



LET'S SPARK SOMETHING

an Everything 4-H guide for pre-teens and teens!

4-H is the place you belong, lead, learn, and serve in the community where you live!



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

How can you choose activities that are right for you?

A new school year or the start to a new season can mean lots of new activities to choose from. Maybe you're headed to junior high or high school this year, trying out new interests, or just looking to change things up. Here are some questions to help decide which activities might be right for you!

1. What do you want?

What do you want an activity to do for you? Are you looking to meet new friends, develop a skill, get work experience for a future job, or just get out of the house? If your goal is to make new friends, something solitary like stamp-collecting (we're sure this is totally still a thing) might not be the way to go. Make sure your activity is a good fit for what you're looking to get out of it.

2. What do you like?

It seems obvious, but this is a good place to start. Don't worry about drilling down too much to find what fits all your interests at once (twilight underwater hockey for example), but think big picture. Do you like to be active? Prefer small groups or big groups? Do you want an activity with community service? See what matches up with what you want to do.

3. What are the choices?

Your school might be a great source of possible activities, but don't miss activities at local park districts, community organizations, or clubs like Scouts or 4-H. Knowing all of your choices is a big part of choosing!

4. What are your limits?

These could be time-based like "No Thursday night activities because I need that time to study for my Friday quiz." Or transportation limitations like "There's no way I can make it across town on my bike by 4:30 every week." Or just emotional limits like knowing when your plate is too full. Activities are meant to be fun and engaging but not add extra stress or burden to your life!

5. Don't be afraid to try!

Now is the time in your life to try new things. If it's a great fit, great! If it's not, that's okay too. It's okay to explore new things, especially at this phase in your life. Also, it's okay to try something even if it just ends up being a short-term activity. You never know if you don't give it a try!

¿Tiene preguntas sobre esta guía o de los programas de 4-H? Envíenos un correo electrónico a 4HENESPANOL@ILLINOIS.EDU

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As military families move frequently and experience the difficulties surrounding deployment and reintegration, 4-H provides predictable programming and a safe and nurturing environment for you to excel ~ there are 4-H experiences in every county in the country!

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What's a 4-H member?

A member is anyone who participates in a 4-H experience!

Illinois 4-H is the largest out-of-school youth organization in Illinois, where you “learn by doing” with fun, hands-on activities that teach skills you can use now and in the future! Members find their way to 4-H through lots of experiences!

What are the types of 4-H experiences you could take part in?

- Multi-project clubs
- Special interest clubs
- After-school programs
- 4-H camp
- 4-H workshops
- and more!



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What do the “H’s” stand for in 4-H?

4-H members pledge their...



Head

TO CLEARER THINKING

This means that 4-H members pledge to be open to new and different ways of thinking by critically assessing new information, making new judgments, and exploring new thought processes!



Heart

TO GREATER LOYALTY

This means that 4-H members put others before themselves. You commit to being loyal to each person you meet and they know that if they need help, they can count on you!



Hands

TO LARGER SERVICE

This means that 4-H members play a part in their community's success and they understand their value to the greater good in a global society. In 4-H you have individual and group opportunities to impact your community, country, and world!



Health

TO BETTER LIVING

This means that you pledge to take care of you! Making sure your health is a priority whether that's through good nutrition, sleep, mental health, or more!

#Thisis4H

CAREER READINESS • CIVIC
ENGAGEMENT • CONSUMER
EDUCATION • LIVESTOCK
JUDGING • SHOOTING SPORTS •
E-SPORTS • CITIZEN SCIENTISTS •
CREATIVE WRITING • ANIMAL
SCIENCES • VISUAL ARTS •
PUBLIC SPEAKING • FOOD
SYSTEMS • HEALTHY LIVING •
COMMUNICATIONS • CREATIVE
ARTS • STEM • ENVIRONMENT •
ENTOMOLOGY • CLOVERBUDS •
ROBOTICS • OUTDOOR
ADVENTURES • AEROSPACE •
COMMUNITY SERVICE •
LIVESTOCK • ROBOTICS •
LEADERSHIP • FLORICULTURE •
CAMPING • INTERIOR DESIGN •
CROPS • PHOTOGRAPHY

Find Your Spark Quiz



4-H has a lot to explore to help you find your "spark" ~ an interest or skill that lights your fire and helps you find joy, energy, and purpose! Not sure where to start? Take our quiz to start your 4-H adventure!



