



Welcoming New 4-H Members

4-H clubs need to develop a plan to welcome and support new members when they become interested in 4-H youth development, arrive at their first 4-H club meeting, and learn about different project areas. Making a great first impression is important because it is the first step in the essential element of creating a sense of belonging.

Essential Element — Belonging

Youth need to know they are cared about by others and feel a sense of connection to others in the group. As the 4-H Club, it is important to provide youth the opportunity to feel physically and emotionally safe while actively participating in your group. A club should create an environment that supports and encourages its members.




Suggestions for how to cultivate a sense of belonging:

- Delegate a New Family Coordinator to contact members before the meeting to learn about cultural, linguistic, and/or disability accommodations to be considered.
- The New Family Coordinator and Club Leader should work with the local K-State Research and Extension office to provide necessary accommodations.
- Identify a specific person to be the greeter at each 4-H meeting to welcome everyone attending.
- All officers should be prepared to engage with members, guests, and adults before the start of the meeting.
- During the meeting, use discussion questions that encourage youth to learn from each other, synthesize, and use ideas collaboratively.
- Use discussion questions during role call (consider being sensitive towards different dimensions of diversity for new members such as socio-economic status, religion, disability status, inclusive family systems, language, etc.).
- Organize an opening recreational activity or serve refreshments before beginning club business.

Welcome and Explain to the New Family the Meeting Agenda

- After they arrive and before the meeting begins, the New Family Coordinator takes the initiative of introducing him/herself, giving the new family a “4-H Greet Sheet,” welcoming the new family to the club, and introducing them to other club members on an informal basis.
- The New Family Coordinator finds a spot for them to sit, children with the current members and the parents with the New Family Coordinator. If parents have questions during the meeting, the New Family Coordinator is close at hand to answer them. If a current family has invited the new family to the meeting, have the children sit with current 4-H members and the parents with those that invited them.
- The New Family Coordinator should let the club president and secretary know there are guests present so that they can be introduced during the meeting after roll call has been taken.
- Developing a buddy system between a new member and a current member helps the relationship with the new member and creates a sense of belonging for all. The New Family Coordinator should recruit current members to be “buddies” with the new member.
- Keep the lines of communication open, so that the new family feels comfortable asking questions. 4-H seems to have a language of its own and may need to be interpreted for the new family. The New Family Coordinator should provide a New Family Handbook to the new family and review it with them.

K-STATE Research and Extension			KANSAS 4-H CLUB CORNER
4-H Greet Sheet			
Welcome to our Club! We Are Glad You Are Here!			
This is an outline of what you can expect throughout our club meeting. Please ask if you have questions. The club meeting starts with the American flag salute, followed by the 4-H Pledge. The pledge is on the back page.			
Group Decisions	Youth officers lead the club through the meeting agenda. You may be asked to participate. Here are some examples of how you can participate in the business meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roll call and Introduction of Guests ... You will be asked to stand and be introduced by the president. You may answer the roll call question if you wish.• Business — This is where the club makes decisions for activities they have planned as well as bring up new ideas• 4-H community clubs often follow parliamentary procedure or a consensus decision-making process• Community clubs sometimes utilize committees to work on specific projects and those representatives share their progress with the group• Officers are elected at the beginning of each 4-H year. As you grow in the program, this is a leadership opportunity you could participate in.		
Program	4-H helps youth explore their interests and master life skills. Through experiential learning, 4-H teaches by having youth engage in hands-on educational learning experiences. During the learning process, youth reflect on the experience and then learn to apply it to a new situation. At a community club meeting, members will often give talks and demonstrations about their projects or the club may do a hands-on learning activity to learn new skills. Please join in by listening carefully, getting involved, and showing your appreciation.		
Group Building	In 4-H, the critical components of a successful experience are a sense of belonging, independence, mastery, and generosity. At each community club meeting you can expect interactive activities to support these essential learning elements. There are many ways that a 4-H community club participates in group building activities. Here are some examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Songs• Recreational games• Refreshments or meal• Service projects• Conversation• Ice breakers, energizers, and team building activities		
We look forward to seeing you again! Our next meeting will be _____.			
If you have any questions before our next meeting, call our New Family Coordinator, _____; Club Leader, _____, or Club President, _____.			
Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service			

Adapted from Strengthening 4-H Club Resources, Kansas 4-H Youth Development

Local Contact Information

Kansas4-H.org



Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

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