



4-H Afterschool Resource Guide

Teens as Volunteer Leaders



Recruiting and Training Teens to Work with Younger Youth in After-School Programs

Credits

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4-H Afterschool is a collaborative effort of the Cooperative Extension System — state land grant universities, state and

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In 2019, the National Association of 4-H Youth Development Professionals Afterschool Working Group began editing and revising this original educational material.

2022 Editor Team

Lead: Vanessa Spero, UF/IFAS Extension

Team in alphabetical order

Niki Crawson, UF/IFAS Extension

JR Davis, West Virginia University

Tara Dorn, UF/IFAS Extension

Beth Rasa Edwards, University of Missouri

Stacy Hall, University of Minnesota
Karen Henry, UF/IFAS Extension
Heather Janney, UF/IFAS Extension
Beth Kerr, UF/IFAS Extension
Andrea Lazzari, UF/IFAS Extension
Abby Morgan, Purdue University
Kristie Popa, UF/IFAS Extension
Cindy Smalley, West Virginia University
Melinda Souers, UF/IFAS Extension
Katie Stenroos, University of Wisconsin
Laura Valencia, UF/IFAS Extension
Travis West, The Ohio State University
Tracy Winters, The Ohio State University
Mary-Louise Wood, University of Wyoming



**NATIONAL 4-H
COUNCIL**

<https://4-h.org>



<https://www.usda.gov>

The authors wish to recognize these individuals and organizations who contributed to the original development of the first edition of the curriculum.

Original Leadership Team

Cathann A. Kress, National 4-H Headquarters at USDA

Donald T. Floyd, Jr., National 4-H Council

Theresa Ferrari, Ohio State University

Marlene Glasscock, Kansas State University

Linda Harriman, Oklahoma State University

Sharon K. Junge, University of California

Eric Killian, University of Nevada, Reno

Lisa Lauxman, University of Arizona

Ina Metzger Linville, University of Missouri

Gretchen May, University of Massachusetts

Michael Newman, Mississippi State University

Sheila Urban Smith, Michigan State University

Samuel Suina, Institute of American Indian Arts

Deirdre Thompson, University of California

Nancy Valentine, National 4-H Headquarters at USDA

Sherri K.B. Wright, National 4-H Headquarters at USDA

Original Writer

Sharon K. Junge, University of California

Original Reviewers

Eddie Locklear, Director, 4-H Afterschool

Ronald C. Drum, Coordinator, 4-H Afterschool

Amee Patel, National 4-H Council Marketing Communications

Original Editor

Laura Phillips Garner, National 4-H Council, Marketing Communications

Original Layout

Tina M. Cardosi, TM Design, Inc.

Original Printing

Tom Sochocki, GraphTec Printing

Original Sponsors

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Introduction:

What is 4-H?

The 4-H Youth Development organization nationwide is known for engaging youth as leaders and giving them the power to take action. 4-H is delivered by Cooperative Extension, a network of over 100 public universities across the nation.

Through the Cooperative Extension System of land-grant universities, 4-H mobilizes trained, experienced, and competent educators in more than 3,000 counties across the United States and 50 other countries throughout the world to support this community of young people who are learning leadership, citizenship and life skills.

The 4-H mission is to teach youth to reach their full potential, working and learning in partnership with caring adults. The cooperation of more than six million youth; over 500,000 volunteers; 3,500 4-H professionals; 105 state land-grant universities; state and local governments; private-sector partners; state and local 4-H foundations; National 4-H Council; and National 4-H Headquarters at USDA makes 4-H happen. 4-H alumni now total about 60 million.

4-H stands for **Head, Heart, Hands, and Health**.

4-H PLEDGE

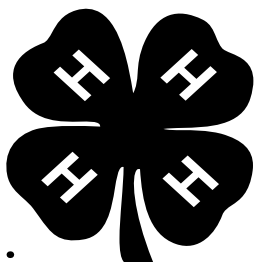
I pledge my **HEAD** to clearer thinking,

My **HEART** to greater loyalty,

My **HANDS** to larger service,

And my **HEALTH** to better living

For my club, my community,
my country, and my world.



This resource guide is designed to be used by Extension professionals who wish to deliver teen-led cross-age teaching in after-school programs. It draws from curricula, ideas, and information available throughout the Cooperative Extension System.

The Issue of After-School Care

Care for school-age children is a concern for millions of American families, particularly those with a single parent or both parents employed. With over 75 million school-age children, the United States is experiencing a burgeoning need for out-of-school programs. In 2020, over 20% of elementary school children participated in an organized after-school program (Sparr et al., 2021).

Where young people spend their time, what they do and with whom they do it are important to their overall development. After-school hours represent either risk or opportunity. Youth who are unsupervised are much more likely to engage in activities that place them at risk.

Programs in the out-of-school hours give youth safe, supervised places to spend time, along with chances to learn new skills, develop interests and spend meaningful time with peers and adults.

“Afterschool programs are a promising avenue for supporting social-emotional, behavioral, and physical health during middle childhood” (Sparr et al., 2021). Participation in high-quality after-school programs is linked with a lower incidence of problem behaviors, such as decreased academic failure, substance use and delinquency. Furthermore, youth who attend these programs have demonstrated improved academic achievement (e.g., better school attendance and better grades) and improved social skills (e.g., positive relationships with adults, opportunity to make new friends, greater self-concept, and self-esteem).



However, the challenges in running effective after-school programs are well documented. Primary among these challenges are program quality, staff training, staff turnover and consistent funding.

A broad range of activities and organizations are described as after-school programs, creating ambiguous definitions (Gootman, 2000). After-school programs don't always share a common time period (i.e., immediately following the school day), because the term is used broadly to refer to any program outside of school hours. Additionally, programming in after-school hours is not solely the domain of any one group. The after-school landscape is populated by a myriad of program types, program locations and sponsoring organizations.

Gootman, J. A. (Ed.). (2000). *After-school programs to promote child and adolescent development: Summary of a workshop*. National Academy Press. Retrieved August 11, 2022, from <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/read/9944/chapter/1>

Sparr, M., Morrison, C., Miller, K., Bartko, W. T., & Frazier, S. (2021). *Afterschool programs to improve social-emotional, behavioral, and physical health in middle childhood: A targeted review of the literature*. ASPE—Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. Retrieved August 15, 2022, from https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/migrated_legacy_files/199566/4_MCASP_LiteratureReview.pdf

Why should 4-H be involved in after-school programs?

The current situation represents a tremendous opportunity to align existing youth development programs available through Extension/4-H with the need for after-school care, as well as an opportunity to create new program delivery models.

A young person's healthy development is Extension/4-H's goal, and we have the resources to provide after-school opportunities. Extension/4-H helps youth develop into confident, capable citizens who contribute to their communities.

It is unlikely that Extension/4-H youth development professionals alone could meet the great need for after-school programs in our communities. However, many communities have existing programs that would benefit from our expertise and resources and welcome our partnership.

AFTER-SCHOOL HOURS

represent either risk or opportunity.

What is 4-H Afterschool?

4-H Afterschool is designed to combine the resources of Extension/4-H with community-based organizations that provide after-school programs that address community needs.

The 4-H Afterschool program helps increase the quality and availability of after-school programs by improving the ability of after-school program staff and volunteers (youth and adults) to offer high-quality care, education, and developmental experiences for youth; increase the use of 4-H curricula in after-school programs; and organize 4-H clubs in after-school programs. 4-H Afterschool offers support and training materials, including this resource guide, to help teens teach quality programs.

The 4-H club operates within the structure of the community-based organization that sponsors the after-school program. The 4-H Afterschool club approach works best when the goals of the two organizations are compatible and both have a shared sense of ownership.

The implementation of the after-school program's 4-H club component can take various forms. For example, 4-H may be offered on a particular day of the week, or selected projects may be offered. After-school educators may designate a specific time for club meetings, where youth say the 4-H pledge, officers lead and members make choices about activities to pursue. The person responsible for the 4-H club may be staff paid by Extension/4-H (e.g., a program assistant), staff of the organization running the program (e.g., the Boys and Girls Club), a volunteer (adult and/or youth), or some combination. Starting 4-H clubs is a familiar part of the 4-H professional's job. Establishing the 4-H club in the after-school program setting, however, may present some new challenges because the after-school landscape reveals many out-of-school program providers and considerable variation among existing programs despite common elements.



Thus, the approach cannot be “one size fits all.” Extension/4-H staff must be creative, flexible, and above all, able to listen when needs are expressed by sites. Despite these challenges, it’s well worth the effort because county 4-H programs and after-school programs both benefit from working with new partners and new audiences. Of course, the ultimate beneficiaries are the children.

.....

4-H AFTERSCHOOL

trains after-school staff and volunteers, develops quality programs and creates after-school communities of young people across America who are learning leadership, citizenship, and life skills.

.....

