



4-H Family News

APRIL 2025

Grand Traverse County



APRIL SHOWERS BRING 4-H CLOVERS

There are two wonderful things to celebrate in April which are very relevant to 4-H. The first being our Volunteers. **Happy Global Volunteer Month!** MSU Extension recently sent out a survey and the feedback shared by our Michigan 4-H Volunteers is incredible. Volunteering is vibrant in Michigan, and we couldn't run a strong county 4-H without all of you. Thank you!

4-H Volunteers in Michigan identified four main ways in which they found volunteering brought personal value to their lives. Volunteers enjoy actively contributing to youth thriving in their home communities. There is a sense of fulfillment and giving back which is experienced when volunteering for 4-H. It helps build social capital and right along with the youth, volunteers can develop new skills while transferring knowledge to others. It is a win for the youth and the volunteers. What a great community!

April is also Child Abuse Prevention Month. Because 4-H is the largest youth development organization in the United States, we are also perfectly positioned to help build awareness in our community around child abuse prevention strategies. 4-H is empowering nearly 6,000,000 young people with the skills needed to go beyond the expected and to be BEYOND READY. The 4-H Youth Development Program is also the only national organization that is federally mandated to conduct positive youth development programs.

I hope you will strongly consider attending our event on **April 9th at 6:00pm** with guest speaker Jenna Baker from the Children's Advocacy Center. Please bring friends who also work with or are in contact with young people in our community. Jenna is bright and engaging as well as our local expert in prevention awareness. She will be bringing Henry as well to provide support for those who need it as we learn how to continue the work of keeping our youth safe. This month, let's remind one another how important all 4-H Volunteers are in Grand Traverse County as we pledge our hands to larger service in our clubs and our community.

You are appreciated,

Sarah Bye

UPCOMING EVENTS

GT COUNTY HORSE & PONY COUNCIL TACK SALE | 4/5 | 9:30AM-2:30PM |
CREEKSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH

LIVESTOCK COUNCIL MEETING | 4/7 | 6:30PM |
REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH OF INTERLOCHEN

CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER TRAINING | 4/9 | 6PM |
GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY MSU EXTENSION OFFICE

PAPER CLOVER | STARTS 4/18 | TRACTOR SUPPLY CO.

EXPLORATION DAYS REGISTRATION | ENDS 4/25

MAKERFEST | 4/26 | 10AM-2PM |
HOWE ARENA-GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY CIVIC CENTER

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STATEWIDE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Support 4-H with the TSC Spring Paper Clover Campaign



From April 18 – May 5, Tractor Supply Company (TSC) customers across the nation will have the opportunity to support 4-H youth by purchasing a \$1 paper clover at checkout, both online and in stores.

Funds raised will support county, state and national 4-H programming. To learn more regarding the campaign, visit www.tractorsupply.com/tsc/cms/4h.

Please contact Sarah Bye at (231) 922-4825 or byesarah@msu.edu if you are interested in a fundraising time slot.

April 10: Driving Success with Workplace Professionalism

Online

Through a partnership with Toyota, youth will experience a variety of career paths in the automotive industry as well as build workforce readiness skills. This webinar will provide insight on professionalism in the workplace.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/workplace-professionalism

April 16: Michigan 4-H Volunteer Webinar - 4-H Club Fundraising 101

Online

This webinar will provide an overview of Michigan 4-H fundraising policies, ensuring that your efforts align with guidelines and best practices for success.

- **12 p.m. session:** www.canr.msu.edu/events/michigan-4-h-volunteer-webinar-series-4-h-club-fundraising-101-noon
- **7 p.m. session:** www.canr.msu.edu/events/michigan-4-h-volunteer-webinar-series-4-h-club-fundraising-101-7pm

April 24: 4-H Fly Fishing Series

Adrian, Michigan

Learn to use fly fishing equipment, practice fly casting techniques and tie a variety of knots. Learn about environmental and water quality concerns, as well as a fish's ecosystem as you practice imitating insects and other water critters. Registration deadline is April 18.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/4-h-fly-fishing-series

