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# NEW YORK STATE 4-H Cloverbud Leader Handbook

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Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension

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## How to Use This Book

This handbook presents both background and practical information about the 4-H Youth Development Program, 4-H club activities and special events for the Cloverbud age group.

### Items to add to this handbook:

- If you are a 4-H club leader for youth who are beyond their Cloverbud years, you should also receive a “New York State 4-H Club Leader Handbook.”
- If you are Cloverbud leader, you should still have sections one and two from the “NYS 4-H Club Leader Handbook” inserted into this Handbook. Section One should be inserted between pages 4-5 and Section Two goes after page 33.

This book can be used as a self-training manual, a reference about 4-H events and activities or a resource to help you plan a well balanced 4-H club program. Here are some suggestions to get you started:

- ◆ **The 4-H Cloverbud Program: What’s it all about?** This section details the typical characteristics of the Cloverbud member and appropriate activities for this age group.
- ◆ **What is 4-H?** This section can help you to understand the 4-H purpose and mission. When you have questions or suggestions from members or parents about your club’s programming, refer to this section to determine whether their suggestions are compatible with the 4-H purpose and mission.
- ◆ **Cloverbuds in the 4-H Program: Questions & Answers** will guide you through policies related to forming a 4-H Cloverbud club.
- ◆ **Ready, Set, Go!** helps you prepare for your first two meetings, as well as create a plan for the year.
- ◆ **Recommendations and Resources for Cloverbud Leaders** offers suggestions for outside resources. Safety and Risk Management Procedures are also included.
- ◆ **Toolkit** includes some tools to help you as a leader, as well as information about finding more tools online.
- ◆ **Basic Facts about 4-H Clubs** contains general information.



# New York State 4-H Cloverbud Leader Handbook

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**Toolkit**

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- Tool CB-2      4-H Cloverbud Parent Participation Survey
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**Basic Facts about 4-H Clubs** (This topic is Section 2 of the NYS 4-H Club Leader Handbook. It has been inserted at the back of this book *only* for those leaders who are working solely with the Cloverbud age group.)

# The 4-H Cloverbud Program: *What's it all about?*

## **Cloverbuds - Very Special 4-H Members**

Cloverbuds, the youngest participants in the 4-H Club Program, are enthusiastic, curious, creative, robust and resilient young people who are growing physically, cognitively, socially and emotionally through a period of rapid and often uneven development. The 4-H Cloverbud Program has been designed to meet the very special needs of these 5 to 8 year olds.

Each child develops on his or her own timetable. It is very important that activities be tailored to their developmental levels so that all can experience success - the magic ingredient that allows them to blossom. For this reason, the 4-H Cloverbud Program, while focusing on the general developmental needs of 5 to 8 year olds, also provides a wide selection of activities so 4-H leaders can tailor the program to their club members.

4-H leaders foster youth development by creating positive learning environments that help members to meet four basic needs: *belonging, mastery, independence* and *generosity*.

The 4-H leader helps Cloverbuds to experience a sense of *belonging* by showing interest in them and what they do, actively listening to them and encouraging them to build on their innate abilities.

The 4-H leader helps Cloverbuds to experience a sense of *mastery* by offering opportunities to take on new challenges, learn new skills and apply these abilities in various situations. Leaders model and explain that failure and frustration is a natural part of the learning process - "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."

The 4-H leader helps Cloverbuds move toward *independence* by creating opportunities for leadership and self-discipline and by helping them to recognize the connection between independence and responsibility.

The 4-H leader helps Cloverbuds to extend their *generosity* through service to others.

## **The Purpose of the 4-H Cloverbud Program**

The overall purpose of the 4-H Cloverbud Program is to foster the development of life skills that are essential for the cognitive, social, emotional and physical maturation of 5- to 8-year-old children. Specifically, this program aims to provide participants with opportunities to:

1. Develop self understanding, social skills, decision-making skills, learning skills and physical skills;

2. Gain knowledge in the sciences, literature and the arts through the experiential (hands-on) learning process;
3. Develop positive attitudes about learning;
4. Develop on-going relationships with caring adults and older youth who serve as positive role models;
5. Explore family and community relationships;
6. Develop understanding of and appreciation for social and cultural diversity.

### Life Skills for Cloverbuds

Life skills are abilities, knowledge, attitudes and behaviors that must be learned for success and happiness. These skills are not learned all at once but are refined and reinforced throughout life. For 5 to 8 year olds, who will transition from middle to late childhood, it is particularly important to make major strides in the development of the five life skills described below:

1. **Self-understanding** - Each child is unique. Each has different interests, personality traits, skills, learning styles and temperaments. In order to expand and refine their understanding of "who I am," 5 to 8 year olds need to try new things to test themselves, build their base of experiences and begin to master skills. To help in this way, Cloverbud leaders need to:
  - nurture creativity and curiosity;
  - provide positive and specific feedback rather than generalized praise;
  - provide correction quietly, one-on-one, in a caring and consistent manner;
  - help members identify their own successes;
  - help members to see and appreciate how they are alike and different from other people.
2. **Social interaction** - Between the ages of 5 and 8, children increasingly want to be with other children. As they develop friendships, they become less self-centered and their need to be connected to others in a group strengthens. To enhance this social development, leaders should:
  - organize small group activities where Cloverbuds can talk and work with one another;
  - use dramatic play to help members understand how other people might feel or react;
  - provide opportunities for building communication skills, including listening skills;
  - help members learn how to cooperate, share and resolve conflicts;
  - take time to listen and visit casually with each young person.
3. **Decision-making** - To develop independence, a child needs to be able to make wise decisions and take positive actions. To initiate this learning process, Cloverbud leaders should:
  - create an environment where it is safe to test
  - decisions and make mistakes;

- help children think about the factors that influence the decisions they make;
  - give Cloverbuds opportunities to lead simple tasks and then progress to more difficult ones;
  - encourage members to overcome obstacles on their own;
  - motivate youth to accept responsibility and praise them when they complete leadership tasks.
4. **Learning to learn** - We all learn in a variety of ways: through seeing and observing, manipulating materials and experimenting, listening and reading. Cloverbuds are concrete thinkers. Ideally, they need real experiences on which to base their learning, but can expand their capacity to learn in other ways. Activities that involve the use of all five senses (or at least several of them) enhance learning. After working with the same group of children for a while, leaders will be able to recognize their different learning styles and, through guided reflection, can help them to understand how they learn.
5. **Mastering physical skills** - Children in this age group are full of energy and need activities that are just that - *active!* Learning experiences that enable members to practice both small muscle (writing) and large muscle (ball catching) skills will use up some of that energy while fostering physical development. When doing crafts, expect the work place to get messy and be aware that, for this age group, the process is more important than the product.

