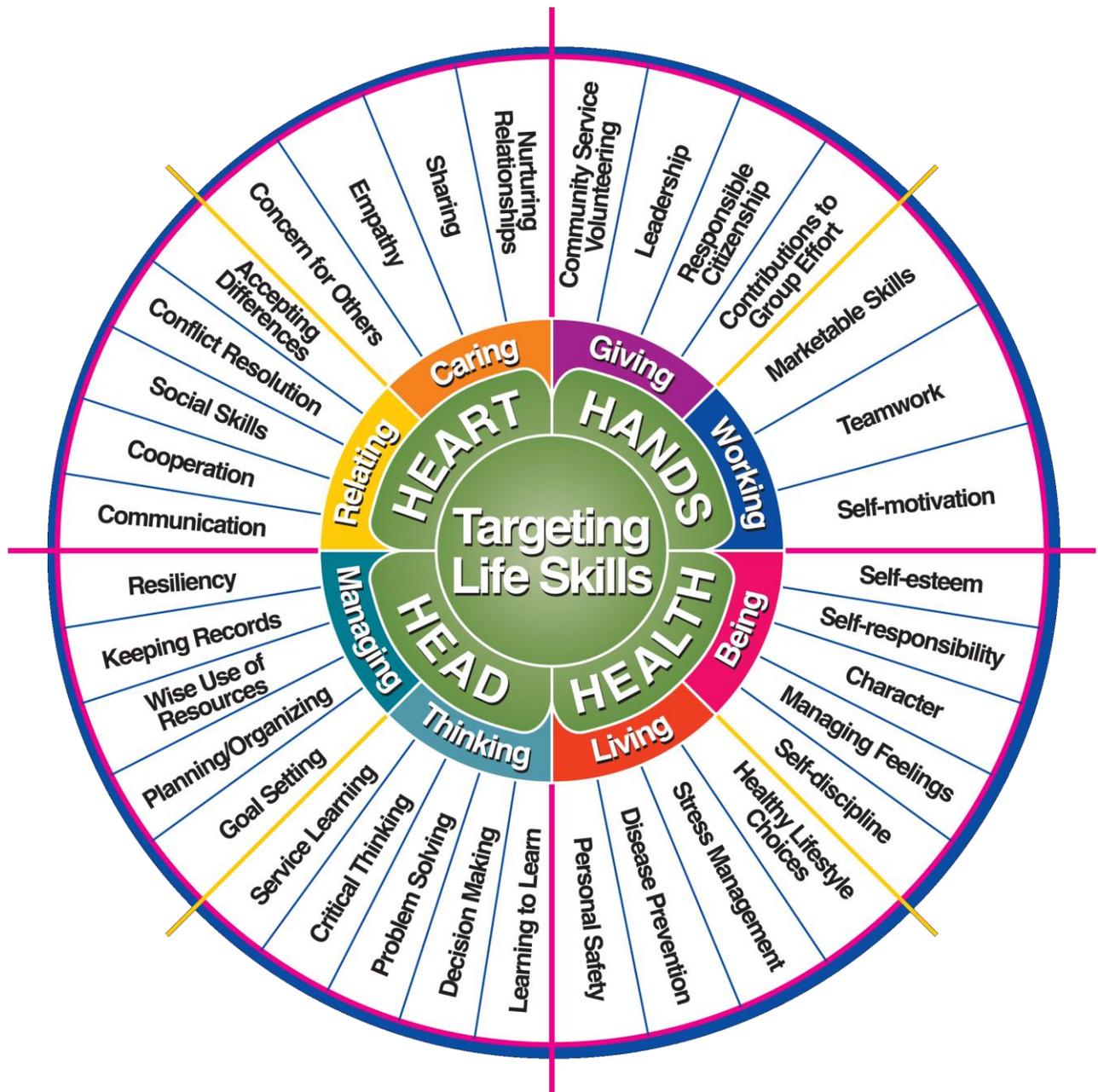


# ***WELCOME TO SWEET GRASS COUNTY 4-H***

## **New 4-H Member Welcome Packet**





#### 4-H & Life Skills Development

Youth development is a process of mental, physical and social growth during which young people prepare to live a productive and satisfying life. Youth development experiences of high quality don't just happen. The best ones are carefully planned to encourage life skill development and to achieve specific outcomes.

