



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension



4-H Youth Development Member and Parent Handbook

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County
21 South Grove Street
East Aurora, New York 14052
Phone: (716)652-5400
Fax: (716)652-5073

Office Hours: M-F 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM

Association web site: <http://cce.cornell.edu/erie>

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September 10, 2014

4-H Club Emblem

A green four-leaf clover with a white "H" in each leaf

The 4-H's

"Head," "Heart," Hands," and "Health" are the four H's in 4-H, and they symbolize the four values members work on through fun and engaging programs.

-  *Head: Managing, Thinking*
-  *Heart: Relating, Caring*
-  *Hands: Giving, Working*
-  *Health: Being, Living*

The 4-H Pledge

*"I pledge my head to clearer thinking,
My heart to greater loyalty,
My hands to larger service,
and my health to better living,
for my club, my community, my
county, and my world."*

4-H Motto

"To Make the Best Better"

4-H Slogan

"Learn by Doing"

4-H Mission

"4-H empowers youth to reach their full potential, working and learning in partnership with caring adults."

4-H Vision

"A world in which youth and adults learn, grow, and work together as catalysts for positive change."

4-H Colors

The 4-H colors are green and white. White symbolizes purity and green represents life, springtime and youth.




Welcome to 4-H!

"4-H is the nation's largest youth development organization. More than 6 million 4-H youth in urban neighborhoods, suburban schoolyards, and rural farming communities stand out among their peers: building revolutionary opportunities and implementing community-wide change at an early age."

"4-H is uniquely equipped to deliver high-quality positive youth development. As the youth development program of the nation's 109 land-grant universities and the Cooperative Extension System, 4-H produces research-driven programming with proven results."

Cornell University is the land-grant university in New York. 4-H is the youth component of Cornell Cooperative Extension.

New York State 4-H programs offer youth hands-on learning activities in three mission mandate areas:

-  4-H Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)
-  4-H Civic Engagement
-  4-H Healthy Living

Project curriculum and resources are available to you in these project areas as well as others. Work through the county 4-H office to locate appropriate, high-quality resources.

4-H Basics

Membership Requirements

All youth regardless of gender, race, color, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or marital status may join 4-H.

In New York State, 4-H membership is limited to children enrolled in kindergarten through youth age 19. Kindergarteners must turn 5 by January 1 of the current 4-H year and teenagers may not enroll or re-enroll if they will turn 19 before January 1st of the new club year (October 1 to September 30).

Independent membership

When circumstances prevent a child from joining a 4-H club, that child may participate in the 4-H Club Program by enrolling as an independent member. Independent members work on projects of their choice at their own pace with parental or other adult assistance.

They are encouraged to participate in county activities.

4-H Clubs

In New York State, a club must have a membership of five or more youth. Smaller groups may register youth as independent members.

A 4-H club consists of five or more school-age youth, guided by enrolled adult volunteers. The 4-H Club's goal is long-term youth development, which encourages its participants to learn life skills that will help them grow into healthy and productive citizens.

The youngest 4-H participants, ages 5-7 (grades K-2), are Cloverbuds and have the opportunity to experience 4-H in age-appropriate ways. Cloverbuds may participate in clubs with older 4-H youth or may be part of a Cloverbud-only club. Because of their developmental stage, Cloverbuds are not judged/evaluated in their project work as older 4-H members are but receive participation awards only.

Types of Clubs

- ✿ Neighborhood 4-H Clubs are groups of youth (five or more) that are usually led by parents/guardians. They meet in schools, churches, community centers, or homes to complete a variety of 4-H projects throughout the year. With the exception of a few countywide clubs, members are usually from the same community.
- ✿ 4-H School Clubs and After-School 4-H Clubs - When 4-H curricula are used within the classroom during regular school hours or in an after-school program, these children form a 4-H club. The classroom teacher and/or other resource people serve as club leaders.
- ✿ Sponsored 4-H Clubs - A government agency, religious group or other youth serving organization may sponsor a 4-H club. Sponsored clubs usually meet at the agency's facilities and are led by agency staff (paid and/or volunteer).

