

Vermont

4-H

## Leader Training Series



### Ages and Stages of 4-H Youth

As you know, young people act differently at various ages and stages of their lives. Think about some young people you know. Can you think of some characteristics of 10 year olds? Would those characteristics be different from 16 year olds? Does a 2nd grader act differently from a 7th grader? Your answer is probably yes!

Because of these differences, 4-H programs are usually designed with a target audience in mind. As in school, 4-H programs are designed according to school grades of youth. Characteristics of these grade groupings are given below. Keep in mind that these groupings are based on averages, and that each child is an individual who develops at his or her own rate.

Be sure to consider the information in the chart on the next page when planning events and activities for your 4-H'ers. Look down each column to get an idea of the characteristics of the youth you are working with. For more specific information, see the information sheet which describes the characteristics and suggestions for planning learning experiences for the specific group you are working with.

*Adapted from: Betty Ann Smith,  
County 4-H Agent, Middlesex  
County and Rita L. Natale,  
Regional 4-H Agent, South, New  
Jersey, 1994*

## DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE 4-H YOUTH AUDIENCE

CHARACTERISTIC	CLOVERBUD Grades 1-3	BEGINNERS Grades 4-6	INTERMEDIATES Grades 7-9	ADVANCED Grades 10-12
<b>Interest Span</b>	Short, unless topic is of great interest. Can be increased if activity is included. (5 to 20 minutes)	Short and varied.	Lengthens with experience and interest in subject or activity.	Almost adult if self-motivated.
<b>Motor Skills</b>	May be easily frustrated by fine motor tasks that are beyond level of coordination.	High interest in doing active projects. Poor coordination.	Interested in skills for specific use. Can tackle more difficult jobs with more complex coordination.	Highly skilled in areas of interest and practice.
<b>Mental Growth</b>	Curious, learns from hands-on experiences. Developing language.	High curiosity. Limited experience. Beginning abstract learning.	Increased depth and scope of learning.	Continued increase related to experience. Can see relationships.
<b>Ability to Plan</b>	Has difficulty with multiple step plans over a period of time.	Limited ability, experience and judgement.	Can plan better than execute.	Has need and ability to plan.
<b>Relation to Adults</b>	Seeks adult leadership and companionship.	Accepts leadership easily from adults.	Needs and wants guidance but rejects domination.	Wants leadership on adult level.
<b>Relation to Age Mates</b>	More interested in small groups under adult supervision.	Needs to feel accepted.	Interested in opposite sex, and in group acceptance.	High interest in groups, "couples" oriented.

### **Reference:**

*Adapted from the North Dakota State University 4-H Curriculum Guidelines.*



2004

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. University of Vermont Extension, Burlington, Vermont. UVM Extension and U.S. Department of Agriculture, cooperating, offer education and employment to everyone without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or familial status.

# 4-H

## Leader Training Series



### Working with 4-H Cloverbuds

Youth ages 5 to 7 are involved in the 4-H Cloverbud Program. In addition, special events are designed to meet the special needs and interests of these children.

Listed below are some characteristics of youth 5 to 7 years old. Not all children in this age group will act in the manner described, but the majority will most of the time. In general, these youth have a strong desire for affection and attention of adults and are usually self-centered. Plan for small group activities with an adult for every three to four children.

#### Youth ages 5 to 7

Specific Characteristics	Planning a Learning Experience
<p>Easily motivated, eager to try something new.</p> <p>Deal with here and now. Interest span short.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan a wide variety of activities.</li> <li>• Plan activities that take a short time to complete, with each experience building on previous activities.</li> <li>• Provide a variety of short and specific learning activities involving concrete concepts.</li> <li>• Free time should be planned and encouraged. Move from one activity to another. Alternate high and moderate activity with low.</li> </ul>

*Adapted from: Betty Ann Smith, County 4-H Agent, Middlesex County, New Jersey, and Rita L. Natale, Regional 4-H Agent, South, 1994*

Specific Characteristics	Planning a Learning Experience
All new learning involves use of language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be very specific and clear with instructions.</li> <li>• Ask youth to give feedback on what they have heard.</li> </ul>
Sensitive to criticism, don't accept failure well.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide positive encouragement and assistance.</li> <li>• Plan many concrete learning activities in which success can be experienced.</li> </ul>
Experimental, exploratory behavior part of development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up situations that foster cooperation and teamwork rather than competition.</li> <li>• Utilize field trips, real models, and hands-on experience.</li> </ul>
Learn best if physically active.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide activities that encourage physical activity: running, moving, playing games, cutting with scissors, painting, brushing, and assembling.</li> </ul>
Strong desire for affection and attention of adults.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan for small group activities with an adult for each three to four youth.</li> </ul>

**Reference:**

Curriculum Development for Issues Programming, A National Handbook for Extension Youth Development Professionals, Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1992.



2004

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. University of Vermont Extension, Burlington, Vermont. UVM Extension and U.S. Department of Agriculture, cooperating, offer education and employment to everyone without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or familial status.

Vermont

4-H

# Leader Training Series



## Working with 4-H Youth ages 8 to 12

Youth ages 8 to 12 are involved in standard 4-H clubs, as well as in-school and after-school 4-H programs. Many special interest programs, 4-H camps and county-wide events are also available for this age group.

Listed below are some characteristics of 8- to 12-year-olds. Not all children in this age group will act in the manner described, but the majority will most of the time. In general, these youth are less self-centered than younger children. Their interests begin to expand more from home to community, so this is a good time to involve them in community service. Children in this age group constantly ask “why?” It’s important to encourage them to explore and experiment to find the answers on their own.

### 8- to 12-year-olds

Specific Characteristics	Planning a Learning Experience
<p>Are quite active, with boundless energy.</p> <p>Like group activity.</p> <p>Like to be with members of own sex.</p> <p>Have interests that often change rapidly, jumping from one thing to another.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put emphasis on “hands-on” learn-by-doing activities. Keep youth busy with individual or group projects. Group free time is encouraged.</li> <li>• Emphasize group learning experiences.</li> <li>• Encourage learning experiences to be done with participants of same sex.</li> <li>• Encourage many brief learning experiences.</li> </ul>

*Adapted from: Betty Ann Smith, County 4-H Agent, Middlesex County, New Jersey and Rita L. Natale, Regional 4-H Agent, South New Jersey, 1994*

Specific Characteristics	Planning a Learning Experience
Usually do best when work is laid out in small pieces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use detailed outlines of sequential learning experiences.</li> </ul>
Guidance from parents and adults important if youth are to attend to a task and achieve their best performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide opportunities for parent involvement. Outline “things to do” and make assignments. Participants will probably need individual and group guidance. Suggest how parents, teachers, and other volunteers can help.</li> </ul>
Admire and imitate older boys and girls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage apprenticing with teen volunteers.</li> </ul>
Are easily motivated, eager to try something new.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a wide variety of learning experiences.</li> </ul>
Do not like to keep records and do not see the value in them; need assistance and close supervision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep written work simple. Review the project or activity forms with the group step by step. Give clear instructions and solicit the help of parents to assist their children with written work.</li> </ul>
Like symbols and regalia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make recognition available to those who earn it.</li> </ul>
Need recognition and praise for doing good work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present recognition in front of peers and parents. Let members know that they will receive rewards for completing activities.</li> </ul>
Are extremely curious; constantly ask “why.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not answer all their questions. They will learn by finding some answers on their own. Encourage a few members to find answers and report back to the group.</li> </ul>

**Reference:**

*Curriculum Development for Issues Programming, A National Handbook for Extension Youth Development Professionals, Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1992.*



Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. University of Vermont Extension, Burlington, Vermont. UVM Extension and U.S. Department of Agriculture, cooperating, offer education and employment to everyone without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or familial status.

