



Michigan 4-H Cloverbud Learning Guidelines



FOR THE 4-H PROGRAM YEAR BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 1, 2018, AND BEYOND.

Children aged 5 to 7 need to be involved in activities and learning experiences that are developmentally appropriate. Children in this age group typically are full of energy and willing to learn, and need educational materials designed for specific abilities, needs and interests. In addition, activities and learning experiences should be geared to the informal setting offered by 4-H.

Research indicates that competition at this age is not developmentally appropriate. It is important that 5- to 7-year-olds be involved in activities where the risk of failure is minimized and the opportunity to experience success is maximized. Educational programs for 5- to 7-year-olds should focus on cooperative learning. The participation and learning for the child should be the ultimate goal.

Additional ideas for appropriate Cloverbud learning experiences follow. To learn more or find 4-H Cloverbud curriculum resources, contact your Michigan State University (MSU) Extension 4-H program coordinator.

PARTICIPATION IN 4-H ACTIVITIES

A parent, adult or older teen volunteer must be with the Cloverbud member while they participate in 4-H activities at all levels. The recommended ratio is one adult or older teen for every six children. Some activities may require a higher ratio of adult or older teen to children. For example, animal activities require a 1-to-1 ratio. Cloverbud members may participate in 4-H at various levels and events in the following ways:

- › **At the local level** – Cloverbuds may participate through authorized 4-H delivery systems such as community clubs, project clubs and special interest groups. Activities may include meetings, community service activities, recreation and tours.
- › **At the county, regional and state levels** – Cloverbuds may participate in noncompetitive, age-appropriate activities designed for this age group. These activities may include camp opportunities, workshops and clinics.
- › **State 4-H workshops and events** – Refer to specific workshop and event announcements for age guidelines.

CLOVERBUDS & SAFETY

In whatever experience Cloverbuds participate, safety is important. Supervision from adults, older teens or both must be provided to ensure youth safety. This includes experiences in kitchens, with tools, around animals and so forth. When Cloverbuds participate in situations that present a risk of falling (such as riding a bicycle or a horse), they must wear proper equipment.

CLOVERBUDS & ANIMALS

Cloverbuds often do not own the project animals that they work with in 4-H educational experiences. Older 4-H members can bring in or share animals during the year at club events and meetings to help Cloverbuds become accustomed to working with animals.





Age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate activities or topics that could be explored in learning-by-doing experiences include:

- › Identifying species, breeds, parts and tracks of animals
- › Recognizing differences between animals
- › Constructing the ideal animal
- › Selecting and identifying equipment
- › Observing animal behavior
- › Learning livestock terms
- › Determining an animal's age
- › Exploring a veterinary clinic
- › Grooming an animal
- › Identifying products from animals
- › Exploring what animals eat
- › Touring a feed store
- › Feeding an animal
- › Visiting a zoo, pet store or farm
- › Attending a 4-H meeting
- › Giving a short presentation
- › Keeping a scrapbook
- › Learning animal photography

4-H volunteer leaders must work within the guidelines of the Cloverbud section of the Michigan 4-H Participant Age policy to ensure that children are safe at all times. Emphasis should remain on the young people and on providing educational, activity-centered experiences.

CLOVERBUD SHOW-TYPE EXPERIENCES

If Cloverbuds are given the opportunity to participate in show-type experiences, follow the guidelines in this and the next sections listed by age. Show staff should ensure safety is always the first priority for these experiences. Knowledgeable adults should be placed strategically throughout the ring or show area to provide support to youth during their experience.

Cloverbud members may have varying levels of experience within an animal science program area. Supporting these youth appropriately, while allowing them to obtain valuable experiences, is essential to making the experience meaningful. A breakdown of what is appropriate for Cloverbuds based on age follows. Members who are 6 and 7 years old may be comfortable exploring independence with their animal projects. They should be given the opportunity to handle the animal independently, if they so choose; however, support from adults and older teen members should be readily available in this age group at all times.

CHILDREN AGED 5:

- › May be involved with equine on a halter and lead. Each 4-H Cloverbud must be directly accompanied one-on-one by a parent, guardian or adult volunteer who is on foot holding the animal's halter or lead to maximize safety. For all 4-H Cloverbud horse experiences, Cloverbuds must wear helmets approved by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) or Safety Equipment Institute (SEI) certification and labeling.
- › May be involved with any animal experiences such as, but not limited to, beef, sheep, swine, goats, dairy, dairy feeder, poultry, dogs, cats, rabbits and caviars. Each 4-H Cloverbud must be directly assisted one-on-one by a parent, guardian or adult volunteer while the child is in contact with the animal.





