



# Create Your Own 4-H Project!

## Leader Guide

How YOU can help youth create their own 4-H projects

### 1. Read through the entire publication, "Create Your Own 4-H Project!" (4H 696)

Yes, we know that sounds obvious, but you'd be surprised how many people skip this important step. Also, this project guide is designed to be different from other project guides that you might be familiar with using.

### 2. Clarify in your own mind the difference between a "project" and an "exhibit."

They are **NOT** the same thing. (Check the glossary if necessary.) Be prepared to repeat these differences to the youth.

### 3. Review basic learner-centered techniques.

Youth (and adults) can be taught in several ways:

- Tell them what you want them to know.
- Show them what you want them to know.
- Involve them in doing activities from which they will learn what they need to know.

Simply telling youth what you want them to learn is the fastest teaching method, but the information is more easily forgotten. Learners may remember more if you show and tell them because they both see and hear the instruction. Getting youth involved in an activity takes more time and effort, but they will learn more and remember what they have learned longer.

4-H has a long history of "learning by doing." Experiential learning happens when a person gets involved in an activity, looks back at the experience critically, determines what was useful or important to remember from the activity, and uses this information in doing something else. Most youth (and adults) find that the "doing" and "reflecting" steps are usually easiest while the "applying" step offers more of a challenge.

Experiential learning is more than doing activities. It involves discussing what was done (what), thinking about what was important about what was learned (so what), and applying new skills and information to a real life experience (now what).

#### Experiential Learning

##### DO

1. **Experience** the activity

##### REFLECT

2. **Share** the results, reactions and observations publicly
3. **Process** by discussing, looking at the experience; analyze, reflect

##### APPLY

4. **Generalize** to connect the experience to real-world examples
5. **Apply** what was learned to a similar or different situation; practice

The following chart may help you focus your efforts in helping 4-H members reach their goals through the “create your own” project.

Steps in the members guide	Type of activity	Activity description	Comments
1-6	Doing (What?)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Decide what is going to be done</li> <li>2. Set a timeline</li> <li>3. Decide how it will be done</li> </ol>	These are the three steps of goal-setting.
7-8	Reflecting (So what?)	Evaluate the process and determine how to share what was learned	Remember that the goal of the shared exhibit or presentation might be different from the project goal, and that's okay.
9-10	Applying (Now what?)	Transfer what was learned	Learning doesn't require successes. 4-H is a safe place to make mistakes, admit them, and learn from them. Ask questions to help the young person clarify or compare what was learned (about the project, about himself or herself, or about a skill) to the "real world." For example, where else might the youth use the research skills practiced as part of this project?

#### 4. Consider what your role should be for each specific child.

In some instances you may be qualified to be the subject expert. If so, share your enthusiasm and try to teach through hands-on participation.

In other situations you may need to play the supportive facilitator and coach role. This **could** involve chauffeuring, Web surfing (and evaluating), making preliminary phone calls and/or finding phone numbers, taking photos, tape recording or videotaping interviews, teaching (or reviewing) library search skills, listening to frustrated rantings and ravings, sharing personal experiences related to failures and successes, offering encouraging words and notes.

#### 5. Get help.

If you are asked a question that you can't answer, admit that you don't know and offer to help find someone who does.



#### 6. Take a deep breath, smile, relax, and ENJOY.

Remember, this is their project, not yours. (Although if you'd like to try something new or learn something new, this process also will work for you!)

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