



CLEAVER KIDS



CLEAVER KIDS LEADER'S GUIDE



Developing 4-H'ers 4 Life!

www.4h.ab.ca



4-H PLEDGE

I Pledge:

My **HEAD** to clearer thinking,

MY HEART to greater loyalty,

My **HANDS** to larger service, and

My **HEALTH** to better living, for

My **Club**, My **Community** and My **Country**.

4-H MOTTO

Learn to do by Doing

4-H GRACE

(Tune of 'Auld Lang Syne')

We thank thee Lord for blessings great

On this our own fair land.

Teach us to serve thee joyfully

With Head, Heart, Health and Hands.

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INTRODUCTION

CLEVER KIDS DEPEND ON LEADERS LIKE YOU!

A hearty welcome to you, both new and returning Clever Kids Leaders!

If you are working with Clever Kids this year, this guide will provide you with some information for effectively engaging children ages six to eight in 4-H.

Six to eight year olds have characteristics that are distinctive from those of older children. They're testing their independence, but still require significant supervision, guidance and assistance in the activities in which they participate. They're learning how to fit in with their peers and are generally eager beavers when it comes to learning and trying something new. For children this age, it's a brand new world out there and they're wanting – and needing – to discover their capabilities and their gifts. Clever Kids, as a rule, are curious and love to learn and have fun.

Clever Kids are busy little people, always looking for ideas and experimenting with new concepts. Children this age need to be ACTIVE. They love to 'do' things (as in the 4-H Motto 'Learn to do by Doing'). You will need energy, patience and flexibility to be an effective Clever Kids Leader, as well as a passion for helping Clever Kids discover 4-H and the desire to help these children grow into future 4-H members. Being a Clever Kids Leader will present a unique set of challenges for you as a leader, but also has the potential to be a very rewarding experience.

Clever Kids will be just starting to learn about 4-H. They may have older siblings or family members who are or have been involved in 4-H, so more than likely your Clever Kids are already interested in 4-H. After all, they can probably see 4-H means having fun, learning, and becoming part of a group of young people who are involved in their community.

This guide will assist you in how to best work with Clever Kids. Understanding six to eight year olds and their stage of development, interests, and capabilities are very important. The information contained in this book will help guide you through the course of the 4-H year with Clever Kids.

Quite literally, Clever Kids Leaders hold the key to the future of these young people in their hands. Seeing these children explore, grow, and learn new skills, all the while having fun, will be an amazing experience to be part of! As a leader, you'll learn lots, too... and have a ton of fun throughout the journey with your Clever Kids!

REQUIREMENTS



Cleaver Kids: Who Are They?

Cleaver Kids are children between the ages of six and eight. Many of them are the younger siblings of current 4-H members. They may also be children from a family that has been previously part of the 4-H program, or they may be part of a family that is brand new to 4-H.

As you might expect, this group of 4-H youngsters is named after the Cleaver the Beaver, 4-H Alberta's trusty mascot. Cleaver is a beaver, of course, who lives up to the reputation of his species: industrious, loyal to his community, and has that tenacious 'never give up' attitude!

Cleaver is much like a six to eight year old child in many ways, and so Cleaver Kids can identify with the 4-H mascot. They enjoy being active like Cleaver, and, just like Cleaver, love to explore things around them. You can feature Cleaver's image in activities ranging from colouring to cutting, pasting, writing, and matching. Cleaver can help "guide" your Cleaver Kids through their year, how you incorporate him is up to you. Be creative!

Being A Cleaver Kids Leader: What You Should Know

As a member of Cleaver Kids, children can uniquely benefit from 4-H, including plenty of opportunities for exploring, growth, skill development, and fun! These children are being introduced to 4-H with the hope that they will become Junior 4-H members in the not-too-distant future!

When deciding whether or not to involve Cleaver Kids in their program, clubs are encouraged to discuss:

- ★ How are we going to effectively engage six to eight year olds as part of the club?
- ★ What club activities will Cleaver Kids participate in?
- ★ What might the Cleaver Kids' Program Plan look like?
- ★ What are the benefits for Cleaver Kids being part of the club?

Many 4-H clubs throughout Alberta welcome Cleaver Kid members until they are old enough to become Junior 4-H members at the age of nine. Each 4-H club has the ability to design their own Cleaver Kids Program Plan within the requirements set for Cleaver Kids by 4-H Alberta.

- ★ Once a motion accepting Cleaver Kids has been passed by the club membership, each club should design their Cleaver Kids Program Plan to best suit the needs of the club, families, and Cleaver Kids' abilities.
- ★ It is strongly recommended that clubs have stand-alone Cleaver Kids activities outside of 4-H club activities to ensure that age-appropriateness, sufficient supervision, and safety can be achieved.
- ★ To become Cleaver Kids, children must be between the ages of six and eight by January 1 of the current club year (October 1st – September 31st).
- ★ Cleaver Kids Leaders are elected by the club through the same process as other 4-H leaders. As a leader you'll need to be registered and complete the leader screening process in order to be eligible to work with Cleaver Kids. And, to further ensure the safety of these future 4-H'ers, there needs to be a ratio of one leader for every five Cleaver Kids. Keeping a close eye on children this age is important!
- ★ Each year verify the provincial registration fee for Cleaver Kids.
- ★ Cleaver Kids are NOT required to meet the Basic 4-H Member Requirements for club-activity attendance, record books, Communications Activity, Community Service Activity or the Achievement Activity.
- ★ Cleaver Kids cannot make a personal profit from their mini projects.
 - Cleaver Kids can donate to a charity or cause, or the club.
 - Cleaver Kids may participate in CLUB fundraising initiatives.
- ★ Cleaver Kid activities can be tracked at club level. Cleaver Kid activities and years of tenure are not utilized or counted in 4-H yearly diaries and/or for 4-H scholarship purpose as junior, intermediate and senior members can.

- ★ Six to Eight year olds are Cleaver Kids.
- ★ The decision to involve Cleaver Kids at district or regional events is at the sole discretion of that specific district or region. Decisions of the district and/or region must be respected.
- ★ 4-H Clubs have the ability be creative and develop their own Cleaver Kids plan while incorporating the key areas of skill development.

Cleaver Kids: Key Areas of Skill Development

4-H Alberta has identified 4 areas of skill development that should be the focus of planned activities for Cleaver Kids and should be reflected in each of the goals set for the Cleaver Kids in the yearly Program Plan.

The 4 key skill development areas are:

1. **Developing new friendships** – Children this age are learning how to interact with others and are beginning to form friendships. Being able to create an environment for nurturing and developing new friendships with peers, adults, and fellow members is a primary goal of Cleaver Kids. Forming personal connections is also an effective way to increase engagement and retention in the 4-H program. By making new friends, Cleaver Kids will be more likely to continue their tenure with the group and also move forward with their 4-H careers. Learning, sharing, and experiencing new things with friends is a great way to ensure that everyone has fun, takes away new knowledge and skills, and makes memories that will last for years to come!
2. **Creating a sense of belonging to the club and community** – Cleaver Kids, because of their stage of development, are egocentric and largely focused on themselves. 4-H provides the opportunity for children this age to learn about working together and to think beyond their individual needs and desires. In 4-H, we focus on the strength of teamwork and communication, making connections with those around us, and contributing to the well-being of communities.
3. **Development of listening skills and the ability to express themselves** – With the limited attention spans of children this age, helping Cleaver Kids to learn how to listen and to begin developing communication skills should be emphasized. Cleaver Kids learn the basics of communicating with others through various activities and have plenty of opportunities for self-expression through artwork, games, or other creative activities you plan throughout the year.
4. **The ability to set goals, track progress, and celebrate achievements** – Keeping records and evaluating the results are an inherent part of 4-H. These skills and habits can be taught beginning at the Cleaver Kids level. For this age group, goals are simple and can be few in number. What's important is that the goals that are set are appropriate and achievable for the age group, and that they are flexible enough for every child's unique needs and abilities. There are so many things a Cleaver Kid can learn!

