

# 4-H DD's (Dynamic Duos)

**Age**

All ages

**Time needed**

It will vary.

## Description

Youth want to belong to groups that are important to them. That's one of the benefits of joining a 4-H club where everyone feels welcome and appreciated. On the other hand, youth who are ignored and left out of discussions and activities probably won't be eager to come back. This activity provides a way for 4-H'ers to make sure their club is the kind of warm and friendly place everyone needs it to be.

## Advance preparation

Pair up newer members with those who have had more experience in the club.

## Directions

1. Whenever newcomers join your club, arrange for them to become part of a "Dynamic Duo" prior to their first meeting. You might want to choose someone who's close to the same age as the newcomer or has something else in common with him or her. (On the other hand, there are advantages in providing an older youth member who can serve as a role model for the new member.)
2. Have veteran club members call their new DD partners, introduce themselves and then:
  - Welcome him or her to the club.
  - Tell him or her a little about yourself (how long you've been in 4-H, what kinds of projects you're taking, etc.).
  - Ask if there's anything else you can explain about your club.
  - Make plans to meet him or her at the next meeting.
3. Suggest that they can use the following partner questionnaire to find out some interesting things about their new DD partners so they can introduce new members at the next meeting.
4. Encourage them to meet their new DD partners at 4-H meetings and events to:
  - Introduce him or her to the club officers
  - Invite him or her to sit with you and your friends.
  - Introduce your new friend to the entire club during the meeting and mention some things you've learned about him or her.
  - Do whatever you can to make the newcomer feel welcome and at home whenever attending 4-H club meetings or events.

## *Additional ideas*

### **Here are some things to encourage DD's to do together at 4-H club meetings:**

- Sit together.
- Participate in ice-breakers and other activities that require partners.
- Present a “team” demonstration.
- Lead a game.
- Be in charge of bringing a treat to the meeting.
- Sign up to work together on club projects or activities.

### **Here are some more ideas to do outside of club meetings:**

- Remind each other of dates and times for meetings and special 4-H activities.
- Help with projects.
- Enroll in the same project together.
- Work on record books.
- Send birthday cards to each other.
- Let the other person know if one person can't make it to the next meeting.
- Volunteer to work on a community service project together.
- Agree to contact one another (by phone, letter or e-mail) at least once between meetings.

### *Hint:*

- Consider having your club officers and youth leaders take the responsibility for introducing the “Dynamic Duo” idea to the rest of the club. Suggest that they put together a presentation about how bad it feels to be excluded and why it's important for the club to be a friendly and welcoming place.
- Concerned that some youth aren't mature enough to follow through with the responsibility of being assigned to be DD partner? Asking youth to volunteer might be a better option.

## *Sum it up.*

1. Everyone can be part of a Dynamic Duo! You don't have to wait until there are new members in the club to start having fun with this activity. In fact, there are some distinct advantages to making sure that everyone in the club belongs to a “Dynamic Duo.” For one thing, it's a good way to break up any “cliques” that may be forming and get kids to branch out and spend some time with other people. Being part of a “Dynamic Duo” is a great way for youth to discover things that they have in common with someone they might not get to know otherwise.
2. One way to get “Dynamic Duos” going in a club where there are no new members is to have everyone draw someone else's name. Or you may prefer putting the pairs together yourself by matching youth with similar interests, experiences, hobbies or lifestyles. It's probably best to avoid having youth select their own “Dynamic Duo” partner because chances are they'll pick someone they already know quite well.