A skill is a learned ability to do something well. Life skills are skills that help an individual to be successful in living a productive and fulfilling life.

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Dear New 4-H Family,

Welcome to 4-H! You have just enrolled or are thinking about enrolling in one of the greatest youth development programs in the nation. In fact, with 6.8 million youth involved nationwide, 4-H is the largest out-of-school educational program in the country.

The purpose of this welcome packet is to give you an overview of the opportunities and resources available to help your family have an incredible experience in 4-H. Keep in mind that this is only an overview. Your best way to stay informed is to meet regularly with your club leader and to **read the monthly Extension newsletter**. Your family will start receiving this free, monthly publication once we receive your 4-H enrollment forms.

The 4-H program can sometimes seem a little overwhelming when you are new. Just keep in mind that your family's 4-H experience can be tailor-made to fit your goals, schedule and interests. That is one reason 4-H is such a great program for Montana families. You can be involved as a whole family, learning and growing together.

Also keep in mind that the club leaders are volunteers. Like all of us, your leader is more than willing to do his or her part, but, your leader also wants help. Your club will be able to accomplish so much more if parents and guardians share some of the responsibilities with the leader. Ask your leader what you can do to support your child's club. If we all take a small piece of the pie, it makes everyone's involvement more manageable and fun!

The local Extension office is located at 515 Hooper Street in the County Annex building and the mailing address is PO Box 640. Office hours are M-F, 8:00– 5:00. Closed from 12-1:00 for lunch.

Again, welcome to the wonderful world of 4-H!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Marc King'.

Marc King, Extension Agent

## ABOUT MONTANA 4-H

4-H is a part of the Montana State University Extension Service co-operating with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and your local county government. 4-H members are those boys and girls who participate in Extension sponsored educational programs which are open to all youth regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation or parental status.

The goal of Montana 4-H is to educate youth and adults for living in a global and ever-changing world by using the resources of Land-Grant Universities and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Montana 4-H uses educational, learning-by-doing projects, club meetings, community service projects, events and activities for young people and adults as they work toward attaining these five life skills:

- Fostering positive self-concept
- Learning decision making and responsibility for choices
- Developing an inquiring mind
- Relating to self and others
- Acquiring a concern for communities – local and global.

The emblem of the 4-H program is a green four-leaf clover with a white 'H' in each leaf. The four 'H's' stand for Head, Heart, Hands and Health.

**HEAD:** Learning to think, make decisions, understand the 'why's', gain new and valuable insights and knowledge.

**HEART:** Being concerned with the welfare of others, accepting the responsibilities of citizenship in our local and global communities, determining values and attitudes by which to live, and learning how to work with others.

**HANDS:** Learning new skills, improving skills already developed, instilling pride in work, and respect for work accomplished.

**HEALTH:** Practicing healthful living, protecting the well-being of self and others, making constructive use of leisure time.

This four-fold development is vital to every individual. All four of the "H's" should be an important part of the goals youngsters identify as they participate in 4-H programs and activities.

## PARENT & GUARDIAN ROLES

First and foremost, 4-H is a family program – a place where parents and their children can learn and grow together. In 4-H you, as the parent or guardian, are very important. You are always invited and encouraged to participate in all 4-H club activities. We recognize every family's schedule is different and you may not be able to attend every club function, but there are many different ways that you can contribute to your child's 4-H group.

