

**NYS 4-H Horse Program  
“Riding Level”  
Evaluation Form**

**Please Note:**

- This form to be used for all 4-H youth that have riding experience and are being evaluated for “CCE/4-H sponsored” programs and events.
- This riding level evaluation form is not required for club activities.
- A youth that has previously been evaluated to ride safely in Junior or Senior levels does not need to be re-evaluated, unless there is a need for re-evaluation.
- Evaluation forms should be kept on file in county CCE/4-H offices.
- A youth that wishes to “move up” a level must be re-evaluated.
- Any Cloverbud youth must have been evaluated by the “Cloverbud – On the Ground Skills Evaluation” form, been involved in “riding experiences”, and demonstrated their ability to ride safely before they are to be involved in “county sponsored” programs and events. All Cloverbud policies apply (see NYS 4-H Cloverbud Leader Handbook)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Age on Date of Evaluation: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

4-H Age (Age on January 1 of the current 4-H year): \_\_\_\_\_

Club Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Club Leader(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\*Parent/Guardian Signature – signifies that the child and parent are interested in this child having a riding experience; and that the parent is giving their approval for this “Riding Level” evaluation to be performed.

State the Riding Level, for this child, for which you are seeking evaluation: \_\_\_\_\_  
(First read all descriptions below)

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Potential Riding Levels:

### **Lead Line:**

The child is mounted and led by a side walker, who is 18 years of age or older and has horse related experience. A properly fitted halter must be over the bridle and a lead line must be attached to the ring at the bottom of the halter, not on the side or to the bit. Youth must be capable of holding the reins in their hands. Youth will not be asked to back their horse. Youth at this level cannot qualify for State Fair.

### **Walk/Trot or Walk/Jog:**

Youth can be Cloverbud or older non-Cloverbud youth. The child is mounted and can ride safely in walk/trot or walk/jog situations. Youth may or may not be expected to know their diagonals, depending upon the level ridden or class entered. The youth will not be asked to back their horse. The youth must be able to control their horse in a group setting. Separate events/classes must be held for Cloverbud youth. Youth at this level cannot qualify for State Fair.

### **Walk/Trot/Canter or Walk/Jog/Lope (no leads to count – diagonals do count):**

This level is designed for youth that are not a colverbud, that have mastered the silks of walking, trotting or jogging, and cantering or loping the horse safely, but not the skill of asking for the correct lead at the canter/lope. The youth may be asked to back their horse. The youth must be able to control their horse in a group setting. Youth at this level cannot qualify for State Fair.

### **Walk/Trot/Canter or Walk/Jog/Lope (leads and diagonals to count):**

Youth must have mastered the skills of walking, trotting or jogging, and catering or loping the horse safely. Youth must know their diagonals and be able to canter or lope the horse on the correct lead. The youth may be asked to back their horse. Youth at this level may need to do independent patterns or more complicated riding skills demonstrations, depending upon the classes they will enter. The youth must be able to control their horse in a group setting.

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

#### **Some Potential Class Levels (these are separate from Riding Levels)**

(These are some suggested potential “class levels” and may vary from county to county):

- Cloverbud – can only do leadline, and walk/trot or walk/jog
- Novice – youth at this level cannot qualify for State Fair
- Junior – youth at this level can qualify for State Fair
- Senior – youth at this level can qualify for State Fair

Use the following scale to evaluate the child's skills:

- 0 = not at all
- 1 = little skill
- 2 = fair amount of skill
- 3 = good skills
- 4 = excellent skills

