



4-H Afterschool Resource Guide

Starting 4-H Clubs 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.

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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

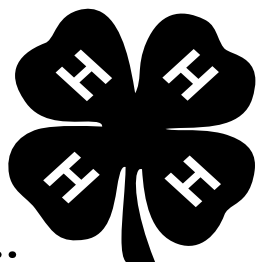
I pledge my **HEAD** to clearer thinking,

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 and after-school program providers who wish to start 4-H clubs. 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 (Capizzano et al., 2000). With nearly 41 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020), the United States needs quality out-of-school programs. In 2020, over 20% of the nation's elementary school children participated in an organized after-school program (Sparr et al., 2021).

There is a growing awareness that where youth spend their time, what they do, and with whom they do it are important to their overall development (Roth et. al., 1998; Gootman, 2000). Engaging middle school students in high quality after-school programs, which foster a sense of belonging and character development, is shown to reduce delinquent behavior (Gottfredson et al., 2004; Anderson-Butcher & Fink, 2005). Similarly, access to community-based after-school programs and positive relationships with adults are both factors which reduce at-risk behaviors in youth and adolescents (Judd, 2019).

Programs in the out-of-school hours give youth safe, supervised places to spend time, along with chances to learn new skills, develop their interests, and spend meaningful time with peers and adults (Gootman, 2000). They support youth's development while reducing the potential for risky behaviors (youth.gov).

"Afterschool programs are a promising avenue for supporting social-emotional, behavioral, and physical health during middle childhood" (Sparr et al., 2021). 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, and greater self-concept and self-esteem) (Lee, 2012).

However, the challenges developing and implementing quality, after-school programs (Halpern, 1999; Lee, 2012). Primary among these challenges are program quality, staff training, staff turnover and consistent funding (Gootman, 2000).

A broad range of activities and organizations are described as after-school programs; the term is used to refer to any youth programs outside of school hours. The after-school landscape is populated by a myriad of program types, program locations, and sponsoring organizations (Gootman, 2000). Examples include sports teams, STEM clubs, and performing arts, which can be offered at local community centers, parks, schools, or similar places. Depending on the location, these may be run by public organizations, such as county or city governments, or private organizations including for profit or non-profit agencies.

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. 4-H can help after-school programs address needs such as program quality and staff training to serve youth.

A young person's healthy development is Extension/4-H's goal, and Extension/4-H has the resources to provide positive 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, they can partner with existing programs that may benefit from the expertise and resources that 4-H offers.

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 professionals 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. While starting 4-H clubs is a familiar part of the 4-H professional's job, new challenges arise in the after-school landscape due to the quantity and variety of after-school providers (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Durlak et al., 2010; Riggs et al., 2010).



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 the benefits of 4-H partnerships with after-school programs are numerous. County 4-H programs benefit by working with new partners and reaching new audiences. After-school programs also benefit from the support and quality programming available through Extension. Above all, the children in the programs benefit through their experience.

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.

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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.

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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.

What Do We Hope to Accomplish?

4-H Afterschool seeks to increase the quality and quantity of after-school programs. To accomplish this, the focus is on improving the ability of program staff to offer high quality care, education, and developmental experiences for youth. Extension offers training materials and support to help establish 4-H clubs at after-school sites, to help program staff increase their ability to use positive youth development principles, and to help providers access quality 4-H program activities.

4-H In An After-School Setting

PROGRAM EXAMPLE

In Houston, 4-H partnered with established after-school programs to offer science enrichment programs to youth. Partners included the local Youth Services, 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC), and area schools. 4-H after-school clubs were formed, and they used research-based curriculums to engage youth, teachers, and site staff in science inquiry programming. Parents were involved through events such as Family Science Night, which showcased the program and recognized youth for their achievements (Nolen, 2022).



How to Use This Resource Guide

This resource guide is designed to be used by Extension professionals and after-school program providers who wish to start 4-H clubs in after-school programs. It represents some of the curricula, ideas, and information available throughout the Cooperative Extension System.

- Chapter 1 helps establish programs.
- Chapter 2 is designed to train after-school program staff directly about the program and requirements of 4-H clubs; it can be used either in a workshop format or in a one-on-one setting.
- Chapter 3 provides some strategies to maintain the programs.
- Chapter 4 presents alternative formats and outreach options. A collection of resources is available at the end of this guide.

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 Materials in the 4-H Afterschool Series

4-H Afterschool offers several other resource guides including:

- **4-H Youth Development Programming in Underrepresented Communities** aims to reach out, increase programming, and meet the needs of diverse audiences in 4-H after-school activities.
- **4-H Afterschool Resource Guide: Teens as Leaders** offers strategies on recruiting and training teens to work with younger youth in after-school programs.

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



Chapter I:

Getting Involved in After-School Programs

You've decided to support 4-H clubs in after-school settings. Where do you begin?

Action Steps*

As an Extension professional, once you have decided to support 4-H clubs in after-school settings, you can begin the process of establishing programs. If you already have liaisons with after-school sites through working with school programs, or attending conferences, community events, and similar programs, start with these contacts.

If you do not have such contacts in place, try these steps or adapt them to a format you have used successfully with other programs:

1. Map your county for existing after-school programs. You can use an Internet search of schools, departments of social services, YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, churches, public housing communities, and other sources to identify local programs.
2. List prospects by name. This will give you an idea of the number of potential partners and sites.
3. Send an introduction letter either by postal service or email (see Sample Introduction Letter/Email, page 10) to all or select sites in areas you'd like to target. This mailing is your first contact. It introduces sites to 4-H and lets them know you'll be following up.
4. Call identified contacts and schedule appointments (see Sample Telephone Contact, page 10). Of course, not all sites will be interested in pursuing your offer.
5. Mail/email a confirmation letter to contact (see Sample Letter of Confirmation, page 11). This lets sites know what to expect from your meeting.

Prepping for your Meeting

1. Review this resource guide.
2. Meet with scheduled contacts:
 - Present 4-H Afterschool, including how it is supported (see Service Descriptions, Who Does What?, pages 11-12) and what the training needs are for sites starting a new 4-H club. (Chapter 2 outlines the training schedule for after-school program staff.)
 - Discuss how partnering with 4-H is beneficial to the after-school site. (They receive program materials, assistance, and research-based programming.) Explain how youth benefit as well from a club structure. The frequency, duration, and quality of interactions promote positive youth development (see 4-H Youth Development Model, page 12).
 - If sites wish to start 4-H clubs, cover necessary program and administrative materials in this meeting (see Administrative Materials for Orientation of New Sites, pages 12-13, and Sample Statement of Understanding, page 14). Optionally, you may decide to complete these materials at a more formal orientation session. The orientation session to cover these materials should take an hour or so.
 - Schedule the first training date and location. You may wish to train several after-school sites (with multiple staff/volunteers) at one master training.

*Special thanks to *4-H Cares: A Guide to 4-H Learning Opportunities*, North Carolina Cooperative Extension, for providing materials to adapt for this chapter.



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SAMPLE INTRODUCTION LETTER/EMAIL

To: County After-school Center Directors

The 4-H program of the _____ Cooperative Extension System would like to work with after-school programs in (County) _____. Our 4-H clubs have provided valuable, positive youth development experiences for more than 100 years. Participation in 4-H opens tremendous opportunities for youth involvement, leadership, and learning.

I have piloted 4-H clubs in some after-school sites and have found them to be positive experiences for the programs and the youth. In addition to the 4-H club experience, 4-H offers an extensive array of experiential (learn-by-doing) activities in hundreds of different subjects such as nutrition, STEM, science, horticulture, character development, and others.

I share your goal of providing a quality after-school program and believe 4-H has educational materials and strategies that would enhance the learning opportunities for youth in your programs. As a part of the (University) _____ Extension Service, 4-H staff are also available to provide high-quality training and staff development experiences for after-school staff. Within the next two weeks, I will be in touch with you to discuss how 4-H can enhance your program.

I look forward to working with you. If you have any questions, please call the 4-H office at _____.

Sincerely,
Your Name Here
Extension Professional, 4-H

.....

.....

SAMPLE TELEPHONE CONTACT

The following is a script. You do not have to read it verbatim, just use the main points to initiate a dialog about enhancing after-school programs. When you call, speak to the director of the center and be sure to know this person by name.

