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4-H and Youth Development: Music Project Guide

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4-H and Youth Development

Music Project Guide

Here's What You Can Learn

The music project lets you explore music as part of your everyday life, whether or not you are currently studying music. As you learn more about music, you probably will discover yourself enjoying it more. You can set your own goals for learning activities based on your interests and skills in music. As you set music project goals, challenge yourself to learn more than you know and can do now. Seek out new experiences and learning opportunities.

In the music project, you can:

- develop and demonstrate performance skills,
- listen to and learn about various types of music,
- compose or arrange music, and
- explore the construction of musical instruments.

As you work on your project, you also will develop the life skills of:

- communication,
- decision-making,
- leadership,
- citizenship,
- coping with change, and
- learning how to learn.

Ready, Set, Go!

- Read this project guide.
- Plan your project goals. Think about what you want to do or learn. Talk about your ideas with your leader, parent, music teacher, or friend. Write your goals on the 4-H Project Record (4H-96).

- Select an activity from this guide, or design an activity that will help you meet your goals.
- Carry out your activity. Find people and resources who can help, such as your leader, Extension staff, teachers, librarian, community musicians, and family.

- They can recommend resources.
- Write what you learned in your 4-H Project Record (4H-96).
- Share what you learn. Look at the section, "Life Skills to Practice," to get ideas for sharing your activity with your friends, club, or community.

Things to Think About, Activities to Do

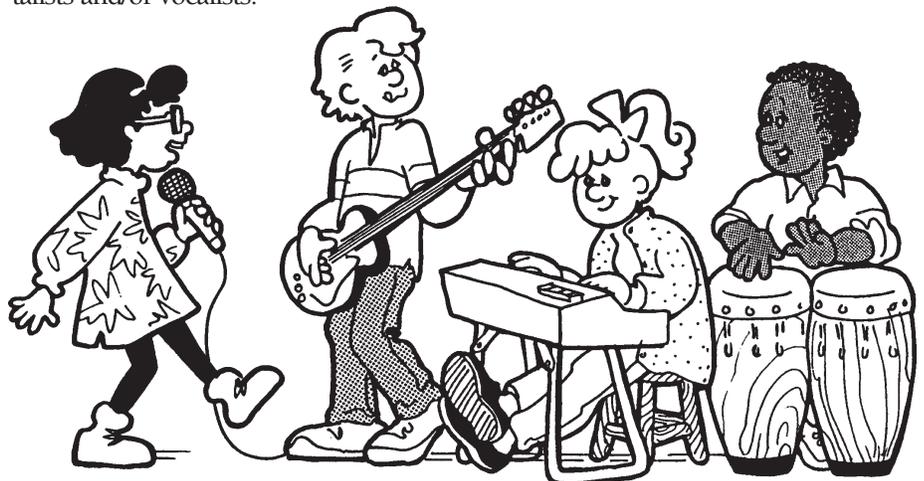
1. Perform Music

Performing music can be a way to gain self satisfaction or communicate with an audience. Music sends messages with sound. Sometimes performers match sound with visuals, movements, or other effects to communicate an idea.

You can perform music as a solo artist or in a group or ensemble. Individual performance works well for acoustic and electric keyboard instruments; fretted instruments, such as guitar, banjo, mandolin, and dulcimer; many brass, woodwind, string, and mallet percussion instruments; voice; and folk instruments. You might prefer to perform in a combination of mixed instrumentalists and/or vocalists.

Performing for an audience as an individual or group requires advance preparation. Consider the musical abilities and interests of the performer(s); the audience; the available rehearsal time; the performance location sites, etc.

As you prepare, be sure to match the type of performance with the interests of the audience and the location requirements. Places to perform might include your 4-H meetings, community events, civic celebrations, church activities, special school situations, hospitals and care facilities, local service clubs, meetings, senior centers, receptions, banquets, commercial establishments, and public meeting rooms.



Ask for help to select music from school music directors, church musicians, private music instructors, local performing musicians, and music specialists at music companies. Many large music companies offer toll-free (800) telephone lines and Web sites staffed by well informed music specialists to answer questions. They also have convenient ordering procedures with generous approval privileges that let you examine music before you buy it.



Things to Do

- Visit the rehearsal of a music group such as a high school band or choir, community orchestra, church choir, or professional group and ask: What was the role of the conductor or director? What kind of things did they work on? How often do they rehearse? Then ask yourself what you learned about preparing for a performance.
- Identify an event or place you'd like to perform (4-H share-the-fun, senior center, service clubs, or shopping mall). Find out about the people who might attend. Consider their tastes in music? What do you want the audience to feel as they listen to your performance? How much time would they like you to perform? Use this information to plan your performance.
- Make arrangements to practice performing a selection in a number of locations (your home, in the school gym, an auditorium, outdoors). What effect does the location have on the sound? Learn how acoustics will affect your performance.
- Interview a group of musicians who have performed together for an extended time. Find out how they work together.

