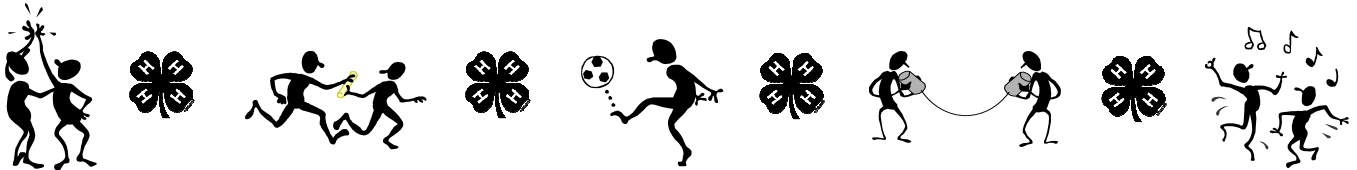




# Ohio 4-H Cloverbud Connections



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For 4-H Cloverbud Volunteers working with grades K-2

## Do I Have Your Attention? Attention Span and Children

Young children have short attention spans, especially when distracted (Enns & Akhtar, 1989). 4-H Cloverbud aged children have a difficult time focusing their attention on one thing and ignoring other things going on at the same time. As children get older their ability to focus and filter out undesirable stimuli improves. However; for 4-H Cloverbud children, keeping their attention and interest is important to consider.

Children today are even more challenged with being easily distracted and staying focused. Some studies have attributed early television exposure (Christakis, Zimmerman, & DiGiusepe, 2004) and electronic gaming as negatively influencing attention span. Regardless of what causes or influences the attention span of children, developmentally 4-H Cloverbud children have a limited attention span.

Because children have short attention spans, the time spent in each activity should be limited to about 10 minutes. There are strategies to help children stay on task and involved in the selected activity. **Suggestion**



**One:** conduct activity in a room or outside where other groups are not present that may be distracting (i.e., the older 4-H Club). **Suggestion Two:** have only materials that will be needed for the activity sitting out and available for the children to help them keep their focus. **Suggestion Three:** kindly remind them to pay attention as they begin to wonder mentally and physically away from the activity. **Suggestion Four:** if the children are engaged and interested in the current activity, let them continue in an unhurried manner.

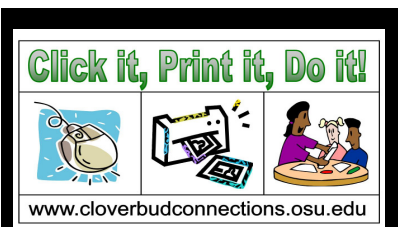
### Sources:

Christakis, D. A., Zimmerman, F. J., DiGiusepe, D. L., & McCarty, C. A. (2004). Early television exposure and subsequent attentional problems in children. *Pediatrics*, 113, 708-713.

Enns, J. T., & Akhtar (1989). A developmental study of filtering in visual attention. *Child Development*, 60, 1188-1199.

Scott D. Scheer, Ph.D.

State Extension Specialist, Preadolescent Education  
4-H Youth Development, The Ohio State University.



Are you looking for an exciting activity to do with your 4-H Cloverbuds? This quarter you will find a "How to Make a 4-H Welcome Mat" activity on-line and ready for you to print! The activity sheets include step by step instructions to help each child create his/her own masterpiece.

## Developmental Characteristics and Abilities of 4-H Cloverbud Children

Ohio's 4-H Cloverbud Program is for youth age 5 and in Kindergarten until they reach age 8 and in the third grade. Therefore, it is designed based on the development characteristics and needs for children in the age group.

There is so much to say about the developmental characteristics of 5 to 8 year old children that this will be an overview to serve as a guide as we work with children in this age group. Children develop in many ways; physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally. All of these components influence each other and do not act alone but together to make up the whole developing child. Children do not grow and develop at the same rate; each child is unique and matures in their own time and way. For children to increase the five life skills of the Cloverbud program (self-esteem, getting along with others, physical mastery, decision making, and learning to learn) it must be carried out at the age appropriate level of the Cloverbud children. If activities are too easy or too difficult to be successful we cannot help them improve on these life skills. Therefore it is essential that we are aware of the children's developmental characteristics and abilities.



Children do possess general characteristics of development that can be categorized around age. Here are some specific points to keep in mind when working with Cloverbud children (Bushaw, 1998).

### 5 & 6 Year Olds

- Learns best by exploring "real" materials
- Needs clear and simple directions
- Begins selective hearing
- Enjoys the process; and product not important
- Learn to cut with scissors
- Cooperates
- Energetic
- Knows some letters
- Writes some numbers
- Fears monsters, ghosts, getting lost
- Has a 10 - 15 minute attention span
- Likes to play with other children
- Needs clear and simple directions

### 7 & 8 Year Olds

- Concerned about rules
- Questions adult authority
- Knows left from right
- Wants to join clubs
- Judges parents yet are sensitive to criticism
- Dresses like peer group
- Needs some personal privacy
- Begins to empathize with others' feelings
- Learns to tell time
- Easily gets upset
- Thinks about the future
- Fears failure and peer rejection
- Likes repetitious activities

Use these characteristics as a reference in conducting activities with children at their own level. By utilizing a developmentally-age appropriate practice, it will help us keep an overall mind set as a "way of thinking and working with children." The efforts we make now to positively help children will reap huge rewards for them and society down the road.

