

**4-H CLOVERBUDS**  
**A LEADER GUIDE SUPPLEMENT**

**WELCOME TO 4-H**

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Colorado State University Extension's youth development program is 4-H. Extension county offices offer support and resource materials for 4-H projects.

The 4-H mission is to help Colorado's young people acquire knowledge, develop life skills and gain positive self-esteem.

The Cloverbud program will help children ages 5, 6 and 7 enhance development through fun, hands-on activities. It is a non-competitive, participatory, multi-subject program that is process-oriented, not result-oriented. The program enables children to learn life skills, build self-esteem through successful experiences, and become more creative.

Parents are a critical part of the 4-H program. The 4-H program promotes parent-child interrelationships.

**AGE GUIDELINES** Cloverbud members must be 5 years old by December 31st of the current year. (Members who are between the ages of 8 and 19 as of December 31st are eligible to enroll in the 4-H Club programs and compete in 4-H events.)

**PURPOSE** The overall purpose of the 4-H Cloverbud program is to foster the development of life skills that are essential for the cognitive, social, emotional and physical maturation of Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> graders by providing unique educational opportunities.

**PARENT INVOLVEMENT** Parents or guardians are expected and encouraged to become involved with the 4-H program. Their involvement will enhance the development of the parent-child relationship – one of the program objectives.

**MEMBER PARTICIPATION** The Cloverbud program is activity-focused and not-project-focused and built on cooperative learning, rather than competitive activities. It offers 4-H members, ages 5 – 7, a wide range of educational activities from which to choose. Members that have engaged in a group activity may exhibit or showcase in a noncompetitive event, or can feature other items from their group activities. Items children exhibit at county fairs, exhibit days and other events should reflect and focus on what they learned through educational activities. They will be recognized for their participation, but they will not receive placement ribbons. 4-H Cloverbud members are not eligible to receive premium funds as a result of exhibition in 4-H. 4-H Cloverbud members do not participate in the ongoing, planned series of activities. Instead, they have the option of exploring several different topics or activities.

**EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES** Parents and leaders will decide on goals for the year prior to choosing educational materials so that activities will meet these goals.

Each Extension office will make educational materials available to 4-H members.

**WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROGRAM?**

- An individual family.
- A 4-H club with all members ages 5, 6 and 7.
- A 4-H club with members of all ages.
- A school enrichment program, and so forth.

**CONSIDERATIONS IN PROGRAMMING WITH 4-H'ERS AGES 5 – 7**

**REMEMBER:**

1. The 5- to 7-year age group tests abilities, tries out interests and gains self-confidence and self-reliance. Protecting and building the fragile self-esteem of children this age is a crucial function of the leader.
2. The “try anything once” attitude of most children this age urges them to use all their senses in impulsive ways.
3. Children’s boundless energy requires adequate space for development of their skills, interests and activities.
4. To belong is important for a child to be accepted; a child needs to “act his or her age” as defined and seen by peers. Talk about good work – “you did a nice job mixing the dough” – rather than how good **they** are – “you’re a good kid.” When things don’t go smoothly, this helps the child understand it is the behavior you don’t accept – “you are running around too much” – not them as people – “you are a bad kid.”
5. Children need to feel approval and acceptance.
6. Children become increasingly social between ages 5 to 7. They begin to develop friendships, usually with children of the same gender. Involve children in selecting and planning their activities. They are more likely to maintain interest if they have been involved in planning.
7. Children must understand the aims if discipline is to be meaningful, helpful and effective.

**PLANNING THE PROGRAM:**

(Keep the information about this age group in mind when you plan programs.)

1. Create an atmosphere where children can be children.
2. Focus on the whole child, not only on learning activities.
3. Emphasize success and minimize failure. It is hard for children of this age to lose. Egos are not ready to take too many blows. Keep aspirations high. Show appreciation for efforts.
4. Provide opportunities, situations and surroundings that are stimulating.
5. Create programs that keep both boys and girls enthusiastic and involved.
6. Design hands-on activities that use all the senses. Present activities that can be completed in one meeting. Offer uncomplicated activities that stimulate the imagination. Vary activities and

be sure they are fun. Be open-minded so children can perform at their own level. Ask the question: do the activities build skills?

7. Rather than give verbal instructions, leaders or parents should demonstrate the activity. To do the activity is important for both the child and the leader. A child at this age of development is more interested in the process than the result.
8. Materials should be visual and graphic with lots of color.
9. Other volunteers can enrich your programs – adults, older teens, both male and female. Involve volunteers who have the skills and knowledge to work with youngsters of this age or who will accept training.
10. Aim for low adult-to-child ratios. Incorporate learning activities into games, songs, poems, pictures, word games, art projects or creative dramatics.



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