

New
Jersey **4-H**

Leader Training Series



Working with 4-H Youth in 1st to 3rd Grades

Youth in 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades are involved in the 4-H Prep Program, as well as in-school and after-school 4-H programs. In addition, special events are designed to meet the special needs and interests of these children.

Listed below are some characteristics of youth in grades 1 to 3. Not all children in this age group will act in the manner described, but the majority will most of the time. In general, these youth have a strong desire for affection and attention of adults and are usually self-centered. Plan for small group activities with an adult for every three to four children.

Youth in Grades 1 to 3

Specific Characteristics	Planning a Learning Experience
Easily motivated, eager to try something new.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan a wide variety of activities. Plan activities that take a short time to complete, with each experience building on previous activities.
Deal with here and now. Interest span short.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a variety of short and specific learning activities involving concrete concepts. Free time should be planned and encouraged. Move from one activity to another. Alternate high and moderate activity with low.

*Written by: Betty Ann Smith, County 4-H Agent,
Middlesex County and Rita Natale Saathoff,
Regional 4-H Agent, South, 1994*

Specific Characteristics	Planning a Learning Experience
All new learning involves use of language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be very specific and clear with instructions. • Ask youth to give feedback on what they have heard.
Sensitive to criticism, don't accept failure well.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide positive encouragement and assistance. • Plan many concrete learning activities in which success can be experienced.
Experimental, exploratory behavior part of development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up situations that foster cooperation and teamwork rather than competition. • Utilize field trips, real models, and hands-on experience.
Learn best if physically active.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide activities that encourage physical activity: running, moving, playing games, cutting with scissors, painting, brushing, and assembling.
Strong desire for affection and attention of adults.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for small group activities with an adult for each three to four youth.

Reference:

Curriculum Development for Issues Programming, A National Handbook for Extension Youth Development Professionals, Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1992.

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 RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
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