



The Self-Determined Project



Member's Guide



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The Self-Determined Project

The Self-determined project is a new idea in 4-H Club work which permits you, the 4-H Club member, freedom to decide your own project area. You set your own objectives, determine a method of operation, and devise a reporting system.



Self-determined projects may be planned for a long term (several years), or may take a relatively short period of time. You can:

- ▶▶▶▶ Take a different direction on a single phase of an already existing project.
- ▶▶▶▶ Develop a plan for a project not currently offered by Pennsylvania 4-H Clubs.

You may use this bulletin as a workbook. However, it might be more satisfactory to develop your own. Some questions you will want to keep in mind to set up a notebook include:

- ▶ What topics have I selected?
- ▶ What do I hope to accomplish? What are my goals?
- ▶ What records do I need to show progress toward my goals?
- ▶ What help will I receive from others?
What help will I give?
- ▶ How can information be compiled to be most useful to me? To others?

Subject Approval Form

It is important to have a plan at the beginning of your self-determined project. Review your plan with an adult and have it approved by that person. (This need not be your regular 4-H leader—but someone who is willing to give you help and guidance with the subject you have chosen.)

SUBJECT: _____

ADULT REVIEWING AND APPROVING PROJECT

TITLE OR OCCUPATION

ADDRESS

DATE APPROVED:



Consider the Possibilities

Select a worthwhile and interesting project for your work this year. This will be the first and most important decision you will make.



Interest Inventory

Make an inventory of your interests, needs, desires, and concerns. This list should include ideas or problems you'd like to investigate; something you'd like to do, find out about, or learn; situations about which you feel strongly; ways in which you could be helpful to other people.

As you work on your inventory, seek help and guidance from other people:

- ▶ Friends
- ▶ Parents
- ▶ Teachers
- ▶ Specialists
- ▶ Scientists
- ▶ Craftspeople
- ▶ Farmers
- ▶ Engineers
- ▶ Doctors
- ▶ Neighbors
- ▶ Leaders
- ▶ Extension workers
- ▶ Clergy
- ▶ Artists
- ▶ Business people
- ▶ Ranchers
- ▶ Mechanics
- ▶ Dentists

My Inventory of Interests, Needs, Desires, Concerns

(List eight ideas which interest you.)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

▶▶▶▶ **Resource People**

Sometimes it is difficult to pinpoint your interests. Other people may help recognize and “mirror” your enthusiasms, abilities, or potential. They can help you see what you want to do, or wish you could do, now or in the future.

Resource People Who Helped Me—

(Name and describe some of the people you talked with. Tell how they helped you with ideas for your inventory.)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

▶▶▶▶ **Criteria for Making a Choice**

You listed eight of your interests, needs, desires, or concerns on page 2. Now you will want to narrow these down to three ideas that you might be able to do something about this year, or during a longer period.

Consider the following questions when you choose among your eight ideas:

- ▶ What are my personal experiences and how will they contribute?
- ▶ How can I find out about my interest? How and where can I get information?
- ▶ How much is it going to cost?
- ▶ How worthwhile is the project going to be to me?
- ▶ What can I learn from my project?
- ▶ Who else will benefit from my work? Should my idea be an individual project, or should a group of people work together on it?
- ▶ Will it fit in with my home and family situation?
- ▶ What other things (such as school activities) will I be doing which may affect my time, my energy, how I can do the project, cost?
- ▶ Do I have someone who is willing to help and knows something about what I want to learn?
- ▶ Will this help me decide about my future career?
- ▶ Will this help me in years to come?



Select Your Project

Using the suggested criteria for making choices and any others which are relevant to your decision, list the three ideas you have chosen from the eight you listed on page 2.



My Project Choices—

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Now pick one of the three ideas which you (or you together with others) will develop as a project. Write it below.

Tell why you chose this project and what things you considered when making the selection.



Plan Your Project

You have now chosen a project. There are no rules, goals, or even literature except what you find or determine for yourself. To have a good project, you will need to set up some goals as a guide for your year's work.



Goals

Goals are meaningful if stated in terms of "What I hope to Learn." Learning implies change or growth, and takes place in three interrelated areas:

- ◆ Knowledge, facts, information, thinking, understanding.
- ◆ Feelings, attitudes, values, beliefs, dedications.
- ◆ Skills, ways of doing things, actions, behavior.



My Project Plan

GOALS

What do I need to learn in order to carry out this project?

What skills will I need to develop?

What changes in attitude or behavior will I make?

METHODS

What do I need to do?

Where can I get help?

What resources do I need?

What kinds of record keeping will help?

What learning experiences will help in accomplishing my goals?



