



4-H VOLUNTEER TRAINING SERIES

Selecting a Name for Your 4-H Club

Introduction

This is one publication in the **4-H Volunteer Training Series**. This EDIS series prepares 4-H volunteers to apply positive youth development best practices.

This series is designed to onboard and support 4-H volunteers. The purpose of this factsheet is to guide volunteers through the process of helping youth select a name for their club. Involving youth in this process can be challenging, but it is one of the first ways to help them develop a sense of belonging and engagement in the club.

Table 1. 4-H Club Name Criteria Checklist.

Yes/No	Criteria	Explanation
	Specific	Does the club name represent the youth and their project(s)?
	Include "4-H"	Does the club name include "4-H"?
	Inclusive	Would the club name make all youth feel like they could belong?
	Positive/ Appropriate	Does the club name reflect 4-H in a positive light?
	Sustainable	Will the club name withstand the test of time?
	Copyright	Does the club name infringe upon any copyrights?

Specific to Group

Each Florida 4-H club is a unique group of individuals who work together toward common goals. A club name should reflect the purpose(s) of the club, often relating to the project(s) in which the club participates, the geographic area where members live, or where the club meets.

The club name must include "4-H" in the title. This provides recognition in community settings and affiliation with the Florida 4-H state and National 4-H organizations.

Choose an Inclusive Name

4-H is an educational, youth development program committed to providing equal opportunities for youth. Keep this in mind when selecting a club name. As a part of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service, a publicly funded entity, Florida 4-H cannot discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, or political opinions or affiliations. It is possible to overlook subtle insinuations that some club names might accidentally exhibit. For example, a 4-H club name that endorses a specific religious perspective or icon would essentially advocate one religion over others and create the impression that 4-H is not open to all regardless of their religious standing.

Positive and Appropriate

Names should foster the character-building purpose of 4-H. The selected name should showcase 4-H as a positive, safe, and open environment for young people. Names which are offensive or generally seen as demeaning to any group or set of individuals protected by equal opportunity regulations are to be avoided. To maintain a positive image for the entire 4-H program, club names should neither shock nor confuse the public.

Sustainable

Names should be sustainable over time. Once a club is chartered or an event named, it's unlikely

Written by Keith G. Diem, Marilyn N. Norman, and Joy C. Jordan. Revised by Jessica Emerson, Candi Dierenfield, Shreemoyee Ghosh, David Hafner, Amber Norris, Melinda Souers, Paula Davis, and Heather Kent. © 2024 UF/IFAS. This publication is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0](#).

An Equal Opportunity Institution. 4-H is the nation's largest youth development organization. Over 230,000 members in the State of Florida help to make up the community of more than 6.5 million young people across America. 4-H is a non-formal, practical educational program for youth. Florida 4-H is the youth development program of Florida Cooperative Extension, a part of the University of Florida/IFAS.

that the name will be changed. Therefore, it is important to select a name that will withstand the test of time, avoiding anything too trendy (e.g., The Bell Bottom Belles) or too juvenile (e.g., Little Clover Kittens).

Copyright

Names should comply with copyright regulations. Avoid using the names of TV shows, public figures, singing groups, popular products, and so forth, that may not only enjoy a short-lived popularity, but may also be a copyright violation of a commercial name.

Some Examples to Consider

For a 4-H Sewing Club

To be more inclusive, “The 4-H Sewing Susans” could instead be named “The Nimble Thimbles 4-H Club.” Teens may be particularly sensitive to cute names that younger youth might appreciate more.

For a 4-H Gardening Club

A more appropriate name for “The 4-H Dirty Hands” would be “The Green Thumbs 4-H Gardening Club” or “The Grow Kids 4-H Club.

For a 4-H Horse Club

Instead of the “Silver Spurs Club” or the “Silver Spurs Horse Club” it should be “4-H Silver Spurs,” “Silver Spurs 4-H Horse Club,” or simply, “Silver Spurs 4-H Club.”

Making the Decision

The decision-making process for selecting a club name can be challenging.

Using the previous examples, help younger members understand the criteria for a club name. Think of many possible names. Let the youth members be creative in the way they generate or solicit club name possibilities. If the group is small, simple brainstorming methods can be used. EDIS publica-

tion #4H340, “Making Learning Fun,” has ideas for brainstorming, group discussion, and more. EDIS publication #4H344, “Running a Smooth 4-H Business Meeting,” includes information about voting on motions.

Tips for Deciding on a 4-H Club Name:

- Write names on the board for themselves.
- Write ideas on index cards or sticky notes.
- Shout out ideas and have someone else record for the group.
- Give time for each member to share their input, making sure everyone gets an opportunity to provide ideas.

Tips for Voting:

- Place three colored dots/stickers by their top three name choices.
- Rank their most liked to least liked.
- Write on a secret ballot/piece of paper.
- Raise their hand or take a standing vote.
- Ask for each vote during roll call.
- Use voice voting: “All in favor say aye.”

If the group is large, the group might create a ballot box where youth and parents can place suggestions. (See Tips for Voting #3.) A committee can review the ballots and make a list of names on which membership can vote. Use the process that works best to involve all members.

Consider whether the suggested names meet the criteria. Again, depending on the group’s size, this may be done by total club membership or a small committee. 4-H members should reach a consensus or use a vote-by-majority rule to make their decision. If this is not practical, especially if the club is large, the club can simply accept or vote on a committee’s recommendations.

Once the decision has been made for the name of the 4-H club, share the information:

- Confirm with your local UF/IFAS Extension 4-H agent that the new club name is approved. If

not, bring back recommended changes to the 4-H club members.

- Upon approval, email the Club Organizational Form to your local UF/IFAS Extension 4-H agent. See [Florida 4-H Volunteer Resources](#) or contact your local UF/IFAS Extension 4-H agent for the most up-to-date form.
- Send a celebration email to the families of the new 4-H club announcing the name, meeting times, and meeting dates.
- Consider working with the UF/IFAS Extension office to send a press release to the local news media announcing the new 4-H club and inviting families to learn more about it.

Summary

When a new 4-H club is being formed, choosing a club name can be a useful group experience in civic engagement and consensus building. Allowing youth to participate in naming their 4-H club helps to build a sense of belonging and offers an opportunity to learn life skills such as decision-making, teamwork, and communication. The adult's role is to guide them through the process and to share the new club name with the 4-H agent, 4-H families, and community.

Follow the 4-H Club Name Criteria Checklist in Table 1. Contact the UF/IFAS Extension 4-H office with any questions about the process.

What's Next?

Now that you have learned about helping youth select a name for their club, see EDIS publication #4H338, "Adopting 4-H Club Bylaws," also from the 4-H Volunteer Training Series.

Reference

National 4-H Headquarters. 2008. "Naming 4-H Clubs, Units, Programs, Events and Websites." USDA. https://extension.usu.edu/employee/files/employee_resources/4-HClubsNamingWebsite-sEvents.pdf

Resources

4-H Volunteer Training EDIS Series: https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/collections/series_vts

Florida 4-H Volunteer Resources: <https://florida4h.ifas.ufl.edu/get-involved/volunteer/>

Publication History

Diem, K. G. (2005). *Selecting a name for your 4-H club*. Clemson Extension/South Carolina 4-H. 4-H Leader Training Series. Adapted with permission.

Norman, M. N., and Jordan, J. C. (2012). *Selecting a name for a 4-H club*. 4HS FS101.7. Gainesville: University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences. Adapted with permission. Archived at <https://ufdc.ufl.edu/IR00005039/00001/pdf>