

Kentucky 4-H Volunteer Orientation Fact Sheet

4-H Cloverbuds

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Historical Background

Involving pre-4-H age youth in the 4-H program is growing across the country. Known as Cloverbuds, the five to eight year olds experience some of the same activities and learning experiences as do their older counterparts. It is important to get youth started in the 4-H program before they become immersed in other activities and organizations.

What is the Cloverbud program?

The 4-H Cloverbud program exists as part of the overall county 4-H youth development program. Activities and learning opportunities are designed for their age level (ages 5-8) and concentrate on developing such skills as decision making, discovery, communication, self-confidence, and building relationships.

Who Can Be a Cloverbud?

Although the requirements may vary according to the needs of the local 4-H program, generally any youth age 5-8 as of January of the current year or is in K-3 is eligible. Membership may not be available in all organized 4-H groups.

How Are Groups Organized?

Just as county programs are organized differently, so are the Cloverbud opportunities. Generally, the following group structures lend themselves to Cloverbud youth development.

1. Community or project clubs - Cloverbuds are recognized as members of the community club and may take part in the organized portion of the meeting, but break away from the older group for their own learning activities. Interested parents or teens under the direction of an adult usually lead these sessions.
2. Classrooms - Because Cloverbud materials are learning based, they are welcomed in the formal

classroom setting as a supplement to what the teachers are already doing. The teacher is usually the leader; however, teens use these settings as opportunities to develop their leadership skills.

3. Cloverbud Clubs - These stand alone clubs often meet after school as part of a supplemental education program, in churches, fire stations or in the homes. They may also be part of a child care program or supplement home school groups. These clubs are usually led by trained adults or interested parents.

What is the Difference Between Cloverbuds and Traditional 4-H Members? **

Type of Learning:

- *Cloverbud learning is activity centered.
- *Traditional member learning is project based.

Type of instruction:

- *Cloverbud instruction is leader directed.
- *Traditional members receive instruction from a leader and through self-study.

Recognition:

- *Cloverbuds are recognized for their participation only.
- *Traditional members are recognized for their participation, goal achievement, achievement of standards, and being judged the best in their area via competition.



Learning Resources:

- *Cloverbud activities come from an approved statewide curriculum, or may use materials approved by the county agent following the Cloverbud program parameters guidelines.
- *Traditional member utilize project manuals or other materials designed for their age group.

Curriculum Resources for Cloverbuds

Because the Cloverbud program is designed as activity based learning, the curriculum chosen should be hands-on, age appropriate, experiential and noncompetitive.

Common topics or themes include: environment, personal skills development, plant and animal science, nutrition and arts and crafts. Formal curriculum can be purchased from other state Extension Services and usually include teaching plans, a detailed activity description and background information.

Guidelines for County Fair Exhibits

Cloverbuds are encouraged to exhibit something they have been working on through their club. These exhibits, however, are noncompetitive and should be for exhibition only. If possible, youth should be given a forum to tell about their project and what it is like to be part of the fair.

Cloverbuds are not permitted to exhibit or compete against 4-H age youth 9-19. Any awards or recognitions given should be given to all Cloverbuds participating.

Participation at Camp

Cloverbuds should be encouraged to attend camp, but these camps should be designed to meet their developmental needs. They should not be included in a camp geared to older youth. Day camps or overnight camping for no more than 3 nights are common for this age. Teens serve as role models and small group leaders for the youth. The program

should consist of hands-on educational activities and group games.

What is expected of Cloverbud Volunteers?*

Specific responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- *being committed to the development of young people;
- *following the guidelines and policies of the Kentucky 4-H program;
- *assisting members in all 4-H learning experiences;
- *maintaining open communications with other volunteers and the Extension office;
- *helping the members select appropriate activities;
- *encouraging parents and other guardians to support their child's involvement and activities while in the program;
- *participating in appropriate volunteer development opportunities;
- *go through the required screening process for volunteers working with 4-H youth.

An individual serving as a 4-H Cloverbud volunteer must also have:

- *a sincere interest in working with youth;
- *the ability to teach and motivate youth;
- *organizational skills;
- *the ability to work with minimal supervision;
- *willingness to become familiar with and work with the philosophy and guidelines of the University of Kentucky Extension, the Kentucky 4-H program and the county 4-H program;
- *patience and understanding of the developmental needs and characteristics of this age group.

****Resource**

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of race, color, age, sex, religion, disability, or national origin.