

# **Kansas 4-H Cloverbuds Program Resource Guide**

**K-STATE**  
Research and Extension



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# Welcome!

## The Kansas 4-H Cloverbud Program Welcomes You!

K-State Extension and 4-H Youth Development are excited to offer 4-H Cloverbuds — a fun, hands-on educational program specially designed for youth ages 5 and 6.

At this age, children are full of curiosity, energy, and wonder, and they learn in ways that are different from older 4-H members. That's why the Cloverbud program is thoughtfully created with age-appropriate goals, activities, and policies that nurture early learning and development. Through engaging and hands-on learning experiences, our youngest 4-H members begin building the curiosity, confidence, and foundational skills that set them on the path to becoming Beyond Ready.

This guide is here to support you — our valued 4-H Cloverbud volunteers, including extension agents, adult leaders, and teen mentors. Inside, you'll find clear, practical information to help you plan and lead successful experiences for your group of Cloverbud kids. Your role is incredibly important, and we're grateful for your dedication. Thank you for making a meaningful difference in the lives of Kansas youth through the 4-H Cloverbud Program!



# The 4-H Core Values

4-H Cloverbuds is an exciting piece of the Kansas 4-H experience. The 4-H Cloverbud program offers its own unique policies and age-appropriate activities tailored for younger children. Cloverbuds is all about supporting the growth and development of its youngest members in a fun, engaging environment. Just like the larger 4-H experience for youth ages 7 to 18 (as of January 1), the Cloverbud program proudly upholds the core values that make 4-H so special. These values include:

## 4-H Colors

White symbolizes purity. Green, which is nature's most common color, represents life, springtime, and youth.

## 4-H Emblem

The green four-leaf clover has a white H on each leaf to represent the four H's: Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. The use of the 4-H name and Emblem is defined through Section 7 in the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 8.



## 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.

## 4-H Motto

"To Make the Best Better," a goal for each member to improve themselves.

## 4-H Slogan

"Learn by Doing," a 4-H member's way of acquiring new skills.

## 4-H Cloverbud Goals

- » Self-understanding skills (initiating independence and self-direction)
- » Social skills (getting along with others)
- » Decision-making skills (making positive choices)
- » Learning skills (learning to learn)
- » Mastering physical skills (enjoying constructive and creative play)

## Kansas 4-H Cloverbud Principles

- |                           |                    |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| » Fun                     | » Leader-directed  |
| » Activity-focused        | » Positive         |
| » Noncompetitive          | » Success-oriented |
| » Group-centered learning |                    |

# Who May Participate

The 4-H Cloverbud program is an educational, youth development opportunity specifically for 5- and 6-year-old children. To be eligible to participate, a child must have celebrated his or her 5th or 6th birthday before January 1 of the current year.

4-H Cloverbuds is an age-appropriate educational opportunity; a 4-H Cloverbud cannot be a 4-H club member at the same time.

Similar to the 4-H program for older youth, Cloverbud members will complete the enrollment process through 4-H Online. Cloverbud members do not pay any fees, and they typically do not designate a primary club.

## Developmental Characteristics of 5- and 6-Year-Olds

Five- and six-year-olds are eager learners full of curiosity, imagination, and energy, who grow and explore in unique ways compared to both younger children and older youth. At this age, kids are developing important social, emotional, and motor skills, and they learn best through hands-on experiences and play. Understanding the developmental and learning characteristics of this age group provides a foundation for developing effective, age-appropriate activities in a safe and encouraging environment.

	4-H Cloverbuds	7- to 18-year-old 4-H Program (before January 1)
<b>Type of Learning</b>	Activity Focused	Project Focused
<b>Type of Instruction</b>	Leader Directed	Self-study, Individual, and Leader Directed
<b>Recognition of Standards</b>	Participation	Achievement
<b>Recognition of Goals</b>	Participation	Competition, Achievement
<b>Learner Resources</b>	Activity Manual	Project Manuals

## What are Five- and Six- Year-Olds Like?

### Physical Development

Physical growth is slow and steady during this stage. Large muscles (such as those used for running and jumping) are easier for these children to control than small muscles (such as those used for stringing beads, playing an instrument, or cutting out detailed patterns), so plan activities that keep the children physically active. Children aged 5 and 6 can throw balls better than they can catch them as they learn to control large muscles. This age group is also learning to use tools and materials (such as crayons and scissors) better than during preschool years. And, because they are still learning how to use their large and small muscles, craft activities may end up being messy, with crooked lines and too much glue. However, we suggest choosing activities that help build skills and nurture success for these children.

### Mental Development

Most 5- and 6-year-olds are just learning letters and words. By age 6, most can read words or combinations of words. Because they are just learning, reading takes more time, so be sure to tell them and show them how to do activities with a demonstration.

Attention spans of children in this age group are short, sometimes as little as 5 to 10 minutes. The Cloverbud curriculum is designed as a series of short activities to accommodate their short attention spans. As you demonstrate, remember that children of this age can distinguish between their own left and right, but not in other people. Also, young children think in very concrete ways.



If they have never seen, heard, felt, tasted, or smelled it, they have a hard time thinking of it. For example, instead of describing a pumpkin, allow them to touch the surface, scoop out the seeds, or smell the inside. These tangible experiences help build understanding.

At this age, children are more interested in working on an activity than in completing it. Over time, continued participation naturally builds greater focus, and completing an activity will be as important as working on it

### **Emotional Development**

Children of this age are sensitive to criticism and do not accept failure well. Provide encouraging words and praise the efforts of all the children in the group. Encouraging words also fulfill the child's strong desire at this age for affection and adult attention. Look for alternative ways the children can help.

### **Social Development**

Children aged 5 and 6 are learning how to play with each other. They prefer to work in small groups of two or three, but they still need time to focus on their own work and play. If you have a large group, divide them so that only two or three are involved in an activity together at one time.

Children in the early elementary years may begin to pair up to have a best friend; the best friend may, however, change frequently. Help children develop friendships through learning to share, taking turns, following rules, and being trustworthy. Children at this stage of social and emotional development can be very blunt and say what they think and feel, (such as "You stink!" or "You're ugly!"), which can be hurtful to other children. Avoid this behavior by establishing ground rules at the first meeting. A good ground rule might be, "No teasing or mean words." Children in this age group are extremely sensitive to criticism. Again, avoid competition or activities that select a single winner or best person.

Socially, the parent or adult at home is still the primary caregiver; however, children of this age can get very attached to teachers and leaders. Youth ages 5 and 6 like being part of and around family, which is why it is important to involve family members in 4-H Cloverbuds activities. 4-H Cloverbuds can participate and enjoy group discussions, if they are kept brief.