**Does the child:**

**(circle the appropriate number)**

- |                                                                                                                                           |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| • show the desire to ride and possible exhibit a horse?                                                                                   | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| • demonstrate the ability to understand and follow instructions?                                                                          | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| • have an adequate attention span for riding and possibly exhibit a horse?                                                                | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| • appear to have the muscle strength to maintain the proper riding position and hold their head in position when wearing a riding helmet? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| • demonstrate that they have adequate balance to stay in position when riding the horse for the level of riding being considered?         | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| • work safely around the horse?                                                                                                           | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| • work quietly around the horse, without being loud?                                                                                      | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| • work softly around the horse, without quick and abrupt body movement?                                                                   | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| • know how to move around and behind the rear of the horse?                                                                               | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| • know that they must always wear a riding helmet when riding a horse?                                                                    | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| • know that they must always wear equestrian footwear with a distinguishable heel when riding a horse?                                    | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

**Does the child:**

**(circle the appropriate number)**

- know that they should mainly work around the left side of the horse? 0 1 2 3 4
  - know the left side from the right side of the horse? 0 1 2 3 4
  - have the ability to lead a horse safely with adult assistance for Cloverbuds; without adult assistance for all other levels? 0 1 2 3 4
  - show respect for the horse and the fact that horses can hurt you? 0 1 2 3 4
  - show confidence when working around the horse? 0 1 2 3 4
  - show a relaxed attitude about being around the horse? 0 1 2 3 4
- 

**Also please evaluate the child on the following:**

**PLEASE NOTE:** Only evaluate the child at the gaits necessary for the level for which the child is seeking evaluation. Never ask a child to perform at a gait that you do not feel the child is capable of, regardless of what level the child is seeking evaluation.

**(circle the appropriate response)**

- is the tack safe for riding? yes No
  - does the tack fit the horse properly? yes No
  - does the tack fit the child properly? yes No
  - does the child's helmet fit properly? yes No
  - is the child wearing equestrian footwear with a distinguishable heel? yes No
-

(circle the appropriate number)

**Walk**

- |                                                                    |   |   |   |   |   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| • can the youth safely handle the horse at the walk?               | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| • does the youth stay in balance with the horse at the walk?       | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| • does the youth execute a safe and smooth transition to the walk? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
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**Trot/Jog**

- |                                                                            |   |   |   |   |   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| • can the youth safely handle the horse at the trot or jog?                | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| • does the youth stay in balance with the horse at the trot or jog?        | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| • if applicable, does the youth know their diagonals?                      | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| • is the youth successful at riding on the correct diagonal?               | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| • does the youth execute a safe and smooth walk to trot or jog transition? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
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**Canter/Lope**

- |                                                                                                                                                               |   |   |   |   |   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| • does the youth safely handle the horse at the canter or lope?                                                                                               | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| • does the youth stay in balance with the horse at the canter or lope?                                                                                        | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| • does the youth know their leads?                                                                                                                            | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| • is the youth successful at getting the horse on the correct lead both ways of the ring?                                                                     | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| • does the youth execute a safe and smooth transition to the canter or lope from the gait asked for? (do not ask for difficult transitions, keep this simple) | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
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**This youth has been evaluated and approved to ride at:**

(circle the appropriate Riding Level below)

Leadline                      Walk/Trot or Walk/Jog

Walk/Trot/Canter – (no leads to count – diagonals do count)

Walk/Trot/Canter – (leads and diagonals to count)

Some suggestions for this child to work on:

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\_\_\_\_\_ This child should not be considered to be a candidate to have a riding experience at this time.

**PLEASE NOTE:** It is recommended that there be a riding level evaluation committee consisting of 3 individuals with suitable horse and riding experience to perform the evaluation. It is suggested that this committee consist of a 4-H leader, a parent of a 4-H youth and an instructor when possible; other possible combinations to be determined by the county Cornell Cooperative Extension Association or educator.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Youth should be evaluated on the horse/rider combination that they will be participating with whenever possible.

Evaluator(s) Name(s) or Initials\*: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Evaluation: \_\_\_\_\_ Please remember to file in the CCE/4-H office.

Recommendations reviewed and accepted by:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
CCE Educator's Signature

\* A child may not be evaluated by their own parent or guardian.