

Guidelines for Accommodation of Children with Disabilities in the Indiana 4-H Horse and Pony Project

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Indiana 4-H programs and curricula must be accessible to the wide diversity of all children in the state of Indiana, regardless of their backgrounds and characteristics, including physical, mental, or emotional ability or limitations. The Indiana Horse and Pony Handbook (4-H 661) states on page 5:

4-H members with special needs are encouraged to show horses, and show management may allow assistance and rule modifications when appropriate.

The purpose of this document is to provide educators, leaders, and parents with some guidelines regarding appropriate accommodations. First and foremost, we must remember that the primary purpose of 4-H is to provide all youth opportunities to grow and develop and to maximize their potential.

4-H Mission — To assist youth and adults in their development by conducting hands-on educational programs, using the knowledge base of Purdue University, other land grant universities, and the United States Department of Agriculture.

This mission statement indicates that 4-H conducts “hands-on learning programs.” Ideally, any accommodation made should allow a child with a disability to participate in the activity with their peers.

Any accommodations should:

- 1) Allow the child with a disability to participate in the same collective activity. Observation of the activity without direct involvement does not constitute participation.
- 2) Not adversely affect how other participants in the activity perform, or are judged or evaluated. Every effort should be made to minimize the effects of the accommodation on other participants.

Examples of this type of accommodation include, but are not limited to, waiving ownership, or waiving one horse/one rider rules; allowing a crop in a Western pleasure class; allowing an American Sign Language assistant in the ring; allowing a modified saddle; allowing the assistant in driving; bringing a halter horse and handler in a wheelchair in at the end of the class, and having them stand separate from the rest of the class; or allowing an assistant to help in a halter class.

In situations where the accommodation makes participation in the same collective activity unsafe or disruptive to the other participants, it is suggested that an alternate activity be designed to allow participation. Examples of this type of accommodation would include, but not be limited to, a walk-trot riding class (with or without assistants), holding the activity on a nearby surface, or development of a trail course with obstacles that the child is capable of negotiating.

Consultation with a vocational rehabilitation professional, or a professional who teaches or provides services to the person with the disability, is recommended to determine appropriate and reasonable accommodation.

Please remember, our primary purpose in 4-H is to provide a positive, interactive learning environment for all of the youth in Indiana, and part of our responsibility as educators, leaders, and parents is to make the 4-H program accessible to all children who are interested in participating.

It is the policy of the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service, David C. Petritz, Director, that all persons shall have equal opportunity and access to the programs and facilities without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, or disability. Purdue University is an Affirmative Action employer.

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