



Hillsborough County 4-H Policies and Procedures Handbook



Revised 2006



UNIVERSITY OF
FLORIDA
IFAS EXTENSION

System:

Your 4-H club is part of a much larger system. The system offers support from many levels for the things that your club will plan to do in the coming year. There are many 4-H clubs in Hillsborough County and in Florida. 4-H is found in every state in the United States and in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guam. Similar clubs have been found in more than 80 countries around the world.

A Partnership:

4-H is the youth development program of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service. It is a partnership between the Hillsborough County Government, the University of Florida, the Institute of Agricultural Sciences (IFAS), Florida A&M University, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the National 4-H Council.

Mission:

Florida 4-H creates supportive environments for diverse youth and adults to reach their fullest potential.

Vision:

Florida 4-H aspires to be the leading youth development program that creates positive change in youth, families, and communities.

Pledge:

I Pledge my Head to Clearer Thinking,
My Heart to Greater Loyalty,
My Hands to Larger Service, and
My Health for Better Living;
For My Club, My Community, My Country, and My World.

Colors:

Green and White

Motto:

“To Make the Best Better”

Slogan:

“Learn by Doing”

Emblem:

The official emblem, a green four-leafed clover with a white "H" on each clover leaf, is copyrighted and may be used only as approved by 4-H.



4-H Name and Emblem:

The 4-H name and emblem are held in trust by the Secretary of Agriculture for the United States Department of Agriculture for the educational and character building purposes of the 4-H program.

1. The 4-H name and emblem may be used by authorized representatives for the educational needs and interest of youth enrolled in 4-H.
2. Any use of the 4-H name and emblem is forbidden if it exploits the 4-H programs, its volunteer leaders, youth participants, the United States Department of Agriculture, Land Grant Colleges, Cooperative Extension Service, or their employees.
3. It is not permissible to superimpose any letter, design, or object on the 4-H emblem, or to materially alter its intended shape.
4. Advertisements, news releases, publications in any form, visuals and audio visuals, or displays in any form must not include actual or implied testimonials or endorsements of business firms, commercial products or services. Statements that a product is used or preferred to the exclusion of similar products are not permitted.

Clubs and members without enrollment forms on file are not considered official 4-H clubs/members and cannot use the 4-H name or emblem in any manner. This applies to individuals or clubs entering competitions such as fairs, contests, etc. Any unauthorized individual or group using the 4-H name or emblem is in violation of Public Law 772, Chapter 645-2d (H.R. 3190), Title 18 U.S.C. 707 and is subject to fines not more than \$250.00 or imprisonment not more than six months, or both.



4-H Year:

The official 4-H year is September 1 to August 31.



“Senior” Participants:

In Florida, Senior category begins at age 14, as of September 1 of the current 4-H year, and the 4-H member must not have passed his or her 19th birthday or graduated from high school, whichever comes first.

“Intermediate” Participants:

Intermediate members are youth ages 11-13 as of September 1 of the current 4-H year. This age category was added as of the 2006-2007 4-H year.

“Junior” Participants:

Junior refers to youth ages 8 through 10 years old as of September 1 of the current 4-H year.

4-H Uniform:

There is no official 4-H uniform. No uniform is required for any 4-H event or activity. Many 4-Hers like to and are encouraged to wear the 4-H colors of green and white during 4-H events and activities. As part of any County, District, or State 4-H event, however, proper conduct and dress by 4-H participants is important. For these events, dress codes are published and distributed with registration packets. **Note:** *County/state fairs and events hosted by organizations other than 4-H may require a specified dress code.*



4-H Membership:

1. To be a bonafide member of Hillsborough County 4-H, the 4-H office must have a completed Enrollment form and Participation form for each member for the current 4-H year. In addition, members must pay a \$1.00 mandatory insurance fee each year. Youth will not be considered a 4-H member until this payment is made and will not be allowed to participate in any 4-H event **Note: 4-Hers wishing to enter county or state fairs and district or state level competition must be enrolled prior to **December 1** of the current 4-H year.**
2. To be a bonafide 4-H member, the individual must reach his or her 5th birthday by September 1 of the current 4-H year. Youth may continue to participate until August 31 of the 4-H year in which they graduate from high school or reach their 19th birthday, whichever comes first.
3. To be a bonafide 4-H member, the individual must attend at least 50% of their club's meetings (at the discretion of the 4-H Club Leader), participate in at least one community service project, and submit at least one completed 4-H record book for Hillsborough County 4-H record book judging (usually books are submitted in June/July of the current 4-H year).
4. All members are expected to abide by the established Code of Conduct.
5. New 4-H clubs may be organized at any time during the year (*Refer to "Active 4-H Clubs" for specific information*). Only 4-H clubs recognized by the Hillsborough County 4-H office are considered official 4-H clubs. Participation by members of these new clubs in county-wide 4-H functions will be governed by the rules for that particular function.
6. Five to 7 year olds are 4-H members with no special name (such as Pee Wee or Cloverbuds) being used statewide. Hillsborough County 4-H uses the term "Cloverbud" when referring to 4-H members of this age. Enrolled 5-7 year olds are covered by insurance policies currently available to all 4-H participants. Participants cannot be enrolled in any large animal projects (*Refer to "Project/Program Participation for 5-7 Year Old"*).
7. 4-Hers who move to Hillsborough County, who have been active 4-H members in other counties, may enroll at any time during the 4-H year.
8. 4-Hers may join and be club officers for more than one club; however, a 4-Her may serve as club President or County Youth Leadership Board Delegate for only one club. 4-Hers who are enrolled in more than one club must have separate enrollment forms submitted to the Hillsborough County 4-H office for each club.

(4-H Membership cont.)

9. Membership in 4-H cannot be prohibited on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, creed, economic status, or geographic location within Hillsborough County.
10. All 4-H club rules affecting membership eligibility must be approved by the 4-H office of Hillsborough County. The club leader may limit the size of the club. A waiting list for membership must be established. As openings come available, new members may be enrolled based on the waiting list. Any club rule for determining active club membership must have provisions made for excused absences, privileges lost by inactive members, and a means of reinstatement to active membership. Inactive members do not lose 4-H membership, only club membership, however they may not earn credit for completing the 4-H year and may not be considered bonafide 4-H members for event eligibility.
11. Leaders and members must reside in Hillsborough County unless approved in writing by the 4-H Agent in both counties. Members and leaders may participate only one county in 4-H and 4-H related functions. Members can participate only in the county fair of the county in which they are registered as 4-H, but may participate in "Open Youth" in other counties if they wish.

****Independent Membership**:** Although membership in an established club is preferred, members may join the 4-H program as independent members only when a club is NOT available. Independent members must abide by the Hillsborough County 4-H policies and procedures.

To be considered a bonafide independent member in Hillsborough County 4-H, youth must submit a letter to the Hillsborough County 4-H Advisory Committee stating the reasons why independent membership is desired. The 4-H Advisory Committee must give approval for independent membership prior to submitting 4-H enrollment forms. In addition, the 4-H member must have a 4-H Agent approved plan of work for the 4-H year (must be approved by November 1 of the current 4-H year) and provide documentation to the 4-H Agents that they have 1.) completed at least 6 hours of project work, 2.) Participated in one community service project, and 3.) submitted a 4-H record book for annual county 4-H record book judging. The 4-H member must also meet with a mentor a minimum of 6 times during the year. A mentor is an adult designated by the 4-H Agents who has successfully completed the *Application to Volunteer with Extension Youth Programs* and screening. This person can not be the parent or guardian of the 4-H member. Progress towards the 4-H member's project goals should be submitted to the 4-h office. (4-H Advisory Committee may elect to allow youth to continue independent membership based on the completed work or extenuating circumstances.) Independent members are encouraged to attend monthly Youth Leadership Board meetings and participate in county 4-H programs throughout the year.

4-H Projects:

1. A member may enroll in as many projects as desired, with the understanding that all projects may not be covered in a 4-H program. Only the first 2 project books will be distributed once enrollment forms are turned in. Additional books may be obtained once the initial project books are completed and submitted to the 4-H office.
2. Members cannot be required to own specific resources (such as a horse, steer, or sewing machine) to belong to a club.
3. It is recommended that a new 4-Header limit the number of projects taken.
4. 4-H Record books and project information will only be distributed to 4-H members and clubs in Hillsborough County with enrollment records on file with the 4-H office.

