

Kansas 4-H Youth Development Policies and Guidelines for Individual Study Membership

The 4-H Club provides a small group learning environment for the positive development of young people. There may be extenuating circumstances where Individual Study memberships would be warranted if the young person cannot join a club. The circumstances should be carefully reviewed and granted sparingly as an exception.

Individual Study memberships should not ordinarily be allowed when the potential exists for organizing or joining a multi-family community-based 4-H club or a 4-H project club. If the local Extension Board or District Governing Body chooses to grant an Individual Study Membership status, there should be a clear statement of expectations for those members, as outlined in this document.

Individual Study 4-H members participate in planned learning outside of a club setting. Their work is self-directed with guidance and support of parents and mentors. Self-study, home study, mentoring or shadowing with an “expert”, and whole families learning together are examples of 4-H Individual Study membership.

Re-enrollment in succeeding years will be based on the completion of the required Individual Study 4-H Member Plan and approval by the local Extension Board or District Governing Body.

Just as the eight essential elements of positive youth development provide the foundation for a quality 4-H Club experience, they are central to the 4-H Individual Study membership experience as well. To ensure that young people choosing individual study membership have a 4-H experience of the highest quality, they are asked to sign an agreement indicating their commitment to:

1. Submit to the local extension office upon enrollment, a completed program plan/calendar outlining their goals and objectives for the 4-H year. This calendar should accompany the 4-H Enrollment Form and the Kansas 4-H Participation Form.
2. Identify an adult mentor (preferably not a parent or guardian) to guide and support them in their 4-H work. The adult mentor chosen must complete the Kansas 4-H Volunteer Information Profile (VIP) process and agree to the roles and responsibilities outlined in the 4-H mentor position description.
3. Complete a minimum of one community service learning project during the year.
4. Publicly demonstrate their learning by giving a presentation before a group and/or exhibiting at the county fair.
5. Meet with their designated mentor six or more times throughout the year to discuss progress toward goals and celebrate accomplishments.
6. Reflect on their learning by completing a Kansas 4-H Personal Page, 4-H Story, and 4-H Permanent Record.
7. Abide by all county, state and national 4-H policies and recognize the authority of Extension staff to establish and enforce rules and policies.
8. Do their part to contribute to the larger 4-H program by actively participating in county and state fundraising efforts; volunteering to lead or assist with 4-H committees, programs and activities; reading and responding to extension office correspondence; and remaining informed and current on 4-H opportunities, procedures and guidelines.

Approved by Extension Administration and State 4-H Advisory January 2005

Information for Adult Mentors of Individual Study 4-H Members

Thanks for expressing an interest in becoming an adult mentor of an Individual Study 4-H Member. The following information should answer many of your questions about this role. If you have further questions, please contact the extension staff member listed at the end of the adult mentor position description which is included in this information.

Kansas 4-H recognizes that small group learning in 4-H clubs is the optimal learning environment for youth, however, clubs may not be available to all youth because of meeting times, travel expectations, etc. Therefore, youth may join the 4-H program as an Individual Study Member.

In order to guide the individual study experience with the same concern for quality youth development that we have for club experiences, an Adult Mentor Position Description and Individual Study 4-H Member Plan is included in this information.

As in quality club settings, adult volunteers play a critical role in providing leadership for creating positive youth development experiences for all youth. This role of Adult Mentor is critical to the success of those youth choosing to enroll as Individual Study 4-H Members.

About Mentoring

Mentoring is a committed relationship between an adult and a youth focused on developing the character and capabilities of the young person through intentional, positive youth development experiences. By definition, a mentor means a wise and trusted friend and guide. Mentoring is a wonderful way for caring adults to make a positive difference in a young person's life.

Parents or guardians of Individual Study 4-H members are responsible for finding an adult mentor. Adult mentors assist the youth in goal setting, planning, completing and reflecting on their experience and in fulfilling the Individual Study 4-H Member Plan. Adult mentors may be teachers, skilled community members (mechanic, seamstress, carpenter, etc.), senior citizens, relative or any adult with an interest in youth.

Roles a Mentor May Play:

- * Friend
- * Listener
- * Cheerleader
- * Coach
- * Tutor
- * Confidant
- * Teacher

Characteristics of Successful Mentors

- * Caring nature
- * Respectful
- * Good communicator
- * Outgoing
- * Sense of humor
- * Broad range of interests
- * Supportive manner
- * Patient
- * Well organized, yet flexible
- * Honest
- * Knowledgeable, experienced
- * Guides, rather than leads
- * Meets others more than half way
- * Offers frequent encouragement
- * Continuously learning
- * Good listener
- * Encourages independence
- * Creative
- * Encourages skill transfer

What Mentors Do

- * Set high expectations of project work
- * Offer challenging ideas
- * Offer friendship
- * Inspire by example
- * Provide growth experiences
- * Be unselfish
- * Identify possible learning opportunities and resources
- * Listen to problems and give advice
- * Help the 4-H member think through options
- * Encourage positive behavior
- * Help member become aware of his/her own skills
- * Teach by example
- * Offer encouragement and support
- * Teach mastery of skills

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Adult Mentor Position Description

Title: 4-H Individual Study Member Adult Mentor

Time Required: October through September 30 of current 4-H year

Purpose:

- * Mentor, coach and guide 4-H individual study member in the completion of their Individual Study 4-H Member Plan.
- * Promote positive youth development experiences.
- * Inform and encourage member and parents/guardians to actively participate in appropriate 4-H opportunities.