# Understanding the 4-H Thriving Model

The 4-H Thriving Model explains how 4-H helps youth grow and succeed. It's based on years of research about youth development and shows how 4-H "works its magic."

The model has four main parts that connect what happens when youth take part in a high-quality 4-H program to the long-term outcomes we want them to achieve. In short, it shows the steps that help youth learn and prepare for life.

## Why This Matters

Research shows that the 4-H Thriving Model really works when we use purposefully to guide how we plan and run 4-H programs. Being intentional about the model helps us make the biggest impact on youth.

When we follow the model, we ensure quality 4-H programs that help young people grow and succeed.

## Developmental Context

This part of the model explains the key pieces that make a great 4-H program for youth. These pieces are: Youth Sparks, Belonging, Developmental Relationships, and Engagement.

Think of these four things like the healthy soil a seed needs to grow. Just like a seed can't grow without good soil, young people need a strong, positive environment to succeed. When these ingredients come together, they help youth learn, grow, and reach their full potential.

## Youth Thriving

Youth development is about how young people learn important skills for life. These include social skills, emotional skills, and thinking skills, along with positive habits and behaviors that help them succeed at school, work, and in life.

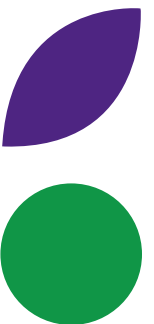
In the model, these seven indicators of development are shown as the strong stem of a growing flower. Just like a stem supports the flower, these skills support youth as they grow into confident, capable adults.

## Developmental Outcomes

When youth grow and learn in 4-H environments, they develop important skills and qualities called Developmental Outcomes. In the model, these outcomes are shown as the leaves on a growing flower.

These leaves stand for big areas of growth that research says are needed for a successful move into adulthood:

- » Positive Academic Attitudes – believing in learning and doing well in school.
- » Social Competence – getting along with others and working as a team.
- » Personal Standards – setting goals and doing your best.
- » Connection with Others – building strong relationships.
- » Personal Responsibility – being dependable and making good choices.
- » Contribution to Others – helping and giving back to your community.



## Long-Term Outcomes

The full flower blooms when youth are ready for life because of their 4-H experiences. These long-term outcomes are based on the Four H's:

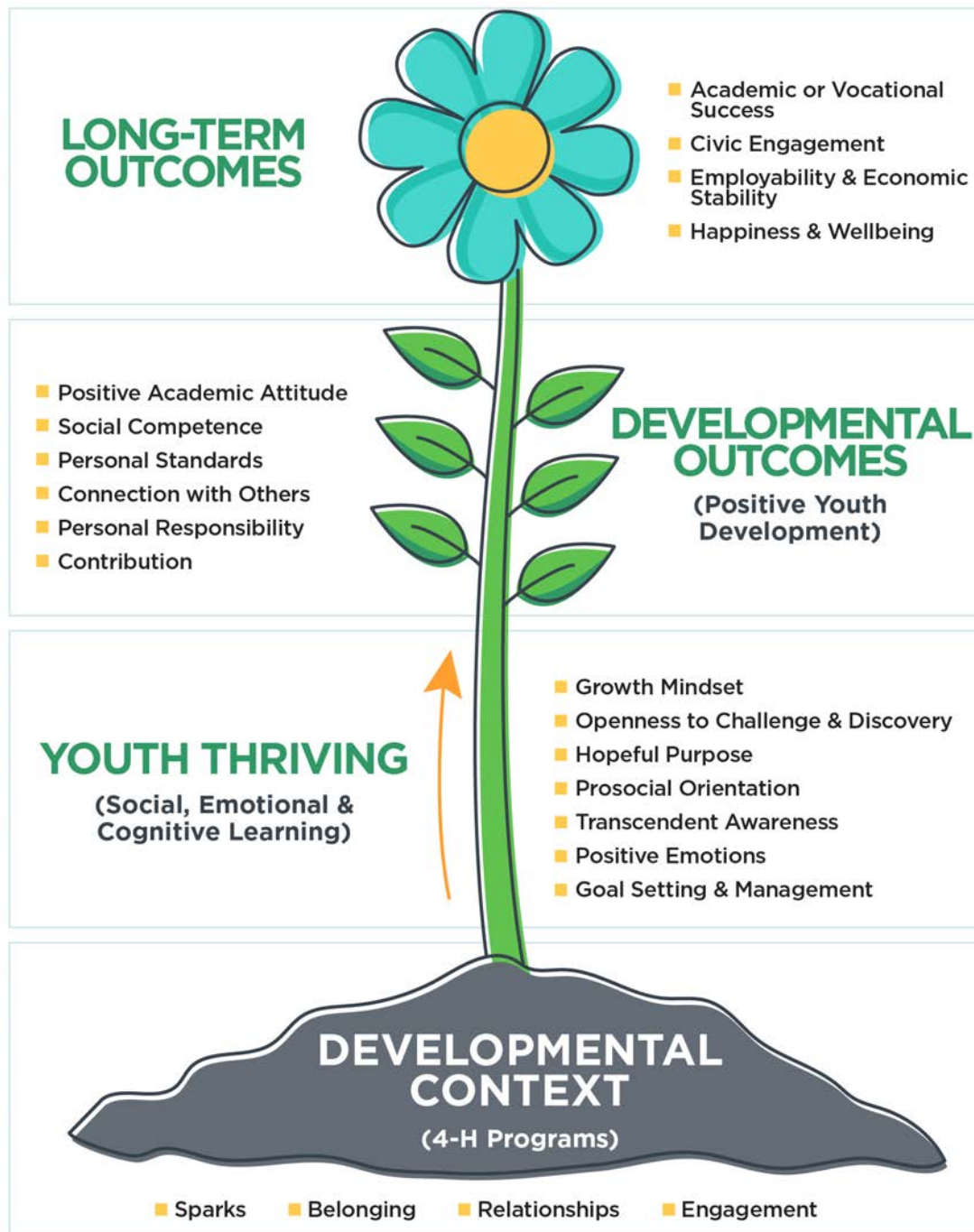
**Head** – Success in school or a career

**Heart** – Being active in their community and caring about others

**Hands** – Having job skills and financial stability

**Health** – Living a happy, healthy life

These outcomes show how 4-H helps youth grow into capable, responsible, and well-rounded adults.