## 4-H Cloverbud Activities

Cloverbud activity guides focus on eight broad program areas. Meetings foster the development of the life skills described above, while teaching information and skills related to a particular program area. The activities are appropriate to the developmental level of this age group and they apply the 4-H “learning by doing” method. The activities have also been “kid tested” - so, you can be sure they will work well. While you are welcome to incorporate your own ideas and use your own creativity, you are advised to rely on these pre-tested 4-H materials for the bulk of your club program.

### Cloverbuds Now - 4-H’ers Forever!

The 4-H Cloverbud Program provides an exciting introduction to the 4-H club experience. Cloverbud leaders play a critical role in fostering the development of the youngest 4-H’ers as individuals and as 4-H members. When they move into the next phase of the 4-H Club Program, they will be ready to take on the challenges of greater self-governance and longer-term project work. 4-H club opportunities will grow with them throughout their elementary and high school years. Many 4-H alumni become 4-H leaders as adults - once a 4-H’er, always a 4-H’er!



# Cloverbuds in the 4-H Club Program: *Questions & Answers*

## **When is a child old enough to join a 4-H club?**

A child must turn 5 by January 1 of the current 4-H year and must have been enrolled in Kindergarten at the beginning of the school year to participate as a Cloverbud member.

Children continue to participate as Cloverbuds through age 8. A third grader who turns 9 during the club year may choose to enroll either as a Cloverbud participant or as a regular 4-H club member. The determination must be made at the beginning of the club year by consensus of a parent/guardian and leader.

## **Can a 5 to 8 year old join any 4-H club?**

Ideally 5 to 8 year olds participate in a Cloverbud group, but if this is not possible, they may join a club with a wide range of ages. Parents and leaders need to ensure that activities are appropriate for their developmental level and adequate adult supervision is available.

## **How many children are needed to form a new Cloverbud Club?**

In New York State, a club must have at least five youth. Cloverbud clubs should not have more than 16 members (no more than 12 youth for 5 and 6 year olds). When there are not enough children to form a club, some counties permit children to participate as "independent members" under the leadership of a parent or guardian, until group size requirements are met.



## **How are 4-H Cloverbud clubs different from other 4-H clubs?**

- 1. Cloverbud clubs do not conduct formal business meetings or elect officers.** At this age, children are not yet ready to fulfill the responsibilities of club officers and require much more adult guidance when making group decisions. However, a structured routine is important to this age group. Starting each meeting with the same opening ritual, roll call and pledges to the American and 4-H flags provides structure while introducing the children to some of the elements of a business meeting. Use of a closing ritual is also recommended.

- Members can be assigned an “office of the day” to help conduct these rituals. This prepares Cloverbuds for future roles as club officers
2. **The educational component of a Cloverbud Club meeting consists of activities rather than projects.** A Cloverbud activity focuses on developing a single concept and/or skill. For example, the children might plant a simple dish garden and learn that it will need sun, water and food to stay healthy.
  3. **Cloverbud clubs do not conduct nor participate in competitive events.** Children age 5-8 are sensitive to criticism and do not accept failure well. Their development is uneven making it nearly impossible to “level the playing field,” a necessity if competition is to be fair. **For these reasons, participation in competitive activities is developmentally inappropriate for Cloverbuds.**
  4. **Cloverbud clubs handle their finances differently than other clubs.** For safety reasons, Cloverbuds do not bring money for dues or supplies to club meetings and they do not conduct door-to-door fundraising activities. They may, however, participate in group fundraising events supervised by adults, such as a bake sale. Parents will decide on how club expenses (activity supplies, refreshments, etc.) will be handled when the club is organized.
  5. **Cloverbud clubs follow a set of program guidelines based on developmental appropriateness.** While Cloverbud activities relate to the same set of program areas as older members, they are designed to suit the cognitive, social, emotional and physical development of children within this age group. That often involves using different kinds of equipment or providing more adult supervision.

#### **When, where and how often do 4-H Cloverbud clubs meet?**

Clubs can meet in homes, churches, community buildings, schools or anywhere else that would provide a safe location for children to gather. Each club decides when it will meet and how often. Most 4-H clubs meet at least once a month, but young children need to be involved to sustain interest, so meetings once a week or every other week are recommended.

#### **How are parents involved in a 4-H Cloverbud club?**

Parents are expected to support their children by attending as many meetings as possible, participating in activities with their children and encouraging their children to extend their 4-H activities at home.

#### **How many leaders are needed to start a new Cloverbud club?**

A minimum of two adult leaders is required to start a 4-H club of any age group (three adults if Cloverbud membership exceeds 12) and at least two adults must be present at every 4-H meeting and activity.

#### **How can I start a new 4-H Cloverbud club?**

The first step is to meet with a 4-H representative and the parents of at least five children who want to form a 4-H Cloverbud Program. During the meeting, the 4-H representative will help the group make initial decisions and plan its first year. Agenda items include:

- Meeting site(s), frequency and schedule
- Parent/guardian involvement in 4-H

- Selection of activities
- Tips for conducting club meetings
- Club finances and fundraising
- Date(s) for New Leader Orientation

After participation in the New Leader Orientation program, you will be ready to conduct your first meeting with the children.

## **Ready, Set, Go!**

### **Getting Ready: Planning is the Key to Success**

Planning a yearly calendar will help everyone integrate 4-H into their schedules. While adults and youth should work together to develop the plan, the leader should present children with options that adults have approved.

Parents and leaders will want to review a variety of Cloverbud activity plans before developing their calendar. The 4-H office has county, state and national Cloverbud resources available. Before discussing possible activities, the club leader should survey adults to find possible project leaders. The yearly plan should balance learning activities with opportunities for community service and social/recreational activities. A sample Cloverbud yearly planning calendar is available on the Web at <http://nys4h.cce.cornell.edu>.