Your 4-H club leader will want to know about your interests and talents, and how you would like to support your child's 4-H group. Because 4-H has so many diverse experiences, we have discovered that every adult can find a parent volunteer role that matches their interests and the club's needs. Some possible helping roles include providing refreshments, supplies, or other resources for a club meeting, helping members with their projects, chaperoning a club field trip, organizing a club service project, or coordinating the club's end-of-the-year recognition program. Your club leader may have other suggestions.

As a parent or guardian, these are the following roles you need to fulfill:

- Provide transportation for your child to and from 4-H events.
- Help your child learn to recite the 4-H pledge.
- Attend 4-H club functions with your child whenever possible. Children 5-8 should always have a parent or guardian attend meetings with them. Horse club members, regardless of age, should *always* have a parent at each riding practice and horse shows.
- Guide your child as he or she selects a 4-H project and help develop goals that are challenging, but also realistic. Encourage project work by making it a family learning experience.
- If your child serves in a leadership role within the club, help him or her fulfill the duties of the office.
- Read the monthly Extension newsletter so you will know the details of upcoming events.
- If you have online access, visit the county 4-H Website for the latest information and resources at: [msuextension.org/sweetgrass](http://msuextension.org/sweetgrass).
- Attend your club's end-of-the-year celebration with your child and attend the 4-H Year End Bash (the county-wide awards program) as a family. Recognition always means more to children when their family is there to share it with them.



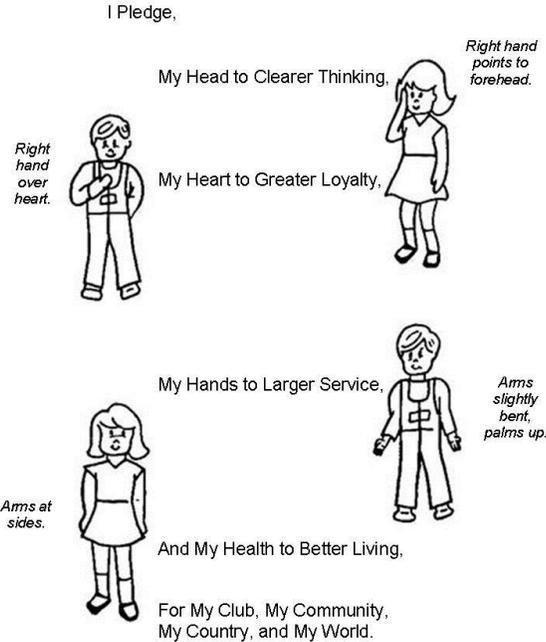
**4-H—**  
**a family affair**

## 4-H FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**What do the four “H’s” stand for on the 4-H clover emblem?** The “H’s” stand for: head, heart, hands, and health, which reflect the whole development of a child.

**What is the 4-H pledge?** Members recite the American and 4-H pledges at the opening of each club meeting. You should work with your child to help him or her memorize the 4-H pledge and the proper hand motions.

### 4-H PLEDGE



**What is the 4-H motto?** “To Make the Best Better”

**What are the 4-H colors?** The 4-H colors are green and white.

**How did 4-H begin?** 4-H began in the early 1900s as Corn Clubs for boys and Tomato Canning Clubs for girls. Although the program has changed a lot through the years, it has always been a program designed to help children become productive members of their communities. Montana State 4-H program celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2012.

**Do I have to live on a farm to join 4-H?** No! Although 4-H began as a program for rural children, today 4-H is available for **all children** whether they live on a farm, in town, or in the city.

**Do boys and girls attend different clubs?** No. All 4-H clubs are open to both boys and girls.

**How old do you have to be to join a 4-H club?** Children can join a 4-H club as soon as the age of 6, and they can stay involved until they they’re 19. In addition, many colleges offer collegiate 4-H clubs, including Montana State University!

**How do I enroll in 4-H?** Enrolling in a club is easy. Complete the 4-H registration & release forms and pay your enrollment fee. Turn these into the County Extension Office. Re-enrollment is done on an annual basis starting in October.

