

## New Jersey 4-H Independent Project



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### Guidelines

#### Objectives

- To provide a 4-H project experience for individual youth with varied abilities, interests, needs, backgrounds, and situations.
- To involve youth in the 4-H program when a 4-H club is not available in either his/her subject matter or geographic area.
- To enhance personal growth and family strengths.
- To encourage adults to mentor youth and for youth to bond with a caring adult.

#### Definition

The New Jersey 4-H Independent Project is an individual study 4-H delivery mode which involves youth participation in a planned 4-H program as 4-H members without 4-H club affiliation. It is a self directed, planned learning experience in a specific subject matter area with limited adult direction. Examples of an independent project include self study, home study

courses, mentoring or “shadowing” with an expert.

In an independent project, a 4-H member works directly with a trained adult volunteer in an informal setting but not in the traditional group setting. This adult may be a parent, mentor, project or club leader, camp counselor, teacher, or paid 4-H staff who has agreed to serve as a leader for the project. The independent project leader must be approved through the New Jersey 4-H Volunteer Appointment Process and registered with the county 4-H office.

An independent 4-H project allows a young person to be a 4-H member and carry a project of his/her choice, even if it is not available in a local 4-H club. It gives the 4-H member an opportunity to study a non-traditional subject matter area, take a different direction in activities, or expand on an already existing project. It also gives the member the freedom to determine and complete his/her own project without being a member of an organized 4-H club. A 4-H member who is currently affiliated with an existing 4-H club may want to expand his/her involvement by carrying an independent project in addition to 4-H work in the club.



## Guidelines

- All independent projects are conducted under the direction of an approved and registered 4-H leader with expertise in the subject matter area.
- Members participating in an independent project must complete a *New Jersey 4-H Independent Project Application*. A *4-H Club Member Registration Form* must be completed unless the member is previously registered.
- Independent projects must utilize existing 4-H curriculum whenever possible.
- In an independent project, the 4-H member recruits an adult to work as a leader for his/her independent project. The adult provides guidance to help the member develop a plan for the project, determine how the project work will be carried out, and select a method of reporting progress toward specific goals.
- Evaluation should be conducted on an ongoing basis throughout the project, with the member designing the way to report progress toward his/her goals. The member should also plan to display, exhibit, or report on the work done in the 4-H independent project through existing local and state 4-H events.
- A 4-H member carrying an independent

project is eligible for county and state recognition provided that the 4-H member meets all of the requirements for receiving the award.

## Resources

Whenever possible, existing 4-H curriculum must be utilized. Additional resources are available through your county 4-H office. Several of the resources that can be used to work with independent 4-H projects include:

- *4-H SPACES Project*, Michigan State University: "Plan-It Sheet"
- *New Jersey 4-H Leader Training Series*, Rutgers Cooperative Extension: "Helping Kids Set Goals," pg. 415  
"There's More to 4-H Than Clubs: 7 Ways 4-H Reached Kids," pg. 111  
"Helping 4-H'ers Learn," pg. 411

## References

*4-H Independent Project Guidelines*, Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Middlesex County.

Cooperative Extension System Annual 4-H Youth Enrollment Report (FORM ES-237)

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## New Jersey 4-H Independent Project Application

**Instructions:** Application must be completed and returned to the County 4-H Office prior to beginning the Independent Project. Members not currently enrolled in a 4-H club must also complete a 4-H Club Member Registration form.

### Information About the 4-H Member

4-H Member's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address/City/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ (as of September 1st, \_\_\_\_\_) (Year)

Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

*It is not necessary for a person to be a current 4-H member to register in a 4-H independent project. However, if you are a member of a 4-H club(s), please provide the following information:*

Date Started in 4-H: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of 4-H Club(s) and Project (S): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Information About the Project

Independent Project Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please use the back of this form to briefly describe your project.

Name of the 4-H Independent Project Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Leader's Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Member's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I have read and understand the New Jersey 4-H Independent Project Guidelines. I agree to follow the guidelines in providing guidance for the project of the above named 4-H member and will be responsible for signing the 4-H Project Record.

Project Leader's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# New Jersey 4-H Independent Project Evaluation Guidelines

Setting goals, planning different ways to achieve those goals and evaluating progress toward reaching goals are all important parts of 4-H project work. Comparing individual project accomplishments with a standard of excellence provides a benchmark for 4-H members to assess their achievements. The following guidelines will help the 4-H leader and member determine their progress in a 4-H independent Project.

4-H Member's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Leader's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Is the record of the 4-H Independent Project an accurate and complete account of the 4-H member's project activities?
2. Do the 4-H experiences and accomplishments included reflect diversity and "in depth" participation in project work and activities?
3. Does the project report include leadership and citizenship activities and accomplishments?
4. Does the 4-H member share his/her knowledge and skills with others?
5. Does the project indicate specific goals and activities designed to reach those goals?
6. Did the 4-H member participate in county wide or state events? (For example; 4-H Public Presentations, 4-H Fair etc.)
7. Does the 4-H member appear to be working toward his/her full potential?
8. Do the 4-H member's accomplishments reflect progress and growth?

## Comments and Suggestions:

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