



# 4-H Clover Program Volunteer Guide

A guide for MCE volunteers who work with children, ages 5-7  
University of Maryland 4-H Youth Development  
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Equal Opportunity Programs

# Maryland 4-H Clover Program

## **A 4-H Clover Club Is...**

A group of five to eight children with a team of adult and/or teen volunteer leaders who meet on a regular basis.

- Children in kindergarten, first, or second grade who are ages 5 through 7 involved in a learning by doing experience.
- Fun. Children learn by making things, working and playing together.
- Activities that are non-competitive and planned to meet the needs of this age group
- Developed and organized by using the policies, procedures and resources listed in this Agent and Volunteer Leader Guide.

## ***What Does the 4-H Clovers Volunteer Leader Do?***

The leader's main objective is to help young children develop positive perceptions of themselves and others. Leaders must be caring, fun and enthusiastic.

- The leader recruits and enrolls children into a 4-H Clovers Club. Another volunteer leader and/or a County Extension Agent may also assist in getting the club started.
- The leader helps present the programs or series of meetings for the year along with the 4-H Clovers and their parents.

## ***Creating a Positive Learning Environment***

4-H leaders should consider the development and needs of 5- to 7-year-olds as they plan the various learning activities. It is important to include what is generally known about children this age, learning theory and practices, and the specific behaviors of the members of the group when creating a positive learning environment for them. In general, 4-H learning activities for 5- to 7-year-olds will be positive learning experiences for children if they:

- **Provide one adult (or older youth) for every five children** Because of the variation in developmental stages, it is important to have a low child-to-adult ratio in learning situations so that each child receives the individualized attention needed to be successful in learning experiences. Involving parents in helping with the group is beneficial and encouraged.
- **Involve the children in selecting and planning activities** learning activities are self selected by children, rather than assigned by adults, they are more likely to maintain interest and to integrate new skills and knowledge with what they already know. Letting them be involved in the selection of learning activities builds their confidence as a learner, fosters personal initiative, and encourages the development of curiosity and creativity. Based on the planned educational objectives, educators should identify activity options and help children make decisions about what they want to do.
- **Change activities often according to the needs of the children.** By offering a variety of learning activities, with a variation in the pace and range of experiences, children remain interested and involved.

- **Encourage children to talk and work with each other.** With guidance, children can learn skills that help them develop respect and understanding of other people, to negotiate and apply rules of living. Children talk as they learn and learn best when they are actively engaged in activities that allow them to practice, demonstrate, explain and apply their learning.

- **Sequence activities in short blocks** - the pace of activities so that children are not expected to engage in one type of activity for too long. Mix quiet activities with those that require movement and active participation. For children in this age range, the process of learning may be more interesting than the finished product

- **Adults serve as positive behavior models.** Children begin to look outside the home for guidance and support; adults with whom they come in contact on a regular basis become influential sources of new information, new skills and new points of view about life. They also have a tremendous influence in helping children feel good about who they are and what they can do. Saying something positive to each child at each meeting is one way of bolstering self-confidence.

- **Promote cooperation rather than competition.** It is not appropriate for children aged 6 to 8 to participate in contests where they are judged. Their self concept is still vulnerable and too fragile for competition. Activities should promote practice of developmentally appropriate skills, provide an opportunity for social interaction, and help children understand and learn about fairness. It is appropriate, however, to display their work and recognize participation. If done fairly and honestly, this can promote a sense of pride and feeling of accomplishment.

- Use **positive guidance and discipline.** Children in early childhood years are learning self-control. Children benefit from adults who use positive approaches to help them behave constructively and solve interpersonal conflicts. Teach skills for appropriate social behavior, such as taking turns, dividing and sharing resources, and working cooperatively.

- **Provide individualized learning, as well as learning in small and large group.** The learning activities should include a sufficient variety of experiences to accommodate the varied ages, stages, interests and needs of participating children. Parallel activities may be needed to allow children at different stages to participate in a way that suits their developmental needs. Some may choose to work alone on an activity while others choose to work in groups.

