

How Can You Discipline Disruptive Club Members?

Players always respond better to positive coaching techniques. Reward your players positive behavior and plan appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior. You should never use physical or verbal punishment to discipline disruptive club members.

A [4-H Youth Code of Conduct](#) is a tool that you may want to use with your club members to review behavior expectations annually and/or to address specific behavior or conduct issues. You should contact your [County Extension Educator](#) prior to using or developing a 4-H Code of Youth Conduct for your club.

Do not penalize! Praise positive team behavior and player attitudes!

A well-planned 4-H club program and clear expectations for 4-H club members and parent/legal guardians should minimize most behavior problems. However, for more behavior management strategies, refer to [Effective Behavior Management](#), Ohio 4-H Fact Sheet #30 and [Managing Conflict Creatively](#), Ohio 4-H Fact Sheet #27.

How Do You Respond to Unacceptable Behavior in Your 4-H Club?

1. Ask yourself, "Whose problem is this really?" Is the member(s) behavior annoying you or is it disrupting the 4-H club experience for the majority of the members. Is the behavior normal for the child's age? What underlying issues may be causing the behavior problem? You may need to talk to the member's parent to find answers to some of these questions.
2. Use the least obtrusive discipline measure possible. Don't cause a scene that causes more disruption than the original problem. Avoid verbally singling the member out in front of the 4-H club - rather use eye contact or move towards the disruptive child without pointing out or saying the child's name. Simple body language changes will often cause a child to alter his/her behavior.
3. Consider laws and liability issues. You are dealing with other parent's children not your own. Only use discipline methods that are positive and acceptable. If you have tried a variety of effective behavior management strategies without success, ask the child's parent how he or she would address their child's negative behavior.
4. Be firm, but fair and avoid negative emotions towards the member. Do not be harsh and inconsistent in your club behavior management strategies. Do not play favoritism. Always engage the child in explaining expectations and understanding consequences associated with unacceptable behavior.

Can 4-H Members Be Sued or Charged?

When warranted (i.e., violation of Ohio laws), 4-H members inappropriate behavior may be turned over to the proper law enforcement authorities. This includes situations involving minors and alcohol and/or illegal drugs, tobacco products, sexual activity, physical harm to self or others, theft, destruction of property, etc. Behavior that warrants investigation and/or action by law enforcement can potentially lead to litigation. If you are dealing with member behavior issues that involve violation of Ohio law, you must contact your county 4-H Youth Development Extension Educator immediately.

Can You Dismiss a 4-H Member?

4-H club experiences should always focus on positive youth development opportunities for all youth, even those that may be struggling with behavior issues. If you have tried a variety of behavior management strategies with no success in correcting the member's unacceptable behavior, your next step is to contact your county 4-H Youth Development Extension Educator for help and support in dealing with the behavior management challenge. Sometimes, this may include setting up a meeting between you, other club advisor(s), the member, his/her parents/guardians and the Extension 4-H Professional(s). The ultimate goal is to find a mutually beneficial way for the child to positively participate and benefit from your or another's 4-H club program.