### **Sample Club Calendar**

#### **Club Goals for the Year:**

1. Try 3 new things we never did before.
2. Do something to help our community.
3. Make every member feel included and important.
4. Have fun!

Month/Date	Program, Event, or Activity	People Responsible
<u>September</u> Fri., 9/14	<b>General Meeting, 7 pm</b> Member/parent social and orientation to 4-H; 4-Hers select activities for Oct./ Nov.	Joan (Organizational Leader) & Lisa (Teen Leader)
Fri. 9/28	<b>Activity Meeting, 5 pm</b> "Trees are Terrific" (lesson & leaf prints)	Project Leaders - Eric (Parent) & Manuel (Retired Volunteer)
<u>October</u> Sat. 10/6	<b>Field Trip, 10 AM - 2 PM</b> Apple Picking Picnic	Joan & Parents
Fri., 10/19	<b>Activity Meeting, 5 pm</b> "Snack Attack" (lesson & apple snack recipe selected by members)	Eric & Barb
<u>November</u> Fri., 11/9	<b>Activity Meeting, 5 pm</b> "Exploring the Community"	Donna (Parent) & Manuel
Mon. 11/19	<b>Community Service, 4 pm</b> Meet at Salvation Army (assemble Thanksgiving Food Baskets)	Paula & Nancy

**Encourage full participation from everyone.** Some parents will not be able to lead activities or attend club meetings, but there are other ways to help. Consider using an interest survey and/or activity sign-up sheet to encourage commitment and to keep track of everyone's interests and availability. A sample parent participation survey is available on the Web at <http://nys4h.cce.cornell.edu>

**Chartering your club** - The Club Charter identifies a group as an organized 4-H club that is authorized to use the 4-H name and emblem for educational purposes. The Charter stays with the club as long as it is in existence. Charter application requirements can be found on page 1 of the "4-H Club Secretary's Handbook" and the application itself is on page 2 of that book.

**Note:** Leaders can use the "4-H Club Secretary's Handbook" to record attendance and other club information that would be kept by the elected secretary in a group of older members.

### Getting Set: Your first two meetings

It is very important to get off to a good start. There is a lot to be accomplished during the first two meetings of a new club. Everyone should leave these meetings feeling that they had a good time, understood and contributed to what went on and know what will happen next. You may want to arrange for an experienced leader or 4-H teen to attend these meetings and provide guidance. A sample Cloverbud meeting planner is available on the Web <http://nys4h.cce.cornell.edu>. Adapt these sample meeting plans to suit your club's situation:

#### Sample plan for first meeting

1. Invite parents to attend with their children. To accommodate working parents, this meeting will probably need to be held in the evening - so keep it very short.
2. Wear a nametag and introduce yourself.

3. Ask Cloverbuds and parents to make and decorate nametags. If everyone knows one another very well play an "ice breaker" game instead.
4. Give a brief, simple explanation of the Cloverbud program.
5. Show the 4-H clover or give each of the children a 4-H button and explain what the H's stand for.
6. Teach everyone how to say the 4-H Pledge and talk about its meaning.
7. Help the children choose a name for their club. Your club's name should be unique within your county, should include "4-H" and should be able to stand the test of time. While this is happening, parents can fill out enrollment forms and any other records required by the 4-H office.
8. Serve healthy refreshments.
9. While everyone munches, describe two or three activities (pre-selected as options at the planning meeting) the Cloverbuds might enjoy.
10. Help the children decide which of the activities they would like to do at their third meeting.
11. Announce the date, time and place of the next meeting. Explain what the club will do at that meeting and what (if anything) the members will need to bring.
12. Ask for a volunteer to bring snacks.

Before everyone leaves, check the forms filled out by the parents and make sure you have an accurate list of the children, their addresses and phone numbers.

#### **Sample plan for second meeting**

1. ***Pre-meeting warm-up:*** As members gather, involve them in a guessing game, enlist their help to set out snacks or involve them in another activity that will allow for others to join in as they arrive.
2. ***Introduce the opening ritual:*** American and 4-H Pledges, roll call. Explain that from now on, members will take turns leading these parts of the meeting. Finish the opening ritual by introducing guests and announcing the program for the next meeting and what members will need to bring.
3. ***Program:*** one or two activities led by leaders, parents or 4-H teens
4. ***Recreation and Refreshments:*** End the meeting with games and/or songs. Try to select games that can continue if some members leave earlier than others. Serve refreshments at the beginning or end of the meeting.



## You're Ready - You're Set - Now Go! - Tips for working with your Cloverbuds

### Be prepared for each meeting

You have already set up a plan for the year, but it is also important to have a plan for each meeting. Leaders should arrive at the meeting place well before the scheduled meeting time to set up and put out supplies, so that everything is ready to go when the members arrive.

### Use effective teaching techniques

1. Get members to use as many of their five senses as possible.

Research has shown that the more senses a learner uses, the greater the retention. Remember this adage: "When I hear, I forget; when I see [and hear] I remember; when I do [and see and hear] I understand." So, explain and demonstrate and have members manipulate the things they are learning about.

2. Include both cooperative and individual learning experiences.

In *cooperative learning*, members work in small groups and depend on each other to accomplish a goal. Cooperative learning encourages the development of social interaction skills and enhances self-esteem.

A leader can create a cooperative learning situation by giving each member a vital piece of information that the entire group must know before it can succeed. Because members must interact with each other to share the information they have, social interaction skills are necessary for group success.

When members make something, this is *individual learning*. Although the members are in the same room, each works independently, trying to do his/her own best work.

Having the opportunity to experience both independence and interdependence helps children develop a sense of self-worth (“I am capable; I am needed by others.”)

### 3. Follow all steps of the Experiential Learning Model.

Experiential learning is simply learning through experience. But, it takes more than just *doing* something. Learning requires *thinking* about what you did and remembering it in a way that will help you to use it in a new situation. By asking questions that guide children through a logical thought process, you help them to learn from their 4-H experiences. Follow *all* the steps illustrated in the model shown on the next page.

**Example:** The leader wants the members to adopt two basic food safety practices. This is how she applies the experiential learning model:

Experience - The children need to do something *hands-on*. In this example, the club members make cheese and apple snacks; they start by washing the apples and end by sealing the leftover cheese in plastic wrap.