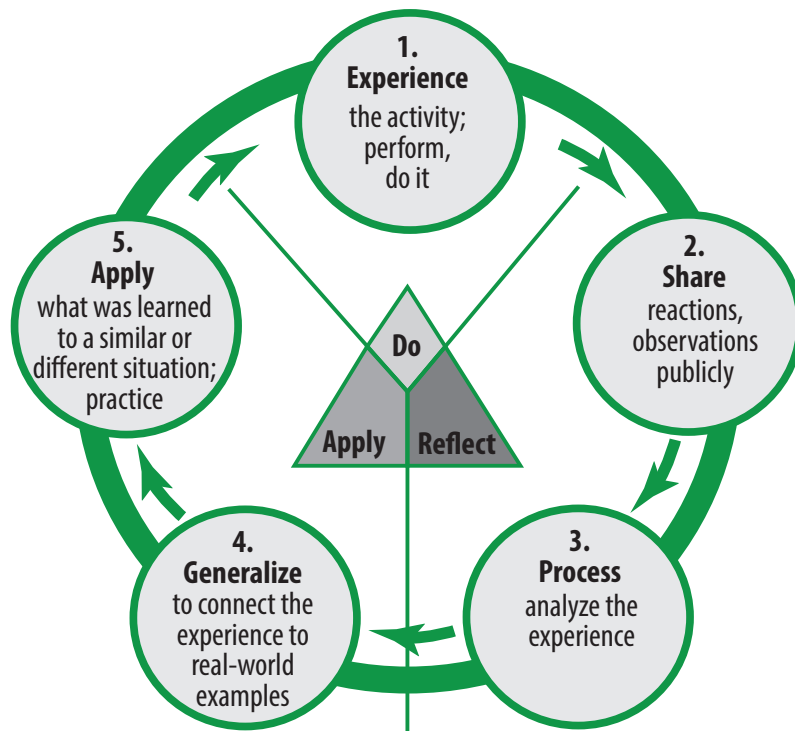




# Understanding the Experiential Learning Model in 4-H

Youth learn and retain more when participating in hands-on or experiential learning activities. 4-H Youth Development uses a five-step model to help youth build life skills. This model helps youth think about what they did during an activity, what they learned from it, and how they can apply that learning in other situations. For this model to work, the 4-H Cloverbud leader needs to know what skills they want the youth to learn and ask good questions that guide them in that direction.

This model helps youth stay active and involved in each step of the activity. Because they are doing, thinking, and reflecting, they are more likely to understand the lesson and apply it in real life.



## The Five-step Model

1. **Experience** – do the activity.
2. **Share** – What did you do? Youth talk about what happened.
3. **Process** – What happened or surprised you? Youth think about what is important.
4. **Generalize** – How can this activity help you? Youth connect what they learned to their everyday lives.
5. **Apply** – What did you learn? Youth apply what they have learned in new situations.

Each step helps youth understand the activity on a deeper level. Just doing an activity isn't enough – young people learn best when they understand what happened, notice patterns, and know how to use that learning again.



## Why This Helps Volunteers

Using the experiential learning model helps volunteers:

- » See what youth already know and build on it.
- » Act as a coach instead of a lecturer
- » Use different teaching methods to involve all youth
- » Learn together with the group

## Why This Helps Youth

- » They learn from each other
- » They work together and share ideas
- » Take responsibility for their own learning
- » They connect activities to real life

## The 5 Steps of Experiential Learning

### 1. Experience

- » Youth take part in a hands-on activity that helps them practice a life skill.
- » Leader guides but does not direct.
- » Choose activities that match the life skill you are teaching.

Activity type:	Life Skill:
Playing a game	Teamwork, risk taking
Experiments	Decision-making, problem solving
Planning an event	Leadership, teamwork
Giving a presentation	Communication

### 2. Share

After the activity, youth share what they did. Leaders may ask:

- » “What did you do?”
- » “What did you see, hear, feel, or notice?”
- » “What was easy? What was difficult?”

### 3. Process

Youth think about how the activity worked. Leaders might ask:

- » “What steps did you take?”
- » “What problems came up?”
- » “How did you solve them?”

### 4. Generalize

Youth connect the experience to their own lives. Leaders might ask:

- » “What did you learn from this activity?”
- » “Where else have you used this skill?”
- » “How does this relate to other things you’re learning?”

## 5. Apply

Youth think about how to use what they learned in the future. Leaders might ask:

- » “How can use this in real life?”
- » “How will this change what you do next time?”

The application shows that real learning has happened.

## Tips for Volunteers

- » Know which step your group is in and be ready to move them onto the next.
- » Prepare your questions ahead of time.
- » Listen carefully to youth responses.
- » Use short activities or sentence starters like “I learned that...” or “I felt...” to help youth open up.
- » Give youth time to think, talk and reflect.

**The best sign of success is when youth use their new life skills outside of a Cloverbud meeting or 4-H experience.** When volunteers effectively utilize the experiential learning model, youth develop confidence, skills, and a deeper understanding.

## Instructing 4-H Cloverbuds

When working with 5- and 6-year-olds, keep in mind the learning level of the group of children. Children in this age group need extra guidance and hands-on support during activities.

- » Most rely on picture recognition rather than reading written instructions.
- » Reading development is just beginning; many are learning letters and starting to read simple three-word sentences.
- » Receptive language is well developed — they understand most spoken instructions at home, school, and in group settings.
- » They can understand and use comparative terms like big, bigger, biggest, as well as more, less, and same.
- » Most are learning to write their names and the alphabet but may become frustrated with written tasks.
- » Motor skills are still developing:
  - » Many can use scissors, crayons, and small tools with growing confidence.
- » Children are often sensitive to criticism and may interpret feedback in very black-and-white terms.
- » They are eager to learn and ask frequent questions — especially “how, what, when, where, and why.”
  - » “What-if” questions capture their imagination and curiosity.
- » They enjoy dramatic play and hands-on short-term projects.

Parental involvement is encouraged and can be done in a variety of ways. Ask parents to take a turn assisting with the leadership role by leading a session or encourage parents to attend the meetings to assist as needed.

Experiment with different teaching methods using the variety of suggested Cloverbud resources and activity manuals available from your local K-State Extension office, rather than focusing on one teaching method. Choosing different topics for each 4-H Cloverbuds meeting will encourage the children to explore new ideas.