Develop Your Project



In order to carry out your plans and develop your project, you may wish to do some of the following—

- ◆ Review your project plans with other young people and with adults.
- ◆ Ask people for help—verbally or by letter. Make appointments with people, but respect their time and energy.
- ◆ Write for literature and materials. Inquire about costs.
- ◆ Subscribe to a magazine or other publication which will help.
- ◆ Try out, experiment, investigate, do things which will aid learning.
- ◆ Go to libraries. What books, magazines, or pamphlets do they have which give information related to your project?
- ◆ Visit persons and places where information can be obtained on your project.
- ◆ Clip information from newspapers and magazines.
- ◆ Watch for help from radio and TV programs.
- ◆ Ask to be included in meetings, tours,

events, and related activities.

Progress or growth is measured in terms of the goals you set at the beginning of your self-determined project. You need to ask yourself and others—

- ◆ What am I learning?
- ◆ What am I accomplishing?
- ◆ How well am I doing?
- ◆ How do I feel about what I am doing?
- ◆ Is this project really helping me to grow?

Collect Evidence of Your Progress

In order to evaluate your own growth in relation to your self-determined project, you will want to collect evidence of progress toward your goals.

||||► *Take pictures.*

Photographs and slides or movies tell a story. You can take “before and after” pictures, or a series of pictures to show the steps or different stages in the development of your project.

||||► *Keep records.*

(Submit on a 8 1/2" x 11" paper when possible.) There are many kinds of records such as: diaries, outlines, stories, notebooks, written reports, tables, charts, drawings, and pictures.

Ask yourself these questions when determining the kind of record to keep.

- ◆ How can I show the extent to which I am learning or accomplishing what I set out to do?
- ◆ How can I describe or show what I did?
- ◆ How can I show the data collected and the results of my investigations or work?
- ◆ Is there any reason to show how I used my time and energy? Do I need to keep track of money spent and received?

Turn on your imagination! Records need not be boring, but can be exciting when they make sense to you.

||||► *Have samples, models, or objects.*

Some projects lend themselves to growing, making, or collecting. These examples of what you have done provide evidence of your growth in knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes.

||||► *Discuss your work with people.*

Gain insights about your progress by describing your project to people who have experience different from yours or in addition to yours. You might arrange for visits or interviews, or exchange letters with people interested in your project.

Share What You Have Learned

Sharing with others can help you summarize, analyze, and further determine what you have accomplished in your project.

Some ways of sharing might be—

- ◆ Give individual help to others.
- ◆ Participate in workshops, programs, meetings, or with communities working on this subject.
- ◆ Erect exhibits, window displays, bulletin boards, or fair booths which will be seen by many people.
- ◆ Give demonstrations, illustrated talks, dramatic scenes, or TV programs.
- ◆ Arrange talks, interviews, panel discussions, and radio programs.
- ◆ Participate in tours and field trips.
- ◆ Write newspaper articles and features in magazines.
- ◆ Participate in a self-determined project open house. (Each person prepares a display on a table and stands or sits by the table in order to answer questions and be interviewed by those who come to see and learn.)

4-H Activities Report

This report will help you keep a better record of your club activities. Fill it in as you complete each assignment. Refer to this record when you are entering county, state, and national programs. Ask your local leader to explain these programs to you.

My 4-H Activities Report for the 19__ Club Year

Projects taken _____

Offices held

Club _____

County _____

“Show-and-tells” given to

Family _____

Friend _____

Local club _____

County _____

Regional _____

State _____

News articles _____

Radio _____

TV _____

Things done to improve my health _____

Community service or citizenship work done

By myself _____

With club _____

Number of meetings my club(s) held this year _____

Number I attended _____

Number of new members I encouraged to join 4-H

Number of boys and girls I helped with projects

_____ In what way? _____

Check those attended and tell how you helped

3- or 4-day camp _____

1-day camp _____

Club or county tours _____

Club picnic _____

Countywide picnic _____

4-H Sunday _____

County fair _____

Achievement programs _____

Roundup _____

Teen Leader Retreat _____

State 4-H Capital Days _____

Camp Leadership Training _____

Penn State 4-H Achievement Days _____

Pennsylvania Farm Show _____

National 4-H Week _____

State Ambassador Conference _____

Judging training _____

Dairy Bowl training _____

Others _____

Name

Address

Name of Club

Leader's Name

Name of Project

4-H Club Motto

"To make the best better"

4-H Club Pledge

I pledge
my head to clearer thinking,
my heart to greater loyalty,
my hands to larger service, and
my health to better living, for
my club,
my community,
my country, and
my world.

4-H Club Colors

Green and White