Responsibilities

- * Attain approval of parent/guardian to serve as mentor.
- * Complete Kansas Volunteer Information Profile (VIP) process.
- * Commit to young people and their growth in all areas; being sensitive to their individual abilities and needs.
- * Advise 4-H member regarding their contributions and participation in 4-H events/activities.
- * Welcome parent/guardian ideas, activity and project assistance, cooperation, support and attendance at 4-H activities
- * Communicate what the 4-H member can expect from you, as a mentor.
- * Support the 4-H member in taking an active role in the mentoring process; being available to coach as needed.
- * Meet with the 4-H member at least six times a year, face-to-face.
- * Answer/research questions from the member related to 4-H Youth Development.
- * Follow all 4-H guidelines and policies of K-State Research and Extension, the Kansas 4-H Youth Development program and the local 4-H Youth Development program.
- * Participate in volunteer development opportunities to stay current with information, learn new skills and maintain the 4-H standard of providing quality experiences for youth.

Qualifications:

- * Enjoy working with young people.
- * The ability to guide, coach and motivate while nurturing positive youth development, decision making, responsibilities, and leadership in youth.
- * A sincere interest in mentoring and sharing knowledge and skills with youth in an educational setting.
- * The ability to effectively support the 4-H member in taking responsibility for their individual study status.
- * Be geographically accessible to the youth.
- * The ability to work and communicative effectively in both verbal and written form.
- * A willingness to become familiar with, support and work within the philosophy and guidelines of K-State Research & Extension, the Kansas 4-H Youth Development program and the local 4-H Youth Development program.

Resources Available:

The local 4-H youth development program agrees to:

- * Provide training opportunities - local, area or state.
- * Provide appropriate curriculum, newsletters and other Kansas supported resource materials.
- * Provide the VIP orientation required for volunteers.
- * Listen to ideas to help improve the 4-H program.
- * Provide appropriate recognition and awards to leaders.

Contact:

List Extension Agent with 4-H Responsibility:

County/District Name:

Phone:

Fax:

E-mail:

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Individual Study 4-H Member Plan

This Individual Study 4-H Member Plan is to be written and submitted within two weeks of enrollment to the local Extension Office. A copy should be given to the Adult Mentor. A copy is to be kept by the member. The member's copy will be turned in at the end of the 4-H program year as part of the final report. Check with local Extension Office for exact due date.

Re-enrollment in succeeding years will be based on the completion of the required Individual Study 4-H Member Plan and approval by the local Extension Board or District Governing Body.

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---------|------|
| Name: | Phone: | |
| Address: | E-Mail: | |
| City | State: | Zip: |
| Name of Mentor: | | |
| Mentor's Phone Number: | E-Mail: | |
| I agree to complete plan _____ | _____ | |
| Member's Signature | Date | |
| Plan approved by Mentor _____ | _____ | |
| Mentor's Signature | Date | |
| I support this plan _____ | _____ | |
| Parent/Guardian Signature | Date | |

1. PROJECTS

PROJECT # 1 _____

Project Goals (Things I want to accomplish this year; must complete at least three goals)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

PROJECT # 2

Project Goals (Things I want to accomplish this year; must complete at least three goals)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

PROJECT # 3

Project Goals (Things I want to accomplish this year; must complete at least three goals)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

PROJECT # 4

Project Goals (Things I want to accomplish this year; must complete at least three goals)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

PROJECT # 5

Project Goals (Things I want to accomplish this year; must complete at least three goals)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

2. CITIZENSHIP and COMMUNITY SERVICE GOALS

(Ways I plan to provide service for or with other individuals and groups in the community, county and beyond. Must complete a minimum of one):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

3. LEADERSHIP GOALS

(Ways I plan to improve my leadership skills):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

4. I will assist at the following events (assist with at least one event):

4-H Club Days

4-H Camp

County Fund Raising Event

Fair

Other (Please indicate) _____

The items below should be completed at the end of the 4-H program year. Check with local Extension Agent for exact due date.

5. Year End Report

Submit a final report of 4-H project activities to the local Extension Office at the end of the program year, (insert date to be completed - should be same date as all other member KAA's or records are due). Reflect on their learning by completing a Kansas 4-H Personal Page, 4-H Story, and 4-H Permanent Record.

Date to submit report _____

Date report submitted _____

6. Year End Completion Statement

I certify that I completed the minimum goals and community activities in this plan.

4-H Member Signature _____ Date _____

I certify that _____ (4-H Member) has successfully completed the minimum goals and community activities in this plan.

Adult Mentor Signature _____ Date _____

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