CHILDREN AGED 6:

- › May engage in the same activities listed as appropriate for a 5-year-old.
- › May ride a horse unaccompanied but only at a walk. Adult volunteers should be in the ring with the Cloverbud at all times. 4-H Cloverbud members must wear ASTM- or SEI-approved helmets for all 4-H Cloverbud horse experiences.
- › May be involved with any animal experiences such as, but not limited to, beef, sheep, swine, goats, dairy, dairy feeder, poultry, dogs, cats, rabbits and cavies. Each 4-H Cloverbud must be directly assisted one-on-one as needed by a parent, guardian, adult volunteer or 4-H teen who is in close proximity while the child is in contact with the animal.

CHILDREN AGED 7:

- › May engage in the same activities listed as appropriate for a 5- or 6-year-old.
- › May be involved with an equine on a halter and lead, unaccompanied by an adult on the ground (for example, a showmanship type class).
- › May participate in walk-trot events with adult volunteers in the ring at all times. 4-H Cloverbud members must wear ASTM- or SEI-approved helmets for all 4-H Cloverbud horse experiences.
- › May be involved with any animal experiences such as, but not limited to, beef, sheep, swine, goats, dairy, dairy feeder, poultry, dogs, cats, rabbits and cavies. Parents, guardians, adult volunteers or 4-H teens should be in supporting roles in close proximity while the child is in contact with the animal.

CLOVERBUD & SERVICE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Service learning activities are excellent, engaging activities for 4-H Cloverbuds. However, not all service projects may be appropriate, due to safety concerns (for example, road and stream clean-ups). Some organizations have specific guidelines on the age of participants and adult-to-child ratios for service projects; be sure to check with the appropriate organizations before arranging such activities.

CLOVERBUDS & SHOOTING SPORTS ACTIVITIES

Youth aged 5 to 7 can participate in Hunting & Wildlife discipline. This includes activities such as wildlife identification (scat, skulls, fur, calls, etc.), plant identification, habitats, animal tracks, winter wildlife, basic outdoor skills, safety in the outdoors, nature scavenger hunts, ecology, predator-prey relationships, camouflage coloration, safety, and more.

CLOVERBUDS & COMPETITIVE EVENTS

4-H Cloverbud events and activities shall not be designed or structured as peer competition. Peer competition is defined as two or more individuals or groups working to achieve an outcome where one individual or group is declared the winner or finishes in first place. A 4-H or 4-H–sponsored event is one that uses 4-H in the name of the event and the 4-H name and emblem in promoting the event. Examples of competitive events include judging contests, exhibits, shows, awards and other performance activities. It is not the intention of this policy to prevent young people age 7 and under from participating in informal games at 4-H gatherings or meetings (for example, family volleyball games at 4-H picnics or games of kickball at 4-H meetings).





4-H EXHIBITIONS

Cloverbuds are encouraged to exhibit the work they complete in their 4-H Cloverbud groups or clubs. The setting must be noncompetitive, with equal recognition given to all participants. “Show and tell” type noncompetitive interviews in which Cloverbud members – either individually or as a group – bring an exhibit to talk about is an appropriate type of exhibition experience. Occasionally, this exhibit is a live animal, but more often, pictures, drawings or other items are used. If a 4-H Cloverbud exhibition activity involves direct contact with animals, it must follow the Cloverbud section of the Michigan 4-H Participant Age Policy.

4-H developed competitive classes, sales, treaties and auction activities are not appropriate activities for this age group.

In some cases, non-Michigan 4-H organizations such as fair boards or other sponsors may offer activities for this age group that are not consistent with 4-H Cloverbud policies. Participation in these types of activities is the decision of the young person and his or her family and is not considered a Michigan 4-H Youth Development activity. The sponsoring unit should take every possible precaution to ensure the child’s safety and that the 4-H name and emblem are not used.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on programming with 4-H Cloverbuds, contact your county MSU Extension office, found on the web at <http://msue.anr.msu.edu/county> or:

Michigan State University Extension
4-H Youth Development
Justin S. Morrill Hall of Agriculture
446 W. Circle Drive, Suite 160
East Lansing, MI 48824
Phone: 517-432-7575
Email: msue4h@msu.edu
Web: 4h.msue.msu.edu