Independent 4-H members

Whenever possible, youth are encouraged to participate in 4-H in a club setting because of the natural support that can come in this group learning environment. However, the club is not the only way to become a 4-H member. Independent membership is another option. Independent 4-H members participate in planned learning outside of a club setting. Their work is self-directed with guidance and support of parents and, in some cases, mentors. Self-study, home study, mentoring, and whole families learning together are examples of 4-H independent membership.

Independent members are encouraged to give special attention to opportunities available at the county level to support their learning. However, without the reminders that often come to club members through their leaders and other club members, independent members can find it challenging to note registration deadlines or dates of special events. Giving attention to notices in the 4-H newsletters and checking the county's 4-H website on a regular basis will be especially important so that new activities of interest aren't overlooked. Interacting with other 4-H families can enrich the 4-H member's learning and enjoyment as well.

Proven Results

THE POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH: COMPREHENSIVE FINDINGS FROM THE 4-H STUDY OF POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT is the first-ever research project of its kind. The decade-long study, completed by a team of researchers at the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at Tufts University, Medford, MA, is influencing research and practice around the world.

The report shows that 4-H youth excel beyond their peers. 4-H members are about:

- ✿ **Four times** more likely to make **contributions to their communities**(Grades 7-12);
- ✿ **Two times** more likely to be civically active (Grades 8-12);
- ✿ **Two times** more likely to make healthier choices (Grade 7);
- ✿ **Two times** more likely to participate in Science, Engineering and Computer Technology programs during out-of-school time (Grades 10 – 12); and
- ✿ 4-H girls are **two times** more likely (Grade 10) and nearly **three times** more likely (Grade 12) to take part in science programs compared to girls in other out-of-school time activities.

Unparalleled Reach and Scope

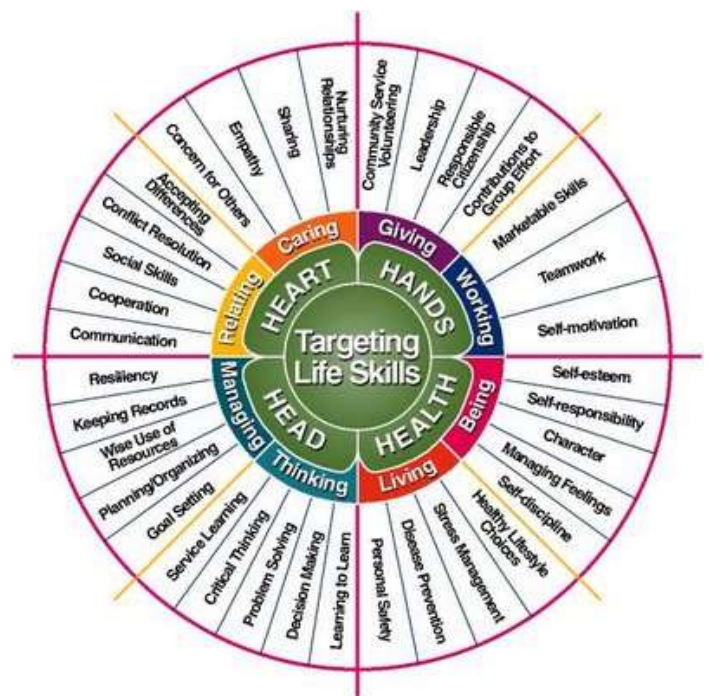
“With 540,000 volunteers, 3,500 professionals, and more than 60 million alumni, the 4-H movement supports young people from elementary school through high school with programs designed to shape future leaders and innovators. Fueled by research-driven programming, 4-H members engage in hands-on learning activities in the areas of science, citizenship, and healthy living.”

What is Youth Development?

“Youth development is a process of mental, physical, social, and emotional growth during which young people prepare to live a productive and satisfying life within the customs and regulations of their society.” The 4-H Youth Development program offers educational opportunities where youth can learn information and develop skills they need.

