

State Contact

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Kentucky 4-H Policy and Procedure Kentucky 4-H Clover Bud Program Effective Date: January 1, 2008

Purpose of Kindergarten through Third Grade Programs

The overall purpose of the 4-H Clover Bud program is to foster the development of life skills that are essential for the cognitive, social, emotional and physical maturation of Kindergarten through 3rd graders. Children in these grades are a distinct audience for 4-H, with unique learning characteristics and developmental needs that are different from older children and youth. As a result, the 4-H Clover Bud program is designed with specific educational objectives and program policies focused on the 5 – 8 year old. (Note: It is recognized that 8 year olds are in transition between the 4-H Clover Bud program and 4-H. For further definition of “4-H Age” in Kentucky, please refer to the Kentucky 4-H Age policy as established on January 10, 2006.)

Participation, safety, personal development, learning and fun are the highest priorities in providing 4-H Clover Bud programs. The policies outlined in this document seek to ensure that 4-H Clover Bud members remain safe and have positive, developmentally appropriate experiences in Kentucky 4-H.

County’s that offer the 4-H Clover Bud program are expected to utilize age appropriate programmatic goals, policies, curriculum and cooperation-based methods to give feedback and recognition. In all programs, the determining factors in designing the learning experiences are the 4-H Clover Bud members’ interests, abilities and needs. **The focus of the Kentucky 4-H Clover Bud program is the positive growth of the children**, not the activities used as vehicles to foster that growth and development.

Policy/Procedure

The 4-H Youth Development program is committed to experiential education, supporting the development of life skills and meeting developmental needs in positive, productive ways. There are four reasons for this policy: 1. the safety of the youth involved, 2. to support the positive growth and development of the youth involved, and 3. to protect the volunteers who work with this age group and 4. to cover our liability making sure that no child is “put in harms way.”

Based on the needs, interests and developmental tasks of children in grades K-3, the following policies and guidelines were established with the initial recognition of the 4-H Clover Bud program and subsequently supported by the National 5-8 Curriculum Task Force in 1992. **These guidelines define the minimum standards** for 4-H programming with the K-3 audience.

4-H Clover Bud program follows a set of guidelines based on the **developmental appropriateness of it’s activities. A "developmentally appropriate" activity is one that is based on the general characteristics of an age group and adapts to meet the individual needs of each child.** That often involves using different kinds of equipment or providing more adult supervision. Sometimes a 4-H Clover Bud member will be physically capable of doing something but will not be able to understand the reason for the process or the result. Participation in that activity would be just as inappropriate as participation in an activity that is unsafe because of physical limitations.

As a result, the 4-H Clover Bud program is fundamentally different than general membership in 4-H. Requirements of the 4-H Clover Bud program include:

1. Activity-Focused rather than Project-Focused

The educational component of a 4-H Clover Bud program consists of **activities rather than projects**. A 4-H Clover Bud activity focuses on **developing a single concept and/or skill** rather than focusing on a project over time. It is **not developmentally appropriate** for K-3 graders to participate in an ongoing, planned series of activities as a member, whether it is a 4-H Shooting Sports program, or an animal project. 4-H Clover Bud members participate in occasional, non-competitive, sampler-type, age-appropriate, properly supervised events or activities sponsored or conducted by 4-H groups.

2. Cooperative vs. Competitive Activities

4-H Clover Bud programs do not conduct or participate in competitive activities. Competitive activities require motor skills, reflexes and strength that often are not yet fully developed in young children. In addition, research indicates that participation in competitive activities is developmentally inappropriate for 4-H Clover Bud members. Grades K-3 children are sensitive to criticism. They often have not developed frustration tolerance or the full ability to manage their emotions, which often results in not being able to accept failure well. **4-H Clover Bud activities should be conducted in a positive environment that focuses on the members' strengths rather than analyzing their deficiencies.** 4-H Clover Bud members need opportunities to practice skills, discover talents and learn about fairness in a **non-judgmental environment**.

3. 4-H Clover Bud Members and Exhibition at Fairs

4-H Clover Bud members are encouraged to ***exhibit*** activity-related items from their club at appropriate venues (i.e. county fairs, county events, etc.). Since 4-H Clover Bud members do not participate in competitive events, **they are not eligible to receive premium funds** as a result of exhibition; a participation ribbon would suffice as an acknowledgement of participation.

4-H Clover Bud members should not have large animal projects/activities/events (i.e. beef, dairy*, horse), nor should they participate as competitive exhibitors with animals because of their physical inability to control these large animals. Animals appropriate for 4-H Clover Bud members include: cats, dairy*, dogs, goat, poultry, rabbits, sheep and swine.

*** NOTE:** An exception to the dairy category would be the “Kiddy Classes” at District Dairy Shows. These classes are for youth younger than the traditional 4-H age. Clover Bud participation is allowable in this event, considering the following:

1. The animal is a young dairy heifer that is appropriate in size and personality to that of the Clover Bud member,
2. Participation supersedes competition,
3. Adult supervision is increased,
4. Youth are “lined up” in no particular order,
5. All youth participants receive positive feedback, and
6. Constructive criticism is kept to a minimum.

To exhibit animals in a noncompetitive event, the youth must be enrolled as a 4-H Clover Bud member during the current 4-H program year and there must be increased adult supervision with a suggested one-to-one ratio with the child.

These animal policies are for the safety of the 4-H Clover Bud member and the public at the public exhibition. The developmental ability and the maturity level of the exhibitor and the unpredictable behavior of animals determine this policy.

