

**NEW JERSEY 4-H CLOVERBUD POLICY  
(formally 4-H Prep)**



The New Jersey 4-H Youth Development Program includes programming for children in kindergarten through third grade (K-3), known as 4-H Cloverbud members. Following the policies established by National 4-H Headquarters, the NJ 4-H Youth Development Program recognizes that 4-H Cloverbuds programs require age-appropriate components based on developmental abilities and needs, and that programs should be activity-focused and not project focused. The 4-H Cloverbuds program is designed to introduce youth in K-3 to the wide variety of 4-H project experiences which are available to them upon reaching 4th grade.

The New Jersey 4-H Cloverbud Program is designed to provide K-3 youth with age-appropriate experiential learning activities in a small club setting. 4-H Cloverbuds members will:

- Learn to get along with others.
- Explore a variety of interests through hands-on activities.
- Build self confidence through healthy experiences.

4-H Cloverbud membership is open to all youth in grades K-3. These youth may be registered members of a 4-H Cloverbud Club or a standard 4-H Club (with assigned, registered volunteers trained in the Cloverbud philosophy and curriculum). Parents and/or 4-H Teen Leaders may assist under direct supervision of registered volunteers. 4-H Cloverbud meetings should focus on fun, active, hands-on learning experiences available from approved curriculum through the County 4-H Office. No formal business meeting should take place.

Recognition and Competition: The focus of recognition for the 4-H Cloverbud Program is participation. 4-H Cloverbud members may receive participation ribbons, certificates and other appropriate 4-H recognition that encourages continued involvement. The recognition needs to be in scale with the accomplishment, both within the 4-H Cloverbud Program and compared to recognition received by standard 4-H club members for their accomplishments.

The 4-H Cloverbud Program is a non-competitive program. There is NO judging or evaluation, including judging against set standards or against other participants, either individually or for a group effort. There can be special comment forms used for the Cloverbud members instead of numerical score sheets. Such forms should be used for positive feedback with suggestions for improvement rather than critical comments.

County events may be specifically developed for 4-H Cloverbud members, for example: camping experiences, talent nights, etc. 4-H Cloverbud members may be included in general county events, with no judging or other form of evaluation, individual or group. 4-H Cloverbud members may not participate in project-specific events that include judging components for standard/traditional club members. At the 4-H fair, 4-H Cloverbud members should have one designated “Cloverbud Class” for exhibiting projects completed as result of their club participation. 4-H Cloverbud Class projects should be exhibited separate from projects of standard/traditional 4-H clubs members if space allows.

4-H Cloverbud members may not participate in any state 4-H events. They may participate only in general activities open to the entire public.

#### 4-H Cloverbud members and animals:

- 4-H Cloverbud members should not have ON-GOING projects of any kind, including animal projects, nor should they participate as competitive exhibitors with animals, large or small. Within the 4-H program, shows are intended to showcase the culmination of a long-term project.
- The handling of animals, both large and small, requires discipline and motor skills that may not yet be fully developed in Cloverbud-age children. Coupled with the unpredictable behavior of animals, working with animals may not provide an optimal safe educational environment. Therefore, it is highly recommended that 4-H Cloverbud members do NOT work directly with animals in an ON-GOING project.
- In the event that 4-H Cloverbud members work with animals through educational activities and are enrolled in 4-H animal science project clubs, they are encouraged to use project animals registered by “standard” 4-H club members, preferably siblings.
- For safety, should 4-H Cloverbud members participate in hands-on activities, exhibitions, or demonstrations which involve animals, they should use an animal with which they have experience.
- For a variety of reasons including the health and safety of the animal, 4-H Cloverbud members may be permitted to register an animal that will only be used for a hands-on activity, exhibition, or demonstration; not an ONGOING project.

*Note: All policies pertain to all clubs, activities, events, and programs sponsored through county offices, individual clubs, advisory and other groups of the NJ 4-H Youth Development Program, including open and invitational shows.*

Project Materials: New Jersey 4-H Cloverbuds Activity Guide Developed by Ad Hoc Prep Task Force FCS Committee.