Active 4-H Clubs:

1. Active clubs must have leader and member enrollment and Affirmative Action forms on file in the Hillsborough County 4-H office for the current 4-H year. ***Clubs and members without enrollment forms on file and who have not paid member insurance are not considered official 4-H clubs/members and cannot use the 4-H name or emblem in any manner.*** This applies to individuals or clubs entering competitions such as fairs, contests, etc. Any unauthorized individual or group using the 4-H name or emblem is in violation of Public Law 772, Chapter 645-2d (H.R. 3190), Title 18 U.S.C. 707 and is subject to fines not more than \$250.00 or imprisonment not more than six months, or both.
2. The organizational leader of the 4-H club must complete designated leader training series developed by the Hillsborough County 4-H Agents prior to establishing/renewing the 4-H club each year. The 4-H club will not be recognized as an official active 4-H club of Hillsborough County until the leader completes this training and has been successfully screened and received an appointment letter.
3. Clubs must have at least seven one-hour meetings per 4-H year to be considered active.
4. Active 4-H clubs must complete at least one community service project per year. The 4-H organizational leader is responsible for reporting the community service project to the Hillsborough County 4-H office.
5. Active 4-H clubs must submit at minimum the 4-H Secretary and Treasurer record books at the completion of the 4-H year.



Participation Age Consideration for 5-7 Year Old Youth:

1. Age and developmentally appropriate curricula are being produced or secured and made available for county programs so the specific needs and abilities of 5-7 year olds can be successfully met. Not all 4-H curricula areas are deemed appropriate for this range of ages due to either developmental appropriateness, safety, or insurance considerations as outlined below.
2. Learning in the group setting is the primary method for involving 5-7 year olds in 4-H. Individualized projects are not appropriate methods for most 5-7 year olds due to limited reading and other self-management skills.
3. Dual participation of child and parent or guardian is encouraged. Family activities are incorporated in curricula to encourage parent/child participation and to build a family involvement pattern that will be maintained as children become older.

Project/Program Participation for 5-7 Year Old Youth:

1. Animal projects for 5-7 year olds will be limited to “lap” animals only. Therefore companion rather than production animals will be the focus of 4-H animal experiences for this age group.
 1. 5-7 Year olds are ineligible to enroll in any large animal projects (sheep, goat, swine, beef, dairy, llama, ostrich, or horse) or participate in any livestock or horse shows. A 4-Her must be 8 years of age at the beginning of the current 4-H year (September 1) to be eligible to enroll in a large animal 4-H project. Current insurance policies available to 4-H participants do not include coverage for children under 8 years of age if enrolled in large animal 4-H projects.
 2. This policy does not prohibit 5-7 year olds from learning about large animals through attendance at meetings or through field trips. They cannot participate, however, in 4-H activities that bring them in contact with large animals due to safety and insurance coverage considerations.

Note: Families (parents or guardians) assume all risk and responsibility of young children if assisting 4-H siblings with large animals.

2. Motorized vehicle and shooting sport 4-H programs will not permit the participation of 5-7 year olds. Again, safety and insurance coverage considerations are the reasons for this program limitation.

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3. Summer residential camping programs operated in cooperation with the State 4-H Department and other programs are not designed to address the unique developmental and supervisory needs of 5-7 year olds. Therefore, 5-7 year olds are not eligible to participate in these residential camping programs. Family camps, especially designed to include 5-7 year olds, are encouraged.
4. 4-H activities will ne offered to encourage 5-7 year olds to exhibit to share project activities at the participation level or for feedback against a pre-defined standard. This method encourages and supports success among younger children who in most cases are not yet emotionally ready to experience failure. Therefore, children under 8 years of age are ineligible to participate in competitive activities at any level (club, county, district, state, national, or international).

Agent and Volunteer Staff Development:

Program guidelines, curricula, and information about age appropriate learning methods area available to support county program planning groups as well as local volunteers who may be directly involved with 5-7 year olds. University Extension specialists can provide staff development programs for county and/or multi county groups upon request.

Laws:

4-H leaders and members must obey the laws of the locality, state, and nation.

Use of Alcohol, Drugs, Firearms, etc.:

The possession or use of alcoholic beverages, drugs, narcotics, firearms, and or weapons is strictly prohibited at all times at any 4-H programs, event, or activity.

Child Abuse/Neglect:

1. Recognize that verbal and or physical abuse and or neglect of youth is unacceptable in 4-H youth programs and report suspected abuse to authorities.
2. Do not participate in or condone neglect or abuse which happens to 4-H youth participants outside the program and report suspected abuse to authorities.

Adult Role Model:

Treat others in a courteous, respectful manner demonstrating behaviors appropriate to be a positive role model for youth.

Motor Vehicle Operation:

1. Any adult transporting 4-Hers must be registered with the Hillsborough County 4-H office.
2. Operate motor vehicles including machines or equipment in a safe and reliable manner when working with 4-H youth, and only with a valid driver's license and the legally required insurance coverage.