Take the Clover Challenge!

Want to learn about Family and Consumer Sciences in a fun, competitive way? Take the Clover Challenge! Imagine head-to-head competition with 4-H’ers from all across the state, while setting at a computer at a common site in your own community. The Clover Challenge is a competitive computer event for young people ages 12-18 who are interested in learning more about Family and Consumer Sciences.

Similar to a quiz bowl, the clover challenge consists of a series of multiple choice questions based on family finance, health, foods, clothing and home environment. Clover challenge participants compete in teams of two, three or four youth; these youth compete against each other in randomly chosen tournament-like brackets. Together, the team reviews the randomly selected question that appears on their computer screen. If their answer is correct, the team wins that question and takes control over a leaf of the Clover. If incorrect, the opposing team has a chance to "steal" the question and gain that leaf. The first team to successfully gain control over all leaves of the clover wins that round and goes on to compete against another team. Competition continues until there is only one team left.

The goal of the program is to increase youth’s understanding and knowledge of Family and Consumer Sciences subject matter and careers using technology to compete on a district level close to home. The top two teams from each district will have the opportunity to compete at the State Clover Challenge Contest June 25, 2007 at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Cost for the district event is $10 per team.

District Contest Dates:
- Panhandle – March 24, 2007, 1:30 p.m. (MT)
- West Central – April 9, 2007, 1:00 p.m. (CT)
- Southeast—April 9, 2007, 1:30 p.m. (CT)
- Northeast – April 21, 2007, 1:30 p.m. (CT)

What do you need to do to be a part of this exciting new event? Recruit a team of two to four willing youth and review family and consumer science project manuals, NebFacts and NebGuides. Contact your local UNL Extension office to find out where the nearest competition site is and to register for the event.
In today’s world of instant communication and travel, it is important to have a global understanding of other cultures. Learning about food customs of other countries reveals much about the history, climate, and geography of a region, as well as the lifestyles, religions and traditions. This knowledge of how other cultures are similar and/or different from our own also helps promote understanding between peoples. What we eat DOES tell the story about who we are!

Foodworks is designed for youth ages 17-19. The project is divided into six major categories or “bites.” Each bite begins with some general background information followed by four different activities. The “bites” are: healthy food selection, smart food purchasing, food preparation, food safety, food preservation, and careers. Of special help to youth is more specific information about international foods, troubleshooting pies, fixing food preparation mistakes, and using herbs and spices.

4-H Foodworks Around the World
Use these ideas to travel with your taste buds!
• Have youth look in books, magazines, the Internet, television, or restaurants for interesting countries to look for ideas.
• Have youth discover their own heritage. What are some ethnic dishes from those parts of the world?
• Make an ethnic dish together at a 4-H meeting. In the Foodworks Leader’s Guide, for example, there is a recipe for Greek Baklava that can be easily done as a groups activity.

International foods bring a lot of fun ideas for fair exhibits. One favorite is the International Foods Display Exhibit. This is a baked product from another country or culture with at least one accessory typical of that country. It can be very interesting to research what was learned about the culture and country, what makes this recipe unique to the country, and when this recipe is served. It could also be a great ongoing club project. Have your 4-H’ers share from meeting to meeting what they have discovered about the country they are researching and work on the displays during club meeting time.

International Foods Display Exhibits need to be displayed so that it will fit in an area no larger than 12” deep by 15” wide x 10” high. Don’t have something that size? Cut down a box to size and cover with fabric or wallpaper that coordinate with the theme. Look carefully for appropriate accessories to accent the country. Make sure it isn’t an irreplaceable family heirloom, as most places are not liable for items stolen, broken, or lost. Items that are creative and unique make better display pieces that dolls.

The food item that is displayed with the International Food Display Exhibit will be sampled by the judge, so it needs to follow the same criteria that is used for any other 4-H Food Exhibit. Make sure that a recipe is included – and that it states that it is from the country being displayed.

Specialty breads and pastries have their own unique challenges. Specialty breads may be a tea rings, braids, or any other specialty bread products. A specialty pastry might be a pie tart, puff pastry, phyllo dough, scone, biscotti, choux, croissant, Danish, or strudel. Have your 4-H’ers research some different types of recipes and review what the challenges might be. Tour a bakery to see how the experts make them! The best part might be free samples!
Skates, tricycles, toy trucks and cars, wagons and balls are among children’s favorite playthings. But in one year, according to U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates, there were 150,000 toy-related injuries serious enough to require hospital emergency room treatment.

Falls are the most frequent kind of accident, but many serious injuries result from children swallowing small parts or placing tiny toys in noses or ears, from exploding gas-powered toys, from flammable products, and from sharp edges.

Toys are the treasurers of childhood, but they must be created with care. When creating a toy of any of the Child Development Projects please consider these guidelines:

**Is the toy suited to the child’s developmental level?** Each of the 4-H Child Development Manuals describes the developmental level of the infant, toddler, preschooler and middle childhood. Make sure you review these pages before you begin your project.

**Think Big.** Toy parts should be bigger than the child’s mouth up to age 3 to avoid the chance of choking. To determine if a toy could potentially cause choking, try fitting it through a toilet paper roll. If a toy or part of a toy can fit inside this cylinder, then it’s not safe.