Share (thoughts)- As they eat their snacks, the leader encourages sharing: Would you like to make these at home for your family? What is the first thing you should do? Giving each member a chance to talk, the steps used to make the snacks are reviewed.

Process - We want children to think about what they did and why. The leader asks: Why did we wash and dry the apples? Why did we wrap up the cheese?

Generalize - We want children to learn how their work might apply to other things. The leader says: So, we learned *two ways we can help make food safe* to eat. What were they again?

Apply - Do you think other foods should be washed the same way as the apples? Can you name some? What should you do with the food you have left over from dinner?

**Activity Record Sheets** can be used to reinforce reflection and application and introduce Cloverbuds to record keeping, an important aspect of 4-H project work. While young Cloverbuds (5 and 6 year olds) have difficulty writing, they can draw pictures of their experiences or dictate to an adult or teen, who fills in their answers on the record sheet. Older Cloverbuds can probably write their own records, but may need some help figuring out what they want to say.

### 4. Ensure that activities are developmentally appropriate

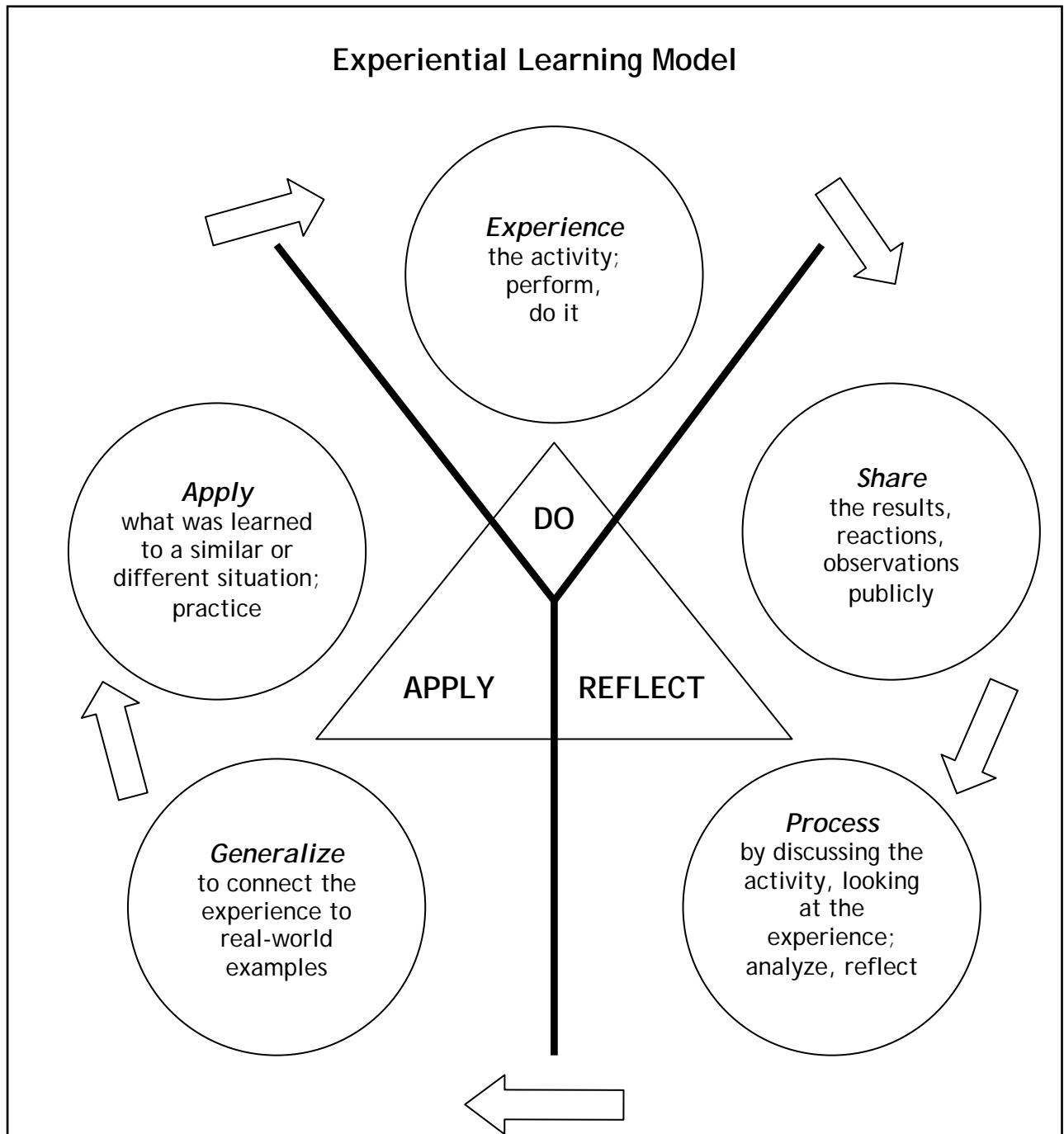
A “developmentally appropriate” program is one that is based on the general characteristics of an age group *and* adapts to



meet the individual needs of each child. The most reliable way to find activities that are based on the general characteristics of the age group is to select from the many 4-H Cloverbud resources that are available to you through the 4-H office or through the National 4-H Council. However, you will still need to adjust these activities to the developmental levels of your own members.



# Experiential Learning Model



## Create positive learning environments

In general, positive learning environments for 5 to 8 year olds are characterized by:

- ☺ Youth involvement in planning - When children help to select their own activities they are more likely to maintain interest and to integrate new learning with what they already know.
- ☺ Frequent change of activities in response to children's needs - Offering a broad spectrum of learning activities keeps children interested and involved. Vary the pace of activities; don't expect members to be engaged in one type of activity for too long.
- ☺ Encouragement of youth interaction - Children talk as they learn and learn best when they can practice, demonstrate, explain and apply their learning. With guidance, children can learn to respect and understand other people, to negotiate, and apply rules of living.
- ☺ Interaction with positive role models - As children begin to look outside the home for guidance and support, adults and older become influential sources of new information, skills and points of view about life. They also have a tremendous influence on the way children feel about who they are and what they can do. Saying something positive to each child at each meeting is one way of bolstering self-confidence.
- ☺ Positive guidance and discipline - Children of this age benefit from adults who use positive approaches to help them behave constructively and solve interpersonal conflicts. Teach skills for appropriate social behavior, such as taking turns, dividing and sharing resources and working cooperatively.

