

# HORSE

## PROJECT LEADERS



### What is a Project Leader?

A project leader is a **Very Important Person** in the world of 4-H. Youth typically join the 4-H Program to explore a specific project area. In your role as a project leader you will:

- Help members learn skills they will use throughout their life;
- Help members reach their goals; and
- Serve as a role model.

As a project leader, it is important for you to acquire your project area resources. Work with your local 4-H professional to see what curriculum books or other resources are available to support the project you will be leading. Your local Extension Office may have resources available for leaders to borrow or purchase. Along with acquiring the project resources, you should also request the contact information for youth enrolled (signed up) for the project you are leading.

### Planning Your First Meeting

Once you have acquired and reviewed your resources, it is time to plan and hold your first project meeting, or the project planning meeting, with the members. This planning meeting is a chance to get to know the youth and their parents/guardians in the project.

At the planning meeting groups can:

- Set upcoming project meeting dates, to get them included on family calendars
- Discuss what youth would like to learn and what their goals are for the year
- Discuss project supplies or cost to be involved in the project

### Involving Parents and Guardians

Parents/Guardians should be encouraged to attend all project meetings, but especially the first meeting. Attending the first meeting helps families understand the project expectations as far as time and financial commitment. Additionally, parents/guardians being involved with the goal-setting meeting help with the follow-through to accomplish these goals at home.

### Involving Youth Leaders

Youth leaders should play an important role in project meetings, helping with the planning, teaching, or presenting the Skill Session, and/or assisting other members.



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## Developing Project Meeting Plans

After the first meeting, use the goals youth developed and older youth in the project area to help plan the path through the project curriculum or other resources. National 4-H guidelines state that youth should have a minimum of six hours of project learning each year. These six hours of project learning can be accomplished in group project meetings or with independent learning youth do at home. As a project leader, it is recommended that you plan at least 5 project meetings.

### Parts of a Project Meeting

A typical project meeting will last from an hour to two hours. Parts of the project meeting can include:

#### INTEREST GETTER

##### 15-20 MINUTES

- Ideas include identification quizzes, judging contests, relay skill games, films or slides, a tour of the host member's project, and guest speakers.

#### SKILL SESSION & DISCUSSION

##### 30-50 MINUTES

- The majority of the time spent in most meetings should be spent **doing**—practicing a skill. Be sure to include the other 4 parts of the experiential learning model (after the doing), sharing, processing, generalizing, and applying in your session.

#### DEMONSTRATION

##### 10 MINUTES

- Ask at least one member to give a demonstration at each meeting. Demonstrations help youth apply the project skills they have learned, teach others new skills, as well as learning more themselves.

#### RECORD KEEPING

##### 10-15 MINUTES

- Allow time for members to work on their project records. Recording lessons learned, update project resources, and track their progress towards reaching their goals.

#### SUMMARY AND ASSIGNMENTS

##### 5-10 MINUTES

- Have members summarize the day's meeting. Plan for the next meeting—where, when, and what to bring.

#### REFRESHMENTS AND RECREATION

- Recreation and refreshments are optional, but these activities help to keep the members' interest.

## End of the Year—Celebrating Accomplishments

At the end of the project year, it is important to celebrate members accomplishments: new skills learned; goals reached; etc. Additionally, the end of the project year is the perfect time to set project goals for the upcoming year.

### Youth-Adult Partnerships

#### TIPS FOR ADULTS

- Create youth-adult partnerships. Give youth a chance to plan, teach, or assist others.
- Set clear expectations for the project.
- Learn with and alongside youth.
- Remember, horse and rider are a team. Both need to feel safe and comfortable.
- Give feedback about skill development. Do not criticize the horse or rider.
- Help youth reflect on their own experiences with others. Encourage belonging.

#### TIPS FOR YOUTH

- Set goals. What knowledge or skills do you want to develop?
- Be a role model for teamwork, attitude, and safety with your horse.
- Talk with your leader. What is your current skill level? What are your goals? How could you share your skills with others?
- Ask your leader for feedback regularly. It can help you learn and grow.

### Connecting with the Community

- Field Trips or Guest Speaker Ideas—Veterinarian, farrier, nutritionist, massage therapist, chiropractor, dentist, judge, trail guide, or equine educator from a technical college or university.

### Caution Corner

- All 4-H events must follow Wisconsin 4-H Horse Policies—<https://4h.extension.wisc.edu/resources/wisconsin-4-h-policies/4-h-project-and-activity-policies/#horsepolicy>
- Communicate clearly with youth. Encourage safety when working with or riding horses.
- Remind youth to know their surroundings when on the ground or on their horse.

# Planning Your Path

A committee of staff, youth and adult volunteers have reviewed current curriculum for this project. The suggested activities provide a path through the curriculum. Additionally they can help focus your project meetings. For example, if your group has goals around learning to ride, you can choose to focus on the suggested activities under the Learning to Ride heading.