Key Elements of 4-H Afterschool

Certain key elements need to be in place to ensure 4-H Afterschool program consistency, including:

1. Open and responsive communication between the local Extension/4-H office and the local 4-H club leadership.
2. Diversity in 4-H club membership and leadership.
3. Shared leadership responsibilities among adults, youth, and children.
4. Youth-adult partnerships recognize individual interests, abilities and assets and balance strengths and weaknesses among and between members and leaders.
5. 4-H club leadership is willing and able to be flexible and adaptable to individual situations.
6. Rules contribute to positive youth development and focus on such fundamental issues as safety and mutual respect.
7. A healthy balance exists between cooperation and competition among the 4-H club’s members.
8. Active participation of 4-H club members is encouraged within and outside club boundaries.
9. Clear understanding of the 4-H club’s purpose, goals, and expectations is held by its members, parents, and volunteers.
10. Educational programs use an experiential learning model.
11. Volunteer and member accomplishments and contributions are recognized.



How to Use This Resource Guide

This resource guide is designed to be used by Extension/4-H professionals to deliver teen-led curricula in after-school programs. It includes an overview of program delivery, recruitment processes and training outlines.

Teens as Volunteer Leaders is a proven model for involving teens in delivering curriculum and programs to younger youth. This cross-age approach is highly effective in building leadership and life skills in teens and in the younger youth who are involved in the program.

- Chapter 1 is an overview of the core elements in developing a *Teens as Volunteer Leaders* project.
- Chapters 2 and 3 provide suggestions for recruiting teens, mentors, and after-school program staff.
- Chapter 4 offers an outline for conducting a teen orientation prior to training the teens.
- Chapter 5 gives a detailed outline for conducting a three-to-four-hour training to prepare teens for working with younger youth and delivering a curriculum.
- Chapter 6 has tips for recognizing teens and youth participants.
- The final chapter offers suggestions for marketing a *Teens as Volunteer Leaders* program.

OTHER RESOURCE GUIDES

in this series offer a more in-depth focus on helping

- after-school sites start 4-H clubs within their operations and providing activities and learning experiences for day-to-day programming.

Other Resource Guides in the 4-H Afterschool Series

- **Starting 4-H Clubs in After-School Programs**, helps afterschool sites start 4-H clubs.
- **4-H Youth Development Programming in Hard-to-Reach Communities** aims to reach out to, increase programming for, and meet the needs of the full scope of audiences participating in 4-H after-school activities.
- **Developing and Managing a 4-H Afterschool Program** assists Extension professionals in evaluating the need for and planning the establishment of new after-school options in communities with insufficient programs available for school-age youth.

Each of these guides is designed to be used independently. Nevertheless, the guides also work well together during orientation and training of after-school staff and volunteers.



Chapter I:

Elements of a *Teens as Volunteer Leaders* Project

What is *Teens as Volunteer Leaders*?

Teens as Volunteer Leaders is a proven model for involving teens in delivering curriculum and programs to younger youth. This cross-age approach is highly effective in building leadership and life skills in both the teens and younger youth who receive the program. Younger youth respond well to teen instructors who often provide a positive role model for them.

The success of the *Teens as Volunteer Leaders* model will not happen without considerable planning effort. Experience and research have shown that there are 10 core elements to planning and delivering a *Teens as Volunteer Leaders* project.

A review of each of the 10 core elements follows.

10 CORE ELEMENTS*

1. Dedicated Adults Who Support Teens
2. Active Teen Recruitment
3. Strong Curriculum
4. Initial Training
5. Ongoing Training & Support
6. Attention to Details
7. Recognition & Reward
8. Team Building
9. Setting Teens Up for Success
10. Feedback & Evaluation

*Adapted from research conducted by Faye C. H. Lee and Shelly Murdock, University of California Cooperative Extension.

Lee, F. C. H., & Murdock, S. (2001). Teens as teachers programs: Ten essential elements. *Journal of Extension*, 39(1). Available at <https://archives.joe.org/joe/2001february/rb1.php>

Dedicated Adults Who Support Teens

Committed adults serving as mentors or coaches are an essential element of an effective *Teens as Volunteer Leaders* project. Teens benefit from the experience and passion of a caring adult. The mentor role should be established early in the process and continued through the completion of the project. Adult coaches and mentors allow teens to explore and try out new roles and new skills in a safe environment. They identify potential problems but allow teens to problem solve and try out solutions. They encourage teens through praise and constructive criticism. They allow teens to be the central teachers, planners, and evaluators. They view their role as creating an environment where teens will be successful.



Active Teen Recruitment

Finding and recruiting teens to participate in the *Teens as Volunteer Leaders* project requires planning. Some projects may require teens to have a prerequisite of skills or experience, while others will provide training necessary for the project. Completing an application and keeping some type of records is useful and can be an opportunity to teach job-seeking skills. Using a commitment or participation agreement is helpful in spelling out the expectations for teens, mentors, and those overseeing the project. See Chapter 2 for suggestions on how to create and implement a recruitment plan.

Strong Curriculum

Successful outcomes are associated with a solid curriculum that is easy for teens to deliver. Teens will be more competent and feel more knowledgeable and capable when they have strong curricula to deliver. 4-H programs employ research-based curricula that are factual, engaging, and hands-on. Minimally, curricula should have at least five lessons that are about one to one-and-a-half hours long. The subject matter of the curriculum can vary. Providing activities that interest teens and younger youth is key.



Initial Training

A comprehensive training on the curriculum and how to teach it is essential. Time spent training the teens on curriculum details and allowing them to practice what they have learned will pay off in top results. Shortchanging the initial training can cause problems in program delivery and compromise program outcomes. Equally important is teaching the teens how to work with younger youth. Our experience has shown that program delivery issues most often are associated with classroom management issues that stem from not understanding the developmental characteristics of the young people with whom they are working. Unrealistic expectations about the ability of younger youth to sit, comprehend, respond, or perform a task can lead to teen frustrations. Addressing these issues in the initial training will assure greater *Teens as Volunteer Leaders* project success. See Chapter 5 for more information.

Ongoing Training and Support

Successful *Teens as Volunteer Leaders* projects invest in additional training and support. The initial training can be overwhelming for some teens. They need an opportunity to reflect on what they have learned. A follow-up meeting to review expectations and content can alleviate anxiety. If delivery problems have been encountered, providing a venue to discuss the issue, identify solutions, or even receive additional training is helpful. Teens appreciate the opportunity to get together with other teen teams, discuss their successes, and get other tips for further project delivery. Mentors should be trained on how to continuously support the teens.

Attention to Details

Giving attention to details may be obvious to many who have experience working with teens or delivering a program of this nature. Successful program delivery is dependent on taking care of the “nuts and bolts” of the project. Great training is only as good as the delivery support system. Plan ahead to provide appropriate communication between teens, parents, mentors, after-school sites, and program implementers. Determine in advance what supplies and other materials are needed to deliver the curriculum and how they will be provided. Set dates and share them with all participants in advance of the start of the project. Give attention to teens’ needs, such as planning for food, transportation, rest, relaxation, and recreation. Don’t forget to make the project fun!

Recognition and Reward

Everyone needs to be recognized for their hard work. Make sure your program provides adequate recognition for all program participants. Teens will benefit from a variety of recognition forms. They will sense whether their efforts are valued and appreciated. Consider offering both intrinsic and extrinsic forms of recognition (see Chapter 6). Some projects may offer stipends or pay the teens for their time. These decisions are usually based on the philosophy of the programs, their locale, and overall objectives of the project. If some form of financial compensation is offered, it should be well thought out with details of compensation and expectations provided in writing to teens.

Team Building

Teens as Volunteer Leaders projects that focus on building a strong team approach are most successful. Teen camaraderie and being part of a teen group experience is a motivating factor for many teens’ involvement in the project. Most teens also prefer to work with other teens in delivering the curriculum. Our experience shows that establishing these teen teams in advance of the training works best (see Chapter 2). Providing opportunities for teens to continue to meet beyond the initial training also supports team building.

Setting Teens Up for Success

Staff who implement successful *Teens as Volunteer Leaders* projects know what a successful project looks like, and they work to assure that teens will experience this success. They are flexible and willing to change course if needed. They have high expectations for teens and confidence in their abilities. They pay attention to group needs and those of individual teens. They provide a safe and caring environment where teens can test their abilities.

Evaluation

Teens need immediate and constant feedback. Mentors assigned to small groups of teens can provide ongoing encouragement and suggestions. Programs that provide multiple opportunities for teens to receive feedback have been found to be the most successful. Involving teens in critiquing their own performance is valuable to teens and to the project. Providing forms, journals, and discussion time to review performance is helpful. The use of portfolios, memory or artifact boxes, videos, and



photographs of the projects in action are additional ways for teens to record and communicate project successes. Asking mentors to give ongoing feedback on teens' performance can identify areas that may need to be modified. Teens or mentors should be adequately trained about how to administer evaluation tools if they are involved in collecting project outcome data.

Evaluation Resources

The 4-H Common Measures surveys (<https://4-h.org/professionals/common-measures/>) can be used to evaluate the leadership skills teens gain by participating in this program. The 4-H Universal Survey and 4-H Experience Surveys apply to this program.



Chapter 2:

Teen Recruitment

What's in This Section

The following is an outline of successful recruitment procedures, including:

- Creating a timeline
- Recruitment planning
- Preparing recruitment materials
- Preparing application materials
- Recruitment strategies

TIP

For best results, include adult mentors and after-school staff with the teens.

Teen Recruitment

This section of the guide will provide you with some proven tools for recruiting interested teens as project participants.