**What is the 4-H year timeline?** The 4-H year begins on October 1 and continues through the following September.

**Can we join 4-H at any time during the year?** Yes; however, each club may have their own “cut off” date for accepting new members for the year. Either way, all youth must be enrolled with the 4-H office by May 15 to be allowed to exhibit in the county fair (must be enrolled by tagging date for livestock members).

**Can my children join more than one club?** Yes. This sometimes occurs when a child wants to explore a project area that is not offered through his or her primary club, but is offered through another club. Being a club member is an important responsibility for both members and their parents. Give careful consideration to the time your family can commit to support more than one club. Parents will have to decide the best balance of 4-H involvement for their family.

**Are clubs organized by age divisions?** Most clubs operate with children from a wide variety of ages. It is a little more challenging to keep everyone’s interest when there is a wide age span, but there are also the benefits of younger youth learning from the knowledge and example of older youth, as well as leadership opportunities for older youth.

**What are the age classifications for competitive events?** Unless specifically stated by a particular project, age classifications are: Cloverbud Member: ages 6-8; Junior-Junior Member: ages 9-11; Junior Member: ages 12-13; Senior Member: ages 14-18. Ages are as of October 1 of the current 4-H year, which spans from October 1 through September 30 of the next year.



**What is a cloverbud?** Children aged 6-8 are known as “cloverbuds.” These children are *full 4-H members* and can participate in a wide range of programs and activities. However, because research has shown that competition at this age might be detrimental, cloverbud members are not allowed to participate in competitive events. These members *do participate* in many camps, events and the county fair, but their work just isn’t “judged” and compared to other children’s work. They receive participation ribbons for fair entries.

**What does it cost to join a 4-H club?** The current enrollment fee for Sweet Grass County 4-H is \$10 per member and \$5 for Cloverbuds. Leader dues are \$5.00.

**Do parents and guardians attend meetings with their children?** Yes! 4-H is a family program. Parents/guardians are encouraged to attend club meetings and 4-H events with their child. It is a great way for families to learn and grow together.

**Can my family choose which county 4-H program we join?** 4-H is organized at the county level. Children participate in the county 4-H program in which they live.

**How do I become a leader?** Whether you are interested in becoming a leader to assist your child’s club leader or organizing a new club, becoming a 4-H leader is easy. Complete a 4-H volunteer application with a fee of \$35 (\$5 Leader fee and \$30 background check). Applications are available at the 4-H office.

**How do I stay informed about 4-H opportunities?** Read the Extension newsletter. It will give you all the details about upcoming programs. Also visit the county 4-H Web site at [msuextension.org/sweetgrass](http://msuextension.org/sweetgrass).

## 4-H PROJECTS

Project work is at the heart of 4-H. As youth work to complete a 4-H project, a lot more is happening than “just” learning new skills. In fact, project work encompasses all four “H’s” – head, heart, hands, and health.

**What is a project?** Each 4-H member will have an opportunity to select one or more projects to learn about during the year. A project is simply a subject the member wants to explore. Projects are completely self-paced. A member may work on a project over the whole year or only spend a few weeks or months on a specific project. One member may choose to explore the same topic for many years, gaining in-depth knowledge of the project. Another member may prefer to explore a wide variety of projects during his or her years in 4-H.

In most cases, the member will end up with one or more finished exhibits to enter in the fair from each project he or she selects. With more than a hundred projects available, there is something to interest every child.

**How many projects can we select?** There is no limit to the number of projects a member can select; however, parents and leaders should help guide members in setting realistic, but challenging goals. It is always better to complete fewer projects that reflect quality workmanship than to rush and complete a lot of poorer quality projects.

**How do we select a project?** In most cases, club members and leaders will meet together to decide which projects they want to complete during the year. A club leader, parent volunteer, community resource person, or perhaps an older 4-H member can help with your project.

**What is a 4-H project workbook?** 4-H offers project workbooks to help guide members’ learning experiences. These written manuals provide age-appropriate, hands-on lessons to help youth acquire new skills and knowledge.

