

WELCOME TO
THE WORLD OF
4-H 
AN INTRODUCTION

Framing 4-H for Families

Welcome to 4-H

Congratulations! You have become a 4-H family. Your family is joining one of the largest educational youth organizations in the United States. Your family? Yes, your family! While the educational experience is designed for youth in kindergarten through 12th grade, adult involvement is a key to their success. Your support keeps your child interested, enthusiastic, and active in the 4-H program.

You might be wondering how you will fit one more thing into your busy schedule. We know how difficult it is to balance work, family, and home life. Often, adults spend time driving their children from one activity to another and miss out on time spent together. 4-H works to solve this problem by offering hundreds of projects and activities where young people and their families can learn and grow together. Imagine the fun in developing interests and hobbies as a family.

Want to know more about the 4-H program? This guide has been prepared to give you a brief overview of 4-H and to help you understand the roles and expectations for families, members, and leaders.

Let us just say welcome to 4-H, we're glad you're here.

What is 4-H?

4-H is an informal, educational youth development program conducted by the University of Arizona Extension Service, as authorized by federal and state statutes. In each county, local Extension staff has the authority to administer the program in accordance with University and Extension policy. Extension staff members work with advisory groups to provide a program that meets the county needs.

Members belong to a club/group led by volunteer leaders and take part in club activities such as community service, educational tours, and fun events. In addition to club activities, there is a wide variety of enrichment activities offered at the county, state, national, and international levels.

4-H leaders are trained volunteers who have enrolled with the Extension Service. They present information provided by Extension and University of Arizona. Publications your child receives for use with 4-H projects are developed by Extension faculty or other resource people.

4-H helps young people discover and develop life skills and set personal goals. Involvement in project areas gives members the help needed to improve specific skills and explore new ones. Activities within clubs also introduce members to the importance of helping others through community service.

Who Can Be a 4-H Member?

4-H CloverKids is the program for youth ages 5 to 8 years. This program provides opportunities for active learning in a noncompetitive environment.



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Adapted AZ 4-H

4-H community/project clubs are for youth in grades 3 through 12. Members are enrolled in 4-H with ages 9 to 13 identified as juniors and ages 14 and older as seniors.

4-H Benefits Families

Children need attention, and the 4-H program has a proven record of providing education, evaluation, recognition, and opportunity to succeed. A member enrolled in her or his first 4-H project has the ability to learn many new things about this interest, share this knowledge with others at club meetings and county contests, and display to others her or his success in areas such as art, foods, natural science, or an animal exhibit.

4-H also benefits families through:

- County activities and events—a way to show 4-H successes and a positive learning tool for members and families.
- Interaction with other club members, families of other club members, and the public, which has a positive effect on 4-H members.
- Club events and contests, which bring members together and provide a cooperative learning environment.

4-H events are family events. The member might have a main role to play but the entire family is encouraged to be part of the experience. Families can take on supportive roles to encourage the member. Many clubs and county programs hold annual family picnics, family nights, and recognition programs.

Families also benefit from 4-H. Being involved with other adults creates an extended social network. Sharing ideas and helping plan club events is a positive role many adults are willing to perform. The 4-H club leader who involves other adults in club activities has more time for helping members and teaching information about their projects.

4-H Projects

Arizona 4-H members may choose from more than 80 different projects offered statewide, or they may develop their own projects with the assistance of an adult volunteer leader and county Extension staff members. Projects are grouped into the areas of animal science, horticulture, home economics, natural resources, engineering, and expressive arts.

- Animal science projects range from small to large, and include chickens, pigeons, rabbits, cavies, dairy and beef cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, horses, and dogs.
- Horticulture members work with flowers or vegetables, designing and caring for gardens or containers.
- Expressive arts projects include art painting, photography, ceramics, fiber arts, leathercraft, and decorative painting.
- Home economics members learn skills associated with food preparation and preservation, nutrition, child care, home decorating, and clothing construction.
- Forestry, geology, entomology, marine science, environmental stewardship, and shooting sports make up the natural science projects.
- Engineering projects include woodworking and tractor safety instruction.

Opportunities to develop citizenship and leadership skills are present at all levels of the 4-H Youth Development Program. Members have a chance to test these skills at various events throughout the year.

Projects are real-life experiences that help 4-H'ers learn to make decisions. These decisions help members feel responsible for their own actions and can lead to personal satisfaction. Members also develop good work habits and learn to work with others, sharing ideas and helping each other. Many projects are completed in or near the home, so the family can work and be together.



