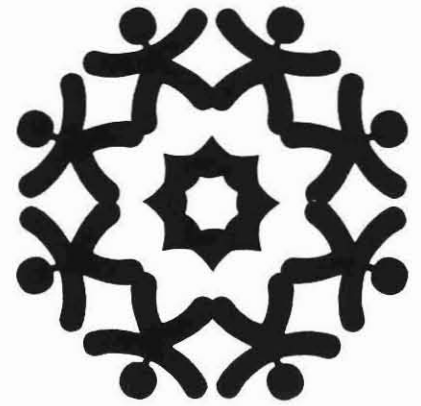


KALEIDOSCOPE

**An Overview of the
Michigan 4-H Youth Programs
5- to 8-Year-Old Curriculum**



**4-H Youth Development
Children, Youth, Families & Communities
Michigan State University Extension**



Acknowledgments

This material was written by Christine Nelson, Ph.D., Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist, Department of Family and Child Ecology, Michigan State University. It was designed and illustrated by Marian Reiter, 4-H Graphic Artist, and edited by Janet R. Olsen, Associate 4-H Program Leader for Curriculum Development.

Welcome to Kaleidoscope!

Imagine what happens when you look through a kaleidoscope that's pointed toward a colorful object. As you twist it around, all sorts of change takes place right before your eyes! Now imagine what happens when you work with a group of children aged 5 to 8. Once again, you will notice all sorts of change taking place—developmental changes like physical and emotional growth—and the changes that come with the discovery of new things. This curriculum, which is designed for use with 5- to 8-year-olds, is called **Kaleidoscope** because it symbolizes all the exciting opportunities to share the world with kids this age.

Kaleidoscope consists of informal learning materials that were created to be used by 4-H volunteer leaders. These materials are also appropriate to use with 5- to 8-year-olds in a variety of other settings including classrooms, before- and after-school programs (sometimes called latchkey programs), family daycare homes and camps. The **Kaleidoscope** materials being developed focus on themes of interest to 5- to 8-year-old children. Examples include holidays, animals, how things work, things that happened long ago, and how kids relate with other people. Many of the materials incorporate some of the traditional 4-H project areas; horticulture, animal science, and food and nutrition are just a few examples. All of the materials are designed to enhance the development of children through fun, hands-on activities.

What Are These Kids Like?

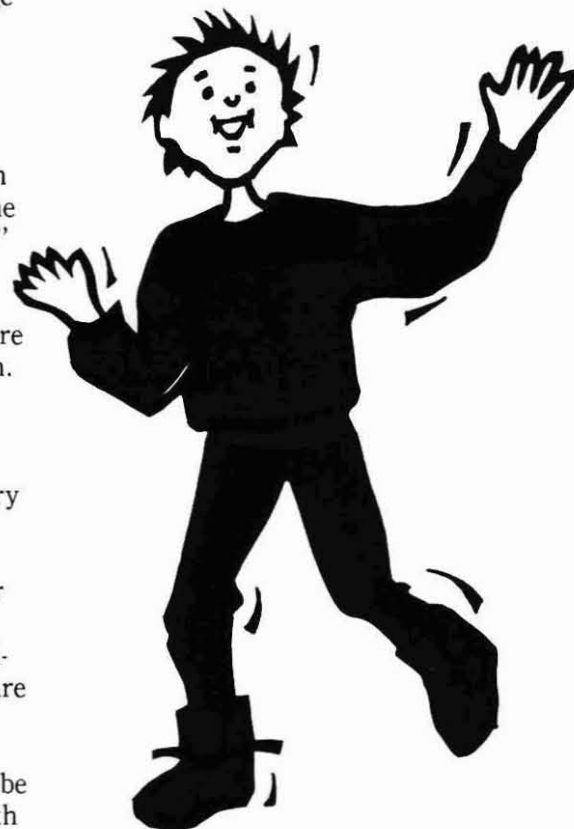
Five- to 8-year-old children come in all shapes and sizes! We need to know and understand their development in order to work with them in the best ways. We need to consider their **cognitive** (or thinking), **physical**, **social** and **emotional development**. Then we can look at these “whole” children in their homes, schools and friendships. By looking at what is going on inside of children—as well as what is happening around them—we can get a good idea of what it's like to be their age and how we can better work with them.

WHAT'S GOING ON INSIDE?

Cognitive Development—It's important to know that children in this age group are very much in the here and now. They are “concrete” thinkers who need to base their learning on real experiences with real objects. Children aged 5 to 8 are full of questions and eager to learn. With a gentle nudge from adults, they will try new things. Most of them can read some words, but remember that reading is a mystery that some of them haven't solved. Other children can read many things and may consume a book or more a week.