## Finally - Have Fun!

4-H should be fun for your Cloverbuds and for you. One of the most important outcomes of participation in 4-H is a feeling that learning is fun. So, think about how your Cloverbuds will view the planned activities. If they seem tedious or "schooly" make some changes that will stimulate curiosity or a sense of mystery; increase the amount of action or interaction; use community resources to create a break from the usual meeting routine. When 4-H is fun and members are involved in doing and discovering, they'll learn, and so will you.

Keep this important point in mind - **you** are the most essential ingredient of a successful 4-H club. When you are having fun and enjoy the sense of discovery that comes out of experiencing new things your members will absorb your enthusiasm.

## Because 5 & 6 year-olds are like this:

### *Physically*

- ◇ Muscular coordination and control is uneven and incomplete. Large muscles are easier to control than small muscles.
- ◇ Able to handle tools and materials more skillfully than during preschool years.

### *Mentally*

- ◇ Ask questions and answer them in literal terms.
- ◇ Define things by their use, i.e., a pencil is for writing.
- ◇ Most are just learning letters and words. By six, most can read words or combinations of words.
- ◇ Short interest span, sometimes as little as 5-10 minutes.

### *Emotionally*

- ◇ Sensitive to criticism and don't accept failure well.
- ◇ Strong desire for affection and like adult attention.
- ◇ Cooperative and helpful; they want to please.
- ◇ Get upset with changes in plans and routine.

### *Socially*

- ◇ Developing cooperative play. Prefer to work in small groups of two or three. Still like to focus on their own work and play.
- ◇ May begin to pair up and have a "best friend", however, the "best friend" may change frequently.
- ◇ Mother (or parent) is still social focus as prime caregiver; however may "fall in love" with kindergarten teacher.
- ◇ Like being part of and around family.
- ◇ Can engage in group discussions.
- ◇ May have a need to be "first", to "win", be the "best", and may be bossy.
- ◇ Can be unkind to others, but extremely sensitive to criticism of self.

## Their leaders should:

- ◇ Plan activities that use large motor skills and introduce fine motor skills, one at a time.
- ◇ Plan lots of physical activity with each meeting.
- ◇ Provide projects that don't require perfection.
  
- ◇ Plan active learning around concrete objects.
- ◇ Avoid a lot of paper and pencil activities that require writing.
- ◇ Give instructions verbally and visually. Don't expect them to read.
- ◇ Plan a series of small activities with physical exercise in between rather than one longer more intense session.
- ◇ Provide lots of materials and mediums for learning, (i.e., paper, paint, brushes, glue, building blocks, games, puzzles).
  
- ◇ Provide lots of encouraging words for effort.
- ◇ Provide lots of opportunities for adult interaction with children.
- ◇ Let children help in "adult-like" ways, such as setting up an activity.
- ◇ Give clear description of what your activity or schedule will be and stick to it.
  
- ◇ Organize projects and activities that involve two or three children. If there is a larger group, break activities into sections so that only two or three are involved at one time.
- ◇ Help children develop friendships, through learning to share, to take turns, to follow rules, and to be trustworthy (not tattling).
- ◇ Organize activities with high adult/child ratios.
  
- ◇ Select activities that involve or focus on the family.
  
- ◇ Avoid competitive activities that select a "winner" or "best person".

## Because 7 & 8 year-olds are like this:

### *Physically*

- ◇ Learn best if physically active.
- ◇ Still inept at small muscle control, so will have difficulty with some fine motor activities such as gluing, cutting, hammering nails, bouncing balls, etc., but have improved at large muscle activities.
- ◇ May repeat an activity over and over before mastering it.

### *Mentally*

- ◇ Most children will be able to read and comprehend simple instructions.
- ◇ Beginning to understand the perspectives of others.
- ◇ Humor takes on new meaning.
- ◇ Enormous curiosity and delight in discovery.
- ◇ Are able to collect, sort, organize, and classify.
- ◇ Can recognize some similarities and differences
- ◇ Can do some abstract thinking, but learn best through active, concrete methods.

### *Emotionally*

- ◇ Increased awareness of themselves, more sensitive to others.
- ◇ Enjoy being part of the family.
- ◇ Worry about failure or being criticized.
- ◇ Will try themselves out on others to see how they are accepted.
- ◇ May claim tasks are too hard rather than admit to being scared.

### *Socially*

- ◇ Value adult interaction, and may actually be more polite to adults.
- ◇ Have high expectations of parents and adults and are critical when parents "mess up".
- ◇ More outgoing, curious, and talkative.
- ◇ May be moody, but less likely to direct negative feelings toward others.
- ◇ Begin to internalize adult feelings toward religion, ethnic groups, and money.
- ◇ Begin to develop friendships that involve sharing secrets and possessions.
- ◇ Begin to choose same-sex playmates and develop play groups.

## Their leaders should:

- ◇ Avoid long periods of sitting and listening or just watching so members are active between explanations.
- ◇ Provide opportunities to practice skills, but use projects that can be completed successfully by beginners.
- ◇ Can introduce *some* written assignments and activities. Give most instructions verbally and visually.
- ◇ Encourage projects that can be done over and over in different ways.
- ◇ Encourage children to develop or make collections and introduce other activities that, require sorting, organizing, or classifying.
- ◇ Guide the children in reflecting on their learning experiences but make sure that the experiences themselves are very "hands-on."
- ◇ Involve them in doing things for others.
- ◇ Have them make gifts for family members.
- ◇ Provide lots of adult encouragement and praise.
- ◇ Be sensitive when teaching a new concept or skill that a child may resist.
- ◇ Introduce the "art of social graces". Teaching of table manners and other social niceties will be more accepted.
- ◇ Select some learning activities that stimulate conversation and others that involve the child's curiosity and creative abilities.
- ◇ Use a variety of songs, rhythms, stories, and comics to help socialize the group.
- ◇ Promote activities that appreciate and emphasize diversity of families/lifestyles.
- ◇ Children will enjoy naming their group or "coin" phrases to describe their activities.
- ◇ Activities will be more successful if children can be grouped in same-sex groups.

