Information for Project Helpers

Welcome to the Illinois 4-H Wildlife project! This project is a collaboration between University of Illinois Extension/4-H and Purdue University Extension. The Level A and B project manuals were written by Purdue Extension educators. While most of the activities may be completed as they are, the manuals do contain some references specific to Indiana wildlife and/or Indiana 4-H. These are identified in the “Notes” section. Where needed, information specific to Illinois wildlife is provided, and readers are directed to Illinois references and resource materials. The Level C manual was adapted from the Indiana project books, but was rewritten specifically for Illinois. Hope you enjoy this challenging and fun project.

Positive Youth Development

Youth and adolescent development research has identified eight “critical elements” of youth programs that produce positive outcomes in youth.

- A positive relationship with a caring adult
- A welcoming/inclusive environment
- A physically and psychologically safe environment
- An appropriately structured environment
- Opportunities to achieve competency/mastery
- Opportunities for self-determination
- Opportunities to value and practice service to others
- Active participation in the future

By devoting your time and talent to helping youth in the Wildlife Project, you have already shown that you care. Here are some things you can do to maintain a healthy learning environment:

- Learn every youth’s name; call them by name.
- Divide your attention equally among all the members of the group.
- Allow everyone to speak his or her mind without being ridiculed.
- Make sure you have a safe place to meet, and that all youth have safe transportation to and from meetings.
- Set high expectations for behavior, and enforce them.
- Encourage youth to complete project activities.
- Share your experiences and stories with them.
- Allow the youth to help make decisions.
- Encourage community service activities, and explain why serving others is important.
- Emphasize the importance of planning for the future, including career planning.

Experiential Learning

4-H is all about learning by doing. This manual is filled with valuable information, but the fun (and the real learning) happens in the learning activities that accompany the text. One of your important roles will be to help the 4-H’ers think about what they have learned in these activities and how that learning impacts their lives. This experiential learning process helps kids build their knowledge and skills and transfer what they have learned to other life situations. Important life skills, like communication and responsibility, are developed along with knowledge of wildlife.

The five-stage experiential learning model is presented below:

Experiential Learning Cycle

1. Experience
   the activity; perform, do it

2. Share
   the results, reactions, observations publicly

3. Process
   by discussing, looking at the experience: analyze, reflect

4. Generalize
   to connect the experience to real-world examples

5. Apply
   what was learned to a similar or different situation; practice

Do

Reflect

Apply
Ages and Stages of Youth Development

Young Children (grades K-3)

Physical development
• In a period of slow physical growth.
• Learning to master physical skills.
• Lack muscular coordination skills.

Emotional development
• Are egocentric/self-centered (4-H should provide experiences that require sharing/cooperation to help children move beyond self-centeredness).
• Need and seek approval from adults (By the end of this stage begin to compare themselves with others; like to play games, but can’t accept losing).
• Intellectual development.
• More interested in doing things than in the end product (Need practice focusing on one thing at a time to move to the next stage).
• Thinking is concrete (Learn through senses by touching, seeing, smelling, tasting, and hearing rather than by thinking alone, verbal instruction should be accompanied by demonstration).

Social development
• Learning to be friends with others.
• Younger kids enjoy playing together, but by the end of the stage, boys and girls will separate.
• Fighting occurs but does not have lasting effects.

School Age Children (grades 4-8)

Physical development
• Very active and enjoy things that involve movement, cannot sit still for long periods of time.
• Beginning of adolescence is marked by a growth spurt that occurs across a wide range of ages, with females maturing before males. (Rapid physical changes are often a source of embarrassment for young teens.)

Emotional development
• Have a weak sense of individual identity (Need to feel accepted and worthwhile, successes should be emphasized and failures kept in perspective as learning opportunities).
• During puberty, changes in hormones and changes in thinking contribute to mood swings.
• Begin to test value (Justice and equality become regarded as important issues).
• Feel the need to be part of something important.

Intellectual development
• Until around age 10 or 11, think concretely in absolutes (black/white, right/wrong), but are beginning to think logically (new ideas are best understood if related to previous experiences).
• Around age 10 or 11 begin to demonstrate formal operational thinking and think abstractly, but still tend to think in all-or-nothing terms.
• Will intensely explore subjects of interest.
• Often reject solutions offered by adults in favor of finding their own solutions.

Social development
• Joining clubs and groups becomes very important around age 9-10 (will form clubs with a group of others similar to themselves).
• Have difficulty understanding others’ thinking, but understand the benefit of making others happy.
• Satisfaction in completing projects comes more from pleasing adults in their lives than from the value of the activity itself.
• By the end of this period:
  1. Ready to start being responsible for actions.
  2. Move away from dependence on parents toward eventual independence.
  3. Dependence on opinions of adults shifts to dependence on opinions of peers enjoy doing activities away from home.