Start Here!

Do you love spending time outside?

YES

Do you enjoy working with animals?

YES

Would you rather

Would you rather

YES

Do you enjoy meeting new people?

NOT REALLY

Would you rather

Spend time exploring new technologies, creating experiments, and discovering the basic elements of programming?

Would you rather

Plan a hike, explore the wilderness, and learn about nature?

NOT REALLY

NOT REALLY

Spend time taking charge, making plans, help run events and completing projects?

Spend time following the news, learning about current events, and finding ways you can make a change in your community?

Spend time expressing yourself through art, performing, and learning about design and color?

Spend time exploring science of food in your own kitchen laboratory, food preservation, and how food goes from farms to tables?

Spend time learning how to stay healthy and fit while helping others do the same through first aid, sports nutrition, and healthy habits?

Spend time caring for animals, studying animal behavior, and learning about animal health.

You got ANIMAL SCIENCES!

Head to page 8 to see how you can find your spark as you develop your love of animals by learning about agricultural science topics such as veterinary science, biotechnology, and raising and training animals!

You got CAREER & LEADERSHIP!

Head to page 16 to see how you can find your spark as you share your voice, influence, and decision-making ability in your community and world.

You got GLOBAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT!

Head to page 24 to see how you can find your spark as you learn about civic affairs, build decision-making skills, and build your confidence in relating and connecting to other people!

You got CREATIVE ARTS!

Head to page 30 to see how you can find your spark in creative arts! From filmmaking to photography, show off your artistic expression and communication. 4-H has everything you need to let your creativity shine.

You got ENVIRONMENT!

Turn to page 36 to see how you can find your spark as you get first-hand experience in utilizing alternative energy, spend time outdoors, and keep exploring your love for nature!

You got FOOD SYSTEMS!

Turn to page 44 to see how you can find your spark as you build your communication, decision-making, goal-setting, and leadership skills, all while learning how to become a strong food advocate!

You got HEALTH & WELLNESS!

Turn to page 52 to see how you can find your spark as you follow your love for health and wellness, and learn the skills to help you and others make healthy decisions and lead healthy lifestyles.

You got STEM!

Turn to page 58 to see how you can find your spark as you learn more about science, technology, engineering, and math with fun, hands-on programs.

Up close with animal sciences



Work up close and personal with animals! The skills you'll learn through animal sciences include responsibility for living things, perseverance to stick with a task until completed, initiative to start projects and get them done, detail, organization, and decision making ~ the skills employers say are most often missing in the workforce today. But you can develop them early through 4-H!

What do you do in a livestock project?

Most youth sign up for livestock projects because they are interested in raising an animal. If that's you, you may be wondering what you'll do!

If you don't want to raise an animal, there are still great ways to participate in Animal Sciences and LOTS to learn!

But if you are interested in raising an animal, you may be wondering what you'll do!

In a livestock project, you'll raise and care for an animal

daily: doing chores, taking care of grooming and feeding, and making sure your animal is healthy.

You'll also need to train your animal to be shown in a safe and calm manner, doing things like making sure it's comfortable around people and noises, and can be led and exhibited.

Throughout this process, you'll develop routines, put in early mornings or late nights, and exercise a lot of patience and understanding. You also need to set goals and work towards them!

Where could this spark take you?

1 County

- Explore the Career & Leadership Development spark sheets to try out different projects
- Explore the Build your Future, Entrepreneurship, Financial Future, or Leadership projects
- Join a 4-H Federation - Federation is the banding together of youth from different clubs into one representative group. Leadership training, decision making, county or unit event planning, and socialization are the focus of Federation members
- Take on an Executive leadership role in your club such as: President, Vice-President, Secretary, or Treasurer
- Join your county's Expansion & Review Committee - this committee provides recommended changes and new approaches to programming to help provide opportunity for all to youth in the county
- Take on an auxiliary leadership role in your club such as Reporter, Recreation Chairperson, Sentinel, Librarian, or Sergeant at Arms
- Become a County or Multi-County Group Officer
- Become a County or Multi-County Group Committee Chairperson
- Join a Special Interest Club
- Attend a workshop to help get you ready for your future career or to help build your leadership
- Participate in local competitions and exhibits
- Become a County 4-H Ambassador
- Become a County Workshop Instructor

- Complete a Career or Leadership Development spark sheet
- Become a Show Assistant in the Career/Leadership project areas
- Connect with your local 4-H staff to participate in new workshop, committee and event opportunities every year!