**Is the toy too heavy?** Could a baby be harmed if it fell on him? If so, pass.

**Make sure it is well put together.** Make sure tails are securely sewn, seams of stuffed animals are reinforced and paint is not peeling. Stuffed animals should also be free of buttons, yarn, ribbons, and anything else a child could yank off and put in his mouth.

**Is there a string or cord on the toy longer than 12 inches?** A cord can too easily be wrapped around a young child’s neck, causing strangulation.

**Is it sharp?** Make sure the toy you have made does not have sharp edges, small parts, or sharp points.

**Extra Care for Toddlers’ Toys**

Make toys for very young children with extra care. Playthings that are safe for older children can be hazardous to little ones. Keep in mind that toddlers trip and fall easily, and that, with infants, “everything goes into the mouth.”

When making a toy for a toddler or infant, make sure it:
- Is too large to be swallowed.
- Does not have detachable pieces that can lodge in the windpipe, ears, or nostrils.
- Will not break easily, leaving jagged edges
- Has no sharp edges or points.
- Has not been put together with easily exposed pins, wires, staples, or nails.
- Is labeled “non-toxic”.
- Can’t pinch fingers or catch hair.

By following these simple safety guidelines, you can create a wonderful toy for your next 4-H Child Development project. For more information, contact your local Extension office and ask for a “Judging Toys Guidelines score sheet.”
Empowering Teens

Empowerment can be one of the most effective ways for providing young people with opportunities to develop life skills. According to Webster (1998), empower means “(1) to give official authority or legal power to; (2) enable to; (3) to promote the self actualization or influence.” The strategy in the first definition can be quite effective provided that the young person has the needs skills to achieve the desired outcome. For many youth, the third definition is more suitable. Adults need to assist or promote building of life skills.

Adults often assume that “empowering youth” is a synonym for giving up all guidance, control and responsibility for a project to the young people. This approach is often met with failure on the part of the youth, frustration on the part of the adults and disappointment for all involved.

Here are some simple ways adults can empower teens in your 4-H Club and community:

**Make a long-term commitment to involve youth in meaningful ways.** Make them a part of the planning, organization, teaching, and working from the BEGINNING.

**Treat young people with the same RESPECT you treat other adults/peers.**

**Involve a DIVERSE GROUP of young people, not just the stars.** Traditional youth leaders are obvious, but a less obvious young person may have a passion for your cause, a better perspective of the issue, and a huge willingness to participate.

**Involve PARENTS to make it easier for youth to participate.** If other adults are invested, the commitment level of the young person increases.

**Recruit at least TWO young people to work in partnership with adults.** Youth are naturally intimidated by adults --having a peer nearby can help boost their confidence.

**Provide youth the opportunity to WORK ON THEIR OWN yet provide support when needed.**

More information on empowering youth can be found on the Nebraska 4-H website at http://4h.unl.edu/programs/leadership/YAPartnerships/yaindex.htm.
Robots have arrived at 4-H! Spark your 4-H’er’s interest in the areas of SET (Science, Engineering, and Technology) education with this new program that combines all the fun of LEGO®s with the essentials of computer programming in a leader-friendly environment. During 8 exciting weeks, students are introduced to the basic fundamentals of logic, critical thinking, and computer programming in an interactive and entertaining environment. Hands-on learning can ignite an enthusiasm for science that textbooks alone just can’t do. Students are hooked before they even realize they are busy learning.

The robotics program has three main components – the LEGO® Mindstorms™ kit, the ROBOLAB™ software and a laptop computer compatible with the ROBOLAB™ software. First, the students construct their own LEGO® robot called a “tankbot”. The tankbot is composed of the RCX, the “intelligent brain” and other various parts such as motors, gears and caterpillar treads which allow the tankbot to move around. Once the tankbot is built, the students use the ROBOLAB™ software to program the tankbot.

The ROBOLAB™ software uses icons to represent the individual tasks the tankbot can do – such as “move forward” or “stop”. Students wire these icons together within the ROBOLAB™ software to create programs. The programs can range from the very simple (“move forward for 4 seconds then stop”) to the complex (“use the light sensor to track and follow a dark line on the floor and then stop”). These programs are then uploaded to the RCX and then run by the tankbot to see if it does what the student thinks it will.

**Move Forward for a Given Time**

![Diagram of moving forward](image)

**Line Track**

![Diagram of line tracking](image)

Rental fees are $10 per child for the 8-week session and include the LEGO tankbot parts and a laptop computer with the ROBOLAB™ software. For specific information on the 4-H Robotics program and how you can get your 4-H’ers involved, please visit the website at [http://4htechnology.unl.edu](http://4htechnology.unl.edu) or contact Dr. Brad Barker at [bbarker1@unl.edu](mailto:bbarker1@unl.edu).
Jammie Jamboree, April 14

Join us at the Jammie Jamboree and make jammie bottoms on Saturday, April 14, 9 a.m. Bring your own pull-on pajama bottom pattern, prewashed flannel or 100% cotton fabric (no one-way design fabrics or plaid) and matching thread. Also bring your sewing machine, basic sewing equipment such as scissors, pins, measuring tape, etc. and a sack lunch. Open to all youth (need not be in 4-H). Adults are welcome. Sign up by April 11 by calling 441-7180. Jammie bottoms may be entered at the County Fair and styled in the Style Revue.

Important News and Notes

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