2004

Vermont

4-H

# Leader Training Series



## Working with 4-H Youth ages 13 to 15

Youth ages 13 to 15 are generally involved in standard 4-H clubs, as well as special interest programs, county-wide events. In addition, early leadership experiences are offered through teen councils, counselor-in-training programs at 4-H camp, and other special programs designed for these youth. There are also more opportunities for involvement in regional or statewide programs and events.

Listed below are some characteristics of 13- to 15-year-olds. Not all youth in this age group will act in the manner described, but the majority will most of the time. In general, this age group is concerned about their own physical development and are somewhat self-conscious. This is a good time to plan activities which will help youth understand themselves and their values, while developing individual skills.

### 13- to 15-year-olds

Specific Characteristics	Planning a Learning Experience
Are concerned about physical development, being liked by friends.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage learning experiences related to understanding yourself and getting along with others.</li> </ul>
Desire a sense of independence, yet want and need their parents' help.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage working with adults and older teens to complete learning experiences and apprenticing.</li> </ul>
Are self-conscious with many needing help to get over inferiority complexes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concentrate on developing individual skills.</li> </ul>

*Adapted from: Betty Ann Smith, County 4-H Agent, Middlesex County, New Jersey, and Rita L. Natale, Regional 4-H Agent, South New Jersey, 1994*

Specific Characteristics	Planning a Learning Experience
Like fan clubs, with many having adult idols.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to have opportunity to practice leadership roles with coaching.</li> <li>• Encourage working with or apprenticing to older teens and adults. Teen and adult leaders must be well-liked to be effective, and teen leaders should be three or four years older than participants and considerably more mature (must not reject those who they are leading).</li> </ul>
Want to go outside of their own community to explore.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide learning experiences outside of the community.</li> </ul>
Are getting over the age of fantasy and beginning to think of what they will do when they grow up, but are often unclear of needs and values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relate what they are doing to career choices.</li> </ul>
Are interested in activities involving boys and girls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage learning experiences involving boys and girls.</li> </ul>
Are interested in sports and active games.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage active, fun learning experiences.</li> </ul>
Are ready for in-depth, longer learning experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tasks may be more difficult and of longer duration. Encourage deeper exploration of leadership roles; encourage more detailed recordkeeping of leadership experiences.</li> <li>• Activities provide hands-on and skill-centered experiences in specific subject matter.</li> </ul>

**Reference:**

*Curriculum Development for Issues Programming, A National Handbook for Extension Youth Development Professionals, Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1992.*



2004

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. University of Vermont Extension, Burlington, Vermont. UVM Extension and U.S. Department of Agriculture, cooperating, offer education and employment to everyone without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or familial status.

Vermont

4-H

## Leader Training Series



### Working with 4-H Youth Ages 16 to 18

Youth 16 to 18 years of age are generally involved in standard 4-H clubs, with an emphasis on developing leadership skills. They may serve as teen leaders in a club, as members of a teen council, as camp counselors and in a variety of other roles. There are many opportunities for participation at state and national levels. These youth are often viewed as role models for younger 4-H youth.

Listed below are some characteristics of 16- to 18-year-olds. Not all youth in this age group will act in the manner described, but the majority will most of the time. In general, this age group is concerned with social development, and are interested in adult leadership roles. They also focus energy on the community and preparing for careers. This is a good time to encourage independence in planning programs, participation in activities involving the community, and exploring career options.

#### 16- to 18-year-olds

Specific Characteristics	Planning a Learning Experience
<p>Have social needs and desires that are high.</p> <p>Want and need a strong voice in planning their own program.</p> <p>Want adult leadership roles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasize leadership life skills that also relate to social development. Provide opportunities for self-expression.</li> <li>• Encourage youth to plan programs with guidance and support of adult helpers.</li> <li>• Encourage working with adult role models. Emphasize guidance and counsel from adults rather than directions.</li> </ul>

*Adapted from: Betty Ann Smith, County 4-H Agent, Middlesex County, New Jersey and Rita L. Natale, Regional 4-H Agent, South New Jersey, 1994.*

Specific Characteristics	Planning a Learning Experience
<p>Are quite interested in co-educational activities.</p> <p>Have areas of interest that are more consistent than earlier, with patterns of interest becoming more definite.</p> <p>Often need guidance in selecting careers.</p> <p>Are developing community consciousness.</p> <p>Are beginning to think of leaving home for college, employment, marriage.</p> <p>Many will leave the community for employment, and many who go to college will not return to their present community after graduation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage co-educational learning experiences.</li> <li>• Encourage greater in-depth study of leadership roles and life skills.</li> <li>• Apply leadership life skills to career exploration, especially decision-making.</li> <li>• Encourage career exploration within specific subject matter.</li> <li>• Encourage learning activities involving the community.</li> <li>• Emphasize application of leadership life skills to being on your own.</li> <li>• Need experiences that expose and involve youth with the larger society.</li> </ul>

**Reference:**

*Curriculum Development for Issues Programming, A National Handbook for Extension Youth Development Professionals, Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1992.*



2004

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. University of Vermont Extension, Burlington, Vermont. UVM Extension and U.S. Department of Agriculture, cooperating, offer education and employment to everyone without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or familial status.



---

## **Principles of Teaching and Learning**

Any time there is a learning situation, keep in mind certain things that will help you be successful with all members.

1. Young people learn best in an atmosphere of warmth and acceptance.
2. Members want to be actively involved in setting their own goals and in planning their activities.
3. Each 4-H'er has different abilities and learns at his/her own rate.
4. Motivation is the key to real learning. This includes self-motivation and external motivation.
5. Self-evaluation is the most meaningful kind of evaluation.

## **Preparation**

Preparation is the key to successful teaching. Keep these points in mind when planning your club activities:

- Know the purpose of the program. What do you want to accomplish?
- Know your audience. What is the size of the group?  
What is the age-range of the group?
- Know the physical set-up. How are the chairs and tables arranged? Is the lighting adequate?
- Know what equipment and other materials you will need. Be sure that it is all in working order.
- Know the subject you will be teaching. You don't need to be an expert, but you should have resources available.
- Be comfortable. If you are well prepared, you will enjoy teaching young people, and have fun with them.

## **Teaching Methods**

Many different ways of teaching are available to you. Here are a few examples of ways you can help members learn. Remember, involve members in ways that will motivate them to learn. Try using a variety of teaching methods to accommodate many different learning styles.

## **Group Discussion, Questioning**

This method helps members express their own thoughts. Use open-ended questions to encourage all members to share more information. Open-ended questions usually begin with "how," "what," "why," or "could."

## **Brainstorming**

---

**Record keeping**

Besides being a good business practice, record keeping is the best way to measure progress of group and individual goals. Members learn more about their projects through record keeping. They learn about costs, materials, and how to evaluate finished products. Record keeping doesn't have to be boring. Besides record books, members can show progress through a scrapbook or a portfolio. This is a good way to help a member keep an ongoing record of his or her 4-H career.

**Collage**

A collage (an artistic composition of materials on a surface) is used to convey an idea or theme to others. Materials that can be used include: magazine and newspaper pictures and texts, tissue paper, markers, poster board, etc.

**Demonstration**

This method is a presentation of how to do something, along with the finished product. Demonstrations can be done by the leader, but preferably by members. Not only does everyone learn a new skill, but the member giving the demonstration also gains communication skills and confidence in speaking in front of a group. An example of a demonstration is how to make bread. A finished product should be available because the process of actual baking would be too time-consuming.

**Audio-Visual Aids**

Videos, slides, cassette tapes, and computer programs are other methods to help young people learn. Be sure to preview any visual aids you plan to use. Vidoetaping presentations or club meetings is another way of teaching and providing feedback. The 4-H office, libraries, and schools are good sources of visual aids.

**Field Trip or Tour**

This method is an excellent way to reinforce something already discussed in a club.

**Simulations, Games**

This method is great for problem-solving. Real-life dilemmas are presented through simulations or games where participants must make decisions. Their choices often lead to further problems and decision-making opportunities. An example of a simulation/ game could be planning a community service project.

