



Definitions and Requirements of Iowa 4-H Clover Kids Clubs

Introduction

The overall purpose of the Iowa 4-H Clover Kids program is to foster the development of life skills that are essential for the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical maturation of kindergarten through third graders by providing a unique, age-appropriate educational opportunity. This document defines expectations for the development and support of Clover Kids clubs.

Iowa 4-H Mission and Vision

Vision: Preparing Iowa's youth to be successful, contributing members of society.

Mission: 4-H empowers youth to reach their full potential through youth-adult partnerships and research-based experiences.

Defining Clover Kids

The Iowa 4-H Clover Kids program is developmentally age-appropriate for children in kindergarten through third grade. Clover Kids members are involved in non-competitive group activities. In doing so, children learn essential life skills, which include strong self-understanding, appropriate social interactions, effective decision-making, cooperative learning, and active physical skills.

Because kindergarten through third grade is the most vulnerable age group served by Iowa 4-H, risk management concerns are paramount. Iowa 4-H Youth Development requires that Clover Kids youth be individually enrolled for risk management purposes. In addition, individual enrollment of Clover Kids will allow Iowa 4-H to improve communications with our Clover Kids participants, and to better track participation in the Clover Kids Program.

Clover Kids is not meant to duplicate the 4-H experience for older youth, therefore it is fundamentally different than general membership in 4-H. County 4-H staff and leaders must ensure Clover Kids clubs promote children's positive development through cooperative learning and developmentally appropriate activities.

Clover Kids can be organized in a variety of settings that include the following: 4-H clubs, classroom settings, afterschool programs, and day camps. In Iowa, we have modified the club setup to allow for Clover Kids clubs to be recorded as "4-H Special Interest/Short-Term Programs." This is a hybrid solution to the federal definition of a club membership not including K-3 youth. Since each individual youth entered into 4hOnline must have at least one club, we put those younger kids into Clover Kids "clubs" designated with that delivery mode.

All Clover Kids clubs must be chartered to use the 4-H Name and Emblem.

Requirements of a Clover Kids K-3 Club

The Iowa 4-H Clover Kids structure is intended to be flexible but must comply with the following requirements.

- Serve children in kindergarten through 3rd grade. This does not include children in pre-k, early kindergarten or other transitional kindergarten classrooms.
- Adults working with Clover Kids on a recurring and regular basis must meet the Iowa 4-H Youth Development training requirements on an annual basis. They must also be screened by their county extension office, per the Iowa Extension Council Association background check policy. <https://www.iaextensioncouncils.org/background-screening>
- Maintain a youth-to-adult ratio of 1 adult for every 6 kindergarten through 3rd grade member.
- Be advised by adult staff or volunteers who have been screened and trained. The recommendation is one (1) adult for every six (6) kindergarten through 3rd-grade members.
- Consist of at least five (5) members from at least three (3) families.
- Create a minimum of six ongoing, regular group meetings that extend throughout most or all the year.
- Use experiential learning to provide research-based and developmentally appropriate cooperative activities that build life skills and are uniquely suited for the kindergarten through 3rd-grade members.
- Provide cooperative learning, non-competitive opportunities that foster children's self-understanding and self-confidence.
- Individually enroll Clover Kids members in 4-HOnline.
- To use the Name and Emblem (Clover) a club must be chartered. If the club is led by a staff member, the club needs to be chartered, as well as if the club is led by a screened and trained volunteer.
- Prepare Clover Kids members for the next stage in their 4-H educational adventure: 4-H club membership.

Cost of Participation in Clover Kids

There is no Program Development Fee or membership fee for Clover Kids. Counties will be charged a \$5 4-HOnline fee for each individually-enrolled member. If a county is experiencing financial difficulty, the Youth Program Specialist for a county should discuss the need with the Iowa 4-H Program Leader.

No child shall be denied the opportunity to join Clover Kids due to financial barriers. Support from a county 4-H foundation or the Iowa 4-H Foundation <https://www.iowa4hfoundation.org> should be pursued.

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