## Helpful Hints for Instruction

- » Keep it short and active: Plan activities in 5- to 10-minute segments to match their attention span.
- » Use a variety of methods: Combine storytelling, music, movement, crafts, and science experiments. Change it up often to maintain interest.
- » Model everything: Show how to do each step before asking children to try. For example, demonstrate how to fold paper or cut along a line.
- » Give clear, simple directions: Use short sentences and speak slowly. For example: “Pick up your red crayon. Now color the circle.”
- » Use visual aids and hands-on materials: Photos, puppets, props, and real-life items help make abstract ideas more concrete.
- » Celebrate progress over perfection: Focus on the process, not the product. A child may enjoy gluing the pieces more than finishing the craft — and that’s okay!
- » Ask questions that spark thinking: Use open-ended or “what-if” questions to get them talking. Example: “What do you think would happen if we mixed red and blue paint?”
- » Use positive reinforcement: Give lots of encouragement, high-fives, and smiles. Recognize effort and teamwork.

When working with a group of Cloverbud kids, structure and routine are your best friends. Start each meeting with a familiar welcome activity or song to help children settle in and feel comfortable. Keep transitions smooth by giving children a “heads-up” before changing activities — say something like, “In two minutes, we’ll clean up and move to our next adventure!” Be mindful of group size — small groups or rotating stations often work better than large group instruction, especially when working on hands-on projects. Incorporate plenty of movement breaks, songs with actions, and group games to help release energy and maintain focus. Most importantly, stay flexible and patient — every group is different, and creating a fun, safe, and positive environment is the key to a successful Cloverbud experience.



# Organizing a Group

A minimum of five youth who have reached the qualifying age of eligibility are required to establish a 4-H Cloverbud group; 4-H Cloverbud groups may also be organized within neighborhoods or school groups.

## Types of Groups

**4-H Cloverbuds:** 4-H Cloverbud members may form their own group separate from any 4-H club.

**Affiliated with a Community Club:** A 4-H Cloverbud group can be affiliated with a 4-H community club. 4-H Cloverbuds may participate through the 4-H club's roll call, then be excused for their own Cloverbuds activities. After the 4-H Cloverbud activity, the 4-H Cloverbuds may return to listen to the 4-H club's scheduled program of demonstrations and project talks.

**County/District-wide Cloverbuds:** A local 4-H Council may offer a county/district-wide 4-H Cloverbuds program for facilitating group activities.

**County/District-wide Day Camp:** A day camp designed around the developmental characteristics and conducted to meet 4-H Cloverbuds needs.

**School Enrichment:** 4-H Cloverbud materials are ideal for a classroom setting with kindergarten and first-grade students. Teachers can easily adapt the 4-H Cloverbud curriculum, available from the local Extension Office, into their educational plan for school enrichment.

**After school:** The theme-based activities can work easily into the after school setting. Possibilities for organizing within the after school setting may include: extension agents, volunteers, or teens facilitating activities or instructing after school staff on the 4-H Cloverbud activities.

**Neighborhoods:** Reach new audiences through engagement in the local communities where parents may organize learning opportunities for neighborhood children.

## 4-H Cloverbud Leaders

The 4-H Cloverbud program requires two volunteer leaders for every 12 children participating in 4-H Cloverbuds activities. The volunteers may be adults, teens or parents who enjoy working with 5- and 6-year-old youth. Volunteers are required to have completed 4-H Volunteer Screening and 4-H Cloverbuds training to serve.

## 4-H Cloverbud Organizational Leader and Volunteers

Purpose: Organizational Leaders will provide leadership for a group of 5- and 6-year-olds, 4-H Cloverbuds. Program Volunteers will assist leadership with the planning and facilitation of group meetings and events.

### Basic Requirement

1. Approved as a Kansas 4-H Registered Volunteer. Contact your local K-State Extension Office to discuss the 4-H Volunteer Application process. All Kansas 4-H volunteers will work with their local Extension office to complete the 4-H Online application and Kansas 4-H Volunteer Screening process. Visit [kansas4-h.org/volunteers](https://kansas4-h.org/volunteers) to learn more about volunteer roles and screening steps.

2. Complete 4-H Cloverbud training.
3. Discuss and encourage the idea of establishing a 4-H Cloverbud group.
4. Promote 4-H Cloverbud program to 5- and 6-year-olds and their parents.

### Responsibilities

1. Follow Kansas 4-H Cloverbud policies.
2. Learn and understand the developmental needs of youth ages 5 and 6.
3. Organize and arrange meeting schedule for a group of 5- and 6-year-olds.
4. Review and plan fun educational activities for the group using the 4-H Cloverbuds curriculum, Experiential Learning Model and 4-H Thriving Model.
5. Recruit and enroll youth ages 5 and 6 through the 4-H Online system.
6. Praise and recognize 4-H Cloverbud members in the same manner for their participation.
7. Encourage 4-H Cloverbuds to display products completed during Cloverbud activities at local fairs, libraries, schools, 4-H Parents' Night, 4-H Achievement Night, churches, community festivals, parades, etc. Please refer to the Kansas 4-H Policy Handbook, section 14.4, Best Management Practices on Cloverbud showcasing at the county fair; [kansas4-h.org/resources/policy-guide/](https://kansas4-h.org/resources/policy-guide/).
8. Work cooperatively with the 4-H Cloverbud parents, encouraging them to assist with the group.
9. Serve as the communication liaison between the 4-H Cloverbud program and the extension office.
10. Consult with the local extension agent(s) and parents to determine the financial resources for the group following the Kansas 4-H Cloverbud policies. Refer to the Kansas 4-H Policy Guide – Section 14, p. 60; [kansas4-h.org/resources/policy-guide/](https://kansas4-h.org/resources/policy-guide/).

### Skills/Knowledge Needed

- » Understanding of youth developmental characteristics;
- » Dedicated to young people and sensitive to their needs;
- » Ability to work in active environment;
- » Communication skills both written and verbal;
- » Organizational skills;
- » Listening skills;
- » Ability to motivate youth; and
- » Small group decision-making skills.

### Time Required

- » Completion of Kansas 4-H Cloverbud Leader and Volunteer Online Training;
- » Facilitating several 4-H Cloverbud meetings during the 4-H year that are approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour long;
- » October through September (4-H year); and
- » Other professional development opportunities as available.

## Resources Available

- » 4-H Cloverbuds Curriculum – Please refer to the Resources section on page 27 of this guide for examples and available URLs.
- » County/District Extension Agent.
- » Kansas 4-H Cloverbud Leader and Volunteer Online Training; [kansas4-h.org/about/clubs-programs/cloverbuds/](https://kansas4-h.org/about/clubs-programs/cloverbuds/).
- » Kansas 4-H Policy Handbook and Best Management Practices; [kansas4-h.org/resources/policy-guide/](https://kansas4-h.org/resources/policy-guide/).

## Benefits to Volunteer

Meet new friends; work with youth; gain leadership skills; and become a role model.