### **Curriculum Considerations for the 4-H Clovers Program**

Several factors need to be addressed in the development and implementation of the 4-H Clovers curriculum. Consider the following:

#### *Educational materials should be*

- Focused on the "whole" child
- Hands-on, using as many of the five senses as possible
- Uncomplicated
- Stimulating to the imagination
- Short, able to be completed in 10 to 20 minutes from start to finish

- Varied
- Fun
- Non-biased, and nonjudgmental so that the 5- to 7-year-old youth can approach them at their own level
- Inclusive of all developmental areas and appropriate for their age
- Colorful, well illustrated, and easy to read

***Volunteer leaders should be:***

- Interested in working with 5- to 7-year-old youth
- Representative of both genders and racially/ethnically mixed
- Adults and/or older teens
- Trained in understanding the developmental aspects of this age group and techniques for enhancing self-perceptions

***Other areas of concern should be:***

- Low leader/member ratios
- Group and/or family oriented activities\*
- Wide variety of topics
- Non-competitive activities
- Appropriate forms of recognition
- Incorporation of the learning activities into games, songs, poems, pictures, word games, art projects, and creative dramatics
- Programming across project areas as well as within them
- The term family is used to refer to either two parent families, single parent families or blended families.

## **Delivery Methods for Clovers Programs**

Learning activities for 5- to 7-year-olds and designed by 4-H may be presented or delivered in a variety of ways. While delivery modes may vary to accommodate situational needs and available resources it is important that the learning opportunities are based on the needs, interests, and learning styles of this age group.

4-H delivery methods focus primarily on people working in groups; however, when working with 5- 7 year-olds, it should be remembered that each child develops at his or her own pace and all may not be at the same stage of development. They may not all be developmentally ready to learn effectively in groups and may have little group loyalty.

The 4-H Clover Program is designed to provide a means through which agents and volunteer leaders can meet the needs of the 5- to 7-year-old youth in their county. Older youth, junior leaders, and teen leaders may be involved as resources and/or volunteer leaders for the 4-H Clovers program.

Involvement in the 4-H Clovers program is open to all youth regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, handicap or national origin.

Participation in the 4-H Clovers program is optional. However, any county or club involving 5- to 7-year-old youth in their program, MUST adhere to the policies and guidelines of the Maryland 4-H Clovers program (e.g., no competition) outlined in this manual. Every Clovers group should apply for a club charter.

There are various delivery modes that may be used in presenting 4-H to this age group. Clovers may be organized as a separate group within existing neighborhood or community clubs, project clubs, school clubs, or be involved in short-term 4-H programs like special interest or school curriculum enrichment program.

They may also be organized as groups that are independent of an existing club. Establishing some 4-H Clovers groups as independent units will allow recruitment of new audiences. Child care programs, neighborhood centers, and after-school programs could provide these new audiences. Youth in these independent units can gradually progress to a traditional 4-H club unit.

### **A 4-H Clover Club:**

**Club size** - 5 children per MCE volunteer. It is a good idea to keep the group small.

**Meetings** - suggest one or two per month, one hour each. Meetings should be informal and relaxed with lots of activity. In many existing clubs, the Clovers start out being part of the regular 4-H club meeting, but then are taken out to a separate room where they are engaged in their Clover activities. Toward the end of the regular club meeting, the Clovers are brought back in to hear the speeches and demonstrations, and share in the refreshments and recreation.

**Where to meet** - community buildings, churches, homes of members or leaders, etc.

**Projects** - encourage members to take the results of their work home to show their parents and to repeat and practice new skills at home.

**Volunteers** - involve family members and older youth to help with activities during club meetings and/or at home. Junior leaders can serve as Clover leaders under adult supervision. Parents may be involved as long as they work with their own child. Adults who work with Clover club members, other than their own children must be MCE Volunteers.

### **Experiential Learning**

4-H promotes experiential (activity based) learning. The traditional 4-H motto "learning by doing" is as appropriate today as it was when 4-H first began. Experiential learning happens when a person gets involved in an activity, looks back at it critically, determines what was useful or important to remember, and uses the information to do something else. The steps to experiential learning are:

**Experience** -Begin with a concrete experience. This can be an individual activity or a group activity, but it involves "doing something". Activities can include: demonstrating a new skill, rating items (e.g., which snack is better), making things, creating exhibits, attending field trips, playing games or recreational activities.

