues. Club dues may be used towards refreshments, project book cost, Fair passes, club t-shirts, supplemental insurance, etc. Please ask your club leader about their club fee structure. If your family is unable to pay club dues, please let you 4-H County Educator know.



**Record Books** – Record books are available at no cost. (See the Projects page at [www.uvm.edu/extension/4hprojects](http://www.uvm.edu/extension/4hprojects))

**Project Items** – Most projects require additional resources. For some projects, these may be supplies and materials that you already have at home. Some projects require additional reference materials that are purchased by the family. Although it is not necessary to own or lease an animal to participate in 4-H animal projects, families may wish to purchase or independently lease an animal & supplies. Ask your 4-H leader what additional resources might be needed for your child's selected project.

## ❖ What Roles will 4-H Leaders Play in my Child's 4-H Experience?

Leaders provide hands-on learning experiences for your child... project work, demonstrations, project judging, and/or field trips. They provide opportunities for your child to build leadership skills through serving as a club officer, on a committee, leading the 4-H pledge, or participating in a business meeting.

Leaders serve as advisors to the Club Officers and Jr. Leaders as they plan and conduct meetings and activities. Leaders will not be the ones who run the meetings – this role belongs to the members as they develop their own leadership skills.

With the large number of projects offered in the 4-H program, it is not realistic to expect that each individual leader will have expertise in all areas. If you have specific project questions, your leader may direct you to another volunteer in the county or to other references where you can get your questions answered.

## ❖ 4-H is a Family Affair!

4-H can be a great way for parents and children to work together through interest in mutual activities and spend time together on things that they enjoy. Parents are encouraged to be positively involved in 4-H activities. When parents are involved in 4-H activities:

**Members** gain support and confidence from working with interested adults; participate with their parents in a common interest; and receive more individual attention and guidance.

**Parents** get to know their children's friends; make new friends and acquaintances and show love and concern for their children by maintaining an interest in their activities and helping them meet their goals.

**Leaders** can delegate jobs to responsible parents to allow time for development of additional club events; and more effectively reach each member with a positive adult influence.

**4-H Club** is strengthened, larger, and more active.



### What Roles Can Parents Play in their Child's 4-H Experience?

- Help your child attend club meetings, activities & events (notifying the leader if your child can't attend).
- Help your child to select a project they are interested in, have the ability to accomplish and is one for which you can help furnish needed materials, facilities, financing and guidance.
- Encourage your child to work on the project and record keeping all year long.
- Help your child submit completed paperwork and applications on time.
- Let your leader and your 4-H County Educator know about IEP's or of other accommodations that your child may need.
- Celebrate accomplishments with your child and encourage them to take pride in their work.
- Stay informed about club activities and read the 4-H Calendar, 4-H Newsletter or recent mailings from the 4-H Office.
- Use the Vermont 4-H website to print off forms, find project and event requirements and find answers to questions. (See the Leaders page at [www.uvm.edu/extension/vt4hleaders](http://www.uvm.edu/extension/vt4hleaders))
- Help out the club... assist with 4-H club activities in your areas of interest and expertise, host a meeting, provide refreshments, sponsor an award, teach a project skill, help with a community service project, plan a field trip, assist with fundraising, or share an idea for possible future programs.
- Encourage your child to participate in county and state events activities that will enhance their learning (clinics, workshops, Regional & State Day) and the club's community service projects.
- Communicate with your club leader as much as possible about your questions & concerns and if you have needs that are not being met, please let your 4-H County Educator know.



It will be particularly beneficial to you and your 4-H club leader if you can visit early on in the 4-H Club year to introduce yourself and offer your assistance. Help the leader to better understand what your interest areas are. Some leaders will have immediate roles for you to fill, while others will contact you at a later time.

## 4-H Opportunities are Knocking

In addition to the 4-H Club meetings and projects, there are a number of other opportunities available to 4-H members, including 4-H trips, overnight events, conferences and other awards. Each of these has unique characteristics and can provide your child with new experiences. Leaders will be able to help you and your child determine which ones are the best for you to apply for and when.

Information for many 4-H many opportunities that happen annually in 4-H, either at a county, regional, state or national level can be found online on the Announcements, Events, Results page at [www.uvm.edu/extension/4hevents](http://www.uvm.edu/extension/4hevents).

Regional Day & State Day  
Achievement & Recognition Events  
Knowledge & Skill Contests  
Teen Congress  
Teen Leadership Weekend  
Mini Congress  
Natural Resources Management Academy  
Citizenship Washington Focus  
Day at the Capitol



Livestock & Other Skill Clinics  
Communication Contests  
Fairs & Field Days  
National 4-H Week  
National Youth Science Day  
Embryology in the Classroom  
4-H Volunteer Training  
Shooting Sports Jamboree  
Becoming an Outdoor Family Weekend

## Where Can You Find Answers to Your Questions?

4-H, as with many organizations, has a number of terms, rules, and guidelines that may be confusing. If you or your child has questions, please ask!

Your Club Leader  
Your County 4-H or the Vermont 4-H State Office [www.uvm.edu/extension/?Page=offices.html](http://www.uvm.edu/extension/?Page=offices.html)  
The National 4-H Website at [www.4-h.org](http://www.4-h.org)  
Experienced 4-H members  
Other parents  
Vermont 4-H Website at [www.uvm.edu/extension/youth](http://www.uvm.edu/extension/youth)

Read the 4-H newsletter, mailings from the 4-H Office, project guidelines and other information with your child. Look to the Vermont 4-H website to print off forms, find project requirements, and find event results and answers to questions. By reading this information, you and your child can keep better informed about 4-H activities.

## 4-H = FUN

**Members have fun while they...**  
Complete their projects  
Participate in club meetings and activities  
Meet new friends  
Learn!

4-H looks forward to helping to create a fun experience for your child, for you and for the rest of your family!

Like us on Facebook  at ["Vermont 4-H"](https://www.facebook.com/Vermont4H)