Hello, my name is _____, and I'm with the (University/County) _____ 4-H program. Did you receive the letter we mailed a short time ago? Is this a good time to talk about the 4-H program? 4-H is designed to provide positive youth development experiences to young people ages 5 to 19. What ages do you work with in your center (group)?

4-H is interested in establishing clubs in after-school settings. Because of your involvement in youth development, I would like to schedule a meeting with you (and other members of your staff) to discuss our 4-H Afterschool Program. This national project is designed to combine the resources of 4-H with local after-school groups. Our meeting would allow us an opportunity to discuss how we could work together to provide quality learning opportunities for youth.

When would be a good time for us to meet?

Thank you for your time and interest. I look forward to seeing you on _____.

.....



SAMPLE LETTER OF CONFIRMATION

Dear _____,

Thank you for the interest you expressed during our recent telephone conversation concerning the 4-H Afterschool Program. I look forward to our meeting on _____ at _____ to discuss the possibility of starting a 4-H club in your after-school program. We are interested in sharing 4-H curricula. Our meeting should last about an hour.

Sincerely,
• Your Name Here
• Extension Professional
•
•
•

Service Descriptions: Who Does What?

SERVICE TITLE: EXTENSION PROFESSIONAL, 4-H

Description

To contact and orient adults and youth to support 4-H programs.

Responsibilities

1. Contact appropriate after-school providers to present 4-H Afterschool Program.
2. Complete the 4-H Afterschool Program contract.
3. Facilitate the 4-H Afterschool Program orientation and training; help maintain the program.
4. Provide curricula and other resources to providers.
5. Complete appropriate recordkeeping and evaluation forms.
6. Provide information on other 4-H opportunities.
7. Submit information about the program to state and national data collections systems.

Resource

Starting 4-H Clubs in After-school Programs

Tenure

For the duration of 4-H program involvement.

SERVICE TITLE: 4-H PROGRAM SITE COORDINATOR/ AFTER-SCHOOL STAFF

Description

Manages the 4-H program activities at their locations with assistance from the Extension 4-H professional. Forms effective teams of teachers/volunteers to deliver 4-H learning experiences. May be a salaried or volunteer member of the after-school center.

Responsibilities

1. Complete enrollment paperwork or online enrollment for all youth participants and volunteers.
2. Communicate to the Extension 4-H professional any needs of the group (materials, resources, assistance, etc.).
3. Attend all orientation/training sessions provided for the volunteers of the site.
4. Assist with various duties of the site as necessary.
5. Assist with identifying and securing necessary resources.
6. Recruit and train teachers and volunteers.
7. Encourage youth to participate in county, state, and national 4-H events.
8. Collect evaluation data.

Tenure

For the duration of the 4-H program at the site or at least one year.



SERVICE TITLE: 4-H AFTERSCHOOL

VOLUNTEER/TEACHER

Description

Guide 5- to 19-year-old youth through structured, learn-by-doing growth experiences.

Responsibilities

1. Serve as a 4-H program volunteer and receive training as needed.
2. Review and plan age-appropriate growth experiences.
3. Guide youth during learn-by-doing growth experiences (subject-matter projects, community service, committee work, etc.).

Resources

- *Starting 4-H Clubs in After-school Programs*
- Other 4-H curricula (available through county Extension offices)

Training Requirements

A minimum of 9 hours of orientation training and 20 hours of child contact is recommended, although this varies from state to state.

SERVICE TITLE: 4-H AFTERSCHOOL TEEN

VOLUNTEER/TEACHER

Description

Assist in guiding 5- to 19-year-old youth through structured, learn-by-doing growth experiences and in preparing for program activities.

Responsibilities

1. Serve as a 4-H program teen volunteer and receive training as needed.
2. Work with adults to help review and plan age-appropriate growth experiences.
3. Assist in guiding youth during learn-by-doing growth experiences (subject-matter projects, community service, committee work, etc.).

Resources

- *Starting 4-H Clubs in After-school Programs*
- Other 4-H curricula (available through County Extension Offices)

Training Requirements

A minimum of 9 hours of orientation training and 20 hours of child contact is recommended, although this varies from state to state.

4-H Youth Development Model*

EMPOWERING YOUTH AND ADULTS

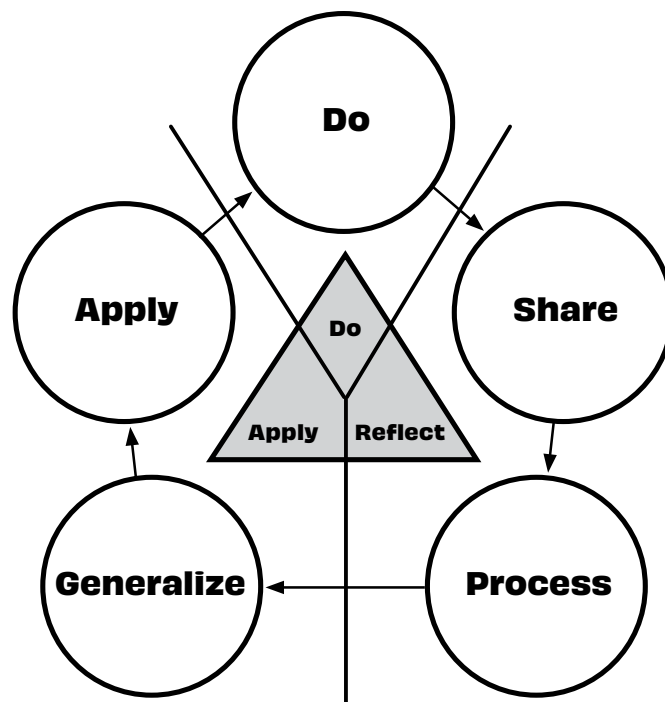
4-H creates opportunities for youth and adults to develop skills, practical knowledge, and wisdom through observing, doing, and experiencing. Empowered youth make decisions to improve their lives. Empowered adults and volunteers create sustainable programs.

LIFE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

4-H helps build the skills and abilities that must be developed for youth and adults to reach their full potential.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING MODEL

Experiential learning, or learning-by-doing, is a proven effective way of helping children learn; it actively engages learners, encourages them to think and reason things out for themselves, and, ultimately, helps them learn more.



Administrative Materials for Orientation of New Sites

Your county should provide a packet of program materials necessary to register all new 4-H clubs. Plan to cover this information one-on-one with after-school program staff that are planning to start a 4-H club.

*Model created by Brenda Carpenter and Shari Haldeman, Tompkins County 4-H, New York.





Type of Materials	Purpose
Criteria	Lists policies of sponsoring state; criteria for 4-H Afterschool clubs; quality indicators, explanation of 4-H colors, name, and emblem; slogan; motto; code of conduct; etc.
Authorization of Club	Letters from the group requesting to become a 4-H Afterschool club; letter from Extension personnel granting permission
4-H Charter	Certifies the charter of the club.
Enrollment and Other Forms	Forms and instructions for completion; membership age groups; eligibility; waivers for photos, parental permission, etc.
Insurance	Liability and accident insurance forms, waivers, etc.
Screening Forms	For volunteer screening: the group you are working with also may have forms/procedures that they use. Check with your state/county office for university policies about screening volunteers and liability.
Fiduciary Forms/Treasurer's Books	All financial reporting requirements related to club dues, fundraising, etc.
Data and Evaluation Forms	Evaluation and data collection forms, procedures, and expectations
Activity Calendar	The county calendar and newsletter highlighting local activities available to all 4-H members
Other as Needed	Miscellaneous program materials



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. There is no set maximum number of hours that may be devoted to 4-H programs. 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 curricula
- Ribbons and certificates for recognition
- Training on how to conduct a 4-H club meeting
- Assistance in setting up a 4-H club for after-school youth
- Emails, letters, newsletters, or other literature to be shared with parents, informing them of 4-H activities
- 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 grow and learn within the 4-H program
- Time in which a 4-H club meeting can be held
- Communication with the county 4-H office
- Educational supplies and resources
- 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 2:

Training After-School Program Staff

This chapter will help you train after-school program staff to start 4-H clubs at their sites. Before offering this training, you should have held an orientation session with each site (see Chapter 1).

