

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

**\* PLEASE NOTE:**

- This form to be used for all 4-H youth that have driving experience and are being evaluated for “CCE/4-H sponsored” programs and events.
- This driving level evaluation form is not required for club activities.
- A youth that has previously been evaluated to drive safely in the Walk/Trot/Extended Trot level does not need to be re-evaluated due to change of age from Jr. to Sr., 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.
- Cloverbuds do NOT drive.

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Age on date of evaluation \_\_\_\_\_ Grade level \_\_\_\_\_

Last Assigned Driving Level \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

4-H age (age on Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> of the current 4-H year) \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

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

**State the Driving Level, for this child, for which you are seeking evaluation:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**(first read all descriptions below)**

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

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Potential Driving Levels:**

**NOTE:** Cloverbud youths **do not** drive. Refer to “Cloverbud Procedure Recommendations for children ages 5-8 working with equines”.

**Walk Only: (this level is for educational clinics only not for 4-H shows)**

The child is driving with the assistance of a person riding in the cart, who is 18 years of age or older and has equine related experience. Youth must be capable of skillfully holding the reins in their hands. Youth will drive at the walk only. Headers will be required during line up (separate from the person riding in the cart). Youth will not be asked to back their equine. Youth at this level can not qualify for State Fair.

**Walk/trot:**

The child is seated and can drive safely at the walk and trot. The youth will be asked to back their equine. The youth must be able to control their equine in a group setting. Headers will be required during line up. Youth at this level can not qualify for State Fair.

**Walk/trot/extended trot:**

Youth must have mastered the skills of walking, trotting, and extending at the trot. The youth will be asked to back their equine. Youth at this level may be asked to do independent patterns or more complicated driving skills demonstrations, depending upon the classes they will enter. The youth must be able to control their equine in a group setting. Headers will be allowed during line up. Youth at this level can qualify for State Fair.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

**Some Potential “Class Levels” (these are separate from Driving Levels)**

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

- **Cloverbud** – Driving classes are not appropriate for Cloverbud youths (Refer to “Cloverbud Procedure – Recommendations for children ages 5-8 working with equines”)
- **Beginner**
- **Maiden**
- **Novice**
- **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 drive and possibly exhibit an equine?                    0      1      2      3      4
- demonstrate the ability to understand and follow instructions?                    0      1      2      3      4
- have an adequate attention span for driving and possibly exhibiting an equine?                    0      1      2      3      4
- appear to have the muscle strength to maintain a proper driving 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 driving the horse for the level of driving being considered?                    0      1      2      3      4
- work safely around the equine?                    0      1      2      3      4
- work quietly around the equine, 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 equine?                    0      1      2      3      4
- know that they must always wear a riding helmet when driving an equine?                    0      1      2      3      4
- know that they must always wear equestrian footwear with a distinguishable heel when driving an equine?                    0      1      2      3      4

**Does the child:**

**(circle the appropriate number)**

- know that they should mainly work around the left side of the equine?                    0     1     2     3     4
- know the left side from the right side of the equine?                    0     1     2     3     4
- have the ability to lead an equine safely with adult assistance for Cloverbuds; without adult assistance for all other levels?                    0     1     2     3     4
- show respect for the equine and the fact that horses can hurt you?                    0     1     2     3     4
- show confidence when working around the equine?                    0     1     2     3     4
- show a relaxed attitude about being around the equine?                    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 driving?                    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
- does the child have the required:
  - gloves?                    yes                    no
  - whip?                    yes                    no
  - lap robe?                    yes                    no

(circle the appropriate number)

**Walk**

- can the youth safely handle the equine at the walk?                   0     1     2     3     4
  - does the youth stay in balance with the equine 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
- 

**Trot**

- can the youth safely handle the equine at the trot?                   0     1     2     3     4
  - does the youth stay in balance with the equine at the trot?                   0     1     2     3     4
  - does the youth execute a safe and smooth walk to trot transition?                   0     1     2     3     4
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**Extended Trot**

- does the youth safely handle the equine at the extended trot?                   0     1     2     3     4
  - does the youth stay in balance with the equine at the extended trot?                   0     1     2     3     4
  - does the youth execute a safe and smooth transition to the extended trot?  
(do not ask for difficult transitions, keep this simple)                   0     1     2     3     4
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**Halt and Back**

- can the youth stop the equine safely and quickly?                   0     1     2     3     4
  - can the youth back the equine safely?  
(Walk Only drivers do not back their horse)                   0     1     2     3     4
- 

**Other**

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| ● does the child have satisfactory control of the whip and reins?                  | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| ● can the youth change direction across the diagonal?                              | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| ● can the youth do a figure 8 at the working Trot? (for W/T/Extended T level only) | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

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**\* It is also important to consider the equine the child will be driving. Take special care to help ensure that the equine/driver combination is appropriate and that the combination is a safe match. The disposition of a suitable child's animal should be quiet, gentle, and of a calm nature. The level of training of the equine should be appropriate for the level of the driver. The size and body type of the equine and its suitability to the child and child's body type should also be considered when picking an appropriate animal for a child. Ideally, the equine should be of a size that the child feels comfortable handling and driving; and that the child can safely handle the animal.**

Other comments about this child's driving evaluation \_\_\_\_\_

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**This youth has been evaluated and approved to drive at (circle the appropriate Driving Level below):**

**Walk Only (does not include back)**

**Walk/Trot (includes back)**

Walk/Trot/Extended Trot (includes back and a figure 8 at the trot)

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 driving experience at this time.

**PLEASE NOTE:** It is recommended that there be a driving level evaluation committee consisting of 3 individuals with suitable horse experience (at least one person having suitable driving knowledge) 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/driver combination that they will be participating with whenever possible.

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

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Date of Evaluation \_\_\_\_\_ Remember to file in the CCE/4-H office

Recommendations reviewed and accepted by:  
CCE Educator's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

Jtg/a:drivinlevevalformjtgfinal09.1.09/January 29, 2009  
Jtg/F:drivinglevevakformjtgfinal13.3.13/March 5, 2013