Participation Requirements
Iowa 4-H Youth Development Program

4-H Mission
4-H empowers youth to reach their full potential through youth-adult partnerships and research-based experiences. 4-H prepares youth to be successful, contributing members of society.

Who Is a 4-H’er?
“4H’er” is an all-inclusive term which refers to Kindergarten through 12th grade youth taking part in programs provided as a result of action by 4-H extension personnel (professional, paraprofessional and volunteer). This includes participation in any 4-H delivery mode (afterschool, camp, club, event, school), including Clover Kids. The youth should participate in 6 hours or more of experiential learning.

Definition of a 4-H Member
A member is any individual youth enrolled in 4-H Online. This includes detailed information including but not limited to name, contact information, demographic data and parent or guardian information.

General Enrollment
Individual enrollment is required for 4-Hers, including Clover Kids. It is not required, but encouraged for non-continuous and short-term planned educational program youth participants. All enrolled members and parents/guardians are asked to sign a Code of Conduct for Iowa 4-H Youth and Families form.

Any K-12 youth who is recorded (individually or as part of a group) by ISU Extension and Outreach as participating in one of the recognized 4-H delivery modes is by definition a 4-H youth participant, and some requirements apply:

- 4-H group, Clover Kids, and club enrollment and reenrollment is open year-round to all youth beginning in Kindergarten through 12th grade (Clover Kids – Kindergarten through 3rd grade), (Club – 4th through 12th grade).
- 4-H members are eligible to take part in 4-H youth events and activities if specific eligibility requirements are met. There may be registration deadlines and grade limitations for participation in some activities and events.
- 4-H youth hold his or her membership in only one county or one state at a time. In special circumstances beyond a youth’s control, the state office may allow multiple county or state memberships.
- If a county has determined that a club has reached its maximum capacity, the county shall make all reasonable efforts to accommodate 4-Hers including, but not limited to, starting new clubs/learning communities, including Clover Kids.

Independent Membership
- Independent membership is an opportunity for youth from 4th through 12th grade where an adult mentor guides a 4-H’er in the planning of their 4-H experience.
• Independent membership provides individual youth access to ISU Extension & Outreach 4-H programs.
• Program Development Fee has been paid.
• Mentors are selected by the member, parents/guardian and ISU Extension staff and have successfully completed the required screening and training process.
• The mentor provides the member experientially designed learning opportunities that support the basic needs of youth (belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity) and the outcomes of the 4-H experience (productive citizens, outstanding communicators, effective leaders, successful learners).
• The 4-H Independent Membership Experience and Member expectations are the same as the Club Member Expectations.
• Independent members are eligible but not required to participate in competitive events, fairs, and camps.

Group Enrollment
An Iowa 4-H Group is a cohort of enrolled K-12 youth who participate in a non-continuous and short-term planned educational program. These experiences are generally events and are usually designed by adults. The program may be designed to reach new and underserved audiences, address priority topics, and build collaborations (e.g. schools). It is expected that, whenever possible, 4-H staff and volunteers will strategically move these youth toward one of the more sustainable deliver modes, e.g. Clover Kids, clubs) and membership status.

Clover Kids
The overall purpose of the 4-H Clover Kids program is to foster the development of life skills essential for the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical maturation of Kindergarten through 3rd grade youth by providing a unique, age-appropriate educational opportunity.

In the Clover Kids program, adults plan the experiential learning experience for the youth. The uniqueness of children in this stage of development requires a cooperative program. Because of developmental appropriateness, youth in Clover Kids will not be involved in competitions, and may not be eligible for activities or projects designed for 4th through 12th grade 4-Hers. (See the Clover Kids Toolbox.)