*Scott D. Scheer, Ph.D.  
State Extension Specialist, Preadolescent Education  
4-H Youth Development, The Ohio State University.*

## 4-H Cloverbuds and Horses

Many 4-H clubs whose members take horse projects also have 4-H Cloverbuds in the club. This makes it tempting to allow the 4-H Cloverbuds to take part in horse-related activities, such as riding meetings, trail rides, or lead-line classes in shows. However, research indicates that the developmental levels of 4-H Cloverbud children may limit their ability to work safely in some project areas, including horses. According to National 4-H, sometimes a 4-H Cloverbud member will be physically capable of doing something but will not be able to understand the reason for or the result of the action. Therefore, Ohio 4-H does not allow 4-H Cloverbud members direct involvement with 4-H equine activities, as this may present a safety risk.



There are many age-appropriate activities for 4-H Cloverbuds to appreciate and learn about animals, including horses, without putting them at risk. Fun, non-competitive, and positive activities can be presented to teach 4-H Cloverbuds

- Horse breeds, colors, and patterns
- Horse body parts
- Horse nutrition and health
- Safety around horses and other animals
- Horse care tools and techniques
- Tack parts, uses, and care

Activities that can be implemented to teach these topics include

- \* Drawing horses; doing other horse-related arts and crafts projects
- \* Reading and writing stories about horses
- \* Completing puzzles, word searches, connect-the-dot activities
- \* Creating model horses, and holding a non-competitive model horse show
- \* Having a stick horse show at the county fair

A great resource for Cloverbud horse activities is the *Ohio's Cloverbud Program Horse Curriculum Instructional Materials*, which can be downloaded from the Ohio 4-H web site (<http://www.ohio4h.org/youth/cloverbud/cloverbudresources.html> – check out resource #5). Other resources can be found by contacting horse breed organizations, such as the American Quarter Horse Youth Association (AQHYA).



Whatever activities you choose, by following the Ohio 4-H Cloverbud guidelines you can provide your 4-H Cloverbuds with fun, positive activities to teach them to have a healthy, safe appreciation and knowledge of horses.

*Janice Hanna*  
 Extension Educator, 4-H Youth Development  
 OSU Extension, Mahoning County, Ohio  
 Crossroads EERA.

## Campus Connections

Hello Ohio CloverBudders! It feels good to make another 4-H Cloverbud Connection with you!

Children at one time or another will have conflict with each other (sharing materials or play space) or with themselves (understanding material or having difficulties participating) when involved in Cloverbud activities. Conflictual experiences can hinder the development of self-understandings and social-interaction skills when not handled properly. When working with Cloverbud youth, we can help them by using the following conflict resolution techniques:

- 1) Approach children calmly - a peaceful, calm adult demeanor will help them sort through the problem to reach a solution.
- 2) Acknowledge their feelings - simply state the feelings you observe. Such a statement helps children identify and understand why they are having feelings of frustration or anger.
- 3) Gather information about the problem - listen to each child's point of view. This will help you understand the situation as the children see it and to discover with them about what to do next.
- 4) Restate problem - repeat what the children have said to convey that their point of view has been heard; it also allows more time for emotions to settle.
- 5) Ask for feedback and ideas to solve problems - open a dialogue with the children to consider various solutions to the problem; help them consider the consequences of their suggestions.
- 6) Give support - be there to help the children carry out the solution (Graves, 1996).

Children who learn how to problem solve and deal with conflict are self-confident. They also expand their self-understanding and social-interaction skills.

*Scott D. Scheer, Ph.D.*

*State Extension Specialist, Preadolescent Education  
4-H Youth Development, The Ohio State University.*



## Coconut Covered Bananas

### Ingredients:

- 1 orange
- 2 bananas
- 1 cup of shredded coconut

### Directions:

1. Cut bananas into several chunks
2. Cut an orange, squeeze some of the juice into a saucer and roll the banana in it's juice. (Then eat the orange)
3. Then roll the banana in coconut, cover well.

*Mooney, B. J. (2010). Coconut covered bananas by Jasna. Cooking with Kids. Retrieved from <http://www.childrensrecipes.com/cocunutbananas.htm>*



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**Editors:** Bruce P. Zimmer, Extension Educator, 4-H Youth Development, Monroe County, 101 North Main Street, Room 17, Woodsfield, Ohio 43793, Phone - (740) 472-0810, E-mail – [zimmer.2@osu.edu](mailto:zimmer.2@osu.edu); Joyce A. Shriner, Extension Educator, Family & Consumer Sciences, Hocking County, 150 North Homer Avenue, Logan, Ohio, 43138-1730, Phone – (740)385-3222, E-mail – [shriner.3@osu.edu](mailto:shriner.3@osu.edu).

**Design & Production:** Jennie Shaw, Extension Office Associate , OSU Extension, Monroe County.

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