Overview of Express Guides and Training Topics

Training Topics Overview

Helping staff become familiar with 4-H curriculum is an important step in the success of any project. While Express Guides provide an overview of a project, Training Topics give staff hands-on experience as they explore a specific activity. The 4-H Project Training Topics briefly introduce a specific 4-H Project to CYS Services staff while other Training Topics focus on general 4-H content like conducting meetings or recognizing youth. Each Training Topic is designed to be used during a staff meeting or training day and takes, on average, 30-40 minutes. It is possible to link two or three topics together giving more consistency in some areas like Introduction to Curriculum, Essential Elements and Experiential Learning Model. Projects like Outdoor Adventures, Photography and Science Discovery could be combined to provide variety and expand learning opportunities for children and youth.

Using the Training Topic

Every Training Topic uses a similar outline providing basic information. The top section includes Project Name, Background, Resource, Materials Needed, and Preparation Time.

The rest of the outline is broken into programming sections with each section providing suggestions on What to Do, What to Say, and an estimate of Minutes each section should take to complete. The What to Say section is a guide and does not need to be followed word-for-word. Although some Training Topics vary, most include Welcome and Introductions, Curriculum, Staff Introductions, Doing an Activity, Sharing Ideas, Applying the Experience, Making a Plan, and Closing.

These sessions have been designed to follow the Experiential Learning Model where staff experience an activity, process what happened and plan how they will use the curriculum with children and youth in the program.

If a Training Topic relates to a specific 4-H Project there will also be a corresponding Express Guide that provides details about that project, the Experiential Learning Model and the Life Skills Model. Whenever possible use these models during training so staff becomes familiar with them.

Training Topics Include:

A Palette of Fun with Arts and Crafts
Aerospace Adventures
Bicycle Adventures
Citizenship/Public Adventures
Computer Power Unlimited (CPU)
Consumer Savvy
Entrepreneurship, Be the "e"
Exploring Spaces, Going Places
Exploring the Treasures of 4-H
Express Yourself (Communications)
Fantastic Foods
Financial Champions

Health
Insectaganza of Excitement
Microwave Magic
Outdoor Adventures
Photo Kids
Project Butterfly Wings
Reading Makes Cents
Science Discovery Series 1 and 2
Service Learning
Step Up to Leadership
Theatre Arts, Imagination in Action
The Power of the Wind

Visual Arts & Crafts
Woodworking Wonders
Workforce Readiness
General 4-H: Conducting Club Meetings
General 4-H: Marketing
General 4-H: Recognition of Youth
General 4-H: Introduction to
4-H Curriculum
General 4-H: Introduction to Life Skills
General 4-H: Experiential Learning
General 4-H: Essential Elements

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Whether it’s your first time working with 4-H project materials or you need ideas for expanding projects, 4-H Express Guides and Training Topics give easy-to-use suggestions and also make connections to other CYS Services programming.
Overview of Express Guides and Training Topics

Express Guide Overview

4-H project manuals are designed in an easy-to-use format but it’s hard to know where to start when planning 6 to 10 meetings around the curriculum. In just four pages, Express Guides start with a brief overview of a particular 4-H project, provide four project ideas taken directly from the manuals; give suggestions on how the content fits with the Four Service Areas; makes suggestions for how the project applies to School-Age, Middle School and Teen programming; and shows how it fits with technology, service-learning, character and much more.

Express Guides Include:

- Project Activity Guides and Target Age Groups – Lists the manuals in the project and the most appropriate ages for the project.
- Four Fun Activities – Taken directly from the project materials, four ideas are provided. All that’s needed to complete these activities are a few supplies and young people.
- Life Skills – Provides general information about the Targeting Life Skills Model and identifies the life skills emphasized in a project. See page 3 of this Overview for more information on life skills.
- Experiential Learning – 4-H programming is built on the Experiential Learning Model of Do, Reflect and Apply. Each Express Guide describes this model. See page 3 of this Overview for more information on the Experiential Learning Model.
- Essential Elements of 4-H Youth Development – Similar for 4-H and the Army, Essential Elements serve as the building blocks for programming. The Essential Elements are briefly described in each Express Guide.
- Related 4-H Projects – A list of other 4-H projects that relate in some way to the project being led is included.
- Integrating Technology – Lists projects and provides websites that could help integrate technology more completely in the project.
- Community Service/Service Learning Opportunities – Suggestions are made for ways to connect the project with service.
- Character Connection – This section serves as a reminder that character counts regardless of what people do and provides ways to demonstrate good character.

Express Guide Include:

- A Palette of Fun with Arts and Crafts
- Aerospace Adventures
- Bicycle Adventures
- Citizenship/Public Adventures
- Computer Power Unlimited (CPU)
- Consumer Savvy
- Entrepreneurship, Be the “e”
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The Power of the Wind
Visual Arts & Crafts
Woodworking Wonders
Workforce Readiness

Targeting Life Skills Model

“Skills that help an individual to be successful in living a productive and satisfying life” are identified as Life Skills (Pat Hendricks, Iowa State University, 1999). The Targeting Life Skills Model shows two types of skills young people gain: subject-matter skills and life skills.

- Subject-Matter Skills (content skills) are the first-level skills learned that are directly related to the content. For example, learning the parts of a computer and how to access the internet would be two subject-matter skills that might be taught during a computer class.
- Life Skills are the second-level skills that can also be thought of as “assets”, the building blocks for promoting healthy youth development and well-being (Benson, Leffert, Scales, and Blyth, 1998). The life-skills related to computers might include self-discipline (it takes eye-hand coordination and focus to learn to use a keyboard) and sharing. These life skills can transfer to other areas of a young person’s life and can promote healthy development and well-being.

The Targeting Life Skills Model identifies the life skills that relate to each of the four elements identified in the 4-H pledge: Head, Heart, Hands, and Health and can be used as a tool to help identify the life skills to be targeted in a 4-H project experience. Many of the project materials identify key life skills for different activities.

Experiential Learning Model

The Experiential Learning Model involves a five-part process that incorporates doing something, reflecting upon it and applying what is learned. (4-H 101, 2002)

- Do – Involves a planned experience helping someone learn a specific skill.
- Reflect – Includes having individuals share reactions and observations and discussing feelings generated by the experience. It also involves processing or discussing what happened during the experience.
- Apply – Asks for generalizations from the experience. This is when the learner begins to connect what was learned to what he/she already knew and leads to the last step which is the “now what” application of the experience, encouraging participants to explore how the information learned can be applied to other situations.

These few questions help move an activity to becoming a more meaningful learning experience. Most of the project materials provide sample questions.