## Expectations Resulting from this Position

- » 4-H Cloverbud members should have fun;
- » 4-H Cloverbud members should feel safe in the meeting environment; and
- » Self-confidence.

## Contact Person(s)

- » Extension agent.
- » Club organizational/Community leader.

# Recruiting 4-H Cloverbuds and Families

Encouraging young children and their families to join the 4-H Cloverbuds program can be as simple — and as enjoyable — as highlighting the exciting educational experiences it offers. From hands-on activities to learning new skills and making lifelong friends, Cloverbuds provides a fun, nurturing environment where children can grow. Leaders can amplify this message through many channels, including word of mouth, personal invitations, newsletters, promotional flyers, social media posts, educational displays at club meetings, school open houses, and community locations such as libraries. Consistency is key — regularly sharing positive, age-appropriate opportunities helps families clearly see the value Cloverbuds brings to young learners.

To further strengthen your outreach, make full use of the Cloverbud Leader Resources, found in the 4-H Cloverbud Program Resources section of this guide, which offer a wealth of tools, guides, and ready-to-use materials designed to support promotion of the program. These resources can help leaders present activities with confidence, deliver high-quality enrichment experiences, and share clear messages about the program's mission. By integrating these materials into your communication and recruitment efforts, you can better demonstrate the program's structure, benefits, and accessibility — making it easier for families to understand how Cloverbuds can positively impact their child's development.

In addition, establishing community partnerships can greatly expand the reach and impact of the Cloverbuds program. Collaborations with local schools, libraries, youth-serving organizations, parks departments, and community centers can open doors to joint events, shared resources, and new audiences eager for youth opportunities. These partnerships not only enrich the activities your Cloverbud group can offer but also serve as powerful pathways for promoting the program to families who may be unfamiliar with 4-H. By working together, community partners and Cloverbud leaders can create engaging, high-visibility experiences that support 4-H youth development across the community.

## Becoming a 4-H Cloverbud Parent

Parents play an important role in creating a fun, safe, and supportive experience for 4-H Cloverbuds, and leaders are encouraged to actively invite them to be involved. Welcoming parents into meetings and activities not only strengthens the group, but also helps children feel more confident and supported. Leaders can encourage parents to participate by assisting at meetings, helping with simple tasks, planning occasional activities, or offering transportation or financial support — such as providing supplies or covering small activity fees — if they are willing and able. These contributions are never required, but they can make a meaningful difference in helping the group succeed.

Parents who want to take on a more hands-on role may also choose to complete the volunteer screening process. While screening is optional for basic involvement, becoming a screened volunteer provides additional opportunities to help with events and activities. Parents interested in this deeper level of engagement can contact their local Extension office to begin the Kansas 4-H Volunteer Screening process.

Parents are encouraged to attend Cloverbud meetings regularly, learn more about the developmental needs of 5- and 6-year-olds, and support their child by promoting positive, cooperative activities both during and outside of meetings. By offering encouragement, helping their child feel a sense of accomplishment, and partnering with the Cloverbud leader, parents contribute to an environment where children feel safe, connected, and excited to learn. This involvement also helps foster strong family relationships and reinforces the joy and discovery at the heart of the Cloverbuds program.



# Planning Cloverbud Sessions

Getting started is the first step. The following suggestions provide a framework for planning well-organized meetings to fit the 4-H Cloverbud group. As you prepare, ask others such as 4-H Cloverbud parents or teen leaders to assist. Communicate with them the responsibilities and expectations necessary to ensure 4-H Cloverbud meetings can be enjoyed by all participating. The goal is a healthy mix of fun in a noncompetitive environment.

Secure a meeting facility and materials for the selected activities. Encourage and invite prospective 5- and 6-year-olds and parents interested in the 4-H Cloverbud program.

## Meeting 1

Time: Aprox. 60 minutes

The 4-H Cloverbud leader or teen leader will lead the meeting.

Encourage parent(s) and guardian(s) to attend the first meeting.

### Display

Before the meeting, set up a display or have a flyer available promoting 4-H Cloverbud activities and opportunities. Check with Extension professionals for additional display materials, brochures and promotional items to give away. Playing music in the background presents a welcoming environment as people are viewing the displays.

### Welcome and Get-Acquainted Activity

A meeting organized by the 4-H Cloverbud Leader for 4-H Cloverbud parents and 4-H Cloverbuds to learn, experience and ask questions.

Open with the Pledge of Allegiance and 4-H Pledge.

Begin with a get-acquainted activity.

- » Have children write their names on a piece of paper and put the name in a hat. Provide nametags for parents.
- » When all children have put their names in the hat, have each child draw a name from the hat.
- » Encourage each child to find the person whose name he or she drew and introduce themselves and share their birth date. (Please assist as children may be shy or unable to read.)
- » Once all members have located their new friend, introduce each child and family to the entire group.

### Alternative activity option that does not require writing or reading

- » Stand in a circle with some space between participants. Have a small ball or bean bag available to toss around the circle.
- » The leader shares their name and favorite item (food/animal/color), then gently tosses the ball to a member who then shares their name and item.
- » To keep pace, each member toss the ball back to the leader after their turn.
- » Continue tossing the ball around the circle until everyone has had a turn to say their name and favorite item.

## Discussion with Parents and New Members

Following introductions, take a few moments to discuss 4-H Cloverbud with parents. Suggested discussion points include:

- » The 4-H Cloverbud learning objectives, principles, and goals.
- » Meeting dates, times, and location.
- » Overview of a typical 4-H Cloverbud meeting.
- » Emphasize that the 4-H Cloverbud philosophy is noncompetitive and activity-focused.
- » Explain the enrollment process through 4-H online. You may want to recruit or invite an Extension Agent to the meeting to help with this.
- » Encourage parents to complete the volunteer screening. This is not a requirement of their child's participation, but completing the volunteer application process creates a safe and supportive environment for all members. Have copies of the Volunteer Application Screening document available for everyone ([kansas4-h.org/volunteers/docs/Volunteer%20Applicant%20Screening%20Steps%202025.pdf](https://kansas4-h.org/volunteers/docs/Volunteer%20Applicant%20Screening%20Steps%202025.pdf))
- » Recruit additional parental supervision to encourage parental involvement and help meetings run smoothly.
- » Assign refreshment responsibilities as needed for the meeting.
- » Discuss financial matters such as payment for supplies, field trip expenses, or refreshments.
- » Talk about how many times your 4-H Cloverbud group wants to meet during the year. Frequent meetings are more age-appropriate with this age group; however, planning weekly or bi-weekly takes extra planning. Start with what is manageable for the leaders and number of families involved.