Plan to offer this section in a workshop format with multiple attendees. The total time needed for this training is about 5 hours. Alternatively, you can use this section (with some adaptation) to train program staff one-on-one.

Format for Introducing After-School Sites to 4-H Clubs

ORIENTATION — CHAPTER 1

One-on-one meeting(s).

TRAINING — CHAPTER 2

Group or one-on-one training.

Activity	Topics/Instructions	Materials Needed	Time
General Welcome	Let everyone make name tags for themselves. Introduce trainers and ask participants to introduce themselves to the group. Review the day's agenda. Ask questions of participants such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did you decide to start a 4-H club at your site? • What's your favorite thing about working with children? • What questions do you have about 4-H? 	Name tags; agenda (posted on a flipchart, multimedia slide, or whiteboard)	20 minutes
Welcome to 4-H!	Explain and discuss answers to questions and general information including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is 4-H? • What is a 4-H club? • Goals of 4-H Afterschool • Review state and national 4-H connections • Recruitment • 4-H bylaws 	Whiteboard or flipchart and markers; photocopies of Background, page 17 (optional — can be used as script); 4-H Bylaws, page 19. Optional: Photocopies of Recruitment, page 18.	20 to 30 minutes
A Typical Meeting	A Typical Meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pledges • Business • Project work • Recreation 	Photocopies of 4-H Pledge, page 23; photocopies of Tips for Younger Youth in 4-H Clubs, page 25; markers; stickers; project table supplies (See under The Project Area, page 22.); refreshments; whiteboard or flipchart and markers. Optional: Photocopy 4-H Pledge Cards, page 24, for participants	45 minutes



Activity	Topics/Instructions	Materials Needed	Time
The View from Childhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ages and stages of children • Experiential model • Life skills • 4-H Thriving Model • Sample activity 	Associated handouts and/or projectors with completed Overheads 1-4, pages 27-30, and photocopies of Life Skills Model, page 30; also, materials (one type of item per two participants) for sample activity—drum and drumsticks; plastic containers with lids that are not clear; beans, pennies, paper clips, o-shaped cereal, popcorn kernels, and other small items to put inside the containers	1 to 2 hours
4-H Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using 4-H project materials in 4-H Afterschool clubs 	National program area information, project resources from your state, including member's and leader's manuals; photocopies of Project Theme Week Handout, page 35.	40 minutes
Involving Parents and Other Community Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging families and other community resources • Working with volunteers 	Whiteboards or flipcharts and markers for each group; photocopies of Involving Parents and Other Community Members, page 36, and Involving Others—Volunteers, page 38.	About 40 to 50 minutes

Objectives

To understand more about the 4-H organization

Time

20 to 30 minutes

Materials

White board and markers or flipchart and markers; photocopies of Background, page 17 (optional—can be used as script); and 4-H Bylaws, page 19. Optional: Photocopies of Recruitment, page 18, and county activity timeline if you have one.

START HERE

Write the word “4-H” on a flipchart/whiteboard. Ask participants to blurt out anything that comes to mind when they think of 4-H. Write their responses in circles or clouds and link them back to the word “4-H.” Your brain blurt may look like the one on this page.

BRAIN BLURT



Welcome to 4-H!

OVERVIEW

In this brief activity, you will help answer the question “What is 4-H?”



4-H is operated by the Cooperative Extension System. It has grown and adapted since its inception in the early 1900s, now offering 4-H programs in many different settings and covering a wide range of program topics. However, all 4-H programs share a common goal: empowering youth to reach their full potential. Distribute copies of the Background or use it as an outline/script to explain more about 4-H.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Explain that 4-H clubs operating in after-school settings are considered the same as other 4-H clubs; they can participate in any activities, fairs, competitions, community service events, camps, or other activities open to the 4-H community. Review a typical calendar month and current overall county program offerings with the group, to show different opportunities available to them as a 4-H club. You may also wish to cover ideas about recruiting 4-H members from current after-school participants. Use the Recruitment, page 18, to discuss ways sites can recruit children to join their 4-H clubs.

Background

WHAT IS 4-H?

4-H is the Cooperative Extension System's dynamic, non-formal, educational program for youth. Our program partners the cooperative efforts of youth, volunteer leaders, state land-grant universities, state and local governments, 4-H Foundations, and the Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service (CSREES) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. We are one of the largest youth organizations in the United States, with more than 3,500 4-H professionals and 500,000 volunteers working directly and indirectly with youth. Young people experience 4-H through school and community clubs, in-school and after-school programs, and 4-H camps.

While 4-H's history is distinctly rural, current programs are found in urban and suburban areas as well. 4-H project activities cover a wide range of interest areas, such as STEAM, agriculture, healthy living, civic engagement, and other topics, all with a focus of positive youth development.

WHAT IS A 4-H CLUB?

A 4-H club is an organized group of five or more boys and girls ages 5 to 19. Youth club officers, in partnership with adult volunteers, lead a planned program of club activities throughout the duration of the club. Through county and state support, clubs have options of group club enrollments and individual membership enrollments (this varies from state to state). Each club should also participate in community outreach and project activities. Club meetings include conducting business by officers, educational programs, and group building or recreational activities, but vary greatly by site. Clubs with a majority of young children may have less structured meetings. All 4-H activities focus on positive youth development.

GOALS OF 4-H AFTERSCHOOL

The goals of the program are to increase the ability of after-school program staff to offer high quality care, education, and developmental experiences for youth and to help increase the availability of after-school programs.

FAST FACTS

- 4-H was founded as a collection of clubs for boys and girls during the early 1900s.
- Leadership is shared between children and adults in 4-H. Young people learn from adults, and vice versa!
- 4-H'ers can dive into more than 110 project areas including STEM, agriculture, healthy living, and civic engagement. The 4-H curriculum includes ties to learning standards, opportunities for community service, and relation to career readiness.



Recruitment

IDEAS FOR RECRUITING 4-H MEMBERS AT AFTER-SCHOOL SITES*

1. Put up signs announcing a first meeting and email parents. Make it exciting!
2. At the meeting, use 4-H materials, including member manuals (available from your local 4-H professional). Some children like getting a book of their own that they can write in.
3. Post a specific outline of upcoming activities and let children sign up.
4. Offer a Nutritious Snack Fair to families as parents arrive at the end of the day. The children in a 4-H cooking club can prepare the snacks.
5. Hand out a 4-H newsletter for parents to take home.
6. Find out a child's specific interests and match him/her with a club.
7. Send a note home to parents explaining that their child has expressed interest in joining 4-H, asking parents to contact after-school staff or the 4-H professional for more information. Alternatively, send a note home that the site has become a 4-H partner site and more information will be coming.
8. Ask current 4-H club members to bring a friend to the next meeting.

WHY DO YOUTH JOIN A 4-H CLUB?

There are a number of reasons adolescents join and continue with 4-H Afterschool Programs, including academic support, a sense of belonging, fun, and positive

4-H'ers are...

4X

more likely to give back to their communities

2X

more likely to make healthier choices

2X

more likely to participate in STEM activities

adult mentorship (Ferrari & Turner, 2006). Similarly, younger kids join for many of the same reasons, as listed below (Wingenbach et al., 2000).

- 65 percent said it sounded like fun.
- 62 percent had friends who were in 4-H.
- 56 percent wanted to meet new friends.
- 49 percent were influenced by parents or caregivers to join.
- 29 percent wanted to learn new skills and do new activities.
- 7 percent joined because a teacher suggested they do so.



*Source of ideas: Email correspondence, Elise Nester, Ruth Ann Christian, Todd Branson, Jim Winkler, and other 4-H volunteers and professionals. January 2003.





4-H Bylaws

PURPOSE OF BYLAWS

The purpose of bylaws is to help everyone understand 4-H standards and procedures. Bylaws describe when and where the club meets, who may join, the type of officers elected by the club, and the criteria used to keep a member in good standing. A copy of the club's bylaws is held at the Extension office. The bylaws also are sent to members, parents, and volunteers.

WHO WRITES THE BYLAWS?

4-H club members write and approve club bylaws. Everyone who is affected by them should have a say as they are developed.

Other bylaws can be added as necessary to clarify the functioning of the club.

EXAMPLE: BYLAWS OF THE EAGER EGRETS 4-H CLUB

ARTICLE 1 — NAME

The name of this organization shall be the Eager Egrets 4-H Club.