## Recommendations and Resources for Cloverbud Leaders

### **Increase Opportunities as Members Mature**

As you begin to work with your new club, most activities should be conducted at your regular meeting site. Young Cloverbuds need the security of a familiar place that is close to home and a predictable routine. But once they become comfortable, your club should begin to participate in community and countywide events and activities. While each county has its own unique schedule of 4-H events and activities, two that are recommended for all 4-H clubs are community service and public presentation. Many counties also provide opportunities for Cloverbuds to participate in the county fair or other exhibitions.

**Community service** - Helping others helps to build self-esteem. 4-H emphasizes community service to foster both personal development and participatory citizenship. To be truly meaningful, community service activities must meet a real need that exists in your community. Your members must be able to understand that need *and* how their actions can help to meet it. In general, the younger the child, the "closer to home" the "need situation" must be to be understood. Since much of their thinking and activity is still very home-centered, community service activities that help families or other children would be most appropriate. They could put a Thanksgiving basket together for a poor family, collect toys for an orphanage at holiday time or adopt a grandmother, for example.

**Public Presentations** - The 4-H Public Presentation Program introduces young people to public speaking. Starting with a simple "show-and-tell," members progress to demonstrations, illustrated talks and other forms of presentation. This experience helps them to put thought and action together and to express themselves clearly, accurately and confidently.

The youngest Cloverbuds (5 and 6 year-olds) participate in an informal self-expression experience designed to help them feel comfortable speaking to a small group of peers and adults. This takes place at the club level and sometimes at a community 4-H event. Older Cloverbuds may be introduced to some of the elements of a more structured demonstration. The objective is to get them on their feet and behind a table before they reach the highly self-conscious pre-adolescence phase of development.

**Fairs and Exhibitions** - The County Fair and other exhibitions provide opportunities for 4-H members to display their 4-H work and be recognized for their accomplishments. Often Cloverbud clubs are encouraged to create a display that highlights the club's activities.

Non-animal Cloverbud exhibit classes are usually quite inclusive but may specify a limit on the number of items that an individual member can display. Cloverbuds may be permitted to participate in “exhibition only” classes with animals as defined in the “New York State 4-H Animal Science Cloverbud Policy and Procedure” and the “New York State 4-H Horse Program Cloverbud Policy and Procedure.”

In any Cloverbud exhibition, the members are participating for experience only and will receive a standard award not based on performance.

### **Enrich Your Program with People**

It is obviously important for leaders to closely involve parents in club activities, but there are many other people who could enrich the experience of your 4-H members: grandparents and other seniors, older siblings, college students, members of community groups such as a gardening club or hobby group, volunteer firefighters, etc.

These community members can be asked to lead activities in the company of an enrolled volunteer. Another good resource for Cloverbud clubs are *Junior Leaders* (or “Teen Leaders”), who partner with adults to provide leadership for 4-H clubs and countywide 4-H activities. Depending on age and experience, a junior leader can serve as a general assistant, teach a project, mentor individual members, coordinate activities or assume almost any other 4-H leadership role under the supervision of an adult.

Involving junior leaders in your club program not only “lightens the load” for you, it also adds a spark of energy and enthusiasm provides role models for your members and gives the teens a valuable opportunity to practice their leadership skills.

To identify teens that would like a leadership experience, contact one of the teen club leaders or a 4-H staff member.

### **Use Community Resources**

Your local government, school district and various community organizations and businesses can be assets for your 4-H club. Check the community calendar in your local newspaper, the library bulletin board and local recreation departments for upcoming events. Think of ways your members might get involved either as a club or with their own families.

Some stores provide discounts or free items like cardboard boxes, empty jugs, etc. to youth group leaders. Carry your 4-H Leader card (available from your local 4-H office) and ask.

## **Communication - an Important Two-way Street**

You will be receiving regular communications and special mailings from the 4-H office. Often they will contain registration instructions for upcoming events. Occasionally staff will request information for reporting purposes. The information you provide is important and submitting it on time eliminates the need for duplicate mailings or phone calls that needlessly waste time and money.

The two busiest times for paperwork are the beginning of the school year and the end of the 4-H program year. Be on the lookout for:

- a. **Annual reenrollment packets** - While the reenrollment process and local deadline dates may vary from county to county, **all New York State 4-H volunteers and members must reenroll each year to continue participation into the next 4-H club year.** Your county may have an enrollment deadline for new members.
- b. **Project completion (or enrollment, or member participation) reports** - Regardless of what it is called in your county, you will be asked to report the activities and programs of your club.
- c. **Seal of Achievement application** - Information about the 4-H Club Seal of Achievement and the required form can be found on pages 1 and 2 of the **4-H Club Secretary's Handbook.** While the application will not come in the mail, the 4-H office may request that it be submitted with other year-end forms. So, look for any mention of it in year-end mailings.

### **Become Familiar with Safety and Risk Management Procedures**

Cloverbuds are anxious to try new activities, learn, and prove their knowledge, but lack the judgment and skills to be safe. The "Safety Guidelines for Working with Cloverbuds" provides recommendations for specific programs and situations. Specific safety guidelines for safety when dealing with animal projects, cooking activities, bike safety, woodworking and other typical Cloverbud activities are all available at this Web site.

Regardless of how cautious we are, there is always some risk that a child might get hurt while participating in a 4-H activity. Cornell Cooperative Extension provides accident insurance for all **enrolled** 4-H members and volunteers. This insurance acts as excess coverage. Cornell Cooperative Extension's liability insurance also provides excess coverage for volunteers.

It is important for parents to know the exact nature of all activities in which their children participate including any risks that may be involved. Cornell Cooperative Extension uses two types of forms to inform parents:

- **Permission/Medical Release Forms** serve two purposes: they indicate the parent/guardian's consent to allow their children to participate in an Extension-sponsored event and indicate the parent/guardian's permission to have their children receive medical treatment in the event of an accident or injury.
- **Acknowledgement of Risk Forms** are used for activities that pose definable hazards (e.g. equitation, water sports, etc.). The parent/guardian



acknowledges that he/she has been advised that there is some risk and they are still permitting their child to participate in the event or activity.

