

4-H Age

Effective Date: September 6, 2006 (and earlier)

A young person in Kentucky may join 4-H at the age of nine and continue his/her participation up through age 18. Some counties offer Clover Bud activities for children as young as age 5; in those counties, 4-H participation will begin before age 9. (Whether to offer a 4-H Clover Bud program is a county decision.)

For many years we have said that the "4-H age" of a young person is determined by the age they are on January 1 of the program year. That is accurate for all but those who have a birthday on January 1. **When a young person's birthday falls on January 1, their 4-H age is determined on Dec. 31, the day before their birthday.** This interpretation is in keeping with the decades-old policy on 4-H Age in Kentucky and with federal ES-237 reporting.

Sept. 1 through Dec. 31 | Jan. 1 through Aug. 31

In 2006, this general policy was revisited and a clarification was put in place, particularly for the upper end of the age range. It becomes especially important when issues of fairness regarding competition are in question. We rely on the good judgment of 4-H agents as the means for implementation of this policy.

Agent Guidelines

- Follow this policy and share it with 4-H families and volunteers as appropriate.
- **Program Year:** The "4-H Program Year" in Kentucky is September 1 through August 31. (The 4-H Program Year may include a few culminating "events" that occur after September 1, such as a few county fairs, the Shooting Sports State Competition, national 4-H judging and skillathon events, and National 4-H Congress.)
- **Upper end of age range:** Kentucky 4-H Age is the young person's age on January 1 of the current program year. On January 1 of the current program year, a youth must be 18 years old or younger to participate in 4-H during that 4-H Program Year. When a young person is 19 years of age on or before January 1 of the current 4-H Program Year, that youth has completed their 4-H eligibility and may not participate in 4-H as

a member during the current 4-H Program Year. A nineteen-year-old may be encouraged to serve in an adult volunteer role. For example:

- 4-H age for the 2016-17 4-H program year is the young person's age on January 1, 2017. A youth who turns 19 years old before January 1, 2017 will be too old to participate in Kentucky 4-H Youth Programs during the 2016-17 4-H Program Year of September 1, 2016 through August 31, 2017 (except for the culminating events listed above that will be held in the fall of 2016.)
- If, however, a youth turns 19 years old on January 1, 2017 or after, that youth may still participate in 4-H since their 4-H Age (age on January 1 of the current 4-H Program Year) was 18.
- **Junior and Senior Divisions:** Some 4-H events subdivide youth into Junior and Senior divisions. Junior members are ages 9 through 13. Senior members are ages 14 through 18. Ages are based on their "4-H age" on January 1 of the program year.
- **Grade:** Participation in some educational events is based on grade rather than (or along with) age. Follow the specific requirements in those cases.
- **State Teen Council/Officers:** Requirements may be unique. See specific requirements under information on State Teen Council and Officers.
- For the **2022-23 Program year**, if a young person's date of birth is...
 - Jan 1 - Dec. 31, 2013, their 4-H age is 9
 - Jan 1 - Dec. 31, 2012, their 4-H age is 10
 - Jan 1 - Dec. 31, 2011, their 4-H age is 11
 - Jan 1 - Dec. 31, 2010, their 4-H age is 12
 - Jan 1 - Dec. 31, 2009, their 4-H age is 13
 - Jan 1 - Dec. 31, 2008, their 4-H age is 14
 - Jan 1 - Dec. 31, 2007, their 4-H age is 15
 - Jan 1 - Dec. 31, 2006, their 4-H age is 16
 - Jan 1 - Dec. 31, 2005, their 4-H age is 17
 - Jan 1 - Dec. 31, 2004, their 4-H age is 18
 - Jan 1 - Dec. 31, 2003, their 4-H age is 19 and is no longer a 4-H member