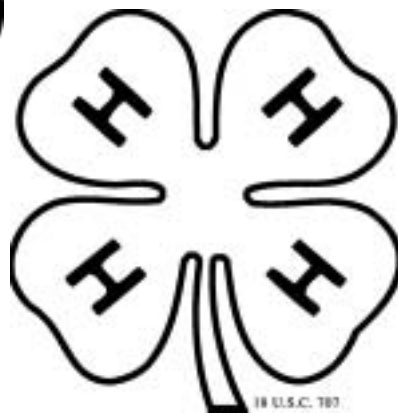


Developing a 4-H Club Yearly Educational Program



Resource Guide

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Dane County

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What is a 4-H Club Yearly Educational Program?

A 4-H club program is like a road map; it directs our actions toward our goal or destination. The group goals, activities, events, and meetings are all part of the program. The 4-H club program tells what the club is doing and when and who is responsible for carrying out projects. The program should be planned to meet the needs of all the members involved.

Why develop a 4-H Club Yearly Educational Program?

It helps your club decide on goals; it meets the members needs and wants; allows for members to share responsibilities; provides for better communication; it insures a more balanced program with a variety of activities that provides learning experiences for youth.

How is the 4-H Club Yearly Educational Program Developed?

Depending on the 4-H club, whether there is a program planning committee, a team of officers and leaders or the entire club membership planning the program, the planning group needs to make sure to include major project areas and interests selected by the 4-H members. The planning group determines the educational portion of the general meetings, provides for members to give demonstrations, and identifies club activities for the year.

Steps to begin developing a 4-H Yearly Educational Program:

- Select the 4-H club program planning group
- Survey members, parents, and leaders for ideas
- Review possible alternatives and what has been done in the past
- Identify club goals for the year
- Plan for club activities and special programs that meet the goals identified
- Create a club calendar
- Present the program to the total membership for approval
- Provide opportunities for members and parents to volunteer
- Evaluate the result of plans throughout the year

Why involve club members, leaders and parents in the planning?

Planning together provides an opportunity for each member to feel part of the club and decision-making. In small clubs, the entire membership may do the planning at a general meeting. In some clubs, the officers plan the program. Many clubs have found success with a special program planning committee made up of a variety of club members, officers, parents and leaders. By involving club members, they feel a stronger commitment to the 4-H club program and are more likely to become actively involved.

The key to success with identifying a group to plan the program is to select a variety of members that represent the interests of people in the club. For example, older members may be efficient planners, but they may overlook the interests and needs of younger members. If we do not plan for the interests of people in the club, members may become inactive.

Idea to try:

Organize special committees for your 4-H club. Each committee can determine what they want to accomplish for the year, then provide ideas to the program planning committee.

Some examples of committees are:

- Recognition
- Community service
- Project emphasis
- Fundraising

If all 4-H members serve on a committee with at least one adult volunteer, then everyone has an opportunity for input.

Survey your club membership

Take the time to survey your club members to find out what they liked and didn't like from previous years. Members have ideas about what they would like to do and need a chance to express them. Ask, What did we do? What did we like about it? What didn't turn out so well? What needs improvement? Was everyone involved? You can survey your members any time of the year. How?

- Suggestion Box
- Share Ideas on large paper or during roll call
- Create collages on favorite activities
- Small group discussions
- Written surveys

Be creative! Try new ways to find out what is successful!

Identifying Club Goals

Goals are statements of what the members, leaders, and parents want to accomplish as a club. The goals should be created on a yearly basis to meet the needs and interests of members involved in the club. Set goals that can be accomplished; promote cooperation in the club; are improvements over last year; and provide for achievements for each member.

Examples of goals:

- To extend 4-H membership to others in the community.
- To develop greater family participation
- To increase project meetings held by leaders.

Your Club Program

As your planning group decides what will be included in your club program, take time to summarize the information you have gathered so far. Which activities identified by members will help reach club goals? Are they appropriate for the situation in the club this year? What was learned from last year's program to avoid problems this year?

You may want to focus on some goals more than others. Be sure to plan several things to help accomplish these goals. As you decide on specific things to do, list them on a chart next to the goal they will accomplish (example below). Attached is a worksheet called "*Achieving 4-H Club Goals*" to use for your own club goals and action steps.

Achieving 4-H Club Goals (example)	
Goal	Action to Achieve It
1. To have 4-H members gain skill in speaking before groups.	a. Invite speaker to talk about "Effective Public Speaking." b. Conduct a public speaking contest in the club and/or compete at the county level. c. Have a different 4-H'er give a presentation at each club meeting.

Create a Calendar for Your Club Program

Creating a calendar will help you make the program realistic and will give you some target dates for accomplishing each goal. To be effective the calendar should include the month, the event, and who is responsible. An example of putting the program ideas into a calendar format is shown below. Attached is a worksheet called "*Club Calendar*". This is a worksheet designed to help plan the 4-H club yearly educational program. Once completed and approved by the club membership, it should be copied and given to each 4-H member. A copy should also be included in the 4-H Club Yearly Educational Program report that is submitted to the Extension Office.

Club Calendar (example)			
<i>Month</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Program, Event, or Activity</i>	<i>Committee or Person(s) Responsible</i>
January (example)	5	4-H meeting: "Effective Public Speaking", Julie's presentation	Mrs. Collier (parent)/Julie Woody (4-H'er)
	15	Woodworking project group	Jim Dean (teen leader)

Club Approves the 4-H Yearly Educational Program

The planning group has the responsibility to explain the program plans to the total club membership. Members, parents, and leaders need to understand the club plans before they can decide what they want to get involved in. People will become involved in the club program if they feel like they were included in the decision-making. Since each person will be expected to help carry out the program, each should have the chance to ask questions and voice an opinion about the program.

As you finalize your 4-H club program, make sure you can answer yes to each of the following questions:

- ✓ Does it provide for involvement?
- ✓ Is it of interest to the 4-H members?
- ✓ Do we have some fun things and some work things?
- ✓ Have we considered county 4-H events?
- ✓ Are the plans age-appropriate?

Gather Volunteers for Responsibilities

Giving youth and adults the opportunity to accept specific responsibilities at the beginning of the year insures that tasks will be shared and no one is left out. Make sure that there is a specific person responsible for each task. Clarifying what needs to be done and letting everyone choose the area he or she wants to work in will encourage volunteering. By making a commitment early in the year, people can plan ahead.

Evaluate your 4-H Club Yearly Educational Program

Evaluating progress on your club program is an ongoing process. It is necessary to make sure that people are doing their jobs and that your program is still appropriate and meets the needs of the membership. At some time during the year, you may need to modify your program. Continually ask how are we doing?

The questions below can be used to evaluate all your meetings:

- Do the officers and leaders check meeting plans beforehand?
- Does the president call the meeting to order on time, keep the meeting rolling, and close it on time?
- Is the business part of the meeting short and snappy?
- Is there a special program in addition to the business meeting and recreation?
- Is the educational program of interest to everyone?
- Do officers and leaders avoid doing all the talking?
- Do all or most of the members take part in the meeting?
- Is there fun and learning at the meeting?

At the end of the year, take a look at the total program. Ask the following questions:

- Were the club goals met?
- Was attendance at meetings and events good?
- Did learning take place throughout the year?
- Did youth develop life skills through involvement in the 4-H club program?