**Share** – Encourage the group or individual to talk about the experience. Share reactions and observations. Talk freely.

**Process** -Discuss how questions are created by the activity. Ask more questions of the learners .

**Generalize** - Find general trends or common lessons in the experience. Stress the important points that apply to the "real world", not just the specific activity. Point out other ways the lesson might apply.

**Apply** -Talk about how the new information can be applied to everyday life or sometime in the future.

Experiential learning is more than doing activities. It involves discussing the activity, drawing lessons from the activity, and applying the lessons to the real world. All five steps are crucial to effective learning and none should be left out. However, use your own judgment when working with young children.

### **Rules of Thumb for Successful Clover Learning Experiences**

- The more messy the better.
- Short and quick.
- Active and action-oriented
- Outdoors works well.
- Hands-on
- If you can eat it at the end that's all the better.
- Supervision ratio is key-keep it small.
- Limit the range of choices to a few.
- Goopy is good.

## **Policy Information for a Clover Program**

### **Age**

Youth who turn 5 before the start of the 4-H program year (January 1) may join a 4-H Clover Club.

### **Enrollment**

Leaders will complete a 4-H member enrollment form for the 4-H Clovers. On the form the club name and number should be that of their 4-H club (e.g., Trail Blazers 4-H Clovers, Busy Bee 4-H Clovers). The only project listed on the form for these members should be 4-H Clovers. All other information will be completed in the normal procedure. The 4-H enrollment form is to be completed with all 4-H Clovers being reported as members of an established 4-H membership unit and listed in the Clover category. 4-H Clovers membership is designated by the project code assigned to the 4-H Clovers program. Forms can be obtained from the County Extension Office.

### **Curriculum**

The 4-H Clovers curriculum is designed specifically to meet the needs of the 5- to 7-year-old youth. These curriculum materials include a variety of learning experiences and activities. Some relate to traditional 4-H programs and projects. Others involve topics that are important to the development of the 5- to 7-year-old youth. Curriculum materials are designed around the developmental criteria for 5- to 7-year-olds outlined in the developmental information section of this document. The curriculum also indicates appropriate means for recognizing the various accomplishments of 4-H Clovers. Maryland 4-H will be providing standard Clover curriculum for use across the state. "Clover" is the only project in which this age group enrolls and participates.

### **Participation in 4-H Activities**

#### **Camp Programs**

4-H Clovers may attend 4-H camp if it is a day camp. Clovers should not participate in activities with overnight outings.

#### **Fairs and Shows**

One of the biggest questions about Clovers regards their participation in the county fair. If Clovers exhibit at the county fair, a separate division for Clovers should be developed. Again, all exhibitors should receive a participation ribbon and should not be competitively evaluated. Interview judging is encouraged. Junior leaders can be used to conduct the interviews. Clover members do not participate in animal shows, fitting and showing contests, or other competitive events at the fair. Clovers may study animals as a part of their learning experience, but should only bring photos of the animal, a notebook, story, photo story or some other display of their learning experiences. No live animals are to be exhibited.

#### **Officers**

The 4-H Clovers groups do not have elected officers like President, Vice President or Secretary. Clover groups should be informal and focused on fun and active learning-not on parliamentary procedure or business meetings run by officers.

## **Fundraising**

Clovers should not participate in fund-raising activities.

## **Competition and Clovers**

Children ages 6 to 8 need to be involved in activities and learning experiences that are developmentally appropriate. While these children are full of energy and have a willingness to learn, educational materials need to be designed for their specific abilities, needs and interests. In addition, activities and learning experiences should be geared to the informal setting offered by 4-H. Research indicates that competition at this age is not developmentally appropriate. It is important that 5- to 7-year-olds are involved in activities where the risk of failure is minimized and the opportunity to experience success is maximized. Educational programs for 5- to 7-year-olds should be focused on cooperative learning. Participation and learning of the child should be the ultimate goal.

