



# 4-H CLUB MANAGEMENT GUIDE

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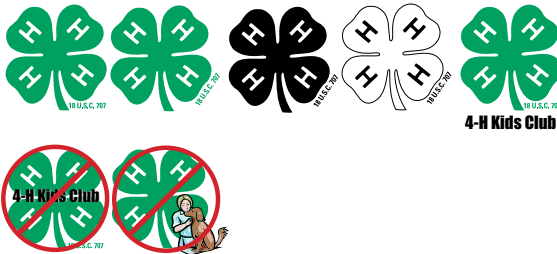
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## Chapter 1—Chartering and Clover Usage

The 4-H name and emblem are federally protected by 18 US Code 707. When a 4-H club or group is formed, the members register with the local Extension Office and complete the “4-H Charter Requirements” (YD4H223) document, which signifies that they have permission to use the 4-H name and emblem. The seven pieces of information required for the application’s completion are as follows:

- 1) Group name.
- 2) Group leader.
- 3) 5 members.
- 4) Officers.
- 5) Constitution.
- 6) IRS information.
- 7) Plan for the year.

Generally, the clover must be printed in 4-H green or black; nothing should be printed over the top of it. Official 4-H clovers have “18 U.S.C. 707” printed on them (minus quotation marks). If a club wants to design a t-shirt logo or other permanent fixture using the clover, the leader should consult the local Extension Office. Details concerning the proper use of the clover are provided in “Using the 4-H Name and Emblem” (YD4H209-04).



### IRS Regulations for Clubs

Because the IRS has granted 4-H a non-profit status, several rules apply to 4-H clubs. The first is that if a club has a treasury, it will need a tax ID number. This is easily accomplished with IRS Form SS-4. The tax ID number is required to open a bank account. The bank may also require a letter from the Extension office in order to prove that the 4-H group is legitimate.

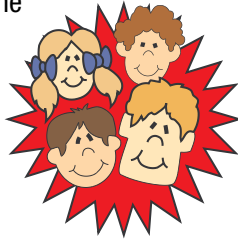
Beginning in 2008, 4-H clubs need to file tax statements regardless of the gross receipts. Small 4-H organizations (those with receipts less than \$25,000) are required to file an electronic notice, Form 990-N. All other 4-H organizations need to continue to file Form 990 or Form 990-EZ. Organizations that do not file their required notice will lose their tax-exempt status. All clubs are required to submit a copy of their financial audit report to the Extension office each year by November 15. If a club disbands, it must follow the guidelines outlined in its constitution. In short, these guidelines require that, should a 4-H group disband, funds raised by that group remain within the 4-H program.

### Resources:

- 4-H Charter Requirements (YD4H223)
- Using the 4-H Name and Emblem (YD4H209-04)
- IRS Form SS-4 (July 2007)
- IRS Form SS-4 Instructions (July 2007)
- National 4-H Headquarters Fact Sheets:
  - Tax Exemption Status of 4-H Clubs and Affiliated 4-H Organizations
  - Fundraising: Private Support for the 4-H Program
  - Raffles, Lotteries, Gaming and 4-H

## Chapter 2—Types of 4-H Memberships

When 4-H was just starting out in 1914, the only membership offered was a “project club.” Boys could join the Corn Club and girls could join the Tomato Club. Today, 4-H offers a wide variety of clubs and memberships.



### Clubs

1. Community Club is often called a “traditional club.” This group is made up of boys and girls of varying ages, studying either a variety of things or a specific project area. They usually meet year-round.
2. After-school clubs meet regularly during an after-school program. The group has a name, a leadership structure, and studies a variety of project areas.
3. Military 4-H clubs resemble community clubs in format and structure but are sponsored by military installations.
4. In-school clubs meet as part of the school day and are classroom specific. They most closely resemble after-school clubs.
5. Special interest groups are focused on a single project area. They may meet over several months or intensively over a short period of time. Members of these groups are often new to 4-H. This is considered a transitional group. Its members are eligible to participate in specific project-related events and activities but may elect not to follow the traditional approach in regard to record keeping and completion.
6. Independent study members are 4-H members who participate in a wide variety of 4-H activities but are not part of a community club, often because of distance or time.

### Leaders

Likewise, 4-H has multiple options for the adult volunteers who serve the club and county programs:

1. Organizational leaders are the main leaders of the club and the main line of communication between members and the Cooperative Extension Service.
2. Project leaders serve either the club or county, teaching and mentoring youth in a specific topic area.
3. Activity leaders are usually short-term leaders who help during a specific activity or event.
4. Collaborators are members of the community who may be called upon for specific consultation or resource development, usually in a county or even FEU capacity.

### Members

4-H has certainly broadened its ability to serve kids since it began. The same is true in regard to membership. Registered 4-H members may be one of the following:

1. Members are youth 8 years old (but not yet 19) by January 1 who are enrolled in community, after-school, in-school, or military clubs, or as an independent.
2. Cloverbuds are youth 5 years old (but not yet 9) by January

1 who are participating in the same groups as members.

3. Special are youth 8 years old (but not yet 19) by January 1 who are enrolled in a special interest group.

Anyone can join 4-H by completing the “South Dakota 4-H Member Enrollment Form” available from the county office. Some counties charge a small fee to cover insurance, awards, and activities. Members who are unable to pay the fee may still join. The membership form collects information about the member, including address, phone, email, parent info, project selections, school, grade, and racial background. All of this information is confidential. The “South Dakota 4-H Member Enrollment Form” contains a “photo policy” statement and a “permission to treat” statement (in the event the 4-H member is injured at a 4-H activity or event). The “South Dakota 4-H Member Enrollment Form” is accompanied by the 4-H “Code of Conduct”; however, only the enrollment form requires a parent signature.

4-H members participating in certain projects or activities may be required to sign additional forms or carry specific insurance. When the member signs up for the project, this information will be provided either by the project leaders or by the Extension Office.

All South Dakota 4-H members are offered an insurance policy that provides some coverage for accidents and illness occurring during 4-H activities and events. The policy does not cover downhill skiing, tobogganing, bobsledding, snow tubing, rodeo, or Cloverbuds working with livestock or firearms. The policy has a \$0 deductible and costs \$1.50 or \$2.50 (the latter for horse projects). Rodeo participants may purchase a separate policy written by the same company, at a cost of \$35 to \$40. Full details on coverage are available at the Extension Office.

4-H volunteers also complete enrollment forms. Any adult who will have direct, unsupervised contact with any child during a 4-H event or activity should complete a volunteer application. By completing the application, we are able to provide some measure of protection to the children we serve. These application procedures are required at schools, churches, and youth organizations all over the country. They are one way to help protect our program from child predators, and to protect our volunteers from unfair accusations.

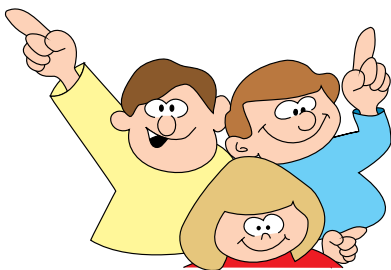
### Resources:

South Dakota 4-H Member Enrollment Form  
South Dakota 4-H Cooperative Extension Service Volunteer Application Form (YD4H207)

## Chapter 3—Successful Club Meetings

### Club Planning

The “club plan” is a working document and is required if the club wishes to qualify for a Gold Seal. Once the plan for the year is completed, it can be turned in to the Extension Office and distributed to the members and leaders of the club.



The methods employed to create a club’s annual plan vary according to the size of the group and the age and experience of its members. Club planning is often a two-meeting process, so it is important to make sure

the group is given adequate time to accomplish the task. For a small-sized club, it is easy for everyone to work together to decide which activities, educational programs, and project work they will do together. For a larger group, it may be necessary to divide into subgroups in order to keep everyone involved.

Here are three methods that can be used to increase participation during the annual planning process:

#### 1. Sticky Note Method

Put topics on large sheet of paper (i.e., community service, fun, project work, presentations, field trips, judging). Give each member some sticky notes and have them place their ideas on the appropriate sheets. Leaders and parent may be allowed to participate. After everyone has had the opportunity to put their ideas up, the sheets can be distributed to small groups to be organized or condensed. When the groups are finished, they can report back to the entire club. After group discussion, either the club or the officers can build the final calendar. The entire group then must approve the calendar (if more time is needed, the approval can be granted at the next meeting).

