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Planning the 4-H Club Program



Good 4-H club programs don't just happen. A lot of planning comes first. A 4-H club program plan serves as a road map of the club's activities, helping to guide the club toward its goals.

In general, conducting a club program requires the following steps:

1. Defining the club's goals - Where are we going?
2. Planning steps toward these goals - How do we get there?
3. Sharing responsibilities toward goal accomplishment. - Who does what toward reaching these goals?
4. Carrying out these responsibilities - The actual program.
5. Evaluation - Did we get where we were going?

The Value of a Plan

The process of planning can be used to help the club define its goals more clearly and agree on steps to be taken toward these goals. Planning can allow for sharing the responsibilities for a successful club program among the members, parents, and leaders. A plan provides a basis for evaluation of a club's program by serving as a yardstick to which accomplishments can be compared.

Teens stay in 4-H in greater numbers than with many other youth organizations. One of the main reasons this is true is that in 4-H, young people are involved in planning their programs and activities. It is widely accepted as fact that people support and take part in activities they helped to develop. This process helps members feel that the club's program belongs to them.

By participating in the planning process, young people have a chance to practice decision-making skills. We help children gain experience in making wise choices by involving them in planning.

Early planning gives enough time before the activity to adequately prepared. If it is known in October that a resource person will be needed in January to speak to the club on bike safety, there will be plenty of time to find such a person and for that person to prepare.

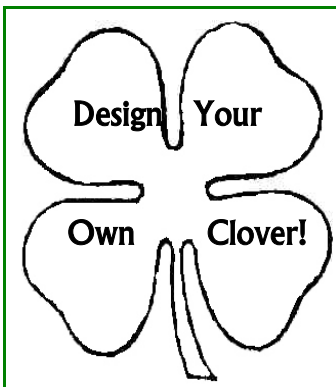
Having an annual plan lets those involved plan for 4-H participation along with other family activities. It can reduce the number of times that a member has another activity in conflict with a 4-H activity.

A plan makes it easier to spread the responsibility of having a successful club among people. Each member can assume responsibility for a part of the plan by locating a speaker, presenting a demonstration on the topic of the meeting, bringing refreshments, making arrangements for a hike, or other tasks.

A potential member, donor, or parent helper can better see what your club is and how they can fit into what your club is doing, if you have a plan.

Getting Member Input

One of the key ingredients in creating a successful 4-H club program plan is getting input from the members. Some ways to get this input are discussed in this section. You may choose to use any one of these methods, a combination of these methods, or your own creation in getting member input for those developing the plan.



An on-going club might begin to gather information for a new plan by reviewing the past year's program. New clubs must use other methods. The club as a whole or in small groups might discuss the following questions:

1. What did we do last year?
2. What did we like best about it?
3. Are there things about last year's program that we want to be sure are in this year's program?
4. What about last year's program needs to be improved?

The answers to these questions can provide valuable insight to the planners.

A technique for getting member input used by leaders in several states is called **Design Your Own Clover**. To use this technique, you should give each member a sheet of paper with a large clover drawn on it, or four sets of index cards works. On each leaf of the clover, or card, should be written a

phrase to be completed.

For instance the phrases might be

- (a) I would like to learn.....,
- (b) We could help our community by.....,
- (c) For fun we could,
- (d) Some of the things I'd like to do in my
4-H club this year are.....

Information gathered on this form can be used by the planners to find out what sorts of club programs, special activities, and community service projects are wanted by club members.

Brainstorming is used in some clubs to come up with program ideas. Members call out program ideas as someone writes them down for everyone to see. The rules of brainstorming require that no comments or criticism of ideas be given until all the ideas are listed. After the list is formed, then the group discusses the ideas and selects those to be recommended to the planning group.

A program suggestion box is made available to members at each meeting by some clubs. Throughout the year members may add ideas for the next year's program. These suggestions may be given directly to the planning committee or reviewed by the club first.

Group discussions can be used and work for some leaders seeking member input in planning. The members are divided into small groups and each group is given the task of recommending three or four ideas for educational programs, community service projects, and club special events. The club discusses the suggestions made by the groups and this information goes to the planning committee.

Regardless of how you get the information it is very important to use member input in planning your club program.

The Planning Committee

If you have a very small club your whole club may serve as the group that actually puts your plan together. Otherwise, the club might need a planning committee to serve this purpose.

The committee might be made up of youngsters who volunteer to serve or members appointed by the club president. If an appointed committee is used, the president should be reminded of the benefit of having different ages, sexes, and project interests represented on the committee. Some clubs find it

useful to invite several parents to meet with the planning committee.

The committee seeks input from the members and develops a tentative plan that is brought back to the members for approval.

Elements of the Completed Plan

Among the parts of a club's annual program for which planning should occur are:

- Club's annual goals
- Educational programs for each regular club meeting
- Club special events (i.e. parents' night, cookouts, camping trips)
- Involvement in activities beyond the club level. (Community service, county and multi-county participation)

A number of different ways of recording the plan can be used, but one is included as an example. If possible each member should get a copy of the club goals and the club calendar.

An additional aid for helping in planning is the "4-H Club Planning Workbook." Ask your agent for a copy.

Example:

CLUB GOALS (example)

1. Enroll 5 new members
2. Increase family participation
3. Have 100% of members complete at least one project record
4. Have 75% of members participate in one community service project
5. Have at least 50% of members give at least one demonstration or illustrated talk.

CLUB CALENDAR (example)

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>PROGRAM, EVENT OR ACTIVITY</u>	<u>DATE AND TIME</u>	<u>PLACE</u>	<u>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</u>
September	Regular Club meeting topic: Energy Conservation	Monday, 8 th , 7:30 p.m.	Jim's house	Jim to contact speaker
	Beef project meeting	Monday, 8 th , 5:00 p.m.	Jim's barn	Jim, Tom, Mr. Lynch
	County Council	Monday, 15 th , 7:00 p.m.	County 4-H office	Club Officers
October	Regular Club meeting topic: Fire Safety	Monday, 6 th , 7:30 p.m.	Fire Station	Julie, Fire Chief Smith
	County Council	Monday, 13 th , 7:00 p.m.	County 4-H office	Club Officers
	National 4-H Club Week	13-19 All Week	to be arranged	All members, leaders, and parents

CLUB MEETING PLAN (example)

DATE: September 8th,
PROGRAM TOPIC: Energy Conservation

JOB:	PERSON RESPONSIBLE:
Arrange for meeting place	Jeremy
Arrange for program	Jim
Lead Recreation	Michael
Lead singing	Rachel
Pledge to American Flag	Joshua
4-H Pledge	Kimberly
Inspirational Thought	Marcus
Introduce speaker	Travis
Provide refreshments	Sandy
Give demonstration	Christie

This publication was originally created by John A. Rutledge, Jr., Extension 4-H Youth Specialist, August, 1985 and was revised by Joy C. Jordan, Extension 4-H Specialist, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, August, 2002.

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