Some programs may have a ready pool of interested teens, while others may need to recruit additional participants. You also may want to use the *Teens as Volunteer Leaders* project as a means of reaching a new population of teen volunteers.

Creating a Timeline

Strategies and timeline plans should be adjusted to meet the individual needs of your program and community. Each program will have additional resources and recruitment strategies to advertise and promote the *Teens as Volunteer Leaders* project. Individual communities will also have unique needs that should be addressed early in the project planning. There are many



online tools that can assist in creating a useful timeline adapted to individual parameters. The following timeline gives suggestions for recruitment.

THREE MONTHS BEFORE TRAINING:

- Determine number of teens you want to train
- Determine the type of strategies to use for recruitment
- Develop written recruitment materials (letters, flyers, posters, applications, etc.)

TWO MONTHS BEFORE TRAINING:

- Advertise through social media
- Advertise through 4-H newsletters
- Send letters to schools and other groups
- Ask school guidance counselors for recommendations for students for the program

ONE MONTH BEFORE TRAINING:

- Re-advertise and follow up as needed
- Review applications, which should include references
- Schedule interviews
- Schedule orientation meeting
- Send out an orientation letter
- Follow state guidelines for background screening and account for this in your timeline

Recruitment Planning

Prior to starting the recruitment process, determine the size of the *Teens as Volunteer Leaders* project that you want to implement. Determine the number of curricula that you will use, the number of after-school programs that you will target and the time frame to deliver the project. A review of your objectives will help you determine how many teens you will need to recruit for a successful project.

USE THE TEEN TEAM APPROACH

Organize teens in teams around a singular thematic unit or curriculum. Each team must have a sufficient number of teens to carry out the hands-on aspects of the curriculum. The use of a team allows teens the option of specializing in one activity of a curriculum and encourages peer support in leading the various elements of the units (i.e., exploration, investigation, discussion, communication, and interaction with the young learners).

TIP

In your recruitment planning, consider:

- Use of teen team approach
- Formation of teams prior to training
- Number of teens to recruit
- Elements of the project
- Teen expectations

FORM TEAMS BEFORE TRAINING

The teams should be formed prior to the training so that they can get to know one another during the interactive session. Also, important planning strategies are built into the curriculum, so teams are creating an implementation plan as they are trained on the theme units.

DECIDE NUMBER OF TEENS TO RECRUIT

We have found that teams of teens (at least two to five per team) work best. In most cases, the curriculum is delivered over at least a five-day period, but often over several weeks. Because of the schedules of teens, it is important to plan for some teen absences and even attrition. Having sufficient numbers of teens on a theme unit team can prevent the cancellation of sessions if one or two teens can't make the scheduled session at the last minute.

VERIFY ELEMENTS OF THE PROJECT

The *Teens as Volunteer Leaders* project as it relates to curriculum delivery usually includes several of the following elements:

- Five or more curriculum content sessions
- Activities centers for extended learning
- Guest speakers and enrichment activities
- Family activity nights
- Take-home activities
- Community service activities

After determining which elements will be part of your local *Teens as Volunteer Leaders* project, you are ready to further develop timelines, recruitment materials, and teen and after-school staff expectations.



TEEN EXPECTATIONS

We have found that clearly defined expectations with tangible time frames are essential in the recruitment of teens. Consider the elements in determining teen time commitments outlined below.

ELEMENTS IN DETERMINING TEEN TIME COMMITMENTS

- Orientation meeting (one to two hours)
- Curriculum unit training (three hours pre-training, six to eight hours theme unit training)
- Teen pre-session planning meetings (one to two hours)
- Teen pre-session organization and preparation (one to five hours)
- Family activity night (one to two hours)
- Community service projects (one to five hours)
- Program evaluations and reflecting (one to six hours)
- County *Teens as Volunteer Leaders* project meetings and recognition (one to ten hours)

Be sure to include any other expectations that you have for the teens and their participation in the project. Also, consider any expectations that project collaborators or after-school programs may have for the teens. Consider using a written agreement with the teens.

TIP

Check the dates of seasonal school schedules, community activities and 4-H calendars prior to setting dates. Scheduling conflicts for teens can be one of the greatest hindrances to the success of the program.

Preparing Application Materials

Before developing application materials, determine the dates and locations for both the *Teens as Volunteer Leaders* training and delivery. It is important to communicate these dates in all of your correspondence with the teens.

Determine the information you want to obtain from the teens; consider age, grade level, experience, and interest as well as other personal data. Don't overlook the availability of teens to deliver the program. Some teens can only present sessions one day a week, others for only one week per quarter. For your scheduling and that of the after-school programs, it's a time-saver to know this information ahead of time.



Recruitment Strategies

Social media is an excellent method for recruiting teens. Additionally, traditional promotional strategies such as word of mouth, personal contact, and informing high school guidance counselors or teachers have proven effective.

When looking for places to recruit teens, don't overlook continuation high schools, homeschooled teens, youth organizations, and other agencies as a source for interested teen participants.

Many high school students have volunteer hour requirements to fulfill shortly after entering high school. Seniors may have an annual community service project or conduct a more intensive senior project as a requirement for graduation. A significant number of teens have been introduced to 4-H and the *Teens as Volunteer Leaders* project through this requirement.

NEWSLETTERS, WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Articles in the county 4-H newsletter have been a successful method for recruiting 4-H teen volunteers and adult mentors. 4-H websites can provide photo albums of teens delivering the program, be a resource hub, and offer other program descriptions. Social media is where many, but not all, of your teen volunteers will be engaged. Make sure your social media advertisements are attractive.

NEWS ARTICLES

News releases in local newspapers that promote the *Teens as Volunteer Leaders* project and the need for teen recruits have been effective. They also are a means of publicizing the program and recruiting after-school programs that are interested in participating.

Consider asking local newspapers to print a feature article on the project and information in upcoming events sections. Refer to Chapter 7, "Promoting Your 4-H Program," for more information.

PERSONAL LETTERS AND EMAIL COMMUNICATION

Personal letters and emails to high school teachers, guidance counselors, service and organizational club presidents and advisors, 4-H volunteers and other youth organizations can be effective recruitment tools. Along with the letter or attached to the email, include several copies of the flyer and youth applications. If your schedule permits, or if you have a volunteer to assist you, a follow-up letter and/or phone call at two-week intervals have proven most effective.

TIP

- The application should be as short as possible to avoid discouraging teens. You might obtain other information after the teens have been recruited.

Preparing Recruitment Materials

Determine the dates, times and location of the training and the delivery of the program prior to recruitment. Determine whether you will hold an orientation meeting prior to the training. We strongly recommend an orientation, especially if you are recruiting non-4-H teens. With today's modern technology, you can have a face-to-face and virtual meeting at the same time. Providing the option to meet virtually for this initial meeting may provide a larger pool of interested teens. You can further explain the project and its requirements, answer questions and assign some field observations at this meeting.

You will find marketing materials, including templates, logos, photos, and ads, available at <https://4-h.org/professionals/marketing-resources>.



Chapter 3:

Mentor and After-School Program Recruitment

Recruiting Volunteer Mentors

As we recommended in Chapter 1, committed adults serving as mentors or coaches are an essential element of an effective *Teens as Volunteer Leaders* project. Before recruiting volunteers and mentors for your program, read through the list of suggestions below and consider how you can provide these elements in your recruitment efforts:

1. Provide a reason to participate. Appeal to what really interests each individual.
2. Give recognition. Encouragement and recognition motivate people.
3. Clearly define and communicate your goals. Maintain a clear sense of direction so people will “get” what the program is about.
4. Conduct meetings that stimulate and have clear focus. Encourage teens by hosting organized, focused meetings with clear goals and outcomes. This will also provide an example for them to follow as teen leaders.
5. Listen. Everyone wants to be heard. The biggest cause of group apathy is the failure of leaders to really listen.
6. Reduce risks of participation. Good communication helps identify risks such as volunteers who are made to feel insecure by participation, feel as if they have been given too much responsibility, etc.

What motivates volunteers?

Volunteers are motivated by a variety of reasons. For recruitment and retention, look for ways to provide opportunities to:

- Help their families (White & Arnold, 2003)
- Learn new skills (White & Arnold, 2003)
- Help the community, “give back” (Martinez et al., 2006)

- Meet or spend time with people who share a common interest (Martinez et al., 2006)
- Enhance social or professional status, that is, network (Handy & Mook, 2011)
- Use personal skills and knowledge (Schrock & Kelsey, 2013)
- Learn more about community efforts and activities (Handy & Mook, 2011)

References

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- Schrock, J., & Kelsey, K. D. (2013). A phenomenological look at 4-H volunteer motives for service. *Journal of Extension*, 51(2), Article 29. <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/joe/vol51/iss2/29/>
- White, D. J., & Arnold, M. E. (2003). Why they come, why they go, and why they stay: Factors affecting volunteerism in 4-H programs. *Journal of Extension*, 41(4), Article 4RIB5. <https://archives.joe.org/joe/2003august/rb5.php>

Where to Find Volunteers

You may already have a ready source of adult volunteers to serve as mentors for your program. If not, consider some of the following:

- Local 4-H program. Asking existing 4-H volunteers to be part of your program can be a fun and rewarding way for them to learn new skills and share their knowledge.
- Parents of participants. Parents can make great mentors because they are interested in what their own children are doing and want to support their efforts.