#### 2. Small Group Method

If the club is relatively small, everyone can work together to create the plan. If the club has a large membership, divide the kids into topic areas. Each group brainstorms ideas and develops a proposal for their area. Each group reports to the club, and the entire group discusses the proposal’s merits. The officers can then take all the group’s ideas and incorporate them into one plan, with the final approval at the next meeting.

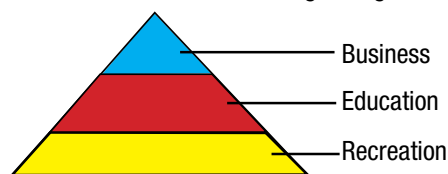
#### 3. Committee Method

This method works especially well for clubs with older members, but it can also work well with younger kids if a leader or parent provides some support. Before breaking into committees, the entire group brainstorms. Each committee then takes the ideas, discusses them, and creates a plan. The committee works with the officers to put their plan into a club calendar, and the entire plan is approved at the next meeting.

Once a club plan has been approved by its membership, it is sent to the Extension Office. This a great time for the educator to touch base with the club and provide some appropriate feedback, training, or encouragement in order to help the club succeed in accomplishing its goals for the year. Additionally, the club secretary can create a complete calendar for each member or transfer the plan to page 4 of the “4-H Journal” and make copies for each member.

Now that the club has processed its goals and priorities for the coming year, the club plan can be used as a blueprint to start planning specific meetings. Most items in the club’s plan will fall into one of three categories: 1) Business, 2) Education, or 3) Recreation. A well-rounded meeting will contain activities from all three categories. For a 90-minute meeting period, experienced volunteers suggest that 15 to 20 minutes be spent on “Business,” 40 to 45 minutes on “Education,” and 20 to 25 minutes on “Recreation.” Every group runs differently, but these suggestions provide balance and variety and allow several members to take active leadership roles throughout the meeting.

The club meeting triangle



It is important to remember that the 4-H meeting is a teaching tool. It provides an opportunity for boys and girls to practice decision making, to take part in discussions, to learn new ideas and new methods, and to provide leadership and citizenship experiences. The 4-H club models democracy in action!

### Business

The “Business” meeting, though important, can become an obstacle if it is boring to the members. Keys to preventing the boring business blues are:

1. Keep the meeting short and to the point.
2. Have a well-planned meeting that is conducted by the members.
3. Provide multiple opportunities for all members to express their views and be involved in the meeting.

Although following parliamentary procedure or “consensus building” are important tools for meetings, it is important to not get obsessed with a perfect meeting to the detriment of fun and fellowship. Again, balance is the key. As leaders, we must not forget that the Business meeting is for the youth, and it is to be run by the youth. We are there to coach the group through the decision making process (helping them to consider the consequences of each alternative) and then allow them to make the decision.

### Very-Basic Meeting Plan

1. Call to order.
2. Pledges.

3. Roll call.
4. Read and approve minutes.
5. Treasurer's report, bills.
6. Correspondence.
7. Committee reports.
8. Unfinished business.
9. New business.
10. Announcements.
11. Adjourn.

practice, not perfection.

4. Refreshments are fun but should be used as a tool to help kids learn to make wise consumer choices AND practice good nutrition.

**Resources:**

Parliamentary Procedures Jeopardy game (pp-jeopardy.ppt)  
 Who Wants to Be a Parliamentarian guide and game (www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/who/)  
 The Way They Learn, by Cynthia Tobias  
 The Cone of Experience — Selecting Teaching Methods  
 SPORK

**Education**

The “Education” section of the meeting provides the members the opportunity to share what they are learning through demonstrations, talks, or judging. Additionally, it is the perfect time to work together on a new project, take a tour, or invite a special speaker in to share or teach. The club plan provides program priorities to help keep the group on track as they work together to explore new things.

Children and adults have preferred learning styles. By mixing up the teaching tools used, it is possible to keep everyone both engaged AND having fun while they learn new things. To learn more about learning styles, try *The Way They Learn*, by Cynthia Tobias. To learn more about selecting different teaching tools, review the online lesson “The Cone of Experience,” which is available on the 4-H website or from your County Extension Office.

**Recreation**

The third section of the 4-H meeting, “Recreation,” is always active, full of variety, and kid-driven! It includes games, singing, refreshments, icebreakers, and free play. Recreation is a tool that can be used to encourage a prompt start to the meeting, to transition between business and education portions, to relieve tensions, and to promote group bonding. Through recreation activities kids learn to follow and give directions, to cooperate, and to understand themselves and others better. Recreation also encourages kids (and adults!) to be more active and can promote a healthier lifestyle.

There are many resources for recreation available on the internet. Searches using the key words “youth games” will provide many ideas for games appropriate for a variety of settings and age groups.

Even with all three portions of the meeting carefully planned, other factors can play a significant role in the success or failure of a club meeting:

1. Parents are extremely important to helping kids succeed — they may need a leader’s assistance in finding the right balance of involvement.
2. Meetings need to begin and end on time. This models respect for others and develops responsibility.
3. Remember, the 4-H meeting is a practice field for learning how to participate in citizenship and democracy. It is about

## Chapter 4—Project Work

Most of the 4-H program centers around work on projects. Projects provide youth the opportunity to both grow in a specific skill AND develop as a person. Projects are real-life experiences that help 4-H'ers learn to make wise decisions. First the youth must decide which project to take; then, as the youth is doing the project, the youth must decide a lot more things (e.g., where to plant the garden, which seeds to plant, and so on). 4-H project work helps members learn good work habits by doing a good job and completing the work they set out to do. They learn that “sticking to it” is important in completing a project, and that sometimes things do not go as well as expected.



along with resources that encourage growth in skills and knowledge.

### Resources:

South Dakota 4-H Project Selection Guide (YD4H502-04)  
Guidelines for 4-H Cloverbuds (YD4H219-06)

Another important aspect of project work is learning to work with others. Whether a family member or an adult mentor, 4-H members learn how to work together, share ideas, express themselves, and assess their own progress as they learn to respect the work and property of others.

Because projects are the tools used to help youth develop into contributing citizens, it is important that leaders encourage an environment that emphasizes the skills we want the youth to internalize (i.e., the responsibility, respect, stick-to-it attitude, and work ethic that will help them achieve success as a person). One way to do this is by advising parents and 4-H'ers to limit their project work appropriately so they can do a good job. Certainly, new members will have a difficult time choosing from one or two projects, so a widely recommended solution is to choose one specific project and “Exploring 4-H.” This allows them the flexibility to try a variety of areas, but encourages the establishment of the habits we are most interested in nurturing.

Older youth with prior 4-H experience are able to handle more projects because they know what is expected. However, as they mature and move into high school, limiting project work to what most interests them will reduce their 4-H workload and encourage a longer tenure in the program. An excellent outlet for teens is helping younger members in project areas in which they have expertise. When dealing with teens, it is important to remember that older members are more interested in leadership and social activities than in project work. Helping teens achieve a balance between these areas will provide a more fulfilling experience for them.

Helping youth select projects appropriate for their age, interests, and family situation is one of the most important tasks for a club leader. Working through the opportunities and expectations will be much easier if the “Project Selection Guide” is utilized. This handy publication provides ideas for project work and exhibits,

## Chapter 5—Essential Activities

Although 4-H clubs provide endless options for how and when things are done, and a list of activities to choose from, there are a few essentials that should be woven into the year's activities. The essentials activities include 1) Community Service, 2) Project Accomplishment, 3) Public Presentations, 4) Decision Making, and 5) Recognition.

Community Service consistently rates high when 4-H alumni and current members are asked what part of their 4-H experience impacted them most. Resiliency research indicates that required helpfulness, putting others first, and helping the less fortunate all improve personal coping mechanisms and serve as positive developmental assets. Clubs engaged in community service activities feel good about themselves and view themselves as problem solvers and able to make a difference.



Activities in this arena help members practice citizenship identify and evaluate community issues and encourage creative problem solving. It promotes youth and adult partnerships and encourages the development of leadership skills. Activities can be small or large in focus, altered according to the age of the participants, and vary in participation from time intensive to dollar intensive. The club has

the ability to respond quickly to a local crisis or to do something over a longer period of time. The actual activity is not nearly as important as the participation of the members in the selection, planning, and completion of the project.

