

4-H PROGRAM PLANNING

INDIANA 4-H LEADER GUIDE



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Introduction

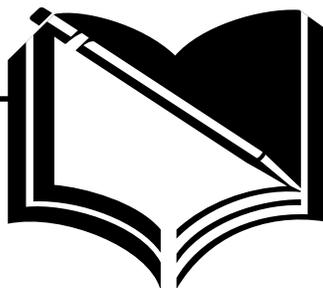
What your 4-H club does this year greatly depends on program planning. Advanced planning can direct 4-H activities throughout the year. A well planned program ensures satisfying experiences for all 4-H club members.

One of the biggest frustrations a 4-H leader experiences is what to do with all those energetic boys and girls after they have joined the club. As a 4-H leader, you have a responsibility to do the best job you can in planning and conducting learning experiences for your 4-H members. The learning experiences chosen should enhance or develop leadership skills, citizenship, responsibility, respect, and other desirable character traits in young people. This is no easy job! You can expose the 4-H'er to new experiences. Hopefully, these materials will help you meet the challenges of planning effective, meaningful programs for young people – our future leaders.

Get Off to a Good Start – Let's Plan!

A good 4-H club year doesn't just happen! Careful planning is necessary and a very important process in 4-H. Developing and organizing ideas into action can be done efficiently by a program planning committee. The purpose of this committee is to:

1. collect facts
2. analyze and evaluate facts
3. develop a plan for the club year
4. carry out devised plan
5. evaluate plan effectiveness



Planning programs is an educational experience. Through such activities, young people can work with and for their fellow members.

This committee should meet as soon as possible after the new club year begins. This meeting should follow a club meeting at which all club members have a chance for input. The makeup of the committee should consist of a variety of members to ensure many different ideas and points of view. Committee members might include a junior leader, new officers, past club president, a younger club member, a parent, and the club leader. A committee may consist of six to 10 members.

In planning an effective club program, you and the committee will need to consider the following points:

- Each club member should feel he/she has a part in decisions affecting the club.
- Every member should get at least one specific job during the year.
- Programs must be balanced with a variety of events.
- 4-H meetings and activity dates should be publicized early so that parents can plan family activities with less interference.
- Programs need to be the kind that 4-H members, leaders, and parents really want!
- The leader's job is easier when people have a part in the planning.



In good program planning there are several basic steps you should follow. You may want to become familiar with these before you have your program planning committee meeting. These steps are:

I. Look at Your Situation

1. Think about the age of the members, where they live, and what they do. Do they belong to other organizations?
2. Look at last year's program. What did members learn? What experiences can 4-H provide that will help them develop?
3. Study the community - schools, businesses, and people. How can 4-H work with other groups to build a strong club program and a better community?
4. Consider the county 4-H program. What training meetings will be held for adult and junior leaders and members? What county-wide events are planned that will help accomplish the goals of the club? What projects or activities are being emphasized on a county-wide basis?

II. Establish Goals

Goals are statements of what the leaders, members, and parents would like to see accomplished. The goals set by the 4-H club should be based upon a study of the situation. For each goal set, there should be special emphasis by the club to accomplish that goal. After goals have been established, ask yourself:

1. Can members of the club accomplish these goals?
2. Do they meet the needs and interests of the members?
3. Do they promote cooperation in the club?
4. Do they provide for individual achievements for each member according to his/her ability?
5. Are they an improvement over last year's goals?
6. Do they provide for worthwhile community participation?

Here are some suggested club goals:

- Extend 4-H membership to others in the community.
- Develop greater parent interest.
- Learn more about 4-H programs in other counties.
- Participate in a community service activity.
- Members attend all project training meetings.
- Every member receives leader assistance in all projects in which he/she enrolls.
- Every member participates in 4-H program events such as judging, demonstrations and exhibits, plus camp, fairs, and parades.

After goals have been established, the club members and leaders decide what they are going to do to meet each goal. For example, to accomplish the goal of developing greater parent interest, a committee of members and leaders may plan a special parents' night, or the organizational leader may visit all parents of club members.

III. List Activities and Events

"Dream" or "think big" should be the motto for step three in the planning process. Although some ideas may not be realistic in terms of resources available, exciting programs are usually the result of trying something new. New ideas usually come from thinking big or dreaming. A good technique to use for this step in planning is called brainstorming. Brainstorming is the unrestrained offering of ideas or suggestions by all members of a group. Although some ideas are a bit "far out," many times an exaggerated idea can be refined, or it may stimulate another idea that is usable.

Evaluation of the ideas is withheld until the next step in the planning process. The next step is selecting activities and events in which the club members decide to participate.