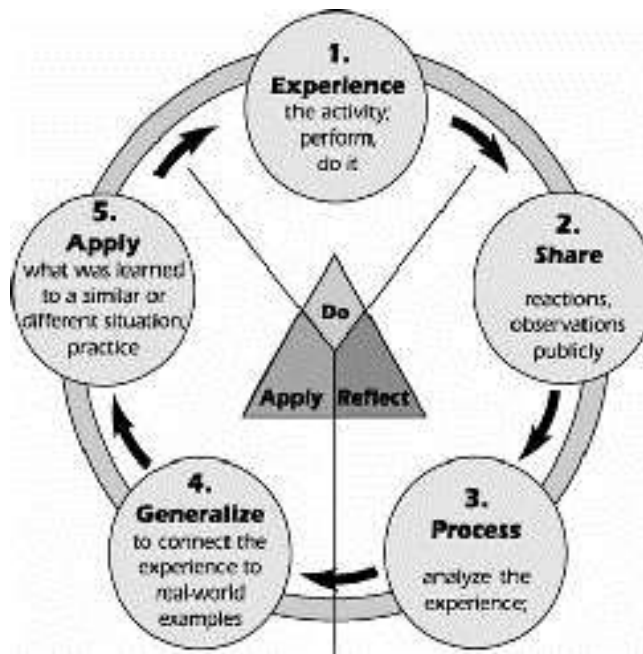
.Targeting Life Skills (TLS) Model

“Life skills are abilities individuals can learn that will help them to be successful in living a productive and satisfying life. In the Targeting Life Skills (TLS) Model, seen below, categories of life skills are identified and divided on the basis of the familiar four H's from the 4-H Clover that represent Head, Heart, Hands, and Health.”



Experiential learning

The 4-H youth development program uses a five-step experiential learning approach to promote life skill development in youth:



Goal: Positive Youth Development

4-H promotes positive youth development by giving youth opportunities to get involved and develop to their full potential. Positive youth development is a framework that highlights the things youth need to become successful. It focuses on strengths instead of limitations and is associated with the five Cs - competence, confidence, character, connection, and caring. Researchers have suggested that a sixth C, contribution (to oneself and others) comes about when the 5 Cs are present in a young person's life.

The goal of the 4-H Youth Development is to see youth achieve these outcomes:

Desired Outcome	Definition
✿ Competence	The ability to act effectively in all of life's settings
✿ Confidence	A sense of self-worth and mastery, having a belief in one's capacity to succeed
✿ Connection	A sense of safety, structure, and belonging; positive bonds with people
✿ Character	Taking responsibility; a sense of independence and individuality; connections to principles and values
✿ Caring	A sense of sympathy and empathy for others; commitment to social justice
✿ Contribution	Active participation and leadership in a variety of settings; making a difference

4-H Member's Code of Conduct

An enjoyable, positive learning experience is everyone's responsibility. As a member of the 4-H Youth Development program, youth are asked to read and sign the following Member's Code of Conduct and obey it fully when participating in any 4-H program or activity. Each member's parent/guardian will be also asked to read the code of conduct also and to indicate that they witnessed their child's signing it.

1. I will respect the rights and feelings of all the members, leaders, and guests of my 4-H club.
2. I will not use anyone else's things without permission.
3. I will cooperate with all reasonable requests made by the leaders and other adults who help at my 4-H club and project meetings.
4. I will come to 4-H meetings and activities on time and participate in the planned program even when an activity is not my favorite.
5. I will not use or bring to any 4-H meeting or activity any illegal drug, alcoholic beverage or tobacco product.
6. I will not bring to any 4-H meeting or activity any gun, knife, or anything else that could be used as a weapon, unless it is required for a project, class or activity. (I understand that my leader or the instructor will give me a written list of equipment when such items are needed.)
7. When I choose to participate in county, district, state or national 4-H activities I will obey the special rules that apply to those activities.

