



Helping You Help Youth



TRANSITIONING 4-H CLOVERBUDS TO THE 4-H COMMUNITY CLUB PROGRAM

Introduction

As 4-H Cloverbud members reach their last year in the 4-H Cloverbud program, it is important to help them understand that new opportunities are ahead for them in the 4-H community club program. The 4-H Cloverbud program differs quite a bit from the regular 4-H programming. Therefore, it is important to prepare the youth for this change. Ideally 4-H Cloverbud members will transition into 4-H community clubs after reaching age 8 as of September 1. For 4-H Cloverbud members who belong to a “Cloverbud group” within a 4-H community club this is a natural progression. These two groups usually already share a location, meeting time, and opportunities where they interact with each other. This makes their transition a smooth and easy adjustment.

Members who belong to an independent or separate 4-H Cloverbud group, who participate in school enrichment 4-H Cloverbud programs, or who attend an after-school program utilizing 4-H Cloverbud curricula may not be aware of the opportunities to progress unless the Extension staff and volunteers assist them in the transition to the regular 4-H program. 4-H Cloverbud leaders have the opportunity to create a positive youth development experience for their small groups and that positive impact can continue by helping 4-H Cloverbud members transition successfully into the 4-H community club program.

The most successful transitions occur when 4-H Cloverbud leaders work with the Extension staff and/or local 4-H community club leaders. These transitions are also more successful when contact with older community club members are built into existing 4-H Cloverbud programs. Interaction between 4-H Cloverbud and community club groups helps 4-H Cloverbud members gain a better understanding of the variety of opportunities available through Illinois 4-H.

Transition Suggestions

Some suggestions to help 4-H Cloverbud members and their families adjust to the changes include the following:

- Have a **4-H Clover visible** at each meeting of the 4-H Cloverbud group so that they realize they are 4-H members. Provide members with a copy of the handout that contains the words to the 4-H pledge and the hand movements. Have members recite the pledge at each group session.



A community club differs from a 4-H Cloverbud group in that the club elects officers, practices parliamentary procedure, and utilizes the democratic process to make decisions. The 4-H Cloverbud group might visit a club meeting to observe officers in action, watch motions being made, and votes taken on decisions. Back in their own group, 4-H Cloverbud leaders could hold practice sessions on making a motion and voting. The group could also visit a city council meeting or a county board meeting to see how adults utilize these same skills in adult life.

- **Create nametags or t-shirts** for members to wear that contain the 4-H Clover. Have your 4-H Cloverbud group wear these when they attend special county 4-H events designed for 4-H Cloverbud members. Some 4-H Cloverbud items are sold through the National 4-H Supply Source Book or on-line at www.4-hmall.org.



- Encourage 4-H Cloverbud groups to **visit a 4-H community club** at least once a year, perhaps for a special program or social event. Perhaps the 4-H Cloverbud members could join a local club on their project tour or special summer outing. This would provide 4-H Cloverbud members with a chance to interact in a fun, informal way with older 4-H members.

Project tour - Have older 4-H members share information about 4-H projects listed in the *Illinois Clover*. They could provide suggestions about projects that are age-appropriate or skill-level appropriate for new 4-H members. They could show 4-H Cloverbud members samples of the project manuals or supplemental materials available to members.

- **Invite a county 4-H Ambassador or a 4-H club Junior Leader** to attend one of the 4-H Cloverbud meetings to talk about the 4-H community club program.

Ambassadors - Invite 4-H Ambassadors to do a short educational program identifying some of the 4-H symbols and traditions including the 4-H emblem, motto, colors, slogan, pledge, and creed. This would help 4-H Cloverbud members gain a greater appreciation for and a sense of affiliation and belonging to the 4-H organization.

Ask Junior Leaders to do an informational session on giving talks and demonstrations since 4-H Cloverbud members will be expected to give presentations in the community club setting.

- **Develop a relationship with a local 4-H community club** where the two groups of youth have an opportunity to work and play together.
- Older members of a 4-H community club could plan and conduct a special **“4-H Cloverbud Party”** or a **“4-H Find Out Party”** for the 4-H Cloverbud members. It would a good leadership experience for the older 4-H members and good exposure for the 4-H Cloverbud members.



- 4-H community clubs could hold a special **“4-H Cloverbud Graduation Ceremony”** for the 4-H Cloverbud members who are turning 8 by September 1. They would use this occasion to welcome them to the 4-H community club program. If this is done on the county level, Extension staff might invite representatives from a number of local 4-H community clubs to be present to conduct the ceremony and to answer questions for the 4-H Cloverbud members and their families.

- If a “4-H Cloverbud Graduation Ceremony” event is not going to be held, gather copies of *The Illinois Clover* (M90301), a list of 4-H community clubs with their contact information, and other promotional materials regarding the 4-H community club program from the local Extension office. Distribute materials to 4-H Cloverbud families.

- Conduct a **county information night** for graduating 4-H Cloverbud members and their families. They can receive additional information about the 4-H community club program and meet youth and leaders involved in the program.

