

Eight Key Elements of a Successful 4-H Cloverbud Program

High quality, positive youth development programs do not happen by accident. The quality of the adult leadership plays an important role in creating an environment for life skills to be achieved and enhanced. Below are eight key elements (Astroth, 2000) along with examples of how the adult leader can achieve these essential elements in the 4-H Cloverbud Program.

- 1. Positive Relationships with Caring Adults by:**
 - children learning and developing in an adult leader-directed environment
 - the volunteer leaders creating a positive learning environment that is caring, supportive, and fun
 - providing volunteer training for the adult leaders to have successful 4-H Cloverbud programming

- 2. An Inclusive Environment by:**
 - using cooperative-learning techniques as the children work on activities together
 - engaging the children in curriculum that is noncompetitive without setting up categories or classes
 - valuing and respecting the diversity of all participants

- 3. An Opportunity for Mastery/Competence by:**
 - allowing the children to be creative across eight different subject areas
 - utilizing the experiential learning cycle through the activities as children experience, share, process, and generalize
 - having curriculum and activities that meet the needs of these children

- 4. An Opportunity to Value and Practice Service to Others by:**
 - fostering the appreciation of community service through 4-H Cloverbud activities
 - cleaning up after activities and children helping each other
 - sharing materials and respecting fellow 4-H Cloverbud members

- 5. An Emotionally and Physically Safe Environment by:**
 - meeting the needs of children where they are emotionally, physically, socially, and cognitively
 - taking special considerations to ensure the safety of 4-H Cloverbud children with low risk and safe activities
 - having a low ratio of children to adults at about 6 to 1

6. An Opportunity for Self-Determination by:

- conducting success-oriented activities to help children gain confidence
- using noncompetitive activities to foster intrinsic motivation
- focusing on the process of doing activities, rather than the product

7. An Opportunity for Engagement of Learning by:

- employing fun, positive experiences for children
- providing numerous subject areas that interest the participants
- being a nurturing role model, enthusiastic, and sensitive

8. An Opportunity to See Oneself as an Active Participant in the Future by:

- giving the children choices in upcoming activities
- exploring a variety of future career options
- discussing and role-playing the reality that what one does today often determines what happens tomorrow