April 30: Make the Most of Your Market Animal Project – Goal Getters

Online

Learn how to set SMART goals to enhance your livestock marketing success. This session will provide practical strategies to develop a goal, stay focused and achieve it.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/market-animal-project-webinar4-30

May 1: Engineering the Future with Careers in Integrated Vehicle Systems (IVS)

Online

Through a partnership with Toyota, youth will experience a variety of career paths in the automotive industry as well as build workforce readiness skills. This webinar focuses on careers in IVS, the backbone of advanced safety in automobiles.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/careers-in-ivs

May 3: Spring 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor Workshop for Adults and Teens

Owosso, Michigan

Learn about 4-H Shooting Sports mission policy, risk management and safety, discipline-specific equipment use and care, how to teach shooting fundamentals to youth, range set-up, and more.

www.canr.msu.edu/events/spring-2025-4-h-shooting-sports-instructor-workshop-for-adults-and-teens





STATEWIDE 4-H NEWS

Registration open for 4-H Great Lakes and Natural Resources Camp

4-H Great Lakes and Natural Resources Camp mixes summer fun and hands-on science education. The camp will be held July 27 – August 2 on the shores of Lake Esau at Camp Chickagami in Presque Isle and is open to youth ages 13-15 during camp.

During this enriching MSU Extension educational program, campers will increase their science literacy and stewardship as they learn from natural resource experts in fields such as Great Lakes coastal and fisheries management, limnology, wildlife, forestry, geography, geology and environmental education. In addition to hands-on learning, attendees also enjoy exciting natural resources recreation activities such as kayaking, swimming, sailing, archery, fishing, snorkeling, evening campfires and more!

Registration is now open! The registration fee is \$525 and includes six nights of lodging, all meals and snacks, a t-shirt and program and activity costs. Space is limited to 70 campers so register today. For more information and to register, visit www.canr.msu.edu/4_h_great_lakes_natural_resources_camp/.



Register for 4-H Exploration Days!

Join 1,000 youth from across Michigan on MSU's campus to explore YOUR future! This three-day pre-college program is designed to help you explore careers, build skills and envision your future. Choose from more than 100 fun learning sessions on a variety of topics that are led by MSU faculty, 4-H staff and volunteers, and other experts. You'll stay in and eat at MSU residence halls, attend sessions in buildings throughout campus, and of course have fun at free-time activities across the university!

4-H Exploration days will be held June 18-20 at MSU in East Lansing. Young people ages 12 to 19 are invited to join the fun! The cost for the 2025 event is \$250, which includes two nights' lodging in a residence hall, meals, learning sessions, an event t-shirt and free-time activities. Contact your local MSU Extension office to find out if your county 4-H program offers scholarships for youth participants.

Registration opened March 20 and closes April 25. You'll want to register soon – sessions fill up fast and are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis! For registration links or more information, visit www.canr.msu.edu/4_h_exploration_days/.

Get your tickets for Michigan 4-H Day with the Detroit Tigers!

Join Michigan 4-H and MSU Extension for a fun day at Comerica Park to watch the Detroit Tigers take on the Baltimore Orioles on Sunday, April 27. Michigan 4-H will be honored as the Group Charity of the Game. To celebrate, 4-H youth, volunteers, staff and their families will enjoy a discounted ticket to the game, as well as:

- Access to a pre-game, on-field opportunity. Michigan 4-H youth are invited to take a lap around the warning track of Comerica Park before the game.
- A portion of each ticket sold donated to Michigan 4-H.

There are several ticketing options available this year, in three main locations, ranging in price from \$22 - 46. In addition, each ticket purchased through the Michigan 4-H link will have the opportunity to purchase an exclusive, co-branded Michigan 4-H and Detroit Tigers jersey (while supplies last). Jerseys can only be purchased by purchasing a ticket through the Michigan 4-H link; however, there is an option to buy tickets without the purchase of a jersey. Learn more at www.canr.msu.edu/events/michigan-4-h-day-with-the-detroit-tigers.





