

Ohio 4-H Chaperone Guidance

A significant component of Ohio 4-H programming includes offering opportunities for 4-H members to engage in educational leadership experiences. At times, these opportunities require travel in-state, out-of-state, and out-of-country. These opportunities would not be possible without adult chaperones who accompany these youth. Chaperones play an important role in helping young people have successful experiences by building positive relationships that help encourage their participation, answer their questions, and calm their apprehensions.

To mitigate risk associated with these opportunities, the following guidelines are in place regarding Ohio 4-H chaperones.

Selecting Ohio 4-H Chaperones:

- Status of Ohio 4-H Chaperones:
 - When traveling, chaperones are in care, custody, and control of minors. Therefore, it is the expectation that all Ohio 4-H Chaperones are either:
 - Ohio State University Extension employees, or
 - Approved Ohio 4-H volunteers, enrolled in the current year.
 - All chaperones must be at least 21 years of age, and at least one chaperone must be 25 years of age or older (including OSU employees).
 - This is because you must be at least 25 years old to rent a vehicle, in the event of an emergency.
 - Chaperones must adhere to the Ohio 4-H Code of Conduct and Standards of Behavior.
- Number of Chaperones / Ratios:
 - At least two chaperones must accompany the group, regardless of the number of participants.
 - The “Rule of Three” should be followed – there should always be *at least* three individuals in a group, which means that chaperones should never be one-on-one with any participant.
 - To determine the minimum number of chaperones needed, the following ratios should be used. Ages are as of the date of the trip. (Keep in mind, a minimum of two chaperones should be used.):
 - *Ages 5-8 (Cloverbud Members):* 1 chaperone per 5 youth
 - *Age 8 (Project Age Member):* 1 chaperone per 6 youth
 - *Ages 9-14:* 1 chaperone per 8 youth
 - *Ages 15-17:* 1 chaperone per 10 youth
 - *Ages 18+:* no additional chaperones are required

Event coordinators and chaperones should also make sure that all guidelines in the [“Risk Management Plan”](#) and [“Traveling with Teens Fact Sheet”](#) are adhered to when traveling.