Project Accomplishment focuses on skill development and personal development. While exhibiting at the “County Achievement Days” may provide a tangible illustration of learning and accomplishment, a mere exhibit is not the only way, or in some cases not the best way, to determine accomplishment and completion. It is up to the leader to determine whether or not a member shows accomplishment and completes a project. Every member has different aptitudes, resources, and capabilities. Some members may have poor luck with a project in a given year, which should not result in penalty if it is beyond their control.

To encourage success in project work, it is important that new club members be encouraged to limit their project selection (so that their club work remains manageable). Starting with three projects is a good way to keep younger members focused and successful. As one project is completed, another can be added. Older members have enough experience to judge what they can complete, but they may need to be encouraged to pare down a list that has the potential to overwhelm. “Quality over quantity” can be a guiding factor when selecting projects. If members

have so many projects they are only doing minimal work in order to exhibit, then a reduction in project numbers should be encouraged. The 4-H motto, “To Make the Best Better,” certainly emphasizes quality work over sheer quantity.

The ability to give quality public presentations is often the single most recognized skill that 4-H members develop. The biggest reason for this is that academic oral presentations are often not required before the middle school years, when youth are most self-conscious and vulnerable to perceived or real public embarrassment. 4-H members begin presentations as early as five years of age, when their confidence and bravery often exceed their speaking ability. No matter, the experience of speaking in front of a group, and the encouragement showered upon the Cloverbud by the older youth, sets the stage for later success. By the time 4-H members reach their more self-conscious years, they already have years of successful speaking experiences to draw upon, as well as the poise they have developed from those experiences.

Public presentations have four general categories: 1) Demonstration, 2) Illustrated Talks, 3) Speeches, and 4) Project Why. A demonstration is a combination of action and explanation resulting in a finished project that can be shown to an audience. An illustrated talk may be about a topic (think “illustrated oral report”) or very similar to a demonstration (but without executing the steps in person). Speeches, which have no visual aids, require the 4-H member to focus on organization, inflection, and gestures to keep the audience’s attention. The final type of presentation, “Project Why,” uses yet another set of communication skills; this presentation type focuses on a question (the why), and the 4-H member answers it via a display and a conversation with passersby. The Project Why format requires the development of a visual or verbal hook, to generate interest in the subject, along with a display that answers the question, but it also encourages interaction between the 4-H member and audience members. Because the audience is passing by, the 4-H member must be able to adapt to the changing group while still transmitting the desired message.

Decision making takes on several forms during a 4-H meeting. The most common form is that of settling issues that come before the group, usually by consensus or a vote using the principles of parliamentary procedure. Participation is a key element, no matter which method is used. Consensus building can take more time because everyone has to agree to the final solution. Its strength is the development of reasoning and negotiating skills. Parliamentary procedure provides specific steps to provide an orderly environment from which to discuss and debate issues. While it does require the members to learn “the rules” to participate, it is a very efficient and effective method for conducting the business of the club.

Another exercise in decision making is called judging. In 4-H judging, the member is presented with a situation and given four



potential solutions. After considering the situation, the member ranks the choices from best to worse, which is called a placing. This placing is compared with the official ranking, and through the use of a Hormel scorecard, a score is given representing how close the member's decision was to the official's. After determining the placing, the 4-H member may be given the opportunity to defend or give reasons for his decision.

Judging is a great exercise in considering options, determining quality, and working with criteria when making a choice. These skills readily transfer to real life situations (e.g., snack selections, car shopping, even friend selection, especially when the member is encouraged to verbally explain why they made a choice through oral reasons). The act of judging a class provides exercise in logical argument and critical thinking, both of which are valuable skills for future leaders.

Recognition is much broader than awards and should be incorporated into every 4-H member's experience. The 4-H Recognition Model advocates that there are five different forms of recognition, and care must be taken to keep all five areas in balance:

1. Recognition for participation takes the form of certificates, t-shirts, or anything that recognizes the member's participation in the group or event. Many clubs have shirts or jackets that recognize their membership. These items can be a great tool to build camaraderie and pride in the group.
2. Recognition for achieving personal goals is another critical form that centers in the club. As members set and achieve their personal goals, it is important to both recognize the milestone and encourage the setting of new goals. Likewise, as the club sets and achieves its group goals, the club itself should be recognized and celebrated.
3. Recognizing achievement based on a set standard of excellence is centered on the Danish ribbon system used in 4-H. Members are eligible to receive purple, blue, red, or white ribbons as determined by evaluating the exhibit against a known criteria. In general, purple ribbon work exceeds all criteria, blue ribbon work meets all criteria and exceeds some, red ribbons indicate that all criteria have been met, and white ribbons are awarded to exhibits which do not meet the published exhibit standards.
4. Recognition based on head-to-head competition takes place anytime work is placed 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and so on. In this setting, project work is compared, and a winner, grand champion, or "best of show" is selected.
5. Cooperation may be recognized by simply saying "thank you" for assistance provided; by purchasing team uniforms; or even by having a special, team-focused activity or competition.

When balanced, recognition provides motivation and encouragement to all club members to do their best and to take risks. For more detailed information, consult the 4-H Recognition Model.

South Dakota offers 4-H members a variety of recognition, all designed to provide a balanced recognition program. Membership pins, achievement medals, project pins, and the upper-level leadership awards all contribute a variety of recognition possibilities for 4-H members of all ages. Requirements for these awards are outlined in the "4-H Member Recognition Guide" (YD4H224). Counties may have additional awards available as well.

**Resources:**

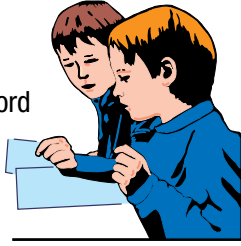
- 4-H Member Recognition Guide (YD4H224)
- Recognition in Youth Programs: Helping Young People Grow (YD4H509)
- South Dakota State Fair 4-H Division Book (YD4H830)

## Chapter 6—Record Keeping

In the 4-H program, record keeping happens at the corporate and individual level. For a club, various officers track the history and progress of the group. The secretary keeps accurate minutes of business meetings, providing a written account of the groups decisions, goals, and programs. The treasurer maintains accurate financial records by recording receipts and expenditures for the group. The historian/reporter/journalist can be one office or several, depending upon the club's size and interests. One group may prefer a scrapbook of events and activities, while another group depends on their journalist to maintain the club's website.

### Secretary

The “South Dakota 4-H Club Secretary Record of Minutes” book (YD4H218) helps 4-H club secretaries keep an accurate record of club activities. The book includes forms to help a beginning secretary take minutes, a suggested order of business, ideas for role call, and plenty of pages for recording meeting minutes. The book is available in print or online, providing a simple template for those wishing to computerize the note-taking process.



### Treasurer

The “South Dakota 4-H Club Treasurer’s Book” (YD4H222) provides plenty of forms and templates to help the club treasurer keep track of funds that are stored in a checking account, saving account, or petty cash fund. It also outlines the requirements placed on 4-H clubs by the IRS to safeguard the club’s tax-exempt status. The book provides examples of how to record the different transactions, instructions for creating a budget, and instructions for conducting an audit. This book is available online, allowing the treasurer to computerize the club’s records.

### Historian/Reporter/Journalist

The Office of Reporter can involve reporting to the local newspaper and/or keeping a club scrapbook and/or photo album. Some clubs have converted the reporter position to club webmaster, while others have added photographers to assist the club historian/scrapbook keeper. This officer position can truly be molded by the preferences of the club members.

The “4-H Club Officers Manual” (YD4H206) provides some great information on writing meeting reports and news releases. Also, 4-H photography manuals provide assistance with shooting better photos, and 4-H computer manuals can help interested members create a club website or start a private online group.

### Member Journals

Each 4-H club member is responsible for tracking his/her activities as a 4-H member. The “South Dakota 4-H Member’s Journal” (4H200-02) is provided as a template to assist the member in creating their own unique record of learning by

doing. The journal is not meant to be merely a form to be filled out, but an opportunity for the 4-H member to reflect on what was learned, to set goals, celebrate accomplishments, and serve as a storehouse for mementos and awards from the past year.