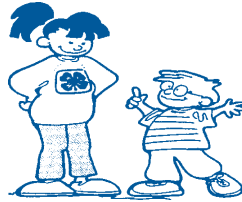
- During county 4-H Project Days, offer one or two **workshops specifically for 4-H Cloverbud members** and encourage them to attend. Middle school- and junior high-age youth might serve as leaders for these project workshops. Besides being positive role models, it would provide teens a chance to begin to develop their own leadership skills.

- 4-H Cloverbud groups might start doing more **“project book type”** activities in the third year of the 4-H Cloverbud program. By enrolling the older 4-H Cloverbud members in 4-H Cloverbud projects that have a member manual, they will experience activities similar to those of enrolling in projects in the 4-H community club program. A list of 4-H Cloverbud projects is available in *The Illinois Clover* (M90301) and on the 4-H web site.



Examples are *Bicycle I* (BU-7503) or *Aerospace I* (BU-6843) 4-H projects. These manuals require some reading and writing on the part of the 4-H member.

- Develop a **mentor system** with a local 4-H community club that matches each 4-H Cloverbud member with a 4-H community club member as a “4-H Friend.” Good matches might include 4-H members who have two or three years of experience in the 4-H community club. Continue to use the “4-H Friend” as a mentor and helper during the transition year. The publication, *Welcome to the Illinois 4-H Big Friend Program* (L90310) is available as a resource.



- Have a party for all 4-H Cloverbud members and leaders at the county level and utilize the “*Get Real – Get Active*” video (VH -7170) and activities (BU-7169) to give the members **a taste of 4-H projects**. Make ice cream sundaes and talk about becoming a 4-H community club member.

- Be sure 4-H Cloverbud families are receiving and reading the **county 4-H newsletter**. While information in this newsletter may be overwhelming at times, it may help parents get a better understanding of the variety of 4-H opportunities at the county, state, and national levels. The county 4-H newsletter may include a “4-H Cloverbud Corner” that contains news and tips just for 4-H Cloverbud families or the county may provide 4-H Cloverbud families with copies of *The Cloverbud Family Times* available for download from the Illinois 4-H web site.



- Ask the Extension office to **list the names of graduating 4-H Cloverbud members in the county 4-H newsletter and add them to the mailing list** for the county 4-H newsletter, so they will receive the first newsletter of the 4-H year.
- Review the 4-H Cloverbud display opportunities in the county 4-H show/fair book and **encourage members to come to the fair, display and share their work as a 4-H Cloverbud group, and see the other 4-H projects on exhibit.**

- **Encourage 4-H Cloverbud families to attend various events in conjunction with your county 4-H show/fair.**



This will provide the families with a better feel and idea about 4-H projects and their exhibit opportunities. They will gain a better understanding of these events before they become an actual exhibitor. The “4-H Big Friend” might give the 4-H Cloverbud a tour of the fair and help them meet others from the 4-H community club and join in on the fair excitement.

- During the transition year, be sure the **provide copies of the *New Kids in the Clover*** newsletter series to the former 4-H Cloverbud families. These are available on the Illinois web site at www.4-h.uiuc.edu/staff/fieldstaff.html#newkids

No matter what access system 4-H Cloverbud members participate in — whether they are an independent 4-H Cloverbud group, 4-H Cloverbud group within a 4-H community club, a school enrichment 4-H Cloverbud group, or a 4-H Cloverbud program in an after-school setting — staff and volunteers need to work together deliberately to promote the excitement of growing older and the opportunities for growth in the 4-H program.

The 4-H community club program provides a variety of opportunities for young people to develop leadership, citizenship, and life skills. The 4-H community club program offers the same positive relationship with a caring adults as well as age-appropriate, structured, safe, and welcoming environments as the 4-H Cloverbud group. However, the 4-H community club program also challenges young people with opportunities to achieve mastery and competence in project work, to value and practice service to others, to be involved in decision-making, and to actively participate in choices related to their future.

Parental Involvement

As we have already noted, 4-H Cloverbud programs can exist in a variety of settings. There is, however, a fairly common link that exists among ALL quality 4-H Cloverbud programs. This common link is a welcome, open attitude toward parents. Cultivating a good relationship with the parents of 5-7 year-olds is an important strategy for enhancing communication and program buy-in. This is also a key component in successfully transitioning youth from a 4-H Cloverbud experience to a 4-H community club experience. Parents who have been actively involved and who have observed the positive learning experiences that their child has been a part of are much more willing to extend and/or continue that program involvement.



Here are some possible strategies for involving and informing parents:

- **Parent Flyers** – send home a monthly update that highlights the 4-H Cloverbud activity their child participated in during the meeting. Also include information related to what their child will be learning during the next 4-H Cloverbud meeting.
- **4-H Cloverbud Supply/Resource List** – many parents (and kids too) like to contribute supplies and/or resources for upcoming activities. Even if a parent can't attend the meeting, this allows the child to see how their parent is contributing to the program.
- **Parent Volunteers** – ask for parent volunteers who can contribute refreshments, lead an activity, assist with planning a tour, etc. Conduct a parent survey to identify any special skills or talents that parents may have that could lead to a special 4-H Cloverbud activity.
- **Parent Cooperation/Attendance** – encourage parents to attend the 4-H Cloverbud meetings with their child. This gives them firsthand experience of what is going on at the meetings, allows them to be a part of the positive learning experience, and also helps them learn about other 4-H related opportunities that exist for their child.

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