**Role-Playing**

Members give spontaneous answers with this teaching method. A small group of participants act out a real-life situation in front of the club. They have no script, but are given a situation and individual roles that they must act out. Participants create their parts as they act. The performance is then discussed in relation to the situation or problem under consideration. An example of a role-play is parents and a teenager discussing curfew time.

---

## Skits

A skit is similar to a role-play, except that the script is prepared and the presentation has been rehearsed. Participants act out an event or situation that can be real-life. Skits can be humorous or serious. An example of a skit could be a group dramatizing how to prepare a campfire.

## Summary

These teaching methods allow you to help members learn in a variety of ways. As you teach members both project and life skills, remember the following hints:

- Catch the interest of the members.
- Focus their attention on the subject.
- Establish a rapport with the group. You don't have to be a buddy, but you need to have mutual respect.
- Be sure your club knows what you expect of them. They should be part of the planning.
- Processing the experience is when much of the learning takes place. Discussing the activity helps members understand how it relates to them.
- Learn to have fun while teaching the members.
- Good luck and best wishes for success!

---

### **References:**

*Improving Teaching Effectiveness: A Guide for 4-H Volunteers.* Roger Rennekamp, State 4-H Office, Lexington, Kentucky.  
*Georgia 4-H Teaching Techniques.* Georgia 4-H Volunteer Staff Development Task Force, Athens, Georgia.

Vermont

4-H

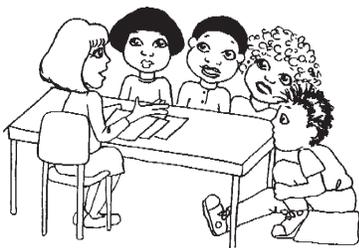
## Leader Training Series



### Helping Youth Set Goals

#### What is the Purpose of Setting Individual Goals?

#### Self-Set Goals



#### 4-H'ers Who Set Their Own Goals:

#### Ways to Recognize 4-H'ers for Achieving Individual Goals:

*Adapted from: –Betty Ann Smith, County 4-H Agent, Middlesex County, New Jersey, 1990, revised 1994*

Learning, growing, and developing self-esteem and self-confidence are important goals of the 4-H program. One way for youth to accomplish these goals is to set their own personal 4-H goals.

Goal setting by the individual enhances learning and the development of self-esteem and self-confidence.

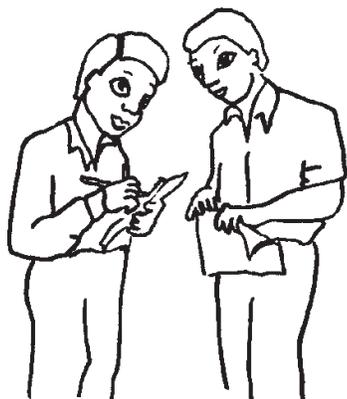
Self-set goals that are realistic will be successfully met.

- Re-evaluating and re-setting unrealistic goals takes the “feeling of failure” out of the learning activity.
- When goals have been reached, new goals for learning can be set. This takes the “feeling of boredom” out of the learning activity.
- Self-set goals allow participants to start where they are, and let them progress at their own rate. The same goals are not set for everyone. The individual is in control of his/her learning.
- develop a higher level of problem-solving skills.
- begin to accept mistakes as part of learning rather than looking at mistakes as failures.
- gain confidence and experience success, no matter how small, thereby developing self-esteem.
- are able to experience success building on success.
- learn that they are appreciated for who they are, not just for what they do, or what they “win” when recognized for achieving individual goals.
- Give verbal praise, and/or a pat on the back.
- Give a Certificate of Recognition for achieving their specific goal.
- Place Danish Ribbons (EX, VG, G, Fair) in a container, and invite the 4-H'ers to take the ribbon that represents their self-evaluation of their success in reaching their goal.

---

## How You Can Help Make Goal Setting a Positive Experience for Your 4-H'ers

### Some Pointers About Useful, Effective Feedback:



1. Help 4-H'ers assess their progress toward their goals. The 4-H'er needs to keep records of original goals set for the project; and progress toward the goals such as record books, diary, records on file cards, etc.
2. The leader working directly with the 4-H'er needs to give timely, positive feedback. Feedback can be suggestions to help correct a process, or it can be information that tells 4-H'ers they are on the right track. Feedback or evaluation is done throughout the year.
3. Help 4-H'ers to understand that any unmet goals and objectives can become next year's goals and objectives.

“Nice job” by itself does not help the 4-H'er. What is particularly significant about their performance? Refer to the 4-H'er's goals. What did he/she hope to achieve? What can the 4-H'er do to improve? Be specific with your suggestions.

Effective feedback is positive, even when discussing how to improve. Avoid comments such as “You failed to..”; “Why did you do it this way?” Your 4-H'ers cannot hear what you are trying to say. What they are most likely to have heard is “you failed.” “Why did you do it this way?” is likely to be taken as a challenge and produce a defensive response.

Try open-ended comments such as “Tell me about your project.” While telling you about the project the 4-H'er will answer your questions of why something was left out, left undone, or accomplished in a particular way.

Recognize the unique growth of the individual. For example, a very shy person may set the goal to make a presentation before the club, or a county/regional presentation. Effective feedback would be your verbal and non-verbal support for the 4-H'er's effort to overcome shyness and fear of public speaking.

---

### References:

*Self-Worth and School Learning* by Martin V. Covington and Richard G. Beery, 1976.

*Model for Recognizing 4-H'ers*, National Awards Task Force.

Vermont

4-H

## Leader Training Series



### Developing a Positive Self-Concept

### How Do I Help 4-H Members Develop a Positive Self-Concept?

*Adapted from: Rose Mary Bergmann, County 4-H Agent, Morris County, New Jersey, 1990. Revised 1994*

One of the major life-skills that are developed through the 4-H Program is “Developing A Positive Self-Concept.”

As a 4-H Volunteer, you have many opportunities to make a positive impact on each 4-H member’s self-concept. Every important adult in a child’s life influences the child’s belief in his/her own value to others and to him/herself. This includes parents, teachers, 4-H leaders, grandparents, older brothers and sisters, youth leaders and religious leaders.

What is a positive self-concept? It is a growing belief about yourself that helps you to cope successfully with the events in your life, and then to make a positive impact on the lives of others.

As a 4-H youth leader, your attitude of non-judgmental, acceptance toward each child is essential. This helps each member feel accepted for his/her inner self, rather than for his/her behavior, clothes or skills. One way to do this is to show genuine appreciation for each individual. If you aren’t genuine, they’ll know it right away.

**Feedback**—Genuine appreciation is also positive feedback. Although we would like to be able to only give positive feedback, part of being an adult role model for youth includes making corrections. You are probably asking, “How can I avoid having corrections thought to be criticism?”

Since each child is unique and already has a self-concept in the process of development, you cannot guarantee how a child will accept correction. Experts recommend that all feedback include at least 75 percent positive comments as you make a correction to keep things in balance. A division of 50/50 positive comments to criticism doesn’t work. Your 4-H members will usually feel unworthy unless you use the 75/25 balance.

---

For example, “You have done an excellent job on this record book. Your handwriting is neat, you have reported all of your expenses, and your story follows the guidelines. However, you did not include the number of 4-H meetings you attended. Next year, you might want to keep a tally on your 4-H calendar so you can fill in this part of your record book easily.”

**Expressing Acceptance**—You can help express acceptance by seeing beyond a behavior to the true self within each 4-H'er. One technique that may help youth discover their uniqueness is to distribute 3x5 cards, at the end of each meeting, and ask them to list the things they liked about themselves during the meeting.

You could also invite your members to list what they learned and encourage them to discover things that were not part of the “lesson plan.” There should be no right answers to match, but all things learned should be encouraged so each person can discover the variety of learnings that take place in a group.