Tracking progress for Cleaver Kids is not necessarily formal or rigid, it is simply a way for leaders and parents to make sure that the group is on their way to attaining goals, developing skills, and having a successful and fun year.

Celebrating achievements- This is a way to recognize Cleaver Kids as they grow and learn, and also a way to let them know they are doing a great job. This will encourage them to continue participating with enthusiasm and give them something to look forward to and work toward. 'I feel good about 4-H' and 'I feel good about me' are your aims for every Cleaver Kid!

Cleaver Kids and the 4-H Club

4-H Alberta recognizes the potential benefits of involving children of this age in 4-H at the club level in their own unique (and age-appropriate) way. Think of Cleaver Kids as preparation for 4-H, where six to eight year olds can learn to become 4-H members and develop some basic 4-H-related skills. The activities that Cleaver Kids may be involved in will be exciting and new to each one of them.

Cleaver Kids' involvement at the club level will vary from club to club. Regardless of the extent of involvement, it is important for the club to foster a fun and safe place for Cleaver Kids to explore and grow. They can be involved in club activities, at meetings, in fundraisers etc., just in their own unique and age-appropriate way. The safety and capabilities of this age group (e.g., attention span) will need to be taken into consideration when involving Cleaver Kids in the 4-H club. It is important for Cleaver Kids to interact with 4-H club members and be able to observe them as they develop skills while having fun in a 4-H environment. And just think of the potential for senior members in the Leadership Project for working with Cleaver Kids!

Create opportunities at the club level for interaction between Cleaver Kids and their families. Have everyone get to know the Cleaver Kids and their parents at activities that are both formal and informal in structure.

Cleaver Kids are future 4-H members! There are ways for them to be involved and contributing to 4-H at the club level. Your Cleaver Kids can – and will – surprise you!

Cleaver Kids should not be participating at the same level as junior members or have the same expectations. As a club you always want Cleaver Kids and members looking forward to future activities as they grow older in 4-H. Progression engages the child and their family to explore more options, have a positive experience in 4-H and stay involved with 4-H for many years.

The Importance of Engaging Cleaver Kids

Cleaver Kids is the introduction to the 4-H program for youth in Alberta. By providing a positive and nurturing environment for Cleaver Kids as their “first taste” of 4-H, we hope that they will become 4-H members at the age of nine, and stay with the program for years to come.

Cleaver Kids are at an age during which they are, through their experiences, forming opinions and values and beginning to decide for themselves what they want. Understanding how best to work with this age group in order to facilitate a positive and fun experience is an important aspect of being a Cleaver Kids leader.

Your club may wish to set some overall objectives for your Cleaver Kids program, in addition to objectives set around the four areas of skill development (outlined in this manual previously). These might include:

- ★ To provide FUN 4-H experiences and activities for Cleaver Kids.
- ★ To prepare and nurture future 4-H members.
- ★ To promote hands-on learning through active participation.
- ★ To encourage family participation.
- ★ To foster safety in all activities.

Networking opportunities are available to share or gain ideas for your Cleaver Kids yearly Program Plan. Cleaver Kids Leaders have support through the 4-H Council of Alberta, Regional 4-H Specialists, and fellow Cleaver Kids Leaders. As a leader of Cleaver Kids you are not alone, there are many networking opportunities and resources available. There are many resources already in existence that could be tailored to the skills you want to teach or mini project you want to take on.

Cleaver Kids is all About Exploring 4-H through Mini Projects!

Cleaver Kids will start to develop skills in the four key areas by getting a ‘taste’ of the different activities and

projects that 4-H offers. They can learn about what 4-H is all about, including the 4-H Pledge and what the motto, ‘Learn to Do by Doing’, means. They’ll have opportunities to make the connections between the four ‘Hs’ (Head, Heart, Health and Hands) and how what it means to themselves, their club and in their community. Giving children the opportunity to explore is what Cleaver Kids is all about: to discover who they are, where their interests and talents lie, how they fit into the world around them, their relationship to their peers, and their roles and responsibilities within their families and community.

Mini projects are hands-on learning activities related to traditional 4-H member projects that are appropriate to the development skills of six to eight year olds. These projects provide progressive learning opportunities that they can build on once they become junior 4-H members. Cleaver Kids are not to have one set project, such as photography, light horse, or gardening, like junior, intermediate, and senior members do. Cleaver Kids will be introduced to a variety of mini projects throughout the year to keep them interested, involved, and encourage them to begin thinking about what more they want to learn, as well as their futures as 4-H members! Mini projects are specially designed for Cleaver Kids, all the while keeping safety in mind.

Cleaver Kids and District/Regional Activities

Participation of Cleaver Kids at district and/or regional events is at the discretion of the district and/or regional council. Districts and regions choosing to allow Cleaver Kids to participate at events must have stand-alone Cleaver Kids activities, sessions, workshops, etc. that are age-appropriate and meet the required Cleaver Kids to leaders ratio.

A request for Cleaver Kids to attend an event is required from the club to a district or regional council well in advance of the event. Alternately, districts or regions may request the attendance of Cleaver Kids at their events. A district and/or regional council may deny attendance of Cleaver Kids at any district or regional function if they feel appropriate activities and/or resources (staff/instructors/prizes/funding) will not or cannot be made available for Cleaver Kids.

District and regions can set their own Cleaver Kids Program Plan, providing they remain within the current requirements set by 4-H Alberta.

At this time there is no provincial 4-H programming for Cleaver Kids ages six to eight.



WORKING WITH YOUTH

Youth-Adult Partnerships

Don't think you know enough to be a 4-H leader? Think again! 4-H leaders aren't required to be experts! All you need is the desire to work with young people and the commitment to helping them grow and develop. A fitting term which describes this relationship is 'Youth-Adult Partnerships' in which leaders and youth share the responsibility of learning. The days of a leader 'teaching' or 'instructing' are long gone for the most part (though this approach may still be applicable in some instances, particularly with regard to safety issues and/or working with livestock). Research indicates that young people now prefer to assume a leadership role themselves. This may involve finding information on the Internet and sharing it with their project group or helping a leader organize an activity.

When working with Cleaver Kids, many of the skills required to take on the leadership role also apply when working with the younger age groups: primarily, the ability to effectively guide youth and learn alongside them. Of course, with this younger age group, you will need to be more instructive than with older children (particularly where safety is concerned), but there are practices even in working with Cleaver Kids that support the principles of Youth-Adult Partnerships, including:

- ★ Encouraging and supporting young children in taking responsibility. Simple tasks, like handing out markers and paper, are responsibilities that children this age love to do. Ask them to help!
- ★ Encouraging and modeling teamwork. Learning to cooperate with others is an important aspect of the 4-H program.
- ★ Asking for their input and ideas. You can do this throughout the year, from setting goals to planning your Program Plan and activities. Of course, not all of their suggestions will be practical or possible, but they will still feel more ownership of what they are doing if they are allowed some input.
- ★ Really LISTENING to the comments and contributions Cleaver Kids make during your meetings and respecting what they have to say. Everyone's participation is valued in 4-H!

