



What Parents of New 4-H Members Need to Know



The Mission of 4-H

The Hawaii Cooperative 4-H Youth Development Program uses a learn-by-doing approach to enable youth to develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to become competent, caring, and contributing citizens of the world. This mission is accomplished by using the knowledge and resources of the land grant university system, along with the involvement of caring adults.

How a 4-H club works

A 4-H club is usually a group of five or more youths, guided by an adult 4-H leader. Each club has a constitution. It is approved by the club members and contains the rules by which the club operates. The club meets once or more each month. Some members serve as officers. They are elected by the club members. Dues are optional and decided by the club.

Cloverbud clubs provide an introduction to 4-H and a way for younger members to explore several projects. The Cloverbud program is designed to be noncompetitive. In a **traditional 4-H club**, members choose to work on at least one project in depth. A project may be a topic like geology, photography, small animals, food and nutrition, or bicycling. It can be almost any subject that the club agrees to learn. Often a club will concentrate on one or two projects. They are judged and awards are given for quality work.

How to get your child signed up in 4-H

If your child hasn't already done so, he or she needs to complete a 4-H Enrollment Form. Your club leader should have copies of this form. This will make your son or daughter an official 4-H member and her/his name will be added to the county 4-H mailing list. Please follow instructions and make sure that all parts of this form are filled in. Your child's club leader can help. The form requires the member's, parent's and leader's signatures. Remember to sign it before giving it to the club leader.

Where to get help

Many people in 4-H are ready and willing to help you. Here is a list of some of them:

- **4-H Leader** – An adult who volunteers to help lead a 4-H club. Leaders work with club members to plan and conduct meetings and activities. Most of all, they teach 4-H members new skills.

- **4-H volunteer organization** – Every county has a group of volunteers who helps support the 4-H program. This organization works with the county 4-H agent to plan county 4-H events and to improve and expand 4-H. The name of this group varies among counties. It is often called the 4-H Association or 4-H Leaders' Association. Parents, club leaders, and other adults are welcome to serve on your county's 4-H volunteer groups.
- **County 4-H Agent** – The professional who is responsible for administering the 4-H program in your county. He or she is a faculty member of the University of Hawaii.

A Parent's Role In 4-H

Children need parental encouragement to get them started in 4-H and to keep them involved in the program through their teen years. You can help if you:

- **Share** – Take an interest in your child's 4-H project and activities. Listen, look, and offer suggestions but avoid the temptation to "take over" and do things yourself. Learning by doing is the 4-H way. Your child learns by his or her mistakes as well as successes, if you provide encouragement.
- **Prepare** – Parents can assist by helping a child understand the value of having projects, duties, and presentations done on time, in a proper way. Also, be sure your child learns the importance of letting someone know if he or she cannot follow through as expected.
- **Be there** – Your child will gain more from 4-H by attending club meetings regularly and by getting involved in 4-H Camp, Farm Fair, and many other activities. Parents can be a part of the 4-H team. Don't just drop your youngster off at meetings – sit and observe. You are welcome. Get to know the club leader. Lend a hand wherever you can. However, try to remain objective and avoid "taking over" any activities. Remember, the club is for the kids.
- **Care** – Arrange to attend programs and events where your child is taking part. Your presence shows that you consider your child, and what he or she is doing, very important.

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