

New  
Jersey **4-H**

# Leader Training Series



## Selecting A 4-H Project

### Qualities Leaders Bring to the Project

### Qualities 4-H'ers Bring to the Project

### Project Selection

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The 4-H project is the method used by 4-H'ers and leaders to teach and learn new skills and/or to acquire a body of knowledge.

You, the 4-H leader, bring your:

- subject knowledge or the willingness to learn new knowledge and skills.
- desire and ability to work with children, their parents, and other volunteers.
- belief in the worth of each individual.
- confidence that children can take responsibility for and make decisions about their learning.
- commitment to the hands-on-learning process.
- genuine concern and care for young people.
- willingness to share your time and knowledge to help 4-H'ers develop to their potential.

Your 4-H'ers also bring important qualities to the task of learning through project work. They bring:

- enthusiasm.
- a willingness to work and learn.
- trust in the adult leader.
- a desire to learn by "doing it themselves."
- an individual package of needs, talents, and expectations.

Project selection is:

- a goal setting process.
- a decision making experience.
- the key to a rewarding 4-H experience.

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## Who is Involved in Project Selection?

- the 4-H'er
- the 4-H'ers parents
- the project leader

NOTE: In New Jersey many 4-H Clubs emphasize one project. All members of a project club work on the same subject. Often project selection is made before joining any club. A 4-H'er who has been involved in the 4-H Prep program, ideally, will have been introduced to a number of project (subject) areas and experiences before becoming a member of a project or community club. Community Clubs offer a variety of projects. Members of a community club have more project selection opportunities.

### A Suggested Method for Project Selection

#### ***Goal Setting***

Ask your 4-H'ers to set some individual goals. In goal setting, the younger 4-H'er may need more adult help than will an older 4-H'er. This can be done at the same meeting as the next suggested step or at a separate time.

(Refer to *Helping Youth Set Goals*.)

#### **Questions to answer that will help with goal identification:**

- What do I like to do?
- What do I already know?
- What do I need/want to learn?
- What must I do to learn more about a particular subject?
- What must I do to learn a new skill?

(Refer to Project Selection Worksheet #1, *Goal Identification Worksheet For Selecting My 4-H Project*, following this information sheet.)

### Decision Making

#### ***Leaders' Role***

Obtain a listing of current projects offered and/or a selection of available project guides and project record books available in your county from your county 4-H extension office. Plan a meeting to give a brief overview of several project areas. Allow time for the 4-H'ers and their parents to look at different project materials. Discuss whether adults are available to help with specific projects. Also discuss time, money and supplies required for the project. Then discuss what to do if the project the 4-H'ers want to work on is not offered.

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## ***Members and Parents***

Your 4-H'ers will be ready to make a decision after they have been introduced to a variety of project areas where capable adult leadership is available, and they have participated in a goal identification activity.

Allow time for the 4-H'er and parent(s) to discuss the project. The goal is to be sure the 4-H'er and the parent(s) understand what the project requires of the 4-H'er and the parent.

### **Answers to the following questions will help in making decisions.**

(Refer to Project Selection Worksheet #2, *4-H Projects That Look Interesting To Me*, following this information sheet.)

- Is there a leader for this project?
- Will my parents help with this project if no leader is available?
- Do I have the money available for expenses this project will require?
- Is there a way for me to earn the money for this project?
- Do I understand how much time and energy the project will require?
- Can I handle the work involved?
- Will my parents let me work on this project?
- Will my parents be able to get me to the project meetings or county events?
- Does this project fit in with my goal identification?
- Do I really want to work on this project?

## **How Many Projects Can a Member Take?**

### **The number of projects a member takes depends on:**

- the age of the 4-H'er.
- the experience of the 4-H'er.
- the ability of the 4-H'er.
- the amount of money involved/available to the 4-H'er.
- the time available to 4-H'er/leader/parent.
- the ability of a 4-H'er to work with minimal direction.
- time needed to learn about and participate in other parts of 4-H beyond project work, i.e., public speaking, trips, camp, other county events.

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## **A Project Plan**

After the 4-H'ers have been introduced to project areas, have completed some goal identification, and have been through the decision making process with parents and leaders, they are ready to develop a project plan.

(Refer to Project Selection Worksheet #3, *My 4-H Project Plan [Setting Goals]* following this information sheet.)

## **A Simple Outline**

The project plan can be as simple as an outline of goals and objectives that indicate a beginning and an end to the project.

The 4-H'ers can refer to their goal identification developed earlier or set a new goal. The goal is a statement that answers the question: "Where do I want to be in my project by the end of the year?" The objectives are simple statements that answer the question: "What do I need to do to get to my end goal?"

## **Share Plan With Parents**

Encourage the 4-H'ers to share their plan with their parents. The more parent involvement and support the 4-H'er receives the more rewarding and successful the project will be.

## **RECORD KEEPING**

Follow the method of recordkeeping established by your county 4-H office. Encourage your 4-H'ers to keep their plan with their records, and refer to it throughout their project work. (Refer to *Record Keeping in 4-H*.)

### **Encourage 4-H'ers to answer these questions as they progress:**

- Am I on target?
- Do I need to revise my goal (my idea about what I will accomplish)?
- Do I need to revise my objectives (the steps I am following to complete my project and reach my goal)?

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### ***Reference:***

*Diem, Ginny P., Leaders' Notebook developed for Ohio 4-H program*

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