

# Kansas 4-H Cloverbuds Program

## The Philosophy

“It is neither the intent nor the objective of the 4-H Cloverbuds program to duplicate the 4-H member experiences that are designed for older youth, nor to create a ‘mini-4-H’ concept. While the 4-H Cloverbuds program is a component of the overall 4-H Youth Development Program and 4-H Cloverbuds members are recognized as 4-H members for the purposes of enrollment, they are considered to be in a ‘special’ membership category with regard to program and policy. As a result, the 4-H Cloverbuds program is fundamentally different than general membership in 4-H” (*National 4-H Cloverbuds Policies*).

The overall purpose of the 4-H Cloverbuds program is to foster the development of life skills that are essential for the cognitive, social, emotional and physical maturation of five- and six-year olds by providing a unique educational opportunity. Participation, safety, personal development, learning and fun are the highest priorities in providing the 4-H Cloverbuds program. The policies for the 4-H Cloverbuds program outlined in this document seek to ensure that the 4-H Cloverbud member remains safe and has a positive, developmentally appropriate experience in 4-H. *Source: National 4-H Headquarters*

## Opportunities with Kansas 4-H Cloverbuds

Kansas State Research and Extension and 4-H Youth Development are pleased to offer 4-H Cloverbuds, an educational program designed specifically for youth ages five and six.

Children of this age have distinctive learning characteristics and developmental needs that are different from older youth who participate in 4-H. That is why the 4-H Cloverbuds program is designed with specific educational objectives and policies focused on the 5- and 6-year-old child.

The local Extension Unit may determine if 4-H Cloverbuds is to be part of the local 4-H program.

Beginning October 1, 2009, the Kansas 4-H Cloverbuds program will become the authorized 4-H education option for 5- and 6-year-olds. Former programs, such as tag-alongs, mini-4-H, etc., cannot be recognized as 4-H Youth Development programs.

## Eligibility for the Kansas 4-H Cloverbuds Program:

### Who May Participate:

- The 4-H Cloverbuds program is designed specifically for 5- and 6-year-old children.
- In order to become a 4-H Cloverbuds member, a child must have reached the age of five before January 1 of the current 4-H year.
- When a child reaches the age of eligibility for traditional 4-H programs (age 7 or older) the child and his or her parents/guardian can decide whether to transition their child into 4-H Club membership. At the time of transition, parents and their child will be responsible for completing the appropriate 4-H enrollment card.
- Due to the unique nature of the 4-H Cloverbuds membership, no 4-H'er may hold membership in both a 4-H club and 4-H Cloverbuds.

## **4-H Cloverbuds, Local Determination**

- The local Extension Unit will determine if 4-H Cloverbuds, an age-appropriate educational membership opportunity for 5- and 6-year-olds is to be part of the local 4-H program. Suggested delivery methods may include: a county/district wide group, sponsorship by a local 4-H club, an afterschool or in school-based club, or collaborating with civic groups or other youth organizations.
- If the 4-H Cloverbuds program is offered within the local Extension unit, it will become the authorized 4-H educational option for 5- and 6-year-olds. Beginning October 1, 2009, former programs, such as tag-alongs, mini-4-H, etc., cannot be recognized as 4-H youth development programs.

### **Policies for the Kansas 4-H Cloverbuds Program:**

#### **Policies**

##### **1. 4-H Cloverbuds is activity-focused, rather than project-focused.**

A 4-H Cloverbuds member participates in noncompetitive, age-appropriate, properly supervised events or activities sponsored or conducted by another 4-H group.

##### ***Best Management Practices***

The 4-H Cloverbuds member should participate in group activities and cooperative experiences with the entire activity completed in one short session. 4-H Cloverbuds activities should use the 4-H Cloverbuds curriculum when conducting 4-H Cloverbuds meetings.

##### **2. The 4-H Cloverbuds programming is cooperative, rather than competitive.**

The 4-H Cloverbuds program is based on cooperative learning. The 4-H Cloverbuds member is to participate in activities and opportunities where the member practices developmental skills, discovers talents and learns about fairness in a nonjudgmental environment.

##### ***Best Management Practices***

The 4-H Cloverbuds member should participate in group-type activities with cooperative experiences. Products made during the group activities may be showcased for public display or show-and-tell.

##### **3. 4-H Cloverbud exhibits can be showcased at fairs and public events, but a 4-H Cloverbuds member may not participate as a competitive exhibitor in traditional 4-H events.**

The 4-H Cloverbuds member may exhibit or showcase activity-related items from their 4-H Cloverbuds' experiences at appropriate locations. The 4-H Cloverbuds member may not participate as a competitive exhibitor and is not eligible to receive premiums or awards in traditional 4-H events. The 4-H Cloverbuds member may receive a 4-H Cloverbuds ribbon.

The 4-H Cloverbuds member is allowed to showcase a pet from the approved list in accordance with 4-H Cloverbuds pet policies. The 4-H Cloverbuds member may not have 4-H livestock exhibits that require long-term ongoing care or weigh-ins, nor can the member participate as a competitive 4-H exhibitor within livestock divisions.