4. Adult Supervision of 4-H Clover Bud Programs

4-H Clover Bud clubs do not conduct formal business meetings or elect officers. Children in grades K-3 are not yet ready to fulfill the responsibilities of club officers and require much more adult guidance when making group decisions. However, a structured routine is important to this age group.

4-H Clover Bud clubs handle their finances differently than clubs of older children. For safety reasons, 4-H Clover Bud should not bring money for dues or supplies to club meetings, nor should they conduct door-to-door fundraising activities. They may, however, participate in group fundraising events supervised by adults. Parents and leaders will decide on how club expenses will be handled when the club is organized.

Youth to Adult Ratio - A minimum of two adult leaders is required to start a 4-H club of any age group and at least two adults (leaders, parents or others) must be present at every 4-H meeting and activity. For groups of 5-6 year olds, the group should not exceed 12 children. For groups of 7-8 years olds, a third adult is required if the group exceeds 12 children and the group size should not exceed 16 children.

An adult or older teen leader should be with the 4-H Clover Bud member at all times when in the presence of an animal or when using equipment that is potentially dangerous. This includes: scissors, saws, knives, needles, sewing machines, rockets, kitchen appliances and so forth. 4-H Clover Bud members should not operate power driven equipment as a part of activities (power drills, small engines, blenders, mixers, clippers, mowers, etc.).

4-H Clover Bud members should wear appropriate safety helmets or other safety equipment such as life vests when engaged in activities such as riding bicycles, skateboards, canoeing, or other activities.

Management of K-3 Programs

Those leading a K-3 special membership category program should be sensitive to **risk management issues** and should consult with insurance providers. Many providers insure "4-H participants," which is defined as 4th graders and up and may not cover K-3 participants in activities or events not specified without an additional rider.

Chartering 4-H Clover Bud Clubs

Although 4-H Clover Buds "clubs" do not elect officers, these groups must still be chartered to recognize their program and enable them to use the 4-H Name and Emblem. This is a national policy and will be followed in the state of Kentucky.

Kentucky 4-H Clover Buds clubs can be registered using the current 4-H Club Charter Submission Form found on the Agent Resources page of the KY 4-H Youth Development webpage (www.ca.uky.edu/agcollege/4h). When registering your Clover Buds club(s), include "4-H Clover Bud" in the club name. This will allow for easier identification of Clover Bud clubs registered in the system.

Clover Buds and Participation in the 4-H Shooting Sports Program

The child must be between 5 - 8 years of age and enrolled with the 4-H Youth Development Program in their county. The parents/guardians of the child must complete a 4-H Enrollment form (marking 'Clover Bud' on the enrollment form) and a 4-H medical form provided by the County Extension Office.

The parents/guardians and the Clover Bud child must be informed that they are **members only at the county practice/participation level** of the shooting sports club. **The Clover Bud child will not be allowed to participate or compete in any 4-H shooting sports competitions.** Individual clubs will determine the level of participation for internal functions such as fund-raisers and other club events.

The shooting sports disciplines that a Clover Bud child will be allowed to participate in will be determined on a child to club basis and shall be based on the specific discipline coach's and the child's abilities. The Clover Bud shall be closely supervised while on the range at all time by a Certified Coach (preferably with a one-to-one ratio).

Agent's Responsibility in Relation to This Topic

It is neither the intent nor the objective of the Kentucky 4-H Clover Bud program to duplicate the 4-H member experiences that are designed for older youth, nor to create a "mini-4-H" concept. While the 4-H Clover Bud program is a part of "the overall 4-H Youth Development program" and 4-H Clover Bud members are recognized as 4-H members for the purposes of enrollment, they are considered to be in a special membership category with regard to program and policy.

It is the agent's responsibility to:

1. communicate the aforementioned policies to Clover Bud leaders.
2. provide support and serve as an advisor to Clover Bud leaders.
3. assist Clover Bud leaders in completing all steps necessary to charter their club.

Tools You Can Use

Kentucky 4-H Clover Bud "Menu of Options" ([link](#)) - serves as guide for 4-H Clover Bud program implementation utilizing the seven Kentucky 4-H Core Curriculum areas: Animal Science, Communications, Family & Consumer Sciences, Health, Leadership, Natural Resources and Science, Engineering & Technology.

Kentucky 4-H Clover Bud promotional brochure ([link to document on resource guide](#))

Kentucky 4-H Clover Bud Resource Guide page – Agent access only -
<http://www.ca.uky.edu/agcollege/4h/resource/cloverbuds/index.htm>

Kentucky 4-H Clover Bud Handout ([link to document on resource guide](#)) – for use with volunteers – this document is to be used to educate Clover Bud volunteer leaders on the basic guidelines of the policy.

Related Opportunities

None at this time

References

It is important that children in grades K-3 be involved in activities where the risk of failure is minimized and the opportunity to experience success is maximized. The most reliable way to find activities that are based on the general characteristics of the age group is to select from the resources listed on the Kentucky 4-H Agents Resource Guide, "Clover Bud" page.

K-3 Youth in 4-H: Guidelines for Programming, National 5-8 Curriculum Task Force, (1992) National 4-H Headquarters, CSREES, USDA.

Additional People to Contact for More Information

Extension District Directors of the counties involved

Joe Kurth, Assistant Director of Extension for 4-H Youth Development, 859-257-5961 X 1;
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Frequently Asked Questions

None at this time

Tricks of the Trade

None at this time

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