As the member progresses in skill and activity, the journal becomes more important because it is from these pages that the 4-H member gleans the information necessary to apply for awards, trips, and scholarships. From age 13 on, it becomes increasingly important for the member to accurately record their activities, achievements, and recognition in their 4-H journal. The journal is still a template, so members should feel free to use whatever methods fit their personality. For some, it may be weekly journal entries, for others, a detailed calendar or a group of bulleted entries. All of these are acceptable; the important thing is to have the information stored in an easily accessible format.

Counties may create other templates for 4-H record keeping; however, they may not require 4-H members to use a county form exclusively. Youth must always be given the option to use either the “South Dakota 4-H Member’s Journal” template or to create their own. Regardless of the form used, every 4-H member must turn in page 9 of the “South Dakota 4-H Member’s Journal” at the end of the 4-H year.

### Resources:

South Dakota 4-H Member’s Journal (4H200-02)  
South Dakota 4-H Club Secretary Record of Minutes (YD4H218)  
South Dakota 4-H Club Treasurer’s Book (YD4H222)  
4-H Club Officers Manual (YD4H206)

## Chapter 7—Evaluation

The motto of the 4-H program is “To Make the Best Better,” and one way to help members’ parents and leaders do that is through an evaluation process. In South Dakota, evaluation is encouraged in the following formats: project or activity work, end-of-the-year journal interviews, through county and state award programs, and club evaluation.

Project evaluation is well known to the general public and 4-H members – its result is the ribbons placed on exhibits during County Achievement Days. Ideally, project evaluation includes a conversation between the member and judge, and a completed score sheet. Many counties across the state have incorporated interview judging into all tabletop exhibit evaluations; this provides the opportunity for members to learn from a knowledgeable source and to better understand how their work was evaluated. Live animal exhibits do not always receive scorecards, but the member can gain valuable information by listening to the judge’s discussion of the class. In both settings, members receive quality awards based on the evaluation.

A purple ribbon is given for work of very high quality that exceeds all criteria. Blue ribbons are given for projects that exceed most criteria. Red ribbons are given for exhibits that meet all criteria. White ribbons are given to exhibits that do not meet the criteria for that exhibit. All exhibit criteria are written in the “South Dakota State Fair 4-H Division Fair Book” (YD4H830) and are included on exhibit scorecards. As parents and volunteers, it is important to remember that true education occurs during the process of completing the project, and just finishing should be considered cause for celebration. In some cases, ribbon colors have lost their value over the years, leading youth and adults alike to believe that the only ribbon worth having is a purple. If that is the case, the education of parents, judges, and youth is critical both for continuing success and for keeping expectations reasonable.

End-of-the-year journal interviews are an opportunity for club leaders to help 4-H members realize that they have grown and learned new skills. The interviews provide a specific time to reflect on the year, to celebrate the goals achieved, and to encourage further improvement or the seeking of wider experiences. Journals are not meant to be judged – there is no correct way to complete a journal. They are a part of the 4-H member’s overall growth and development, and should be used as such. Evaluating journals with the intent of awarding prizes for the best youth or record is contrary to the youth development principles 4-H is founded on. These types of “journal judging” awards create a very real temptation for parents to get too involved, often resulting in the journal entries of 8-year-olds reading like those of college graduates instead of 3rd or 4th graders!

The South Dakota 4-H Awards program provides recognition for a wide range of 4-H members. Membership pins are provided for

those completing their 1st, 5th, and 10th year of membership. Skill awards are provided for young members, encouraging them to explore more opportunities and develop more skill in speaking and leadership as they achieve bronze, silver, and gold member status. Project awards are given to members achieving and leading in specific project areas. Achievement awards are available for older members in Citizenship and Leadership. The highest award for South Dakota 4-H members is the Key Award.

Complete details and requirements for 4-H Awards are available from the “4-H Member Recognition Guide” (YD4H224).

Formal Club Evaluation is something new in South Dakota, but many long-standing clubs have informally evaluated their programs for years. As with project evaluation, it is important to remember that the club evaluation form is a tool 1) to help club leaders and members strive for and reach goals, 2) to generate expectations for program planning, and 3) to assist the entire club in balancing project work, leadership development, community service, education, and fun. Two formats for club evaluation are included in this publication; they can be used in tandem or separately, depending upon the county program goals and the age of club members.

The first tool is the “4-H Club Excellence Form” (YD4H225). This tool works very well for groups that have variety in age, length of membership, and leadership abilities. It is assumed that clubs using this form have balanced leadership between the members and adult volunteers, and that they are working together as a team. Counties may use the “Club Excellence Form” to provide achievement awards at the club level, or to nominate outstanding 4-H clubs for special awards.



Club members may use the form at their planning meeting to help them set goals and plan a balanced program for the year. Leaders may use the form to assign co-leader responsibilities, to explain participation expectations to parents, or as an outline for the program committee and president to use as a monthly meeting checklist.

The “Club Excellence Form” is broken down into the following areas: program planning, membership, participation, community, and promotion.

### Program Planning

It is important for both the club and the individual members to have goals. Individual goals are recorded in the member’s journals, while club goals can be recorded in the minutes or in the club scrapbook. Once the members have completed the plan for the year, each member should receive a copy for his journal and each family one for their family calendar. A final copy should be sent to the County Extension Office. All members should be active in planning the club program for the year.

Membership records help the club to see patterns in growth

and decline. These trends can alert leaders to how well they are serving the youth of their club and whether their club is maintaining its vibrancy.

Club participation provides a snapshot of where the club is at in any given year. Participation areas may show strength or weakness as the club's median age rises and falls. There are many other elements of club participation that were not included on the "4-H Club Excellence Form." Those included here are those that are most helpful to club success, those that are required by state or federal offices to protect the clover, or those that encourage members to expand their level of participation or increase skill in a certain project.

Successful meetings require that 1) 70% of the membership be in attendance, 2) that youth run the business meeting, and 3) that 20 minutes of educational programming occur during the meeting. The educational programming may take the form of talks and demonstrations, a speaker, field trip, or project skill development.

Clubs should plan a minimum of four meetings per year, however nine is considered the ideal. Meetings should include opportunities for members to give project demonstrations and to enjoy recreation and project exploration. The club officers are responsible both for conducting the business portion of the club meetings and for encouraging all members to participate. The Community Program includes club service to the community, participation in the state Community Service Project, and club programming in the areas of health, safety, and diversity. Clubs have done incredible amounts of community service since before World War I. Participating in the state Community Service Project provides the youth a chance to pool all their creativity under one topic area and to create a larger impact across the state. Health and safety programs have also been part of club programming for many years, though they have not been as prominent in the past decade. Diversity programming is new to South Dakota. It encourages club members to expand their world a bit and step out of their comfort zone. A club's diversity program could be an international night with a visiting exchange student, a club study of another culture, serving dinner at a homeless shelter, or a visit to another club in a different part of the country or state.

4-H Promotion is a vital part of club work. It not only helps the club membership grow, but helps returning members to articulate why they are part of 4-H and why they continue to participate. The activities listed on the "4-H Club Excellence Form" are suggestions a club can use, or the membership can create its own activities. The important thing is that the club work together to promote the 4-H program. Their efforts will be rewarded with additional membership, leaders, and sponsorship.

The second tool is more internal and can be measured by consulting club members and a third party observer. The

information collected can be compared to the descriptive characteristics of thriving youth groups, and the club structure adjusted accordingly. Vibrant 4-H clubs exhibit a series of characteristics that kids respond to with enthusiasm. They create an environment where youth learn, experiment, and grow in a positive, motivating environment. These come as a whole package; the synergy of the whole is as important as each individual. Leaders are encouraged to objectively evaluate their club using these features, and to modify their behavior according to their findings. To increase the vibrancy of the 4-H club, leaders may want to ask an objective party to observe their club meetings and point out traits they can improve.

