



UConn 4-H Fact Sheet



UConn | EXTENSION

Program Planning - The Value of a Plan

The process of planning can be used to help a club define its goals more clearly and agree on steps to be taken toward reaching those goals. Planning can allow for sharing responsibilities for a successful club program among its members, parents, and leaders. A plan provides a basis for evaluation of a club's program by serving as a yardstick by which accomplishments can be compared. Teens stay in 4-H in greater numbers than with many other youth organization. One of the main reasons this is true is that in 4-H, young people are involved in planning their programs and activities. It is widely accepted as fact that people support and take part in activities they helped to develop. This process helps members feel that the club's program belongs to them. By participating in the planning process, young people have a chance to practice decision-making skills. We help children gain experience in making wise choices by involving them in planning. They will also begin to take responsibility for their plans.

Elements of a complete Plan

Member input is vital in 4-H. You can have the group discuss, brainstorm, make suggestions or fill out evaluations to move forward in the planning process.

Among the parts of a club's annual program for which planning should occur are:

- Club annual goals
- Educational programs for each regular club meeting
- Club special events (parents' night, cookouts, camping trips, etc.)
- Involvement in activities beyond the club level (Community service-learning, county and state level participation)

Club Calendar

In today's overwhelming schedules it may be essential to plan the club calendar for the entire program year. This does not need to be so rigid that it can't be adjusted, but rather to take all your members suggestions and get them implemented as appropriate over time. Seasonal considerations along with space, supplies and availability should also be considered. Your club's GOALS should take precedence while planning over other factors like participating in larger group events.

Points to look for in a good 4-H meeting

This list can be used to evaluate all your meetings. You should be able to answer Yes to most of the questions. The ones you answer with a No are areas you will want to improve upon:

- 1. Do the officers and leaders check meeting plans before hand?
- 2. Does the president call the meeting to order on time, keep the meeting moving forward, and close it on time?
- 3. Is the business part of the meeting short and snappy?
- 4. Are guests introduced and made to feel welcome?
- 5. Is there a special program in addition to the business meeting and recreation?
- 6. Is the educational program of interest to everyone?
- 7. Do officers avoid doing all the talking?
- 8. Do leaders avoid doing all the talking?
- 9. Do all or most of the members take part in the meeting?
- 10. Is there fun, learning, and fellowship at the meeting?

You may want to duplicate the list to see how 4-H'ers and parents feel about the club and its activities. Several "No" answers may indicate that some things about the meeting need changing.

Other program planning considerations

- Is there a balance between fun activities and learning experiences that support progress in each member's project?
- Does your 4-H Club Calendar include activities that help teach your members life skills as well as focus on your club project areas?
- Have a variety of members' ideas been included which most of the club members will support?
- Have you included any field trips or outside resource persons to come to the club?
- Are most activities available at little or no cost to members? If there is a cost, have you considered fund-raising activities?
- Are there any community service learning projects included?
- Are responsibilities for carrying out activities shared among the club, or are there one or two members who are responsible for the majority of the program?
- Do the activities included provide opportunities for members to develop new leadership skills?
- Is adequate preparation time provided for activities or events that the club has never experienced before?
- If your club has refreshments, have you included this responsibility in your plan?
- Can you, as the leader, see where the plan is flexible so that unexpected and spontaneous events can be accommodated?