



Frequently Asked Questions by Parents Barbara Carder – Hocking County



Q: What is 4-H?

A: 4-H is an educational youth development program offered to individuals age 5 to 19. Youth are involved in hands-on, experiential learning that allows *learning by doing*. All 4-H programs focus on active involvement and quality experiences, which stimulate lifelong learning of values and skills.

Q: What are the age/guidelines to become a 4-H member?

A: Eligibility for 4-H membership begins when a child has reached age 5 and is enrolled in kindergarten as of January 1 of the current year (Cloverbuds); membership to the 4-H club program begins when a child is at least age 8 and enrolled in 3rd grade as of January 1 of the current year. Ohio 4-H membership ends December 31 of the year in which an individual attains the age of 19. Membership begins when an eligible individual is enrolled in a club or group that is under the direction of a trained adult and within the scope of Ohio State University Extension.

Q: What is the history of 4-H?

A: 4-H began in Clark County, Ohio on January 15, 1902 when Mr. Albert Belmont Graham, the superintendent of the Springfield Township Schools, organized a meeting with some thirty boys and girls in the county courthouse basement. Given the success of Graham's "out-of-school education program," the Ohio State University created a plan to aid in the club's research through the use of the Agricultural Experiment Station and the College of Agriculture. In time, the Ohio State University's influence helped to establish additional youth agricultural clubs throughout Ohio. By 1905, there were over 2,000 youth within sixteen counties partaking in similar programs to that of the "original" Agricultural Club.

Q: What is the number one objective of 4-H?

A: To develop our youth into competent, caring, contributing young adults.

Q: Who administers the 4-H Program?

A: 4-H is part of Ohio State University Extension (OSUE). OSUE is cooperatively funded by our county commissioners, The Ohio State University, and the United States Department of Agriculture. The Ohio 4-H program is coordinated by County, Region and State 4-H Youth Development professionals, who are staff members of Ohio State University Extension.

Q: How many 4-H members are there in Ohio?

A: Over 300,000 Ohio youth are enrolled in 4-H youth development programs and activities.

Q: Are those all in 4-H clubs?

A: No. The 4-H program utilizes four primary delivery methods to educate youth. These methods include community clubs, school enrichment, special emphasis, and camping programs.

Q: What is a 4-H club?

A: 4-H members meet in an organized group of youth, under the direction of club advisors. The size of the club varies according to the ages of its members, meeting facilities available, number

of advisors available for club, and if the club has a designated specialty (such as livestock, cooking, sewing, shooting sports, etc.)

Q: Who are the club advisors?

The advisors for each club have been through a screening process conducted by OSU Extension. They have completed a fingerprint check by local law enforcement. Our advisors are volunteers dedicated to providing the best possible educational experience for our members, and we are very grateful for their hard work on behalf of our youth. Every year the advisors have several opportunities for training. Any offer to assist your child's advisor – bringing refreshments, picking up supplies, etc. – will be most appreciated by our hard-working advisors. Volunteers are an essential part of the overall 4-H program. Approximately 30,000 youth and adult volunteers participate in the Ohio 4-H program this year. 4-H volunteers have the opportunity to contribute their time, energies, talents, and knowledge to help develop 4-H youth in a positive, educational way.

Q: How often are club meetings held?

A: The schedule varies during the year. Most clubs hold two meetings per month during the six months preceding the county fair, and one meeting during the other six months of the year.

Q: What happens at a club meeting?

A: 4-H club meetings are the cornerstones of the 4-H experience for 4-H club members. Well-planned club meetings allow our youth to acquire new knowledge, share ideas, develop life skills from the leadership and decision-making opportunities given them, make new friends, and enjoy recreational activities. The typical club meeting outline consists of the business meeting (15 minutes), education/project work/demonstrations (45 minutes) and recreation/social (30 minutes). During the business portion of the meeting, parliamentary procedure is followed by the members to conduct any business needed. The educational portion is based on “learn by doing” and give members an opportunity to learn about their projects and the projects of other members. Members may be asked to conduct a demonstration, which is a “show & tell” presentation on the topic of their choice. The recreation portion of the meeting allows members to engage in a fun activity with the members of their club.

Q: What about a project?

A: 4-H offers learning experiences in more than 200 subject matter areas. Some of these subject matter are family life, photography, woodworking, shooting sports, livestock, health, aerospace science, bicycles, natural resources, safety, horticulture, sewing, and nutrition. Each club member enrolls in at least one project, which helps the member “Learn to do by doing” in an educational and fun setting. Therefore, project work is important to the development of the individual. It provides them with a sense of accomplishment and self-confidence.

A project is made up of three types of learning activities: hands-on activities (making, producing, practicing, observing, etc.); organized activities (demonstrations, workshops, field trips, camps, etc.); and leadership/citizenship activities (conducting, planning, assisting, informing, organizing, etc.)

Q: How do we help our child select an appropriate project?

A: Each year, Ohio 4-H publishes a *Family Guide* which lists the projects available. Near the front of the book, review the section titled *Understanding 4-H Projects*. Project descriptions follow that section. Near the back of the booklet, review the *4-H Project Selection Guide* because those pages provide information on projects appropriate to age of the member, the skill level of the project, etc.