Understanding Youth: What Are They Like?

Some needs and interests are universal to children of all ages to ensure successful development. These include:

- ★ To experience a positive self-concept.
- ★ To experience success in what they do.
- ★ To become increasingly independent.
- ★ To be accepted by people of different ages – peers as well as leaders.
- ★ To develop and accept their own identity.
- ★ To give and receive affection.
- ★ To experience adventure and have new experiences.

Basically, along with fun and stimulation, what anyone needs to succeed is to know they are cared about and supported by others; to feel safe, secure, and valued; to feel and believe they are capable and successful; to know they are able to influence people and events; and to practice helping others through their own generosity.

Children involved in youth activities want to be with friends, have fun, make or do something useful, and know that they are appreciated.

Ways to Learn

Individuals learn in a variety of ways. Some learn best through seeing, others through hearing, but all learners are more interested and active if a variety of learning methods are utilized.

Reading – Young people will retain approximately 10% of what they read. Supplement printed material with other learning methods. Also, Cleaver Kids are in the stage of learning to read and communicate via written language, so ensure any printed materials use illustrations and are age appropriate.

Hearing – Children will remember only 20% of what they hear. The information does not need to come only from the leader – give young people a chance to discuss and share information they may also have.

Seeing – Youth will be able to recall 30% of what they see. Posters, photos, and exhibits are examples of this type of learning that encourage creativity.

Hearing and Seeing – Young people will retain approximately 50% of what they see and hear in combination. Challenge these senses with movies, tours, outings, demonstrations, etc.

Saying – When young people have the opportunity to personally explain something, they will remember 70% of the information. Being an active part of discussions and explanations increases learning dramatically.

Saying and Doing – 90% of what young people say and do in combination is retained. Provide opportunities for hands-on activities and then discuss the activities with children.

Principles of Learning

A leader's responsibility is to help children gain the skills and knowledge needed to reach their goals. Some thoughts that apply to all learning situations include:

- ★ Young people learn best in an atmosphere of warmth and acceptance.
- ★ Children must have clear, self-determined goals that provide motivation and stimulation.
- ★ Each individual has different abilities. The same learning method may not be successful with all children.
- ★ Learning requires motivation. Self-motivation comes from basic needs, personal preferences, and feelings of self-worth and belonging. External motivation is based on incentives, rewards, and

positive reinforcement received from others.

- ★ Youth must be actively involved in selecting and carrying out learning activities.
- ★ Self-evaluation is the most meaningful kind of evaluation.

Experiential Learning

4-H is based on experiential learning. This supports the concept of Youth-Adult Partnerships because experiential learning is a cooperative relationship between leader and youth. The experience alone does not create the learning – rather, carrying out the specific plan does. Activities are designed to involve children in experiences that require them to interact, analyze, question, reflect, and apply. The activity comes first and the learning comes from the thoughts, discussion, and ideas created as a result of the experience. This is the 'Learn to do by Doing' process!

The steps to experiential learning are:

- ★ **Experience** – Begin with a concrete experience, an individual activity, or a group experience – anything that involves 'doing' something.
- ★ **Share** – After completion, have the group talk about their project. Share reactions and observations. Acknowledge ideas, ask questions, and share information. Encourage children to ask and answer questions. Get everyone involved!
- ★ **Process** – Discuss how questions are brought out by the exercise. Talk about specific problems, ideas, and issues identified by the group.
- ★ **Generalize** – Find general trends or common traits. Draw out and identify the principles that are important.
- ★ **Apply** – Concentrate on how the new learning can be applied to everyday 'real life' situations. How can the new knowledge be used in the future? Each individual should have a satisfying sense of having learned something.

Hands-on learning is an effective way to engage children in this age group. It is especially important to introduce concepts at a gentle, age appropriate pace to ensure that all Cleaver Kids are able to learn and have an enjoyable time! Activities should be a fun and casual introduction to 4-H that cultivate enthusiasm and willingness to become junior 4-H members once they have reached the age of 9.



CLEAVER KIDS ARE SPECIAL

Age Characteristics of Cleaver Kids

To effectively work with this age group, you first need to understand them. Although each individual is different, there are traits that will be common amongst Cleaver Kids. These will include characteristics that are the result of their stage of development, as well as their general capabilities in terms of what they can do (i.e., skills).

As you read, keep in mind that no two children develop at the same rate or according to the same schedule (although the order of the stages of development

is usually the same). In addition, transitions are general. A Cleaver Kid who seems very responsible and mature at one meeting may be noisy and bored at the next. By being accepting of children at their current developmental stage and offering challenging opportunities to help them make the transition into the next, you as leader can help make 4-H a rewarding and fulfilling experience for your Cleaver Kids, at the same time that you help them grow and develop.

This chart offers a general overview of the development of children in the 6-8 year old age bracket:

| CHARACTERISTICS OF 6-8 YEAR OLDS (EARLY CHILDHOOD) | IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS |
|---|--|
| Are at a period of slow, steady growth. | Use active learning experiences. |
| Learn best if physically active. | Provide activities that encourage physical activity: running, moving, playing games, cutting with scissors, painting, pasting, brushing, and assembling. |
| Are learning how to use their bodies by mastering physical skills. | Use small and large muscle activities. |
| Are more interested in process than product. Interested in doing activities other than creating a specific product or 'doing well' in the activity. | It's okay for six to eight year olds to work on a project rather than complete it. |
| Are wrapped up in self. | Make-believe activities allow youth to imagine clearly what other people think and feel. |
| Are learning how to be friends. May have several 'best friends'. | Provide a balance of activities which can be done alone or in small groups that allow for individual attention. |
| Boys and girls may enjoy playing together. | Involve both genders in activities. |
| Thinking is concrete. | Use the senses to help children experience things. |
| Are easily motivated and eager to try something new. | Plan a wide variety of activities. Plan activities that take a short time to complete with each experience building on previous activity. Provide a variety of short and specific learning activities involving concrete concepts. |
| Deal with here and now. Interest span short. | Free time should be planned and encouraged. Move from one activity to another. Alternate high and moderate activity with low. Be very specific and clear with instructions. |
| Are naturally curious and want to make sense of their world. | Allow for exploration and spontaneity in activities. |

| CHARACTERISTICS OF 6-8 YEAR OLDS (EARLY CHILDHOOD) | IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS |
|--|---|
| Sensitive to criticism. Don't accept failure well. | Provide positive encouragement and assistance. Plan concrete learning activities in which success can be experienced. Set up situations that foster cooperation and teamwork rather than competition. |
| Have strong desire for affection and attention of adults. Are moving from dependence on parents to dependence on other adults. | Plan for small group activities with an adult for each group of three to four youths. |
| Seek adult approval because not confident enough yet to set their own standards. | Offer support and positive reinforcement. |

Things to understand about six to eight year olds:

- ★ Children develop socially and emotionally during these years. Some children may be shy and appear to lack initiative. However, as they come to know their leaders and peers, they usually gain confidence, begin to establish friendships, and become an active part of the group.
- ★ They are eager to be trusted with responsibility.
- ★ Cleaver Kids can show considerable empathy toward people and animals when their own needs do not conflict with the needs of others.
- ★ They are developing a sense of independence but are also learning from working with others.
- ★ Physical activity is one common characteristic, although they vary a great deal in the development of physical skills and abilities.
- ★ Some are slow and cautious about trying new things; others seem to accept any challenge that is presented.
- ★ Group activities should be short and allow for active participation.
- ★ Children this age have a powerful urge to find out about things. They ask many questions and love to play guessing games and solve riddles.
- ★ Cleaver Kids will enjoy listening to stories, but will not learn merely from listening to information. Their intellectual growth comes from exploration, testing, and investigating rather than only from listening.