- School teachers. Often high school, middle school and elementary school teachers are interested in supporting new learning and leadership opportunities for their students and are willing to put in the extra time to provide this experience.
- After-school staff. Involving after-school staff as teen mentors is a plus for the program. Their knowledge of the after-school program setting and the young people attending can be very beneficial to the teen's success.
- Business community. Look for ways to involve adults from a variety of occupations. They have many skills to share with teens about the work environment and future careers.
- Volunteer agencies. Many communities have volunteer centers. These individuals already are interested in volunteering—they just need a program.
- Social media. Use your social media platforms to announce your need for volunteers. Also, there are several social media apps that promote available volunteers.

TIP

4-H and other youth organizations rigorously screen volunteers, both teens and adults, in their programs. This can include fingerprinting, background screening, and more. These screenings can be costly and take time to process. Your program may also approve recent screenings from other approved entities, like school boards and police departments. Be sure all volunteers are screened in accordance with local 4-H volunteer screening processes, and that this is covered in advance with the mentors and the after-school program staff.

Mentor Roles and Responsibilities

Well-trained, highly motivated mentors are essential to the *Teens as Volunteer Leaders* project. It is important that they understand their roles and responsibilities. Here are some functions to consider when developing a job description for program mentors.

General Description

Provide support and guidance to a team of teen teachers as they deliver learn-by-doing experiences to younger youth in after-school settings.

Responsibilities

- Serve as a *Teens as Volunteer Leaders* program mentor and receive training as needed.
- Attend orientation, planning, evaluation, and follow-up meetings.
- Work with teens to successfully plan and deliver age-appropriate activities outlined in the curriculum.
- Provide motivation and problem solving to teens.
- Assist in collection of evaluation and project completion data.
- Offer appreciation and recognition to the teen.

Many states have specific guidelines or resources available, such as this manual on 4-H mentoring.

WHERE TO FIND AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

You may already know of after-school and out-of-school programs with which you can partner. If not, consider some of these suggestions for finding them:

- School districts
- Internet search
- Childcare resource and referral agencies
- Parks and recreation departments
- Social service agencies
- Youth organizations
- Churches and faith-based groups
- Public housing agencies



Establishing a Partnership with an After-School Program

If you are establishing a new partnership with an after-school program, you may want to consider discussing some of the following with the staff of the after-school program:

- Goals of the 4-H program. Explain the 4-H program and specifics of this teen-led project.
- Goals of the after-school program. Have a conversation about how the programs may have similar objectives and how a partnership can be beneficial.
- Roles of all partners and participants. Make sure to cover roles of 4-H, the after-school program, teens, mentors, and other partners.
- Program expectations. Discuss what the expected outcomes are for the youth, teens, staff, mentors, and partners.
- Program delivery. Explain in detail how the program will be delivered and the time and resource commitment for all involved.
- Statement of understanding. A written statement of what is expected of both partners can be useful. See the sample in the next section.

AFTER-SCHOOL STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Supportive and well-trained after-school staff are essential to the *Teens as Volunteer Leaders* project.

It is important that they understand their roles and responsibilities. Here are some functions to consider in developing a job description for after-school staff.

General Description

Provide support and assistance in the delivery of the 4-H curriculum at the after-school site. Provide a learning environment where teens can successfully deliver the curriculum and learn-by-doing experiences to younger youth at the after-school site.

Responsibilities

- Receive orientation and training as needed.
- Help promote the curriculum and delivery.
- Determine areas where the curriculum can be delivered.
- Manage the classroom appropriately so that teens can deliver the age-appropriate activities outlined in the curriculum.
- Motivate teens. Help them with problem-solving.
- Assist with collection of evaluation and project completion data.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will clarify expectations and boundaries between 4-H and the after-school site. MOUs are specific to each organization. Below is a sample statement of understanding to help guide you if you elect not to enter into an MOU with an after-school site.



SAMPLE STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

This understanding between 4-H and _____ establishes a program whereby youth will participate in at least _____ hours of 4-H educational programs annually. No maximum number of hours that may be devoted to 4-H programs is set. The program is scheduled to begin on _____. After-school providers and other personnel agree to attend scheduled training sessions. Through the acceptance of this program, the 4-H organization will provide the curriculum, orientation training and recognition. In return, after-school sites will help promote the 4-H program consistent with 4-H policies and educational philosophies. Sites agree that 4-H can market and promote the program and feature young people from the center as opportunities arise. This understanding may be terminated upon initiation by either party.

4-H WILL PROVIDE

- 4-H curriculum taught by trained teens
- Ideas and assistance in expanding the curriculum
- Letters to parents informing them of 4-H activities
- Suggestions for guest speakers and/or other enrichment activities
- Certificates of participation
- Opportunities for youth to participate in county, state and national 4-H events and activities

AFTER-SCHOOL SITE WILL PROVIDE

- Adults to supervise and help youth learn through the curriculum
- Time in which the curriculum can be delivered
- Communication with county 4-H program
- Educational supplies and resources as needed
- Consistent opportunities to display 4-H materials (banners, posters, etc.)
- Opportunities for data collection and evaluation

After-School Program Location: _____

• Director/Administrator Signature: _____ Date: _____

• 4-H/Extension Agent Signature: _____ Date: _____



Chapter 4:

Teens as Volunteer Leaders **Project Orientation**

Objective

To provide teens with an understanding of the project's objectives and expectations.

Time Required

One hour

Materials

- Flipchart
- Markers
- After-School Observation Sheet Handout
- Supplies for conducting a sample curriculum activity

Getting Ready

1. Gather all needed supplies. Make sure you have enough for everyone at the orientation.
2. Reproduce the applications, commitment contracts, observation sheets and other informational or promotional materials.
3. Set up a comfortable and inviting area for the orientation.
4. Prepare refreshments in advance if you choose to serve them (we strongly recommend it at any time of day).

Teens, adult mentors, and after-school staff benefit from an orientation to the *Teens as Volunteer Leaders* project. A brief introduction provides a good overview of the goals and objectives of the project, an opportunity for questions and answers, and a chance to involve teens in active, hands-on activities similar to ones they will be facilitating in *Teens as Volunteer Leaders* project delivery. A suggested outline for conducting this orientation follows.

Overview

Teens, adult mentors, and after-school staff are introduced to the *Teens as Volunteer Leaders* project during the orientation where they have an opportunity to get acquainted with each other, learn about working with younger youth, and discuss expectations of the project.

Directions: Project Description

1. Ask participants to sign in, pick up any handouts and complete a nametag as they arrive. If you are serving refreshments, have them available as teens arrive.
2. Introduce yourself. Then ask the teens to introduce themselves and tell why they are interested in volunteering for the project. Often, the teens' responses are very enlightening. Don't forget to include the adult mentors and after-school staff, although it's a good idea to have the adults introduce themselves after the teens.
3. Give a brief overview of the project and explain the project objectives.
4. Emphasize the key elements of the project and any requirements you have for participants. Be sure to review the time frame, number of hours required for training, minimum number of hours for preparation and teen leading, appropriate attire when volunteering, and any further dates for follow-up meetings.





5. Ask teens about any requirements they may have for senior projects or community service projects. You may need to meet individually with teens who have specific requirements.

Directions: Project Delivery

1. Discuss the need for teens to understand developmental characteristics of the age group with whom they will be working and the after-school environment.
2. Ask teens how they think they can best learn more about these subjects based on their prior experiences (i.e., first-hand observation). Then, share with teens the After-School Observation Sheet.
3. Explain that you would like each of the teens to visit an after-school site and observe the children, staff, environment, resources, materials, and other relevant items.
4. Ask teens to return the observation sheets to you before the training, so you will have a sense of what the teens observed.

Directions: Project Elements

1. Explain to the teens that they will be teaching younger youth in a hands-on, interactive way. Tell them that you have an activity to do that is similar to what they will be teaching. (We suggest you then present an activity from the curriculum for teens to experience.) Make sure the activity is hands-on and uses the experiential learning model.
2. Conduct the activity. Make clear to the teens that they have an opportunity to explore and learn just like the younger youth with whom they will be working.



3. Discuss with teens how this activity relates to curriculum and hands-on learning. Ask the teens to briefly explain what they learned. Also, discuss how they think younger youth would respond to this open-ended, hands-on activity. Add your own questions!

Wrap-Up

1. Complete the orientation by answering any questions and passing out information about the dates, locations, and times for the training.
2. Allow time for individual discussions with teens, parents, mentors, and after-school staff.

TIPS

- It is very important for teens to observe the sites where they will be training. Site visits are the first step in forming relationships with the after-school staff and children and make their first teaching session much less stressful.
- We recommend using 4-H resources that provide training on ages and stages, youth development, guidance and discipline, and experiential learning. While not edited since its first printing, the **Guiding Growth: Training Staff for Working with Youth in After-School Programs** 4-H after-school resource guide can help train teens.