Parent's Role: "4-H is a family affair"

4-H members need their own parents' support and encouragement to attend meetings, complete projects, and fulfill responsibilities to the club.

Parents have an opportunity to spend time with their children and enjoy activities together. In many ways 4-H is a "partner in parenting."

In addition to helping their own children, parents are important in 4-H leadership. Yes, you are being invited to become a club leader and/or fill another volunteer role in the 4-H program. Contact one of the staff (listed on the last page of this handbook) to learn about various opportunities. Training support is available. You don't need to be an expert to help. The time involved for various volunteer positions varies, so you can make a difference with whatever time you have available.

Communication is Important

We want to keep in you, so here are some ways we plan to do that:

- ✿ Through our newsletter, "4-H News," which should be arriving at your home every other month
- ✿ Through emails on an "as needed basis"
- ✿ Through regular updates on our county association's website: <http://www.cce.cornell.edu/erie>

If you have a question, please contact your child's club organizational leader. You should meet that person at your first club meeting. Or, you can contact a 4-H staff member. Your 4-H Youth Development Staff Team is listed on the last page of this handbook. Updated information can also be found on the website listed above.

Special 4-H Opportunities in Erie County

- ✿ **Award Trips**
- ✿ **Special Youth Roles** - Teen Ambassador, junior evaluator for Public Presentations, Erie County Fair)
- ✿ **Public Presentation and Horse Communications County Event**
- ✿ **Fashion/Textile Revue**
- ✿ **Animal Program Shows and Other Educational Events such as Hippology, Dairy Bowl, Livestock Judging**
- ✿ **County Fair**

Special 4-H Events in New York State

4-H takes you places! Here are just a few of the many special opportunities through New York State 4-H:

- ✿ The **New York State Fair**, held in Syracuse, takes place during a 12-day period prior to and including Labor Day in August-September annually. Supported by the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets and Cornell University, the state fair provides opportunities for youth to showcase their top county-level fair projects, have leadership opportunities, and have loads of fun in the process.
- ✿ **Career Explorations** is a three-day event (usually held on a Tuesday through Thursday in late June or early July) for youth on the Cornell University campus. The purpose of this program is to provide youth with exposure to academic fields and career exploration, to develop leadership skills, to provide hands-on experience in a college setting, and to introduce youth to Cornell University. The event is made up of two grade-specific tracts: University U for youth entering grades 8 and 9 and Focus for Teens for youth entering grades 10 through 12.
- ✿ **4-H Capital Days** gives youth an opportunity to meet and interact with legislators in Albany and to tell their 4-H story. This program provides teen participants with an awareness of career opportunities in New York State government, to better understand how their state government operates, and to network with delegates from other counties. This program typically is held on the first Monday and Tuesday of March.
- ✿ **Animal Crackers**, held annually (usually the first Saturday of May), provides New York youth with fun, hands-on science-oriented learning experiences on Animal Science topics. This program features the unique facilities and staff of Cornell University.
- ✿ The State Teen Action Representative Retreat (**STARR**) is a three-day, fun-filled event (usually held from a Friday evening through noon on Sunday in mid-April) where 4-H teens participate in a variety of workshops and activities meant to challenge, excite and further develop life skills. The event is planned by teens and adults serving on the youth/adult STARR planning committee. STARR is open to all NYS 4-H Teens.
- ✿ **New York State 4-H Agribusiness Career Conference** (aka the ABC Trip) is a two-day career exploration conference, usually held in the fall, and is open to all youth ages 14 and over who wish to become more aware of agricultural opportunities and also academic requirements for professional positions in various agri-businesses.
- ✿ The State-Level **Horse Communications** and **Public Presentation Program**, held at Cornell University (usually on Saturday in mid-May), gives opportunity for youth to showcase their communicate skills through a presentation which they researched and wrote. Participants qualify at the regional/district-levels for state selection.
- ✿ **NYS Junior Dairy Leader Program** is a one-year program where select youth, ages 16-19 years of age, explore careers in the dairy industry along with hands-on experiential learning. Youth build personal and professional skills while gaining a realistic view and experience for the dairy industry.
- ✿ **March Dog Madness** is an annual conference for adult and teenage 4-H volunteer leaders. Workshops engage participants in science-based information training, addressing such topics as current animal health, animal behavior, industry trends, and youth development. The conference is held at Cornell, usually on the first Saturday of spring break for university students.