So what can you expect the differences between a 6 and an 8 year old to be?

Well, sometimes there's very little difference! As we've emphasized, not all children develop at the same rate or in the same way. Generally, though, you'll notice that 7 and 8 year olds will exhibit fewer of the typical traits of early childhood. Their attention spans are longer. They'll become more independent and capable of following

through on tasks. They are better able to interact with others, develop strong friendships with others, and have better control over their behaviour. Towards the end of early childhood, children are less impulsive and are able to think more logically instead of only in 'black and white'.

But beware! Just as you think an 8 year old Cleaver Kid who you're working with has really matured, you will find that can change in a blink of an eye under stressful circumstances or if the child is having a bad day. Remember, growing up is a process which requires time and support from understanding adults!

Keys to Success

Positive reinforcement is the most important key in the development of youth. Positive reinforcement can be verbal or non-verbal. To be effective, be specific and sincere. Some examples are:

- ★ A pat on the shoulder.
- ★ Nodding.
- ★ Specific verbal praise.
- ★ Certificates.
- ★ A written note to take home.
- ★ Saying "Thank you".
- ★ A smile.
- ★ An enthusiastic and encouraging comment.

There are thousands of ways to show positive reinforcement. Be aware of the importance and opportunities – 'catch them being good and reward them' is a great reminder!

Challenges of Working with Cleaver Kids

Similar to any age group of children, working with Cleaver Kids has its particular challenges. Some typical characteristics of this age group are:

- ★ Teasing, squabbling, tattling.
- ★ Being boisterous, noisy, energetic, rowdy.
- ★ Dawdling.
- ★ Whining, sulking.
- ★ Having short attention spans.

Tips for leaders:

- ★ Keep the groups small, five to six children per leader.
- ★ Talk things over with children and ask for their input.
- ★ Hold brief business meetings .
- ★ Plans LOTS of activities.
- ★ Use all available resources, add your own ideas, and include lots of variety.
- ★ Let children grow as they will – respect them as individuals.
- ★ Encourage and involve interested parents – they can be a big help!

Setting Limits

How much freedom do you give young people? Children need to know the limits, the reasons they have been set, and that rules will be enforced. In fact, they will test you to see what those limits are if you don't tell them. When you as the leader are setting limits you may wish to use these questions to evaluate them:

- ★ Is this necessary for safety?
- ★ Is this necessary for the protection of property?
- ★ Is this primarily for the convenience of adults? If so, is it in the best interests of the club/the group?
- ★ Is this still necessary or has it been outgrown?
- ★ How can this be enforced?

Misbehaviour

Misbehaviour is a normal part of childhood. Children respond emotionally and impulsively to situations. As they grow, children slowly develop manners, moral conscience, the ability to reason, and control over their behaviours.

Some reasons children misbehave:

- ★ To get attention.
- ★ To test authority.
- ★ To fit an image – or they may be imitating someone else.
- ★ To assert their independence.
- ★ A lack of knowledge or experience.
- ★ A lack of understanding of expectations.
- ★ Feelings of rejection/being unloved.
- ★ Being upset, tired, hungry, or sick.
- ★ Feelings of discouragement.
- ★ A lack of confidence.

When first confronting a situation where a youth is misbehaving:

- ★ Take a step back and take a deep breath – this will help calm your emotions.
- ★ Behaviour is goal-oriented, so try to find out the cause of the behaviour.
- ★ When speaking to the Cleaver Kid, focus on the behaviour and not on the young person's character.
- ★ Don't take the behaviour personally and try not to respond to it emotionally or instinctively. Be as neutral as possible.

Steps to Managing Misbehaviour

1. Once the inappropriate behaviour has taken place, it cannot be undone. Make the incident into a learning situation for youth. Be aware that good discipline is fair, consistent, immediate, positive, appropriate in intensity, and effective. It may sound difficult, but it becomes easier with practice.
2. Take the Cleaver Kid aside privately so as to not humiliate him or her in front of others. Talk to that child about what has happened. Be sure to express yourself in simple, clear language and speak only of the behaviour, not the person. Express how their behaviour has disappointed you, using your tone of voice, facial expressions, and words. Don't forget, however, to keep the talk brief. Remind him or her how important they are to the club and to you. At the end of your talk, make sure that the Cleaver Kid understands why they are 'in trouble' and then finish on a positive note. (Keep in mind: a screened leader is required to be present when working with a child one on one).

3. Allow the child to experience the consequence of their actions. A good practice is to create the consequence. A consequence should be related to the incident, respectful all of those involved, and reasonable. One thing to remember with the use of consequence is that things usually get worse before they get better. Many children will try to test your commitment to it which can be difficult, but as a leader you must remain kind and firm during the test period. With a consequence (rather than punishment), the Cleaver Kid will develop responsibility for their own behaviour, as long as the leader lets them be responsible for solving their own problems. It can be very difficult to hold back and to let young children learn on their own. 4-H is a safe environment – what better place for youth to make mistakes and learn from them?

'An Ounce of Prevention'

This proactive approach can save leaders the difficulty of having to deal with inappropriate behaviour later on:

Set rules. At the beginning of the club and project year, the leader(s) and Cleaver Kids should sit down as a group and together create a set of ground rules to include in the Program Plan. If done as a group, it will give the youth involved ownership and make them feel both responsible and respected. The types of rules that should be addressed include how Cleaver Kids will treat each other, conduct in meetings, standards for participation in the club, and whatever else is important to both leaders and young people. Try to summarize rules into five key points so they are easy to remember and therefore easier to comply to. Post the rules at each meeting and if a situation arises, refer Cleaver Kids back to the posted rules that they created at the beginning of the year. (This process can also be followed as a club.)

- ★ **Plan ahead.** Thinking through a situation and all the potential hazards can save you a lot of headaches. Planning will make a big difference!
- ★ **Build success into your expectations.** Learn what works for your group and keep doing it!
- ★ **Be clear and positive** about your expectations and keep them simple to understand. If you're not sure a child understands, have him or her repeat what you have asked them to do and why.
- ★ **Provide choices.** Life is full of decisions! Giving children choices will assist them with the development of sound decision-making skills.

POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND:



- ★ Often good planning, a 'grab bag of tricks' and some insight will be indispensable tools to keep order.
- ★ View any mistakes as opportunities to learn and know that some children will need to learn a lesson over and over again. Remember that you, as a leader, are a role model and children this age will do what they see you doing.
- ★ If you treat everyone with fairness and respect you will quickly earn the respect and admiration of children. Plus, you will teach Cleaver Kids about the behaviour that is expected of them towards others.

As a leader, be aware of the early signs that a difficult situation is about to develop and be prepared:

- ★ If the group is bored or restless, use a rouser to wake them up.
- ★ If your group is overexcited, slip in a quiet activity like cleaning up or working on a puzzle.
- ★ If meetings never start on time because your Cleaver Kids won't settle down, five minutes before the meeting give them a time warning. Have children volunteer for 'clock-watching' and 'round-up' committees to help get the others settled so the meeting can start on time.

Guiding Children

Strive for positive guidance such as:

- ★ Helping a child learn to get along with others.
- ★ Showing a child how to behave in an agreeable way.
- ★ Assisting a child to learn self-control.

