

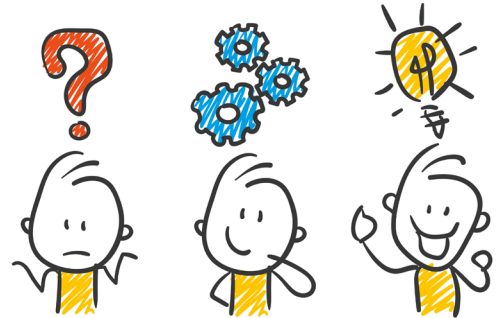
EVALUATING RECORD KEEPING SYSTEMS

Iowa 4-H Record Keeping

RECORD KEEPING LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The purpose of 4-H record keeping is to teach how to keep records, which is an important life skill. Record keeping is an ongoing process that does not end when the 4-H year ends. Youth are encouraged to select a format and process that meets their needs and their learning style.

- To learn how to set goals, make action plans, and determine how well you did.
- To learn the skills of record keeping such as organization, planning, and decision-making.
- To learn to communicate and summarize.
- To learn responsibility by completing a task.
- To evaluate information that will market personal skills through future resumes and applications.



RECORD KEEPING SYSTEMS

In 4-H, using a record keeping system is a recommended practice for youth in grades 4-12 to track participation, goals, achievements, and reflections throughout their 4-H journey.

You can find a variety of information in our publication *Record Keeping Overview* (4H 5000), <https://store.extension.iastate.edu/Product/16335>. You are encouraged to read this document to understand how young people are instructed to approach record keeping in Iowa 4-H.

Record keeping systems might be requested as a part of a county awards process. Record keeping systems are one way youth might be asked to show evidence of their learning, goal setting, reflection, and growth in project area learning, leadership, civic engagement, or communication to meet award criteria.

In Iowa 4-H, we suggest young people select a record keeping system that works well for their learning style, goals, and preferences. We only recommend that the following elements are included in their record keeping system.

- Record keeping for one or more project areas.
- Summary information of their participation in 4-H experiences.
- Yearly self-evaluation and/or a member-mentor conference.

EVALUATION PROCESSES

We provide *Record Keeping Evaluation* (4H 5016), (<https://store.extension.iastate.edu/product/16648>), and *Project Area Record Keeping Evaluation* (4H 5015), (<https://store.extension.iastate.edu/product/16647>), for counties to consider using if they host a record keeping evaluation process locally. These forms were designed to support all record keeping formats and align with our learning objectives.

Another way to evaluate record keeping systems is to use *Record Keeping Self-Evaluation* (4H 5012), (<https://store.extension.iastate.edu/product/155>). Youth can use this document independently or as a guide for a reflective conversation between a youth and a caring adult mentor.

Adapted in 2023 by Bonnie Dalager, Iowa 4-H educational design and development manager; edited by Lisa Berkland, youth field specialist, and Sydney Peterson, communications specialist, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.



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EVALUATE, EDUCATE, AND ENCOURAGE

Iowa 4-H asks that all evaluators utilize the three E's: evaluate, educate, and encourage.

Focus on the techniques and skills related to record keeping objectives and put aside any personal preferences or biases on style and design. Be as objective as possible.

Encouragement is also important. Help the exhibitor recognize their accomplishments. These could be achievements, but accomplishments also include things like effort, tenacity, diligence, curiosity, reflection, and adaptability. Present a friendly evaluator style through your written comments.

Your role as a mentor is important. Your approach and encouragement could lead a 4-H member to further the art and skill of record keeping with excitement and confidence.

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE YOUR FEEDBACK

When reviewing record books, providing feedback is a caring act of encouragement. You can ask yourself these questions to guide the constructive feedback you give:

- How can my comments encourage challenge and discovery?
- How can my comments encourage goal-setting and time management?
- How can my comments encourage a young person's growth mindset?
- How can my comments facilitate future learning?
- Are my comments relevant?
- Are my comments practical?
- Are my comments specific to this individual young person's needs?

REVIEWING FINANCIALS

While 4-H members often record the costs associated with their projects, evaluators do not make judgments on those costs. Evaluators examine records to see if the costs supported the learning goals the young person identified. Evaluators may also review records to determine if accurate financial records were documented and if calculations were done correctly. Suppose the young person addresses consumer management decisions in their goals. In that case, the evaluator should consider the young person's decision-making process when considering their expenses, but only as those decisions relate to their goals.

YOUTH VOICE AND CHOICE

While creating a record keeping system, youth will have choices about the format, layout, design, use of photos, and supplemental materials. These choices may reflect their preferred styles, formats, culture, or personal expression.

There are practical and creative aspects to record keeping. Many techniques and formats of record keeping are appropriate. A record keeping system's primary purpose is for young people to record, reflect, and make informed decisions to further their learning experience.

We recognize that young people learn in various ways. Some respond best to written information, charts, audio, visual reports, data, photos, or stories. Some young people have differing abilities to handwrite, type, read, speak, analyze, or communicate information.

Every young person is unique. Remember that their records may be affected by circumstances out of their control, such as their age, years of experience in this project area, cultural perspectives, economic limitations, and access to tools and equipment.

We are working together to create a supportive, inclusive learning environment. It's important that our young people receive feedback that focuses on their technical knowledge, skill development, and accomplishments in pursuing their goals.

ACCOMMODATIONS

An accommodation request process is posted on the Iowa 4-H website. If the 4-H staff receive an accommodations request, they will discuss the relevant aspects of that request with you. Remember that accommodations requests are not always formally submitted, and each participant has unique needs.