

# UConn 4-H Explorers



## 4-H for 5-6 Year Olds

**UConn** | COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE,  
HEALTH AND NATURAL RESOURCES

EXTENSION

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# UConn Policy on the 4-H Explorers Program

The UConn 4-H Explorers is a unique membership category that is age appropriate for youth 5 and 6 years old (as of Jan. 1 of the program year). These programs require more adult supervision and the focus is on cooperative learning rather than competition. The UConn 4-H Explorers program follows a set of program guidelines based on developmental appropriateness.

It is neither the intent nor the objective of the UConn 4-H Explorers program to duplicate 4-H member experiences that are designed for older youth, nor to create a “mini 4-H” club. While the UConn 4-H Explorers is a component of the overall UConn 4-H Youth development Program, and UConn 4-H Explorers members are recognized as full-fledged members, they are considered and enrolled as a special membership category with regard to activities and policy. UConn 4-H Explorers do not take on projects: Explorers programs are activity based and not project focused. As the name implies, UConn 4-H Explorers engage in hands-on activities that introduce the entire scope of 4-H programs. They do not have any one specific project area that covers a year of meetings. 4-H Explorers experience the broad spectrum of topics offered by 4-H. Leaders are trained in the policy, curriculum, and developmental stages of 4-H Explorers.

The focus of recognition for UConn 4-H Explorers is participation. Explorers may receive participation ribbons, certificates, or other appropriate 4-H recognition which encourages continued involvement. It is a non-competitive program. There is no judging or evaluation, either individually or in a group effort. Special comment forms can be used instead of judging forms, for positive feedback.

There is a specific UConn 4-H Explorers Activity Summary, which can be filled out individually or as a club, instead of 4-H Activity and Project Records.

# UConn 4-H Explorers

## 4-H Explorers SHALL:

- ❖ Be at least 5 years old as of January 1 of the 4-H year.
- ❖ Be enrolled in UConn 4-H as Explorers, and their chosen project area is by default 'UConn Explorers'.
- ❖ Learn to get along with others.
- ❖ Explore a variety of interests through hands-on activities.
- ❖ Build self-confidence through healthy experiences.
- ❖ Have their own program activities, and do not just 'join in' with older youth.
- ❖ Receive participation recognition.
- ❖ Fill out the UConn 4-H Explorers Activity Summary. An adult may assist in filling out the form and it can be done as a group record or individual.
- ❖ 4-H Explorers may participate in county/state events including 4-H Fairs), where specific Explorers program activities have been put in place.
- ❖ Have Leaders who attended a UConn 4-H Explorers training and are approved UConn 4-H Volunteers.

## 4-H Explorers SHALL NOT:

- ❖ Have on-going projects of any kind (including animals, large or small)
- ❖ Participate as competitive exhibitors
- ❖ Submit verification forms, as they do not have any on-going projects
- ❖ Do not hold any offices or leadership roles in their club
- ❖ Hold voting privileges
- ❖ Receive any placing ribbons or awards (including Danish)
- ❖ Focus on a single project area

# Starting up an Independent 4-H Explorers Club

The strongest program delivery for 4-H Explorers is where all participants are of Explorer age (5 and 6 years old), meeting as small groups of children with a trained Leader. These groups explore a wide variety of subject matter through short-term activities.

If developmentally appropriate, 7 year olds may participate as a 4-H Explorer.

UConn 4-H Explorers can enroll as Independent members. The parent must contact their county 4-H office for training and curriculum.

# Incorporating a 4-H Explorers sub-group into an Existing Club

When incorporating 4-H Explorers into a multi-age club, there is a separate sub-group for Explorer members led by a designated, trained 4-H Explorers Leader. They can meet at the same date/time/location, but preferably with a separate room or area to utilize Explorer materials and resources. 4-H teens may serve as Junior Leaders but only under the direct supervision of the trained Explorers Leader.

A club can choose to not include 4-H Explorers in their club.

# Becoming a UConn 4-H Explorers Leader

Contact your county 4-H Office to notify them of your intent and set up your training.

- ❖ Become an approved UConn 4-H Volunteer: first by submitting the volunteer application.
- ❖ Complete steps 1-3 of the UConn 4-H on-line training.
- ❖ Complete UConn background checks and trainings as required.
- ❖ Attend a UConn 4-H Explorers Leaders Training (offered on a county level or on-line).
- ❖ Agree to follow the UConn policy and guidelines for the 4-H Explorers program.
- ❖ Use the recommended 4-H curriculum.

## Explorers Leader Training

Topics covered in the training include:

- ❖ Steps to Getting Started
- ❖ 4-H Ages and Stages
- ❖ Experiential Learning
- ❖ Planning and Implementing for Success
- ❖ Positive Learning and Group Management
- ❖ Curriculum Review
- ❖ Activity Summary Review

# 4-H Explorers Curriculum

Below is a list of curriculum for use with the UConn 4-H Explorers.

- ✿ *Clover Adventures: A Leader's Resource Guide*. University of Maryland, Frederick County 4-H Youth Development curriculum  
[https://extension.umd.edu/sites/default/files/\\_docs/Clover%20Adventures%20%283%29.pdf](https://extension.umd.edu/sites/default/files/_docs/Clover%20Adventures%20%283%29.pdf)
- ✿ *The Big Book of 4-H Cloverbud Activities*, Ohio State University  
<http://estore.osu-extension.org/The-Big-Book-of-4-H-Cloverbud-Activities-P451.aspx>
- ✿ *UConn 4-H Explorers At the Fair*
- ✿ *UConn 4-H Explorers Activity Summary*

The Primary Club Leader, upon attending the UConn training, will receive copies of the curriculum.



For more information on the UConn 4-H Explorers Program or 4-H in general, please contact your local 4-H Staff:

**Fairfield County Cooperative Extension Center**, 67 Stony Hill Road, Bethel, UConn 06801, 203-207-8440 *Edith Valiquette, Extension Educator*, [edith.valiquette@uconn.edu](mailto:edith.valiquette@uconn.edu)

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