

# 4-H Cooking

## HELPER'S GUIDE



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# *ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS*

Written by Madonna Weese, Ed. D., Extension Specialist 4-H Youth Development

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# INTRODUCTION



Thank you for your willingness to share your knowledge and expertise with young people as they learn about food preparation, food safety, food selection, and food science. Thank you too for giving your time and commitment to your club or group. A positive relationship with a caring adult like you is an important asset for a young person and it can powerfully impact his/her life. Your role as a volunteer is a critical one. This guide will help you make the best of that opportunity.

## 4-H Cooking Series

The *4-H Cooking series* includes four levels of project manuals. The manuals provide content information, food science experiments, and a variety of classic recipes that are youth-tested and youth-friendly. Select the book to use based on the skill level of the youth who will be participating in your club or group.

- *4-H Cooking 101*: suggested for beginner level. Members learn the basic skills of food preparation, selection, safety, and science.
- *4-H Cooking 201*: suggested for intermediate level. Members expand their basic skills with a focus on whole grains, quick breads, handling and preparing meat, food safety, and preparing sauces, cream soups, and gravy.
- *4-H Cooking 301*: suggested for intermediate to advanced level. Members plan and prepare food for a party, learn how to make yeast breads and rolls, bake shortened cakes, cook with slow cookers, and prepare food on a grill.
- *4-H Cooking 401*: suggested for advanced level. Members prepare ethnic foods, bake flatbreads and ethnic breads, make candy, bake pastries, bake foam cakes, use dry- and moist-heat cooking methods, and plan and prepare celebration meals.

## Getting Started

As you begin planning for your 4-H club or group, you may want to consider these options to determine how you can provide a positive learning experience for the young people and have a successful volunteer experience for yourself.

- **How much time can you commit?** Traditional 4-H volunteers commit to an ongoing, year-round schedule for their club or group. The club or group meets once or twice a month to have a meeting and engage in project learning activities. If you would prefer a limited, defined schedule for your group, you have that option. Clubs or groups are encouraged to meet a minimum of six times during a specified time. That could be once a week for six weeks; every other week for two months; on designated Saturdays; or any

combinations that work for you and your group. This type of schedule works well for project clubs or special interest groups. At the end of the scheduled meetings, the group can finish or decide to continue meeting, if desired. By committing to a specified beginning and ending time, volunteers and youth may be more willing to commit to the group.

- **Where to meet?** Since your group will be preparing food, you need access to cooking utensils and equipment. Your community most likely provides options for you to explore. The local Extension office often has a kitchen/meeting room that could be scheduled for your club. Those facilities may also be available in places of worship in your community, fire departments, community centers, schools, or in homes.
- **Who to invite?** It's usually quite easy to recruit young people to participate in a 4-H cooking or foods project. Young people love the hands-on approach to food preparation and obviously, they love to eat! The 4-H cooking project could be used for an after-school club, a project workshop, a project group that meets for a specific time period, or with a traditional 4-H club.
- **What to teach?** The beginner's level manual, *4-H Cooking 101*, teaches basic skills and techniques that every cook needs to know. Regardless of the age of the youth, they need to learn and master these skills before they move to the intermediate or advanced levels. Learning activities are more effective if participants are similar in age or limited to a two-year age range. This guide provides suggestions for a series of learning activities targeted to the skill level of participants. Refer to those suggestions for guidance.
- **Who can help?** Often parents, older 4-H youth, or other community members are willing to help with a club or group, but they don't want to be "the leader." How do you go about getting help from others? Ask them! It's that simple. Most of the time, people are willing to help if asked and if they know the length of the commitment. Identifying a beginning and ending date for your club or group helps with volunteer recruitment as well as recruiting young people to participate. Extra hands are needed with cooking activities to supervise and assist members as needed. A good size for a cooking club or group is about 10 to 15 youth, with assistance from two to three adults.
- **How to cover the cost?** Most likely you will charge a registration fee that will be used to cover the cost of food and supplies. Total the expenses and divide by the number of youth who will be participating. If you are working with under-resourced youth, talk with the Extension staff about sources of support for the club needs.
- **We're done?** Don't miss one of the most important components of the learning experience — demonstrating mastery of skills. Plan a culminating event for the members to show what they have learned and mastered. This is a powerful way for members to prove their competence to themselves and others. There are many ways to showcase members' skills. Invite members to share their ideas and vote on a favorite. To get the ideas started, here are some suggestions. The group could prepare a meal and invite family members to share. The group could host a cook-off and invite others to sample their products. The group could prepare a meal to serve at a homeless shelter or crisis center. Now it's your turn — what are your ideas?





# POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



As you prepare for your volunteer experiences with youth, you might begin by developing a list of activities and events that you hope to provide for the youth in your club or group. Or you might focus on the skills youth will develop or the product they will create — by participating in the club or group, youth will be able to ( do what? ). Those are all important pieces of program planning. But, before you begin planning, you must consider underlying principles that contribute to the success of 4-H programs.

It's easy to assume that if we provide fun, engaging learning activities that young people will have a positive experience, develop new skills and knowledge, and ultimately become the caring, competent citizens that we want them to be. It appears to be a winning formula — except, it doesn't work that way. We know from the research that creating positive program outcomes isn't automatic. It must be intentional. In fact, we have learned that poorly designed activities and experiences can have a negative influence on youth. So, how do we produce positive outcomes for the youth in our clubs or groups?

All youth have four developmental needs.

- **Belonging:** To know they are cared about by others
- **Independence:** To know they are able to influence people and events
- **Generosity:** To practice helping others through their own generosity
- **Mastery:** To feel and believe they are capable and successful

Youth will find ways to meet these needs, build skills and values, and use their skills, talents, and time in ways that make them feel good and powerful. 4-H helps youth meet these needs through Positive Youth Development experiences. (An easy way to remember the four developmental needs is to use the acronym **BIG-M**.) Belonging, Independence, Generosity, and Mastery are like ingredients in a recipe, if we leave something out, we won't get what we expect. We want 4-H to be a positive influence in the lives of youth, so we must use the right ingredients. Let's look at those beneficial ingredients.



## Belonging

Young people want to belong and be members of groups or clubs. Research suggests that a sense of belonging may be the single most powerful positive ingredient we can add into the lives of children and youth. (Belonging is the “B” in **BIG-M**.) Three essential ingredients create a strong feeling of belonging



among club members: 1) A positive relationship with a caring adult; 2) An inclusive environment; 3) A safe emotional and physical environment.

**A positive relationship with a caring adult** is one of the most important ingredients of Positive Youth Development. Young people in clubs or groups are directly impacted by relationships with caring adults like you. Ongoing interaction with you creates a supportive relationship that nurtures club members as they learn. As a result, your members feel confident to try new things, tackle more difficult tasks, and set higher goals.

**Creating an inclusive environment** begins with acknowledging and celebrating the similarities and differences in club members, which helps them to feel accepted and appreciated. When youth feel accepted and appreciated, they are more likely to participate and become engaged in learning activities.

As a volunteer, you are responsible for **providing a safe emotional and physical environment**. You set the tone for the group. Encourage positive interaction among members. Stop put downs or teasing that can lead to hurt feelings. Praise teamwork. Help members work toward common goals — that could be something as simple as preparing cookies for snacks. Enjoy the work you are doing together.

## Independence

**Independence** is the second key ingredient of Positive Youth Development and the “I” in **BIG-M**. As a volunteer, you will use your skills to support and guide members as they practice their independence. Independence grows by steps and begins with making small decisions that can turn into life-changing decisions. Your encouragement builds their self-confidence as they learn to influence people and events through decision-making and action. By exercising independence, youth mature in self-discipline and responsibility, learn to better understand themselves, and become independent thinkers.



Following are some success strategies for developing Independence.

- Before making a decision, ask if youth could make the decision instead.
- Include youth in planning discussions and encourage input.
- Ask youth to do something instead of telling them to do it.
- Help youth explore courses of action or appropriate decisions.
- Don't jump in too quickly to help youth and deprive them of the thrill of overcoming an obstacle.
- Maintain a close link between independence and responsibility.



## Generosity

**Generosity** is the third ingredient of Positive Youth Development and the “G” in **BIG-M**. Generosity values and practices service to others. Club members are encouraged to develop and practice skills that are helpful or useful in their community. 4-H community service projects allow youth and adults to work together to help others. Community service helps youth build discipline, learn respect, value civic responsibility, and participate in real-world experiences.

