



Maximizing Member's Abilities

Club leaders should have a basic understanding of ages and stages of youth development to plan appropriate educational activities for all members. Members will respond differently to activities depending on their age. Be a good listener and observer to spot members who need additional support.

Use these tips to help maximize club experiences for each member's age.

7 & 8 year olds - Beginner

- Provide short fast-pace activities 5 to 15 minutes led by adult or teen volunteers.
- Allow members to work together and share.
- Focus on the hands-on learning, not the finished product.
- Conduct activities that use the five senses.
- Offer time for members to play together and develop friendships.
- Find ways to give positive encouragement.

9 to 11 year olds - Junior 4-H'ers

- Set limits so members are able to finish what they start.
- Guide project selection matching member's skills, interests, and abilities.
- Work with members in pairs or small groups to enhance project learning experiences.
- Conduct, active, fast-pace meetings, activities and project work.
- Work closely with this age group and enlist older youth to help.
- Reassure members, praise progress not just completion and celebrate successes.

12 & 13 year olds - Intermediate 4-H'ers

- Involve members in setting rules.
- Provide opportunities for members to show their special skills and talents.
- Allow members to help plan activities and expect follow through. Help them evaluate the outcome.
- Help members improve, have heart-to-heart talks to boost members self-esteem.
- Include recreation and social time during club meetings.
- Praise progress and completion towards personal goals.

14 to 18 year olds - Senior 4-H'ers

- Allow teens to help younger and/or less experienced members.
- Use teens' skills to carry out club events and activities.
- Offer leadership opportunities that enable teens to self-direct club activities.
- Encourage civic projects that are of service to others.
- Provide recreational and educational experiences in mixed groups.
- Encourage teens to apply leadership experiences beyond club level.
- Give career guidance and help teens to develop good judgement and decision making skills.

Adapted by Diane Mack, 4-H Youth Development Specialist, NE Area.

Original Resource:

Ohio 4-H Clubs Advisory Handbook - Club Members - Youth Developmental Needs.

<http://advisorshandbook.ohio4h.org/clubmembers/developmentalneeds.html>