Youth under age eight are not permitted to participate in 4-H or 4-H sponsored peer competitive events or activities. Peer competition is defined as two or more individuals or groups working to achieve a mutually exclusive goal; when the goal is achieved by one, the other(s) fail to achieve the goal. A 4-H or 4-H sponsored event is one that uses 4-H in the name of the event and/or the 4-H name and emblem in promoting the event. Examples of competitive events include judging contests, exhibits, shows, and other performance activities. It is not the intention of this policy to prevent youth under age 8 from participating in informal games at 4-H gatherings or meetings (e.g., a family volleyball game at a 4-H picnic, a game of dodge ball at a 4-H meeting, etc.).

**Policy Rationale:** The mission of 4-H is to help youth acquire knowledge, develop life skills, and form attitudes that enable them to become self-directing, productive and contributing members of society. Positive self-esteem plays a major role in accomplishing this youth development mission. Younger children, who are forming a self-concept, look to others around them for positive reinforcement. Children at very young ages tend to think in concrete and absolute terms, and if they lose in a competitive event, they may see themselves as failures. Adults and older youth are able to separate themselves from the outcomes of competition. Young children have not yet reached this developmental stage.

Research indicates that children under age 8 are not developmentally ready to participate in structured peer competitive events. As noted, children of this age find it hard to lose, at least in part, because they have difficulty putting their losses into perspective. They need to explore many interests and develop competencies and skills in a supportive, cooperative environment. Cooperative learning experiences must be introduced before competitive ones. The National 5 to 8 Curriculum Task Force has recommended against channeling 5- to 8-year-olds into narrow project areas or vigorous competition. Also, the "National Survey of Programs for Pre-nine-year-olds in 4-H" found that 73% of those states who had programs for youth under age 8 discourage or do not allow competition in their pre-4-H program.

In addition, competition takes the emphasis away from the process and puts it on the end product. Young children are fascinated with the process of accomplishing a task. Placing importance on the result rather than the process is in direct conflict with what is important to children in this developmental stage. The absence of competition reduces the importance of the outcome and frees children to simply enjoy the experience of playing and learning.

## Involving Parents As Volunteers In Programs for Ages 5- 7

Parents are a vital part of 4-H, and are an especially valued resource in the 5-7 Clover program; their cooperation is essential. Often it is the volunteer who serves as the catalyst to impress the importance of the parent's involvement and links the parent and child in a common work effort, sharing a new experience. This parent-child relationship linkage is one of the most important and dynamic leadership roles a volunteer advisor can fill.

What are some roles parents can fill with the Clover group? Here are some ideas:

Parents can learn how to help their own children see themselves as successful through positive reinforcement of the child's **part in the group effort**.

Parents can serve as volunteers for special events of the Clover group, remembering the parent serves as a facilitator for the event, not one who does the work of the Clover group, and in this case must be an MCE volunteer or complete a short-term MCE volunteer form for the specific event.

Parents can support the club volunteer through attendance at special events of the group.

Parents can learn about, appreciate, and teach through role modeling the goals of the 4-H program to the Clover participants.

Parents can give support to the citizenship/civic education lessons for example by taking the Clover group on an outing on election day to experience the decision-making process. Parents can be an excellent source of help for your local Clover program. However parents will usually not automatically volunteer their time to help you, even though most are willing to help. Volunteers must ask parents to help with specific jobs they can do. You need to convince parents their time is essential to the success of the Clover program.

Another important consideration when discussion the role of parents is how to keep them involved and informed about the Clover group. Here are a few suggestions:

- Involve parents right from the start in the organization of the club.
- Phone or personally invite parents to talk about 4-H and the goals and philosophy of the 5-7 Clover program.
- Ask parents to host a 4-H meeting in their home.
- Have special events, such as a parent tea or information night, specifically designed for the parent's involvement.

If the parents feel the Clover group is **your** group, they will feel no obligation to volunteer. Make certain parents feel ownership of, a part of the program, and that they can make a real contribution to the Clover group experience. Let the parents know that the member appreciates their involvement and the members like their 4-H activities better when the parents are interested.

## Starting a Clovers Club

### General Description

Clovers is the name given to a 4-H club membership unit for youth 5 to 7 years old. The neighborhood is a good base for this group. Children can walk to and from the club leader's home or another convenient location. Five to eight youth is an ideal number for a 4-H Clovers program. All youth regardless of socioeconomic level, race, sex, disability, national origin or religion are welcome in 4-H groups.