COUNTY 4-H NEWS

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION WEEK



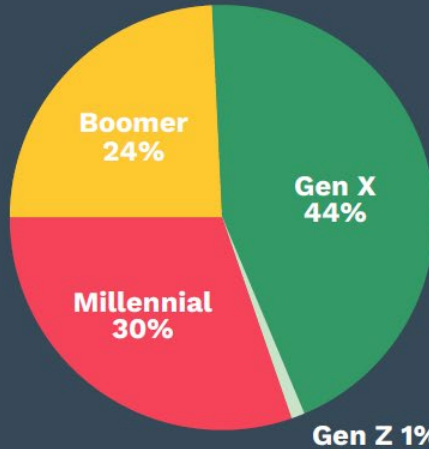
Volunteers give on average **9 hours a month** to 4-H*



Average Years of Service was **13.5 years** for 4-H Volunteers



2/3 of Volunteers were 4-H members as youth



78% FEMALE



20% MALE

140 Volunteers

identified themselves as Hispanic and/or non-White

National Volunteer Appreciation Week 2025 is April 20-26! We want to express our sincerest gratitude for the generosity of all 4-H volunteers. We wouldn't be here without their continued dedication to the program and their big hearts. Please read this informative article detailing the importance of our 4-H volunteers! https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/recognizing_the_value_of_volunteers

UPCOMING SPECIES POSSESSION DATES

- Goat: 5/1
- Jr. Beef: 5/15
- Lamb: 5/1
- Llama & Alpaca: 5/5
- Poultry: Dates vary, begins 4/7; see www.northwestmichiganlivestockcouncil.org/species-specific.html for more detailed information.
- Rabbit/Cavy: Dates vary, begins 4/17; see www.northwestmichiganlivestockcouncil.org/species-specific.html for more detailed information.
- Swine: 5/1

SPRING 2025 4-H SHOOTING SPORTS INSTRUCTOR WORKSHOP

Registration is open for the Spring 2025 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor Workshop! This is for adult and teen leadership training. Full event details and registration can be found at:

<https://events.anr.msu.edu/2025SpringWorkshop/>



This training was very comprehensive and informative. I feel much more equipped to help children in these situations now. Thank you!!

@traversebaycac



TALK

How to *talk* to children about sexual health

PROTECT

How to *protect* children from sexual abuse

REPORT

How to *report* abuse and suspicious behavior

**A 2.5-hour evidence-informed program that focuses on what every adult should know to be an effective advocate.*

Hosted by



MSU Extension
Grand Traverse County 4-H

Wednesday, April 9th
6:30 P.M. - 9:00 P.M.
520 W. Front St.
Traverse City, MI 49684



TRAVERSE BAY
Children's
Advocacy
Center

Material is intended for adults only (18+).



KEEPING KIDS SAFE

Texting Safety

Most people have a hard time thinking and talking about child sexual abuse, but if we're going to prevent it, we must all think, talk, and take action about it. The Keeping Kids Safe series was created to help parents and primary caregivers learn concrete ways to keep children and teens safe from sexual abuse. The series introduces key concepts and age-appropriate ideas and activities for protecting the children you love and helping them learn and build skills and knowledge that will reduce their risk of being victimized.

Keeping your kids safe is the number one priority of any parent. With technology continuously growing, the importance of talking to your child about texting safety is essential. Most gaming and social media apps have some form of direct messaging; therefore, children are gaining access to direct messaging and texting even before they have a phone through tablets, iPod touches, computers, and other forms of technology.

The prefrontal cortex is the rational part of a child's brain, which is vital in performing executive functions such as impulse control and managing one's emotions. An individual's prefrontal cortex is not fully developed until they are about 25, resulting in children being prone to impulsive decisions.

Children are going to make mistakes on technology. They might make a rash decision, regret a text they sent, or start talking to someone they shouldn't. Although these conversations can be difficult, talking about safe practices is a proactive step in teaching your child responsible decision-making, self-regulation, and social awareness: key components in texting safety. Talking about safe practices builds a foundation of trust and security where children feel more comfortable disclosing when things become inappropriate.