**Nonjudgmental Attitude**—Your attitude to each 4-H member will be obvious to the children. Even though adults have learned how to say one thing and do another, children often see through this immediately. So it is important to be honest within yourself as you notice your relationship with each youth. Having and expressing a non-judgmental attitude is an important part of helping youth develop a positive self-concept.

Within the group setting you can help the members remove their judgments from situations by demonstrating neutral behavior. When a person in the group shares an experience, feeling, or a thought, the leader accepts it as the true expression of that person at that moment. For example, if a youngster says he could not bring his record book because his parents wouldn't let him, the leader and members don't attack him with, “You're lying. That's not true. You just forgot it.” Instead, the leader sets a positive example by saying, “Okay. Let's work together with your parents so you can bring it to the next meeting.”

**Caring**—Adults, who communicate to youth a sense of caring and a sense of personal worth, help to increase each person's positive self-concept. You can do this by creating an environment of mutual support and caring. As the club leader, you can gently help every member have a chance to share his thoughts with the

---

## Where Does One's Self-Concept Come From?

group so the most talkative person doesn't overshadow a more quiet personality.

You will have reached this goal when the members trust one another and the leader enough to be at ease when expressing their feelings openly, and know they will not be ridiculed. This atmosphere of trust and acceptance will help young people recognize that they are valued and can count on receiving genuine affection and support.

How you think and feel about yourself, your self-image is learned. This began at birth, with your parents and other care givers. They gave you verbal and non-verbal feedback on your behavior.

These experiences with the important people in your life, help determine whether you will feel acceptable or not valued.

Some people will give you the message that, although you may at times behave in unacceptable ways, you are basically an okay person. Others may give a negative message: "You are bad because you do bad things." Either of these messages, given over and over as you grow up, form the basis for how you see yourself. By the time a child reaches school age, the self-concept is quite developed.

Although the early influences have a significant impact, it is possible to change self-concept. You, as a youth volunteer, can be part of the gradual process of building a positive self-concept for youth, as well as for yourself.

## Self-Confidence Expressed

Genuinely confident people know they can handle whatever challenges life brings their way. They are willing to learn and are not afraid of making mistakes. They feel good inside, and like themselves. They have strong self-respect. And they have an equal amount of respect for the feelings and capabilities of other people. They feel inferior to no one and superior to no one.

There is a source of love and strength within each of us. No matter what problems we have, even if we are physically injured or mentally handicapped, that inner power is still there. It is upon this inner strength that confidence must be built; not on looks, intelligence, money, popularity, athletic ability, or social status.

---

## What Can I Do About My Self-Concept?

You are in charge of your self-concept, too. All of the things we've said about helping youth develop a positive self-concept apply to everyone. You will find that by genuinely expressing your caring for others enthusiastically, even when your feelings are saying, "I don't feel like it," will cause you to feel better.

You are a special person who volunteers to work with 4-H youth, and you know in your heart that you really care about young people.

Expressing your true self, and being genuine and accepting are the keys to helping 4-H members increase their positive self-concept.

Remember: you are an incredible person! Within you is wisdom, love and joy. Never sell yourself short.

---

### **References:**

*Clemes, Ph.D., Harris, and Reynold Bean, Ed.M.; How To Raise Children's Self-Esteem, Price Stern Sloan, Los Angeles, 1990.*

*Goth-Owens, Judy Ann; High on Myself, A Substance Abuse Prevention Program, Michigan State University, East Lansing, 1979.*

*Self-Esteem, Education Resource Packet, Agricultural Extension Service, North Carolina State University, Raleigh.*

Vermont

4-H

## Leader Training Series



### Recognizing Your 4-H'ers Achievements

### Beliefs About Recognition

*Dapted from: Ginny P. Diem, County 4-H Agent, Somerset County, New Jersey, 1990, revised 1994*

“Good Job!”

“Here is your pin for completing a year of 4-H work.”

“You have received a blue ribbon for the excellent job you did on your project.”

“Congratulations! You have received an outstanding award on your project.”

No matter how we say it, we continually recognize young people for their achievements in 4-H. Recognition comes in many forms, and can be linked to participation, achievement, cooperation, or competition. It's important to understand why children need recognition, and how we can recognize them for their accomplishments.

- Recognition is a basic human need with security, new experiences and responses.
- Recognition should be a part of all 4-H learning experiences.
- Appropriate recognition takes many forms.
- Respect for individual differences is essential.
- Recognition must be structured to build positive self-esteem.
- Opportunities for self-assessment and reflection allow youth to learn.
- A range of opportunities and challenges provide choices to meet individual needs.
- Adult support is essential in youth learning and recognition.
- Everyone should be recognized at some level.
- A balance between all elements of the recognition model is essential.

---

## National 4-H Recognition Model

The following model represents a national policy statement about recognizing individuals and groups, youth, adults, families, and partnerships. The purpose of recognition is to encourage and support the efforts of young people in learning to improve their knowledge and develop their life skills.

## National 4-H Recognition Model

For: Individuals & Groups, Youth, Adults, Families, & Partners

---



*Recognition, support, and encouragement for learning is provided equally in all five areas. Cooperation partly overlaps Participation, Progress toward self set Goals, Standards of Excellence, and Peer Competition. Cooperation is part of all four. The intent of the graphic is to show that recognition is given to individuals and people working together in teams or groups.*

### Recognizing 4-H'ers for Participation in Educational Experiences

It is important to acknowledge the participation of 4-H members in an educational activity. For younger members, especially Cloverbuds (ages 5 to 7), participation is the major form of recognition. It should be easy and simple for members to earn this type of recognition. Being recognized for a year of 4-H club work by receiving a year pin is one example of recognizing participation.

Criteria for earning this recognition should be simple. All youth who meet the criteria are recognized. Recognition can be earned several times. The awards should be part of the learning experience.

---

## **Recognizing 4-H'ers for Progress Toward Self-Set Goals**

An important part of 4-H is to help members learn to set goals and plan ways to achieve those goals. Setting goals is appropriate for all ages and all activities. A 4-H member may have a goal of learning to put in a zipper, or a 4-H club may have a goal of collecting food for a local homeless shelter. Personal goals set by a member allow for the unique growth of that member. Adults, both leaders and parents, should be part of this goal setting process to help the member set realistic and reasonable goals, as well as to evaluate progress toward achieving them. Setting and achieving small goals will lead to accomplishing a long-term goal, such as completing the year's project. Refer to *Helping Youth Set Goals*, on page 415.

### **Goal setting questions:**

1. What would you like to accomplish in your project or activity?
2. What resources do you need to reach your goal?
3. What are the steps you need to take to reach your goal?
4. Is this goal worthy of your time and abilities?
5. Are you happy with your goal?
6. Have you recorded your plan?

## **Recognizing 4-H'ers for Achievement of Standards of Excellence**

Measuring a member's accomplishments against a set of standards is one of the most common ways that 4-H members have been traditionally recognized. Fairs are excellent opportunities for youth to have their work compared to standards. The Danish system of judging allows members to receive colored ribbons (blue, red, yellow, white), based on a score determined according to established standards. However, when members are then ranked against one another and an overall winner is selected, recognition moves to the level of peer competition.

When recognizing members' achievement of standards, it is important that the standards be well-defined, usually on a score sheet. All participants should know and understand the standards they need to achieve. After members are evaluated, feedback from the judge is needed to help them learn how well they rated on a set of standards and to receive suggestions for improvement.

## **Recognizing 4-H'ers for Results from Peer Competition**

Peer competition is recognition for the best team or individual at that specific time and place. It is a strong motivator for some but not all young people. Participation in peer competition should be optional, and is not appropriate for younger children (Cloverbuds).

---

## Cooperation

This type of recognition is more extrinsic than intrinsic, with the award being a trophy, rosette, or plaque. If properly designed and implemented, this type of recognition showcases the best things produced by 4-H'ers. It is important to establish specific selection procedures. Rules must be stated, understood, and enforced.