### How Do I Start a 4-H Clovers Group?

- Visit or call the county Extension office. The telephone listing for your Extension agents is listed in the white pages along with the other county offices.
- Meet with the county Extension agent and/or an experienced 4-H volunteer leader who will help you start your group.
- Participate in training specifically designed for Clover Club volunteers.
- Review the materials in this guide and the curriculum materials available for use with the 4-H Clovers group.
- Obtain enrollment forms from the County Extension office. Be sure you clearly understand the procedure for enrolling the 4-H Clovers members.
- Invite interested parents to a meeting to learn about 4-H Clovers. At this meeting:
  - Discuss parent expectations.
  - Discuss and display the materials to be used.
  - Discuss the parent's/guardian's role with the group.
  - Make plans to start the group.
  - Keep it fun, simple, stimulating and relevant.

### *Clover Leader Competencies*

- General knowledge of the 4-H Clover program.
- Organizational abilities.
- Interest and ability to work with youth 5 to 7 years old.

### *Duties*

- Participate in required training.
- Conduct an organizational meeting with the parents and members.

- Complete the necessary enrollment forms, records and reports.
- Arrange for meeting places and necessary supplies.
- Arrange for field trips and tours as well as any necessary transportation and additional chaperone needs.

Remain flexible and encourage members to contribute to and participate in the various Clovers activities.

### **Families are Important in the 4-H Clovers Program**

Families are a vital part of 4-H. Their cooperation is essential. Often it is the 4-H volunteer leader who gets the family members and the child working together on a project. The volunteer leader helps link them with each other in a new sharing experience. This is one of the most important benefits that leaders can provide for young children and their families.

#### *4-H Volunteer Leaders can help parents or guardians*

- Appreciate the goals of 4-H Clovers programs
- Learn to help children select projects
- Understand project requirements
- Learn to help children accept success and failure
- Become involved with Clovers
- Assist with transportation
- Have a role in special events

#### *How to interest and Inform parents or guardians:*

- Involve them in the organization of the 4-H Clovers group
- Phone and/or visit with them to talk about the 4-H Clovers
- Hold 4-H Clovers meetings in members' homes
- Invite them to all meetings and events
- Plan special events for parents

#### *Why is it important to involve parents or guardians?*

- They can increase efforts
- Members will like their 4-H Clovers activities better when their family is interested and involved

- They can make a valuable contribution to the 4-H Clovers and their community
- They gain an understanding of 4-H, parenting and this age group
- Many parents or guardians become 4-H volunteer leaders

Talking with parents or guardians helps you know and understand your 4-H Clovers members. Parents or guardians also like to know about the activities of their children. Parents or guardians are the major source of help for the program.

However, your attitude in soliciting help is important. They must feel that their help is needed. They must know that you think they are important to the success of the program and the individual's development.

"Nobody asked me" is the most frequent response given by people who do not volunteer. Most parents or guardians are willing to volunteer to help. Ask parents or guardians to become involved. Get both males and females interested and active.

## **Conducting Meetings for 4-H Clovers**

The 4-H Clovers meeting is one of the major tools leaders can use to help young children develop and learn. It provides children with the opportunity to participate in and develop friendships, exchange ideas, develop life skills, and explore new concepts and areas of interest. A 4-H Clovers meeting is a time when children can learn and have fun. No 4-H Clovers meeting should be so concentrated with education that it lacks the sounds of laughter and friendly conversation.

Remember, this meeting may be the first contact that these children will have with the 4-H Program. The experiences they have while participating in a 4-H Clovers group may make or break their future involvement in 4-H for many youth.

- One hour is a good time span for 4-H Clovers meetings.
- Allow time at the beginning to greet all the members and make them feel welcome.
- Open the meetings with the Pledge of Allegiance followed by the 4-H Pledge.
- Explain the activities to the members and allow them to actively participate.
- Keep in mind that members do not always have a finished project. Some activities simply allow the members to gain an understanding and awareness of the subject being taught.
- Remember the members have short attention spans, be sure to keep the activity simple and have plenty of "adult hands" to help. - Refreshments, games, and a short time for free play should be part of the meeting.