2 State **Lead**

Join the Youth Leadership Team - Teens receive training in leadership development, team-building, public presentations, and more. You'll actively participate in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the Junior Leadership Conference, including planning and teaching workshops, leading mixers and recreational activities, reviewing budgets, and developing marketing and promotional pieces.

Illini Summer Academies Planning Committee - help plan one of 4-H's biggest events and have a voice in making the event the best it can be!

University of Illinois Collegiate 4-H - activities can range from working directly with state, county, or local 4-H groups to serving as volunteer leaders for projects, educational workshops, contests, judging competitions, or assisting with service projects.

Teen Teacher - get hands-on education experience as you become a role model for younger kids!

Become a Project Assistant at the Illinois State Fair and help keep the judging process running smoothly at our biggest state event!

Awards/Scholarships

Deb Stocker Scholarship - this scholarship is for exceptional Youth Leadership Team members

Earn a Leadership or Project Learning Club Award

Statewide scholarships - earn an educational scholarship for your work in Career/Leadership

Individual Experience Award - earn statewide recognition as you gain new and diverse 4-H experiences

Experience, Excel, or Engage Club Award - get recognition for your club's work!

Qualify to exhibit at Illinois State Fair - display your project work in front of thousands of State Fairgoers

Attend

Speaking for Illinois 4-H - get special advanced training to prepare you to meet with county and state elected officials, potential donors, civic groups, and new volunteers to tell your 4-H story

Illini Summer Academies - get ready for a hi-fidelity college exploratory experience on the University of Illinois campus. You'll attend academy sessions led by university professors and enjoy a variety of engaging activities that provide a taste of just how cool college life can be.

Junior Leadership Conference - join this fun-filled event that provides junior high 4-H members (7th & 8th grades) a look into opportunities in Illinois 4-H and helps start their leadership journey. Members gain skills related to 4-H projects and leadership, such as communication, decision-making, and teamwork while engaging in fun activities.



National

Attend National 4-H Congress - this five-day national conference is an opportunity for youth from across the country to develop their leadership skills. Members have the opportunity to go to trainings, listen to nationally recognized speakers, participate in community service projects, and network with 4-H members from across the United States.

Attend a 4-H Multi-State MEET (Mingle Event for Excelling Together) - MEET is a unique opportunity for upper-level 4-H members to network with each other, build lasting connections, and learn about 4-H across the nation.

And more! New National organizations, committees, events, and leadership opportunities just for 4-H members present themselves each year!



International

See if your 4-H club can begin a sister club program with an International 4-H Club around careers and leadership where you can learn about career opportunities around the globe while you gain skills in presenting to international audiences!



Apply for a 4-H Youth in Action Award!

This national program recognizes four confident young leaders with diverse backgrounds and unique perspectives in 4-H's core pillar areas: agriculture, civic engagement, healthy living, and STEM.

Each year, Pillar Winners will experience an exciting year of telling their 4-H story and celebrating their leadership. Winners receive:

\$5,000 higher education scholarship • Opportunities to showcase their 4-H impact story • All-expenses paid trip to National 4-H Council event • Networking opportunities with 4-H celebrities and other prominent alumni • Recognition as the official 4-H youth spokesperson for their pillar

Tastebud Test

Healthy living is all about balance! Trying out new foods, tastes, and textures to help you find the fuel that makes your body feel the best.

Are you ready for our A-Z Tastebud Challenge? Mark the foods you've tried. Keep looking out for opportunities to try something new!

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asparagus | <input type="checkbox"/> Iceberg lettuce | <input type="checkbox"/> Radishes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beets | <input type="checkbox"/> Jicama | <input type="checkbox"/> Starfruit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cantalope | <input type="checkbox"/> Kiwi | <input type="checkbox"/> Turmeric |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dragonfruit | <input type="checkbox"/> Lemons | <input type="checkbox"/> Ugli Fruit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Edamame | <input type="checkbox"/> Mushrooms | <input type="checkbox"/> Victoria Plum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Figs | <input type="checkbox"/> Nectarines | <input type="checkbox"/> Walnuts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guava | <input type="checkbox"/> Onions | <input type="checkbox"/> Xylitol |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Honeydew melon | <input type="checkbox"/> Paprika | <input type="checkbox"/> Yams |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Quinoa | <input type="checkbox"/> Zucchini |

Your Thoughts Matter!



