

Group Decision Making Methods

Provide opportunities for all youth to share their **voices and choices** in the 4-H club. Use a variety of decision-making techniques to keep meetings interesting and get input from everyone.

Brainstorming The purpose is to create as many different ideas as possible. Write down all ideas, making sure each one is considered possible. No ideas are discussed until the list is complete. The group discusses the ideas, narrows them to the best ideas, and makes a decision.

Consensus The purpose is to reach general agreement, a collective opinion or belief which represents what appears to be the best resolution for the group. Consensus often means combining diverse opinions into a mutually acceptable course of action. Consensus does not need to be unanimous agreement. Consensus is developed by listening to others, showing empathy and respect, and valuing others' thoughts and concerns. People tend to be cooperative when encouraged to do so.

Rapid Response Pose a question and call out someone's name to respond. Move rapidly from person to person to get a range of answers. Have several members record the answers. "Pass" is acceptable.

Suggestion Box Provide a suggestion box, index cards, and pencils at each club meeting. Youth can anonymously share ideas and concerns about club meetings. This is a club improvement method. Officers can review the ideas before the next meeting and try to incorporate suggestions.

Buzz Group Form small groups for an informal, quick method to collect information on ideas. Work in groups of three to four members. Take one minute (or a designated amount of time) to generate as many ideas as possible on a topic. Select a reporter to share the group's ideas with the large group. Share round robin, one idea (group) at a time, and share only ideas that other groups have not shared. Move as quickly as comfortable from group to group until all ideas are shared. Then discuss and select the best idea.

A Great Idea: Using Committees!

Committees improve the effectiveness of 4-H clubs business meetings.

- Committees can help get everyone involved. For large clubs, committees are an excellent way to get all member involved and to help them get to know one other.
- Some individuals who will not accept individual responsibility may agree to work on a committee.
- Members have a chance to grow into responsibility that will help them develop leadership skills.
- Club business meetings can be shortened when committees bring recommendations to the club for a vote.

For help with committees,
go to www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/committees/

Resources

Iowa 4-H Volunteer Web Site

This one-stop shop for volunteers includes training links, information for independent member mentors, links to the 4-H store, Clover Kids, mentor information and more. It also includes:

The 4-H club guide

This includes basic information for volunteers, tips for conducting meetings, risk management information, and links to many opportunities.

www.extension.iastate.edu/4-H/Volunteers/volclub.htm

4-H 101

An online training and information manual has lessons to begin and maintain a great 4-H club.

www.4-hmilitarypartnerships.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=75

4-H Communications Brochure 4-H 4001C

Methods for club and project volunteers to incorporate communication activities and share all the communication opportunities available to 4-H'ers.

www.extension.iastate.edu/4H/volunteers/Documents/BLcommunicationsBrochure

4-H Leadership Brochure 4-H 4003B

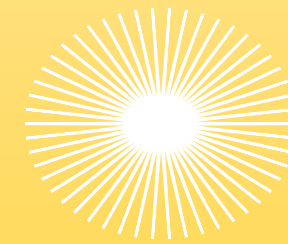
Club and project volunteers can incorporate leadership activities and opportunities in their clubs.

www.extension.iastate.edu/4H/VolunteersDocuments/4h4003bLeadership.pdf

4-H Pick A Project

This yearly newspaper contains a listing of all 4H Projects Materials and how to purchase them. It also gives step by step instructions on how members can get started with their 4H project.

www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/4H200.pdf



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4-H Youth Development

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Astroth, K. (1997). Beyond Resiliency, Fostering Vibrancy in Youth Groups. *New Designs for Youth Development*, 13(4).

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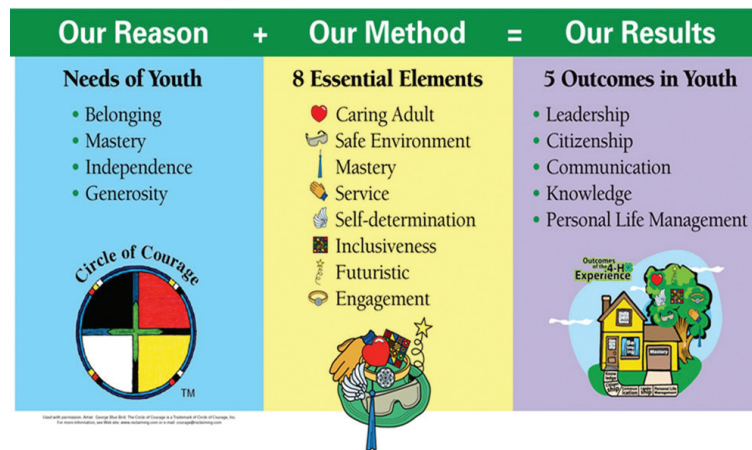


IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
University Extension

vibrant 4-H clubs



Welcome to vibrant 4-H clubs



It's all about Fun, Friends, Voice and Choice

Youth come to club meetings when their needs are met and when they are:

- having fun with friends and making new friends
- learning new things and having a voice in club activities
- making decisions as a group by giving them choices
- providing service to others

Characteristics of Vibrant 4-H Clubs

- Promote member development, not competition— weaning, not winning
- Change how youth do things, not what they do (firm yet flexible)
- Work hard and play hard
- Empower young people
- Provide communication with and listening to young people
- Balance flexibility with firmness
- Have people who affirm and support one another
- Use a mentoring system to assimilate new members
- Value and practice service to others
- Take time for training
- Recognize that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Each person brings skills and talents to work together to achieve the larger goal of the group. (Astroth, K.1997)

Best Practices for Vibrant 4-H Clubs

- Ask members to develop and follow a yearly club program plan
- Set meetings at a consistent day and time
- Incorporate methods for families to spend more time together...they can do that in 4-H!
- Communicate consistently and clearly
- Use greeters at the door to welcome all who arrive
- Introduce visitors during the business meeting
- Contact members who did not attend
- Use club newsletters or other communications
- Include parents in pre-meeting activities and recreation
- Volunteer leaders operate as coaches; guides on the side

The best way to transform the lives of youth in 4-H clubs is by meeting their needs and giving them the power to make decisions.

Vibrant club meetings have four parts Each plays a vital role in the experience and learning of the 4-H member

Pre-meeting activity	15-20 minutes
Business meetings	15-20 minutes ★ <i>notice this is not the largest part of the 4-H meeting</i>
Education	20-30 minutes
Recreation	20-30 minutes

1. PRE-MEETING ACTIVITIES promote Belonging and Mastery

Pre-meeting activities

- Engage members in fun activities
- Free volunteers to work with club officers or committees organizing items before the meeting begins
- Help members get to know each other
- Bridge the gap between the time members arrive and the meeting begins
- Promote learning life skills through project work

Pre-meeting activities may be led by members, youth leaders, parents, meeting hosts, or leaders. Pre-meeting activities could be mixers, word games, puzzles, writing thank you notes, project work, preparing invitations, and working exhibits.

Try These!

- Share a working exhibit
- Create an A-Z scavenger hunt of items in or around the meeting place
- Scramble the letters in the 4-H leaders' names to see how many words members can make
- Ask members to write their names backwards and practice the pronunciation; Have them introduce themselves by the new name to everyone who enters the room

More pre-meeting activities are in the Iowa 4-H Club Guide at www.extension.iastate.edu/4-H/Volunteers/Documents/240PreMeetingActivities.pdf

2. The BUSINESS MEETING promotes Belonging, Mastery, and Independence

Learning business meeting procedures is an important skill. When business meetings run efficiently, there is more time for the club to grow through learning and playing together. The goal is a shorter, well-run meeting.

1. Call to order
2. Flag pledge
3. Roll call/attendance
4. Reading of the minutes
5. Treasurer's report
6. Committee reports
7. Unfinished business
8. New business
9. Announcements
10. Adjournment

Many clubs use parliamentary procedure. Check out parliamentary procedure at www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/who/inside.html

3. EDUCATION promotes Belonging, Mastery, Independence, and Generosity

Include learning in every club meeting. Some clubs include an activity from a different 4-H project manual at each meeting or schedule:

- Educational presentations
- Working exhibits
- Share the fun/other creative speaking
- Project workshops
- Guest speakers
- Tours and field trips

Use the 4-H 'Pick a Project' to help select project areas to emphasize. www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/4H200.pdf

4. RECREATION promotes Belonging, Independence, and Generosity

Have fun and create excitement. The one thing all youth want more of is the one thing clubs sometimes forget—recreation!

Kids want fun and friends...this is why club recreation and social time are so important. Anytime you bring people and food together, you have set the stage for fostering relationships...and this, for many kids, is a magical time. Relationships are improved when volunteer leaders and parents participate in recreation as well.