Before going home the 4-H Clovers should help clean up and put away any clutter they have made.

## **Planning**

The 4-H Clovers leadership team made up of the leader and other parents should meet several weeks prior to the first 4-H Clovers meeting and plan the first three meetings in detail. These first three meetings should focus on acquainting members with 4-H and getting the group off to a good start. Family involvement is always helpful in having a successful program and should be encouraged from the beginning.

During the planning meeting, a list of responsibilities for the first three meetings should be developed. Some of these responsibilities will include the following:

- Contact prospective members and their parents concerning the 4-H Clovers meeting and encourage parent participation.
- Secure and arrange facilities for the meeting.
- Secure the needed publications, supplies, and volunteers for each meeting.
- Plan and conduct different parts of each club meeting.

## **Suggested Outlines for First Three 4-H Clovers Meetings**

The following outlines may be modified to meet your specific needs. The leadership team may want to invite additional leaders or resource people to assist them in conducting the first three meetings. Make sure the meetings are well organized. Everyone on the program should be well prepared and understand their responsibility. At the fourth meeting, members of the group may be asked to assume some of the responsibilities or assist with various tasks such as opening ceremonies and roll call

### **Meeting #1**

Make sure a parent or guardian understands that they should attend this first meeting.

#### ***Display***

Before the meeting begins, set up a display of the 4-H Clovers educational materials and other 4-H information and items.

#### ***Welcome***

The leadership team who will preside over the meeting should welcome everyone and introduce the get-acquainted activity.

#### ***Get Acquainted Activity***

Write the name of each person attending the meeting on a small individual slip of paper and place a slip inside each balloon. Give each person a balloon and ask them to blow it up, then pop it to release the paper slips. Read the person's name on the slip and find that person (younger children who can not read should ask someone to help them read the name on their slip.) Ask them their date of birth. Once the activity is completed, ask each person to introduce the person whom they had to find to the group by telling them their name and birthday.

### ***Discussion with Parents and New Members***

Now that everyone is acquainted with each other, take a few minutes to discuss with the parents: meeting times, dates and locations. Also discuss any cost that may be associated with membership in the 4-H Clovers and the parent's role. Explain that the 4-H Clovers are more focused on the healthy development of their child than in making and exhibiting projects. 4-H Clovers will not be involved in competitive events. As such, the activities included in the 4-H Clovers meeting will include the following outline.

#### ***Suggested Time Frame for Meeting***

- 5 minutes: Opening and Overview
- 30 minutes: Learning Activity
- 5 minutes: Clean Up
- 10 minutes: Snack Time
- 10 minutes: Recreation Time

Explain that the Learning Activity is something that the whole family can work on together. Encourage the families to discuss the 4-H Clovers Learning Activities at home and continue involvement in these activities with other members of their family.

#### ***4-H Clovers Learning Activity***

Because time will be short, give an example of a 4-H Clover Learning Activity by conducting a ten-minute activity. This will break up the meeting with an activity for the young children and show them and their parents a sample of the educational programs involved in the 4-H Clover meetings.

#### ***Closing***

Ask for questions and thank everyone for attending. Announce the date, time and location of the next meeting. Encourage parents to attend any of the club meetings.

#### ***Refreshments***

Serve refreshments and encourage everyone to look at the 4-H display.

## **Meeting #2**

The Leadership Team will conduct this meeting. During the first part of the meeting do the following:

- Say the 4-H Pledge (Ask members and parents to repeat each line after you)
- Decide on a name for your 4-H Clovers group
- Decide on a regular meeting date(s), time and location.

### ***4-H Clovers Enrollment***

Complete the individual member and group enrollment forms supplied by the MSU Extension Service through your local county agent. Ask the parents to provide assistance in completing the individual member form with accurate information on the members-name, age and address.

### ***4-H Clovers Learning Activity***

Use a shortened version of the activity. This is an excellent opportunity to send home unfinished projects for the 4-H Clovers and their parent or guardian to complete.

### ***Refreshments***

Serve refreshments.

### ***Recreational Activity***

Get the 4-H Clovers and their parent or guardian involved together in a recreational activity. This might include a quiet inside game or a fun song that they all can sing.