Vibrant youth groups:

1. Are more concerned with weaning than winning. Meetings are youth focused and driven. Youth, as they mature, lead the decision making.
2. Change how they do things, but not what they do. Club structure is firm yet flexible; creativity is encouraged while consistency and reliability is maintained.
3. Work hard and play hard – they do not meet just to meet or conduct business; the club provides a way for members to do fun things together and to work hard serving their community.
4. Empower rather than embalm young people. Rather than preserve members in some childlike state, youth are empowered to do what they are qualified to do, and to develop personal responsibility.
5. Communicate and listen. A conscious effort is made to involve members in discussions and deliberations. Communication and leadership are two-way processes in which adults and youth share responsibilities.
6. Are able to achieve a balance between chaos and rigidity.
7. Affirm and support one another; they take pride in and celebrate the collective efforts of all members. The goal is to "do our best," not to be the best.
8. Use a mentoring system to "socialize" newcomers into the club environment.
9. Value and practice service to others. Community service is not viewed as just another requirement, but is important within itself.
10. Take time for training; adults see their primary responsibility as helping young people to become involved as equal partners in the process of planning, implementation, and evaluation.

#### Resources:

4-H Member Recognition Guide (YD4H224)  
4-H Publications—assorted project scorecards  
4-H Club Excellence Form (YD4H225)  
"Beyond Resiliency: Fostering Vibrancy in Youth Groups," New Designs for Youth Development, 13(4):5-11

## Chapter 8 – Youth Leadership

Leaders are not born, they are developed! While some youth are more adept at public speaking or are exceptionally quick thinkers, that does not make them leaders. To be a true leader takes years. Attitudes and skills need to be encouraged and developed over time. That is why leadership practice begins the moment a child enrolls in 4-H, regardless of age. As a Cloverbud, leadership training begins by learning how to express ideas and feelings appropriately, by taking responsibility for one's actions, and by doing things for the good of the group – like helping to clean up after a craft.



As kids grow and develop, they are ready to practice more difficult skills such as speaking extemporaneously, planning the club program, and serving on committees and in officer roles. Failure will be a part of the learning process, just as learning that leadership is as much about putting the

club's needs before personal preference as it is about being "in charge." It is important to allow the kids to make mistakes, and learn by doing, so that they understand that when things do not go exactly as planned they can problem solve and redirect, and still reach the goal or feel successful. In real life, things seldom go as originally planned, so it's important to practice problem solving almost as much as public speaking.

There are many great resources available to help youth grow as leaders. In recent years, the National 4-H Curriculum system has developed an excellent set of activities to help members practice leadership skills. These activities provide a wide variety of experiences that enhance decision making, planning, team building, and the servant-like attitude that can develop a great leader. CHARACTER COUNTS!<sup>SM</sup> activities also play a role in building the internal structure that help kids become better leaders. For club officers, there are specific materials available to help each one do the job well. The "4-H Club Officers Manual" (YD4H206) is a guide that can be passed to each officer or given to every interested club member. Club officer training is another way for any youth to learn more about the roles and responsibilities of being a club officer.

As youth grow, their leadership focus will change from just the club, to the county, to the field education unit (FEU), to the state. During these years, tweeners and teens become great mentors for younger kids and begin to take on leadership roles in the projects they are most skilled in. They make ideal event or committee chairs, because they have experienced enough planning and active participation to understand what to do. With some encouragement from an adult, they are quite capable of handling club-level events and activities.

At the county and/or FEU level, older youth have the opportunity to gain more skill, try larger responsibilities, and develop a more grown-up perspective about the program. It is important that these youth be offered educational, fun, and creative activities that they help plan. These types of events provide opportunity for the oldest members to hone their leadership skills as they direct and teach less experienced youth. These local activities also provide a great introduction to regional and state events such as 4-H Camp and Teen Leadership Conference (TLC) and, potentially, service on state and national committees focused on youth issues. Both provide an opportunity for teens to test their skills in a much larger group. Whether attending as a delegate or aspiring to become a member of the State Officer team, TLC provides instruction, networking, inspiration, and ideas to help teens meet personal goals and to serve as a catalyst for new ideas in their local program. 4-H Camp focuses on building leadership skills and achieving personal goals. Both programs encourage younger teens to stand up and lead, while providing older teens opportunities to transition into adulthood as they consider college and careers. All participants are provided with challenges to become more complete leaders, whether at home, school, or work.

Most leadership opportunities are communicated through the 4-H newsletter. If opportunities are lacking in an area of the state, contact the 4-H/YD educator and the state Teen Council member in the area for assistance. Information on state level opportunities is available from the Extension office or from the Family/Youth and 4-H office at South Dakota State University.

### Resources:

Step Up 1 My Leadership Workbook 07905  
Step Up 2 My Leadership Journal 07906  
Step Up 3 My Leadership Portfolio 07907  
Leadership Mentor Guide 1 07903  
Leadership Mentor Guide 2 07904  
4-H Club Officers Manual (YD4H206)

## Chapter 9 – Adult Involvement

The 4-H program would not be possible without the enormous volunteer staff that does most of the direct work with the youth. Volunteers come to the program with a wide variety of expertise, experience, motivation, and desire. When working with club volunteers, it is important to remember that they have personal reasons for giving of their time, and it is always a worthwhile endeavor to strive to meet their needs as well as those of the youth served.

In today's fast paced world, two-income families have become the norm rather than the exception. This limits the amount of volunteer time available to the 4-H club, but it does not limit the potential number of volunteers. Because parents are so busy, it is critical that club leaders engage them immediately, or they will find other ways to spend their time.

Start by creating a list of single jobs that could be accomplished at each meeting. Instead of the organizational leader putting all the pieces together, they can be assigned to parents either before the meeting or as they arrive. Jobs can be as simple as facilitating a small group during a discussion period or putting up the announcements on the club bulletin board. More-involved activities could include setting up a judging class or leading a craft.

Easy jobs for relatively inexperienced parents:

- set up refreshments
- update club bulletin board
- one-on-one help with journals
- helping set up demonstrations
- sitting with over-active kids
- calling tree
- double-checking forms
- greeting late arrivals
- recreation setup
- packaging handouts
- distributing fundraising packs



An excellent way to “hand out” these jobs is to put the directions/expectations on an index card to give to each parent. It saves time in explaining what is needed and serves as a handy reference for the parent. For more assistance in finding ways to involve parents, ask the local Extension educator or 4-H/YD educator to present the “Planning to Involve Parents” material at a Leader Training workshop.

### Registering Volunteers

It is critical that volunteers be properly recognized and protected while working in the 4-H program. Anyone helping in a 4-H club more than once a year should be registered at the Extension Office, so their years of service can be properly tracked and recognized. They can be registered according to their involvement:

1. Organizational leaders are those who are organizational

leaders of the club. They usually handle paperwork, some planning, and are the official contact for the club.

2. Project leaders take leadership for a specific project area either within a club or for the entire county.

3. Activity leaders help out with specific tasks such as crafts, community service, or refreshments.

4. Collaborators are not usually associated with a club and often are not directly involved with kids. They often consult with other leaders, lead financial campaigns, or work as an advocate in the political arena.

Any adult who works with kids in an unsupervised setting needs to complete the “South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service Volunteer Application Form” (YD4H207-04). This application contains necessary information that allows 4-H to comply with federal and state child protection statutes. It is the same information collected by schools, churches, and other youth organizations. An added benefit of filling out the application is that it makes the volunteer eligible to purchase liability and accident insurance for a very reasonable price. Deadlines for these policies vary, so volunteers should inquire directly to the Extension Office if they are interested in these policies.

### Recognition

In South Dakota, 4-H volunteers are recognized with pins for each 5 years of service to the organization. Some counties provide certificates for each year of service.

### Volunteer Training and Certification

Continuing education is very important for helping volunteers keep up to date, be encouraged, and be creative. Leader workshops, conferences, and associations provide opportunities to learn, share ideas, and communicate with other 4-H volunteers. By participating in these, as well as by taking advantage of online opportunities, club volunteers can gain new skills, gain fresh perspectives, and locate avenues of help as they continually adapt to the changing needs of today's youth.


Certification, while new to many clubs, has actually been going on in South Dakota for over 10 years! 4-H Shooting Sports instructors have been required to complete 16 to 18 hours of training since 1992, with six of those hours being devoted to youth development. 4-H Horse participants are required to attend safety training. Wyoming 4-H mandated a volunteer certification program in 2003, and their volunteer numbers increased as a result. Certification programs take time, but they create a well-trained, more-committed volunteer that has a deeper understanding of how he or she can positively affect a child. Certification programs also provide experienced volunteers the opportunity to move up to the next step and become advanced trainers within their FEUs. More information about leader training opportunities is available from the Extension Office.