High School Age Youth

Physical development
• Physical changes are accepted by most teens, and most awkwardness is past, although some boys are still growing quickly.
• Most females reach maximum height by age 14, most males by age 16, males gain muscle, females gain fat. Both sexes are still developing bone mass.

Emotional development
• Searching for independence and identity, usually achieved around age 16.
• Seeking emotional autonomy from parents.
• Younger teens have difficulty with compromise.
• Unsettled emotions are common.
• Take pride in responsibility and respect of others.

Intellectual development
• Continue to gain cognitive and study skills, can adapt language to different contexts.
• Mastering abstract thinking.
• Exploring/preparing for future careers and roles.
• Set goals based on feelings of personal needs and priorities, likely to reject goals set by others.

Social development
• Generally self-centered, but capable of empathy.
• Relationship skills are well developed.
• Dating increases and moves from group dates to double dates to couple only dating and intimacy.
• Acceptance by opposite sex is of high importance.
• Want to belong to groups, but be recognized as unique individuals within the groups.
• Employment and education fill the need for social relationships that were filled earlier by club and group activities.
Level A Notes

Section 1, page 2
• The three general habitats found in Indiana are also found in Illinois. A fourth habitat, urban lands, will be addressed in the Level C book.

Section 4, page 8
• “Animal Facts” says White-Tailed Deer were reintroduced in Indiana in the 1930s. The species was also reintroduced in Illinois during the same time period.
• In the “down” clues for the crossword, #2 states, “I like to gather in coveys and I am found in every county in Indiana.” This animal is also found all over Illinois.

Section 5, page 10
• Information is given on a species and habitats poster for Indiana. Check out the “Illinois Nature Viewing Guide” online at http://dnr.state.il.us/lands/education/watch/index.htm

Section 11, page 23
• The use of brown sugar in hummingbird feed recipes is not supported in all research.

Information About Featured Species, pages 27-28
• (Page 27) The “Red Fox” is “the most commonly seen fox in Indiana.” It is also the most commonly seen fox in Illinois.
• (Page 28) Wild Turkey young are called “chicks.” Young wild turkeys are also referred to as “poults.”

Level B Notes

Section 2, page 5
• “Many birds that you may see in the summer in Indiana live in different areas during the winter because of a lack of food sources.” This statement also holds true for Illinois.

Section 4, page 8
• Example questions are specific to Indiana. For this activity, youth will need to research facts and develop similar questions that are specific to Illinois. Here are some sample questions:
• True or False: the badger has been extirpated from Illinois. Extirpated refers to species that have left or been removed from a certain geographic area.
• True or False: the robin is the state bird of Illinois.
• What do you call a baby skunk?
  – An embryo
  – A kit
  – A pup
• True or False: a northern pintail is a type of duck.

Section 5, pages 10-11
• Complete the activity as it is presented.
• Comparing the status of wildlife species from Indiana and Illinois, one finds many similarities. However, there are a few differences worth noting. Find a list of endangered species from Illinois at www.dnr.state.il.us. Compare the mammals on the Illinois endangered list with those on the list on page 11. Make and play a new puzzle game using the Illinois species.
• It is important to note that the status of species can change. Species come and go from endangered and threatened lists each year. Some reasons for this movement include changes in habitat, changes in environmental conditions, pesticide use, or management policies, and/or disease.

Section 6, page 12
• “Possible Resources” for additional Indiana information are given. See the resource list at the end of this guide for additional Illinois resources from Illinois and around the nation.

Section 10, page 20
• The “Did You Know?” section has information on the Cardinal, Indiana’s state bird. The Cardinal is also the state bird of Illinois.
Resources
Illinois 4-H Project Support - http://www.4-h.uiuc.edu/projects/onlineref.html (click on “Natural Resources” for additional links)
Ducks Unlimited - http://www.ducks.org/
Illinois Department of Natural Resources - www.dnr.state.il.us
Illinois Natural History Survey - http://www.inhs.uiuc.edu/
National Wild Turkey Federation - http://www.nwtf.org/
The Nature Conservancy - http://nature.org/
Pheasants Forever - http://www.pheasantsforever.org/
Quail Unlimited – http://www.qu.org
University of Illinois Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences - http://www.nres.uiuc.edu/
University of Illinois Extension Natural Resources educators (contact the local Extension office)
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service - http://www.fws.gov/

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