2. Listen to and Learn about Music

Most people listen to rather than compose or perform music. Music surrounds us on TV, radio, motion pictures, CDs, video games, and over loud speakers. Today, we have superb, relatively inexpensive audio reproduction equipment. We have a huge selection of music available as compact discs, tapes, recordings, and live concerts. Listening to music can be fulfilling, valuable, and pleasurable. If you like today's pop music, you might expand your listening to other types of music. Generally, the more you know about a style or piece of music, the more pleasure you receive from listening to the selection.

Things to Do

- Listen to works by a single composer or performer (solo or group). What is the composer trying to communicate in each selection? Can you find similarities in his/her work? What differences did you find?
- Attend a concert or musical event featuring music you usually do not listen to. Folk, blues, ethnic, jazz, opera, and symphony are some music types to consider. Write down what you enjoyed most and least about the performance. Compare what you heard with the music you usually listen to.

How was it similar? How was it different? You might start a music diary to record your thoughts about performances you attend.

- Interview members of your family about their favorite musical piece and why they like it. What did you find out about your family's tastes in music? What do you think influenced their tastes?
- Survey radio stations in your area and find out what type of music they play. How do they describe their listening audience? How do listeners influence what type of music radio stations play?
- Trace a musical development such as jazz, a style such as baroque, or a category such as musical comedy. What is the history of the development, style, or category? What were the first reactions to the new type of music? What influence has the new type of music had on today's music? You may want to write a report about what you learned.

MUSIC CHOICES FOR SPECIFIC AUDIENCES

MUSIC →	SHOW TUNES	Rock + Roll	NURSERY RHYMES	GOPEL	FOLK (SING-ALONG)
AUDIENCE ↓					
PRE-SCHOOL			X		X
FAMILY PICNIC	X	X	X	X	X
NURSING HOME	X			X	X
FAIR	X	X			
CLUB	X	X			X





3. Compose or Arrange Music

If you already have acquired considerable musical skills, you might consider composing new music or arranging existing music.

Original music is usually written in musical notation so it can be read by others. Some composers, however, particularly pop or folk musicians, do not have notational skills. They may use computer programs that translate sounds into musical notation, either directly or through piano-style keyboards.

You may want to arrange existing music for a performing group such as an ensemble of instruments or vocalists or a mixture of the two. Write arrangements in musical notation so they can be performed again. Include a score, which indicates all the parts in order of performance, and a set of individual parts. This allows other groups to perform your music, although an arranger can teach the individual parts to performers by sound only.

Things to Do

- Select a piece of music. Find three or more arrangements of the selection. What makes each arrangement unique? Why does a single selection often have more than one arrangement?
- Learn or review basic musical notation. Use this skill to communicate a piece you have written. Have someone else play or sing it from your notations. Does it sound the same as when you played or sang it? Why? Why not?
- Compose lyrics for an existing melody. What did you consider as you matched words to melody? Reverse the process and compose a melody from existing words. Melodically describe your thoughts, feelings, or visions.

4. Make an Instrument

A musical sound or tone, is created by vibrations (sound waves). Instruments are made so the performer can control the pitch, volume, duration, and quality of the tone. Instruments also must be able to amplify and prolong the sound so the tone can be heard.

Musical instruments often are grouped in five major classes: stringed, wind, percussion, keyboard, and electronic.

You may wish to learn how instrument construction affects sound. Perhaps you can make an instrument yourself.

Things to Do

- Compare and contrast the construction of instrument classes (woodwinds and brass) or instruments within a class (viola and violin). How does the size, shape, or material affect the sound produced?
- Make a group of instruments to teach rhythm to younger children. Try the instruments at a local preschool or daycare. What instruments do the children like best? You may wish to donate the instruments to the preschool.
- Trace the history of an instrument that interests you. Has the construction changed over time? (Consider materials, shape, and size.) Why were changes made?



- Assemble an instrument from a kit. Kits contain pre-cut parts or materials, hardware, and directions. Some instruments to consider (in increasing order of difficulty) include: the Appalachian dulcimer, banjo, kalimba, bowed psaltery, hammered dulcimer, harp, guitar, mandolin, hurdy-gurdy, balalaika, and the harpsichord (for the very ambitious and skilled wood craft person.)

Life Skills to Practice

Life skills such as communication, decision making, leadership, citizenship, coping with change, and learning how to learn can help you lead a fulfilling life. Learning these skills takes practice. You can practice many of these skills within your music project. Here are some ideas to get you started.

1. Communication

Communication is effectively exchanging messages with others. Each person exchanges messages in many different ways every day. We can communicate with words or sounds (verbally), without words (nonverbally), and by listening, writing, and teaching.

Things to Do

- Make a poster to promote musical performance.
- Interview an organizer of musical performance about how the person/group advertises to increase attendance.
- Write a review of a musical performance for your school or local newspaper.
- Design a learning activity for younger 4-H'ers about making simple musical instruments.
- Write a poem and set it to music.

2. Decision Making

You make decisions every day. Some decisions are small; others are big. All decisions can be broken into the following smaller steps.