ARTICLE 2 — PURPOSE

The purpose of this 4-H club is to support the development of its members through club meetings, project work, demonstrations, fairs, and other activities.

ARTICLE 3 — POLICIES

The club will meet regularly at least 12 times each year, preferably twice a month, to conduct business. Any major decision of the club must be voted upon by two-thirds of the membership present.

ARTICLE 4 — MEMBERSHIP

Without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin, any youth ages 5 to 19 as of September 1st of the current school year may become a member of this club. To become a member, a person must attend six meetings, complete an enrollment form with parent/guardian signatures, agree to abide by the 4-H Code of Conduct, and know the 4-H pledge.

ARTICLE 5 — OFFICERS, ELECTIONS, AND DUTIES

The elected officers of this club shall be president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. Officers shall be elected each [quarter, semester, or year]. (Note: Officers may rotate each club meeting, especially in clubs with mostly younger members.)



Objectives

To understand how to run a model 4-H meeting for older youth. To know there are many variations to a typical meeting.

Time

One hour

Materials

Photocopies of 4-H Pledge, page 23; photocopies of Tips for Younger Youth in 4-H Clubs, page 25; paper; markers; stickers; project-table supplies (see under The Project Area); refreshments; and whiteboard or flipchart. Optional: Photocopy 4-H Pledge Cards, page 24, for participants.

A Typical Meeting

OVERVIEW

In this activity, you will engage after-school staff to simulate a typical 4-H meeting for older youth. Be sure to set up your project table(s) before you begin (see The Project Area, page 22). Also, have refreshments ready in a separate area.

START HERE

Explain to participants that they will simulate a typical 4-H meeting. You will act as president. This new 4-H club is being founded at Kids Rule! Center. Explain that participants can adopt the ages and attitudes of either a girl or boy aged 8 to 19 and stick with this character throughout the meeting. Alternatively, some may choose to be an adult or teen volunteer who helps the participants.

Distribute copies of the 4-H Pledge, paper, and markers. Then read (or improvise) the script.



SCRIPT TO READ

BASIC 4-H CLUB MEETING

- **Call to Order**

(President, _____, raps gavel two times for members to come to order.)

The meeting of the _____ 4-H Club will come to order. We will begin with the Pledge of Allegiance and the 4-H Pledge. _____ and _____ will be our Pledge Leaders today.

(President, raps gavel three times for members to stand.)

- **Pledges**

(The two Pledge Leaders come to the front to lead pledges; all members will recite pledges.)

(Pledge Leader) Attention, salute, pledge: I pledge allegiance to the flag...

(Pledge Leader) Now the 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.

- **Roll Call**

(president, raps gavel one time for members to sit.) Next, we will have roll call.

- **Secretary**

Please state your name and tell us your favorite _____. Please be sure you have signed in on the attendance sheet. (For older youth, this can include reading minutes.)

- **Educational Program, Project, and/or Activities**

(President) Our Vice President, _____, will tell us our club options for today. (First meeting may focus on club name; i.e., Our first order of business today is to come up with a name for our 4-H club! So, let's start writing down some names you like for our club. Here are a couple I've thought of:

- Kids Rule! 4-H Club
- Active Aardvarks 4-H Club
- I KNOW you can come up with some more. Work with your neighbor to come up with ideas to write up here on the board [or flipchart].

(Vice-President) Today's educational program will be by _____, who will teach us about _____.

Or

Today's club options are: 1. _____,
2. _____, or 3. _____.

- **Announcements**

(President) Are there any announcements?

- **Adjournment**

(President) Do I have a motion to adjourn the meeting?

(Member 1, _____) I move that the meeting be adjourned.

(President) Is there a second?

(Member 2, _____) I second the motion.

(President) All those in favor of the motion to adjourn the meeting say "yes." {pause} All opposed say "no." {pause} The motion to adjourn the meeting has passed. Please stand. (Raps gavel three times.) We will adjourn by saying the 4-H Motto, and then you may go to your project meetings/activities.

(All) To make the best better.

(President) This meeting is adjourned. (Raps gavel one time.)



The Gavel is a symbol of power and authority and should be respected. Only the presiding officer may use the gavel. When not in use, the gavel rests on the podium or table in front of the presiding officer.

.....

ONE RAP

signals members to sit, follows the announcement of a vote, and also adjourns the meeting.

TWO RAPS

call the meeting to order.

THREE RAPS

signal the group to stand in unison (for pledges, to recognize honored guests, etc.).

MULTIPLE RAPS OVER THREE

signal to restore dignity and order to the meeting, for members to sit and be quiet.

Adapted by Florida 4-H Military Programming team, form 4-H 101, Lesson 11, 4-H Military Partnerships, National 4-H Headquarters, National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA.

.....

After everyone has written their best ideas down, give everyone three stickers to vote for their favorite name. The name with the most votes wins. In case of a tie, flip a coin, re-vote, or hold the vote until the next meeting. Explain that the business part of the meeting is now

concluded. Formally adjourn the group and ask them to move to the project table. Explain that the project table has activities that the group has expressed interest in and that the 4-Hers should decide how to best get things done. Adult and teen volunteers are available to help.

THE PROJECT AREA (EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM)

The project should contain something engaging and educational. You may wish to have more than one project table to introduce 4-H club offerings. Here are some ideas:

1. Gardening activity—Create newspaper pots; add soil and seeds while learning about plant parts, needs, and growth.
2. Craft activity/Service project—Design a card, bead bracelet, picture frame, etc. for your family member, teacher, neighbor, or friend.
3. STEM activity—Explore plastic or cardboard gears, magnetism, design concepts, etc. using a variety of play, building, crafting, or science materials.

SOCIAL TIME!

After participants have finished, let them share projects with each other and parents. Next, continue the fun with refreshments and a “Welcome to 4-H!” party. Include activities such as word games or active games. For example, write the words “four h clover” on the board and ask people to come up with different words from the letters (such as love, hour, flour, foul, over), or organize relay races, charades, etc. Let people mingle and get to know each other better!



FINAL ACT

After socializing is done, pull the group back together and ask them to be adults again. Summarize the points for making meetings work with 4-H youth (write these on a flipchart/board or read them):

1. Start and stop on time, according to time slots available.
2. Set behavior standards. Young people need to know what is expected of them. Set and agree upon behavioral expectations right away. Encourage everyone to practice good citizenship and respect for others at meetings.
3. Let officers (youth) fulfill their responsibilities. Help by providing guidance.
4. The president calls the meeting to order and is in charge. Other officers and committee chairpersons do their own work.
5. Encourage the use of parliamentary procedure. This helps keep the democratic process of decision-making orderly.
6. Communicate upcoming events, dates, and responsibilities.
7. Be sure young people make the decisions — not adults!
8. Encourage youth to help plan meetings with variety. One-fourth business, one-half education, and one-fourth recreation is a guideline, but it can be adjusted if necessary.
9. Keep things moving and encourage participation.

Next, distribute Tips for Younger Youth in 4-H Clubs to participants and discuss the major points. Initiate a discussion about how meetings may differ for younger children versus older ones. (Typical meetings occur with 9- to 19-year-olds. Children younger than 9 benefit from

a less structured routine that still emphasizes social interaction, decision making, and learning.)

The 4-H Pledge

The 4-H Pledge, first adopted in 1927, summarizes 4-H as the four-fold development of youth through the Head, Heart, Hands, and Health.

Post a pledge banner at your meeting site. At the end of the first meeting, give everyone a card with the 4-H pledge to take home (see page 24), along with a 4-H pencil or other 4-H item.

The **HEAD** represents

- thinking, planning, and reasoning
- gaining new and valuable knowledge
- understanding the whys

The **HEART** represents

- being concerned about the welfare of others
- accepting the responsibilities of citizenship
- determining the values and attitudes by which to live
- learning how to live and work with others
- developing positive attitudes

The **HANDS** represent

- learning new skills
- improving skills already known
- being useful, helpful, and skillful
- developing respect for work and pride in accomplishment

The **HEALTH** represents

- practicing healthful living
- enjoying life
- using leisure time wisely
- protecting the wellbeing of self and others



4-H PLEDGE CARDS

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.



4-H PLEDGE CARDS

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.



