



Michigan 4-H Cloverbud Animal Science Project Record Book Parent and Leader Supplement

WHAT ARE CLOVERBUDS?

Cloverbuds are 4-H members who are ages 5-7 years old. The mission of the Michigan 4-H Cloverbud program is to guide 5-7 year olds as they acquire knowledge, develop life skills and form attitudes that enable them to become confident, self-directed, contributing members of society.

Participation, safety, personal development, learning and fun are the highest priorities for Cloverbud programs.

4-H Cloverbud experiences should be introductory, age appropriate, and noncompetitive. Effective programming for this age group should be activity-based, cooperative, fun, experiential, and varied.

Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status.

4-H ANIMAL PROJECTS

4-H animal projects can range from large or small livestock animals to household pets and exotic species and everything in between. In fact, a child who is interested in animals but doesn't own one can enroll in the animal project area to increase their education on the topic.

Youth can learn many important life skills through their experiences with animals. Responsibility is the most frequently mentioned life skill gained in an animal project. However, youth may also learn trust and how to form relationships, build communication skills and learn how to show and receive affection. Animal projects can also teach about the life cycle and provide a child experiences to manage emotions as they experience the joys and pains from the beginning of the project, to the end, and all that happens in between.

The Michigan 4-H Cloverbud Program Policy outlines specific guidelines for participation in Cloverbud animal science projects to ensure safety of participants and positive outcomes for learning. It also provides suggested age appropriate activities.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

4-H experiences should be designed with respect for the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of youth. Experiences should provide youth with:

- Activities that develop positive social interactions and cooperation
- Ways to develop communication skills
- Opportunities to be physically active
- Activities that involve tangible objects; rather than abstract thinking
- Positive ways to manage situations and emotions



HOW TO USE THE CLOVERBUD ANIMAL SCIENCE PROJECT RECORD BOOK

- ⇒ Always be mindful that you are working with Cloverbuds; 5-7 year olds learn differently than older youth. They may require more 1:1 attention. Their experience should be limited to ensure they are not overwhelmed.
- ⇒ This book should be used by all 4-H Cloverbud members enrolled in an animal science project. Cloverbuds may own their animal or borrow an animal from another person in their club or family. Youth do not have to own an animal to be in 4-H.
- ⇒ Learning experiences in the animal science project may include hands-on activities with live animals, but is not required. If hands-on access is not available to learn about animals, you may encourage your child to “borrow an animal” by selecting an animal at the zoo to study or observe or watch a video of an animal.
- ⇒ Parents and leaders should help Cloverbuds complete the book by guiding them through the process. Cloverbuds may also learn from interacting with older 4-H members.
- ⇒ It is recommended that each page of the record book could be a stand-alone activity. It is strongly discouraged to complete the entire record book during one session.
- ⇒ Members are encouraged to write and/or draw their responses as appropriate for their age and/or development.
- ⇒ It is strongly encouraged that animal science project record book entries accompany hands-on activities.
- ⇒ 4-H programs and projects should include learning experiences throughout the year.
- ⇒ Check with your local 4-H program coordinator to determine requirements for completing the record book and opportunities for exhibition (fair). Record books may be exhibited without live animal or may accompany live animal exhibition. All Cloverbud exhibitions are non-competitive. Entries for Cloverbud exhibition at fairs is often limited to ensure a positive experience that is not overwhelming.
- ⇒ There are some questions within the animal science record book that are identified with “***” to indicate questions that are more age appropriate for older youth.

4-H AND LIFE SKILLS

The goal of Michigan 4-H Youth Development is that every youth possess the necessary life skills to be successful and lead a productive life. Through the 4-H slogan, “learn by doing” and the Experiential Learning Model, youth involved in Michigan 4-H programs are gaining life skills through projects, experiences and opportunities that 4-H offers.

Your child is asked to identify life skills that they have learned through their 4-H project in the Cloverbud Animal Science Record Book. This question is open-ended and does not have one right answer. Encourage your child to express what they feel they have learned. If you would like to engage your child in further discussion around life skills gained through their Cloverbud experience, the following are the life skills have been identified as priority in Cloverbud programming: fun, participation, learning, social interaction; additional life skills relating to animal science projects: responsibility, safety, self-confidence, managing feelings, helping, problem solving, sharing, and concern for others. For more information on life skills: https://www.canr.msu.edu/life_skills/index

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Check out a book about animals from your local library—improve your child’s literacy skills while expanding their learning in their interest area.
- Take a field trip to a zoo, pet store, or farm.
- Attend 4-H club meetings to interact with older 4-H youth members. This will help create a mentor-mentee relationship.
- Explore various habitats in which animals live.
- Consider making edible snacks for your animal.
- Attend a local fair or exposition and watch an animal show.
- Attend a fair or exposition other than the one you will be participating in to observe, learn, and gain insight into how other counties operate.

ADDITIONAL CLOVERBUD RESOURCES

Find the Michigan 4-H Cloverbud Program Policy Information sheet, other Cloverbud activities, and research on youth development on the Michigan 4-H website:
http://4h.msue.msu.edu/programs/cloverbuds_ages_5-8