National Opportunities

Yes, there are national opportunities! Ask your 4-H leader or 4-H staff member to tell you more. Here is just one:

- ✿ **Citizenship Washington Focus (CWF)** is a week-long 4-H citizenship program for youth ages 14-19 that takes place at the National 4-H Youth Conference Center, just 1 mile from the Washington, DC border. Every summer, thousands of young people participate in the program, which provides opportunities for them to: (1) strengthen their communication, leadership, and citizenship skills on a national level; (2) understand the importance of civic and social responsibilities as they relate to the development of better citizens and leaders; (3) exchange ideas, practice respect, and form friendships with other youth from diverse backgrounds; and (4) experience hands-on learning using the historical backdrop of Washington, DC.

Evaluation of Project Work

Young people often join 4-H because there are new experiences that interest them: robotics, raising a steer, learning to sew, etc. The 4-H Youth Development program creates opportunities for youth to develop skills and gain practical knowledge and wisdom through observing, doing, and living through experiences. Such events as the 4-H Fair, Dairy Judging, Public Presentations, Hippology, Fashion Revue, and Dog Shows give 4-H members a way to showcase their knowledge and accomplishments through exhibits, presentations, and knowledge contests. At such events, caring and trained adults often interact with the 4-H member to encourage them to continue building those skills. Appropriate recognition can inspire young people to go further in their endeavors, and serves as an incentive to greater accomplishments.

The purpose of evaluating a 4-H member's project work is really three-fold:

- 1) To provide youth with opportunities to learn and recognize standards for quality of project work.
- 2) To provide youth opportunities for reflection on what they have learned from project work.
- 3) To contribute to the growth and development of 4-H members by assessing their accomplishments and awarding recognition for their achievements.

What is the Danish System of Judging?

Perhaps you are familiar with 4-H members participating in events where blue, red, and white ribbons were awarded. Maybe you wondered why more than one person could receive the same ribbon color and just what those ribbon colors meant.

The Danish System is a method of evaluating a presentation, an exhibit, showmanship, skills, etc. in a particular class or contest relative to an ideal for the person's grade level and experience. If disabilities are identified that impact the 4-H member's ability to complete an exhibit or demonstrate a skill, consideration is given to the developmental age of the young person, not his/her chronological age.

In a 4-H context, awards are broken down into four categories: Excellent (blue), Good (red), Worthy/Fair (white) or Cloverbud Participation Award (green) for each category. If the exhibit, presentation, or skills being evaluated fails to meet criteria for the event or contest, no award is given. Constructive feedback from the evaluator/judge is an important aspect of the overall experience for the 4-H member.

When is a blue/red/white/green appropriate?

- ✿ **Excellent or Blue:** A blue is given to those entries or members who most nearly meet the standards established for the particular class or level of performance. Excellent does not indicate perfection but indicates a high degree of achievement toward the elements in the standards.
- ✿ **Good or Red:** Red indicates those exhibits or individuals who rank good in relation to the particular standards or expected achievement of the class or contest. Either the general level of the accomplishment is less than excellent or enough specific shortcomings are found to cause the placing to drop from excellent to good.
- ✿ **Worthy/ Fair or White:** White describes those exhibits or contestants who upon evaluation are found lacking in some way but still show that effort was given.
- ✿ **Green/Participation:** This award is given for all Cloverbud (K-2nd graders) entries or presentations.

"The ultimate goal of evaluating 4-H project work is the development of the individual by helping each one become a self-directing, productive, and contributing member of society."

