

# RECREATION



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## INDIANA 4-H LEADER GUIDE

Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service • West Lafayette, IN

Recreation is an important factor in having a successful meeting. A variety of fun-filled activities adds enthusiasm and enjoyment to 4-H club meetings. Education can and should be fun, and this is one of the secrets to working successfully with youth. Choose activities that create a positive atmosphere; thus, barriers can be broken down between the youth and the leader. Recreation helps the meeting become more productive and socially enjoyable and has the potential to help develop the individuals to their fullest extent.



From the group standpoint, recreation can help to create a favorable atmosphere, increase participation, facilitate communication, set group standards, and develop leadership.



### When to Use Recreation

Understanding the purpose of recreation will provide many ideas on when recreation should be used. In a newly formed group, there will be many people who do not know one another. It is important to group participation for members to really get to know each other. Getting acquainted activities are a form of recreation and most important to the success of the group.

Regardless of the age of a group or how well the members know each other, there are sure to be some cliques that form. "Mixers" can easily break up clusters. Some are formal, others are of a pure nonsense nature. Properly used, mixers can contribute much to good group process.

The arrival of the first members and the actual start of the meeting is a critical time. A good recreational program has something planned for the "early arrivals" before the meeting starts.

During a meeting, to shift from a general "gab session" to a more structured portion is often difficult. Many times games or stunts perform this function better than a break.

Sometimes it is necessary to create interest in a subject or topic to seriously involve the group. Games or stunts often accomplish this better than a formal approach.

### Why Use Recreation?

Recreation is a great aid in getting acquainted and providing opportunity for sociability. It reduces tension and brings relief from boredom and fatigue. Recreation can often exert social controls and create group solidarity and identity. The following are reasons for using recreation:

1. Recreation activities can increase the productivity of almost any group when properly chosen, timed, and led.
2. Recreation activities have great potential for developing security in the group, group recognition, and new experiences.

Quizzes, especially those that contain an element of humor, may be the ideal way to introduce a new subject.

You may need to alleviate the physical, mental, or emotional strain of a meeting. Relaxing games, music, or musical games can afford temporary relief from the project at hand. Large groups who are sitting or listening usually need such relaxers. If conditions are crowded, it is good to choose activities that produce some physical activity.

Status differentials within a group may result in poor communication, poor identification, and much insecurity. Even marked aggression and hostility may develop. Good

leadership anticipates such situations and prevents them. Persons with little status within the group often possess outstanding skills in recreation.

Arranging activities so that these people can use recreation skills may enhance their status and enable them to become more productive group members.

(Example: You may discover a new or younger member has talent in playing a musical instrument. By displaying this talent, the member may gain acceptance.)



Occasionally, there is a need to relieve a disruptive, tense situation. Often an alert leader can help relieve group tension by the appropriate use of humor. A recreational break frequently provides an outlet for tension release.

It is best not to end a meeting abruptly after an exciting game. "Signatures" are designed to help people feel relaxed. Refreshments and group singing may conclude the program. You may use a signature such as taps.

## A Recreation Plan

Recreation is doing something you like to do and enjoy. Recreation can be by yourself, or with others whose company you enjoy. Recreation is having fun. Good recreation doesn't "just happen." It must be planned. The biggest job in planning recreation is to keep in mind that every member should be considered and involved. What is fun should be fun for the majority.

Many clubs elect a recreation chairperson or recreation committee. This person or small group should be comprised of mature and capable people within the

club. They should not be the youngest or most inexperienced members. On the other hand,

they need not be the last officer or group elected. This person or group should assume the leadership for planning the recreation program. The recreation plan should involve:



- a. what kind of recreation will be done,
- b. equipment and supplies needed,
- c. who will be the leader,
- d. when and how long it will last.

The plan should be developed (for a series of meetings) well in advance and those responsible should be informed in sufficient time to prepare.

Many types of recreation can be enjoyed by 4-H'ers throughout the year. Seasons, holidays, and special events offer a variety of opportunities. Singing, active games, quiet games, mixers, homemade games, skits, hobbies, folk dances, and sports are some successful recreation activities enjoyed by Indiana 4-H'ers. In addition to recreation being an important part of each meeting, special meetings or parties devoted entirely to recreation are great!



## Duties of the 4-H Leader

As 4-H leaders, we have responsibilities in helping the recreation chairman or committee. Initially, you may need to guide the committee in planning the recreational program for the year.

It is important that you are continually sensitive to the group's needs. Whether it is getting acquainted or relieving tension, recreation can be very useful to 4-H members.

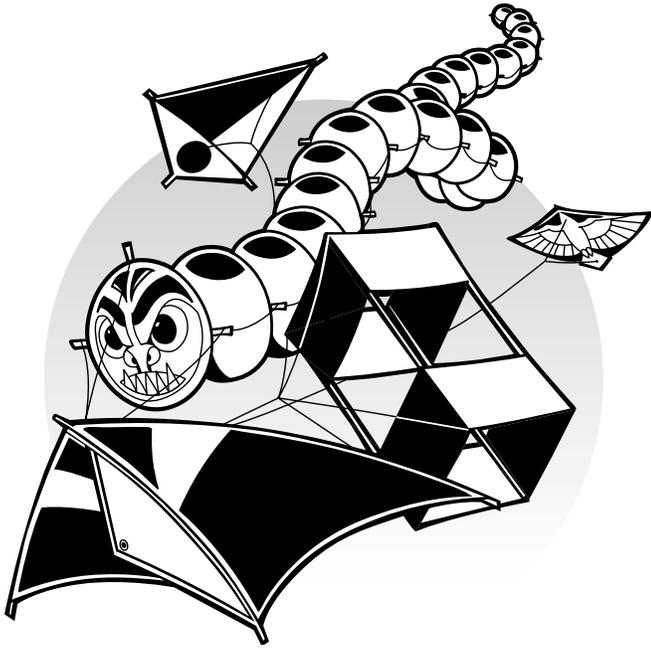
The leader will often be able to assist the recreation chairperson in getting everyone involved in activity. A few words of encouragement may be all that a younger member needs to get involved.

