

Why Should You Never Be Alone With a 4-H Member?

Do not coach one-on-one, rather conduct all 4-H activities in a team setting with at least two adults (non-4-H members) over the age of 18 working with members. While there are no guarantees, following these guidelines will help reduce potential risks, including accusations of inappropriate interactions with youth.

How Can You Prepare for the Unexpected One-On-One Situation with a 4-H Member?

You should be aware of your surroundings and make contingency plans for situations that may unexpectedly place you in a one-on-one situation with a minor (i.e. last child picked up from an event or club meeting; dropping off the last child from a group outing). To prepare for these possibilities, you should:

Never coach one-on-one.

1. Always plan on two adults, preferably club advisors, staying until all youth are picked up;
2. If having two adults is not possible, ask another adult who is picking up a child to stay with you until all youth are picked up;
3. When transporting youth, make sure there are two adults in the vehicle at all times.
4. Do not use teen 4-H members in supervisory roles of other 4-H members.
5. Use this guide to provide adequate supervision to all members:
 - 1 adult to 6 youth (ages 6-8)
 - 1 adult to 8 youth (ages 9-14)
 - 1 adult to 10 youth (ages 15-18)

What Child Safety Recommendations Can You Put in Place?

- Never leave a child/children unsupervised!
- Have children enter public restrooms in pairs or groups, never alone and never one-on-one with an adult/volunteer.
- Maintain appropriate child to adult ratios at all club events and establish a check-in system when engaging members in activities held in a large geographic location.
- Do not release a child/children to anyone other than the parent/guardian or other adults designated by the parent/guardian on the [Restricted Release Form](#).
- Encourage [parents](#) to participate in club meetings, field trips and events.

- Don't show favoritism.. respect and be considerate to all children.
- Be cautious of behaviors and actions (verbal and nonverbal) that could be miss understood by children/parents/guardians, lead to inappropriate relationships or be mistaken as emotional, verbal, physical or sexual abuse. Examples of inappropriate behaviors and actions include: profanity, inappropriate jokes, flirting, teasing, excessive tickling/wresting, touching unless to prevent an accident, treat an injury, console an upset child and then only in the presence of another adult and respecting a child's verbal and non-verbal cues.
- Always use positive [behavior management techniques](#) encouraging an environment of fun and cooperation among all members.
- Adults chaperoning overnight club events should be 21 years of age and older. Adults and youth should never share the same sleeping quarters with the exception of family members and then only when necessary.
- Use the [Risk Management Checklist](#) to ensure safety at meetings, events and field trips.