After-School Programs Teen Observation Sheet

Site Observed: _____

Dates of Observations: _____ Times: _____

Number of Staff in Attendance: _____

Number of Children: _____ Approximate Ages: _____

The Program Setting: Briefly describe the program setting. Include observations about: amount of space; number of tables; access to water; types of available supplies, equipment and games; locations and amount of bulletin boards and display space; etc.

Children's Activities: Check the following activities that you observed children doing. Check all that apply.

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Indoor activities | Singing | Reading |
| Outdoor activities | Building objects | Doing art projects |
| Playing games/puzzles | Performing drama | Doing science projects |
| Homework | Listening to music | Doing cultural projects |
| Eating snacks | Recreational activities | |

List other activities that you observed:

Program Relationships: Check what you observed children participating in. Check all that apply.

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Working in small groups | Working one-on-one with staff | Free time or free choice activities |
| Working in large groups | Staff-led activities | |
| Working individually | Child-led activities | |

General Comments: _____

Signed: _____



Chapter 5:

Training Teens to Deliver Programs

This overview provides an essential foundation for successful teen delivery of curriculum in after-school programs to younger youth. Plan to offer this section in a workshop format with multiple attendees. The total time needed for this training is about three hours.

This training is designed to help teens understand the developmental characteristics of the younger youth that will be participating in the programs. It also will teach them principles of experiential learning and successful

program delivery. We suggest that mentors and after-school program staff participate in the training. Arrange the seating and room layout so that teens and adults are commingled for the training. Establishing this partnership early is important.

You can present this training in a variety of ways. Presenting the activities outlined in this chapter on a Friday evening followed by the curriculum training on Saturday works well.

TRAINING AGENDA

Activity	Purpose	Materials Needed	Time
Getting Acquainted—Animal Sounds	To establish a comfortable group environment and introduce participants to each other.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Names of animals written on slips of paperSheets with introduction and discussion instructions	15 to 25 minutes
Child Development—Remember When?	To enhance understanding of preadolescent and adolescent youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ages and StagesDevelopment Characteristics handouts for the target audienceDevelopment Characteristics role playing cardsFlipchartMarkersOverhead projector	45 minutes to one hour
Experiential Learning—Learn by Doing	To be able to understand and use the experiential learning model when delivering curriculum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">FlipchartMarkersHandoutsPaper helicopter on 20 lb. paper (precut)Paper clips, 1 per participant	45 minutes to one hour
Communication—Keeping Audience Tuned in!	To understand processes to keep participants engaged and interested.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">FlipchartMarkers	30 to 45 minutes
Planning—Wrap-Up	To review and share what was learned.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Foam ball or torch	15 minutes



Objectives

To establish a comfortable group environment and introduce participants to each other.

Time

15–25 minutes

Materials

- Names of animals written on slips of paper
- Sheets with introduction and discussion instructions



Getting Acquainted— Animal Sounds

OVERVIEW

Icebreakers help participants to get to know each other in a nonthreatening way. They also can set the stage for what is to come. The icebreaker helps teens get acquainted with each other. Teens should be encouraged to use icebreakers with the younger youth they will be teaching. The selected icebreaker should be appropriate to the audience being trained. Use the icebreaker below or one of your choosing.

START

1. Welcome the group. Explain you are going to do an interactive game to help everyone get to know each other.
2. Explain how the game works:
 - All participants will be given a slip of paper with the name or picture of an animal.
 - The task is for all like animals to find each other.
 - The catch is that no one can talk. Participants can only use sounds or movements made by their animal.
3. Give each participant a slip of paper with the name or picture of an animal written on it.
4. Allow time for everyone to find their animal family.
5. Once the family circles are formed, give the groups a list of questions to encourage discussion. Consider asking questions such as:
 - What is your name and what is your favorite animal?
 - Why are you interested in the program?
 - What do you hope to accomplish by participating?
6. Discuss the function and importance of icebreakers. Discuss how teens can use icebreaker games with younger youth.



Objectives

To enhance understanding of preadolescent and adolescent youth.

Time

45 minutes to one hour

Materials

- Ages and Stages
- Development Characteristics handouts for the target audience
- Development Characteristics role-playing cards
- Flipchart
- Markers



Child Development— Remember When?

OVERVIEW

This activity will help teens and adult mentors better understand how younger youth think, feel and act. This understanding is extremely important for teens as they begin delivering the curriculum and activities. Knowledge of these principles and how to use them will help teens solve behavioral issues they may encounter working with younger youth.

START

1. Explain that middle childhood and early adolescence are exciting times for children. It is often the time when childhood memories are made and when much development occurs. During this time, young people are maturing in many ways—physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially. Individual development during this time period is not the same from one child to the next, nor is it consistent within the various areas of development, even for one child. Each child grows and develops at his or her own rate.
2. Show the Developmental Stages diagram. Discuss how children have a chronological age as well as a physical, mental, emotional, and social age. These different developmental ages mean that children's development and ability to perform tasks will vary. For instance, some children's physical growth may outpace their classmates, but they may be behind in other areas of development.
3. Ask teens to share how these developmental differences can influence:
 - how younger children learn;
 - how teens would need to deliver the program;
 - how adaptations might need to be made when presenting activities.
4. Show the Characteristics of Youth diagram for the target age group with which the teens will be working. Briefly review the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual characteristics and the implications for programming.

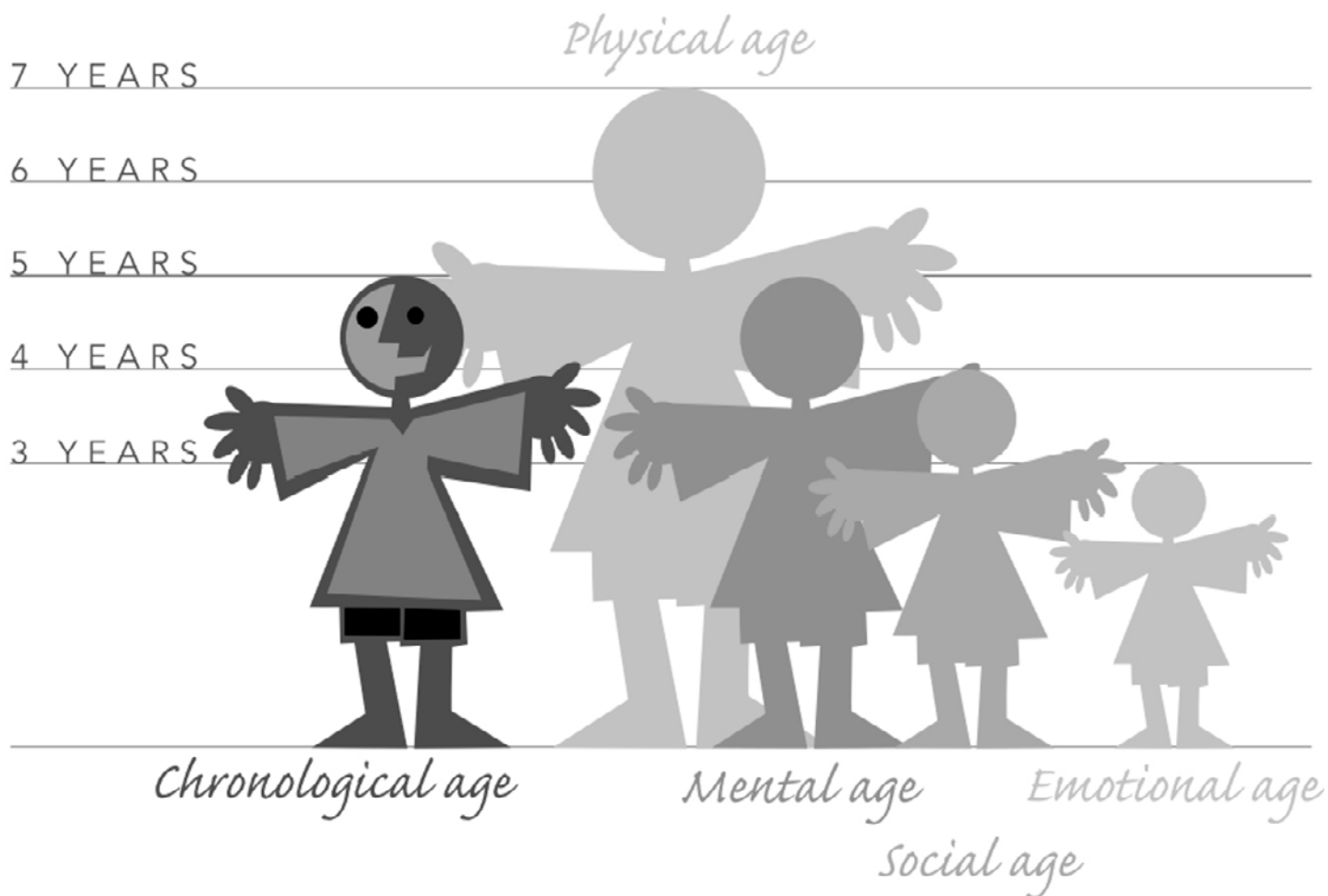


5. Conduct a role-play activity to demonstrate these differences. Note: In advance, make a set of role-play cards that include one of the developmental characteristics and the implications for programming on each card.
 - Divide the group into teams of four to six people.
 - Give each group a card that includes the developmental characteristics and implications for programming.
 - Explain that they will be given five minutes to create a skit that demonstrates these principles.
 - Ask each group to present their skit to the larger group.