Scan to find out what youth wish people knew about youth mental health! <https://bit.ly/3yo1c7G>

Physical health is important, but we know mental health is too.

Your Thoughts Matter is a statewide Special Interest Club that teaches teens definitions of common mental health disorders, the impact of mental health experiences, ways to help others, and resources available in their community.

What's a Healthy Living Ambassador?

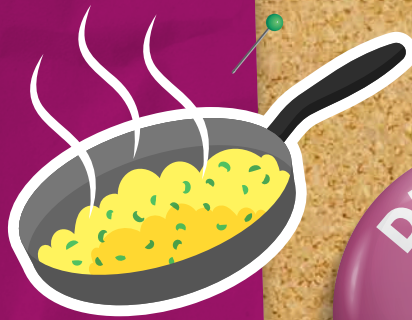
A Healthy Living Ambassador is a statewide leadership role that serves as a positive role model for healthy living! Someone who walks the walk and talks the talk about living a healthy lifestyle and is excited to help teach others!

Things you might do as a Healthy Living Ambassador:

- Help conduct a program at an afterschool site or community location like a school, YMCA, or other after school organization
- Help staff a table or booth at a healthy living event
- Create a Zoom class on a healthy living topic to share with younger youth
- Continue to be on the lookout for additional opportunities to provide leadership in your community about healthy living!
- Attend state and national workshops to help build your skills!



Skills you can build!

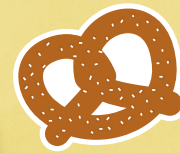


Illinois 4-H projects let you get hands-on experiences in the areas that interest YOU! To learn more about projects, scan the code or head to: <https://bit.ly/3RgVNXy>



Here are some things you can do in 4-H to build your Healthy Living leadership skills!

- Explore the Healthy Living spark sheets
- Complete a Healthy Living Project
- Prepare a meal or snack for first responders
- Give a first-aid demonstration
- Make a workout schedule for the week - can you include a friend in your plans?
- Start a babysitting club
- Organize a community appreciation event for first responders
- Explore the Pathway on pages 56 & 57 and make a wishlist of experiences you'd like to take part in at the county, state, and at the national level!
- Get your parent's permission and scan the QR code to learn how to make soft pretzels at home! <https://bit.ly/3OMu92M>



Learn how to make a new beverage - from product formulation to labeling as you explore the Food Science project



Practice different ways of staying physically active as you explore the Sports Nutrition project



Explore the science and math of preserving foods as you explore the Food Preservation project



Design a family first aid kit and more as you explore the Health project



EXPLORE

your interests and learn by doing in Illinois' largest out-of-school youth organization!



Can you picture yourself in 4-H?

Who can join 4-H?

4-H is the place for all Illinois kids and teens ages 5-18 where you belong and are part of the **community!**

What is 4-H?

Illinois 4-H is the largest out-of-school youth organization in Illinois, where you "learn by doing" with fun, hands-on activities that teach skills you can use now and in the future!

Where are 4-H clubs and programs?

There are 4-H clubs and programs in all 102 counties in Illinois! There are also experiences like online workshops, virtual special interest clubs, and more!

Why 4-H?

In 4-H, you learn about what interests you! Thinking about your future? 4-H also helps build awareness of careers and skills needed to excel in those careers.

In 4-H, you get to be you! We welcome everyone from all backgrounds, with all interests, wherever you live. We'll help you learn more about the things you like to do. We'll provide opportunities for you to meet mentors and kids who share your interests. Travel to exciting new places. Check out careers. Explore the world around you while you build up the community where you live.

All that and more awaits you in Illinois 4-H. Scan the code to tell us a little bit more about your interests in the form below and someone from your local Extension Office will reach out to connect you with next steps to register and find the 4-H experience that's right for you!

Or head to
<https://4h.extension.illinois.edu/join-4-h>



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