Talking to your child about texting safety has become extremely important as texting has increasingly become the preferred form of communication for youth. When talking about texting safety with your child is it important to consider the following:

Minding Our Language

In this series of fact sheets we have chosen to use the inclusive words *they*, *their*, and *them* as singular, nongendered pronouns.

Families and parents come in all shapes, sizes, and styles. A *family* may include people who are related by blood, by marriage, and by choice. *Parents* may be biological, step-, foster, adoptive, legally appointed, or something else.

When we use the words *family* and *parent* in this fact sheet, we do so inclusively and with great respect for all adults who care for and work with young people.





Do your research

A parent cannot understand the possible dangers of texting on a specific app if they do not know what it is. Part of teaching your child about safe practices for texting is educating yourself on the social media apps and sites your kids can text or direct message on. In most social media outlets, there are ways to direct message with other individuals. Downloading the applications that your child is using is a great start to educating yourself on the various types of social media as well as their various guidelines and restrictions. The more informed you are about what your child is able to do on the application, the better you can teach them safe practices.

Have this conversation early and often

Think early about the expectations you have about texting safety for your child. Young children often use tablets, and texting and direct messaging can happen on tablets too. If you allow your child to use a tablet for games or various apps, be aware of the access to messaging the various applications have. Additionally, looking into the privacy settings of the apps is a key protective factor in ensuring your young child's safety. For young children, parental controls are a great option if possible. Don't make this a "one-and-done" conversation. Continue to talk to your child about your expectations and changes to your rules or routines about texting.

Remind your child that what they send out is permanent

Although texting and direct messaging is a great way of staying in touch with people, it also leaves behind a *digital footprint*—the path of data that one leaves behind using the internet (Netsafe, 2021). Your digital footprint includes your internet searches, text messages, posts uploaded to social media, websites visited, and much more. Once this data is uploaded, it is permanently on the internet, even if it is deleted.

This aspect of permanence, even when something appears to be deleted, can be challenging for youth. For many people, once something is out of sight, it is out of mind. For example, if a child is texting on Snapchat and direct messages (dms) an inappropriate picture or text, at first it appears to be automatically deleted after the viewer opens the message. However, there are many options to save this photo before it is deleted. Someone can screenshot the picture using their own personal phone or take a photo on someone else's phone.

A Pew Research Center (2009) national survey study found that 15% of youth ages 12 to 17 received sexually suggestive nude or fully nude photos on their cellphones. Additionally, 4% of the sample reported to have sent sexually suggestive nude photos of themselves by text message. As the data shows, youth are sending and receiving inappropriate pictures at all ages. The danger of this is that these pictures can be forwarded to others or saved on the receiver's phone. There are several ways to screenshot texts and photos that are supposed to be automatically deleted including applications that allow individuals to open and screenshot these pictures without the sender being notified.





Sending a message over text is like squeezing the toothpaste out of the tube. Once you send it out you cannot take it back. Using this visual representation is a good way to paint the picture of the impact texting can have on youth's digital footprint and safety.

Encourage open communication with your child

Keeping the lines of communication open with youth is a key protective factor in keeping your child safe virtually. Open communication gives parents the opportunity to provide advice and guidance and allows kids to disclose their emotions. Having open conversations about texting safety and the potential risks that come from developing a harmful digital footprint will equip your child with the tools to make responsible decisions around texting on social media and their phone in the future. Talk about their texting engagement, ask questions, and listen. Just having a simple conversation can make a child feel supported, heard, and cared for. Here are some questions you could consider asking:

- Who are you talking to?
- How do you know this person?
- What information are you sharing?

Having these open conversations with your child gives you the opportunity to determine if any behavior is inappropriate. Children often may find it difficult to open up about experiences that make them uncomfortable; however, making time to have these open conversations gives your child the opportunity to speak up. Children do not have the same practice as adults in telling the difference between appropriate and inappropriate information. Having these open conversations helps children learn your expectation of what is appropriate regarding texting safety.