- After each presentation, discuss what was learned. Offer other suggestions to enhance learning.
 - Relate the skit presentations to possible situations that they may encounter in delivering the program to their target audience in informal after-school settings.
6. Ask the group to summarize what was learned. Remind the teens and mentors to refer to Developmental Characteristic handouts as they prepare their presentations to take to after-school programs or if they encounter any behavioral problems in working with the younger children.

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES IN DIFFERENT DOMAINS

Children can be in different developmental stages in each developmental area. For example:



SOURCE: Cooperative Extension System Extension "CARES" for America's Children and Youth Initiative, March 2001.



Ages and Stages—Characteristics of Youth

GRADES K-3

Characteristics	Implications for Programming
<p>Physical</p> <p>Growing slowly, just learning to master physical skills. Can control large muscles better than small muscles.</p>	<p>Projects and meal times are messy. Activities that encourage use of large muscles, such as running, playing games, etc. are good.</p>
<p>Social</p> <p>Learning how to be friends; may have many friends. Fighting occurs but doesn't last long. Towards the end of this phase, boys and girls separate.</p>	<p>Small group activities let this group practice their social skills, but still allow for individual attention. Role-playing helps children gain empathy. Encourage children to participate in mixed-gender activities.</p>
<p>Emotional</p> <p>Are self centered. Seek approval from adults, and go out of their way to avoid punishment. Are sensitive to criticism; don't like to fail.</p>	<p>Be positive! Plan activities where everyone can experience some success. Foster cooperation, not competition.</p>
<p>Intellectual</p> <p>Are concrete thinkers—base thinking in reality. Can't multi-task well. Are more interested in doing things that getting a good result at the end.</p>	<p>Plan lots of activities that take a short time to finish. Focus on the process rather than the final product. Allow for exploration and inquiry.</p>

GRADES 4-6

Characteristics	Implications for Programming
<p>Physical</p> <p>Growth continues at a steady rate. Small muscles have developed so they can do activities such as hammering, sawing, playing musical instruments, etc. By the end of this period, they may be as coordinated as an adult, although lapses of awkwardness are common.</p>	<p>Provide for lots of physical involvement. Use hands-on activities that allow youth to make and do things.</p>
<p>Social</p> <p>Peer influence grows. To be accepted by peer group is reward. Peer group can become a club, gang or secret society. Prejudice can develop during this period. Independence from adults is increasing. Discusses and evaluates others, develops a concept of "fair" or "unfair" as relates to others.</p>	<p>Provide activities through clubs and group activities. Use activities that allow the youth to make decisions about what they make, do and use. Group youth in same sex groups when possible.</p>
<p>Emotional</p> <p>Growing independence. Beginning of disobedience, back-talk and rebelliousness. Common fears are the unknown, failure, death, family problems and non-acceptance. Concept of right and wrong continues to develop. Sense of humor develops. Concept of self is enhanced by feelings of competence. Strong attachment to their own sex and show antagonism towards opposite sex.</p>	<p>Don't compare youth to one another. Emphasize progress and achievement.</p>
<p>Intellectual</p> <p>Reading becomes an individual experience. Abstract thought is possible and plans can extend over several weeks. Activities can be evaluated with insight. Attention span increases. Ability to understand "Why?"</p>	<p>Use simple, short instructions. Include real-life objects when teaching and involve their senses when possible.</p>



GRADES 7-9

Characteristics	Implications for Programming
<p>Physical</p> <p>Often have a growth spurt that can cause clumsiness until coordination catches up with the growth. Most girls are more developed than boys. Distinguishing physical features such as large feet, ears or nose may be a source of worry. Increase in appetite.</p>	<p>Avoid activities that cause youth to compare their physical characteristics to others. Offer projects that require more coordination.</p>
<p>Social</p> <p>Participation in youth organizations may decline. A feeling of dependence on the rules and regulations specified by adults continues, even though they may protest. Peer group pressure increases. Crushes are common. Interest in the opposite sex is often shown in contrary behavior...pushing, hair pulling, etc.</p>	<p>Provide some activities that include both sexes, but still offer same sex activities. Provide opportunities for the group to determine the rules.</p>
<p>Emotional</p> <p>Worry and/or shame associated with body development. A strong emotional attachment to an older youth or an adult may be evident. Keen interest in their own bodies, especially sex and sex processes.</p>	<p>Provide lots of opportunities to succeed. Avoid comparing performance with others. Provide opportunities to work with other youth and adults.</p>
<p>Intellectual</p> <p>Growing capacity to reason and think abstractly, although manipulation of concrete objects is often enjoyed. Ability to persist until desired result is achieved. Avoid tasks beyond their ability. Can take more responsibility in planning and evaluating their work. Vocabulary may be equal to an adult; however, reading interests are different.</p>	<p>Provide more complex tasks. Projects that require more reading and analysis can be offered. Allow them to evaluate their own work. Avoid tasks that are beyond their abilities.</p>

HIGH SCHOOL

Characteristics	Implications for Programming
<p>Physical</p> <p>Physical changes are usually accepted, but boys may still be growing quickly. Most females reach maximum height by age 14 and most males by age 16.</p>	<p>Be willing to answer questions about physical changes. Avoid comments that criticize or compare body shapes/sizes.</p>
<p>Social</p> <p>Self-centered, but capable of feeling empathy. Are able to maintain relationships with many diverse people. Acceptance by members of the opposite sex is important. Want to belong to clubs yet be recognized as unique within those organizations. Spend more time working and going to school, less time in club and group activities.</p>	<p>Let teens plan their own programs. Establish a climate that is conducive to peer support.</p> <p>Emphasize personal development whenever possible.</p>
<p>Emotional</p> <p>Searching for their identity, they usually find it around age 16. Want to be autonomous from parents. May have trouble with compromise and may have unsettled emotions. Strive to earn responsibility and the respect of others.</p>	<p>Let teens assume responsibility. Expect them to follow through. Help them explore their identity, values and beliefs. Help them develop individual skills. Encourage them to work with other teens and adults.</p>
<p>Intellectual</p> <p>Gain cognitive and study skills. Are mastering abstract thinking. Emphasis is on exploring and preparing for future career and roles. Like to set their own goals based on their own needs. May reject goals imposed by others.</p>	<p>Give them real-life problems to figure out. Let them make decisions and evaluate the outcomes. Encourage service learning. Plan field trips to businesses and colleges.</p>



Objective

To be able to understand and use the experiential learning model when delivering curriculum.

Time

45 minutes to one hour

Materials

- Flipchart
- Markers
- Handouts
- Supplies for the sample activity



Experiential Learning—Learn by Doing

OVERVIEW

This activity will help teens and mentors understand the theory of experiential learning. Almost all 4-H curricula use experiential learning in their development and delivery because 4-H recognizes that direct, hands-on involvement (learning by doing) is the most effective way to help children learn. Experiential learning actively engages learners, encourages them to think for themselves, work hard, and ultimately, learn more.

START:

1. Discuss the five steps to the experiential learning model.
 - Step 1—Experience the activity. Provide an opportunity for youth to perform or do an activity.
 - Step 2—Share what happened. Ask the youth questions about the activity and the experience after they have completed it. Ask them to describe the results and their reactions.
 - Step 3—Process what happened. Ask questions about something that was important about the experience or activity. Help them analyze the experience and reflect upon the results.
 - Step 4—Generalize. Help youth to apply the results of their learning to the real world. Ask questions to help them connect the learning to life skills and other subjects. Ask “so what” questions.
 - Step 5—Apply. Help youth to apply what they learned to their own lives. Ask “now what” questions to help them see how they can use their new skills or information.
2. Use the Helicopter Activity (or one of your own) to demonstrate and practice experiential learning.





Experiential Learning Model

DO

Describe the activity you'll have participants do. Encourage them to think about what they might see or what might happen. Then, let participants experience the activity; perform or do it.

SHARE

Ask questions about the activity and the experience after they've completed it. Participants describe the results and their reactions.

PROCESS

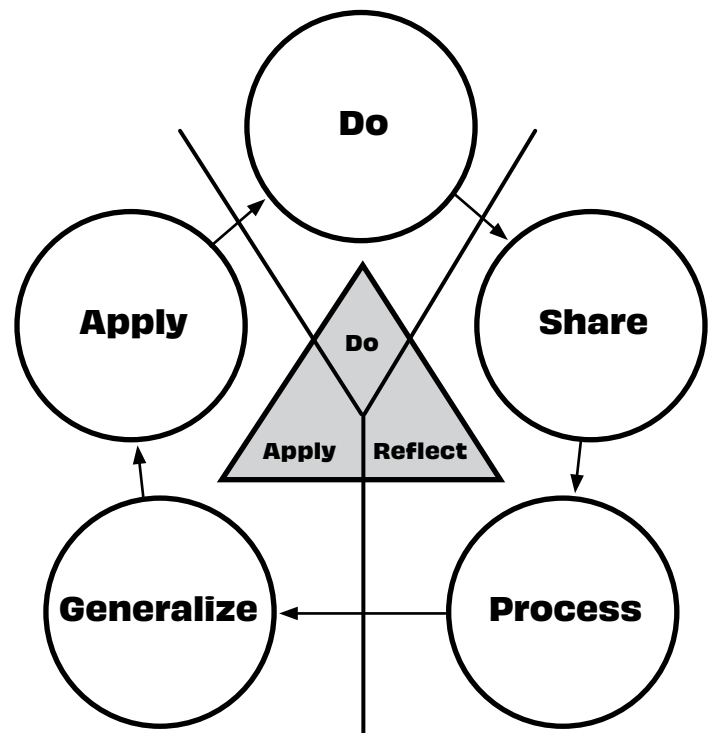
Ask questions about something that was important about the experience. Participants analyze the experience and reflect upon the results.