A Bit of History

“In the late 1800's, researchers discovered adults in the farming community did not readily accept new agricultural developments on university campuses but found that young people were open to new thinking and would experiment with new ideas and share their experiences with adults. In this way, rural youth programs introduced new agriculture technology to communities.”

“The idea of practical and ‘hands-on’ learning came from the desire to connect public school education to country life. Building community clubs to help solve agricultural challenges was a first step toward youth learning more about the industries in their community.”

1902: Youth Clubs were Formed

“A. B. Graham started a youth program in Clark County, Ohio, in 1902, which is considered the birth of 4-H in the United States. The first club was called ‘The Tomato Club’ or the ‘Corn Growing Club’. T.A. Erickson of Douglas County, Minnesota, started local agricultural after-school clubs and fairs that same year. Jessie Field Shambaugh developed the clover pin with an H on each leaf in 1910, and by 1912 they were called 4-H clubs.

1914: Cooperative Extension System was Created

“The passage of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914 created the Cooperative Extension System at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and nationalized 4-H. By 1924, 4-H clubs were formed and the clover emblem was adopted.”

“The Cooperative Extension System is a partnership of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the 109 land-grant universities and more than 3,000 county offices across the nation. Cooperative Extension combines the expertise and resources of federal, state, and local governments and is designed to meet the need for research, knowledge, and educational programs.”

4-H Today

“Today, 4-H serves youth in rural, urban, and suburban communities in every state across the nation. 4-H'ers are tackling the nation's top issues, from global food security, climate change and sustainable energy to childhood obesity and food safety. 4-H out-of-school programming, in-school enrichment programs, clubs and camps also offer a wide variety of STEM opportunities – from agricultural and animal sciences to rocketry, robotics, environmental protection, and computer science – to improve the nation's ability to compete in key scientific fields and take on the leading challenges of the 21st century.”

Resources

The sources of information found in this guide along with a few more:

<http://www.cce.cornell.edu/> New York State website for Cornell Cooperative Extension

<http://ansci.cornell.edu/4H/index.html> Extensive information and resources for all animal science topics—livestock, horses, dogs, rabbits, etc.

<http://nys4h.cce.cornell.edu/resources/Pages/default.aspx> A wealth of resources on Cornell Cooperative Extension's 4-H Youth Development website

<http://www.4-h.org/> National 4-H website

<http://www.4-h.org/about/youth-development-research/positive-youth-development-study/> Research on 4-H's ten-year research on the impact of 4-H in the lives of its youth participants

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/explore/lifeskills> The Targeting Life Skills Model

www.actforyouth.net On-line source for positive youth development

Erie County's 4-H Youth Development Team

Name: Tessa Buratto

Title: 4-H Club Management Educator

Key Responsibilities: 4-H Club Management, Public Presentation, Textile Review

Phone: (716)652-5400 ext. 130

E-Mail: tsb54@cornell.edu

Name: Tammi Kron

Title: 4-H Livestock Educator

Key Responsibilities: 4-H Livestock Programs, Small Animal Projects, Shooting Sports

Phone: (716)652-5400 ext. 132

E-Mail: tlk6@cornell.edu

Name: Sara Jablonski

Title: 4-H Urban Educator

Key Responsibilities: 4-H Afterschool Programs, 4-H Urban Programming

Phone: (716)652-5400 ext 142

E-Mail: sej57@cornell.edu

Name: Lynn Riley

Title: 4-H Administrative Assistant

Phone: (716)652-5400 ext. 131

E-Mail: ldr22@cornell.edu

Erie County's Executive Director

Name: Diane Held

Phone: (716)652-5400 ext. 166

E-Mail: dbh24@cornell.edu

Erie County's Board of Directors:

Please check website: www.cce.cornell.edu/erie

4-H Youth Development Advisory Committee

Please contact 4-H office for list

Note: any changes that occur are updated throughout the year on our association website:
<http://www.cce.cornell.edu/erie>