

### AGE/GRADE REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION IN 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS



#### I. Overall Policy

Grade level shall be recognized as the NJ 4-H Program's participation criteria effective September 1, 1993. This policy shall apply to every program in all counties, as well as all state programs, except where other criteria are indicated by law or national program requirements.

- A. *4-H Educational Programs* – 4-H educational programs shall be offered to all youth grades K-13 on a grade appropriate basis, without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.
- B. *4-H Club Membership* – 4-H club membership shall be offered to all youth grades 1-13 without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.
  - 1. 4-H Prep Club Membership shall include youth in grades 1 to 3.
  - 2. Standard 4-H Club Membership shall include youth grades 4 to 13.

#### II. Determination of “4-H Grade” Level

- A. Upon initial enrollment into the 4-H Program, all New Jersey 4-H members shall be assigned a “4-H Grade.” The “4-H Grade” shall be used to determine eligibility for 4-H club membership, as well as various programs and activities sponsored by the 4-H Program at the local, state and national levels.
- B. A 4-H member's “4-H Grade” is effective September 1 through August 31 of each year, and will automatically advance the next September 1.
- C. Changes in a 4-H member's “4-H Grade” shall occur only on September 1 of each year (see Section III).
- D. A 4-H participant's “4-H Grade” shall be determined as follows:
  - 1. In-School Youth  
The “4-H Grade” for youth who are enrolled in schools that assign grade levels to students will be the same grade in which they are currently enrolled in school. (Note: The member's “4-H Grade” remains the same throughout the summer until September 1.) This is the most common determination for grade level among 4-H youth.

2. Non-Graded, Home-Schooled or Out-of-School Youth

Youth who are enrolled in schools that do not assign grade levels, youth who are home-schooled, and youth who are not enrolled in school shall be assigned a “4-H Grade” based upon the following “Age to Grade Conversion Chart.” The “4-H Grade” will be determined based upon the participant’s age on September 1 of the current 4-H year (September 1 through August 31) and will remain the same until the next September 1, when it will automatically advance one year.

<b>AGE TO GRADE CONVERSION CHART FOR NON-GRADED, HOME-SCHOOLED AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH</b>	
<b>Age on September 1</b>	<b>“4-H Grade” from September 1 through August 31</b>
5	K
6	1
7	2
8	3
9	4
10	5
11	6
12	7
13	8
14	9
15	10
16	11
17	12
18	13 (one year out of high school)

**III. 4-H Members Experiencing Special Grade Changes**

*A. Enrolled 4-H Members Experiencing Grade Changes in School*

1. In-school youth already enrolled in the 4-H program who, after enrollment, skip a grade or are retained in a grade, will make a decision at the beginning of the new school year (September), as to their “4-H Grade” for participation in 4-H clubs, events and activities. These 4-H’ers may make one of the following choices:
  - choose the grade in which they will actually be enrolled in school.

OR

  - choose the grade in which they would have been enrolled in school if the decision to skip or be retained had not been made.
2. This decision must be made the same year as the change is occurring in school and may not be changed in the future.

3. This shall be a one-time opportunity. The change will be permanent and may not be altered at any time in the future, regardless of future changes in school grade.
4. The “4-H Grade” change will be documented by completion of the *Special 4-H Grade Change Form*, will be approved by the child’s parent/guardian, and will be filed in the county 4-H office for future reference in verifying “4-H Grade” level for participation in county, state and national events.
5. This decision must take place by September 1 of the new 4-H year.

B. *New 4-H Members Who Previously Experienced Grade Changes in School*

1. New members who skipped a grade or were retained in a grade in school prior to enrollment in the 4-H program will be assigned the “4-H Grade” which corresponds to the grade in which they are enrolled as of the current school year (as of the previous September).

C. *Grade Changes for Non-Graded, Home-Schooled or Out-of-School 4-H Members*

1. 4-H members who are non-graded, home-schooled or out-of-school may elect to change their “4-H Grade” based upon their parent/guardian’s perceived changes in their educational progress.
2. This shall be a one-time opportunity. The change will be permanent and may not be altered at any time in the future, regardless of future changes in educational progress or other factors.
3. The “4-H Grade” change may be made upon initial enrollment of the member into the 4-H program or in later years. The change will be documented by completion of the *Special 4-H Grade Change Form*, will be approved by the child’s parent/guardian, and will be filed in the county 4-H office for future reference in verifying “4-H Grade” level for participation in county, state and national events.
  - a. If the change takes place during initial enrollment, the new “4-H Grade” will be effective immediately through the following August 31, when the “4-H Grade” will automatically advance one year.
  - b. If the change takes place at any time after initial enrollment, the change may only take place on September 1 and will be effective through the next August 31, when the “4-H Grade” will automatically advance one year.

D. *Communication of Grade Change to 4-H Club Leaders*

The county 4-H staff who signs the *Special 4-H Grade Change Form* is responsible for informing the 4-H members’ club leader(s) of the “4-H Grade” change, and shall forward a copy of the form to the leader(s) of the club(s) listed in Section II of the form.