### Resources:

County leader associations or county councils  
State Leader's Association

North Central Regional Leaders Forum  
Project training/certification  
South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service Volunteer Application Form  
(YD4H207-04)  
Planning to Involve Parents  
<http://4h.sdstate.edu/2005ncrvf/Insight/Parent/PlantoInvolveParents.ppt>

## Chapter 10—Expanding Opportunities... for my club, my community, my country and my world



The 4-H club is similar to a greenhouse. It is a wonderful place to sprout seeds and help them to become established, before sending them out to the garden for planting or to be repotted so they can grow even stronger. The 4-H club provides a safe and friendly place for youth to gain skills, explore, grow, and even fail. Once established, youth are ready to begin activities that require more skill, responsibility, and independent thought. It is important to encourage club members to continue growing, to expand their experiences, and to stretch their world, knowing that they have their familiar 4-H club to return to for encouragement and assistance.

Each county has its own group of events and activities designed for multiple age levels. All 4-H members should be encouraged to participate in at least one county-level 4-H activity, in addition to Achievement Days. Almost every county has a public presentations, special foods, or recognition event, a fundraiser, or Teen Leader group. They often schedule project workshops and judging sessions and sponsor a 4-H camp. Watch the county 4-H newsletter for these opportunities, and encourage parents to assist their child in attending. District- and state-level activities cover a wider area, but many are available for all ages.

### In-state Events

**Western Junior** has taken place in Rapid City for over 60 years. It includes livestock shows, range plant displays and IDs, judging contests, public speaking, fashion revue, place setting, measuring, home living, bread baking, and photography. Youth from South Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming, Montana, and even Iowa have attended this fun and educational event.

**State competitive events** happen across the state at different times during the year. Most of these events require some type of county qualification to participate:

**State 4-H Shoot** – held in April and September for all ages

**Rangeland Days** – held in late June or July for all ages

**State Horse Show** – held in July; includes judging, quiz bowl and halter events

**Summer Spotlight** – held in late July; includes state livestock judging and skillathon

**State Fair** – held in later August, early September; includes project exhibit judging

**State 4-H Rodeo** – held in August for all ages

**4-H Camp** is a 3 to 4 day residential camp usually held in June for younger 4-H members (8-12) at three locations: Camp Richmond, near Aberdeen; Camp Lakodia, near Madison; and Camp Bob Marshall, near Custer.

**Teen Leadership Conference (TLC)** is held the first week of

June on the South Dakota State University campus. This four-day conference is for those age 13 to 18 and is planned by the State 4-H Youth Council. It includes workshops and activities designed for older youth to increase their leadership potential, explore careers, and establish friendships with other teens from across the state.

**4-H Youth Council** is a group of teens selected to provide 4-H leadership at the FEU and state level, including the annual Legislative visit and TLC. Members are selected through an interview process. Any youth age 15 to 18, or in grades 9 to 12, may apply for a two-year term.

**Tech Team** is a group of teens selected to explore and promote the use of technology in 4-H youth programs. Members may travel to the National Technology Conference, conduct workshops, and provide expertise for different 4-H or Extension activities and events around the state.

**Citizenship Washington Focus (CWF)** is a six-day intensive citizenship program for youth ages 15 to 19. Delegates learn about the democratic process while they experience our nation's capitol. The South Dakota delegation usually attends in late June or early July.

### National and Regional Events

**National 4-H Congress** is the flagship event of the 4-H program. The congress provides youth a quality educational and cross-cultural experience as it addresses the needs and issues of today's youth. It is usually held in late November in Atlanta, Georgia; an application is required.

**National 4-H Conference** is the Secretary of Agriculture's premier youth development opportunity for engaging youth in developing recommendations for the 4-H Youth Development Program. The conference is held in late March or Early April in Washington, D.C.; an application is required.

**Western Regional 4-H Roundup** is the longest continually running National 4-H event, in existence since 1920. Roundup is a combination of several competitive events, plus a leadership conference held in Denver during early January. Delegates are selected to participate in the competitive events, and sometimes as leadership delegates.

**North Central Region Volunteer Forum** is an opportunity for youth and adult volunteers to partner together to learn how to become better leaders at the club, community, and state level. Participants teach, share, and motivate each other as they experience high-quality speakers, tours, and workshops presented by fellow volunteers. The Forum is held in the fall, with a different north-central state hosting each year.

### International 4-H

It is not necessary to travel outside the U.S. to experience the International 4-H program. 4-H families can bring the world to



their door by hosting international exchange representatives in their homes.

**LABO** is a cooperative exchange between Japan and the United States. South Dakota 4-H families host Japanese youth aged 12 to 18 during late July and August. Youth are matched according to age and interests, and U.S. hosts are eligible to travel to Japan in a future exchange. Each year, South Dakota 4-H members host 12 to 15 Japanese youth. There are also opportunities to host a Japanese student for the entire school year. South Dakota typically hosts two year-long Japanese youth.

**FLEX** is a special program to help promote democracy and to build leadership skills in teens from former Soviet-block countries. FLEX students spend one year in the United States, and attend an American school. South Dakota sponsors one or two FLEX students each year.

**IFYE** stands for International 4-H Youth Exchange and provides opportunities for 4-H members and alumni to participate in intercultural exchanges. IFYE Ambassadors are between 15 and 18 years old, and travel as a group to a country for a period of 6 to 12 weeks. IFYE Representatives are between 19 and 25 years old and travel to a country for 3 to 6 months. 4-H families are always needed to host IFYE delegates, usually for a 2 to 4 week period of time.

## Chapter 11—Starting a New 4-H Club

Starting new 4-H clubs can be time intensive, but it is well worth the effort when the benefits to the youth and adults involved are considered. Club membership provides a stable, long-term arena from which true youth development takes place. By breaking down club formation into a step-by-step sequence, with expected outcomes, it is possible to maintain a consistent effort in this area, while ensuring maximum effectiveness as well.

### **STEP 1: Contact School Administrators**

Time Commitment: 1 hour with superintendent; 1 hour with each principal  
Expected outcome:

- Access to individual schools is gained.
- High-level school administrative officials educated about the Cooperative Extension Service.

If you have already established a relationship with the superintendent, you are well on your way. If not, it is time to schedule a visit and educate the superintendent about the research-proven benefits of 4-H as an extra-curricular activity. Here is a brief synopsis of benefits:

According to research conducted by Montana State University (2002) and Colorado State University (2005), 4-H members are more likely to report that they succeed in school, are involved in out-of-school activities, and are less likely to participate in risky behaviors such as shoplifting, using illegal drugs, damaging property, or skipping class. 4-H members also reported that they feel more socially competent and self-assured, are more likely to take on leadership rolls at school, and are more likely to be involved in projects helping others.

These are all qualities that school administrators would like their students to have, so sharing this research with them is an ideal way to position yourself as a true educator, if you have not already done so. Once you have met with the superintendent, you can make an appointment for a similar meeting with your selected school's principal(s).

More research about the benefits of 4-H can be found at [http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/comm/4h\\_ydresearch.htm](http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/comm/4h_ydresearch.htm).

### **STEP 2: Information Survey**

Time commitment: 1 hour in each location

Expected outcomes:

- Gather information on the interests of potential club members.
- Educate parents about CES and 4-H.
- Provide the opportunity for a club member or leader to step up to a new leadership role.

Once permission is granted by the principal, you are ready to contact youth and parents. Timing can play a key role. If possible, distribute the survey one or two days prior to a PTA meeting or open house (where you [or a 4-H leader/member] can give a short presentation or have an information table set up). Successful marketing is about multiple contacts, so conducting the survey, sending information home, and being at a school function, all within days of each other, is an excellent

approach. Some tips for you to consider as you plan:

- Surveys should have a quick turnaround so they do not get lost.
- Send more info, both about 4-H clubs specifically and about the 4-H program in general, home for the parent.
- You can expect a return rate of 1 survey for every 5 distributed, so don't be discouraged by initial low turnout.

Samples of promotional materials and surveys are available in this publication's "Resources" section.

