

Introduction to 4-H Projects- Thinking about What You Want to Do



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The 4-H Cloverbud Program introduces groups of youth to many different subject areas and experiences. These experiences are a brief sampling of what 4-H projects are offered. There is also the opportunity through Self-Determined projects to create a project on a very specific topic. The Cloverbud experiences lay a path for each child to determine what is specifically interesting and to be able to develop an idea of what were their “liked” and “favorite” activities. Narrowing down the choices is where members need to start when thinking about choosing a 4-H project.

Once a choice is made, the project itself will take more time than just a Cloverbud activity or lesson. Advisors will need to teach the members and their parents to pace the project work to be successful. Dividing the project into sections and setting “completion” date goals for each section will allow for a positive experience and achievement. It is highly recommended that first year 4-H members only take one project. This is a rule in many counties.

Each project usually includes a combination of two (2) leadership or citizenship activities, a community service activity that sometimes is completed by the entire club. A 3-5 minute project demonstration in front of peers is also usually required with the club as the audience. Club advisors should periodically check in during club meetings to oversee the progress of the project. Each county sets a date for when all projects must be completed. A project book review (judging) is required. It can be facilitated through the county office or the club by an advisor. Always encourage the members and the parents to ask questions.

Activity: *What do I want to do when I grow up to be a 4-H Member?*

Supplies needed: paper, highlighter markers, one watercolor marker, pencils, painter’s tape, self-stick notes, State 4-H Family Guides

- Tape a sheet of paper to the wall.
- Begin a group discussion with your members about their favorite activities they have experienced. There are not any “right or wrong” answers.
- Use a watercolor marker to write on the paper the ideas the youth suggest as their favorite while being in the Cloverbud Program.
- Give each youth a pencil and a self-stick note. Have them copy the project names that are specifically interesting to them.
- Now have the kids each put a one (1) by their favorite activity; make a two (2) by the next favorite activity and make a three (3) by their third favorite activity.
- Give each member a State 4-H Family Guide. Use the highlighter to accent their top three projects from the 4-H Family Guide.
- The next step in selecting a project is to have the youth, parent, and advisor discuss the three projects highlighted in order to make the best decision possible for the new 4-H member and their family. The discussion should cover the cost of the projects, availability of adult helpers, and whether or not it is a realistic choice.