



BUL 999

# Essential 4-H Club Meeting Planning:

## *The 4-H Meeting Wheel*



CLUB MEETINGS ARE A KEY ELEMENT in determining a member's overall 4-H experience. Careful, purposeful planning and including youth in the process will lead to fun, educational, and focused meetings. A well-planned 4-H club meeting will give youth the opportunity to

- Acquire new knowledge
- Work on projects
- Make new friends and develop social skills
- Enjoy recreational activities
- Develop self-confidence, leadership, citizenship, and other life skills
- Participate in decision-making
- Learn and use parliamentary procedure

As planning for meetings begins, review the Essential Elements of Positive Youth Development and intentionally plan how all adults may incorporate these elements in every meeting and all interactions with youth. For further information on the Essential Elements, contact your county Extension office. As a reminder, these elements are

- A positive relationship with a caring adult
- An inclusive environment
- A safe emotional and physical environment

**Nancy Shelstad**

Regional 4-H Youth  
Development Educator,  
University of Idaho Extension



University of Idaho  
Extension



- Opportunity for mastery
- Engagement in learning
- Opportunity to see oneself as an active participant in the future
- Opportunity for self-determination
- Opportunity to value and practice service to others

## Location

Choose an appropriate meeting location for the size of the club. Some clubs choose to meet at the same location for every meeting such as at a library, school, community center, or other public location. Other clubs choose to meet in the homes of members or leaders on a rotating basis. Either way, assure that the location is accessible and a comfortable environment for all. Scheduling meetings on a regular date and time will provide a consistent, predictable schedule for all club volunteers and families to depend on.

## Communication

Communication with families is vitally important to assure all are well informed. Use a variety of communication styles such as emails, phone calls, in-person discussion, newsletters, calendars, or closed social media posts. Send multiple reminders of important dates and events. Also distribute copies of important club documents such as bylaws, annual calendar, Family Handbook, and project requirements. Lack of sufficient communication is among the top reasons families leave the 4-H program. Don't let this be why a family decides to discontinue membership in your club!

## 4-H Meeting Wheel

Club meetings should last between 60 and 90 minutes (although shorter for younger youth) and be balanced with fun, business, and learning. Schedule fun (group-building) for about 15–20 minutes, business (group decisions) for about 15–20 minutes, and learning (program activity) for about 40–60 minutes. A shorter overall time frame is recommended if the club meets virtually instead of in-person, although include each of the three categories for an interactive, balanced meeting.

### Fun (Group Building):

A time for recreation and socializing that may include activities such as games, refreshments, and club celebrations. Activities should include everyone to encourage the Essential Elements of an inclusive environment and sense of belonging. Use a variety of activities to keep it fun and engaging.

### Business (Group Decisions):

Business meeting time is youth officer led with support in pre-planning of adult volunteers. Use parliamentary procedure to conduct the business meeting to assure that all youth voices are heard and that the meeting is efficiently conducted. Parliamentary procedures may be a new process for many youth. Take the time to teach at least one item of parliamentary procedure at each meeting. Activities in this portion of the 4-H Meeting Wheel contribute to the Essential Elements of opportunity: to see oneself as an active participant in the future and for self-determination.



The 4-H Meeting Wheel. Courtesy of North Dakota State University Extension.

### *Learning (Program Activity):*

A portion of the meeting dedicated to education. It can take many forms. Examples include working on a service-learning project, a guest speaker on a topic of general interest to the club, youth oral presentations, or project work that the entire club is involved in. Use the experiential learning model whenever possible. Activities in this portion of the 4-H Meeting Wheel contribute to the Essential Elements of opportunity for mastery and engagement in learning.

Provide volunteers and youth the opportunity to work together to create the Annual Calendar of Meetings and Activities (#91612) and use the 4-H Meeting Wheel to plan further details in each meeting. Planning helps assure a balance of fun, business, and learning as well as provides opportunities for all youth to be involved and feel they belong in the club.