4-H PLEDGE CARDS

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.



4-H PLEDGE CARDS

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.



4-H PLEDGE CARDS

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.



4-H PLEDGE CARDS

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.





Tips for Younger Youth in 4-H Clubs

The 4-H member meeting is a major tool after-school staff can use to help children develop and learn. It provides children with the opportunity to build friendships, exchange ideas, enhance life skills, and explore new concepts and areas of interest. Here are some tips for making the meetings work for younger children.

1. One hour is a good time span for meetings.
2. Allow time at the beginning to greet everyone and let everyone actively participate.
3. Remember members may have shorter attention spans, especially after a school day. They may need shorter projects and learning experiences.
4. If you want to explore a leadership structure, consider making members a club officer for the day.
5. Include refreshments and play time in each meeting.
6. Let members take responsibility for themselves. They should clean up and put away clutter.

Suggested time frame for meetings that include projects or learning activities:

- **3 minutes**
Opening and Overview
- **30 minutes**
Learning Activity
- **5 minutes**
Clean up
- **10 minutes**
Snack Time
- **10 minutes**
Recreation



OBJECTIVES

To enhance understanding of pre-adolescent and adolescent characteristics and behavior.

TIME

One to 2 hours overall, including *Good Vibrations: The Science of Sound* activity.

MATERIALS

Projector; display Overheads 1-4, pages 27-30; make copies of Life Skills Model, page 30, and Experiential Learning Model, page 31. Additional materials from the sample activity, *Good Vibrations: The Science of Sound*, pages 32 and 33.

The View from Childhood

OVERVIEW

In this activity, you'll teach after-school program staff the basics of 4-H educational theory and introduce them to some activities. For additional activities, see *The Big Book of 4-H Cloverbud Activities*.

START HERE

Explain to participants that one of the guiding principles of 4-H is the development of the child. While mastery of content and gaining skills are important, it is critical that we first understand the different ages and stages of a child's world to optimize our educational efforts.

Use Overheads 1-4 to explain the different ages and stages of child development. Ask participants to give examples from their experience working with youth of

each age group. Alternately, you can ask a small team to come up and pretend they are the age group represented on the overhead dealing with this dilemma:

The team must work together to take care of a hamster. The group includes four children and one adult.

The team can role play using the characteristics of each age group. (You can use different teams to represent the different ages from each overhead.)

Explain that understanding how different ages work, play, and learn is critical to helping them develop into productive and happy adults, all of which is core to 4-H programming.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Distribute and review the Life Skills Model with the group. Explain that life skills are abilities that extend to different aspects of life and help realize one's full potential as a youth and adult. All 4-H programming focuses on life skills that go beyond teaching content. For example, while cultivating vegetable gardens, children acquire life skills such as working together, communication, self-motivation, responsibility, discipline, decision-making, and more.

Next, explain that for children and teens to fully understand a new concept, several steps must happen. This is called experiential learning, which can be explained using the model on page 31.

FINAL ACT

Teach *Good Vibrations: The Science of Sound* (pages 32 and 33) as a sample activity. Be sure to demonstrate the concepts of experiential learning and life skills.



Overhead I: 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. Large motor skills are more developed than fine motor skills.</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. Developing empathy. Mixed gender play is common.</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>Seek approval from adults. Are sensitive to criticism and failure.</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. Are more interested in doing things than 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>

*Adapted from UW-Madison Extension (2020)



Overhead 2: Ages and Stages—Characteristics of Youth

GRADES 4-6

Characteristics	Implications for Programming
Physical Energetic, increased muscle coordination. Beginning of adolescence is marked by a growth spurt, with females generally experiencing puberty earlier than males.	Provide active learning experiences, including large and small movements. Avoid competitions between boys and girls.
Social Enjoy group activities. Admire and imitate older youth. Seek peer approval.	Use group learning when possible. Encourage older mentors to work with your group.
Emotional Delicate sense of self-confidence. Hormonal changes may create mood fluctuations.	Don't compare youth to one another, rather praise individual progress. Be patient and accepting.
Intellectual Attention spans and intellectual abilities vary. Wide variety of interests. Generally enthusiastic and eager to try new things.	Offer a wide range of activities to ensure that many experience success. Engage youth in planning and decision-making.

*Adapted from UW-Madison Extension (2020)





Overhead 3: Ages and Stages—Characteristics of Youth

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>

*Adapted from UW-Madison Extension (2020)



Overhead 4: Ages and Stages—Characteristics of Youth

HIGH SCHOOL

Characteristics	Implications for Programming
<p>Physical</p> <p>Physical changes continue. Boys may still be growing quickly.</p>	Avoid comments that criticize or compare body shapes/sizes.
<p>Social</p> <p>Seek leadership and responsibility but need some adult guidance. Belonging and recognition are important. Changing relationships.</p>	Let teens plan their own programs. Establish a climate that is conducive to peer support. Emphasize personal development whenever possible and be a resource for them.
<p>Emotional</p> <p>At varying stages of moving toward independence and individual identity.</p>	Give recognition for leadership. Allow teens to take on increased responsibility and opportunities for self-exploration of identity, values, and beliefs.
<p>Intellectual</p> <p>Gaining cognitive and study skills. Are mastering abstract thinking. Emphasis is on exploring and outcomes, preparing for future career and roles. Like to set their own goals based on their own needs. May reject goals imposed by others.</p>	Allow work on real-life problems. Let them make decisions and evaluate the outcomes. Encourage service learning. Plan field trips to businesses and colleges.

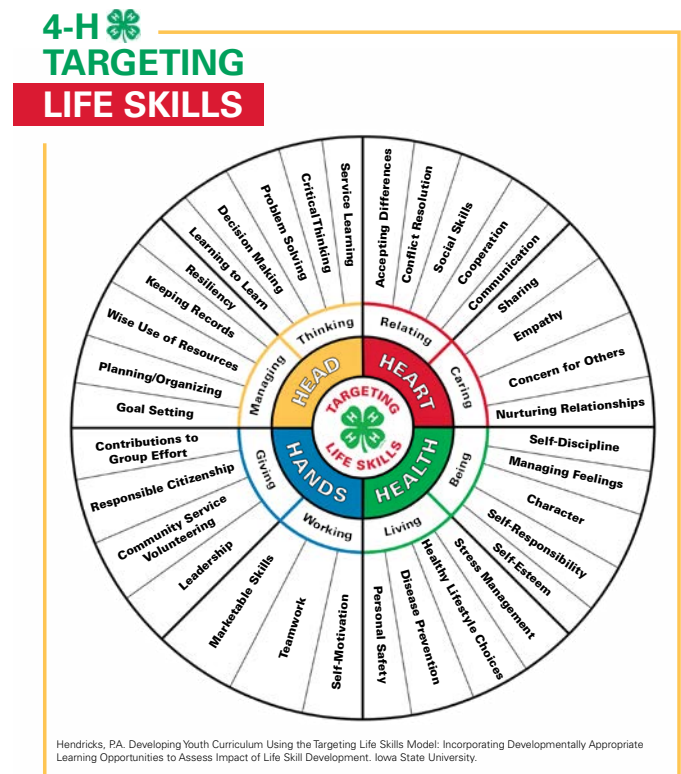
*Adapted from UW-Madison Extension (2020)

Remember: While there are common characteristics of youth within an age range, it is important to understand that all youth are individuals, and therefore, development will be unique to each child. The ages and stages of youth development serve as a general guide to support positive youth development.

Life Skills Model

Source

Hendricks, Patricia A. *Developing Youth Curriculum Using the Targeting Life Skills Model: Incorporating Developmentally Appropriate Learning Opportunities to Assess Impact of Life Skill Development*. Iowa State University. 4H-3050.



Hendricks, P.A. *Developing Youth Curriculum Using the Targeting Life Skills Model: Incorporating Developmentally Appropriate Learning Opportunities to Assess Impact of Life Skill Development*. Iowa State University.

