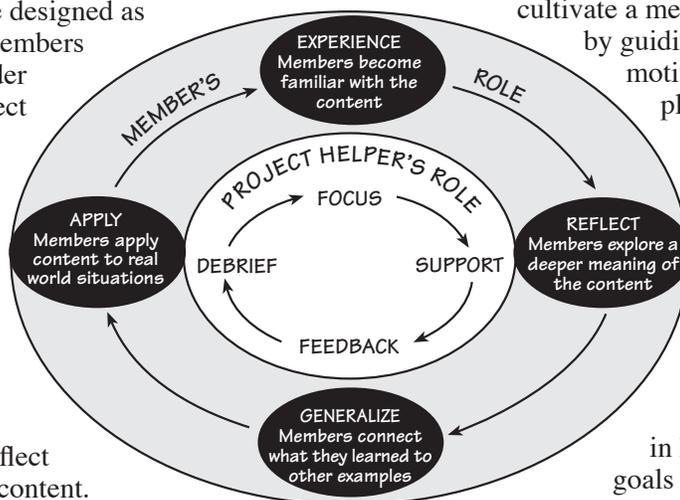


# 4-H Project Learning

Whether you are one of several adults serving as a project leader for your 4-H club or possibly the club's organizational leader performing this task, you are responsible for **overseeing** the project learning of members. The following is designed to help you with this important task.

## Individual Member Projects

4-H project books are designed as self-study manuals for members to read and complete under the supervision of a project helper. The organization of information and activities in these books is arranged in a unique experiential fashion (see right). Members begin by experiencing the project's content in a meaningful way. This is followed by activities that allow members to reflect a deeper meaning of the content. Following this, members generalize what they learned to other examples. Lastly, members apply what they learned to real world situations.



cultivate a member's interest in a project by guiding the member's planning, motivating the member to complete the project's activities, and recognizing the member for a job well done.

### Helper's Role

- Become familiar with the material in the project book.
- Support the member in his or her efforts to set goals and complete the recommended number of project activities.
- Provide feedback as requested or needed.
- Date and initial the activities that have been completed.
- Recognize the member for a job well done. Project completion certificates are available from your county Extension office.

### 4-H Project Experience

At the core of every member's project experience is the Project Helper. This can be a parent, relative, friend, or interested adult. The duties of this individual include helping the member **Focus** on the tasks at hand, providing **Support** and **Feedback** for the learning taking place, and conducting a **Debriefing** exercise to determine what was done well, what could have been done differently, and where to go from here. As a Project Helper, adults can nurture and

Adult involvement as a Project Helper is one of the eight critical elements for positive youth development. These elements affirm the need for youth to become actively engaged in meaningful learning activities with caring adults in a safe and supportive environment. For more information on the Eight Critical Elements for Positive Youth Development, visit our web page at [www.ohio4h.org](http://www.ohio4h.org).



# Group Projects

Sometimes a group of members may want to focus on a project of particular interest or take on a club project in addition to individual projects. To meet these needs, group project work is often organized and conducted by a project leader who is responsible for directing project work. Group project work can be conducted as part of, or separate from, the club meeting. When apart from the meeting, project advisors can provide a more in-depth exploration of the topic and involvement in project activities. Sometimes members from surrounding clubs are invited to be a part of these specialized project sessions. When this occurs, these members are considered part of a 4-H Special Interest group.

## *Getting Started*

### *Organizing Your Project Group*

Once you and your members decide on a project topic, you'll need to begin locating the necessary materials. Start with 4-H 1000, *Family Guide to 4-H*. This resource lists specially prepared materials for teaching a variety of topics in individual and group settings. If there is a particular 4-H project that members want to explore as a group, yet no group materials listed use a copy of the Member Project Manual instead. Ohio's member project manuals offer a variety of project activities, as well as specific guidelines for completion that will be of use.

You are not, however, limited to project topics or materials offered through 4-H. Feel free to use additional teaching materials from libraries, associations, or special interest groups.

### *Involve Members in Project Planning*

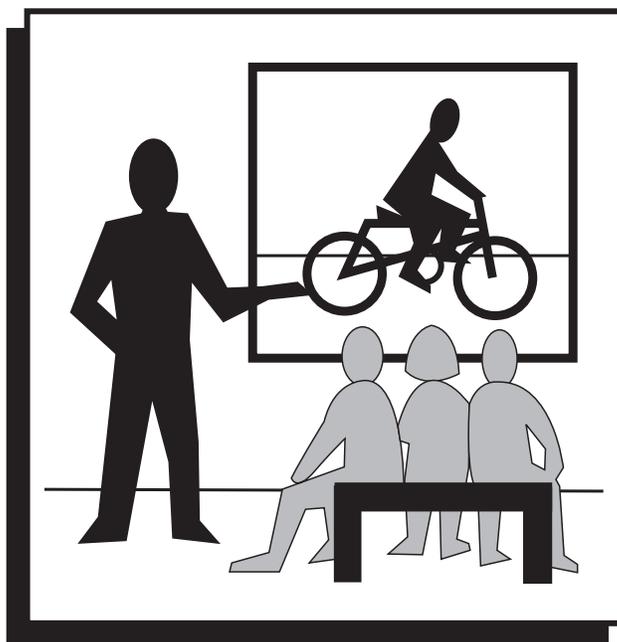
As much as possible, involve your members in planning project work sessions. They will have a greater commitment to the project if they have been involved in its planning. The length of time members spend on project activities will depend on the nature of the project and the ambitions of the group.