Learning and working together promotes high achievement. Cooperation may take advantage of all the skills represented in the group, as well as the process by which the group approaches the learning task or goal. Everyone is rewarded.

## Summary

Designing a recognition system involves:

- Looking at the young people: their needs, interests, attitudes and aspirations.
- Understanding differences between people based on background and experiences; difference in behavior in same person; differences between similar types of people.
- Using recognition that encourages and supports learning, and satisfies intrinsic and extrinsic needs. It has to balance recognition for participation, progress toward self-set goals, achievement of standards of excellence, competition, and cooperation.

This Recognition Model is appropriate and useful at all levels of 4-H. Recognition committees and councils at the local, county/regional, state, and national levels utilize this approach in all recognition programs. Using a comprehensive, recognition program can lead to more youth being recognized and can provide a way to say to every youth:

“You are a valued and important member of the 4-H program.”

---

### **Reference:**

*4-H Youth Development Education: A National Model for Recognition in 4-H Programs.* National 4-H Council and 4-H Youth Development, ES-USDA.

Vermont

4-H

## Leader Training Series



### Understanding 4-H Judging

Children join 4-H to have fun and make new friends. One reason why 4-H is so successful is because children choose to do whatever interests them. As participation increases, 4-H'ers learn more, begin to assess progress for themselves, and look to others for evaluation of their work. The judging process in 4-H is like real life. 4-H'ers set goals, work to achieve them, and reap rewards for their efforts.

Having one's accomplishments evaluated can be motivating and educational for 4-H'ers. When judges critique their work or performance, it serves as a guide to further improvement. The judging process is probably more valuable than the award or recognition. To plan, practice, and present a finished product is to "learn by doing." To graciously accept constructive criticism of one's work is a real life experience. 4-H'ers learn quickly that judging results reflect a personal opinion, and that evaluation will vary among judges.

Refer to *Recognizing Your 4-H'ers' Achievements*, to determine how to maintain a balance of activities to recognize and motivate your 4-H'ers.

### Types of Evaluation

- **Conference or interview:** The judge interviews the participant as he/she evaluates the product against a set of standards. The purpose of this judging is to determine what the 4-H'er learned in completing the project. Comments are provided verbally and also in writing on a score sheet.
- **Project judging:** The judge evaluates the finished products against a set of standards without the member present. The focus is the quality of the project **itself** and not the learning process. Comments are provided to the participant in writing, usually on a score sheet.

*Adapted from: Gail Bethard, 4-H  
Program Associate, Somerset  
County, New Jersey, 1994*

---

## Danish Judging in 4-H

- **Performance judging:** The judge evaluates how a 4-H'er accomplishes a task or goal in progress. The judge looks for skills being used, as well as evaluating the end result. This type of event enables the 4-H'er and the judge to see how the performance directly effects the end product. Comments are often provided verbally and also in writing on a score sheet.

In 4-H most judging involves the Danish system of judging. In this system, the judges do not judge one person's work by comparing it to another's. The evaluation is made against a standard. A judge looks to see whether requirements are met. Often a score sheet is used, available from the county/regional 4-H office.

If the work meets high standards, it receives an excellent rating and blue ribbon (score of 90 to 100). A red ribbon signifies very good work, (score of 80-89). Yellow ribbons are given for work of good quality that will benefit from further improvements (score of 70-79). A white ribbon signifies work meets standards well enough to be shown, but is only fair quality (score below 70).

One advantage of this system is that everyone whose work fulfills minimum qualification can receive a ribbon. If all entries are judged to be excellent, all receive blue ribbons.

The purpose of using the Danish judging system is to give every 4-H member the recognition deserved for the work that was done. It also helps young people recognize the need to improve their skills and to "make the best better."

## Peer Competition

While Danish judging focuses on set standards, other judging compares one 4-H'ers' work to another's. This is peer competition. This type of judging may be used to select the "best" projects within a class. An example of this would be awarding a "Best in Show" rosette to the photo with the highest score in a photo judging contest.

## This We Believe:

- 4-H boys and girls are more important than 4-H projects.
- Learning how to do a project is more important than the project itself.

- 
- “Learning by doing” through a useful work project is fundamental in any sound educational program and characteristic of the 4-H program.
  - There is more than one good way to do most things.
  - Our job is to teach 4-H’ers how to think, not what to think.
  - A balanced program of work and play, geared to the individual’s needs, is more important than “grooming winners.”
  - Competition is a natural human trait and should be recognized as such in 4-H work. But it should be given no more emphasis than other 4-H fundamentals.
  - Every 4-H member needs to be noticed, to feel important, to experience success and to be praised.
  - No 4-H award is worth sacrificing the reputation of a 4-H member or a 4-H leader.
  - A blue ribbon 4-H member with a red ribbon project is more desirable than a red ribbon member with a blue ribbon project.

*(adapted from South Dakota newsletter by GB/85)*

### **Who are the Judges? How are They Selected?**

Judges have a special interest in young people, and may have knowledge in a particular subject matter area, as a hobby or career. They are selected by paid staff and volunteers for their knowledge and interest in youth. Most are volunteers with some exceptions, such as in the horse project area where professionals are secured.

### **What Rules Do Judges Follow?**

Judges must know the rules and criteria agreed upon by the 4-H participants, the 4-H leaders, and the 4-H staff. Each judge should be given information about the judging activity including scoring sheets. In addition, judges should be aware of and understand the philosophy behind the 4-H program and the purpose of evaluating 4-H’ers’ projects and performances. A judges’ orientation helps to ensure a fair judging experience for everyone.

---

## When You Are the Judge:

- Know and understand the 4-H philosophy.
- Judge the 4-H member's effort as well as the finished product. This is important because young people are not yet experts in a particular skill.
- Know the judging standards or criteria and follow them carefully. Try not to allow personal biases to influence your comments or decisions.
- Be consistent in your judgement.
- Judge each entry on its own merit - not by reputation.
- Acknowledge the parts that were done well before making criticisms. Be positive and look for the good first!
- Written or verbal statements should be constructive and not harsh. Critique is necessary for further learning, but harshness serves only to discourage the individual. Give concrete suggestions for improvement.
- Sign your name to the score sheet. The judging has a positive influence on the 4-H'er.
- Always stress the learning and accomplishments that have taken place rather than the **award**.
- Treat the 4-H member as an individual. Be sure to consider age and experience when evaluating. Use this event to stimulate growth and to motivate children to learn more. Competition in 4-H should be a good experience for members.

Vermont

4-H

## Leader Training Series



### Valuing Differences, Celebrating Diversity

#### Challenge or Opportunity

#### Melting Pot Theory vs. Tossed Salad

*Adapted from: Ginny P. Diem,  
County 4-H Agent, Somerset  
County, New Jersey, 1994*

The issue of “diversity” is a controversial one. Some see it as a problem, an intrusion by others. We in 4-H prefer to see it as an opportunity. The wealth of knowledge, experiences, and resources that are available through diversity allows our youth in Vermont to grow in a way that promotes acceptance and understanding of differences.

Growing up in a community where people are alike in many ways can seem secure, but it also promotes a narrow focus. The more differences that children are exposed to, the more open and accepting they are as they grow up. Activities and programs that provide children the opportunity to explore and experience differences is multicultural education.

The goal of multicultural education is to increase individuals’ self-esteem, understanding, and appreciation of others in our society, and deepen concern for the needs of all people in the United States culture and the world.

Earlier this century, we believed that assimilation of all children into “American” culture was essential for success. They were expected to speak only English, and become just like everyone else, thus the melting pot theory. Today, we recognize that cultural differences are strengths, not weaknesses. We encourage everyone to contribute to the national culture, yet maintain their own distinct identity. This is the tossed salad theory, each vegetable in the salad is separate and has a distinct taste. Blended together, each ingredient enhances the other’s flavor.