IV. Determine Activities and Events

Keep the club goals in mind as the committee selects activities and events best suited to the club members. Decide which ones need emphasis. Choose activities that will interest all ages represented. Consider regular monthly meetings, special events the club wishes to conduct, and participation in community and county 4-H events. Suggest committees to plan activities that have been chosen. Using committees throughout the year spreads responsibility to all members.

V. Prepare the Program Plan

A program plan should be prepared and approved by the club. It is very important to keep thorough notes as planning takes place. The total year's program can be listed on a simple form and given to each member, parent, and leader. A suggested form includes the following areas:

(example)

Date: May 1

Place: Jim Jones' home, 1011 Eue Rd.

What will be done and how: Regular meeting, community service project determination.

Who will do it: Officers committee, Jim Jones, chairman.

After Planning – What?

Even after the program planning committee has finished its duties, the yearly program has been approved by the club and has been copied in the Secretary's Book, the program still exists only on paper. Making the program WORK for the club becomes the responsibility of the club officers and the leader. Following are some ways to make your club plan work:

1. Provide a written copy of the yearly program to each club member and leader or each 4-H family.
2. Provide a copy of your club calendar to others in the community who may be interested.
3. Start planning for events early.
4. Assign community club program responsibilities to a program chairperson.
5. Review the goals set and check on progress two or three times during the year.
6. Be ready and willing to make adjustments in the program to meet emergencies.
7. Keep parents and the community informed about your plans.

Last Step – Evaluate the Program!

Sometime at the end of the 4-H program year you should conduct an evaluation meeting. The ideas and discussion at this meeting will be very valuable to you when planning next year's program. You might even send a questionnaire



to or visit with parents and get their reactions to the 4-H club year. Don't be afraid of negative feedback. This is how we "Make the Best Better!"

Record 4-H members' comments on the following questions. Add your own questions.

1. What did you like best about the past year's 4-H club program?
2. What did you like least about the past year's 4-H club program?
3. What are some new and different things you would like to do next year?

As the club year rolls along, you will see things you wished you would have done differently. Record these problems and possible solutions in a notebook for future reference.

Here are some questions that may stimulate your thinking as you try to measure success:

Members

- Did they know what they wanted to accomplish in the beginning?
- Did they do their project work to the best of their ability?
- Did they participate in club meetings and activities?
- Did they do special jobs (being an officer, committee member, giving a demonstration) well?
- Did they cooperate with other members, leader, and parents?
- Did they learn and did they make progress?
- Did they do their work themselves?

Club Program

- Was planning done by reviewing past experiences and looking ahead?
- Were attainable goals set?
- Was there variety and balance (active, quiet, serious, humorous, business, inspiration projects, recreation)?
- Did the program help to meet some needs of the community?
- Did all members have a part in making decisions?
- Was there continuity from one meeting to another?
- Were members given definite responsibilities?
- Were the set goals attained?
- Was the program publicized to parents and the public?

Leaders

- Were you forceful enough, without being too stern or too familiar, to get members to do their work?
- Did you inspire confidence in the members by respecting them?
- Did you take personal interest in the members, discuss their work with them, and help them reach their goals?
- Did you help members do their club work well by giving instructions clearly and following up with them?
- Did you use suggestions and give credit to members?
- Did you develop teamwork by planning ahead with others?
- Did you share responsibilities, help club members in carrying these out, and allow them to make mistakes on their own?
- Did you call for the best efforts of the members and stimulate their enthusiasm?

Summary

A good 4-H club program:

1. Is based on the 4-H members' needs.
2. Allocates time to get the major goals of the club accomplished.
3. Is based on goals that are established by the members and leaders working together.
4. Is designed to show results in the directions of the teaching.
5. Gives each member a responsibility sometime during the year.
6. Emphasizes democratic business procedures.
7. Is full of interesting activities.
8. Contains a balance of activities for older and younger members.
9. Contains health and safety information for the members.
10. Considers parent involvement and uses parent support.
11. Assists in developing members into leadership positions.
12. Has some community value and community

service projects.

13. Includes the dates and activities of 4-H events in the club, county, area, and state.
14. Contains a variety of activities.

If we keep these things in mind, we can plan the right activities for our program.

A well planned 4-H program gives direction to a club throughout the year. Successful advanced planning means involving members, parents, and volunteer leaders. All club members should know their responsibilities and have ample opportunities for direct involvement in the club through the year. A 4-H club with programs planned in advance will enable members to gain new and broader experiences plus help the leader have success in working with the group.

The Indiana 4-H Program offers these additional 4-H Leader Guides:

- 4-H 682 What is 4-H?
- 4-H 684 The 4-H Meeting
- 4-H 685 Parents
- 4-H 686 Recreation
- 4-H 687 Teaching Techniques
- 4-H 688 Fund Raising in 4-H

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