## Sample Activity

Conduct one or two short 4-H Cloverbud activities from the 4-H Cloverbud curriculum (preferably from different topics) to demonstrate the variety of activities available for the children. By doing an activity, the children will be engaged, and parents can view the educational opportunities and benefits that will occur during a 4-H Cloverbud meeting. Refer to the Activity Ideas and Examples below for quick and easy activities or use the Resources section of this guide for additional ideas and inspiration.

## Closing

Close by reciting the 4-H motto. Ask for questions and thank everyone for attending. Announce the date, time, and location of the next meeting. Encourage 4-H Cloverbuds and their parents to attend.

## Refreshments

Serve 4-H Cloverbud members and their parents refreshments. Encourage everyone to look at the 4-H displays. For some 4-H Cloverbud members, refreshment time is one of their favorite parts of the meeting! It is suggested to always make sure refreshments are served in some capacity.

# Meeting 2

Time: Aprox. 60 minutes

The 4-H Cloverbud leader or teen leader will lead the meeting.

Encourage parent(s) and guardian(s) to attend the meeting.

## Suggested order

- » Open with the Pledge of Allegiance and 4-H Pledge (Ask members and parents to repeat each line after you.)
- » 4-H Pledge Debrief – An interactive, hands-on activity is located in the Training Wheel kits found in your local Extension office or regional office. Training Wheel kits are available to check out from the regional offices by your local Extension agent.
- » Conduct a simple get-acquainted activity for learning each member's names. (Encourage the shy ones.)
- » Choose a name for the 4-H Cloverbud group. (Ask for suggestions; if necessary, begin by suggesting one or two possible names.)
- » Select a regular meeting date, time, and place.

## Cloverbud Activity

Conduct two to three activities from a topic in the 4-H Cloverbuds curriculum. When working with the 4-H Cloverbuds age group, keep the activities short, simple, and fun. Also, choose different instructional methods, such as listening to a story, doing an activity, and singing. Refer to the Activity Ideas and Examples below for quick and easy activities or use the Resources section of this guide for additional ideas and inspiration.

## Recreational Activity

The need for active motion is a developmental characteristic and recreation is important. If the topic lesson does not provide a recreational activity, incorporate a recreational activity into the meeting. The recreation activity may be a quiet inside game for “fun” or a song that all can sing.

*Example: Farm Animal Freeze*

- » Play music and have kids move around like farm animals (e.g., hop like a bunny, waddle like a duck, trot like a horse).
- » When the music stops, they freeze like statues!
- » Call out a new animal when music starts again.
- » No winners or losers, just fun movement and listening practice.

## Induction Ceremony

An induction ceremony can be a special way to welcome 4-H Cloverbuds into the group. A ceremony can add significance to 4-H and provide a way to express the values and ideals of the organization.

The induction ceremony can be conducted in many ways, from simple to very elaborate. When conducting a ceremony, parents, family members, and friends may be invited. For ceremony ideas check out Celebrating with 4-H Ceremonies available at local extension offices or at [bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/4H824.pdf](https://ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/4H824.pdf)

Clover Outline and Directions available here: [kansas4-h.org/about/clubs-programs/cloverbuds/docs/Clover\\_Outline\\_and\\_Directions.pdf](https://kansas4-h.org/about/clubs-programs/cloverbuds/docs/Clover_Outline_and_Directions.pdf)



# Suggested Induction Ceremony

**4-H Cloverbuds Leader:** As we pause for a quiet moment, let us think of the four-leaf clover, which is the symbol of our organization. As a 4-H Cloverbud, you represent the four-leaf clover with an “H” on each leaf. The Hs stand for **Head, Heart, Hands,** and **Health.** These are symbols of the teaching of 4-H, by which we try to become better citizens for our club, our community, our country and our world today and tomorrow. The green clover is the symbol of youth, life and growth. The white “H” is for purity, hope, and high ideals.

The **Head** guides our lives. It represents knowledge and wisdom. Knowledge is learning facts. Wisdom knows how to use these facts wisely. This leaf represents head.

All our ideals and dreams come from the **Heart.** Without the heart, there is no desire, no will, and no conscience. Heart makes us caring individuals. This leaf represents heart.

Our **Hands** represent our service to others. Hands can do no good by themselves; they are tools of the head and heart. Let our hands become the symbol of expression of our ideals and dreams. This leaf is for hands.

Good **Health** is important to living a good life. Good nutrition and physical fitness serve as building blocks for good health. We add this leaf to represent good health.

The beauty of the leaf cannot develop, and would not be complete, without the support of the stem. The stem represents the 4-H volunteers and parents who support you.

The 4-H clover is now complete: Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. May the Hs of 4-H help you grow into a responsible citizen. 4-H Cloverbuds members, please join me as we repeat the 4-H pledge.

## Closing

Close by reciting the 4-H motto: “To Make the Best Better,” a goal for each member to improve themselves.

Announce the date, time, and location of the next meeting. Encourage 4-H Cloverbuds and their parents to attend.

## Refreshments

Serve the 4-H Cloverbuds and their parents refreshments.



# Meeting 3

Time: Aprox. 60 minutes

The 4-H Cloverbud leader or teen leader will lead the meeting.

Encourage parent(s) and guardian(s) to attend the meeting.

## Suggested order

» Open with the Pledge of Allegiance and 4-H Pledge

### Cloverbud Activity

Conduct three to four activities from a topic in the 4-H Cloverbuds curriculum. When working with the 4-H Cloverbuds age group, keep the activities short, simple, and fun. Also, choose different instructional methods such as listening to a story, doing an activity, and singing. Refer to the Activity Ideas and Examples below for quick and easy activities or use the Resources section of this guide for additional ideas and inspiration.

### Recreational Activity

The need for active motion is a developmental characteristic and recreation is important. If the topic lesson does not provide a recreational activity, incorporate a recreational activity into the meeting. The recreation activity may be a quiet inside game for “fun” or a song that all can sing.

Example: Sing “If You’re a Cloverbud and You Know It” (To the tune of “If You’re Happy and You Know It”)

If you’re a Cloverbud and you know it, clap your hands!

If you’re a Cloverbud and you know it, clap your hands!

If you’re a Cloverbud and you know it,

Then your smile will surely show it,

If you’re a Cloverbud and you know it, clap your hands!

### Repeat with fun actions like

- » Stomp your feet!
- » Jump up high!
- » Spin around!
- » Say “4-H!”

### Refreshments

Serve the 4-H Cloverbuds and their parents refreshments.