## **Meeting #3**

The leadership team will conduct this meeting. Begin with the Pledge of Allegiance and the 4-H Pledge, a song and roll call of members. (This allows the youth to continue to learn the names of other members.)

### ***Presentation of Charter***

The 4-H Clovers leader presents the official charter to the 4-H Clovers members in a formal presentation.

### ***Initiation Ceremony***

The 4-H Clovers manager may conduct this special initiation ceremony for all new members of the 4-H Clovers group. At the conclusion of the ceremony, see that each member is presented an official 4-H pin, membership card and any other appropriate materials.

### ***4-H Clovers Learning Activity***

Conduct the 4-H Clovers Learning Activity. If the activity is incomplete at the close of the meeting, allow members to finish it at home with the help of family members.

### ***Refreshments***

Serve refreshments

## **Encouragement for 4-H Clovers**

Remember that the 4-H Clover Club or Program is intended to be a different, age-appropriate experience for children, ages 5-7, than the 4-H Club program for children and youth, ages 8-18. The focus is on having fun while learning! Each child is special and the 4-H volunteers who work with the group will have a lot of fun, too! Here are some tips for providing encouragement for the children in your club.

Focus encouragement on the assets and strengths of the child.

See the positive in a situation first before finding the negative.

Accept the child for what the child is, not what you want the child to be.

Show faith in the child's abilities and attempts to do tasks. Lack of faith will only help the child to fail.

Provide realistic standards to live up to and, from time to time, re-evaluate these standards.

Replace discouraging words in your vocabulary with encouraging words.

Praise is reserved for a job well done, encouragement is used when continuation of a task is wanted or when a task is poorly done.

Encouragement:

Focuses on helping the child feel worthwhile.

Will have long range and lasting effect on the child's behavior and self-confidence.

"Knowing you, I'm sure you will do all right."

"I really appreciate what you've done for me."

"You're doing much better."

"I can see you've done something about that. Are you ready to start?"

## **Recognition for Clover 4-H children**

Clover 4-H members do not participate in competitive events in 4-H and cannot receive premium awards. Some county/city programs offer a 4-H Clover ribbon to youth who share their Clover exhibits at the county/city fair or in other places in the county/city. Children do appreciate recognition! Here are some great ways to recognize the Clover children for their participation in Clover 4-H:

A pat on the shoulder

Nodding

Specific verbal praise

Certificates

Writing a note home about the progress of the group member

Saying, "thank you."

Letting a group member make a decision

Asking a group member a question

Asking a group member to demonstrate skills to the rest of the group

Providing an opportunity for the group to share their skills and projects with the community through a fair or special exhibit

Smiling

Giving enthusiastic and encouraging comment concerning a person's work

Allowing group members to plan and lead group activities.

There are literally thousands of ways to show positive guidance. The effective youth volunteer must always be aware of the importance of positive guidance and practice it as much as possible.

## **Sample Job Descriptions for Volunteers Working Directly with Youth Ages 5 - 7**

### **Clover 4-H Club Leader**

*Time Required:*

(Specify)

*Location:*

(Identify Specific Area or Community)

*General Purpose:*

Serve as a liaison between the county extension office/county 4-H professional and 4-H members enrolled in a Clover club, their parents, and other volunteers regarding 4-H Clover club programs.

Support 4-H professionals, volunteers, and members in conducting meaningful educational experiences to help youth, ages 5 - 7, grow and reach their fullest potential.

Inform and encourage members, parents, and other volunteers to actively participate in appropriate 4-H opportunities for Clover youth.

*Specific Responsibilities:*

Be committed to young people ages 5 to 7 and their growth in all areas.

Advise Clover 4-H club members regarding their contributions to and participation in club activities.

Be dedicated to young people and sensitive to their abilities and needs.

Encourage 4-H members' and parents' interest and participation. Encourage parents to support their child's Clover activities.

Welcome parents' ideas, activity and project assistance, cooperation, support, and attendance at 4-H activities.

Follow all 4-H guidelines and policies of Maryland Cooperative Extension Service, the Maryland 4-H program, and the county 4-H program.

Read 4-H newsletters and literature from the county Extension office and keep members, parents, and other volunteers informed.

