

New
Jersey **4-H**

Leader Training Series

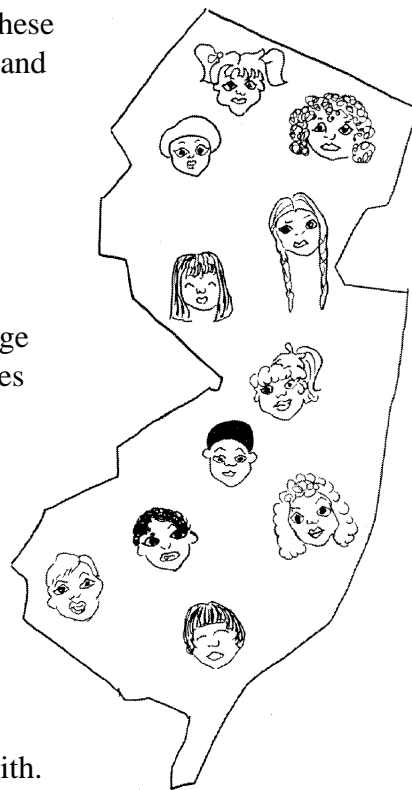


Ages and Stages of 4-H Youth

As you know, young people act differently at various ages and stages of their lives. Think about some young people you know. Can you think of some characteristics of 10 year olds? Would those characteristics be different from 16 year olds? Does a 2nd grader act differently from a 7th grader? Your answer is probably yes!

Because of these differences, 4-H programs are usually designed with a target audience in mind. As in school, 4-H programs are designed according to school grades of youth. Characteristics of these grade groupings are given below. Keep in mind that these groupings are based on averages, and that each child is an individual who develops at his or her own rate.

Be sure to consider the information in the chart on the next page when planning events and activities for your 4-H'ers. Look down each column to get an idea of the characteristics of the youth you are working with. For more specific information, see the information sheet which describes the characteristics and suggestions for planning learning experiences for the specific group you are working with.



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DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE 4-H YOUTH AUDIENCE

CHARACTERISTIC	PREP Grades 1-3	BEGINNERS Grades 4-6	INTERMEDIATES Grades 7-9	ADVANCED Grades 10-13
Interest Span	Short, unless topic is of great interest. Can be increased if activity is included. (5 to 20 minutes)	Short and varied.	Lengthens with experience and interest in subject or activity.	Almost adult if self-motivated.
Motor Skills	May be easily frustrated by fine motor tasks that are beyond level of coordination.	High interest in doing active projects. Poor coordination.	Interested in skills for specific use. Can tackle more difficult jobs with more complex coordination.	Highly skilled in areas of interest and practice.
Mental Growth	Curious, learns from hands-on experiences. Developing language.	High curiosity. Limited experience. Beginning abstract learning.	Increased depth and scope of learning.	Continued increase related to experience. Can see relationships.
Ability to Plan	Has difficulty with multiple step plans over a period of time.	Limited ability, experience and judgement.	Can plan better than execute.	Has need and ability to plan.
Relation to Adults	Seeks adult leadership and companionship.	Accepts leadership easily from adults.	Needs and wants guidance but rejects domination.	Wants leadership on adult level.
Relation to Age Mates	More interested in small groups under adult supervision.	Needs to feel accepted.	Interested in opposite sex, and in group acceptance.	High interest in groups, "couples" oriented.

Reference:

Adapted from the North Dakota State University 4-H Curriculum Guidelines.

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