Please keep in mind that you are not required to utilize a project workbook to guide your child’s 4-H project, but you may find it very helpful. Also, do not feel like your child has to complete every learning activity listed in the project manual. Think of the project workbook as a useful resource for you, rather than a “to do” list of activities that must be completed.

**4-H Project vs Fair Entry?** When a member joins 4-H, they choose their project or projects and work on those projects during the year. Note that projects are not the same as fair entries. Each member will receive a fair entry packet in June – the fair entries are when a member chooses what they are exhibiting in the fair within the projects they are entered in. Example, a member project is cooking. On the fair entry form, this is where you choose specifically what you are actually bringing to the fair – such as ‘chocolate chip cookies’ or ‘whole wheat bread’, etc. Another example is woodworking – that is your project, not fair entry. The fair entry would be ‘birdhouse’, ‘gardening bench’, etc. Fair entries are needed for everything that will be shown in the fair, including all livestock exhibits. Just because they were tagged and weighed in, you still have to enter them for the actual fair. Members can only bring exhibits to the fair for the projects enrolled in: If a member is only enrolled in the woodworking project, that member cannot bring a sewing item, etc.

## AVAILABLE 4-H PROJECTS

**Animal Science:** Beef, Cat, Dairy Cattle, Dog, Dairy Goat, Meat Goat, Horse, Pocket Pets, Poultry, Rabbit, Sheep, Swine, Vet Science, Livestock Judging

**Engineering and Technology:** Aerospace, Bicycle, Electric, Robotics, Small Engines, Welding, Woodworking

**Environmental and Natural Sciences:** Entomology, Forestry, Outdoor Adventures, Shooting Sports (22 Rifle, Archery), Sport Fishing, Wildlife

**Family and Consumer Sciences:** Child Development, Babysitting, Family Adventures, Home Environment, Sewing, Knitting/Crochet/Embroidery, Quilting

**Plant Science:** Crop Science, Gardening, Range Science Management, Weed Science

**Communication and Expressive Arts:** Communications, Cowboy Poetry, Leathercraft, Photography, Theatre Arts, Visual Arts, Scrapbooking

**Leadership and Personal Development:** Citizenship, Leadership, Service Learning

**Foods & Nutrition:** Cake Decorating, Cooking, Baking, Food Preservation

## 4-H CLUBS

**Boulder River Bandits:** Sandra Crawford, Ashley Stockwell, Kaylie Kleinsasser

**Livestock Busters:** Marc King

**Otter Creek:** Lana King

**Pioneers:** Robin Thomas, Marvin Laubach

**Porcupine Butte:** Melissa Anderson, Rebecca Rein

**Reed Point Riders:** Lev Ott, Norma Ullery

**Yellowstone Victorians:** Marcie Niebur

# LEADERSHIP

Developing leadership skills is a very important aspect of 4-H. Serving as a club officer is one way for members to build their leadership abilities. The club officers, with support from their 4-H club leader, will lead the business portion of the 4-H club meeting.

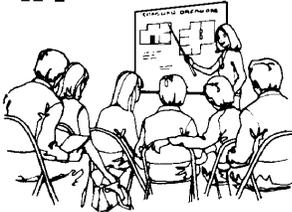
Clubs officers are generally selected by election. Most clubs will elect the following officers:

- **President:** Presides at the club meeting using parliamentary procedure and works to ensure that all members get a chance to share their ideas and participate in the business meeting.
- **Vice President:** Greets, introduces, and thanks presenters at club meetings and presides at the club meeting using parliamentary procedure in the president's absence.
- **Secretary:** Keeps accurate minutes of the business meeting, keeps accurate attendance records, and writes letters and thank you notes on behalf of the club.
- **Treasurer:** Keeps accurate financial records for the club. Usually, the club leader maintains the club's checkbook or monies. The treasurer provides the oral report of income and expenses at each business meeting.