Suggestions for guiding:

- ★ Focus on the 'dos' rather than the 'don'ts'.
- ★ Build feelings of self-confidence.
- ★ Change up the setting to provide variety.
- ★ Provide choices.
- ★ Give the security of limits.

- ★ Listen to the child.
- ★ Set a good example.
- ★ Show your concern in ways a child can understand.

Children need honest and real recognition to help establish positive self-concepts. Some suggestions include:

- ★ Speak with each child individually during each meeting.
- ★ Ask your Cleaver Kids to help with tasks, or ask those who are capable to assist others.
- ★ Share enthusiasm with them about the achievements of the group.
- ★ Thank children when they are helpful.
- ★ Use non-competitive activities whenever possible.

| DO... | DO NOT... |
|---|---|
| Speak in a calm, kind voice. | Make fun of the child. |
| Speak directly to the child. | Give a choice if one is not available. |
| Speak in short meaningful sentences. | Compare one child with another. |
| Express requests in a positive way. | Be dishonest with the child. |
| Get down to the child's level – sit or kneel so you are face to face. | Make a child feel guilty. Accept them even if you do not condone their actions. |
| Answer the child's questions, but don't monopolize conversation. | Make a child feel inferior. |

MANAGING THE YEAR



Setting Goals

A Program Plan helps balance what Cleaver Kids learn through the activities they participate in. It also assists the leader with thinking through the program from beginning to end for the entire year. In the spirit of Youth-Adult Partnerships, involve Cleaver Kids when setting goals. When they are involved, your Cleaver Kids will:

- ★ Feel their ideas are important and the project is 'theirs' (contributes to feelings of ownership and pride).
- ★ Learn to express their ideas and opinions.
- ★ Have opportunities to set attainable goals.
- ★ Learn to make decisions.
- ★ Gain respect for other group members and their leader.
- ★ Work together as a group and a club, and come to understand the value of teamwork.
- ★ Learn about 4-H, the projects, expectations and opportunities.
- ★ Develop a greater appreciation of the values and benefits of the 4-H program.

It is important to share goals and plans with parents. Their understanding and cooperation will ensure smooth operation as the plan is put into action. Just as it is in families, in business and anywhere people come together, communication is the key to success! Decide on the number of times your group will meet during the club year and set a few goals.

The goals you set should be:

- ★ **Attainable** (Your group should meet enough times to complete the goals set out);
- ★ **Measurable** (Were the goals and corresponding objectives met?); and
- ★ **Reasonable** (Recognize and understand the development level of your age group. Are they capable of completing the activities?)

FUN is important! Choose activities so that children feel they are having fun while learning. Keep activities light and informal. Games, role playing, and other hands-on activities are excellent ways to learn and have fun at the same time.

In order to encourage Cleaver Kids as much as possible, goals for this age group should be simple and achievable. The goals should incorporate the four key skill development areas identified previously in this manual which include:

1. Developing new friendships
2. Gaining a sense of belonging to the club and the community
3. Working on listening skills and the ability to express themselves
4. The ability to set goals, track progress, and celebrate achievements.

The very act of setting goals will start you out on the road to skill development! In fact, many of goals you set may accomplish more than one of the key skills.

Here's an example of goals and the key skill development area(s) the goals may achieve:

| GOAL | SKILL(S) ACHIEVED |
|---|--|
| Learn to recite the 4-H Pledge with the group by the end of the 4-H year. | Gaining a sense of belonging to the club; Working on ability to express themselves; Setting goals, tracking progress, and celebrating achievements |
| Learn the name of a 4-H member in my club. | Making new friendships. Setting goals, tracking progress and celebrating achievements |
| Explore two Mini Projects | Setting goals, tracking progress, and celebrating achievements |
| HAVE FUN! | Establishing new friendships; Gaining a sense of belonging to the club. Setting goals, tracking progress and celebrating achievements |

Within the mini projects there will also be plenty of opportunities to address the four skill development areas. Be sure to identify opportunities to help Cleaver Kids learn these new skills and practice what they have learned.

Tracking Progress

Use your Cleaver Kids goals as a guideline to track your progress during the year. Tracking progress can be through a club designed activity book, stickers for achievement, a flow chart – whatever works for you and your group! As goals are achieved, reward and congratulate Cleaver Kids. Each group will be able to determine how to track progress of the children throughout the year.

Sample progress tracking related to skill of Self Expression themselves:

1. Set the goal ‘Learn the 4-H Pledge’.
2. Track Cleaver Kids’ progress by reciting the pledge on Day 1 and record “I recited the pledge and learned the actions”. On Day 2 record, “I recited the pledge, with actions, along with my fellow Cleaver Kids and Cleaver Kids Leader”. Day 3: “I recited the pledge, with actions, at a club meeting”.

Celebrate the achievement by putting a “You Did it!” sticker in their Cleaver Kids notebook or scrapbook.

Programming and Planning

Taking into account the stages of development and skill levels of Cleaver Kids, you’ll need to consider the following when planning for your project year:

- ★ Boundless energy requires adequate space for the development of skills, interests, and activities that will be stimulated by active imaginations.
- ★ As children explore their abilities and interests, they gain self-confidence and self-reliance. It is crucial that, as leaders, we help them build their self-esteem.
- ★ The ‘try anything once’ attitude of most children in this age group urges them to act in impulsive ways. Caution may need to be advised.
- ★ BELONGING is important. To be accepted, a child needs to ‘act his/her age’ as defined and seen by peers.
- ★ Children need to feel approval and acceptance.
- ★ Children must understand aims and goals if discipline is to be meaningful, helpful and effective.
- ★ Create an atmosphere where children can be children.
- ★ Focus on the child as a whole, not just the learning activity at hand.
- ★ Emphasize success and minimize failure. It is hard for children of this age to lose. Egos are not ready to take too many blows – show appreciation for all efforts.

- ★ Provide opportunities, situations and surroundings that are stimulating.
- ★ Create opportunities that keep both boys and girls enthusiastic and involved.
- ★ Design activities that are:
 - Hands-on, using many different senses.
 - Short (most activities should be completed during the meeting).
 - Uncomplicated.
 - Stimulating.
 - Varied.
 - Open-minded (so children can approach them at their own level).
 - Skill-building (physical, social or emotional).
 - FUN.

Cleaver Kids and Club Meetings

The extent to which Cleaver Kids are involved in your club meetings will vary from club to club, though there should be at least some involvement so that these future 4-H members have additional opportunities to learn how 4-H clubs operate. Start them off on the right foot!

It can be really hard at first because they are very young and may not have long attention spans. Is your club meeting at a good time for Cleaver Kids to participate? (e.g., not too late in the evening) Your club may need to choose the parts of meetings that they should attend, or set aside another time when Cleaver Kids can interact with members.

Here are some suggestions that you can try out at club meetings involving Cleaver Kids. It may be a little slow at first, but once they catch on to how meetings work and what they need to do at them, you won’t be able to stop them!

★ Develop a Buddy System

- Pair off your Cleaver Kids with members – They should sit beside each other throughout the meeting. (FYI, the member can even be a Junior. Basically it just needs to be someone who has been to 4-H meetings before and understands the process!)
- The older buddies help the Cleaver Kids throughout the meeting. They can either whisper in the Cleaver Kid’s ear, or the President can even announce to the group, “Buddies take a minute to explain and discuss with your Cleaver Kid.” The older buddies can answer questions, explain what the discussion/motion is about, describe how the agenda item or decision will impact the club.

