



4-H GROW¹

A Path for a Successful 4-H In-School Program

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School enrichment programs, sometimes referred to as 4-H In School, can help 4-H agents reach large groups of youth with 4-H programming, yet 4-H agents often find the programs difficult to implement. The GROW model is a practical guide for agents to follow to increase the likelihood of beginning and sustaining a successful 4-H In-School program. This publication builds on [Ask IFAS](#) publication [4H324](#), “4-H School Enrichment: A Guide for 4-H Faculty and Staff.” This model offers ideas of whom agents can reach out to during the initial phases of a school enrichment program; and it lists what steps to follow. Based on feedback from experienced teachers and 4-H agents, the GROW model outlines an organizational plan to eliminate miscommunication and unexpected mishaps while clarifying the expectations of all participants.

The GROW model is a process for marketing and implementing 4-H programs in schools. 4-H faculty and staff may not have experience in schools and may feel at a loss on how to approach a school. This publication intends to walk agents through the GROW model and provide the necessary resources to implement this model for local 4-H in School programs.

G—Get Connected

Getting connected refers to identifying personnel within a school that may be receptive to your program. Teachers are most often interested and are a great target audience. However, other staff—such as coaches, librarians, and guidance counselors—may also have the time, interest, and ability to offer programs. Principals may also be a good choice.

R—Recommend Programs

Once you identify an approachable school-contact, prepare to recommend programs that you have the capacity to support. Some of Florida’s statewide programs, such as Florida 4-H public speaking powered by Florida Power and Light and embryology, are good options. Local or regional programs, such as Chick Chain or I Am a Scientist, may also be offered. For more support on some of the regional 4-H In-School programs and resources that are available, reach out to your district’s 4-H regional specialized agent.

O—Organize and Plan

Once your contact agrees to the program, the planning begins. Decide who will be conducting the program; whether the program will be “a train the trainer” or conducted by you, a volunteer, or other staff member; what time and date(s) courses will be held; and what will be the role of the contact. Ensure that the contact knows whether you will only help them start or whether you will be integral in presenting the program. Planning can help avoid conflict, clarifying topics that, if left unspoken, could lead to misunderstandings down the line, sometimes referred to as upstream thinking. There is a checklist below to assist you in this planning process.

W—Words of Wisdom

The following reflections from field agents that have conducted in school programs may help your program run smoothly:

- The rules are for us [agents] too. “Make sure you follow the school rules and protocols, such as signing in and out, and [doing the] screenings they may require.”
- “Make your programs attractive to a school. Market how the program fits a school or standards goal and is not just ‘one more thing’ that a teacher has to do.”
- “Be flexible and dependable. Understand that you are asking an educator to give up valuable class time for this program. Oftentimes the end of the school day is a good time for enrichment programs.”
- “Once the dates, times, and commitments are set, meet them.”
- “Leave it as good or better than you found it. If you need to rearrange the classroom for your program, be sure to put the classroom back in the original set up. On the other hand, if you are doing a high energy program, be sure to plan a calm down time before you leave.”

The GROW model is intended to help 4-H agents market their 4-H In-School programs. This tool may also be used to clarify roles and responsibilities. By GROWing your 4-H In-School program, you give youth greater opportunities to pursue their sparks and get on the Trajectory to Thrive.

4-H In-School GROW Checklist

1. What is the agent's role?
2. What is the teacher's role?
3. What is/are the date(s) for the program?
4. What equipment or supplies will be supplied by 4-H?
5. Do the supplies need to be returned? If so, in what condition? E.g., will they be cleaned and/or in the box?
6. What other details should you consider that are specific to your program? Have you considered them?

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