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4H 3050



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

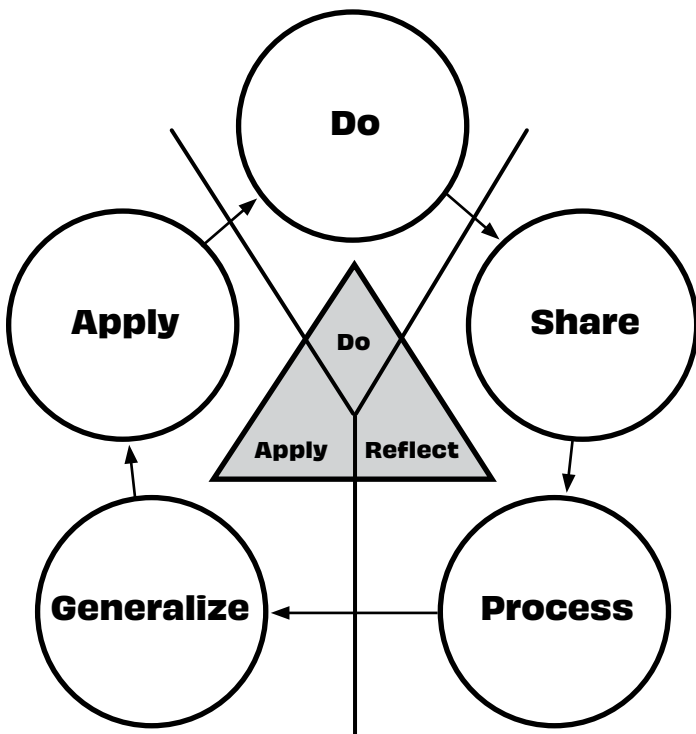
Ask questions about something that was important about the experience. Participants analyze the experience and reflect upon the results.

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.



LIFE SKILLS

Critical thinking, problem solving, communication.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

To understand how sounds travel and are heard. To gain an appreciation for how sounds enrich our lives.

AGE

5 to 12

TIME

30 minutes

SETTING

Indoors or outdoors

MATERIALS

Drum and drumsticks; plastic containers with lids that aren't clear; beans, pennies, paper clips, o-shaped cereal, popcorn kernels, and other small items to put inside the containers. (You'll need one type of item for every two participants.)

Sample Activity: GOOD VIBRATIONS: THE SCIENCE OF SOUND*

OVERVIEW

In this activity, you'll teach participants how to use a typical 4-H experiential learning-based, hands-on activity. Good Vibrations: The Science of Sound helps youth understand the process of problem solving.

In this activity, participants get a chance to explore their sense of hearing. Before you begin, prepare two of each type of "shaking containers" by placing beans, pennies, paper clips, cereal, popcorn kernels, or other small items into containers that are not see-through.

START HERE

Explain to participants that Good Vibrations: The Science of Sound is designed to emphasize the life skill of critical thinking. Ask participants to pay particular attention to

*Adapted from *4-H Cloverbud Series II Curriculum*, Ohio State University.



the experiential learning process, to see how it is applied in this activity.

Ask participants to assume the roles of youth ages 5 to 12. Note that the group will be beginning with the first step in the experiential learning process: **experiencing the activity**.

Before they do this, however, note that you'll be providing some content background.

Explain that sound is vibration moving through a substance such as air, water, or other material. Our ears collect the vibrations and pass them down the ear canal to the eardrum. The eardrum vibrates like the head of a drum. (Use a drum to simulate this vibration; ask for volunteers to help make the noise.)

Resume your explanation by pointing out that other small bones in the ear continue the vibrations until they reach the inner ear, where they are changed to signals sent to the brain.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Help participants explore the wonderful world of sound. Give each person a container. Tell them to shake it but not open it. Listen carefully to the sound it makes.

Now, instruct participants to go around the room and find the person with matching items in their container. However, they may only use their sense of hearing to find this match.

After everyone has found a match, ask them to open canisters and see if they are correct. Those who aren't correct should find their match, and carefully compare the sounds made. This is the experiential process of **sharing results**.

Next, explain to participants that they'll be using a series of questions to move through the next experiential steps, namely, processing, generalizing, and applying.

FINAL ACT

Ask participants these **processing questions**:

1. What kind of sounds did you hear?
2. How did you know who had the same items in their container?
3. Why did the different items in the containers make different sounds?

Ask some **generalizing questions**:

1. What other things could be put into the containers to make sound?
2. What things could you put in the containers that would not make sound?

Help children **apply** what they've learned. Explain that we get important information by hearing. Ask: What are some instances when listening carefully is important? Are there ever times when listening isn't important?

More to Do

Let's make a band! Assemble everyone and ask them to shake or tap their canisters in beat to a simple tune, such as "This Old Man" or "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." Have everyone sing along and play a recording of the song.



OBJECTIVES

To help participants understand the different projects available within the 4-H system.

TIME

40 minutes.

MATERIALS

Project resources from your state, including member's and leader's manuals; photocopies of Project Theme Week Handout, page 35.

4-H Projects

OVERVIEW

In this activity, participants are introduced to 4-H projects. Set up a table with project resources before you begin.

START HERE

Explain that a strong component of 4-H work is focused on projects. This project-based learning helps increase the life skills of members and builds content knowledge in specific areas. For example, children enrolled in the aerospace project learn scientific principles such as thrust and lift, engage their creative abilities in building and painting rockets, and develop problem-solving skills when their rockets don't perform as anticipated.

Share some of the project curricula available for youth. Give them time to explore these resources on their own.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Explain that there are several scenarios for using project-based materials in 4-H clubs, including:

1. Each child can choose the project that interests him or her. If you have the resources/volunteers to support this approach, it can be quite successful since children will truly match their interests to their efforts.
2. A club may choose to do one or two projects as a group. You will need fewer volunteers and other resources to support this approach.
3. Volunteer teachers or club leaders can use project books to plan theme weeks (or months). Many of the ideas in the books could be used to teach the entire group about subjects such as computers, self-esteem, future workplaces, etc.

Divide the group into teams of two or three each. Ask them to choose a project book and plan a theme week based upon the book. Distribute copies of the Project Theme Week Handout to help them plan. Give teams some time to plan and be creative.

FINAL ACT

Give teams an opportunity to share their plans. Answer any questions that have arisen about 4-H project work.





PROJECT THEME WEEK HANDOUT

Planning Items, Events, and Activities	Decisions
PROJECT RESOURCE (Book name)	
THEME FOR WEEK	
LEARNING AND OTHER OUTCOMES	
LIST ACTIVITIES TO BE TAUGHT/EXPLORED FROM MATERIALS	
LIST DAYS/TIMES OFFERED	
WHAT WILL BE DONE WITH PRODUCTS?	
LIST PRODUCTS THAT WOULD BE MADE (For example, posters, dog collars, tree surveys, etc.)	
HOW WE'LL INVOLVE PARENTS	
HOW WE'LL INVOLVE OTHER COMMUNITY	
MEMBERS OR RESOURCES	
SPECIAL EVENTS PLANNED?	
SPECIAL SNACKS PLANNED?	
OTHER IDEAS?	



OBJECTIVES

To help participants learn how to best involve parents and other community members to build strong programs.

TIME

About 40 to 50 minutes.

MATERIALS

Whiteboard or flipchart and markers for each group; photocopies of *Involving Others — Volunteers*, page 38.

Involving Parents and Other Community Members

OVERVIEW

In this activity, participants will think through how best to involve parents and other community members in their 4-H Afterschool club.

START HERE

Explain that parents and other community members can help make 4-H Afterschool programs strong. Parents want to know what their children are doing in 4-H and at the after-school site; children benefit from parental involvement. Community members can support the 4-H after-school program as volunteers or may bring other resources into the setting.

Urge participants to build support from parents and families from the very beginning. Here are the best ways to do this:

1. Ask for their consent when the child first joins the 4-H club.
2. Give parents a description of the program and discuss how they can support the program.
3. Provide opportunities to discuss the 4-H Afterschool program with parents.
4. Urge parents to attend club meetings or special events whenever possible.
5. Encourage parents to participate when something is planned for the club that matches their interests or abilities. They may wish to teach a craft or host a field trip, for example.

Explain that there are challenges to keeping parents involved, especially in regard to scheduling. Still, it's important for parents to have some involvement in 4-H Afterschool activities. Brainstorm some ideas for helping parents stay more connected with the 4-H Afterschool club. Some ideas might include:

- special invitations to 4-H events, which children can design and make
- hosting a special Parents' Day.
- giving recognition to parental helpers.
- providing information on how parents and caregivers can reinforce program goals at home.
- providing regular correspondence about program activities.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Recruiting, maintaining, and motivating volunteers from outside the paid staff are important tasks at a 4-H Afterschool club site. These tasks must be well planned and thoughtfully managed. Pass out *Involving Others — Volunteers*.