Your club may modify the specific duties of each officer role. In addition, your club may choose to elect other officers besides the ones listed above. If so, the club leader will explain the duties.

It is important that children have *meaningful* leadership roles. Creating a bunch of officer positions so *everyone has a job* teaches the wrong message about leadership! Keep in mind that children do not have to be a club officer to have important leadership roles in their club.

## 4H BUILDS LEADERS



### OTHER LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

Being an officer is not the only way to develop leadership skills. Youth can develop these skills in many formal and informal ways, such as:

- serving on a club committee
- leading the pledges
- giving a club talk or demonstration for club members
- helping younger club members learn a new skill
- helping the leader set up or clean up after a club meeting

## 4-H RECORD BOOKS

A record book is a written summary of a member's 4-H experiences, using standardized 4-H record book forms. The record book includes: project goals, skills & knowledge gained, learning experiences, leadership, community service, non 4-H experiences, and finances. Record books are due to the Extension Office in early October each year.

**Why Should We Do Record Books?** Youth learn many important skills as they work on their record books, including organizational skills, creative writing skills, the ability to assess "value" to the products of their project work (i.e., dollars earned, money saved), learning to identify skills and knowledge gained, record-keeping skills, and the ability to positively share their work through photos and captions.

Members will want to start work on their record book very early in their 4-H year and maintain their records throughout. It is so much easier to know what, how and when to document their 4-H activities, than to try to go back later and remember all the things that they did.

## THE COUNTY FAIR

One of the highlights of the year for 4-H members is being able to exhibit their completed projects in the Sweet Grass County Fair.

**When is the fair?** The Fair is held the end of July each year at the Fairgrounds. As part of the fair, members have an opportunity to compete in horse, livestock, small animal shows, as well as enter completed projects for the indoor exhibits.

**Who can enter the fair?** Any 4-H member who meets the enrollment, tagging and other requirement deadlines can participate in the fair.

**What projects can we enter in the fair?** The Extension Office will print and distribute the fair entry forms and fairbook listing all the 4-H classes that can be entered. Generally, classes do not change a lot from year to year, so you can look at previous catalogs to get ideas for projects to enter in the fair.

***LIVESTOCK EXHIBITS:*** Extension staff will announce the dates to have 4-H livestock animals tagged and weighed. Tagging identifies the members' project animal(s) and ensures the member has had the animal in their possession for the minimum length of time required. At fair time, animals need to be brought to the Fairgrounds at the designated time for official weigh-in. At initial weigh-in each member can tag and weigh-in 2 different market animals for each species entered in, if they so choose. This would give the member a 'backup' animal in case the first choice animal doesn't fit the member standard to show at the fair. At fair time the member can choose which animal to bring to the fair, but can ONLY bring the animal chosen. A member CANNOT bring both animals and weigh them to make the decision.

***HORSE EXHIBITS:*** Each exhibitor must complete a horse card form by the announced deadline to show at the county fair. Horse Helmet Education is required once as first year member and once as a senior member. In order to transition to different levels of the horse project, all participants must be assessed by a certified horse leader. \*See all horse rules in the fairbook.

***OTHER ANIMAL EXHIBITS:*** There are numerous opportunities in which club members can exhibit animal projects (rabbits, goats, poultry, etc.). Follow the guidelines in the fairbook to enter a project animal in these shows.

### **How are exhibits judged?**

***Indoor Exhibits:*** All 4-H exhibits are judged on the Danish judging system with each entry earning a purple, blue, red or white ribbon. In addition, some projects will have other exhibitor rosettes and awards.

***Livestock & Horse Exhibits:*** Grand and Reserve Champions are selected for each species and will receive a rosette and an award. Livestock exhibits are judged on the Danish judging system, with each entry earning a purple, blue, red or white ribbon. In addition, showmanship awards are also presented and special awards may be presented based upon sponsorship (see catalog).

