

West Virginia 4-H Cloverbud Program Facts and Best Practices



Mission of 4-H

The 4-H program empowers youths to reach their full potential by working and learning in partnership with caring adults.

4-H Vision

A world in which youths and adults learn, grow and work together as catalysts for positive change.

Philosophy of the 4-H Cloverbud Program

The Cloverbud program provides age-appropriate activities designed for this age group in order to foster the development of life skills needed for cognitive, social, emotional and physical development by providing cooperative learning activities (Fleming et al., 2003). The 4-H Cloverbud program is designed to be noncompetitive, educational, activity-based, cooperative-learning centered, safe, developmentally age-appropriate and success-oriented (Scheer, 1997).



Who Can Be a Cloverbud?

2018 – 2019 4-H Year

Last year of current West Virginia State Department of Education policy (August 30 birthday)

- Starting age is based off of 4-H year (October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2019)
- First year to participate as a Cloverbud is if they turn 6 years old during the 4-H year
- Last year to participate as a Cloverbud is if they turn 8 years old during the 4-H year

2019 – 2020 4-H Year

New West Virginia State Department of Education policy goes into effect (K)

- Starting age now based off of age on June 30



- First year to participate as a Cloverbud is if they are 5 years old on June 30 – prior to the 4-H year they are starting. (Matches new West Virginia State Department of Education policy for starting K in 2019)
- Last year to participate as a Cloverbud is if they turn 8 years old during the 4-H year (for kids who would have come in under the old school-age policy)

Birthdate falls between these dates:	First possible date of 4-H participation as Cloverbud	Last possible date of 4-H participation as Cloverbud
Oct. 1, 2010 – Sept. 30, 2011	October 1, 2016	September 30, 2019
Oct. 1, 2011 – Sept. 30, 2012	October 1, 2017	September 30, 2020
Oct. 1, 2012 – Sept. 30, 2013*	October 1, 2018	September 30, 2021
July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014*	October 1, 2019	September 30, 2022
July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015	October 1, 2020	September 30, 2023
July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016	October 1, 2021	September 30, 2024
July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017	October 1, 2022	September 30, 2025
July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018	October 1, 2023	September 30, 2026
July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019	October 1, 2024	September 30, 2027
July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020	October 1, 2025	September 30, 2028
July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021	October 1, 2026	September 30, 2029
July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022	October 1, 2027	September 30, 2030

**The Cloverbud's age changes as of June 30 with 2019 – 2020 4-H year.*



Cloverbud Program Parameters

As states began to offer 4-H programming for youths ages 5 to 7, it was determined that practical guidelines were needed in order to provide quality Cloverbud programs. The Ohio State University Extension Specialist Scott Scheer outlined ten parameters for successful Cloverbud programs (rebrand.ly/programming-parameters-for-5-to-8-year-old-in-4-H).

Therefore, when an Extension professional or 4-H volunteer is designing a Cloverbud activity or program, they should ask themselves the following questions to make sure that the program meets the goals of the Cloverbud program (Scheer, 1997):

- Is it activity-based and short-termed?
- Does it involve cooperative learning in which children work with and not against each other?
- Is it noncompetitive and are children equally recognized?
- If Cloverbud children are involved in a fair, is it for exhibit only and are they not competitively judged?
- Is the activity safe?
- Is the activity developmentally age-appropriate keeping in mind their physical, social, mental and emotional characteristics?
- Is the activity intended for Cloverbud children (5- to 7-year-olds) as opposed to members in the regular 4-H member program (8- to 21-year-olds)?
- Are the curricula success-oriented? Can the children do the activities successfully?
- Does the animal material contribute to Cloverbud objectives and parameters?
- Is the activity fun, positive and focused on the five life skill areas through the experiential learning cycle?

“YES” answers to all of the questions above means that the activity or program may be excellent to use with Cloverbuds.

If all of the answers are not YES, then explore ways to modify or adjust the activity or program to meet the parameters that guide a successful Cloverbud program. Reach out to other Extension professionals for help and advice.



Differences Between 4-H Cloverbuds and 4-H Members

	Cloverbuds (5- to 7-year-olds)	4-H members (8- to 21-year olds)
Types of Learning	Activity Centered	Project Centered
Type of Instruction	Leader Directed	Self-study, Individual Leader Directed
Recognition	Recognition of Participation	Competition and Achievement
Learner Resources	Activity Manual for Helpers	Project Manual for Youths

Typical Cloverbud Meetings

Cloverbud members can be integrated into a regular club meeting with older 4-H members or a separate club involving Cloverbud members only. Either way, the meeting structure for Cloverbuds should run the same. Each activity should be short (5 to 10 minutes) and a meeting for Cloverbuds should last no longer than 60 minutes, preferably 30 to 45 minutes.