- This is a win/win solution! Not only are you keeping the Cleaver Kids informed and part of the group, you also are enabling the older 4-H members to take a leadership role in the club – something that we strive for in 4-H. Apart from that, you are helping to create new friendships. A friend is a friend, even if one is 6 and the other is 16!
- Alternate idea: If there aren't enough members, have your parents serve as buddies. You may want to assign parents to Cleaver Kids so they are not working with their own child, and switch up the pairings each time so that the child does not become too dependent on the parent during meetings.

★ Round Table

- Ensure everyone sits in a circle so all are part of the discussion.
- Make sure you have enough room so that all the Cleaver Kids and members fit around the circle. Parents do not have to be part of this circle, nor do leaders.

★ Use Your President

- Give your President the power to make a difference. The General Leader should have a conversation with your President and encourage him or her to keep an eye out for the following at meetings:

★ **Who is not contributing to the discussion?** If this happens, your President can ask specific questions to specific children, “Michaela, we haven’t heard what you think. Do you think we should make crafts at our Christmas Party, or go swimming?”

★ **Who looks confused?** If children look confused, the President can take a moment and explain to everyone what you are talking about (or ask you as General Leader to explain).

★ **Who looks bored?** Check in and see if they are okay, “Levi, do you have any questions?”

★ Break it Up

- If the discussion is really dull, have your President or another executive member lead a quick, two-minute game of ‘Simon Says’.
- Go really fast and try to ‘trick’ people. This will get their energy up.
- Only play one or two games that they can play at their chairs; don’t move to another space.

The key is to wake them up, not distract them completely from the meeting!

★ Keep it Positive

- Give positive reinforcement at meetings when Cleaver Kids participate. For example, “Joey, for leading us in the 4-H Pledge, you get a 4-H pen.”; “Let’s give Allie a “Woot Woot!” for helping out with this activity!”

★ Prepare the Parents

- Give out the agenda ahead of time. The General Leader and President (and sometimes the Secretary) put together the agenda for the meetings, not just the General Leader. Give this to your 4-H families in advance so the Cleaver Kids’ parents can go over it and prepare their children for the meeting.

★ Use Your Project Leaders

- Select a leader to be with the Cleaver Kids during the meeting. When it comes time to bring forward ideas, have the leader take a few minutes away from the larger group to talk with the Cleaver Kids separately. The leader can ask them to think of ideas to bring back to the larger group. This way it is a group idea and less intimidating for younger children. This process will take more time, but it facilitates Cleaver Kids sharing their ideas more effectively.

★ Give Them the Power!

- Be sure to make it clear to all youth that they are responsible for making their own decisions, even if they are not voting members.

★ Fun During the Meeting – and Afterwards!

- After the meeting, play some fun games and have goodies (after you’ve worked for 15 minutes on your record book or scrap book – that’s a good way to keep up with them too).
- Have 4-H families take turns making snacks for each meeting. Fill up on good food after the meeting is done!

Having Cleaver Kids at a club meeting may sound overwhelming, but it is good practice. These potential 4-H members should take part in club activities to learn what 4-H is about. Meetings where Cleaver Kids are involved may take a little longer until they get the hang of things, but the goal is that once they have a few meetings under their belts they will gain confidence and want to take part because meetings can be fun and interesting.

Keep it Safe!

One of your roles as a 4-H leader is to ensure that youth involved in the program are safe. Keep this in mind with regard to all your project activities, particularly if the Cleaver Kids are around livestock. 4-H Alberta has specific rules relating to Cleaver Kids involvement – see the 4-H Alberta website for more information.

Think ahead as to the potential risks of activities. Is there equipment involved that might be harmful, such as scissors or knives? Seek help from an assistant leader, an older member or a parent when working with your group. Keep groups small so you can keep an eye out for potential safety hazards. Find out from parents if any children have allergies or health concerns that you should be aware of.

Dealing with Competition

Competition can be good for children. Competing with others teaches them many things from setting goals to discovering who they are (and learning about their strengths and areas they can improve), to developing skills in working with others, to learning how to become a gracious winner and, just as importantly, how to be courteous and appropriately handle a situation when one does not win. But competition is lost on children who are too young because they simply cannot grasp the concept.

Children six to eight years of age do not do well in competitive activities because at their stage of development:

- ★ They will be particularly susceptible to feeling pressure to win – they need to win often.
- ★ Their short attention span makes it impossible for them to understand complex rules.
- ★ They lack the competitive skills to successfully compete.
- ★ They are not yet strategic thinkers so cannot develop strategies to defeat other people.
- ★ They aren't yet ready physically for physical competitions and have difficulty functioning in team situations.
- ★ They may become upset and take it very hard when they do not win.

Rather, this age group works best in cooperative settings where the focus is on competing for fun instead of for prizes or awards where a specific winner is selected. Children in the early school years are more concerned with the rules of games and how the games are played

than on winning. Yes, competition is often a part of 4-H, but emphasizing fun and learning will help members of this age group develop self-confidence and skills for life.

In working with Cleaver Kids, remember to:

- ★ Build and maintain self-esteem in all you do.
- ★ Don't overestimate the value of competition. It has limited value in the development of young people.
- ★ Emphasize growth, effort, and improvement from previous attempts.
- ★ Downplay winning by NOT asking "Did you win?" Instead ask:
 - "Did you have a good time?"
 - "What did you learn?"
 - "How do you feel?"
 - "Were you and your teammates good sports?"
 - "Did you support your teammates and the other competitors?"
 - "What would you do differently next time?"
- ★ Strive to keep a balance of success and failure in a young person's life. Too much of either can hinder development.
- ★ Encourage – don't force – participation in challenging activities that 'stretch' the child.
- ★ Provide encouragement. "You did very well". "Great job." "You improve each time you do this."
- ★ Take the child's ideas and reactions seriously.
- ★ LISTEN – Work with the child and really listen to his or her needs and concerns.

Emphasize the importance of fair play. What the Cleaver Kid learns in the process of winning an award is much more valuable than the award itself. Have parents encourage their child to participate for the purpose of learning experiences and not for the prizes and awards.

The Cleaver Kids Year at a Glance



Month 1

- ★ Leaders familiarize themselves with the Cleaver Kids program and understand the rules and requirements set by 4-H Alberta. Contact the 4-H Alberta Council with any questions or if you require any clarification on requirements when setting your Program Plan.
- ★ Promote Cleaver Kids to families in the club with children between the ages of six and eight.
- ★ Hold a fun evening for children and parents to learn about Cleaver Kids. Include a hands-on activity, some icebreaker activities, an opportunity for a Q & A session, and provide an overview of the program. Allow everyone to provide input. Be sure to talk about the skill development of Cleaver Kids!
- ★ Begin establishing notes for your Program Plan.
- ★ Register Cleaver Kids and Cleaver Kids leaders using the Online Registration System. (Don't forget that one leader is required for every five Cleaver Kids.)
- ★ Set the yearly Cleaver Kids Program Plans' goals. Always consider the key skills associated with each goal. Share goals with the club and parents and encourage and welcome input and suggestions.

Sample goals:

1. Learn the 4-H Pledge as a group for Achievement Day.
2. Make a new friend.
3. Play a game and do a mini project.
4. Go on a field trip.

So where do you start as a Cleaver Kids Leader? One good way is to get an understanding of what the year looks like for Cleaver Kids.

The Cleaver Kids year will generally run parallel to the 4-H year. 4-H clubs start up in Alberta in October and wind up at Achievement Day which, depending on the club, will be sometime between April and June. That means you will be looking at about six months of programming for Cleaver Kids.



