



UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
EXTENSION



# Membership and Eligibility

The Georgia 4-H program year is August 1-July 31. Grade level (for the current program year) shall determine participation in Georgia 4-H Programs, both in competitive and non-competitive events (effective August 1, 2015).

## Member Enrollment

Registration for 4-H is conducted through the local county Extension office. All youth must be registered in the Georgia 4-H Enrollment system to be an official member of a 4-H program. Youth participating in 4-H activities and events for education, recreation, or competition should complete 4-H enrollment. For educational and recreational purposes, 4-H'ers may participate and enroll in more than one county's 4-H programs. Youth may be a member of more than one club or organized 4-H group within their home county.

Youth should compete as members of 4-H in the county where they attend school or live full time (referred to as home county). If a youth lives and attends school in separate counties, the youth (along with family) should choose one county program to join in competitions, unless joining Dual Enrollment in the SAFE or Horse programs. More information on 4-H Dual Enrollment for SAFE and Horse Programs can be found at <https://secure.georgia4h.org/documents/DualEnrollmentPolicyAndForm.pdf>

In situations where youth would like to enroll in 4-H in a county other than the home county, the request should be made for positive youth development principles and not for competitive advantage. Refer to the 4-H Change of Membership Policy to make the request, found at <https://secure.georgia4h.org/documents/ChangeInMembership.pdf>

Youth enrolled in 4-H who also compete in FFA competition must meet and follow all guidelines in the 4-H/FFA Statement of Relations ([https://secure.georgia4h.org/documents/4-H\\_FFA\\_Statement\\_of\\_Relations.pdf](https://secure.georgia4h.org/documents/4-H_FFA_Statement_of_Relations.pdf)). In most cases, when 4-H and FFA offer the same contests, youth may not represent both 4-H and FFA in contests in the same program year.

## Membership Classifications

Land-grant universities, found across the nation, may specify 4-H eligibility guidelines for their programs. Eligibility for Georgia 4-H involvement is designated by positive youth development principles and will be determined for each program/activity/competition. The information provided on each program/activity/competition will describe the grade requirement for eligibility. Programs will be designated for youth no younger than kindergarten and no older than high school graduate. High school graduates are not eligible to participate in events once the 4-H year ends on July 31 of the year of their high school graduation.

## Grade-level Classification

*Youth attending a public or private institution* - For youth who attend a public or private educational institution, grade level is determined by the grade in which youth are currently enrolled.

*Non-Graded or Home-School Youth (not enrolled in public or private school)* - Youth who have not graduated high school, or are enrolled in schools that do not assign grade

levels, or who are home schooled, shall be assigned a grade level based upon the following age to grade conversion chart. The 4-H grade will be determined based on the participant's age as of September 1 of the current 4-H year.

**Age to 4-H Grade Conversion Chart**

Age on September 1	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
4-H Grade Equivalent	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

*Early Membership* - Some counties may offer a variety of programming for youth prior to 4<sup>th</sup> grade, but not prior to Kindergarten. When livestock programs are offered, youth in grades 1-3 are eligible to show lambs, goats, and ewes. Youth who are 3<sup>rd</sup> graders may show swine. For further clarification on livestock eligibility, visit <https://secure.georgia4h.org/documents/LivestockAgeGradeEligibility.pdf>

### **Special Circumstances**

Youth with special circumstances may be allowed to enroll in 4-H or seek an exception to the eligibility guidelines with the approval of the State 4-H Leader. Requests for an exception should be made from the County Extension Office to the State 4-H Leader and include a statement of circumstance. The exceptions could include:

1. Youth in a non-graded system who have special circumstances for advancing a grade or repeating a grade may enroll in a grade other than the one specified.
2. Youth who have not reached their eighteenth birthday by September 1 but have graduated high school and are not enrolled in a post-secondary institution.
3. Youth in the twelfth grade who graduate mid-year may request to continue participation through July 31.

### **Event and Program Considerations**

Each event or program in Georgia 4-H will have a grade level established. This grade requirement can be found with the eligibility requirements for those events. Also, additional member forms may be required based on the specifications of the activity.

### **National 4-H Event Eligibility**

Note that national events may have additional rules and requirements that govern their events and contests.

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*Updated 9/9/2025. This document updates and combines the previous versions of Membership and Enrollment and Eligibility for 4-H Membership and Competitive Events.*