## **Pet Policies**

- A 4-H Cloverbuds member may showcase a pet from the approved pet list.
- Wildlife cannot be allowed (as per the Kansas Wildlife and Parks Policies and Statutes).
- All pets must be caged, leashed, and/or contained as appropriate and manageable/under-control.
- A parent or guardian must be present with their child and pet at all times.
- Pets cannot be included in overnight exhibits at the fair but may be used as show-and-tell activity or showcase.

### **Approved Pets:**

Amphibians - frogs, toads	Ant Farms	Cats
Dogs	Fish	Gerbils
Guinea Pigs	Hamsters	Mice
Parakeets	Rabbits	Rats

### ***Best Management Practices***

The 4-H Cloverbuds member may showcase a product, poster or notebook of 4-H Cloverbuds activities. Pets from the approved list can also be showcased.

### **Public Event and Fair Showcase**

The 4-H Cloverbuds member is encouraged to showcase a product, poster or a notebook of 4-H Cloverbuds activities. Suggested locations include noncompetitive show-and-tell-type displays at local fairs, libraries, schools, 4-H Parents' Nights, 4-H Achievement Night, churches, community festivals, parades, etc. Pets cannot be included in overnight exhibits at the fair, but may be used as show-and-tell.

A separate "4-H Cloverbuds" division should be created for showcase entries at the fair. 4-H Cloverbuds recognition ribbons may be given, but all members should receive the same ribbon to maintain the noncompetitive nature of the showcase. A show-and-tell type experience between the 4-H Cloverbuds member and an adult or older teen is encouraged to provide positive feedback on the entry.

### **4. A Ratio of Two Adults to 12 4-H Cloverbuds members (2:12) is required.**

A minimum of two adult leaders is required to start a 4-H Cloverbuds group. 4-H Cloverbuds group must have two (2) adults per twelve (12) children (ratio of 2:12). There must be appropriate adult supervision (leaders, parents, or teens) at every 4-H Cloverbuds meeting and/or activity relative to the size of the group. Adult and teen volunteers must be registered through the Kansas 4-H Volunteer Information Profile.

### ***Best Management Practices***

Family involvement is typically one of the key components of the 4-H program. Because parents and/or guardians are a vital part of the development of their children, it is recommended that parents and or/guardians also attend the 4-H Cloverbuds activities to assist and support their child and the 4-H Cloverbuds group.

### **5. 4-H Cloverbuds requires a safe environment.**

The 4-H Cloverbuds program must ensure the 4-H Cloverbuds members remains safe and have a positive, developmentally appropriate 4-H experience.

### ***Best Management Practices***

Before each activity the adult or older teen leader must identify any potential hazards and avoid putting the 4-H Cloverbuds members at risk.

4-H Cloverbuds Leaders should know and practice safety precautions and consult with the Extension Agent concerning insurance coverage. American Income Life Insurance covers each registered member while they are participating or attending approved and adult supervised group activities, but does not cover children ages 5 and 6 with animal projects.

### **6. A 4-H Cloverbuds group does not have officers.**

4-H Cloverbuds groups may not conduct formal business meetings; therefore, they do not have officers. Children ages five and six are not developmentally ready to fulfill the responsibilities of a club office. A structured routine for the 4-H Cloverbuds group is, however, important when conducting Cloverbuds activities. Additionally, maintaining age appropriate activities for 4-H Cloverbuds is essential and therefore:

- No annual records are to be kept or submitted for judging.
- 4-H Cloverbuds earn recognition based on participation. All 4-H Cloverbuds are, however, to receive the same recognition, meaning that placements and other competitive awards are not age-appropriate.

### ***Best Management Practices***

When implementing a 4-H Cloverbuds program, the local Extension Unit should consider:

- Recruiting interested persons for leadership roles.
- Encouraging teen leaders to serve in a leadership role.
- Organizing a county/district-wide group.
- Sponsorship by a local 4-H club.
- Allowing 4-H Cloverbuds members to come to the business meeting through roll call; then are released for a 4-H Cloverbuds' activity in a separate area.
- Partnering with after-school or school-based clubs.
- Collaborating with civic groups and other youth organizations.
- Provide seven-year-olds and their parents/guardians the option of membership in 4-H Cloverbuds or 4-H Club. However, the child can not hold membership in both at the same time.

**7. The 4-H Cloverbuds members do not manage money.** The 4-H Cloverbuds member does not pay dues. The 4-H Cloverbuds leaders, volunteers and parents will decide how group expenses will be handled.

### ***Best Management Practices***

For financial management purposes, 4-H Cloverbuds group finances may be handled by a sponsoring 4-H club or the local 4-H Events Council.

**8. Cloverbuds groups that become an established club must follow *Kansas 4-H Youth Development Policies, Best Management Practices, and Information section, F1.3, <http://www.kansas4-h.org/DesktopModules/ViewDocument.aspx?DocumentID=5551>.***

*Source: Kansas 4-H Youth Development Program  
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