*Qualifications:*

The ability to teach and motivate youth ages 5-7 while nurturing positive self esteem, decision making, and responsibility in the youth; a sincere interest in teaching and sharing knowledge and skills with youth and adults in a Clover educational setting; the ability to organize information and materials and delegate responsibility; the ability to work communicate effectively in both verbal and written forms; leadership positions; the ability to work with minimal supervision from professional staff, a sincere interest in working with other volunteers and professional staff in an educational setting; and a willingness to

become familiar with and work within the philosophy and guidelines of the Maryland Cooperative Extension Service, the Maryland 4-H Program and county/city 4-H program.

*Cooperative Extension Service, 4-H Youth Development agrees to:*

Provide training opportunities that will help the volunteer meet the needs of youth ages 5-7, other volunteers, and parents; provide appropriate manuals, pamphlets, audio-visual aids, newsletters and other resource materials for Clover program; have professionals and/or middle management volunteers available to consult with club volunteers; provide opportunities for professionals to listen to volunteers' ideas to help improve the 4-H program; and provide appropriate recognition and awards to advisors.

*Supervision:*

(List county Extension 4-H professional(s) or 4-H middle manager name, address, and telephone number)

Participate in one or more volunteer development opportunities each year.

Be aware of 4-H curriculum available for youth enrolled in Clover clubs, help members with educational activities, and encourage parents to support their child's educational activities.

Continually provide feedback to members, letting them know when they are doing a good job and advising them when they need to improve. Praise members for the progress they make.

## **Clover 4-H Special Interest Leader**

*Time Required:*

(Specify)

*Location:*

(Identify Specific Area or Community)

*General Purpose:*

Serve as a liaison between the county extension office/county 4-H professional and 4-H members enrolled in a Clover club, their parents, and other volunteers regarding 4-H club programs. Support 4-H professionals, volunteers, and members in conducting meaningful educational experiences to help youth, ages 5 - 7, grow and reach their fullest potential. Inform and encourage members, parents, and other volunteers to actively participate in appropriate 4-H opportunities.

*Specific Responsibilities:*

Be committed to young people ages 5 to 7 and their growth in all areas.

Coordinate and/or teach short-term 4-H educational programs emphasizing experiential learning for youth ages 5-7.

Recruit special interest participants ages 5-7 and coordinate enrollment, publicity, and recognition for the group.

Encourage 4-H members' and parents' interest and participation.

Welcome parents' ideas, activity and project assistance, cooperation, support, and attendance at 4-H activities.

Follow all 4-H guidelines and policies of Maryland Cooperative Extension Service, the Maryland 4-H program, and the county 4-H program.

Be dedicated to young people and sensitive to their needs.

Read 4-H newsletters and literature from the county Extension office and keep members, parents, and other volunteers informed.

Participate in one or more volunteer development opportunities each year.

Encourage parents to support their child's Clover educational activities.

Continually provide feedback to members, letting them know when they are doing a good job and advising them when they need to improve. Praise members for the progress they make.

*Qualifications:*

The ability to teach and motivate youth ages 5-7 while nurturing positive self esteem, decision making, and responsibility in the youth; a sincere interest in teaching and sharing knowledge and skills with youth and adults in a Clover educational setting; the ability to organize information and materials and delegate responsibility; the ability to work communicate effectively in both verbal and written forms; leadership positions; the ability to work with minimal supervision from professional staff; a sincere interest in working with other volunteers and professional staff in an educational setting; and a willingness to become familiar with and work within the philosophy and guidelines of the Maryland Cooperative Extension Service, the Maryland 4-H Program and county/city 4-H program.

*Cooperative Extension Service, 4-H Youth Development agrees to:*

Provide training opportunities that will help the volunteer meet the needs of youth ages 5-7, other volunteers, and parents; provide appropriate manuals, pamphlets, audio-visual aids, newsletters and other resource materials for Clover program; have professionals and/or middle management volunteers available to consult with club volunteers; provide opportunities for professionals to listen to volunteers' ideas to help improve the 4-H program; and provide appropriate recognition and awards to advisors.

*Supervision:*

(Give county Extension 4-H professional(s)/middle manager name, address, and telephone number)