If your club will be conducting or participating in any special activities away from the usual meeting site or that pose more than usual risks, contact a 4-H staff member to find out if and how either of these forms should be used.

## Safety Guidelines for Working with Cloverbuds

**Adult/youth ratios** - New York State Law requires that a *minimum* of *two adults* be present at all 4-H meetings and activities. (In case of an accident or emergency one adult can supervise the children while the other deals with the problem. This also offers protection for youth and adults.) Additional supervision is required when working with cloverbuds. For groups of five to eight year olds a third adult is required if the group exceeds twelve children. When using tools or equipment (powers tools and equipment are not allowed) a 1:1 ratio should be maintained with five and six year-olds, a 1:3 ratio with seven and eight year-olds *who have demonstrated their ability to work safely in a less structured environment*.

**Animal Science** - The purpose of animal science projects for young cloverbuds is to provide educational experiences that inspire both an understanding of, and a respect for, animal life. Direct contact with live animals is an indispensable aspect of these experiences. Such contact not only has a direct teaching role, but is also a powerful motivator that stimulates young people to ask questions and drives them to learn more about domestic animals and themselves. Large animals such as hogs and steers, etc. are not recommended. The guidelines pertaining to specific animals shown on the following pages seek to optimize both the education and safety of these children. Even the best guidelines are no substitute for sound judgment. Activities that endanger a child or an animal in any situation must be recognized and prevented by responsible adult supervisors. Therefore, when working with live animals of any size a one-to-one adult to youth ratio is recommended for most situations. More details are provided in the NYS 4-H Animal Science Cloverbud Policy and Procedure and the NYS 4-H Horse Program Cloverbud Policy and Procedure available from your 4-H Extension Educator. These recommendations are located in the NYS 4-H Club Management Notebook for Staff.

**Ownership and Exhibition** of animals require responsibility, skills, and experience. Full responsibility for an animal should be preceded by a period of learning about the animal and closely supervised direct contact so the child can become acquainted with both the animal and how it should be handled. The Cloverbud years are ideal for this type of learning.

Cloverbuds may be permitted to participate in "exhibition only" classes with animals as defined in the New York State 4-H Animal Science Cloverbud Policy and Procedure and the New York State 4-H Horse Program Cloverbud Policy and Procedure. Each county must ultimately decide if they have the resources to support programs for the cloverbud age group since "exhibition only" experiences have special requirements to fit the cloverbud age group.



**Cattle** - Cloverbud activities must be closely supervised. Feeding, watering, and some grooming are appropriate for this age because they involve measuring, physical activity, and stimulate immediate positive responses from the animal that members can enjoy and remember. Sole responsibility for cattle ownership, training, grooming, milking, and showing is inappropriate for cloverbuds. A cloverbud may share the responsibility for raising calves. Leading of large cattle is not recommended for Cloverbud youth. Cloverbuds are allowed to exhibit calves born between the dates of March 1 and May 30<sup>th</sup> of the current year.

**Equine-** A 1:6 adult to youth ratio is recommended when cloverbuds are in a club setting. When working with Equines, a 1:1 ratio of adult to youth is recommended for most situations.

**Riding Equine** - Cloverbud youth may ride in lead line, longe line, and walk/trot or jog situations, when they have adequately demonstrated the "on the ground" skills (safely and cautiously, lead, groom, move around the animal) necessary to work safely with equines and show respect for the equine, due to the potential danger the youth could be in if they do not demonstrate these skills. The NYS 4-H Horse Program Cloverbud Policy and Procedure including the "On the Ground Skills" Evaluation Form and the "Riding Level" Evaluation Form is available from your 4-H Extension Educator for volunteers willing to be trained in the use of the forms. These forms are located in the NYS 4-H Club Management Notebook for Staff. These documents provide more details about working with cloverbud members and horses.

Lead line and longe line - generally appropriate for children in grades K or one.

Walk/trot or jog - generally appropriate for children in grades two and three.

Cantering and loping - *not appropriate* for cloverbud children.

Driving - *not appropriate* for a cloverbud child, *except* as a passenger in a cart with a knowledgeable adult who is over eighteen years of age. Driving horses requires much hand and eye coordination, quick reflexes, keen judgment, and decision-making skills that are beyond the capacity of this audience.

Ground rail - Any over fences activities would generally be inappropriate for cloverbuds, with the exception of ground rail classes. Ground rail classes are not cross rail classes. Make sure that those working with this audience know the difference.

Showmanship at Halter, Trail, Drill/Parade, Draft Equines, Bareback - *not appropriate* for cloverbuds.

**Small stock: sheep, goats, feeder pigs and llamas** - In addition to the feeding, grooming, and other activities suggested as part of supervised contact experience with the larger domestic animals (see cattle and equines), cloverbuds can begin with a very young lamb, goat kid, or piglet and can raise and train these animals under the supervision of their parents, guardians, and leaders. Since these animals are smaller than the children at the beginning, the children can establish

dominance and allow their animal handling skills to grow with the animal. The sole responsibility for animal ownership, training, grooming and showing of mature breeding animals (rams, ewes, does, bucks, sows, and boars) is inappropriate for cloverbuds in any setting. A cloverbud may share the responsibility for raising llamas or young market (sheep, goats, and feeder pig) animals.

**Rabbits/cavies and other small pets** - Cloverbud activities may be designed that provide children with closely supervised contact. Feeding, watering, handling and some grooming, are appropriate for 5-8 year olds because they involve measuring, physical activity, and stimulate immediate positive responses from the animal that students can enjoy and remember. In addition, cloverbuds may own, raise and train these animals under the supervision of their parent, guardians and leaders. Since these animals are smaller than children, the children can establish dominance and allow their animal handling skills to grow. The sole responsibility for animal ownership, training, grooming and showing of any animals that can escape from a child's grasp are inappropriate for cloverbuds. A cloverbud may share the responsibility for raising rabbits, cavies, and other small pets.