Connect with empathy

When talking to your child about texting safety, connecting with empathy helps them feel safe and validates their feelings and thoughts. For example, try using phrases such as, "I can tell that you're upset," or "I understand that you're frustrated." Using empathy to see your child's perspective makes them feel acknowledged while building a foundation of love, trust, and connectedness that makes you approachable. When your child feels safe to share information with you, it is much easier to keep them safe.

Set expectations around texting

Set your rules in place before your child has access to using a phone. If you make up the rules after they have already been granted a phone, the rules can feel like punishment. By proactively establishing what you will and won't allow regarding texting, your child is completely aware of the rules and consequences. By establishing these rules you're helping your child build the connection between their actions and consequences.

As your child gets older, your expectations around texting may need to change. While some rules may disappear, others may need to be added to keep your child safe. For example, when your child is a toddler, your expectation for screen time might be significantly lower than when





they are a teenager. On the other hand, you might have not had any expectations for texting strangers because you always supervised their technology usage; however, as they grow older and become more independent, you will need to have these conversations.

Some texting boundaries to consider follow:

- Develop a list of people your child can text.
 - Do they know them personally? Is there a mutual friend?
 - Are all of those numbers in their phone contact list?
- Establish sites or apps they are allowed to use to communicate.
 - Are they only allowed to use sites with parental control and privacy settings?
- Set times when they are allowed and not allowed to text.
 - Can they text in the morning, at mealtimes, after school, evenings, late nights?
 - What are your child's strengths and weaknesses? For example, if getting to school on time is an issue for your child, consider making a rule about no texting in the morning until their backpack is packed and they are dressed for school.
- Determine what information is appropriate to text.
 - Do you model the behavior that you expect your child to use while texting?
 - What is your child allowed to text about to family, neighbors, or other kids? (For example, it's okay to text a family member about your after-school schedule but it's not okay to text neighbors with information about where you are going to be.)
- Determine the social media sites they are allowed to text on.
- Decide when they are allowed to get a phone or tablet.
 - Why does your child need a phone? What are the needs and benefits of a form of communication at this age?
- Establish where it is appropriate and not appropriate to text.
 - Can they text in the bedroom, in bathrooms, while driving?
- Establish when your child can share their location as some apps are set to share your location automatically.

Follow through with your rules

Be consistent with your rules and consequences. If your household rule is that phones have to be out of the bedroom after 10 p.m. or you lose phone privileges the next day and your child breaks that rule, you must follow through with your predetermined consequence. If you are constantly allowing your child to break the rules, they will not understand that behaviors have consequences.





Teach your child to evaluate what information is being sent through their text

Although texting is convenient for quick messages, it loses the component of having context with the message. Text messages are open to interpretation from the reader since there are no nonverbal cues or emphasis on certain words. For example, if someone texts, “Do whatever you want,” one person might read this with a negative connotation, whereas another person may read it thinking they are supporting their decision.

Talk to your child about phone etiquette

You should talk not only about your own household rules, but also about the social norms of phone etiquette with your child. Some of these include putting your phone away when talking to others, silencing your phone when attending meetings or quiet areas (such as in a library or in class), and considering how your tone of voice will be perceived.

Remind your child to be kind through their texts.

To help youth think about being kind, have them consider the following guidelines:

- Take a moment to pause before responding.
- Consider if what you are sending could be taken out of context or someone might think it is hurtful.
- Always ask for clarification when something doesn’t make sense, or might seem hurtful or hard to interpret.
- Apologize if something is misinterpreted by someone.
- Seek help from an adult if unsure how to respond.
- If you can’t say something nice, say nothing at all.
- If a text is hateful or bullying, tell an adult, but do not respond to the text.

CONCLUSION

A survey found that 59% of teens have experienced some type of harassment online and 90% of teens agree that online bullying is an issue for their age group (Pew Research Center, 2018). Cyberbullying is a prominent issue among teens. It is not only important to teach youth to be kind through technology, but also to speak up. Often when youth are being bullied online, they are afraid of the consequences that could come from tattling. However, if you have built a foundation of trust and security with your child, they are more likely to come to you when they are being cyberbullied.

