



Creating a Positive Learning Environment

It's important to create a setting where young 4-H'ers are encouraged to enjoy learning. As a Clover Kid, each child should feel valued as an individual and receive positive guidance and reinforcement. The following suggestions will help you create that type of environment.

1. Limit group size. Have one adult (or older youth) for every four to six children.
2. Ask parents to become involved in the program. Their cooperation is essential for success.
3. Involve children in selecting and planning activities. They are more likely to maintain interest in activities they have helped plan.
4. Change activities often according to the needs of the group. Begin a new activity when you notice children losing interest.
5. Sequence activities in short blocks of time. Vary the pace of activities so children do not engage in one type of activity for too long.
6. Children this age have a tremendous amount of energy. Plan physical activities using their large muscles. Burn off energy between quiet activities.
7. Have children do things as much as possible. Children talk as they learn and learn best when they are actively engaged in activities that allow them to practice, demonstrate, explain and apply their learning. For children this age, the process of learning may be more interesting than the finished product.
8. Promote cooperation rather than competition. Activities should promote developmentally appropriate skills, provide an opportunity for social interaction and help children understand and learn about fairness.
9. Use positive guidance and discipline. Children in this age group are learning self-control. Teach skills for appropriate social behavior, such as taking turns, dividing and sharing resources and working cooperatively.
10. Keep an eye out for children who may feel left out and who need help to be part of the group. Pair this child with another child and tell them they are each other's helper.



11. Encourage children's creativity. Most children are naturally creative. Often, however, their natural creative talents are ignored or discouraged by stressing conformity and sameness instead of celebrating unique and creative differences.