

4-H CLUB MEETINGS THAT YOUTH CHOOSE TO ATTEND

There are three major components of club meetings: group building, group decisions and an educational program or activity.

Component #1- Group Building - 25% of the meeting. This includes any activities that help everyone get acquainted, feel accepted and recognized. New kids join throughout the year. Incorporate activities that will help new 4-H members get acquainted with other club members, including celebrations. The Kansas 4-H publication "Celebrating with 4-H Ceremonies" suggests the following types of ceremonies for 4-H Clubs: Recognition ceremonies (to honor work done by individuals or the club), welcoming ceremonies (to show importance of being a member of a group), special observance ceremonies (holidays, special weeks, events), campfire, flag raising and lowering, and citizenship ceremonies. Add in evaluation time. Get everyone's opinion after a club event to know how it could be improved or what people thought went well. Often adults have a very different idea of how an event went or worked, so it is also important to get club member opinions. Often recreation is the first component of a club meeting to get cut because meetings run long. For very young children this may be the part of 4-H they enjoy most. Recreation should be a part of every meeting. It helps members continue the atmosphere of fun and interest as well as getting to know one another.

Component # 2 - Group Decision Making - 25 % of the meeting. Decision making happens in the business part of the meeting. This time should be democracy in action. Members learn to express themselves in a group, listen to the views of others, use parliamentary procedure to reach decisions and abide by majority of the rules. This may be the member's first experience with parliamentary procedure. Parliamentary procedure is abstract and can be hard to understand. It will take some coaching and reinforcement to help members learn par law skills. Try having a parliamentary procedure tip at each meeting. Break into small groups and practice. Experiment with other ways to build consensus and make decisions.

Component # 3 - Educational Program or Activity - 50% of the meeting. This is the educational part of the meeting. Having members give presentations is a great opportunity for them to learn public speaking skills in a supportive atmosphere. If it's hard to schedule everyone, consider breaking the audience in two parts and have two talks going at the same time. Ask members to consider giving team demonstrations. By pairing younger and older 4-H members together they both gain new skills from the experience. Be flexible with presentations. Younger members may like to do a show and tell. Some members may want to create a project display that they can talk about in a more unstructured way. Other ideas for the program component include having a health tip, safety tip, citizenship tip or thought for the day. Invite a guest speaker to talk. Create a project bowl or skill-a-thon. Or use this time for project work or community service projects.