Q: What is our monetary commitment?

A: Each club members pays a \$5 activity fee annually. The fee is paid to the 4-H Committee, which uses the fee to support the 4-H program with awards, trophies, and other program expenses. Each project that your child signs up for requires a project book (cost: \$5) every year. In addition, some livestock projects require a resource book (cost \$8 - \$12) but that book can be used throughout your child's 4-H career. Some clubs hold fundraising activities to offset these expenses.

Q: What is my responsibility as a parent?

A: Parental interest, involvement and encouragement play a major part in the success of our members. If parents are involved from the beginning of the child's 4-H experience, chances for a successful 4-H experience are significantly increased. Parents are encouraged to:

- Assist your child in selecting a 4-H project
- Read the project book your child receives, and look for ways to assist your child with the project. You are not to do the work, but guide and assist as needed.
- Provide transportation to each meeting and activity.
- Attend club meetings and activities with your child as often as possible. (This may vary depending on space at meeting facilities, etc.)
- Make sure your child takes the appropriate paperwork to each meeting – such as their member handbook (if applicable), paper, pens, etc.
- Assist your child in keeping written records on his/her 4-H work. This includes offices held, demonstrations given, awards received, community service completed, etc. This information will be very valuable when your child becomes old enough to apply for awards and scholarships.
- Offer to assist the club advisors with specific tasks, such as providing refreshments. It will be very much appreciated.

Q: How does our family receive program information?

A: The 4-H member receives information from their club advisor at meetings. Each county sends out newsletters, with some sent to advisors and some to families. Find out if you should receive a newsletter. When you do, post it on a bulletin board or other safe place for easy access and reference.

Q: Do we have access to a 4-H web site?

A: Yes! The state 4-H web site is <http://www.ohio4h.org>. Each county has a web site also. Insert the name of your county into this address: <http://countyname.osu.edu> for lots of great information about your local program.

Q: How will 4-H members participate in the county fair?

A: The county fair serves as a showcase for 4-H. If a member has a livestock project, he/she has the option of showing that animal in the livestock show during the fair.

Q: What other opportunities are there to exhibit a project?

A: Each county conducts project reviews. During the project reviews, each project is evaluated by a judge. Members bring the required items to that project review – such as project book, poster display, etc.

Q: What is a Skillathon?

A: Members with livestock projects are encouraged to attend the livestock skillathon held prior to the county fair. Note: some counties make skillathon participation mandatory. During the skillathon the member will progress through a number of “stations” where they will complete activities related to their project specie. For example, at one skillathon station they may be asked to label body parts, at the next they may be asked to match animal breeds, etc. Typically, the final stop is the interview table where they will present their project book and answer questions related to their project.

Q: What is Quality Assurance?

A: Completion of the Quality Assurance (QA) program is required for all 4-H members with market beef, swine, poultry, sheep, goats and lactating dairy cows and goats to show and/or sell at the Hocking County Fair. These guidelines are set by the Ohio Department of Agriculture. Each county offers this training, but in a variety of formats. Some offer countywide QA sessions, and some have members complete this requirement within their club.

Q: What awards/scholarships/opportunities are available for 4-H members?

A: Review the *Opportunities and Awards for Members* section of the Family Guide. This section, near the back of the booklet, lists awards and opportunities awaiting members. Some county level opportunities are:

- Honor Member (requires completion of a form listing member’s participation in events)
- Honor Club (requires completion of a form listing events completed by club)
- Junior Fair Board member
- 4-H Committee Youth Member
- Livestock Sale Committee Youth Member
- Camp Counselor

The following state 4-H trips are awarded to our teen members via an application / interview process. The applications ask for a history/record of the member’s 4-H career, so it is critical that a written record be kept throughout membership in 4-H.

- Ohio 4-H Teen Conference is a trip that requires a member to be at least age 14. It is held at the OSU Campus in February.
- State 4-H Leadership Camp is a camp that requires a member to be at least age 14. It is held at Camp Ohio in Utica at the end of June and/or the beginning of July.
- State 4-H Conservation Camp is a camp that requires a member to be at least age 14. It is held at Camp Ohio in Utica the end of June and/or the beginning of July.
- Washington Focus is a trip that requires a member to be at least age 14 and it is a bus trip with different stops on the way to Washington D.C. It is held during June or July.

- Sea Camp is a camp that requires a member to be at least age 13 and it is held at Kelly's Island, Lake Erie at the end of July and the beginning of August.
- Carving New Ideas Workshop is held at Camp Ohio in Utica in December for members ages 13-19.

Q: What is the 4-H motto?

A: "To Make the Best Better."

Q: What is the 4-H emblem?

A: The 4-H emblem is the four-leaf clover with the letter "H" on each leaf, standing for head, heart, hands, and health.

Q: What are the 4-H colors?

A: The 4-H colors are green and white. Green symbolizes nature's most common color and represents life, spring-time and youth. White symbolizes purity.

Q: What is the 4-H pledge?

A: The official 4-H pledge

I pledge:

My head to clearer thinking,

My heart to greater loyalty,

My hands to larger service and

My health to better living, for my Club, my Community, my Country and my World.