---

## Mini-activities to Reduce Prejudice and Stereotypes

Below are some activities you may wish to try with your 4-H members to help them learn to value differences.

- **A “Me” Bag**

This activity will prompt members to see similarities and differences they have with other members. Collect newspapers (for pictures) and magazines. Give each member a small paper bag that will be a “me” bag. They should select photographs that represent:

- their family.
- what they feel like when they are with friends.
- what they enjoy doing.
- what makes them different.

All of these cutout photos should be placed in their “me” bags, which can be decorated with their name and anything else they wish to put on them. In small groups, members should share the contents of their “me” bag.

- **What’s in a name?**

This activity helps everyone get to know each other a little better, and can prompt discussion about ethnic heritage or even how first names were chosen. Ask each member in your club to share a story about his or her name. Make this assignment at one meeting for the next so they may go home and talk with parents about their names - first, middle, or last. Ask each person to share the story or history.

- **Unique as a snowflake (for younger members)**

This activity helps members realize that each person is unique. Ask the group if they think that everyone is alike. If they say no, ask them to identify some characteristics that make people different. If they say yes, then share with them some examples of what makes us different (see group identity exercise). Give each person a piece of paper (use as many different colors as possible) and have each create a snowflake. They can do this any way they wish. If they need some assistance, have them try the method of making many folds, cutting notches along the fold, then unfolding the paper.

- **Group Identity**

This activity is designed to help members realize they belong to many groups and to encourage interaction

---

between groups. Have members stand when their group is identified. Use groups that are appropriate for your club. Examples are: gender, race, grade in school, area where they live, favorite school subjects, hobbies, hair color, etc. Older members may be asked to share a little information about what it feels like to be a member of that group. Give others the opportunity to ask questions of the group standing up.

- **Exploring your neighborhood or community**

This activity will help members get acquainted with their own community, and what it has to offer them. Give them an assignment for the next meeting to go home and learn about their community. Ask them to draw a map of their block, town, street, or whatever is appropriate. Tell them to have their parents help identify who lives in each house or apartment, and what other buildings are in the area, such as a store, library, school, church. When they share their maps, discuss different ideas of what makes a community, and how they could make their own community better. Encourage each member to get to know one more neighbor, or one neighbor a little better.

## Poem

Share this poem with members to help them understand the importance of valuing differences.

### **If All the Trees Were Oaks**

What if all the trees were oaks,  
How plain the world would seem;  
No maple syrup, banana splits,  
And how would orange juice be?

Wouldn't it be a boring place,  
If all the people were the same;  
Just one color, just one language,  
Just one family name!

-But-

If the forest were the world,  
And all the people were the trees;  
Palm and pine, bamboo and willow,  
Live and grow in harmony.

---

Aren't you glad, my good friend,  
Different though we be;  
We are here to help each other,  
I learn from you, and you, from me.

—Author Unknown

---

***Reference:***

*Multicultural Teaching - A Handbook of Activities, Information, and Resources.* Tiedt, P.L. & Tiedt, I.M., Allyn and Bacon, Inc, Boston, 1986.

Vermont

4-H

## Leader Training Series



### 4-H for Youth with Special Needs

#### Defining Youth with Special Needs

#### Being Inclusive is Rewarding for All

*Adapted from: Rita L. Natale,  
Regional 4-H Agent, South New  
Jersey, 1994*

Approximately 4.3 million school-aged children in the United States have special needs. Involving “special needs” youth in 4-H can result in a satisfying experience for all involved.

Special needs youth includes children with a wide range of disabilities. Examples of disabilities include:

- **Physical**—visual or hearing impairments, spinal cord injuries, missing limbs.
- **Mental**—below normal intellectual functioning (mental retardation).
- **Developmental**—learning disabilities, emotional impairments. These disabilities may be caused by mental or physical disabilities or conditions such as epilepsy, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, etc.

“Being inclusive” in the 4-H program means to involve youth with special needs in the same clubs, events and programs as youth without special needs. 4-H educational programs are provided to all youth alike in a non-segregated, inclusive manner. All 4-H participants are provided with the same opportunities to develop life skills as they complete projects and participate in 4-H events together. This results in a rewarding experience for all, as:

- 4-H members with special needs develop a sense of self-confidence and self-reliance as they successfully interact with other youth and participate in 4-H activities.
- 4-H members without special needs learn that youth with special needs are not so different, and begin to see that each individual, regardless of special needs, has strengths and weaknesses, as well as unique abilities.

---

## Involving Youth with Special Needs



- 4-H leaders and volunteers learn new skills and techniques for working with special needs youth, and become more comfortable with people who they may perceive to be different.

Involving special needs youth in your club or activity may take some special consideration, but can be quite easy if you follow these steps:

- **Learn about the special need.** This can be accomplished by talking to the child's parents, researching at the library, contacting local support or advocacy groups (i.e., Muscular Dystrophy Association, Association for Retarded Citizens, etc.), or attending local Special Olympics, where you can see how trained volunteers work with a variety of children with special needs.
- **Find out how the special need affects the particular child you are working with.** Remember that each child with a disability is still a unique individual. This means that different children with the same special need may display a varying range of characteristics. Talk with the parents to become familiar with the child's ability levels, special challenges, and other individual needs. Ask the parent to share their child's Individual Educational Plan (IEP), a personal educational plan developed by the school for each special needs youth.
- **Modify the project or activity to match the ability level of the child.** For example, a child in a wheel chair could participate in a gardening project by designing a raised garden bed or participating in container gardening. Modification may also mean modifying program requirements. For example, in an animal science project, youth without a disability may be required to take care of the animals on their own, while a special needs child may be able to receive assistance from a fellow 4-H'er. Look at the objectives of the project or activity and help the child set reachable goals to meet the objectives. The child should be involved in the setting of the goals and the adaptation of the program as much as possible. The modifications to the program must be designed to meet the child's ability levels and the goals of the project, while still challenging the child to consistently improve his or her own personal best.

---

## Special Needs Guidelines

- **Educate 4-H'ers and other members of the 4-H community about special needs.** This might be accomplished through videos, presentations by adults or older youth with the special need, or discussions with an adult who works with special needs children. If appropriate, a question and answer session with the child and his/her parents may be a way to handle this. The important factor here is to focus on the similarities among special needs youth and those who do not have special needs, and not to concentrate on the differences. As do most youth, special needs youth have a basic need to belong and to feel accepted by the group.

Here are some guidelines to remember when working with special needs youth:

- Involve the child and his/her parents as much as possible in setting goals and modifying the program to meet the child's needs.
- Treat each child, special needs or not, as an individual who has certain talents, skills, strengths and needs.
- Provide plenty of recognition and positive reinforcement. Make sure your expectations for each child are based on efforts made toward reaching a set goal. Don't be "easier" on a special needs child just because of the uniqueness of their situation.
- Remember that the 4-H motto, "Making the Best Better," does not always mean blue ribbons and other awards. Personal growth (ability to handle frustration or communicate better), gaining and using new knowledge (planting and taking care of a garden), and feelings of accomplishment (succeeding in any new challenge, no matter how small it may seem) are also important accomplishments.
- Take the time to learn, and to teach other 4-H'ers, the correct terminology for the child's special need, as well as any equipment which the child may use. Sometimes the common terms are considered insensitive or rude.
- Many people with special needs would prefer to discuss their need rather than have everyone ignore it or pretend

## Ready for Success

not to see it. How this is handled should be determined by consulting the child and his/her parents.

- Differentiate the areas where the child's abilities are diminished or different, and where they are "normal." For example, people often shout at visually impaired people, as if they also cannot hear. Don't assume anything about a child's disability; remember that each child is an individual.
- With inclusive education standard in Vermont public schools, today's youth often have a greater awareness, understanding and comfort zone in interacting with their special needs peers than in the past. Usually the fact that a child is "different" ceases to be a problem for the other children in a group long before the adults reach the same comfort level.