# Activity Ideas and Examples

These are quick and easy activity ideas that would fit into the suggested organizational meeting examples from the section above. All activity samples borrowed from University of Wisconsin 4-H. Access downloadable files at [4h.extension.wisc.edu/4h-resources/cloverbud-activity-plans-and-family-letters/](http://4h.extension.wisc.edu/4h-resources/cloverbud-activity-plans-and-family-letters/). Find additional activity and 4-H Cloverbud curriculum resources in the Resources section of this guide.

**Paper Bag Pet Parade (University of Wisconsin)** - Most youth are fascinated by animals. Help them develop this into an attitude of responsibility and caring for their pets. Youth will make a paper bag pet and teach it some tricks, then share their tricks during a special paper bag pet parade. *Life skills: Decision-making, group discussions.*

**The Superhero in You (University of Wisconsin)** - Cloverbuds will learn how they can use their own personal talents to help make the world a better place and to help others! They will make superhero wrist cuffs and a symbol to show their super power. *Life skills: Responsible citizenship, self-esteem.*

**Build a Snack Mix (University of Wisconsin)** - Cloverbuds will learn the importance of decision-making and working together to make a decision as a group. This activity gives youth the opportunity to work together by creating a snack the whole group enjoys. *Life skills: Citizenship.*

**See the Wind (University of Wisconsin)** - This activity will give youth a chance to explore meteorology and make a windsock so they can see the wind around them! Cloverbuds will learn about the world around them while using critical thinking skills. *Life skills: Critical thinking, learning to learn.*

**Better Bubbles (University of Wisconsin)** - This interactive activity helps the Cloverbuds develop social interaction, hand-eye coordination, and fine motor skills while learning about how air makes bubbles using two different solutions. *Life Skills: Cooperation, critical thinking.*



# Kansas 4-H Online Enrollment

- » Youth may enroll online in Kansas 4-H at any time. 4-H Cloverbud members will enroll through the 4-H Online Enrollment Portal; [v2.4honline.com/](https://v2.4honline.com/).
- » 4-H Online Family Resources and Enrollment Guides are available on the 4-H website; [kansas4-h.org/resources/4-h-online/](https://kansas4-h.org/resources/4-h-online/). Encourage parents to contact their local office if additional assistance is needed.
- » The 4-H Cloverbud program is an educational, youth development opportunity specifically for 5- and 6-year-old children. To be eligible to participate, a child must have celebrated his or her 5th or 6th birthday before January 1 of the current year.
- » The 4-H calendar year begins October 1<sup>st</sup> and concludes on September 30<sup>th</sup>. Youth who turn 7 before January 1 of the current 4-H year may enroll. Youth who turn 19 before January 1 of the current 4-H year are ineligible to enroll.



# Kansas 4-H Cloverbud Policies

For the full Kansas 4-H Policy Guide and best management resources, please visit [kansas4-h.org/resources/policy-guide/](https://kansas4-h.org/resources/policy-guide/).

## 1: Safe Environment

The 4-H Cloverbud program must ensure the 4-H Cloverbud members remain safe and have a positive, developmentally appropriate 4-H experience.

### Best Management Practices

Before each activity, the adult and/or older teen leader must identify any potential hazards and avoid putting the 4-H Cloverbud members at risk. 4-H Cloverbud leaders should know and practice safety precautions and consult with the local extension agent concerning insurance coverage. American Income Life Insurance covers each registered member while they are participating or attending approved and adult-supervised group activities but does not cover children ages 5 and 6 with animal projects.

## 2: Activity-focused

A 4-H Cloverbud member participates in noncompetitive, age-appropriate, properly supervised events or activities sponsored or conducted by another 4-H group.

### Best Management Practices

The 4-H Cloverbud member should participate in group activities and cooperative experiences with the entire activity completed in one short session. 4-H Cloverbud activities should use the 4-H Cloverbud curriculum.

## 3: Cooperative Learning

The 4-H Cloverbud program is based on cooperative learning. The 4-H Cloverbud member is to participate in activities and opportunities where the member practices developmental skills, discovers talents, and learns about fairness in a nonjudgmental environment.

### Best Management Practices

The 4-H Cloverbud member should participate in group-type activities with cooperative experiences. Products made during the group activities may be showcased for public display or show-and-tell.

## 4: Cloverbuds Recognition

4-H Cloverbuds earn recognition based on participation. All 4-H Cloverbuds are, however, to receive the same recognition, meaning that placements and other competitive awards are not age appropriate.

## 5: Cloverbuds Program Structure

When implementing a 4-H Cloverbud program, the local extension unit should consider:

- A. Recruiting interested persons for leadership roles.
- B. Encouraging teen leaders to serve in a leadership role.
- C. Organizing a county/district-wide group.
- D. Sponsorship by a local 4-H club.
- E. Allowing 4-H Cloverbud members to come to the regular 4-H club business meeting through roll call; then are released for a 4-H Cloverbud activity in a separate area.



- F. Partnering with after-school or school-based clubs.
- G. Collaborating with civic groups and other youth organizations.

## 6: Supervision Ratio

A minimum of two adult leaders is required to start a 4-H Cloverbuds group. 4-H Cloverbuds group must have two (2) adults per twelve (12) children (ratio of 2:12). Adult volunteers must be screened and approved through the Kansas 4-H Volunteer Screening process.

### Best Management Practices

Family involvement is typically one of the key components of the 4-H program. Because parents and/ or guardians are a vital part of the development of their children, it is recommended that parents and or/ guardians also attend the 4-H Cloverbud activities to assist and support their child and the 4-H Cloverbud group.

## 7: Cloverbud Officers

4-H Cloverbuds groups may not conduct formal business meetings; therefore, they do not have officers. Children ages 5 and 6 are not developmentally ready to fulfill the responsibilities of a club office. A structured routine for the 4-H Cloverbud group is, however, important when conducting Cloverbud activities. Additionally, maintaining age appropriate activities for 4-H Cloverbuds is essential and therefore: No annual records are to be kept or submitted for judging.

## 8: Cloverbud Financials

4-H Cloverbud members do not manage money. 4-H Cloverbud members do not pay dues. 4-H Cloverbud leaders, volunteers, and parents will decide how group expenses will be handled.

### Best Management Practices

For financial management purposes, 4-H Cloverbud group finances may be handled by a sponsoring 4-H club or the local 4-H events council.

## 9: Cloverbud Showcasing

### Non-competitive

4-H Cloverbud exhibits can be showcased at fairs and public events, but a 4-H Cloverbud member may not participate as a competitive exhibitor in traditional 4-H events. The 4-H Cloverbud member may exhibit or showcase activity-related items from their 4-H Cloverbud experiences at appropriate locations. The 4-H Cloverbud member may not participate as a competitive exhibitor and is not eligible to receive premiums or awards in traditional 4-H events. The 4-H Cloverbud member may receive a 4-H Cloverbud ribbon.