1. Identify the problem or situation.
2. Gather information.
3. Make a list of solutions, even ones you don't like at first.
4. Consider the consequences, advantages, and disadvantages of each choice.
5. Make the decision that best meets your needs and goals with the resources you have available.
6. Decide how good your decision was. How did it turn out? How would you solve the problem the next time?

Things to Do

- Use the decision-making steps to decide which music to perform, how to prepare it, and where to perform it; clothes to wear as you perform; which classes to take at school; whether to take individual music lessons; or which musical performances to attend. In many cases, your decisions will need to be a joint effort with your family, friends, or teacher.
- Make up your own method to compare options in a decision. Your method should include your likes, needs, and wants. It should be logical and easy to use. You might make a rating scale or numbered scoring system. Use your new rating system to rate sound equipment, concerts, music camps, tapes, and instruments. Magazines like Consumer Reports use rating scales that may give you some ideas. If you need help, visit with a teacher or ISU Extension staff member.

3. Leadership Skills

Leadership is the ability to positively influence, guide, or help others. In order to perform these roles, you need to practice certain skills, which include the ability to:

- listen,
- communicate,
- care about people,
- delegate, and
- consider the needs of others.



Things to Do

- Organize a talent show to increase awareness of the musical talents of other 4-H'ers.
- Volunteer for the entertainment committee for a club, community, or county event.
- Show younger 4-H'ers the opportunities in a music project.
- Organize a club outing to a musical performance.
- Volunteer to teach or lead music at a 4-H day camp.

4. Citizenship

Citizenship includes all the ways that people think, feel, and act with informed concern for the good of themselves and others. Life skills in citizenship begin with understanding yourself and expand to relationships with family, peer groups, community, state, national, and world concerns.

Things to Do

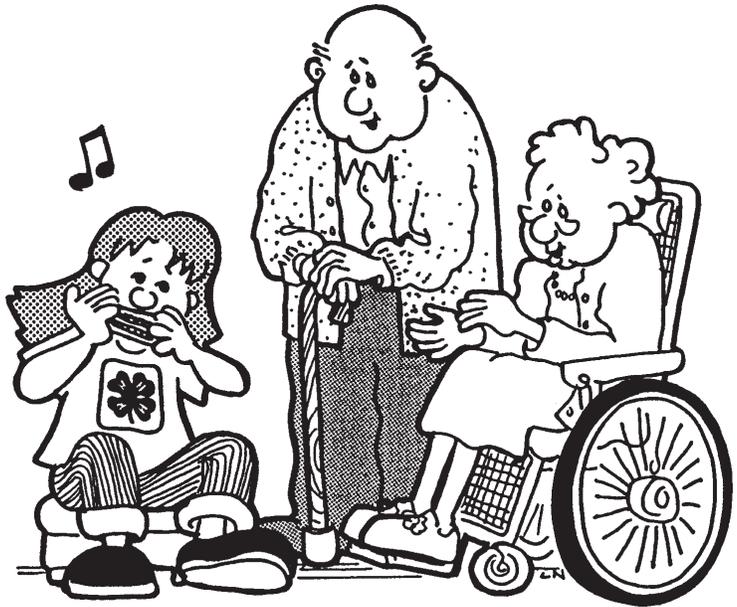
- Share what you've learned about music with others (i.e., share rhythm or speech activities with pre-school or elderly people).
- Take a talent show on tour in your community (i.e., at a care center, hospital, and day care).
- Perform in a community fundraiser for a cause of your choice or at a civic celebration.

5. Coping with Change

Productive citizens are people who are adaptive, flexible, and open-minded about their understanding and participation in the world. You can learn how to create change and how to deal with change.

Things to Do

- Compare music written by American performers or composers with music by performers or composers from other countries.
- Talk with a professional musician or a representative from a music store. Find out how the person decides which kinds of products or music to produce or provide. In what way have people's interests and tastes changed over the years? Have musical instruments changed?
- Talk to a parent, grandparent, or other older adult about music the person enjoyed as a youth. Share with each other your likes and dislikes and why.



6. Learning How to Learn

You learn in different ways — by questioning, reasoning, gaining knowledge, using knowledge (learning-by-doing), thinking creatively, and being willing to think about and try new things. The more ways you use to learn, the better learner you will be.

Things to Do

- Ask a librarian for a tour of a local library or one where you plan to attend college. Find materials for your music project. Ask about availability of records, tapes, and CD's.
- Ask a professional music teacher about ways to help people learn new information, solve problems, and improve skills.
- Pick a musical selection with lyrics; consider what might have inspired the writer such as events during the time period in which it was written, the place where it was written, and the writer's background. What role can music play in documenting our history?

- Visit an instrument maker. (A college with a music department or the Iowa Arts Council may be able to suggest an instrument maker to contact.) Find out how the craftsperson learned the skills, constructed the instruments, and marketed the instruments.

Find More Information

Ask for *Self Determined Project*, 4H-696, Create Your Own 4-H Project, from your county office of ISU Extension.

Adapted from material prepared by Neil Bjurstrom, former ISU Extension specialist, music; Deb Hall, former state 4-H youth development specialist; and Shirley A. Stakey, former state 4-H program assistant.

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