Working with special needs youth requires some extra attention, time and flexibility. However both volunteer leaders and 4-H'ers alike will find many rewards. The most important reward is the chance to make new friendships, take part in fun and satisfying shared experiences, and to learn to value each individual for the unique and special person they are.

---

### *References.*

Schnepf, G., Tormoehlen, R. and Field, W. (1992), A Perfect Fit - 4-H Involvement for Youth with Disabilities, Cooperative Extension Service of Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN, 69 pages.

Yeager, R. (1993 Draft), Including Children with Special Needs in 4-H Activities, Department of 4-H Youth Development, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, 3 pages.

Vermont

4-H

## Leader Training Series



### Positive Discipline for Children

#### Assumptions

#### What is normal, acceptable behavior?

*Adapted from: Keith G. Diem,  
Ph.D., County 4-H Agent,  
Somerset County, New Jersey,  
1994.*

Working with youth, especially other people's children, can be a challenge. While some children are better behaved than others, they all need acceptance and the opportunity to learn. Especially in mixed groups, the challenge of a youth leader is to see that disruptive youth do not prevent learning or fun for others. Their very presence in the group, combined with your wise guidance, will help them learn what is socially acceptable and how to do what is right. This information sheet will help you understand children better and provide some ideas on how to deal with the unruly kids with minimal disruption of the learning situation.

This information sheet is based on the assumptions that:

- All children have positive qualities.
  - Understanding motivations which make children behave the way they do will help adults respond more effectively.
  - Using a positive approach and positive reinforcement is better than punishment.
  - When given the behavior choices and respective consequences, children will respond with appropriate behavior.
  - Emphasize the idea of bad *behaviors*, not bad children.
  - Adults should be part of the solution as positive role models and not part of the problem as poor examples.
- 
- This depends on age, situation. What is okay for nine year-olds on a recreational outing may not be acceptable for high school students on an educational tour.
  - The often fine line between acceptable and unacceptable is crossed when any of the following occur:
    - anyone is in danger of physical or mental harm
    - the behavior is disruptive to the activity of the group
    - the rights of others are infringed upon

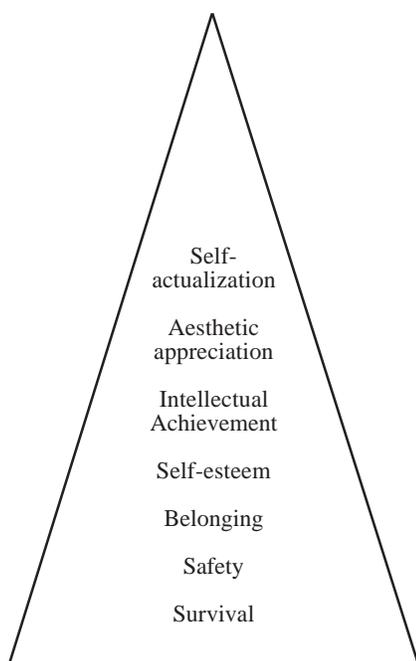
---

## How can you detect unacceptable behavior?

- When you notice that any of the previous three items have occurred or are likely to occur.
- When you observe negative reaction from other children.
- As an adult, you are not comfortable with the behavior. (Just be sure your views are not so conservative that they do not allow for mainstream interests and actions of children!)

## Motivation is the key to human behavior

### Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is one theory of motivation. It theorizes that people must meet lower needs before being able to address higher functions.

- Survival (the very basic need for food, water, air, and shelter—lowest level)
- Safety (the need to feel physically and psychologically secure and free from danger)
- Belonging (the need to be accepted and loved)
- Self-esteem (the desire to gain approval and recognition)
- Intellectual achievement (the need to understand and explore)
- Aesthetic appreciation (the search for order, structure, and beauty)
- Self actualization (highest level—self-fulfillment and the realization of all that a person is capable of being)

If you determine why a difficult child is acting in an unacceptable way, you can better respond to the root of the problem and not just the symptom. Also, by helping children meet basic needs, you can also help them be motivated to higher levels of achievement. For instance, if a child does not have proper diet or adequate clothing, he or she may not have the energy or physical comfort to concentrate on learning. If a youth worries about meeting the neighborhood bully on the way to your club meeting, the member may choose not to show up. Furthermore, if a child does not feel accepted in your group, the youngster will not want to be part of your group. Offering get-acquainted activities help all of the group members get to know each other better and feel comfortable working together.

## How do you respond to unacceptable behavior?

1. First and foremost, determine that the problem is really a problem.

*Ask yourself, "Whose problem is this really?"*

---

## Prevention is better than cure

2. Use the least obtrusive discipline measure possible. In other words, don't cause a scene that creates a problem more disruptive than the original discipline problem itself! For instance, don't stop in the middle of a lesson you are teaching to verbally discipline a child. This only brings attention to the disruptive behavior. Instead, your mere physical presence near the child while you continue your demonstration or stern eye contact only the disruptive child can see will be just as effective.

3. Consider laws, liability issues. Dealing with other people's children may be different than working with your own. Use methods that would be acceptable to most people.

4. Earn respect—credibility. It takes time to develop mutual trust. Your goal is not to become a “buddy” but a role model who leads by example.

5. Be firm but fair (and not harsh/inconsistent). Giving partial treatment loses your credibility and is discriminatory. You are not in a popularity contest and, sometimes, the decisions you need to make won't be liked by everyone.

Understanding the motivations of children is important to understanding their behaviors. Better yet, through your actions, you can help youth be motivated. Motivation comes from within a person. But you can help in the following ways:

- Use a variety of teaching/learning methods. This keeps both the teacher and the learner from becoming bored. Boredom is a major enemy of motivation and leads to unacceptable behavior used by a child to combat boredom.
- Involve as many youth as possible in planning and doing. This gives them ownership in the group and therefore, a feeling of belonging. Also, kids will usually be more interested in something *they* say they want to do than something that someone *else* thought they would like to do.
- Try giving a disruptive child a special job to help you or the group. Many times disruptive behavior is simply a plea for attention. Help the child channel that energy into something more productive.
- Focus on *doing* more than watching and listening. Kids want to *try* things themselves. Show them how and then let them do it! This is the “learn by doing” philosophy of 4-H.

---

## Key thoughts to *positive learning and discipline*:

## Summary

- Positive discipline is the art of catching children doing things right (and letting them know it).
- Set rules of behavior in advance, with involvement of children affected. Don't assume that youth know what you expect: they may be accustomed to totally different rules and expectations at home or in school.
- Give kids choices in advance—corresponding to behaviors and respective consequences.
- All children have the potential to behave in an appropriate fashion.
- By making learning fun, youth will be motivated to behave in an acceptable way.
- Vary your responses to children's behavior based on the suspected motivations of why they are acting that way.
- Don't react to symptoms, but aim for the root of the problems.
- Don't overreact to "normal" behaviors.
- Before responding to what you perceive is a problem behavior, confirm to yourself that it really is a *problem* worth doing something about.
- Keep in mind that children are *not* miniature adults.
- Use the least obtrusive discipline possible.
- If one approach doesn't work, try something else! Approach behavior problems with creativity and humor.
- Be as *patient* as humanly possible!

---

### **Reference:**

Maslow, A.H. (1970). *Motivation and personality*. New York: Harper and Row.

Vermont

4-H

## Leader Training Series



### Decision Making by Consensus

Groups can make decisions in many ways. Two of the most common methods are voting to determine a majority rule and consensus.

The way a group makes decisions greatly influences how people feel about the group and how well the group members support a decision.

If the decision made by the group is liked by the members, they feel as though they have "won." If the members do not like the decision, they will feel as though they have "lost." A good decision for the group is one that is understood, carried out, and supported by its members.

The term consensus means that the entire group supports the decision. Consensus decision making is a cooperative team-effort process of selecting options that are liked, understood, supported and carried out by a group.