Physical Development—Children between the ages of 5 and 8 are developing their large muscles by learning to gallop, skip, climb, wrestle and hop. Children need to be able to use these large muscles both to develop them and to use up the

tremendous amount of energy characteristic of this age group. Five- to 8-year-olds are also refining the use of the small muscles for fine motor skills. One example of this is the amount of control they have with a pencil when they write their name. Children need lots of practice using pencils, scissors and other small utensils to develop their small muscles. But don't expect them to start off with these fine motor skills; they will need practice and patience from a caring adult.



Social Development—Children become increasingly social between the ages of 5 and 8. They begin to develop friendships, usually with children of the same gender. When working with children, it's important to consider their increasing need and desire to be with others. Plan activities that they can do together. Watch for children who are loners and find a way for them to be part of the group. Don't be surprised when there are disagreements and squabbles. Children need to test out who they are and how they interact with other children. Remember, however, that they are in the process of learning social skills and will sometimes need adult help to resolve problems.

Emotional Development—Children in the 5- to 8-year-old stage are firming up emotional tendencies that began in their younger years. They want to please adults and know that they are liked. This means that what adults say to children and how they say it is very important. Find ways to tell children when they have done a good job. Make sure that you talk about **the good work that they have**



done, and not about how **good they are**. Say, "Wow, you did a nice job of following that recipe," instead of "Wow, you're a good kid." When things aren't going well, this helps children know that it is their **behavior** that you don't accept ("You're goofing around too much"), not **them** ("You're just a bad kid").

WHAT'S GOING ON OUTSIDE?

The most important people in the lives of 5- to 8-year-olds are their parents and teachers. Because children in this age group are still so dependent on adults, they will try to please them and are usually quite cooperative. These are fairly easy years for families and teachers.

When children enter school, they begin to see themselves as learners and are often receptive to new ideas and experiences. They will especially enjoy the informal situation of a 4-H club. In this setting, they can socialize in a manner that may not be allowed in school, yet they are learning about their expanding world at the same time.

WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN TO YOU?

As a 4-H leader, you need to consider the development of 5- to 8-year-olds as you plan your meetings. You need to contrast what is generally known about children this age with the specific behaviors you observe in the members of your club.

In general, 4-H meetings involving 5- to 8-year-olds will be a better experience for the children (and for you) if you consider the following when planning your meetings:

1. Have one adult (or older youth) for every six children. (Some activities will require fewer children to every adult.)
2. Involve the children in selecting and planning the activities. They are more likely to maintain interest in activities when they have been involved.
3. Change activities often according to the needs of your group. Get a

sense of the group's attention span (children become "antsy" when they are having difficulty sticking with an activity).

Change to a new activity when you first notice children shuffling their feet, looking around and being "busy bodies."

4. Have the children **do** things as much of the time as possible. Try not to address them as a group for more than 5 to 15 minutes at a time.
5. Allow and encourage the children to talk and work with each other.
6. Keep an eye out for children who may feel left out and who need help to be part of the group. One way to do this is to pair such a child with another and tell them that they are each other's helper.
7. Remember that children this age have a tremendous amount of energy. Stop and have them do something active if they seem restless.
8. Most importantly, keep in mind how important you are, as an adult, to children this age. Find something positive to say to each child at each meeting.

Two other areas of concern to 4-H leaders are siblings and how to share a project with others.

It is not unusual for brothers and/or sisters to be in the same 4-H club. This can present both challenges and joys. Although much is made of "sibling rivalry," children do not often take their teasing, nagging or bickering behaviors outside of their homes.

If they do, you (as leader) need to firmly but kindly let them know that this is not the time or place for such behaviors. Keep in mind that siblings may also provide great help to each other in the club situation.

Many opportunities will arise for sharing your club's work. The first to come to mind is the county fair. Others are achievement days, community days and bulletin boards. **Please be aware that it is not appropriate for children aged 5**

to 8 to participate in contests where they are judged. Their “self” is still too vulnerable for competition. It is appropriate to display their work and to give participation awards. Use the children’s art and crafts, drawings, experiments or other activities when you have the opportunity to share their projects.

Using the Kaleidoscope Materials

A leader’s guide and member’s packet are being designed for each **Kaleidoscope** theme. Some of the themes will include an additional materials packet.

LEADER’S GUIDES

You may find the **Kaleidoscope** leader’s guides to be exciting, overwhelming or both! Most of these feelings will be related to the number of activity choices that you, as a leader, are offered for each meeting. Leader **choices** have very purposely been incorporated into these guides for two reasons. One is that they help you to provide experiences that are best for your children based on their ages, past experiences, interests and preferences. The other is that you can select activities that you enjoy doing and that are a part of your individual leader style. For example, you may not like to do arts and craft activities at all, but you may love to sing! By offering both of these activities as possible ways to introduce concepts related to a topic, this material provides you a way to use **your** interests and strengths in your 4-H club programming. Following is information on the sections included within each meeting description.