The 4-H Mission

The mission of the Arizona 4-H Youth Development Program is to provide educational opportunities to become capable and contributing members of a global society through these five life skills:

- Build Self-Confidence
- Learn to Make Decisions
- Develop an Inquiring mind
- Relate to Others
- Develop Concern for the Community
- using research-based knowledge and the land-grant university system.

4-H Roles and Expectations

Volunteer 4-H leaders, club members, and families working together as a team will lead to a successful 4-H experience.

4-H Families

If you are wondering how you can help, here are some suggestions:

- Assist your child in selecting 4-H projects.
- Take an interest in your child's 4-H projects and activities.
- Encourage your child when he or she succeeds, but even more so when things are not going well.
- Be a positive role model.
- Provide transportation to local meetings and county activities in which your child is interested.
- Attend 4-H meetings and other special activities.
- Help your child be prepared.
- Offer your services to assist the leader.

All adults have knowledge and skills needed in 4-H. Look, listen, and offer suggestions for club and project ideas.

4-H Leaders

Club leaders are adults who care enough about young people to volunteer their time to work with them. They:

- enroll members in the program
- supervise members' project work and provide an opportunity for evaluation of the members' progress
- obtain and distribute project materials

- work with members, families, junior leaders, and other 4-H leaders to plan a fun, educational program for the year
- assist members in arranging and conducting meetings
- keep abreast of changes, policies, new information, etc. by attending leader trainings and leader meetings
- teach or arrange for the teaching of the specific skills identified by members and/or in the project manuals, and
- inform members of county, state, national, and international activities, and encourage them to participate.

4-H Members

4-H members also have roles and responsibilities. Members work as individuals and as a team. They:

- select projects with guidance from a 4-H leader and parents or guardians
- participate in enrolled projects
- keep a record of project work
- attend club meetings and participate in club activities, and
- abide by the 4-H Code of Conduct.

Members also may take on additional roles in the 4-H program. As their involvement in the club or county program grows, so does their level of responsibility to the program.

Extension and 4-H

4-H is designed to be a positive experience for members, clubs, and families. In order to have this happen for your child, please rely on the network of available help.

Your 4-H club leader is prepared to help members with project work and notify them of activities related to their project. Families of other members in the club are great resources for new 4-H families. 4-H staff, who work at the Extension office in each county, can answer many questions and provide good suggestions for helping with projects. The staff member in charge of the 4-H program is available to provide support, education, and help with problem solving.

The county Extension office provides services that allow 4-H activities to occur. County 4-H staff

members recruit and train volunteer leaders, distribute 4-H project materials, facilitate events, teach educational programs and trainings, and work with the county 4-H leaders association.

Project materials, teaching aids, and contest questions are available from the Extension office. Each county office, working with University of Arizona, can provide materials for each project the state supports. Materials for county projects and activities are created at the county level, by agents, and/or by volunteer leaders.

Many county Extension offices and Uof A CES are online with Web sites designed to offer help and information. Use these sites to become better informed and enjoy more that 4-H has to offer. Visit the Arizona 4-H Web site at <http://ag.arizona.edu/4-h/>

We also invite you to visit the U of A Extension Web site at <http://ag.arizona.edu/extension/>

4-H Program Fees

There are program development fees to become a 4-H member. Members may also be asked to pay for project materials, insurance, and registration fees for special activities or events.

Fee waivers may be requested.

The projects selected usually will determine the total cost of 4-H. Members may enroll in one or several projects, and families may have on hand many of the support materials needed for these projects or they may need to purchase items. There will be a significant difference between starting a large animal project and starting a clothing project, unless the animals and equipment already are available for the member's use.

The investment also may increase as members grow with the 4-H program and become active in regional, state, national, or international events.

Members may become involved in club or county fund-raising events to help meet club or project expenses. When clubs set their goals for the years, fund raising may be a part of their plan. Clubs also are encouraged to assist with fund raising conducted by either the county or state 4-H Foundation.

Scholarships for many 4-H camps, trainings, and statewide programs are available. Adults need to ask about how to apply and what followup is needed to receive the 4-H financial support.

Again, congratulations...and welcome to the world of 4-H!

4-H Values

- **Community volunteers** as a vital key to success
- **Respect for the individual** and fostering a caring attitude toward others
- **Continuous development of Head, Heart, Hands, and Health** to achieve full potential
- An appreciation of **human diversity** to encourage respect for cultural diversity
- **Teamwork** to achieve objectives
- **Lifelong and hands-on learning**
- Developing **leadership** in youth
- **Research and knowledge**, using the best research-based methods for working with youth
- **Partnerships** as essential to successful youth and adult development, educational programs, and resource development

This is part seven of a seven-part series. This series is a cooperative project between Oregon State University, Washington State University, and the University of Idaho.

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