Consensus decision making can be used by all varieties of 4-H groups: general membership, committees, executive boards, etc.

### Steps in the Decision Making Process

1. Identify the problem, situation, or issue that needs a decision.
2. Brainstorm a list of alternatives. (*See back of this page for explanation of brainstorming.*)
3. Test each alternative. What would happen if....? Choose a member to record the results of the testing. **Caution: Remind the 4-H youth that only the alternative solution is being evaluated, not the person who made the suggestion.** Change, rewrite, or discard the alternatives.
4. Take the list of rewritten, and/or saved alternatives to the problem where everyone can see them. Use group discussion as the process for ranking the alternatives. If your

*Adapted from: Betty Ann Smith,  
County 4-H Agent, Middlesex  
County, New Jersey, 1990,  
revised 1994*

---

## Brainstorming

## Rules of Brainstorming

---

*No idea is to be  
judged, discussed  
or rejected!  
Anything goes!*

---

group is very large, sub-divide into smaller groups so everyone will have an opportunity to say what they think. If more ideas are needed, brainstorm more solutions.

5. Make your decision. After the group has discussed the alternatives, they are ready to choose the preferred solution. The decision should be written on newsprint or chalkboard or poster so everyone can see it.
6. Implement the decision. Decide who will do what? When? How? Where?
7. Evaluate the results of the group decision.

Work in small groups of five to eight people. Ask each group to choose a recorder who will list the ideas. Set a time limit.

Present the problem, the situation, or the issue clearly. Write the problem on the chalkboard or newsprint so all can see it and refer to it.

Go around the group to get an idea from each person. Ask for ideas as rapidly as possible. To be sure everyone's ideas are included, ask for one idea from each person. The goal is to produce a long list of possibilities, so go back to the first person and go around the group as often as your time limit allows.

**Record all ideas.** The more ideas the better.

For 4-H'ers to feel a part of the group/team they need to:

- feel they belong, are welcome and needed.
- share in planning and goal setting.
- know that their ideas are heard.
- feel that the group is doing something worthwhile.
- share in the way the group will work toward common goals (rules).
- know what is expected.
- see that progress is made.
- have confidence and trust in the leader.

---

### Reference:

*Family Community Leadership Resource Packet*

Vermont

4-H

## Leader Training Series



### Recreation/Creative Play

#### When to Play

#### Goals for Play



*Adapted from: RoseMary Bergmann, County 4-H Agent, Morris County, New Jersey, and Betty Ann Smith, County 4-H Agent, Middlesex County, New Jersey, 1990, revised 1994*

Recreation can be a highlight of your 4-H club meeting, depending on how you conduct it. Creative play is an opportunity for you and your club members to:

- have fun together
- be spontaneous
- expend energy.

Play may occur:

- at the beginning
- during the meeting
- or at the end

Remember, whatever the goal for playing, the main reason youth play games is **TO HAVE FUN!** So, be sure to put **FUN** in their **PLAY!**

Having a goal for play will help you, the teen leader, or the game committee know what kind of game to choose to play.

Is your goal:

- to burn off excess energy?
- to work on developmental skills?  
(example: problem-solving skills)
- to work on individual behavior skills?  
(examples: self-control; following directions.)
- to work on physical abilities?  
(example: develop coordination)
- to work on basic motor skills?  
(examples: running, jumping, balance, etc. This goal will apply to almost any game you choose for the younger set, grades 1-3.)

---

## Why Some Won't Play

FEAR of :

- not being selected for a team,
- being too uncoordinated to be valued by a partner or teammate, not understanding what to do, and/or
- being criticized or made fun of can cause some kids to hang back and make all kinds of excuses for not playing!

As a leader, you can overcome fears that discourage play by:

- selecting games that anyone **can** do.
- beginning with a game that is not too threatening.

## Developing Play Skills

Learn how to lead games, and then practice.

- Learn-by-doing, take a workshop on leading games.
- Find and use a good reference for leading games. (Check with your 4-H office for references for games and play. Your local library is also a good resource for books on play.)

When you're ready to start your role as game leader, begin with simple games.

- Beginnings often feel awkward.
- As you lead more games you will be more at ease and natural. Be aware that you and each 4-H'er bring a history of previous play experiences . . . some fun, some disappointing, and others devastating.



## Play Hard, Play Fair, Nobody Hurt, Have Fun!

Keep your play on the positive side, focus on cooperation.

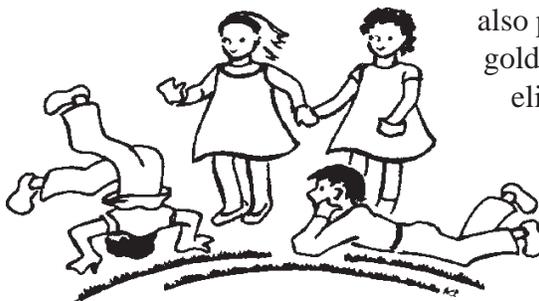
- Set the limits of acceptable behavior.
- Encourage team work.
- Avoid games that eliminate people.
- Redesign favorite games that eliminate people to include more and more people.

## Cooperative Play

What is cooperative play anyway? Does it sound like it will be boring because everyone is nice? Actually it is not. It's full of high energy and quick change possibilities. The major difference

## Golden Opportunity!

is the focus on common characteristics. For instance, games that group people by birthdays, hair color, clothing color, etc. focus on our connections. This opens the door for everyone to see more subtle connections as the group continues to do things together.



Cooperative play also provides you the golden opportunity to eliminate once and for all the self-esteem damaging process of choosing teams based on “skill level.” When teams are formed by matching

people with common characteristics “being chosen last” is eliminated.

## Competition

So far we have talked about cooperative play and including more people rather than excluding people in our play. So, where does competition fit in? Is competition all bad?

Competition in itself is not a bad thing. What’s bad about competition is what people allow it to do to themselves and others. As George Leonard says, “There is nothing wrong with competition in the proper proportion. Like a little salt, it adds zest to the game and to life itself....” You, as the leader, have the opportunity to influence your members in a positive way about handling competition and developing cooperative skills.

## Getting and Holding Their Attention

Before you can teach youth, you need to have their attention. Suggested techniques (from *How to Play With Kids* by M.S.P. Terrell):

- **Maintain active listening through eye contact.** Make sure you are the one facing the sun.
- **Creative Sound:** Use any mix of high, low, variable speed or intonation. (Examples: horseracing banter, whistling, whispering, different accent.)
- **Collaboration:** Make a deal with 2 or 3 youth. They will start laughing, clapping, snapping their fingers, or stomping their feet. Everyone’s attention will soon be on you.

---

## Be Prepared!

## Stop While You are Ahead

- **Rituals:** Teach mini-games to use later whenever you need everyone's attention. Example: Hand signal used in football for time out, "Freeze" (stop where you are!) "Islands" (nobody touching anyone else.) "Dead Ants" (everyone gets on their back with feet and hands in the air.)

Have all the necessary equipment ready for the games you plan to play. Know the directions for the game. Explain the directions clearly. To do this you need their attention. Refer to the section immediately before this one.

Stop the game while their enthusiasm is still high! Channel their enthusiasm to the next planned activity—another game, project activity, etc.

---

### References:

- Fluegelman, Andrew (editor); *The New Games Book*, Doubleday & Company, New York, NY, 1976
- Fluegelman, Andrew; *More New Games!*, Dolphin Books/Doubleday & Company, Inc. Garden City, NY, 1981
- LeFevre, Dale N.; *New Games For The Whole Family*, The Putnam Publishing Group, New York, NY 1982
- Leonard, George; "Physical Education for Life," *Today is Education*, September-October 1975
- Terrell, M.S.P., *How to Play With Kids*, copyright 1989, Play Today, Pacifica, Ca.
- Weinstein, Matt and Joel Goodman; *Playfair*, Impact Publishers, 1980