GENERALIZE

Now apply the results back to real-world examples. Ask questions to help participants connect the subject matter to life skills and the bigger world.

APPLY

Help participants apply what they learned to their own lives, to give them opportunities to practice these new skills or use the new information.



Materials

- Precut helicopter on 20 lb. paper. Diagram follows.
- Paper clips, one per participant
- Flipchart
- Markers



Helicopter Activity—The Power of Experiential Learning

EXPERIENCE THE ACTIVITY

- Show the participants the paper helicopter. (Precut the helicopters along the dotted lines; the solid lines are for folding). Show how to fold along the solid lines.
- Ask the participants to predict what will happen if they were to hold the helicopter at eye level and drop it. Record some of the responses.
- Pass out the helicopters. Ask the participants to drop the helicopter and observe what happens.
- Next, ask the group to predict what might happen if they were to hold the helicopter sideways and then drop it. Record responses. Ask the participants to experiment with dropping the helicopter from various positions.
- Next, pass out paper clips. Ask the participants to clip the paper clip to the bottom end of the helicopter. Again, ask the group to predict what might happen.

SHARE WHAT HAPPENED

- Talk about what occurred in each of the activities above. Talk about what they observed. How were they able to make the helicopter perform differently?

PROCESS WHAT HAPPENED

- Ask questions about things the participants did to change the rate of spin. What is the rate of fall? What is the direction of spin? How could we make the helicopter spin faster? Slower? What other ideas can we test?

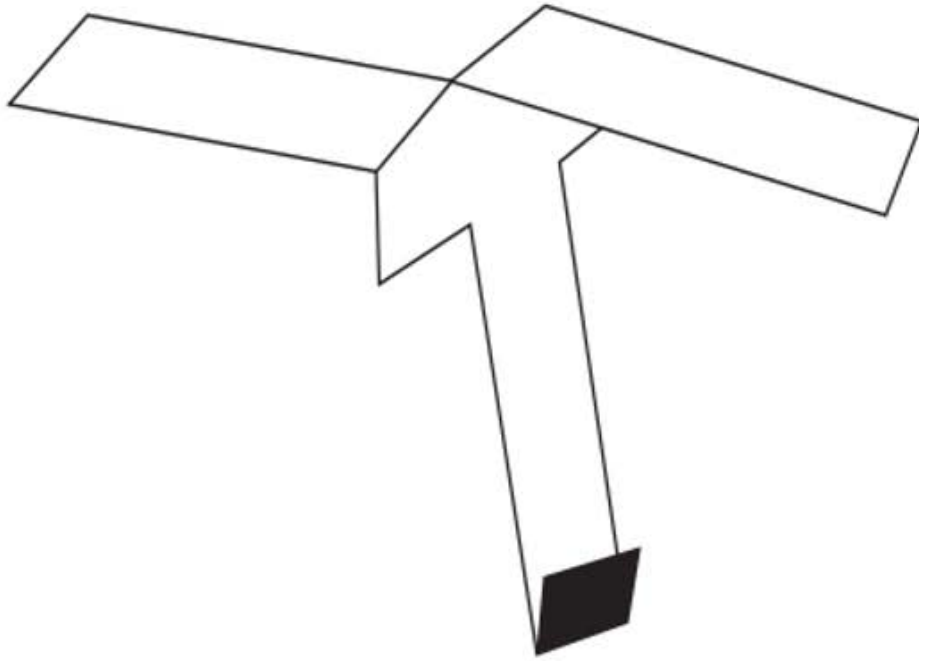
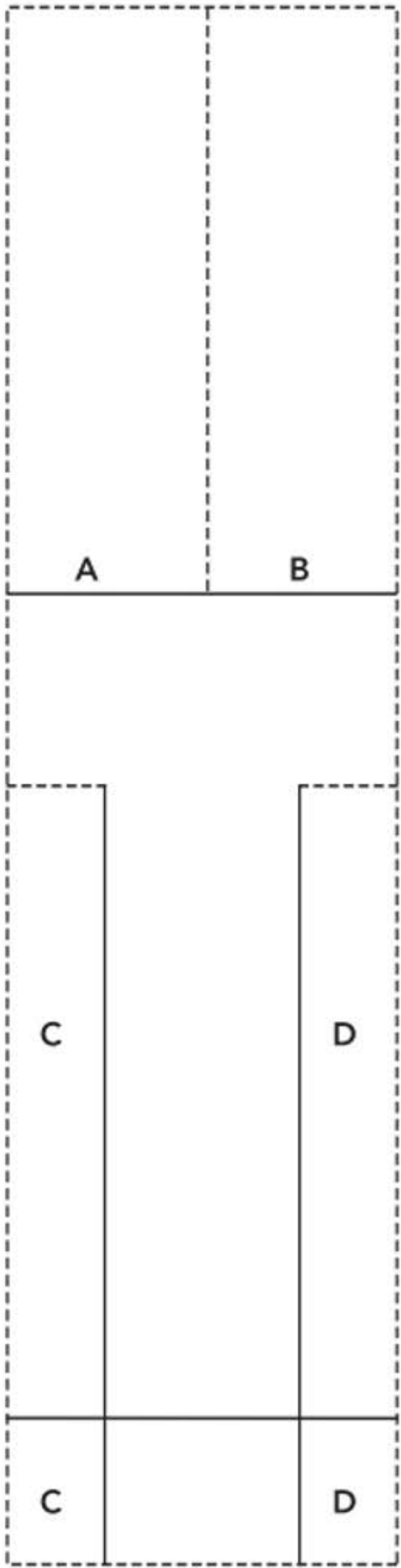
GENERALIZE

- Ask the group (or in smaller groups) to describe other objects that spin like the helicopter in flight. What generalizations can we make from what we learned? Where could this information be useful? Where might this process occur in nature?

APPLY

- Now, ask the group to apply what they have learned from the helicopter exercise in constructing a paper airplane.
- Pass out paper and allow a few minutes to construct and fly the paper airplanes. Observe and discuss the variables and application.





Objective

To understand processes to keep participants engaged and interested.

Time

30 to 45 minutes

Materials

- Flipchart
- Markers

Communication—Keeping Your Audience Tuned in!

OVERVIEW

Knowing the information that you want to present is just one part of being an effective teacher. Being organized, removing distractions, and knowing how to communicate the information so that learners are engaged also are important.

START

1. Introduce the concept of engaging learners. Ask participants to recall a time when they were not engaged. What was the experience like for them?
2. Ask them to identify some of the reasons why they were turned off and not engaged (i.e., long lectures, sitting too long, not allowed to do the work, speaker using a monotone voice, other things going on in the room, etc.). Write their responses on flipchart paper.
3. Break the participants into groups of four to five. Assign each group one of the topics identified as turning off audiences. Give them about 10 minutes to brainstorm ways—as a presenter—they could keep the audience engaged.
4. Bring the groups back together and ask one person from each group to share their suggestions.
5. Discuss how they can apply these tips in their teaching.



Objective

To review and share what was learned.

Time

15 minutes

Materials

Foam ball or torch

Planning—Wrap Up

OVERVIEW

It is important to review what was learned in the workshop. It is especially helpful to have each participant share their own thoughts. Use the activity below, or one of your own, to close the workshop.

START

1. Form the group into a circle. Share any other information before completing the rest of this activity. Ask the group to reflect on what they learned through the workshop.
2. Toss the ball (or pass the torch) to one of the participants and ask him or her to share one thing that he or she learned.
3. After the participant has shared, then he or she tosses the ball to another participant. Sharing should continue until everyone has had the opportunity.
4. Thank group members for their participation.



Chapter 6:

Recognizing Program Participants

Because you will want to recognize the efforts of many individuals in this project, you may choose to design specific recognition programs for youth participants, teen leaders, mentors and volunteers, after-school program staff and other partners.

Recognition is a basic human need that we all experience. Recognition can increase self-esteem and a sense of mastery for program participants, so it is an essential part of the 4-H experience. It is necessary that *all* youth participants receive some form of recognition. It is important to note that positive feedback that allows

growth and self-assessment is part of the recognition process. This assists youth in applying the skills learned and enables positive behavioral changes to occur.

Recognition, like any other great 4-H program, requires careful planning. While some people need outward signs for recognition, others thrive in the sense that they have done a job well. Some people like to be publicly recognized, while others prefer individual praise or a “pat on the back.” Try to offer recognition that is most meaningful to the individuals and groups with which you work.