### Cloverbud Exhibits

The 4-H Cloverbud member is encouraged to showcase a product, poster, or a notebook of 4-H Cloverbuds activities. Suggested locations include noncompetitive show-and-tell-type displays at local fairs, libraries, schools, 4-H Parents' Night, 4-H Achievement Night, churches, community festivals, parades, etc. Pets cannot be included in overnight exhibits at the fair but may be used as show-and-tell.

A separate "4-H Cloverbud" division should be created for showcase entries at the fair. 4-H Cloverbud recognition ribbons may be given, but all members should receive the same ribbon to maintain the noncompetitive nature of the showcase. A show-and-tell type experience between the 4-H Cloverbud member and an adult or older teen is encouraged to provide positive feedback on the entry.

## Best Management Practices

### Suggested 4-H Cloverbud Fair Division:

- A. 4-H Cloverbuds may exhibit or showcase age-appropriate activity related items from their 4-H Cloverbuds experiences.
- B. The 4-H Cloverbud member may showcase a product, poster, or notebook for a show-and-tell type display.
- C. A 4-H Cloverbud member may showcase a pet from the approved list during his/her show-and-tell. Pets cannot be included in overnight exhibits. No livestock can be exhibited.
- D. The 4-H Cloverbud member may not participate as a competitive exhibitor and is not eligible to receive premiums or awards. A 4-H Cloverbud may receive a 4-H Cloverbud ribbon or participation award.

## Cloverbud Pet Policies

4-H Cloverbud members are allowed to showcase a pet from the approved list in accordance with Cloverbud pet policies. 4-H Cloverbud members may not own and/or show 4-H livestock.

- A. 4-H Cloverbud members may showcase a pet from the approved pet list.
- B. Wildlife cannot be allowed (in accordance with Kansas Wildlife and Parks policies and statutes).
- C. All pets must be caged, leashed, and/or contained as appropriate and manageable/under-control.
- D. A parent or guardian must be present with their child and pet at all times.
- E. Pets cannot be included in overnight exhibits at the fair but may be used as a show-and-tell activity or showcase.

## Best Management Practices

4-H Cloverbud members may showcase a product, poster, or notebook of 4-H Cloverbud activities. Pets from the approved list can also be showcased.

### Approved Pets for Cloverbuds Showcase

- » Amphibians — frogs, toads
- » Ant Farms
- » Cats
- » Dogs
- » Guinea Pigs
- » Fish
- » Gerbils
- » Parakeets
- » Rabbits
- » Hampsters
- » Mice
- » Rats

## 10. Cloverbud groups that become an established club must follow Kansas 4-H Youth Development Policies.

Visit the Kansas 4-H Policy Handbook, [kansas4-h.org/resources/policy-guide/](https://kansas4-h.org/resources/policy-guide/) for additional information. Refer to Section 14 in the Handbook for Cloverbuds guidelines.

# 4-H Cloverbud Program Resources

Scheer, S. D. (1997). Programming parameters for five- to eight-year-old youth in 4-H. Journal of Extension [On-line] 35. (4). Available URL address: <http://www.joe.org>

Shop 4-H Curriculum Guides and Helper's Guides; <https://shop4-h.org>

The Big Book of Cloverbud Activities; <https://shop4-h.org/products/the-big-book-of-4-h-cloverbud-activities>

That's 4-H Cloverbud Activity Book; [https://shop4-h.org/products/cloverbuds-activity-book?\\_pos=4&\\_sid=072454494&\\_ss=r](https://shop4-h.org/products/cloverbuds-activity-book?_pos=4&_sid=072454494&_ss=r)

All About Insects Cloverbud Activity Book; [https://shop4-h.org/products/all-about-insects-activity-booklet?\\_pos=6&\\_sid=072454494&\\_ss=r](https://shop4-h.org/products/all-about-insects-activity-booklet?_pos=6&_sid=072454494&_ss=r)

All About Pets Cloverbud Activity Book; [https://shop4-h.org/products/all-about-pets-cloverbud-activity-booklet?\\_pos=9&\\_sid=072454494&\\_ss=r](https://shop4-h.org/products/all-about-pets-cloverbud-activity-booklet?_pos=9&_sid=072454494&_ss=r)

Create Your Own Marshmallow Rocket; [https://shop4-h.org/products/create-your-own-marshmallow-rocket-1?\\_pos=11&\\_sid=072454494&\\_ss=r](https://shop4-h.org/products/create-your-own-marshmallow-rocket-1?_pos=11&_sid=072454494&_ss=r)

Cloverbud STEM Activity Kit Bundle; [https://shop4-h.org/products/cloverbud-stem-activity-kit-bundle?\\_pos=12&\\_sid=072454494&\\_ss=r](https://shop4-h.org/products/cloverbud-stem-activity-kit-bundle?_pos=12&_sid=072454494&_ss=r)

University of Illinois Extension – Cloverbud Show Book;  
[https://extension.illinois.edu/sites/default/files/u23\\_cbud\\_showbook\\_21.pdf](https://extension.illinois.edu/sites/default/files/u23_cbud_showbook_21.pdf)

Utah State University Extension – Discover Curriculum; <https://extension.usu.edu/utah4h/discover>

The Ohio State University Extension – The Big Book of 4-H Cloverbud Activities, Life Skills and Learning for K-2 Youth; <https://extensionpubs.osu.edu/the-big-book-of-4-h-cloverbud-activities/>

The Ohio State University Extension – 4-H Cloverbud Volunteer Guidebook;  
<https://extensionpubs.osu.edu/cloverbud-volunteer-guidebook/>

The Ohio State University 4-H Cloverbuds Connections; <https://u.osu.edu/cloverbudconnections/>

Click and Do Activities; <https://u.osu.edu/cloverbudconnections/click-it/>  
Cloverbud Educational Activity Kits; <https://u.osu.edu/cloverbudconnections/kits/>

University of Wisconsin 4-H Cloverbud Activity Plans and Family Letters;  
<https://4h.extension.wisc.edu/4h-resources/cloverbud-activity-plans-and-family-letters/>

Wisconsin 4-H Cloverbuds Project Leader Sheet;  
<https://4h.extension.wisc.edu/files/2022/03/Cloverbud-Leader-Sheet.pdf>

Kansas 4-H Cloverbuds Program Leader Resources; [kansas4-h.org/about/clubsprograms/cloverbuds/](https://kansas4-h.org/about/clubsprograms/cloverbuds/)

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