



Pet Project



As part of the Animal Science project, the 4-H Pets project helps members explore which pet best fits their family while learning to be responsible caretakers. Youth can study a variety of small pets including cats, fish, birds, guinea pigs, and reptiles, and learn basic animal science through daily care and record keeping. This project builds knowledge about household companions, their needs, and how to keep them healthy. Members can focus on their pets while completing creative activities such as designing a toy, making a commercial, or creating a scavenger hunt that highlights their pet's unique traits.

Starting Out Beginner:

- Explore which type of pet fits best in your family.
- Identify hazards for pets around your home.
- Invent a toy for your pet.
- Learn about your pet's nutritional needs.
- Practice grooming techniques.
- Learn to safely handle and hold your pet.
- Explore basic pet first-aid supplies and their uses.

Learning More Intermediate:

- Learn about your pet's digestive tract.
- Examine your pet to make sure it's healthy.
- Plan a training or exercise program for your pet.
- Compare labels on pet foods to make an informed decision on nutrition and price.
- Create a commercial about pet ownership or care.

Expanding Horizons Advanced:

- Learn the symptoms and treatment of diseases.
- Learn about taxonomic classification.
- Plan a pet store scavenger hunt.
- Understand animal behavior.
- Research emerging issues in pet welfare.
- Investigate exotic pet ownership.
- Create a long-term care plan for an aging or special needs pet.

Beyond Ready

Ready to Lead

Youth involved in 4-H are **two times more likely to have the goal of becoming a leader**. Through real-world experiences and the guidance of caring mentors, they develop the confidence, communication, and decision-making skills needed to lead in today's changing world.

Ready to Serve

Youth who participate in 4-H are **three times more likely to engage in community service**. Service learning provides them with purpose and connection at a time when **more than 53% of Gen Z report feeling lonely**. Through 4-H, youth are empowered to serve with compassion and make a meaningful impact.

Ready to Build

With nearly **10 million unfilled jobs and 77% of employers seeking real-world skills**, 4-H helps youth build what matters. Through hands-on projects and career exploration, youth gain adaptability, problem-solving, and workforce readiness.

Ready to Conquer

While 52% of young people feel like they're failing at life goals, 4-H youth rise with resilience. Backed by research and supported by caring adults, they learn to overcome challenges, set goals, and take charge of their future with confidence.

***Building a Ready
Generation in a
World of Change!***

Pet Project

Expand Your Experiences!

Healthy Living:

- Research the importance of washing your hands when handling/grooming your pet to prevent the spread of zoonotic diseases.
- Learn how interacting with pets can reduce stress, improve mood, and support mental health.
- Create a plan to keep your pet's living space clean.

Science and Agriculture:

- Study the body and skeletal structures of your pet.
- Analyze pet food ingredients; learn how agricultural products become commercial pet foods.
- Research livestock, poultry, or aquaculture industries about supplying feed ingredients, bedding, or equipment used by pet owners.

Community Vitality:

- Serve as a junior project leader or superintendent mentoring other members in the pet project.
- Organize a fundraiser to support a local animal shelter.
- Volunteer at a local animal shelter.
- Organize a pet fair at a local care home.

Communication and the Arts:

- Develop social media posts communicating fun facts, training tips, pet advocacy.
- Teach a younger 4-H member important traits to consider when selecting a pet.
- Design artwork showcasing your pet's personality.
- Write a children's story or poem from your pet's point of view.

Career Exploration:

- Shadow a local veterinarian, groomer, or veterinary technician.
- Interview professionals in the pet industry (groomers, trainers, pet-store managers, animal shelter staff).
- Visit a pet food company.
- Visit an animal nutritionist.
- Research animal assisted therapy.
- Create a real/conceptual pet product or service business and participate in a YEC (Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge) competition.
- Explore cybersecurity jobs in the pet industry.
- Explore the KSU pet food program.

Contact Information

Kansas 4-H
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Resources & Events:

- Build confidence, resilience, and real-world skills through hands-on activities.
- Share what you have learned through a Club Day presentation.
 - Present at a local civic organization.
 - Exhibit at a county fair.
 - Exhibit at a local pet show.
 - Participate in a local vaccination clinic.
 - Kansas 4-H Discovery Days.

Curriculum & Resources:

- Contact your local Extension office.
- Go to National 4-H Curriculum — <https://shop4-h.org/collections/small-animals-and-pets-curriculum>
- Go to Kansas 4-H Project Website — <https://www.kansas4-h.org/projects/animal-science/pets.html>
- Go to K-State Extension Bookstore — <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/topic/4-h-youth-development/pets>
- Visit KSU Pet Food and Companion Animal Sciences Program

4-H Record Keeping:

- Learning to keep accurate records is a life skill.
- Setting 4-H Project Goals (4H1100), https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/item/setting-4-h-project-goals_4H1100
 - Kansas 4-H Record Keeping, <https://www.kansas4-h.org/resources/awards-and-recognition/LocalRecordKeeping.html>
 - Complete a Pet Journal that includes:
 - Species, breed, age, sex, identifying characteristics.
 - Health and veterinary records.
 - Challenges with your pet.

Project Exhibit Ideas:

- Exhibit your pet in a pet show or fair.
- Exhibit a pet poster, notebook, or project display.
- Create a pet toy or interactive item for your pet.
- Record a video commercial about owning a pet.
- Display pictures of a pet store scavenger hunt.
- Exhibit pictures of your pet.