Explain that there are numerous other community resources. Ask participants to break into groups of about four each. Give each group a flipchart and markers. Ask them to:

1. Identify community resources.
2. Identify a role for these resources.
3. Figure out the best approach to gain participation in the 4-H Afterschool club.

FINAL ACT

Let each group share their community resource strategies. Share these examples, if you wish:

1. Your local Fire Department is a community resource. Firefighters can act as speakers and teach children about fire safety. Children can travel to the fire station on a field trip and learn about fire safety. A phone call to the local fire station is probably all that is needed to engage these resources; most stations have educational programs or participate in community outreach.
2. Senior citizens can come in to lend a hand or teach a skill. Volunteers can be solicited through local senior citizen agencies or from grandparents of children attending the after-school program.





Involving Others — Volunteers

Work with Extension personnel to identify resources within the 4-H community that can help your newly formed 4-H Afterschool club.

How do you best entice volunteers to join 4-H?

Try these tips:

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 quickly understand the purpose.
4. Conduct meetings that are focused and respectful of everyone's time.
5. Listen. Everyone wants to be heard. Apathy often results from leaders' failure to listen.
6. Reduce risks of participation. Good communication can help identify and reduce risks.
7. Encourage teens to volunteer. Offer volunteer hours, an opportunity to participate in service learning, chances to meet other teens, and other incentives.

There are two types of volunteers: ongoing and one-time. Ongoing volunteers may include club leaders, teen helpers, and others. One-time volunteers may agree to host the 4-H Afterschool club at their workplace or may teach a class on a particular topic. Many parents will willingly take on the role of one-time volunteer.

What Motivates Volunteers?

Volunteers have different motivations including opportunities to:

- Help their families.
- Learn new skills.
- Contribute to the community.
- Meet and get to know people in the community.
- Develop leadership skills.
- Gain community recognition.
- Use personal skills and knowledge.
- Learn more about community efforts and activities.

SCREENING PROGRAM

4-H and other organizations rigorously screen volunteers in their programs. Be sure to cover your local 4-H Volunteer Screening Program with the after-school sites.



Chapter 3:

Maintaining the 4-H Afterschool Club

Establishing 4-H Afterschool programs is a major step! Next, it is important to keep it going with continued support and motivation. Program continuation and participant retention stem from a combination of factors including setting, activities, and leadership (Ferrari & Turner, 2006).

This section provides some maintenance tips to county 4-H Extension staff responsible for 4-H Afterschool programs.

Our thanks to Deirdre Thompson, University of California, for her contributions to this chapter.

Engaging Afterschool Staff with Your County 4-H Program

FOLLOW-UP CONTACTS

There are some key communication check-ins that you should plan with after-school club sites. Sites that don't receive feedback and support are more likely to become disinterested or quit within a short time.

Here is a sample plan for maintaining good connections with Afterschool clubs:

1. Check in once a month via the method preferred by your after-school contact.
2. Send a monthly newsletter targeted specifically at the successes and challenges of 4-H after-school.
3. Stay in touch by email—sometimes informal notes go a long way toward keeping minor problems minor.
4. Drop by the sites a few times each year.
5. Organize new volunteer and after-school staff meetings and get together, so that different sites get a chance to meet and explore what works best.

6. Plan two evaluations each year (six months and annual).
7. Help program staff manage volunteers from outside their organizations by offering training opportunities (either on a local, regional, or national scale).
8. Ensure that sites are providing needed records, such as roster sheets, reports, enrollment data, etc. (You should set up the process for collecting these materials in your initial orientation meetings with sites.)
9. Invite key after-school executives/administrators/leaders to become a member of your county Extension Advisory Committee and/or 4-H Advisory Committee.
10. Consider creating a social media presence.

ONGOING TRAINING

It's beneficial for after-school program staff to attend 4-H trainings you offer. These include training on how to enhance the quality and setting of after-school programs, curricula/activities options, and other workshops offered to 4-H volunteers and leaders.

ONGOING CURRICULUM SUPPORT

One of the best ways to help after-school program staff is to offer training that showcase 4-H curricula. Offer a sample of curricula that may be of interest to your local youth and partners. You may also design trainings for after-school program staff, giving them an opportunity to experience the material in a supportive group setting.

4-H and the Extension system offer a wide range of curricula that after-school program staff will find useful. For additional options, view the national 4-H curricula at <https://4-h.org/parents/curriculum/#!menu-builder>. Especially important to the club experience are the Member's Manuals, which individuals use to learn more





about specific projects. Also, check state 4-H resources that are available for a given topic or age group.

Engaging Current Youth and Adults With Your County 4-H Program

RECOGNITION

Three main groups may need to be recognized as part of your 4-H Afterschool club programs. They include youth participants, volunteer partners, and after-school staff.

Recognizing the accomplishments of youth in 4-H After-school clubs can occur in many ways. These may include:

- certificates (also awarded for participation)
- ribbons
- scholarships (camps, youth meetings, etc.)
- trips
- plaques and trophies
- membership cards
- other benefits (such as movie passes, etc.)
- social media and newsletters

Ultimately, one of the major outcomes for participants is a sense of mastery and an increase in self-esteem. While some people need outward signs for recognition, others thrive in the sense of a job well done. Each 4-H Afterschool club should offer recognition that is most meaningful to its members.

Volunteers, also, should be recognized for their participation and achievements. Extension personnel should work with after-school sites to design volunteer events and recognition that are most meaningful to the individuals at their locations.

Additionally, plan recognition for partnering after-school sites. This recognition may take the form of highlighting the program in 4-H materials, social media, or local news outlets. Or you may wish to individually recognize after-school staff for their efforts. Again, plan recognition that is meaningful to after-school program staff.

Encourage sites to follow the National 4-H Recognition Model⁶ for youth:

1. Recognize children for participation. This acknowledges their involvement in the first step of working toward a goal and helps build a positive self-image.

*Adapted from Kent, H. C. (2015, March 20). *Meaningful recognition in Florida 4-H clubs*. UF/IFAS Extension. Retrieved December 30, 2022, from <https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/extension/2015/03/20/meaningful-recognition-in-florida-4-h-clubs/>



2. Recognize children for progress toward their personal goals. This helps youth gain experience in setting goals and realistically assessing their abilities.
3. Recognize children for achieving standards of excellence. These predetermined targets give youth something to aim for in their learning experiences.
4. Recognize children through peer competition. This can be a strong motivation for some children. It is not appropriate for children under the age of 8.
5. Recognize children for cooperating.

MARKETING MATERIALS AND PUBLICITY

County programs have employed many different approaches to marketing and publicity over the years. Whichever methods are used, be sure to include 4-H after-school projects in your outreach efforts with local 4-H programs. Here are some additional methods to market and publicize your 4-H after-school programs:

1. Appoint a publicity committee, with both older youth and adult representatives, to generate and implement publicity ideas.
2. Hold high-profile special events to publicize 4-H Afterschool, such as Fun Days for non-4-H members, ice cream socials, etc.



3. Write public service announcements (PSAs) or newspaper articles to talk about 4-H Afterschool.
4. Have a 4-H Afterschool enrollment drive.
5. Provide impact information to key decision makers and stakeholders. Social media may be one way to communicate information.

Counties should work closely with after-school staff to plan marketing and publicity efforts for the clubs.

EVALUATION

The Cooperative Extension System will collect data for state and national purposes, including demographic and quantitative information. Additionally, you may work with sites to collect data that will help them improve the 4-H club experience. National 4-H Common Measures is an evaluation instrument available for 4-H professionals at <https://4-h.org/professionals/common-measures/#!menu-builder>. Extension

Foundation and Cooperative Extension also offer the 4-H Thriving Model Evaluation Instruments available at <https://helping-youth-thrive.extension.org/evaluation/>. To determine which tool is best for your purposes, view the document *Measuring the Impact of 4-H* <https://helping-youth-thrive.extension.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/4-H-Thriving-Model-and-Common-Measures-2.0.pdf> (Arnold, et al., 2022).