## Mastery

**Mastery**, the “M” in **BIG-M**, is achieved when youth build their knowledge, skills and attitudes, and then demonstrate the competent use of these abilities. To develop self-confident youth who believe they are capable, they must experience success at solving problems and meeting challenges. Mastery is dependent on the developmental ability of the youth — mastery exhibited by an eight year old is different than mastery exhibited by an eighteen year old.




Experiential learning, also known as hands-on learning, actively engages youth in learning and reflects 4-H's learning theory of “learn by doing.” Engaged youth are focused on learning. They are self-motivated, set goals, and work toward reaching goals or mastery.





# UNDERSTANDING AND WORKING WITH YOUTH

While children learn at their own rate and in their own way, they typically share some common characteristics during certain stages of development. It's important to consider those characteristics as you begin planning learning activities for your club or group. Because learning characteristics vary by age and development, it is helpful to limit the age range of the youth who will be participating in your 4-H cooking club or project group to a range of two to three years.

 <b>Grades 3 – 4</b>	
<b>Characteristics of Age Group</b>	<b>Implications for Project Club or Group</b>
Are active and full of energy	Start meetings quickly and engage youth in hands-on learning activities, such as food preparation and food science experiments.
Like group activities; strong need for belonging to a group	Divide youth into work groups of two to three that take turns in each step of the recipe.
Like to be with members of own sex	Pair youth into same-sex work groups to help them make positive connections with peers.
Have rapidly changing interests	Divide activities into steps to keep their attention. This is a natural process when preparing recipes.
Are just beginning to think logically and understand abstract ideas	Provide simple, short directions. Help them see the connection between the steps of a learning activity. Demonstrate key techniques of food preparation as a model for youth to follow.
Want adult approval and have a strong need to be accepted	Provide encouragement and praise as they work. Praise is a powerful motivator.
Have a strong need to feel accepted and want individual attention	Provide feedback on each individual's work or product and avoid comparisons between youth.
Admire and imitate older boys and girls	Ask older youth with experience in cooking projects to assist as volunteers for the group.



## Grades 5 – 6

Characteristics of Age Group	Implications for Project Club or Group
Grow in spurts; typically, girls mature faster than boys	Be sensitive to the fact that they may be uncomfortable with their changing bodies. Avoid drawing attention to the changes.
Are entering puberty and may begin to experience the emotional and physical effects of changing hormones	Be prepared for the range of emotions and drama that the physical changes can bring. Listen and offer support as needed.
Are self-conscious about their changing bodies which can lead to low self esteem	Be accepting of their feelings and insecurities; provide support and encouragement; pair them with supportive peers. Avoid comparisons or pointing individuals out in front of others.
Want to be liked by their friends; the opinions of their friends are more important than adults'	Provide opportunities for them to plan small parties or social events and prepare the food to serve.
Desire a sense of independence; they explore and test their identities through clothing, new friends, music, and entertainment; but, they still want and need the help of adults	Allow youth to experiment with the addition of different flavors and ingredients, such as adding different fruits/dried fruits to muffins or cookies. Provide suggestions, but allow them to make the final decision. That may mean helping them to learn from mistakes.
Want more responsibility	Provide opportunities that allow them to learn and develop responsible behavior, such as packing up utensils and supplies, or making suggestions on how their small group can work together more efficiently.



## Grades 7 – 9

Characteristics of Age Group	Implications for Project Club or Group
Are very concerned with themselves and their peers; acceptance by the opposite sex may become important	Expect some attention-seeking behavior as they look for acceptance from the opposite sex. Working in small groups continues to be important so consider co-ed groups.
Enjoy new ways of doing things as they master abstract thinking; they may challenge adults as they test these new skills	Allow youth to plan activities and take responsibility for a meeting or event. Form committees to plan parties or other social activities.
Want to set their own goals	Provide opportunities for group to select learning activities and set goals. Use the project manuals for guidance.
Need less supervision as they become more independent	Understand that the helper's role may become more of an advisor or coach as work groups become more independent.
Are ready for leadership roles as they become aware of their interests, talents, skills, and abilities	Provide opportunities for them to give leadership to the group, such as chairing a committee to plan a service project or a culminating event.