

Welcome to Quality and Vibrant 4-H Clubs

It's all about Fun, Friends, Voice and Choice!

We often wonder what keeps youth coming to club meetings. What about:

- They are having fun with their friends and making new friends
- They are learning about new things that interests them
- They have a voice in club activities
- They get to make decisions as a group
- They give back to the community through service to others.

What are the Characteristics of a Quality and Vibrant 4-H Club?

- Promotes member development, not competition
- Changes how youth do things, not what they do (firm yet flexible)
- Works hard and plays hard
- Empowers young people
- Provides communication with and listening to young people
- Balances firmness with flexibility
- Has people who affirm and support one another
- Uses a mentoring system to help new members
- Values and practices service to other
- Takes time for training
- Recognizes that each person brings skills and talents to the group to help achieve the larger goal of the group (Astroth, K. 1997)

What are the Best Practices of a Quality and Vibrant 4-H Club?

- Members develop and follow a yearly club program plan
- Meets are set for a consistent date and time
- Arranges activities for families to be involved in and spend more time together
- Communicates consistently and clearly
- Uses greeters at the door to welcome everyone - especially those who might get their early
- Introduces visitors during the meeting - make them feel welcome

- Contacts those members who did not attend the meeting
- Uses club e-mails and newsletters or other forms of communications to let everyone know what is happening
- Leaders meet with officers ahead of time to develop an agenda for the meeting
- Volunteer leaders operate as coaches, and guides members on the side

Quality and Vibrant 4-H Club Meetings Have Three Parts.

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| Business Meetings | One-fourth of meeting time |
| Educational Program | One-half of meeting time |
| Recreation Time | One-fourth of meeting time |

Business Meetings promote Belonging, Mastery, and Independence. Learning business procedures are an important skill. When the meetings run smoothly and efficiently, there is more time for the club to grow through learning and playing together. The goal should be a shorter, well-run meeting. An agenda should include the following:

- Call to order
- Flag Pledges
- Roll call
- Reading of the minutes from the previous meeting
- Treasurer's report
- Committee reports
- Unfinished business
- New business
- Announcements
- Adjournment

The **Educational Program** promotes Belonging, Mastery, Independence, and Generosity. Include learning in every club meeting. Some clubs will promote an activity from different 4-H project areas at each meeting. Some ideas are:

- Demonstrations related to the youth's projects - good practice for County Events
- Outside speaker
- Field Trips
- Working on projects, exhibits, or project books

Above all be creative when planning the educational program and get input from club officers and members as to what they would like to learn about.

Recreation promotes Belonging, Independence, and Generosity. It is important to have fun and create excitement in club meetings. Most youth want recreation and more often than not this is the portion of the scheduled meeting time that is left out. Kids want to have fun and be with friends so make sure to include club recreation and social time in all club meetings. Whenever you bring food and people together, you have set the stage for building those relationships and creating a very positive setting in your club. Relationships are improved when volunteer leaders and parents participate in the recreation time - it helps everyone feel they are a part of the club and have a voice.

To take club meetings to the next level begin incorporating a 4th component - **Pre-meeting Activities** which promote Belonging and Mastery. Every club has members that arrive early - why not have greeters their a little early, and have activities/games set up where members can get to know each other better. Maybe even have a project activity set up for those who arrive early to begin working on - this could be related to the **Educational Program**. Pre-meeting activities can be led by other youth, parents, or other volunteers within the club. This may be a time where you would have your refreshments available for those arriving early - especially if the meeting meets during or right after the dinner hour.

For more information on club related resources go to the Florida 4-H website at <http://florida4h.org> or contact your local 4-H Agent for additional support and help.

Material adapted from "Vibrant 4-H Clubs", Iowa State University, 4-H Youth Development, 2008, Judith Butterfield, Central District Regional Specialized 4-H Agent IV, University of Florida/IFAS, July, 2009.