***SHOWMANSHIP:*** The top TWO showmen from each livestock and small animal species per age division will get the chance to compete in the round robins. Large animal round robin is Horse, Beef, Goat, Lamb and Pig. Small animal round robin is Pygmy Goat, Dog, Cat, Chicken and Rabbit.

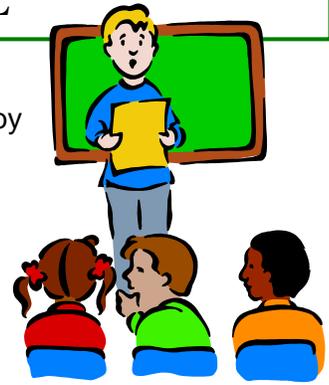
## 4-H PUBLIC SPEAKING: CLUB LEVEL

All members are encouraged to start developing their public speaking skills by giving club talks: demonstration or speech. The club talks are not judged.

**What is a club talk?** A club talk is a simple presentation about a topic of interest to the member. It is usually something related to a project he or she has been exploring.

**How long is a club talk?** Depending on the child's age and previous experience, the talk may be very short, or it may last for five minutes or so. The time is not important. The important thing is that club members begin to feel comfortable speaking in front of a group in a supportive, non-competitive environment.

**What is the proper format for a club talk?** As the child gains experience and confidence, he or she will want to give a more thorough club talk that includes all three components of a speech: an introduction, the body, and a summary. Children will want to use posters or other props to help them share their information. It is always more interesting for the audience to see, rather than just to listen.



## 4-H PUBLIC SPEAKING: COMPETITIVE LEVEL

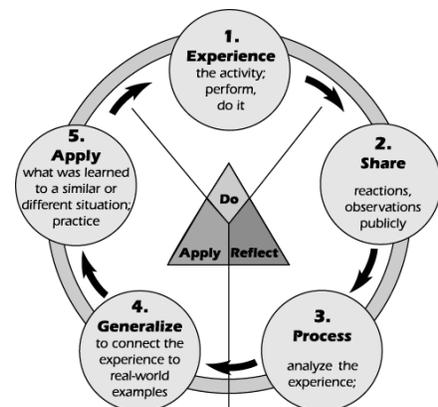
The next step in a member's development is to participate in competitive public speaking experiences. 4-H offers a variety of demonstration and public speaking contests throughout the year.

Preparing a speech or a demonstration for competition really helps youth develop poise and confidence in front of an audience. They learn to organize their thoughts, utilize effective delivery techniques, and develop attractive visual aids that will help hold the audience's attention. They also gain increased knowledge about their project area as they prepare and deliver a speech or demonstration. It is often said, "You don't really know something until you teach it."

Depending on the child's age and the category selected, he or she will have an opportunity to compete in County Communication Day, State 4-H Congress and may even be chosen for national competition.

## EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING MODEL

In 4-H, youth "learn by doing." The experiential learning model below describes the five steps that allow youth to fully benefit from a learning experience or activity.



# This I Believe...



- ✿ The 4-H boy and girl are more important than the 4-H projects.
- ✿ 4-H is not trying to replace the home, the church, and the school, only to supplement them.
- ✿ 4-H'ers are their own best exhibit.
- ✿ No 4-H award is worth sacrificing the reputation of a 4-H member or leader.
- ✿ Competition is a natural human trait and should be recognized as such in 4-H club work. It should be given no more emphasis than other fundamentals of 4-H.
- ✿ Learning how to do the project is more important than the project itself.
- ✿ A blue ribbon 4-H'er with a red ribbon pig is more desirable than a red ribbon 4-H'er with a blue ribbon pig.
- ✿ To “learn by doing” is fundamental in any sound educational program and is characteristic of the 4-H program.
- ✿ Generally speaking, there is more than one good way of doing most things.
- ✿ Every 4-H member needs to be noticed, to be important, to achieve, and to be praised.
- ✿ Our job is to teach 4-H members **HOW** to think, Not **WHAT** to think.

## 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 country, and my world.