Surveys are also available from states to collect this formative data. Plan to work with individual sites to determine the goals of the evaluation, and then choose instruments that will yield meaningful data that can be used to improve programs and learning opportunities.

You can find sources of curricula, marketing materials, and evaluation at the National 4-H Council website, <https://4-h.org/>



Chapter 4:

Beyond the Local 4-H Afterschool Club Model

Now that you have begun the involvement of after-school sites with 4-H clubs, you can explore other options for improving after-school programs. The overall goals of 4-H Afterschool are to increase the ability of after-school program staff to offer high-quality care, education, and developmental experiences for youth, as well as to help increase the availability of after-school programs. By starting clubs and training after-school staff, you are working toward these goals. To expand your work, explore ways to involve the greater community.

Written by Rosa Andrews and Eddie Locklear, North Carolina State University.

Community Outreach

As a 4-H professional, you are in a unique position to share information about children's experiences after-school from a local, state, and national perspective. You can educate about the need for quality after-school experiences for youth in their community, and what the research says about how this affects children's development.

Building County-Level Support for 4-H Work and After-School Programs

There are many ways to get other people involved with after-school work. Parents, policymakers, educators, and the public support high quality, structured, after-school programs for young people. This section offers a few suggestions on how Cooperative Extension professionals can mobilize this interest into action to support 4-H Afterschool.

Your 4-H Advisory Committee and Overall Advisory Committee in your county are great resources for this. Invite key stakeholders to be part of these committees. Introduce 4-H Afterschool programming and seek assistance in:

- finding financial and human resources to donate to after-school programs,
- conducting needs assessments to determine the demand for additional programs or to figure out training and programming needs of after-school staff,
- conducting a marketing campaign to increase awareness of the need for programs,
- helping link the academic needs of youth to their after-school activities,
- locating volunteers and mentors to work with children in programs, and
- working with public officials to find additional ways to support programs.

SCHOOLS

Many after-school programs need a closer working relationship between school staff and after-school staff. If you have successful linkages with schools, perhaps you can work with program staff to help them develop working relationships with schools. With additional emphasis being placed on academic achievement, after-school staff may support youths' academic needs through connecting a child's work in school with after-school activities.





VOLUNTEERS

Another important role 4-H can serve is helping identify and train volunteers to work in after-school programs. The strength of 4-H as a premier youth development program in America is the more than 500,000 volunteers who support 4-H nationwide (<https://4-h.org/about/what-is-4-h/>). Community-based or school-based 4-H volunteers also may be interested in offering educational programs to after-school youth. Master volunteers can be trained to teach after-school staff or engage more 4-H volunteers in after-school programs.

Educating current volunteers about 4-H's involvement with after-school programs in the county is important. One challenge faced by some Extension professionals is helping community-based 4-H volunteers recognize after-school staff as 4-H volunteers. Integrating after-school staff in all structured 4-H volunteer training, recognition, and other activities will contribute to breaking down this misconception of who can be a 4-H volunteer.

Many parents have an interest in taking an active role in their child's activities. With encouragement and training from 4-H staff, they can become a rich source of volunteers to the programs.

FEDERAL, STATE, AND COUNTY RESOURCES

All Cooperative Extension staff (not just 4-H professionals) have expertise and educational materials that can improve the quality of after-school programs. As the 4-H representative, you can serve a valuable role in linking the many resources of Cooperative Extension to after-school programs.

You are in a unique position to share information about children's after-school experiences.

In addition to getting involved with after-school programs in your county, there also are many state and national initiatives to support after-school programs. This section provides a brief overview of several national groups and organizations that support the improvement of the quality and availability of after-school programs. To learn more, check out the web sites or contact your state or National 4-H offices.

State and National Efforts

CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES AT RISK (CYFAR)

<https://nifa.usda.gov/program/children-youth-and-families-risk-cyfar>

The CYFAR is a USDA Grant Program that "allocates funding provided by congressional appropriation to Land-grant University Cooperative Extension for comprehensive community-based programs for at-risk children, youth, and families." The mission, as stated on their website, is "to provide resources to Land-Grant University System and Cooperative Extension Systems so that, in collaboration with other organizations, they can develop and deliver educational programs that equip at-risk youth with the skills they need to lead positive, productive, contributing lives. The CYFAR Program is based on tools and resources that enhance and support positive development for at-risk children, youth and families and on the human ecological principle of working across the lifespan in the context of the family and community."

CYFAR provides leadership and funding to state Extension services in land-grant universities for community projects that are focused on at-risk audiences, established as research-based collaboratives, and committed to self-sufficiency. CYFAR is designed to provide educational resources to state Cooperative Extension professionals and other educators who work with at-risk audiences. In addition to providing financial support to local communities to start programs for supporting families and communities, CYFAR has an extensive list of resources on its website.

MILITARY PARTNERSHIPS

<https://4-hmilitarypartnerships.org/>

Through an agreement between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of Defense, resources of Army, Air Force, and Navy are merged with those of CSREES and the land-grant universities to develop education and research programs which benefit military-connected youth and families. 4-H clubs and programs are offered on military installations to serve youth whose families have military connections.

AFTERSCHOOL ALLIANCE

<https://www.afterschoolalliance.org/>

Their mission, as stated on their website, is "to ensure that all youth have access to affordable, quality afterschool programs by engaging public will to increase public and private investment in afterschool program initiatives at the national, state, and local levels."



Some of its major activities include:

- Research & Publications
- Policy & Advocacy, including the annual Afterschool for All Challenge in Washington, D.C.
- Communications, including a nationwide celebration of after-school programs every October with Lights On Afterschool
- Field-Building, including 50 state after-school networks

FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS

<https://www.strongnation.org/fightcrime>

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids is a national anti-crime group of more than 5,000 police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, crime survivors, and leaders of police officer organizations working together to reduce crime in the United States. This organization is conducting valuable research in and raising awareness of crime reduction and the value of quality youth development and after-school programs.



THE NATIONAL AFTER-SCHOOL ASSOCIATION (NAA)

<https://naaweb.org/>

The National After-school Association is the voice for professionals who work with and on behalf of children and youth during out-of-school time. Their mission, as stated on their website, is “to promote development, provide education and encourage advocacy for the out-of-school-time community to further the after-school profession.”

Some of its major activities include:

- an annual national conference;
- a public policy forum held in Washington D.C. annually;
- the *School-Age Review*, its national journal, and *After-school Today*, its digital bi-annual magazine;
- a national accreditation program;
- national school-age care standards;
- an extensive web site of information and support for after-school staff; and
- affiliates in all states.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME (NIOST)

<https://www.niost.org/>

The mission of NIOST, as stated on their website, “supports the healthy development of children, families, and communities, and advances the OST field through our research, training, advocacy, and tools. We help before-school, afterschool, expanded learning, and summer programs get better at what they do.”

Some of their major activities include:

- developing research-based standards;
- enhancing the leadership, youth development, and quality improvement skills of; practitioners and program managers;
- improving programs through evaluation and discussion with all stakeholders;
- building OST systems in cities, states, and regions across the nation;
- influencing policy; and
- guiding community action to make quality OST programs more available, sustainable, and accessible to all.

21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER

<https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-formula-grants/school-support-and-accountability/21st-century-community-learning-centers/>

The program description is stated on their website:

This program supports the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. The program helps students meet state and local student standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math; offers students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic programs; and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children.

In some states, Cooperative Extension staff have used resources from the Department of Health and Human Resources, Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Labor, and other state and federal agencies to improve the quality and availability of after-school programs. Foundations, businesses, and other grant sources are resources that can be used to address after-school issues. There are many local, state, and national sources for educational and financial support to after-school programs. Contact the after-school leaders in your area to learn more about what is going on after-school in your county and state.

Conclusion

These are only a few of the many initiatives, agencies, and resources available across the country that improve the quality and availability of after-school programs. Many others exist and likely operate in your area to help expand and support after-school programs.

We hope this resource guide has given you some ideas for establishing, maintaining, and expanding 4-H in after-school settings. As a youth development professional, we believe that you will find ways to expand on what we have presented in this short document. The need for quality after-school programs is great. We invite you to take an active role in helping create safe, healthy, educational, enriching, and fun programs for youth during their after-school hours.



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