Most parents' number one goal is keeping their kids safe and equipping them to lead the best lives possible. This can seem like a daunting task as it is inevitable that your child is going to make mistakes with their technology. We are all human. The best thing you can do to keep your child safe online is to pay attention, be actively involved, and make informed decisions about





things that could affect their safety. Even if these efforts seem scary or overwhelming, being prepared and vigilant are key steps in protecting your child and helping them build the skills that will help them stay safe as they get older. You don't have to prevent your child from texting anyone. Instead, have these conversations, set appropriate boundaries, and stay tuned in. You can do a lot of things to protect your child that shouldn't prevent you and your child from enjoying technology and the benefits it can bring.

REFERENCES

Netsafe. (2021) *What is a digital footprint?*. <https://www.netsafe.org.nz/digital-footprint/>

Pew Research Center. (2009). *Teens and sexting*.
<https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2009/12/15/teens-and-sexting/>

Pew Research Center. (2018). *A majority of teens have experienced some form of cyberbullying*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2018/09/27/a-majority-of-teens-have-experienced-some-form-of-cyberbullying/>

FIND OUT MORE

To find out more about keeping kids safe, check out these other MSU Extension resources:

- **Be SAFE: Safe, Affirming and Fair Environments** (<https://bit.ly/36CwUk7>)—The Be SAFE curriculum is designed to help young people aged 11 to 14 and adults work in partnership to create environments that are physically and emotionally safe. It draws from extensive research from a variety of key disciplines, as well as from evidence-based bullying prevention programs. Be SAFE includes engaging activities that promote social and emotional learning and development, address and prevent bullying, and foster positive relationships with peers and adults. Designed for use in out-of-school time settings (such as 4-H, Boys and Girls Clubs, Scouts, and after-school programs), Be SAFE also applies to middle school settings.
- **Keeping Kids Safe series** (<https://bit.ly/3jG8JFo>)—The fact sheets in this series are designed for parents and adults who work with kids from birth to age 17. They cover issues related to body ownership, boundaries, and safety; consent; identifying and communicating about feelings; monitoring and limiting technology use; sharing about kids on social media; and recognizing and preventing grooming by child sexual predators. There are currently 11 titles in the series:
 - Keeping Kids Safe: Ages 0 to 5: <https://bit.ly/3zLjmhG>
 - Keeping Kids Safe: Ages 6 to 11: <https://bit.ly/3f8ecEH>
 - Keeping Kids Safe: Ages 12 to 17: <https://bit.ly/3zRbWJB>
 - Keeping Kids Safe: The Downside to “Sharenting” on Social Media: <https://bit.ly/3f9toBl>
 - Keeping Kids Safe: Preventing Grooming by Child Sexual Predators: <https://bit.ly/3ib4vXZ>
 - Keeping Kids Safe: How Child Sexual Predators Groom Children: <https://bit.ly/3BWYRFc>
 - Keeping Kids Safe: How Child Sexual Predators Groom Adults, Families, and Communities: <https://bit.ly/3f8F7jM>
 - Keeping Youth Safe Virtually: Best Practices: <https://bit.ly/2VI9Cvr>
 - Keeping Kids Safe: Characteristics of Child Sexual Offenders: <https://bit.ly/3Bh2gJa>





- [Keeping Kids Safe: Female Perpetrators of Child Sexual Abuse:](https://bit.ly/3sNN17J)
- [Keeping Youth Safe: Warning Signs of Child Sexual Abuse:](https://bit.ly/2XR2vMC)

These resources also contain helpful information on keeping kids safe:

- American Academy of Pediatrics. (n.d.). *Family media plan.* <https://bit.ly/3iE9Wf1>
- Darkness to Light. (n.d.). *Resources.* <https://www.d2l.org/resources/>
- National Sexual Violence Resource Center. (2018). *Preventing child sexual abuse resources.* <https://bit.ly/34zyAYW>
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Acknowledgments

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Edited by the MSU Extension Educational Materials Team for MSU Extension
(extension.msu.edu)

