

# Ohio State University Fact Sheet

## State 4-H Office

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## Effective 4-H Club Meetings

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4-H club meetings are the cornerstone of the 4-H experience for boys and girls. Ask beginning 4-Hers what they like about 4-H, and they will tell you about their club, their new friends, new experiences, and fun activities.

Well-planned meetings allow youth to:

- acquire new knowledge and share ideas;
- develop self-confidence and leadership;
- participate in decision making;
- develop responsibility and commitment;
- make new friends;
- enjoy recreational activities.

### Setting the Stage

4-Hers like to be active and take part in the club's program of activities. The volunteer can make it easier for them to participate by "setting the stage" for involvement and learning. Consider these key items:

#### 1. Pleasant Meeting Place

Ideal meeting places have plenty of light, comfortable temperature, and adequate space and facilities for planned activities. Room arrangement is important. Set the room to fit the activities. Members need to see and hear every speaker or person during a group discussion or demonstration. Providing tables and chairs for officers may give them support and confidence. A flip chart or small blackboard may be a useful tool to record ideas.

#### 2. Comfortable Atmosphere

Members feel best and gain the most when they are at ease. 4-Hers need opportunities to get to know each other, to talk together, and to build trust. A few ideas to help create positive situations where members feel free to "join in" are get-acquainted games, team-building activities, small group discussions, and committee work.

#### 3. Feelings of Acceptance

Each person wants to be an active part of the group, but sometimes he/she needs help. Provide opportunities for members to contribute to the club. Many clubs accomplish this by getting members involved through club

officers, committees, demonstrations and talks, community service, fund-raisers, and group projects. The key is to enable all members to participate with specific jobs and responsibilities.

## **Planning Ahead**

The initial work for a 4-H meeting takes place long before the actual gathering. The planning committee develops a yearly plan in the beginning of the club's year. This plan includes the "Who, What, When, and Where" for club meetings and activities: Who is responsible, What is going to happen, When is it taking place, and Where is it being held. Advisors need to work with officers or committee members before meetings to help them prepare and complete assignments.

## **What Happens at 4-H Club Meetings**

4-H meetings offer a variety of experiences for members. Meetings contain business, project work, educational programs, community service, recreation, and social activities. All of these may not be a part of every meeting, but each should be included during the year for a well-balanced program. The members decide what to include and when, with the assistance of the 4-H volunteer. A club meeting outline provides a structure for conducting a meeting.

## **Sample Club Meeting Outline**

### **Business: 15-20 minutes**

The business section should demonstrate democracy in action. Members learn how to express themselves in a group, listen to the views of others, come to consensus and reach a decision, and abide by majority rule.

Typical business agenda:

1. Call to order.
2. Pledge of Allegiance and 4-H Pledge
3. Roll call - answering in any way the group decides.
4. Minutes of the previous meeting.
5. Treasurer's report
6. Committee report
7. Old business
8. New business
9. Adjournment

### **Education and project work: 30-45 minutes**

"Learning by doing" is one of the 4-H program's unique strengths. This is the place for members to give demonstrations, work on project books, participate in tours, community service and other activities. Use a variety of activities to involve members in program planning, self-esteem development, and decision making. Ingenuity and creativity can make this section of the meeting interesting and active. Providing work space during project work makes learning easier.

### **Recreation and social activities: 15-25 minutes**

A variety of fun activities add enthusiasm and enjoyment to the meetings. Some clubs have a different recreation committee for each meeting, while others elect recreation officers for the year. A few ideas are: games, charades, relays, sports, puzzles, party for parents, picnics, and hikes. Refreshments can be a part of recreation, with different members responsible through the year.

## **More Tips For Effective Meetings**

### **Start and stop on time.**

The club officers and advisors set the standard for the group. One to two hours of well-planned activities can hold interest, reach goals, and be fun.

### **Let the officers fulfill their responsibilities.**

The president calls the meeting to order and is in charge. Let other officers and committee chairpersons do their assigned jobs. Volunteers should help officers develop confidence in their abilities by providing guidance, while remaining in the background. Encourage the use of parliamentary procedure.

Democratic participation takes place when members have a chance to express themselves. Basic parliamentary procedure is an orderly way of making this possible.

### **Communicate upcoming events, dates, and responsibilities.**

Use a variety of methods to convey the message to members and parents including phone, personal visits, media, written notes, newsletters, and phone chains. Repeat important dates and events at several meetings. Distribute county and club calendars, constitution, project requirements, and copies of assignments to each family. Communicate with parents about club meeting locations, and beginning and ending times.

### **Set behavior standards.**

Members need to know what is expected of them. Members and volunteers should come to consensus about behavioral expectations early in the year. Club meetings are an excellent place to learn and practice good citizenship and respect for people and property.

### **Plan meetings with variety.**

Remember this formula to plan meetings: 1/4 business, 1/2 education, 1/4 recreation. Mix it up with lots of variety to keep interest, encourage learning, and just for fun. Keep the business section effective and to the point.

## **Conclusion**

Know what needs to be accomplished at each club meeting. Make sure each member has a chance to do and learn something at every meeting. Keep members involved and include lots of variety to help 4-Hers learn and grow through club work.

## **References**

The Green Pages 4-H Advisors' Program Books, The Ohio State University.

Learning Through Leadership: Lesson II, The Ohio State University.

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