Month 2

- ★ Introduce Cleaver Kids to the club at a club meeting and get them involved in a club activity. (Get parents involved too!) This will foster new friendships and family engagement.
- ★ Track progress and celebrate achievements (on-going).



Month 3

- ★ Introduce the 4-H Pledge with a fun activity.
- ★ Play a team game to interact with fellow Cleaver Kids and perhaps members. This will introduce them to teamwork and will provide an opportunity to be active.
- ★ Track progress.
- ★ Celebrate achievements.

The Cleaver Kids Year at a Glance Cont.

Month 4

- ★ Do a mini project to learn more about setting goals, evaluating results, and celebrating achievements. Example: baking cookies!
- ★ Complete an activity that utilizes listening skills and an opportunity to express themselves.
- ★ Revisit goals and celebrate achievement.

Month 5

- ★ Organize a hands-on activity to learn more about 4-H, utilizing a 4-H mini project.
- ★ Have an interactive activity to teach a sense of community.
- ★ Track progress and celebrate achievements.

Month 6

- ★ Have Cleaver Kids lead the 4-H Pledge at Achievement Day as a group.
- ★ Celebrate the 4-H Year and achievement of goals!

EVALUATION



At the end of your club year, review with Cleaver Kids the project activities completed and discuss which 4-H projects they could take next year to continue their learning. The importance of evaluation of 4-H projects cannot be over-emphasized. Evaluation serves to reinforce and reflect upon what was learned, to ensure that project goals are met and, to recognize accomplishments.

A record book provides a summary of the year and is a tool for reflection to focus on the development of the member and acquisition of life skills. Though a traditional record book may not be appropriate for Cleaver Kids, there are other options: an activity book/notebook, a scrapbook or a portfolio of work done throughout the year that the Cleaver Kids can share with others and their parents.

INVOLVING PARENTS



Parents are Important!

Often it is the leader who gets parents and children working together and sharing new experiences. Parents are a vital part of ensuring Cleaver Kids feel supported, and their cooperation is essential. After all, 4-H is a family affair that offers lots of opportunities for parents and their children to work and have fun together! The strongest clubs usually have parents that are actively involved, providing leadership and support to youth. Parents are particularly influential when it comes to which activities that younger children become involved in within the 4-H program.

Leaders can help parents:

- ★ Appreciate the 4-H program and Cleaver Kids involvement.
- ★ Understand the project requirements.
- ★ Share the children's enthusiasm.
- ★ Learn how to help their children accept issues and failure.
- ★ Become involved in the club.
- ★ Have a role at special events.
- ★ Feel welcome!

Parents who are involved can provide:

- ★ Encouragement.
- ★ Assistance.
- ★ Transportation.
- ★ Guidance.
- ★ Knowledge.
- ★ Resources.
- ★ Leadership.
- ★ Ideas .
- ★ Additional Supervision.

Successfully involving parents is a process that involves three steps:

1. Analyze the level of parent knowledge about 4-H. Become familiar with parents' interests, personality type, skills, and abilities.
2. Educate the parents about Cleaver Kids, 4-H, parent involvement opportunities, and encourage them to attend meetings. Involve both children and parents in goal setting for the year and in planning the club's program plan.
3. Get parents involved, whether as supporters or active participants. Ask for advice in areas where they can contribute and when they offer to help, involve them in meaningful activities. Keep parents informed of events and activities.

Recognizing parents and providing appreciation for the work that they do for the club is key to retaining them as supporters and active, involved parents. Be sure to thank them (and have children do so as well). You may even consider holding a special event for parents to recognize them for their contributions. A card, note, phone call, or personal thank you will go a long way toward a parent feeling appreciated and valued.

Tips on Better Parent Cooperation

Ask Parents:

- ★ For their consent when their child first joins Cleaver Kids.
- ★ To come together occasionally to discuss the club's program.
- ★ To attend meetings of the club whenever possible.

Inform Parents:

- ★ Make them aware of the goals of Cleaver Kids, 4-H and how involvement can benefit their child.
- ★ Tell them what materials or assistance their child will require to complete the project and how much you anticipate it will cost.
- ★ Let them what duties are expected of them.
- ★ Take the opportunity to discuss the club program and their child's progress. The parent's level of engagement and commitment is almost always directly related to their own child's interest and progress.

Involve Parents:

- ★ Invite families to events planned by your Cleaver Kids group and the club. Fostering a welcome environment and ensuring Cleaver Kids' families are included will go a long way to assisting both youngsters and adults alike in forming new friendships and will grow support for the program.
- ★ Ask them for help with activities for your group, parts of the club program they may be interested in, or have special affinity for.
- ★ Express appreciation for their help both publicly and privately.

Most of all, maintain open and regular communication with parents and encourage their involvement in their children's activities. Engaging the whole family in the 4-H experience will more likely result in the family making the decision to continue to be involved in 4-H in the future.



A CAUTION:

A leader needs to recognize that all parents are different, just as all children are different. Volunteers should not assume that a parent will take an active role in 4-H, but one of the responsibilities of being a leader is to encourage parent involvement and support. The time spent in developing relationships with parents can serve to bring families closer and provide additional help in working with Cleaver Kids/members. Thus it is critical to communicate with parents and share information so that they can decide the level at which they want to support their children and/or the roles they can assume within the club.

BUSY BEAVERS!



Activities, Activities, Activities!

When planning activities for Clever Kids, you will need to understand their capabilities. Here are a few suggestions from a Clever Kids point of view.

Here is a basic guide on what we're like:

- ★ We learn from play.
- ★ We enjoy testing muscle strength, skills, and coordination.
- ★ We are VERY curious, always exploring and asking questions.
- ★ We have not mastered multi-tasking, so one task at a time please!
- ★ We like to sort and arrange things.
- ★ We are just starting to develop an understanding of cause and effect.
- ★ We look for security and a safe place.
- ★ Rules and routine are welcome.
- ★ We like the company of other people, both friends and family.
- ★ We relate to our own experiences.
- ★ We do not deal well with failure or criticism.
- ★ Our attention spans can be short.
- ★ We like to be fair so that we are treated fairly.

Activities that we can do:

- ★ Cutting – with guidance.
- ★ Coloring.
- ★ Drawing.
- ★ Gluing.
- ★ Tracing.
- ★ Very basic writing and reading.

When you are planning for us, keep these in mind to ensure success:

- ★ Make sure to include plenty of FUN along with the learning – we will especially remember something that is fun!
- ★ Give us positive encouragement.
- ★ Provide opportunities for everyone in the group based upon everyone's unique needs.
- ★ Provide a sense of belonging and security.
- ★ Plan activities that focus more on the process more than the product.
- ★ Read to us.
- ★ Allow us to explore through hands-on activities.
- ★ We prefer non-competitive team activities.
- ★ We are just starting to learn how to relate to others.
- ★ Provide for active play allowing us to use our bodies.
- ★ Activities should be a maximum of 20 minutes in length.
- ★ Keep fine motor skill activities short because we tire quickly with these activities.

Remember:

All activities need to be age appropriate.

- ★ When program planning for your club, keep in mind that activities should differ between Clever Kids to Junior to Intermediate and to Senior 4-H members. Each age group has very different learning abilities and develop skills at different rates.
- ★ All materials and activities should be progressive in nature. By ensuring each year builds on skills learned the previous year there is continual learning for a child throughout their 4-H years, even within a single project such as Beef or Light Horse.
- ★ Children learn and develop best when they are able to manage the pace and direction of their learning, as well as when they are involved with the goal setting progress. They then continue to build on their existing knowledge as they progress. It is very important that they also feel safe and confident enough to extend and explore by experimenting, repeating, and making mistakes.