### **STEP 3: School Promotion**

Time commitment: 1-2 hours

Expected outcomes:

- "Informational" meeting scheduled.
- Final promotions completed.

Within a week of the survey return deadline, send everyone who responded positively a written invitation to attend an informational meeting. Make sure the entire family is clearly invited. Ask for permission to put up posters in every classroom, the hallways, and so on, and to remind kids via morning announcements or an "ad" in the school newspaper or newsletter. Do not forget to ask that the meeting be added to the school calendar and to the school's website (if they have one). Other possibilities are "reminder" bookmarks for all the students to take home, or 4-H pencils with a note. Remember, even though a family may have declined to fill out the survey, they may still attend a meeting to gain more information, especially if their child continues to be excited. Ready-made items are listed in this publication's "Resource" section.

### **STEP 4: Informational Meeting**

Time commitment: 2 hours

Expected outcomes:

- Parents and youth understand both the purpose of and the opportunities available through a 4-H club.
- Group decides whether or not to start a club.
- Date selected for organizational meeting with parents.

This meeting is your opportunity to show that 4-H is the dynamic youth development program that it is! Make sure that your presentation and all the materials you use reflect the diversity and vitality of the program. Make sure that this meeting includes:

- FUN! – get everyone involved in a get-acquainted activity
- Refreshments – to help families relax, ask questions, and become friends
- Project selection guide for each family
- A list of those in attendance (name, address, and phone) for future reference

Do NOT ask parents to volunteer at this meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to help them understand what 4-H is about – so that they can make an informed decision. Do emphasize that 4-H is a family program, and that kids and adults work together to make decisions about how the group operates, and so on. Here is an example of an agenda for the informational meeting:

1. Group get-acquainted activity. (See “Resources” section for several ideas.)
2. Presentation about 4-H, with the following elements included:
  - a. connection to SD Cooperative Extension Service
  - b. partnership between private, federal, state, and county entities
  - c. essential elements of youth development and how a 4-H club helps
3. Explain what makes a club (chartering requirements):
  - a. five or more youth
  - b. one or more adult leaders
  - c. organizational elements: club name, officers, constitution
  - d. annual program plan
  - e. charter authorization
  - f. expectations of volunteers and parents, relative to the club
4. Feel free to use or adapt *Welcome to 4-H*, a PowerPoint presentation available online.
5. Present examples of projects and project materials. The CCS curriculum is excellent for this, and club members can provide old projects. Give each family a “South Dakota 4-H Project Selection Guide” (YD4H502-04).
6. Ask those interested in starting a new club to sign up for a club organizational meeting to be held the following week, and to complete project and parent surveys.
7. Demonstrate the 4-H pledge, and close with refreshments.

At the end of this meeting, it should be pretty obvious whether or not the group wants to start a club. Assuming they do, it's time to ask for parents to agree to take on some *temporary* leadership roles to help the club get started. Remember, as an Extension educator, your role is to answer questions and assist in coordinating their movement in the desired direction. You **CANNOT** take on any leadership roles. The first step in this direction is to have the group decide when to set dates for the parent organizational meeting and the first club meeting. Don't despair if no one is ready to commit to permanent leadership positions yet. Personal phone calls to the parents will no doubt glean some serious prospects.

### **STEP 5: Parent Organizational Meeting**

Time commitment: 2 to 4 hours total, could be shared with club members  
 Expected outcomes:

- Parent leadership selected.
- Provide training on stages of development.
- Plan first club meeting.

Now it's time for you to begin to step back into a support role. If your county has club mentors, this is the time to assign one to the new club. You or the mentor will want to make personal contact with each parent, answering any questions and confirming what volunteer roles the parent has the skill(s) to fulfill. By the time you have talked to the final parent, you will

probably have a good idea of who can best serve in the different roles. You may decide to have a planning session with key parents prior to the organizational meeting. This allows you to move them to the forefront and you to a support role.

When you have the parent organizational meeting, try this format:

1. Group building activity.
2. Reminder that 4-H is youth and adults working together to learn. Determine parents' objectives for their youth's participation. Review project interests (from project surveys) and make a list of projects the club will offer this year.
3. Provide appropriate training on the stages of development, as determined by ages of the youth in the group.
4. Determine club format (project or community) to start with.
5. Go over an inventory of parent skills. Note what each parent is willing to help with or teach.
6. Explain the role of club organizational leader. (Give job description and help the group select temporary [3 to 4 months] or long-term [12 months] leaders.)
7. An excellent idea is to put the organization on a 3-year rotation with an advisor, organizational leader, and assistant. In this case, the club mentor takes on the advisor role, one or two leaders in the organizational leader role, and another parent in the assistant position.
8. Determine the date, time, and location of future club meetings.
9. Determine who will contact members about future meetings.
10. Plan the first club meeting, making sure to include:
  - a. group building
  - b. decision making
  - c. educational program – the mentor could provide a club member to do a simple craft or demonstration
  - d. recreation
  - e. refreshments
11. Complete volunteer applications and explain how to complete member enrollment forms.

### **STEP 6: First Meeting of New 4-H Club (led by main leader,**

Time commitment: Club mentor—2 hours; Educator – 30 minutes to debrief with club mentor  
 Expected outcomes:

- Decision making: club name, constitution, and officer format.
- 4-H enrollment forms completed by club members
- Group begins to form a cohesive unit

### **supported by club mentor)**

Group building – by parent

Decision making – use index cards or large paper:

- Have kids discuss what they want from being in a 4-H club.
- What do they want to learn about?

- Decide if officers are appropriate. If so, discuss roles and suggest selecting them at the next meeting. Consider rotating officers every two months, if appropriate.
- Choose a club name.
- Constitution and bylaws – use the template.
- Enrollment forms – experience suggests that it is best to limit the number of projects in a first year club: as a club, choose one project to do; and choose one project from a list created at the planning session.

Program – a club activity (visual arts is usually fun) that can be completed at the meeting gives everyone, adults included, a sense of accomplishment. A team of 4-H members wishing to complete project pin requirements is a great resource.

Recreation – another game or two will help solidify the group and promote the team-building phase of the club.

Refreshments

### STEP 7: Leader Training Meeting

Time commitment: 3 hours for planning, prep, and presentation

Expected outcomes:

- Organizational leader has a grasp of what will be happening for the next 6 months.
- Project leaders understand their roles and have outline for 3 meetings
- Everyone understands the basics of meeting procedures, judging, and public presentations.

Assuming that you do not attend the first club meeting, make sure you touch base with the club mentor both to find out what happened and to facilitate getting the new group in the system as quickly as possible. At this time, you can talk through the leader training meeting, deciding who will be responsible for the different elements. Plan to attend this meeting with the mentor to share the teaching.

Important topics for this training session will include:

- project leader job description and project meeting planning
- county calendar for the current year
- demonstrations and public speaking
- journals and (briefly) awards (a quick overview, but concentrate on 1st year)
- decision making for kids
  - o basic parliamentary procedures (see “4-H Club Officers Manual” [YD4H206]) or Jeopardy game
  - o consensus
  - o judging program
- “4-H Club Officers Manual” (YD4H206)
- project activities planning

### STEP 8: Second Meeting of Club

At the first meeting, dates and times were selected, so a second meeting date should be easily determined. At this point, you will be finished with your intensive time commitment to this group, and if you have not previously, you will be turning over the mentorship to the club mentor. However, it is still important that

you regularly contact the mentor about the club’s progress and be prepared to provide more leadership training if it is needed.

Time commitment: 0 to 2 hours, depending upon confidence of organizational leader

Expected outcomes:

- Determine club goals and plans for the year
- Elect officers.
- Determine date for Program Planning Committee to meet.

The club mentor might not attend the second club meeting, depending on the confidence of the leadership. If he/she chooses not to attend, it is CRUCIAL that the organizational leader be contacted within a day of the meeting, to see what progress was made, what concerns have surfaced, and so on.

A suggested agenda:

1. Group building activity.
2. Club leaders introduce project and activity leaders and other volunteers.
3. Election of officers (3 months to 1 year).
4. Final vote on constitution and bylaws.
5. Club goals/plan for the year – Keep It Simple! (See “Resources” section for ideas).
  - Suggested appropriate goals for first year club:
    - o have a demonstration / talk by each club member
    - o meet every month.
    - o complete one club project
    - o participate at Achievement Days
6. Select date for program planning committee to meet.
7. Fun activity.
8. Refreshments.