Tangible Recognition

Consider offering some of these tangible forms of recognition for program participation:

- Participant and completion certificates
- Ribbons, plaques, and trophies
- Scholarships to future training or events
- 4-H membership cards
- Other incentives

Other Forms of Recognition

Consider offering some of these forms of recognition:

- Specific verbal praise
- A note to the participant
- Recognition on social media platforms
- Opportunities to demonstrate skills to the rest of the group
- Opportunities to share skills with the larger community
- 4-H member spotlight in blog, newsletter, or newspaper
- Other enthusiastic forms of encouragement



Chapter 7:

Promoting Your 4-H Afterschool Program

It's important to spread the word in your community about 4-H Afterschool programs. You'll increase participation by letting youth and their parents who could benefit from the programs know how to get involved. You'll achieve academic, government, and business community support that may result in better facilities, funding and/or volunteer participation. By making 4-H Afterschool highly visible and showing its value to the community, you'll help ensure the future of after-school programming.

To begin, you must identify your audience, your goals, and your budget for marketing. See 4-H Communications: Marketing and Public Relations (document) and Marketing and Public Relations (slides) for more information and helpful tools in getting started or evaluating existing outreach efforts.

There are many ways to promote your program, which include radio, television, newspaper, signs, social media platforms, flyers, community events, and more. Using multiple methods will increase your reach and coverage.

Here are some ideas for how to promote your program:

1. Engage youth, adults, and alumni. Be visible! Ask teens and mentors to form a publicity committee or focus group to generate ideas and create a plan for publicizing the program.
2. Get your story in print. Draft a news release and send it to local newspapers, newsletters, and community websites along with appropriate social media posts. Think about places other than the main newspaper, such as school, residential community, and local business newsletters as well.
3. Hold special events. Hold a high-profile special event to bring attention to your program such as a family activity night.
4. Take photographs and videos. It's easy to use a digital camera to document the many memorable moments in your program. Use photographs to illustrate brochures and posters. Challenge youth to create collages that can be displayed in local libraries or stores. Remember to get parent/guardian permission to use the photos, videos, or audio recording of any members or volunteers.
5. Participate in community events. The youth in your programs are your best salespeople. Have them demonstrate the many activities they experience in your 4-H Afterschool program by setting up tables at art shows, food festivals and farmers markets or marching in holiday parades. Consider the use of social media videos and posts to share the 4-H story.
6. Create a website or social media page, as well as sharing on existing accounts such as the local Extension office, after-school programs, etc. Involve teens in creating a web page and graphics on your program. Make sure you include photos and quotes from young people and timely content such as a calendar of events or stories about projects you're working on or recently completed. Check for approval with your 4-H agent, partner after-school program, and technical support to ensure proper logos and verbiage are utilized on any promotional materials (print or digital) to comply with branding requirements.
7. Contact radio or television stations. Ask teens and mentors to contact radio and television stations to pitch stories on your programs.
8. Give presentations. Community groups are always interested in having guests share their activities. Ask teens to give presentations about what they did and learned while participating in your program.



9. Prepare an impact report. Periodically, prepare a brief report about the impact and outcomes of the program. Share this report with key decision-makers and potential funders in your community.
10. Contact public affairs personnel at your local Extension office, state land-grant university, and after-school programs for ideas, collaboration, and compliance.

Whichever promotional methods are used, there are steps that need to be followed to comply with national and state regulations and ensure youth protections. Each state's land-grant university will have all the guidelines necessary for that state. Working with your local 4-H agent is the best way to make sure that all requirements are met for promotional materials and media exposure.

REMEMBER:

- It is essential to ensure that any youth or adult has a signed media release before using their photo or video for any media purposes. Check with your local Extension office or state 4-H program to ensure compliance as well as the national 4-H site at [4-H Media Release](#).

- When using social media, 4-H guidelines must be displayed and followed Social Media Community Guidelines. Each state 4-H program may have authorized social media platforms to use with youth. Youth protections, virtual etiquette, and best practices must all be accounted for, and you must abide with all requirements of the state 4-H program.
- The 4-H Name and Emblem is a federal mark and can only be used with authorization: [4-H Name and Emblem Use](#).
- Compliance with ADA and printed statements of this fact should be adhered to. Your local and state 4-H programs can provide you with this information.
- 4h.org has lots of resources to enhance your promotional efforts. Visit the Marketing Resources section at <https://4-h.org/professionals/marketing-resources> to download graphics, ads, logos, and more.



Objective

To give parents, caregivers, children, and staff opportunities to interact and learn in informal ways.

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Photocopies of *Family Activity Night Planning Handout*
- Flipchart
- Markers
- Construction paper, scissors, glitter, glue, markers, poster board, and other art supplies



Family Activity Nights

OVERVIEW

In this activity, participants break into teams to plan Family Activity Nights. Before you begin, put together an art table that has construction paper, scissors, glitter glue, markers, poster boards and other art supplies. You also may wish to write the information found under “What’s Next?” (core strengths) on a whiteboard, flipchart, or shared screen.

START HERE

Begin by discussing the idea of involving parents and other community members by holding Family Activity Nights. Such events can be as informal as an open house or as scheduled as a workshop. In all communities, Family Activity Nights serve to let children, parents/caregivers, community members, and staff interact in a relaxed and positive atmosphere.

Ask sites if they’ve ever held such outreach events. What were the outcomes? What were the strengths of the events? What were things that needed improving?

Review the following “core strengths” information with the group.

To build strong community partnerships for learning, it’s recommended that:

1. Families read together.
2. Parents and caregivers monitor out-of-school activities.
3. Parents talk with children and teens.
4. After-school sites make after-school visits easier.
5. Sites promote family learning.
6. Sites encourage parent leadership.
7. Point out that Family Activity Nights can help promote all these core strengths.

WHAT’S NEXT?

Break the group into teams of three or four people each. Give teams a copy of the Family Activity Night Planning Handout. Explain that teams will plan the activity nights by filling out the planning sheets. Ask them to keep the previous “core strengths” information in mind while planning their events. For example, they may wish to plan a family reading night or have parent boards plan the events.





Also explain that some of the best Family Activity Nights happen with the collaboration of children at the site. Ask one member of each team to “become” a seven-year-old child and creatively offer up any ideas he/she may have.

After teams are done planning the night according to the theme, they will move to the art table and design a large poster to advertise their event!

FINAL ACT

Give teams a chance to share their planning ideas and posters. Discuss how the events can be implemented at each site and what the outcomes or improvements might be.



FAMILY ACTIVITY NIGHT PLANNING HANDOUT

Family Activity Night Planning

Plan a celebration! Our theme is: _____

What is the best time of day to offer this activity? Immediately after school? On Friday nights? Write the day and time here: _____

What do we want to happen at this night? What are our goals — to help families meet other families and staff or learn something?

How are we going to help families get to know each other and the staff?

What is our main activity of the night?

Are we going to serve food? How will it be prepared — will we have families help make or bring the food?

If we are going to have an educational event, how will we do this? Will we show a video? Bring in a guest speaker? Lead the group in an activity?

How will we wrap up the evening?

How will we measure its success?



Objective

To understand how to begin to build a sense of community at sites.

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Flipchart
- Markers
- Photocopies of *Community Outreach Event Handout*



Working with the Community at Large*

OVERVIEW

In this activity, teams review and/or brainstorm some ideas to involve the children at their sites with the community, and then plan an event that would accomplish this.

START HERE

Explain that a sense of community plays an important part in developing a child's self-esteem. Children need to know who they are and how they fit into the world around them. They need to become aware of others and the community in which they live.

Explain that infants care only about their own physical needs. Preschool children, too, remain very self-centered. However, school-age children are becoming better able to reach out to others. They need opportunities to develop giving relationships and to understand the world around them.

Next, suggest the following activities to help children feel part of the larger community or ask participants to brainstorm a list and fill in:

1. Invite people from the community to come to your after-school site and talk about what they do.
2. Take field trips to places in the community.
3. Take part in community activities.
4. Make service to the community a part of your program.
5. Collect food for hungry people.
6. Hold a special program for teachers in the community.
7. Entertain senior citizens.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Break the group into teams of two to three participants each. Ask them to choose one of the ideas from the list and make a *Community Outreach Event Handout*. Give teams time to plan their events.

NOTE:

- All community outreach event plans should be
- reworked with input from youth before they are
- implemented.



FINAL ACT

Reflect: After they have finished, let teams share ideas. Remind them it's important to get the children's feedback on their plans, and, in fact, children should be involved from the earliest point.

Apply: Ask teams if they think they have viable plans, and how they would implement them.

*This activity reprinted in part with permission from the National Network for Child Care—NNCC. Eller, C. A. (1991). Building a sense of community. In Todd, C. M. (Ed.), *School-age connections*, 1(1), pp. 102. Urbana-Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service.





Community Outreach Event

Our idea:

How are we going to do this?

Where it will happen?

Who's involved?

When will we do it?

What will children learn?

How will community members benefit?

Other comments:



UF | **IFAS Extension**
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA



Contact Info

UF/IFAS Extension
Florida 4-H Youth Development Program
2142 Shealy Drive
PO Box 110225
Gainesville, FL 32611
(352) 846-4444

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