Purposes—This section tells why the activities are important and what you can expect the children to learn.

Suggested Meeting Plan—Each basic meeting is planned to

take about 1 to 1½ hours. The plans for the meetings are very similar. They involve the following:

1. A major activity that has been developed to help children discover all or many of the concepts listed under “What Children Need to Know.” Sometimes there is a brief introduction to the activity.
2. One or more activities (from “Other Fun Things to Do”) which reinforce what children need to know about the meeting topic.
3. “Talk Abouts”—a discussion of the important things that children learned during the meeting.
4. Planning for the next meeting (“Planning Ahead Together”) and sending home the mini-poster.

What Children Need to

Know—This section provides information about the topics to be explored and experienced in the meeting. Since it is sometimes difficult to put complex ideas into language appropriate for children, this information is provided in “child language.”

Major Activity—The major activities have been developed to help children explore the major concepts for the topic. They use a variety of methods (for example, drawings, experiments, walks and discussions). Materials are listed for each activity. Directions are easy to follow, and questions to help children think about the concepts are provided.

Other Fun Things to Do—This section provides the leader with a variety of activities that can be used after the major activity to reinforce or expand on the topic of the meeting. There are several categories of activities. Most or all of the following will be available for each topic:

1. **About Me**—An activity that helps the children relate the topic to themselves.
2. **Card Games**—Familiar card games may be available with some themes.



3. **Books and Stories**—Books are listed for each meeting. Although many of these are old, they are classics and can often be borrowed from a library. In areas with small libraries, these books may be difficult to find. You may be able to borrow them from an elementary school library or teacher.
4. **Movement Games and Activities**—These activities are great for children who need to use those large muscles (arms and legs) and burn up some energy. Some of the activities require the children to act out situations, thus allowing them to use their creativity. Other games and activities are variations of old standbys. Try to include at least one movement activity in each meeting.
5. **Songs**—Most 5- to 8-year-olds enjoy singing. Often songs help provide fun while teaching children important information about the topic. Most songs are sung to familiar tunes.
6. **Arts and Crafts**—These activities use a variety of easily

obtainable and usually free or inexpensive materials. They are usually open-ended so that children of all ages can do them in their own creative way regardless of varying abilities.

7. **Science Experiments**—These activities introduce children to the scientific method and are done with inexpensive and easily obtainable materials.
8. **Other Activities**—These are activities that don't fall into any of the above categories but that can be done to reinforce the topic. They are often less complex or time-consuming than the major activity.
9. **Snacks**—Recipes for snacks are provided for many meetings. These are easy-to-make treats that are related in some way to the topic of the meeting.
10. **Drama/Poetry**—Poems and opportunities for acting out stories are included wherever appropriate.
11. **Trips or Walks**—Whenever possible, trip suggestions are provided.

Talk Abouts—The last 5 minutes of every meeting should be spent doing the "Talk Abouts." These questions review what the children have been doing and learning in the meeting.

Planning Ahead—This section provides tips on involving the children in planning for the next meeting. It is a way of giving children input into what and how they learn. A reminder to send the "mini-poster" home is also included.

MEMBER'S PACKETS

The **Kaleidoscope** member's packets will always include a "My Thoughts and Feelings" sheet and a mini-poster for each meeting. In some cases, other materials will also be included in the member packet.

"My Thoughts and Feelings" Sheets—The last few minutes of the meeting involve having the children fill out the "My Thoughts and

Feelings" sheet. Children circle the activities that they did in the meeting and a face that shows how they felt about each activity. On the bottom, they draw how they felt about the entire meeting. This provides the children with a record of their activities during each meeting.

This sheet can also be used to discuss what kinds of activities the children enjoyed and what kind of activities they would like to do in the next meeting. For example, if most of the children liked a song, you can plan to use the song during the next lesson. Try to use the activities that the children liked as well as new kinds of activities (so they gain new experiences) for each meeting.

Mini-Poster—Each member's packet includes a mini-poster that can be sent home following each meeting. These mini-posters are designed to tell the parent(s) what the child learned about during each meeting. Each poster includes suggestions for follow-up activities, as well as tips for the healthy growth of 5- to 8-year-olds.

A space is provided on each mini-poster for you to write a message for



parents if desired. This could be a notice of a meeting date change, a note on an item the child needs to bring to the next meeting, information on "homework" for the child, etc. The space could also be used to let parents know something positive that happened to their child during the meeting. Remember to focus on the good work of the child rather than on how good the child is (see page 4).

Where Do You Go From Here?

Your county 4-H staff can tell you what **Kaleidoscope** theme materials are available from Michigan 4-H Youth Programs. Select a theme that both you and your members will enjoy and start the 4-H fun!



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