**Poultry** - Cloverbud activities may be designed that provide children with closely supervised contact. Feeding, watering, handling and some grooming, are appropriate for 5-8 year olds because they involve measuring, physical activity, and stimulate immediate positive responses from the animal that students can enjoy and remember. In addition, cloverbuds can begin with very young birds (bantams, broilers or layers) and raise and train these animals under the supervision of their parents, guardians and leaders. Since these animals are smaller than the children, the children can establish dominance and allow their animal handling skills to grow with the animal. The sole responsibility for animal ownership, training, grooming and showing of large mature breeding animals (roosters, hens, ducks, geese, turkeys, etc.) that can escape from a child's grasp are inappropriate for cloverbuds. Activities involving larger breeds (such as Ostrich and Emu) are inappropriate for cloverbuds in any setting. A cloverbud may share the responsibility for raising poultry animals.

**Dogs** -Cloverbud activities may be designed that provide children with closely supervised contact. Feeding, watering, handling and some grooming, are appropriate for 5-8 year olds because they involve measuring, physical activity, and stimulate immediate positive responses from the animal that students can enjoy and remember. In addition, cloverbuds can learn to give dogs simple basic obedience commands. However, because dogs come in many shapes, sizes and temperaments, the sole responsibility for animal ownership, obedience training,

grooming and showing of dogs are inappropriate for cloverbuds. Although puppies are small, they are difficult to handle, even for adults. The primary responsibility for training a puppy should be reserved for children ages 8 and older. Even then, special care should be taken to ensure that the child is matched with an animal of appropriate size, temperament and physical ability. A cloverbud may share the responsibility for raising dogs.

Special care should be taken to ensure that the child is matched with animals that are appropriate for the size, strength, and maturity of that child. With these small animals, attention must be paid to both the child's safety and the well-being of the animal. Improperly handled dogs can nip, rabbits can scratch, and poultry can peck or pull hair. Cloverbuds are still learning how living things differ from toys that move and still need help learning to be gentle and cautious with all animals.



Animals are excellent for all ages, especially adults, but for cloverbuds they represent the opportunity to learn how to be responsible for all aspects of caring for another. Such lessons can be the first step in learning to care for larger animals and other people.

**Bicycle Safety** - Youth in grades K-three are beginning to explore their world by tricycles, scooters, and bicycles. They generally ride along sidewalks and in driveways at relatively slow speeds. They have no concept of traffic or hazards. The most common type of crash with a motor vehicle occurs as a result of an unexpected conflict with traffic, such as riding out into the street from a driveway or sidewalk.

Cloverbuds should be developing basic handling skills such as balancing, stopping, and starting a bicycle. Basic concepts such as why it is important to obey traffic laws, a bicycle is a vehicle, stop before entering traffic, and wearing a helmet at all times should be addressed at this grade level. Videos and project materials that can be adapted for this program are available.

**Horticulture** - Follow the recommendations given in *Gardening with Children, Step by Step*, available through the Horticulture Department of Cornell University. Cloverbuds should not sharpen tools or handle fertilizer. Use smaller tools that are tailored for children's small hands. Do rototilling in the absence of the children.

**Nutritional Sciences - Safety Guidelines for Cloverbuds Involved in Food Preparation:**

Independent use - Cloverbuds can use tools without sharp edges such as:

- measuring cups/spoons
- spoons for mixing
- wire whip for mixing
- hand rotary beater for mixing
- tight-fitting jar as a blender
- rolling pin

- potato masher/pastry blender
- hand juicer
- hand food grinder

Progress toward independent use - 1:1 adult/youth supervision ratio, can progress toward independent use (second and third grades). Some sharp edges and small appliances.

- serrated plastic knives for cutting
- hand grater
- vegetable peeler
- can opener
- apple corer
- toaster
- electric popcorn popper

Close supervision at all times - 1:1 adult/youth supervision ratio

- sharp knife
- electric mixer
- blender
- food processor
- toaster oven
- electric skillet
- electric/gas oven
- electric/gas burners
- microwave oven

***Textiles and Apparel*** - Children in grades 2-3 can be introduced to embroidery with blunt needles and hand sewing under 1:5 (instructor:children) supervision. Many are ready to learn beginning sewing machine skills with parental permission and 1:1 supervision. Activities that involve electric scissors, hot cutters, or irons are not appropriate for this age.

**Woodworking** - An item appropriate for construction by cloverbuds should be simple enough to ensure that they can complete it and feel good about the experience. They should be encouraged to help each other, especially when assembling parts. This is an excellent time to stress safety, not only for themselves but also for others. **Use of safety glasses** is required and is an excellent way to foster the development of a "safety mind-set." Skills for the younger Cloverbuds (K through grade one) should be limited to sanding, gluing, and applying simple finishes to kits. Activities for older cloverbuds in **grades two to three** might include, with adequate supervision in a **1:1 ratio**, some simple cutting, and hammering. Some examples would be:

Cutting boards of various designs  
 Napkin holder kit  
 Trivet  
 Simple games  
 Key holder

## Become Familiar with a Variety of 4-H Cloverbud Resources

4-H Cloverbud program materials are available from county, state and national sources. These materials may contain a combination of background information and activity plans. A list is available on the Web at [www.cce.cornell.edu/4h/](http://www.cce.cornell.edu/4h/), which also contains links to national resources. Some of the resources listed there are available at your 4-H office for either purchase or loan. Two major sources, noted in parentheses, are:

CCS - Cooperative Curriculum System - can be ordered through National 4-H Council's *Source Book* or through the web at: [www.n4hccs.org](http://www.n4hccs.org)

NCC - National Curriculum Collection - Most of these materials were developed by Cooperative Extension staff across the country (some by outside groups), then recommended by a national jury for 4-H use.

You can find most state's 4-H Youth Development websites by searching for 4-H followed by the name of the state. Then look for publications, a catalog or resource list. The latest Sourcebook Catalog from the National 4-H Council is available from your local 4-H office or downloadable on the web at: <http://www.4-hmall.org/>.

## References

Cloverbud Leader Orientation Guide, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County, 2000

Jefferson County Cloverbud Guide, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County, 2001

K-3 Youth in 4-H: Guidelines for Programming, National K-3 Curriculum Task Force, 1993

Meeting the Needs of Youth: *Tips for Adults Working with Youth*, Iowa State University, August 1999

Moving Ahead Together, Cooperative Curriculum System, 2000

New York State Cloverbud Guide, Cornell Cooperative Extension State 4-H Youth Development, 1993