The following chart provides useful information as to the sorts of activities you might plan for this age group:

| | 6 YEAR OLDS (IN GENERAL)* | 7 & 8 YEAR OLDS (IN GENERAL) |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| MOTOR SKILLS | | |
| CUTTING | May start with large items, but quickly progress in skill. | No problems with cutting. May require safety scissors. |
| COLOURING | Start with large spaces, progressing to medium sized spaces by the end of grade 1. | Can manage details quite well. |
| DRAWING | Start with large scale with few details, and progress to medium scale and some details. | Can complete quite detailed drawings. |
| GLUING | Can use with supervision. | Need little supervision. |
| TRACING | Start with large scale and few details, moving to medium scale with a few details. | Can complete quite detailed tracing. |
| WRITING | Can print name and copy printed words. | Can print sentences and begin cursive writing. |
| COGNITIVE SKILLS | | |
| READING | Are learning to identify written letters. | Basic reading skills. Can read simple sentences. |
| NUMBERS | Can count and begin to identify printed numbers. | Can do simple addition and subtraction. |
| SHAPES | Can identify and name basic shapes. | Can locate shapes within other shapes. |
| LANGUAGE | Like to talk to adults and will interrupt when they have something to say. | Are becoming better listeners. |
| SITTING STILL | No longer than 20 minutes. If longer periods are needed, provide breaks or other activities. | Can concentrate on one activity for up to 45 minutes. Still best to break up time with a variety of activities. |
| TYPE OF ACTIVITIES | Hands-on by manipulating materials. | Can do paper and pencil work. |

* Since these would vary from child to child

Planning to Go Places

Working with Cleaver Kids, it's all about variety! Consider taking your group on an occasional field trip. Field trips are fun, special times and are easy to plan. Some tips:

- ★ **Plan well.** Know where you are going, how to get there, costs involved, and the total time it will take. Inquire about guided tours, best times to arrive, and related facilities.
- ★ **Share the plans and get input from the children.** Suggest to the group where they could go and why, what they might see, and how they could get there. Ask for their ideas. Don't make promises you can't keep.
- ★ **Be prepared and be safe.** Safety is a main concern, so make sure children dress appropriately. Carry a backpack with an assortment of supplies from Band Aids to tissues to juice – and plan to have FUN with the group!
- ★ **Be flexible.** Often a field trip involves some things that you can't control, such as the weather. Be prepared that your plans may have to be modified, especially if your field trip involves the great outdoors.
- ★ **Expect good behaviour.** Explain in advance what is expected of the group and outline the consequences. Be positive and praise good behaviour.
- ★ **Stop while it's still fun.** Remind yourself that this age group has short attention spans. If the trip is long, bring a variety of activities they can pass the time with. Don't overstay your welcome, or ask for too much in terms of the attention of the group.
- ★ **Follow through.** Encourage discussion about the outing afterward. Have Cleaver Kids share their experiences with the Cleaver Kids group, 4-H club, and their families. Ask them to write stories and/or draw pictures about the outing.
- ★ **Have parental consent.** Before the event, make sure all parents are fully informed of all details and have provided written consent expressing permission for their child to be involved.

Mini Projects

In Alberta, 4-H projects for Cleaver Kids are in the form of mini projects. Cleaver Kids is intended to give six to eight year olds the opportunity to experience activities related to a variety of 4-H projects – think of it as a ‘taste of 4-H’. This will allow them to identify their own specific interests and natural skills in order to begin thinking ahead to their future 4-H careers and what project they may choose to pursue. The Cleaver Kids program is NOT intended or designed to focus purely on just one project (e.g. just on Light Horse or just on Beef). It is essential that a sample of a variety of the many available 4-H projects are worked into your Program Plan! The following are some examples for specific mini project activities that you could try with your Cleaver Kids to develop the four skill development areas and accomplish your goals for the year:

Exploring 4-H

- ★ Explore the pledge – Learn what the pledge is and what it means:
 - My Head to Clearer Thinking – Discover project choices (what 4-H has to offer), learn about safety.
 - My Heart to Greater Loyalty – Discover when and how to use your heart (making the right decisions).
 - My Hands to Larger Service – Discover your community (visit community groups, participate in a community service).
 - My Health to Better Living – Discover where they live (farm safety, household safety, pet safety) and communicate through storytelling or sharing. Shadow a 4-H member for an activity – what do Cleaver Kids get to look forward to in future years belonging to the club?

Sewing

- ★ Understand basic clothing care – how to put away clean clothes in your bedroom and keep them neat and tidy.
- ★ Pack a suitcase to go to Grandma’s house – what will you need for an overnight stay?
- ★ Learn the names of the different tools used in sewing.
- ★ Do a simple, fun sewing project.

Foods

- ★ Learn about kitchen safety.
- ★ Discuss and share stories about good eating.
- ★ Prepare some simple and fun recipes. Invite parents to taste-test their children’s efforts.

- ★ Make a recipe book of everyone’s favourite easy recipes.

Small Engines

- ★ Discuss shop safety.
- ★ Learn about the different tools and what they are used for.
- ★ Get Cleaver Kids to sort and match nuts and bolts.
- ★ Have children bring their bikes so they can check them for safety. (Have a set of pliers, pressure gauge, tire pump, an oil can, and a few parents to assist with adjustments.)

Woodworking

- ★ Show Cleaver Kids pictures of trees and discuss types of wood, including names, level of hardness, uses (have different samples available).
- ★ Discuss tools needed to make things from wood.
- ★ Learn about shop safety and basic first aid.
- ★ Assemble a pre-cut wood project (e.g., letter holder, birdhouse).

Photography

- ★ Learn about the history of photography, from daguerreotypes to film and digital photography.
- ★ Learn about the parts of a camera.
- ★ Visit a photography studio.
- ★ Take pictures and make a photo cube or a photo cube mobile.
- ★ Invite Cleaver Kids to document a 4-H club activity (e.g. the Club Christmas Party) by taking pictures and creating a scrapbook or memory book of the event.

Small Animals

- ★ Learn care and safety of owning or being around a small animal.
- ★ Take photos of the animal and make a collage.
- ★ Write and share a story about a pet.
- ★ Organize a show and tell about their favourite animals: types, origin, etc.

Livestock Projects

- ★ Learn care and safety around animals.
- ★ Learn about the anatomy of an animal, what the different breeds look like.
- ★ Organize and clean a grooming kit.
- ★ Make and paint a paper mache animal.
- ★ “Shadow” an older member as the care for their project, train it, or prepare it for show.

IT'S A WRAP

So that's the basics! We hope that the information provided in this guide will be useful when working with Cleaver Kids, and we wish you well in your role as leader. Without a doubt, it will be a fun-filled, interesting, and very rewarding year that lies ahead!

Need More Information?

For more information about Cleaver Kids and 4-H clubs in your area, contact the 4-H Council of Alberta, your Government of Alberta 4-H Specialist or consult the 4-H Alberta website at www.4h.ab.ca.

You might try doing some of your own research on the Internet – there's lots of useful information out there! For example, DIY sites, pinterest, and breed associations.

A Final Note...

Thank you for offering your time and your knowledge to develop today's youth. These are young people who will become the leaders of tomorrow, both in your community and in this great country we live in. Your dedication and desire to guide these little bundles of energy (i.e., Cleaver Kids) is greatly appreciated!

NOTES:

4-H Council of Alberta

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