### Step 9. Program Planning Meeting

Time commitment: 2 hours for new club leaders, officers, and Program Planning Committee

Expected outcomes:

- Finalize program plan for the year, recruit members, and leaders to complete single tasks.
- Develop list of committees.
- Provide orientation and training for new officers.

After the second meeting, leaders will need to work with the newly elected officers to help them prepare for the next meeting, so they can begin to try out their new role. If each leader provides help to one officer, they can work together to “learn the ropes.” At the actual club meeting, the leader should stay either in the background or to the side while the officers or teen leaders conduct the meeting.

The program committee (or officers) will also need to meet to review the work done by the club in the goal-setting process.

Items to be accomplished at this meeting include:

- Work out the details deemed necessary to make club goals and activities happen.
- Contact and recruit youth members or adults to be responsible for completing these tasks.
- Set up committees to complete the goals set by the club.

- Make a calendar for the year.
- Fill out sign-up sheets for committees or tasks needing additional member involvement.

This initial planning gets a new club moving toward its goals. It allows club members to become involved immediately, and provides direction for club leaders and officers. When a new club has been well organized in the beginning, and the club program planned, it is ready to be on its own. Helping clubs function independently from the very beginning fosters leadership rather than dependency. After the first two meetings, neither the educator nor the club mentor need to be involved each time the club meets.

**Committees are an excellent way to involve more members in the club's activities, and to encourage commitment. Try to make sure that every club member is involved with at least one committee.**

### **Step 10. New Club Support**

Time commitment: 30 minutes to debrief each month; possible time spent training

Expected outcomes:

- New club's leaders have opportunity to network and learn from other club leaders.
- Specific training needs are discovered and handled within one month.

New 4-H clubs will require regular contact with the club mentor during the first year. A debriefing after each meeting is essential, so that questions and concerns can be handled efficiently, and if necessary, more training provided by the mentor or the Extension educator. The club mentor will also want to extend a personal invitation to the club leaders to attend the county Leader's Meeting. For new leaders to gain from this, it is important that county Leaders' Meetings keep a healthy balance of education, evaluation, networking, and idea sharing, in addition to the usual county program planning activities. If there are several new clubs in the area, it would be very beneficial to have those groups meet quarterly during the first year, so that programs can be planned to accommodate their specific needs. These training meetings can be facilitated by a combination of experienced club leaders, the club mentors, and Extension educators.

### **Resources**

Youth Brochure (YD4H103)  
 Posters for School (YD4H104)  
 Invitation to Informational Meeting (YD4H122)  
 Ad for School paper (YD4H123)  
 Book Marks (YD4H121)  
 4-H Parent Interest Survey (YD4H226)  
 4-H Club Interest Survey (YD4H227)  
 Project Interest Survey (YD4H228)  
 Parent Brochure (YD4H126)  
 Web Announcement for school website (YD4H124)  
 Project Selection Guide (YD4H502-04)  
 4-H Club Constitution template (YD4H229)  
 Get Acquainted Activities  
 Organizational Leader Job Description  
 "Welcome to 4-H" PowerPoint

## Chapter 12—Glossary of 4-H Terms

**4-H age** – Age on January 1 of the current 4-H year.

**Youth Development/4-H educator** – The South Dakota State University employee responsible for the design and implementation of the 4-H club programs, other 4-H or youth outreach efforts. Cooperates with youth-related community programs.

**Activity leader** – The leader who helps youth learn through one or more activities available in 4-H.

**Agenda** – Plan for local 4-H group meeting. When prepared ahead of meeting, it allows officers to prepare for their respective parts.

**Camp** – Personal development and life skills building experience for youth and adults. There are two types of camps: (1) residential camps where lodging is available and (2) day camps that focus on a specialty area and do not provide overnight lodging.

**Citizenship Washington Focus (CWF)** – Held in Washington, D.C., this program provides an opportunity to study and observe the executive, legislative, and judiciary branches of the federal government. Both youth and adult chaperones may attend.

**Cloverbuds** – A pre-4-H program geared for children in kindergarten through second grades that is not part of the 4-H record.

**Club year** – Runs from October 1 to September 30.

**Code of Conduct** – Contractual agreement accepted by 4-H members to guide their behavior during involvement in the South Dakota 4-H program.

**Collegiate 4-H club** – An organized 4-H group made up of students enrolled at a university or college. Collegiate membership does not give a student membership in the South Dakota 4-H program.

**Community 4-H club** – 4-H group organized with officers and a planned program, meeting over several months of the year in a local community or school.

**Community service project** – A 4-H activity in which 4-H members make a contribution to their local community. The group chooses a project based on a community need.

**County 4-H Leaders' Association** – All adult 4-H volunteers are invited to participate. The leaders' association serves primarily

to provide volunteer training and support and to set priorities and plans for county 4-H functions. An Extension educator serves as an adviser to the leaders' association. The association is usually organized with officers, a program of work, and regularly established meeting times.

**Exhibits** – Opportunities for 4-H individuals or groups to display skills and achievements. Often, these will be items or displays made as part of 4-H project work.

**Experiential learning** – Takes place when a person is involved in an activity, looks back at it critically, determines what was useful or important to remember, and uses this information to perform another activity. 4-H youth programs promote life skill development through experiential learning

**4-H member** – A youth who has enrolled in a 4-H learning experience between eight years of age and has not reached his or her 19th birthday on or before December 31. Learning experience may be club, special interest group, school enrichment, or individual.

**Illustrated talk** – A presentation supported by charts, pictures, or models; tells the audience about an idea or how to do something.

**IFYE (pronounced If-ee)** – International 4-H Youth Exchange program. This program provides individuals or groups with cross-cultural experiences and encourages international understanding. Those visiting in a county stay with host families involved in 4-H.

**Judging** – A formal process for helping 4-H'ers learn to recognize quality, develop skills in decision-making, and orally express the decisions they made and the reasons behind them. Judging may involve contests in areas such as livestock, FCS, and horticulture.

**National 4-H Center** – Located in Chevy Chase, Maryland, the center hosts many national 4-H events and activities.

**National 4-H Conference** – Held in Washington, D.C., youth and adults participate in discussions of national issues.

**National 4-H Congress** – An out-of-state opportunity for older 4-H'ers to be recognized for outstanding project and activity achievement.

**National 4-H Week** – a week set aside to increase public understanding of 4-H. Usually held the first full week in October; it is the time for promotion of the 4-H program.

**Organizational leader** – The 4-H leader who provides the overall leadership for a local 4-H club.

**Project** – Method for teaching girls and boys many new life skills. A variety of topics are offered. Members share in setting goals, making decisions, learning, and evaluating.

**Project/Helper guides** – Publications that assist leaders in helping youths fulfill project and other activity goals.

**Project leader** – The 4-H leader who helps members learn through a specific project.

**Project meeting** – A meeting of a small group of 4-H members, focusing on a specific project area. Activities are based on information youths need to complete their project work.

**Public speaking** – A talk prepared by a 4-H member and given to an audience on a selected topic.

**School enrichment** – In cooperation with school officials, groups of youths receive a series of learning experiences during school hours to support the school curriculum. This may involve direct teaching by Extension staff or trained volunteers, including teachers.

**South Dakota 4-H Foundation** – A state 4-H support group that receives and administers private gifts to 4-H to further the needs, develop the programs, and otherwise support the interests of 4-H around the state.

**Special interest/project club** – 4-H group organizes and/or coordinated by Extension for specific learning experiences.

**State 4-H Shooting Sports Instructors' Training Workshops** – Provide the opportunity for 4-H volunteer leaders to become certified instructors in a variety of shooting sports disciplines so that they are eligible to teach in their respective counties.

**Teen leader** – Teenage 4-H'er with previous 4-H experience who provides leadership in the 4-H program. The teen may provide support or total leadership for an activity or project.

**Teen Leadership Conference** – provides teens with an opportunity for personal growth, fellowship, and leadership development; held at the SDSU campus in June.

**Volunteer application** – The form completed by all new adult volunteers who will work directly with youths.

**Volunteer screening** – Involves the volunteer application form, personal references, and possibly a personal interview and/or background check.



## South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service

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