### *Setting Individual and Group Goals*

By your second meeting, have members determine their personal goals for their project, as well as those of the group. However, this needs to be done with consideration for the individual abilities of each member. As a project advisor, guide members in setting realistic goals for both themselves and the group.

### *Preparing for Project Instruction*

Successful learning will depend on how well you involve members in hands-on activities. You may want to use a variety of techniques such as role playing, experiments, demonstrations, and discussions to maintain member interest in the project.



# Project Advising, Review and Recognition

As a 4-H leader, one of your jobs is to monitor the project work of your club members. This includes having members give regular project reports at club meetings.

Project reports give advisors an opportunity to check on the work each member has done, especially if it is done at home. If members have encountered difficulties, they can be discussed. Project reports naturally lead into project demonstrations, which are typically assigned in advance. The demonstration provides the opportunity for members to highlight important things they learned about their projects at home. For additional information on giving 4-H project demonstrations, refer to 4-H 909, *Demonstrations for 4-H Members*.

## Project Review

Review of the member's accomplishments should take place once the member's project goals have been met. Typically, this evaluation is done at home by either a project helper or at a time and location agreed upon by the club. The purpose of this evaluation is to assess "to what degree" members have achieved their project goals.

Additionally, members may take part in a club level evaluation to assess contributions in leadership, citizenship and community service; participation in 4-H events and activities; involvement in the club; and personal growth through 4-H. Typically, this level of evaluation is conducted as part of or following a members project review. It is usually done to assign the member a final grade or a particular "Honor Member" type of award.

Members may also be encouraged to take part in county level judging, sometimes referred to as county project judging. However, this level of assessment is designed to determine "how well" rather than "to what degree" a member has achieved within a project. Normally, a judge will review the planning section of the member's project manual in order to assess the scope of the member's project knowledge and involvement. Members may also be required to bring a project exhibit or demonstrate an activity as a way of assessing project skills. Normally, grade ribbons (A, B, C) or color ribbons (blue, red, white) are assigned to reflect individual project achievements as determined by the judge.

At the highest level of member assessment called "competition against others," members are judged against standards of excellence as well as the achievements of others. Typically, this takes place during county level evaluation at the time when trophy winners and state fair participants are determined. It also takes place at county and state fair contests and special competitive events.

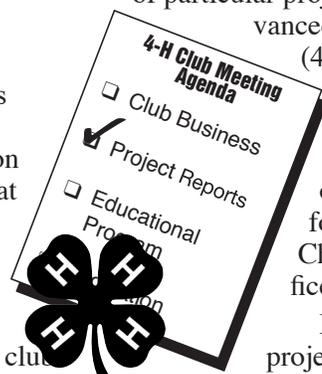
## Member Recognition

Members who achieve the personal/group goals set for their project can receive one of Ohio's 4-H *Project Achievement Certificates*, 4-H 905-908. These awards are based upon the level of difficulty of particular projects; beginning, intermediate, advanced. Refer to the *Family Guide to 4-H* (4-H 1000) to determine the appropriate level of award for each project.

In addition, your county may offer a special "Honor Member" or member achievement type award for recognition beyond project work. Check with your county Extension office for availability and details.

Individuals who earn recognition for project and membership achievements should be recognized among fellow members. Before distributing awards, ask members to tell what they learned from their experiences. Help members focus on triumphs rather than failures. Don't forget, pats on the back and verbal praise can be done at any time.

Additional opportunities to recognize significant member achievements are available through your county, state and national 4-H award programs. This includes nominating members to receive national level county 4-H project medals, trips to state and national events, and academic scholarships. For additional information, contact your county Extension office for a copy of its county award packet or refer to the awards section of the *Family Guide to 4-H*.



*Additional Resources available online at [WWW.ohio4h.org](http://WWW.ohio4h.org)*

4-H 909 *Demonstrations for 4-H Members*

4-H 1000 *Family Guide to 4-H*



## *Definitions*

**Project Club:** Two or more members who meet regularly under the direction of a 4-H advisor to elect officers, conduct club business, plan the club program, and enroll in the same or similar 4-H projects.

**Club or Group Project:** Advisor-directed project taken by two or more members in the same club.

**Project Group:** Group of members who work together on a project either as a part of or separate from the club meeting.

**Special Emphasis Group:** A short-term program,

offered by one or more 4-H advisors, that focuses on a topic of particular interest to local youth. These groups are not required to conduct business meetings, nor is there a specific length of time for them to meet.



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