## How to Choose, Prepare, and Lead Games

See your 4-H educator for more helpful games and recreation information. Also, 4-H 455 *Recreational Activities Coordinator's Guide* and 4-H 592 *Recreational Card File* may be of help for your recreation leaders.

## Choosing Games

1. Think carefully about the types of games your particular group would enjoy.
2. Primarily consider games and activities appropriate for the age and interest level.
3. Consider the physical and mental skills required, and be sure they are appropriate for the group.
4. Refresh your collection of games by researching for new and different activities.



5. Choose games that will be progressive in social value. That is, simple ones for starting and then building toward more complex.
6. Remember, choose games that will capture the interest of all present at your meeting.

### Preparing for the Game Period

1. Plan a variety and be able to switch from one game to the other with ease.
2. Plan an abundance of recreational activities. For example, several more than you think may be needed. If one game is not accepted enthusiastically, another might be easily started.
3. Study each game thoroughly to learn the action involved, and calls, if any.
4. Plan a method for teaching the game or dance.
5. Always consider the physical requirements of the game, such as space, accommodations, equipment, and comfort of players. Be attentive to these things before the game begins.
6. Practice the instructions and calls, if any.
7. Plan logical sequences in formations for the games. Follow a brief outline to move swiftly from one activity to the next.

### Leading the Games

1. Get in a position to be seen and heard by the entire group.
2. Get the undivided attention of the whole group before explaining the activity. Wait for natural pauses. Be jovial and pleasant.

3. Inspire group action by genuine enthusiasm of both voice and manner.
4. Get players into formation, if any, before instructions.
5. Instructions should be clear, but brief. Demonstrate when possible.
6. Briefly practice or “walk through” the difficult parts of the game or dance activity.
7. Give the participants a chance to ask questions, but avoid lengthy, dull explanations.
8. Direct the game enthusiastically; the joy of leading comes from the ability to share with others.
9. If necessary, stop, make corrections and then begin again. No game is fun unless ALL are having a good time.
10. Make it fun for everyone; play the game yourself whenever possible. The leader **MUST** direct the joy of the game to the activity itself.

### Stunts and Challenges

Recreation can be held at different times during the 4-H meeting:

1. at the opening of the meeting
2. between the business and educational phase of the meeting
3. at the close of the formal meeting
4. following the meeting

Stunts and challenges are appropriate recreation for any of the four situations and can be fun if not overdone. In selecting stunts or challenges, make sure the stunt is appropriate for the occasion (the way people are dressed and for the place where you are meeting). Avoid stunts and challenges that would unnecessarily embarrass, harm, injure, or otherwise displease participants, and be selective and use good taste in choosing people to participate.

### *Jacket Stunts*

Two persons wearing large jackets stand face to face, hands in each other’s pockets. Try to remove the coats without taking hands from the pockets.

### *Drinking Straws*

One person picks up an inch square piece of paper, using just the straw. The person must hold it at straw’s end with his or her breath. Partner must take it from the person using just a straw and place it on another table at the far end of the room. No hands at any time.

### ***A Stunt for Fun***

Select several volunteers to try this: Put two pennies on your elbow, shake them off and try to catch them with the same hand.

### ***Can Someone Do This?***

Select one or more pairs of volunteers from the group. Sit back to back on the floor in pairs with arms locked and try to get up. First pair on their feet without unlocking arms is the winner.

### ***Guess***

Make up a list of your own questions like those listed below:

1. What's the diameter of a half dollar?
2. How many safety matches in a package?
3. How many keys on a piano? White? Black?
4. What is the size of this room? The height of the ceiling?
5. How wide is a newspaper column?

### ***Age Teller***

Here is a method by which you can discover a person's birth month and his age. For example, you ask a man (whose age is 25) born in March, to compute the following and give the final figure.

1. Take the month of birth (the third month)
2. Double it (6)
3. Add 5 (11)
4. Multiply by 50 (550)
5. Add present age (plus 25 = 575)
6. Subtract 365 (210)
7. Add 115 (325)

The first digit will indicate the month, the last two the age.

### ***How Dry Am I?***

Select two people from the group who would have fun doing this. Two people each eat two crackers. Then see who can whistle first.

### ***Don't Eat the Peanuts!***

**Equipment:** Drinking glass of the size that is used in serving iced tea and enough peanuts with the shells on to fill the glass.

**Game:** Each player in turn inverts the glass of peanuts on the table top and slowly lifts it leaving the peanuts in a compact heap. By using the fingers, he removes as many peanuts as possible without moving any of those in the

heap. He is finished when a peanut moves.

**Score:** 10 points for each peanut removed.

### ***Four Suitcases***

Put two suitcases under each arm; then transfer those on the left to the right and vice versa without touching the floor.

### **Summary**

Recreation is important in developing a successful 4-H club program. Recreation will increase productivity of almost any group when properly chosen, timed, and led. Development of a recreation plan will help assure a meaningful recreational program. Recreation is not only fun, it is a very effective educational tool if properly developed and skillfully prepared.

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

- 4-H 682 What is 4-H?
- 4-H 683 4-H Program Planning
- 4-H 684 The 4-H Meeting
- 4-H 685 Parents
- 4-H 687 Teaching Techniques
- 4-H 688 Fun Raising in 4-H

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