- Say the pledges.
- Introduce the topic and begin with a short activity.
- Play a game related to the topic.
- Do another short activity (keep them active).
- Play another game if time permits.
- Have a healthy snack.
- Clean up (teach them responsibility by cleaning up after each meeting).



It is recommended that Cloverbuds take part in regular 4-H club meetings during the pledges and roll call, and then leave the meeting to do Cloverbud activities during the business portion of the meeting. Then, they should return to the club meeting to participate in recreation, programs, songs and refreshments.

Cloverbud Do's and Don'ts

Do encourage and allow Cloverbuds to:

- Participate in age-appropriate club service projects.
- Work together or individually on a poster for the poster contest.
- Participate in County Roundup, reciting the pledge and making cookies.
- Participate in show-and-tell at club meetings.
- Work together or individually to showcase their work for the fair.
- Participate in fun, hands-on activities led by a 4-H volunteer.



Don't encourage or allow Cloverbuds to:

- Plan service projects from start to finish.
- Enroll in or take a 4-H project.
- Do a visual presentation (show-and-tell is acceptable).
- Vote at club meetings or hold an office.
- Count years as a Cloverbud as 4-H years.
- Show livestock of any kind.

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: Can Cloverbuds participate in county contests, such as County Roundup or the poster contest?

Answer: Yes. Cloverbuds are welcome to participate noncompetitively in county activities like Roundup and poster contests. There should be a Cloverbud category for these contests that is set up for all participants to receive the same recognition for their participation. Nothing should be judged. These Cloverbud opportunities stay at the county level and do not move to the state level.



Question: Can Cloverbuds exhibit at the county fair?

Answer: Yes. Cloverbuds are encouraged to showcase something from their 4-H Cloverbud activities. Examples include something that they made during an activity; a poster/trifold showcasing one or more Cloverbud activities; or notebook/scrapbook of their Cloverbud activities. Cloverbud exhibits can be done individually or as a group.



All exhibits created by Cloverbuds should be noncompetitive. All Cloverbuds participating should receive the same recognition (ribbon, certificate, premium, incentive, award, etc.). Because county fair categories may be governed by a local fair board, reach out to your county Extension office to learn more opportunities for Cloverbuds to showcase their work.

Question: Can Cloverbuds complete a 4-H project?

Answer: No. The 4-H projects are used with regular 4-H members. Project books are typically completed independently by the 4-H member and graded competitively. The Cloverbud program should be activity-centered and encourage cooperative learning amongst Cloverbuds. Some Cloverbud programs will organize their activities into a notebook/scrapbook. Try to use terms like “notebook” or “activity book” to describe such a booklet. “Project book” is not a term that should be used with Cloverbuds.

Question: Can Cloverbuds exhibit livestock?

Answer: No. West Virginia 4-H Cloverbuds are not allowed to exhibit livestock. The Kansas 4-H program explains it well:

“The 4-H Cloverbuds program is tailored to youth, with concerns for a child’s physical, mental and emotional development. The physical difference in stature between a child and livestock can endanger a child. A child’s maturity level and lack of understanding of animal behaviors also can increase the risk to the child. And, while a child may seem capable of handling livestock on the family farm and/or in familiar settings, managing livestock in a public setting can add stress and increase the risks for the child, the livestock and others who may be in the area. Allowing a young child to exhibit livestock in a public arena also increases the liability for all concerned.” (Kansas 4-H Office, n.d.)



Question: Can Cloverbuds go to camp?

Answer: Cloverbuds may attend day camps specifically designed to meet their developmental characteristics and needs. A Cloverbud day camp involves youths for one day, or a series of days, at a camp-like setting where educational, hands-on activities occur. Day camps for Cloverbuds should have a minimum adult to camper ratio of one adult per every six youths with a minimum of two adults. Overnight camping with Cloverbuds is not permitted in the West Virginia 4-H program.



Question: How can I recognize Cloverbuds?

Answer: Cloverbuds should be recognized for their participation in 4-H activities. Typical forms of formal recognition include ribbons and certificates. However, more informal recognition, like applause or a How How during a club meeting or activity, is also appropriate. Since Cloverbuds are noncompetitive, all participants should receive the same recognition (ribbon, certificate, premium, incentive, award, etc.). Many county 4-H programs have invested in special Cloverbud ribbons that are different in color or style than ribbons used for regular 4-H member recognition.



Some counties recognize Cloverbuds who are aging out of the program and moving on to become a regular 4-H member with a Cloverbud pin to recognize their participation in the Cloverbud program.



References

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