

Understanding Developmental Needs by Age Group



Purpose

This quick guide helps volunteers and staff understand **developmental needs by age group** and apply inclusive practices so all youth can feel safe, successful, and engaged in 4-H club meetings and activities

Cloverbuds (Ages 5-7)

Key Needs

- Predictable routines and clear structure
- Short attention spans and concrete thinking
- Frequent movement and sensory regulation
- Hands-on learning and adult guidance

Inclusive Strategies

- Use a **simple visual agenda** and preview transitions
- Give **one-step directions** and repeat as needed
- Build in **frequent movement** and brain breaks
- Offer **sensory-friendly options** (quiet space, headphones)
- Provide **adapted tools** and pre-cut or template-based materials

4-H Club Members

(Ages 8-18)

Key Needs

- Growing independence and identity development
- Desire for choice, voice, and peer connection
- Developing executive functioning and social skills
- Varied learning styles and abilities

Inclusive Strategies

- Offer **choices** in roles, topics, and participation formats
- Use **clear expectations** and consistent meeting routines
- Provide **visual schedules, checklists, and timers**
- Encourage **peer mentoring and teamwork**
- Allow multiple ways to show learning (talking, building, writing, demonstrating)

