

# ***Youth with Disabilities in the 4-H Horse Program of Kentucky***

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As a part of the University of Kentucky, the Cooperative Extension and the 4-H Horse Program provide Equal Opportunity Programs.

“Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age, veteran status, or physical or mental disability.”

The Americans with Disabilities Act gives civil rights protection to individuals with disabilities by guaranteeing equal opportunity in public accommodations, employment, transportation, State and local government services, and telecommunications. This guide will help you answer some common questions that may arise in working with a disabled youth in the 4-H Horse Program.

## ***Are there classes in the 4-H Horse Program specifically for youth with disabilities?***

- ♣ No. A youth with disabilities may ride in any class for which they are qualified. The 4-H Horse Program limits participants to enter once in walk/trot (or jog) classes during their 4-H career. However, consideration will be given to more than one entry for individuals with special needs to allow them to enter this class more than one time.

## ***What about safety of the youth with or without a disability?***

- ♣ Safety is always a concern when children are working with horses. However, one cannot assume that a youth with disabilities is any more at risk for harm than any youth without disabilities. The CES is allowed to establish qualification standards that will exclude individuals who pose a direct threat (a significant risk of substantial harm) to the health or safety of the individual or of others, if that risk cannot be eliminated or reduced below the level of a direct threat by reasonable accommodation. However, one may not simply assume that a threat exists; the program must establish through objective, medically supportable methods that there is significant risk that substantial harm could occur. By requiring individualized judgments based on reliable medical or other objective evidence rather than on generalizations, ignorance, fear, patronizing attitudes, or stereotypes, the ADA recognizes the need for CES to balance the interests of youth with disabilities against the interests of all participants, to maintain a safe learning environment.

***What accommodations should we be prepared to make to the show location or classes to provide for a youth with disabilities?***

- ♣ The 4-H Horse Program is required to provide reasonable accommodation to enable a person with a disability to accomplish a task in a manner that may be different from the way a non-disabled person may accomplish the same task. However, the CES is not required to eliminate essential tasks. Reasonable accommodations are any modification or adjustment to a task or the environment that will enable a qualified youth with a disability to participate in the program. Reasonable accommodation also includes adjustments to assure that a youth with a disability has rights and privileges equal to those youth without disabilities.
  - Example-A youth in a wheelchair would like to show his/her horse in showmanship, as required to qualify for the State 4-H Horse Show. The ground is too soft and the wheelchair does not move with ease. What do you do? The show committee would have to decide upon a location for showmanship that will accommodate the 4-H member with his/her wheelchair.
  
- ♣ The CES provides access for any participant with a disability to participate in the programs it provides when possible. This includes access to a building, riding arenas, stalls, and to all facilities used by other participants when possible. We encourage anyone requiring a reasonable accommodation for participation to notify the CES in advance so that services may be arranged.
  - Example: A youth with a disability may require access to a stall for their horse, but cannot grip the handle to open the stall door. A reasonable accommodation would need to be arranged or a reasonable alternative provided.
  
- ♣ Accommodations may be needed to assure that skill tests actually measure the ability of an individual to perform a function rather than reflect limitations caused by the disability.
  - Example: In an equitation class, the judge may ask the riders to dismount and mount. If a youth with disabilities needs assistance with this process, then the show committee should allow qualified individuals to assist the youth so that the task may be completed.

Comments, questions or inquiries relating to physical access, web access, reasonable accommodation, or requests for information related to the University of Kentucky's compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, or the UK Affirmative Action Plan should be directed to the ADA Compliance Coordinator, Assistant Vice President:

**Patty Bender**  
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