See Resources section for information about curriculum listed in this section.

## Resources

The following curriculum is available at your local Extension office or <https://shop4-h.org/>.

- **Giddy Up and Go**, Level 1 (01518Y)
- **Head, Heart, and Hooves**, Level 2 (01519Y)
- **Stable Relationships**, Level 3 (01520Y)
- **Riding the Range**, Level 4 (01521Y)
- **Jumping to New Heights**, Level 5 (01522Y)
- **Horse Project Helper's Guide** (01523F)

Wisconsin 4-H Horse Association Handbook (from Wisconsin 4-H Horse Board)— <http://horse.wi4h.org>— Information on State 4-H Horse Shows, rules, and Association contact information.

eXtension Horse page— <https://horses.extension.org>— Articles, videos, podcasts, infographics, and online courses are available.

### GROUNDWORK

Youth must learn skills to handle their horse before they ride. Youth will learn building trust, grooming, tying the animal, health, nutrition, and horse anatomy.

#### BEGINNER

- **Nickers, Snorts, and Whinnies:** Level 1, Pgs. 13-16
  - › Youth practice their observation skills and learn how to “read” horse body language.
  - › **Life Skills:** Problem solving, communication
  - › **Project Skill:** Identifying horse behaviors
- **Pieces and Parts:** Level 1, Pgs. 17-20
  - › Youth have fun while playing a game to learn the names of common horse body parts.
  - › **Life Skill:** Communication
  - › **Project Skill:** Judging horses

#### INTERMEDIATE

- **The Bottom Line:** Level 3, Pg. 53-56
  - › Youth talk to their family about expenses involved with a horse. They talk about how to make decisions that have a cost.
  - › **Life Skill:** Money management
  - › **Project Skill:** Determining horse expenses
- **The Right Tack:** Level 4, Pg. 9-12
  - › Youth learn to identify the parts of both English and Western bridles and saddles. They decide what kind of tack to use for riding.
  - › **Life Skills:** Accessing resources, Decision making
  - › **Project Skill:** Identifying English and Western saddle and bridle parts

#### ADVANCED

- **Pony Up to the Salad Bar:** Level 2, Pg. 21-24
  - › Youth learn how to make a healthy horse ration.
  - › **Life Skill:** Decision making
  - › **Project Skill:** Understanding horse nutritional requirements
- **Time to Hoof It:** Level 2, Pgs. 41-44
  - › Youth investigate hoof anatomy, function, and care.
  - › **Life Skill:** Problem solving
  - › **Project Skill:** Investigating hoof anatomy and care
- **Long in the Tooth:** Level 2, Pgs. 33-36
  - › Youth learn about the basic structure and function of teeth. They also learn where the term “long in the tooth” comes from.
  - › **Life Skills:** Critical thinking, decision making
  - › **Project Skill:** Examining horse teeth
- **Stacking Up:** Level 2, Pgs. 65-66
  - › Youth learn how to assess horse health using body condition scoring.
  - › **Life Skill:** Decision making
  - › **Project Skill:** Assessing horse health using body condition scoring

## LEARNING TO RIDE

Youth will learn necessary skills to safely ride a horse.  
Youth will learn to safely mount and dismount a horse, ride at all gaits, and ride in different settings.

### BEGINNER

- **Ready to Ride:** Level 4, Pgs. 27-30
  - › Youth learn basic skills needed to mount and dismount a horse safely.
  - › **Life Skills:** Personal safety, responsibility, emotional regulation
  - › **Project Skill:** Mounting and dismounting safely
- **Basic Riding:** Level 4, Pgs. 31-34
  - › Youth practice walking, trotting, and cantering their horse at halter and while riding.
  - › **Life Skills:** Physical activity, learning to learn, patience, timing, trust
  - › **Project Skill:** Developing horse riding skills

### INTERMEDIATE

- **Is Your Character Terrific?:** Level 5, Pgs. 26-27
  - › Youth explore what it takes to have a good character and be a good sportsman.
  - › **Life Skills:** Character development, responsibility, trust, respect, caring
  - › **Project Skill:** Appreciating good character
- **It's Show Time:** Level 5, Pgs. 23-26
  - › Youth learn and practice showmanship skills, with and without a horse.
  - › **Life Skills:** Interpersonal communication, trust, respect
  - › **Project Skill:** Showing horse at halter

### ADVANCED

- **Winning isn't Everything:** Level 5, Pgs. 43-48
  - › Youth will examine common ethical dilemmas that may happen when they work with horses. They will come up with their own responses to the situations.
  - › **Life Skill:** Critical thinking
  - › **Project Skill:** Evaluating ethics in competitive situations
- **Helping a Buddy:** Level 5, Pgs. 57-60
  - › Youths' challenge is to create a fun and safe experience for someone who has never ridden a horse before.
  - › **Life Skill:** Leadership
  - › **Project Skill:** Teaching others to ride.

## CREDITS

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