

Parents — *Partners on the 4-H Team*

Why Parents Are Needed

When interested parents participate in 4-H, the members benefit from their support and encouragement. When the parents know about 4-H and the activities and events available to the members, they can help their children participate. Informed parents can help members attend club meetings, workshops, keep records, participate in community service activities, and prepare for leadership roles in the club program.

Parents are a valuable resource to 4-H. When the parents have the opportunity to share their interests and talents with the 4-H members in club work, both will benefit. The young people will learn more, and the adults will get to know other families and develop positive relationships with young people.

What Can Parents Do?

Parents can help their own children select, finance, and manage their 4-H projects. This is especially important for young members. Young people often need encouragement to continue their projects. More specific things that parents may do include the following:

- Hold meetings in their homes;
- Help with project work, based on parents' interests;
- Encourage record-keeping activities;
- Help members get to meetings and events;
- Help to secure other qualified adults to assist with projects and activities;
- Help members select, finance, and manage projects
- Attend 4-H meetings and events;
- Serve on committees to help plan and conduct events;



- Encourage the youth to participate in special 4-H events;
- Be a 4-H booster in the community;
- Provide food when asked for by the 4-H club;
- Read the 4-H newsletters that come into their homes;
- Offer to assist the club leader with some task;
- Share skills or knowledge by volunteering to be an assistant 4-H club leader, activity leader, or project leader for the club;
- Serve as a judge for some event;
- Be up-to-date on the 4-H information in the county; and
- Help members conduct project work.

How Should the Organization Volunteer Leader Involve Parents?

Keep parents informed about 4-H. Be sure they know the following:

- What 4-H is and the opportunities it offers;
- What is expected of their son or daughter;



- The names of the 4-H volunteers and their responsibilities;
- The financial cost to members and parents;
- The time, place, and topic of the 4-H meetings.

It is important parents feel involved from the beginning. Enroll the parents when you “enroll” the member. Hold a special meeting for parents at the beginning of the year to get acquainted and to explain 4-H. Be sure that each family has a copy of the 4-H member handbook and enrollment guide. Give them the opportunity to choose the way they will be involved in the work of the club. Parents will understand why the club needs their help if they know the club plan. Ask parents to help. Ask them to do specific tasks related to their interests. Describe clearly what is needed. Be sure the parents see meaningful and challenging aspects of the task.

Every parent needs material and information to help his or her child grow and develop in 4-H. Visit members’ homes shortly after they join 4-H and get to know their parents. Use these ideas for successful home visits:

- Let parents know you would like to visit and then find a time convenient for all involved;
- Don’t complain or demand help during your visit. Use a positive reason for your first visit; for example, explain the purpose and aims of 4-H; tell about your local program; describe the child’s project, providing 4-H manuals or describing a special achievement their child has made.
- Include the 4-H’er in your conversation with his/her parents.
- Explain your role as a 4-H volunteer. Be sure parents understand you are a volunteer and the way you and the par-

ents can help the youth by working together.

- Explain what is expected of the 4-H member. Parents should know what project their child is taking and the responsibilities the child has in the club.
- Give at least one genuinely deserved compliment and one challenge during your visit. Use a "Parent Interest Survey" found in this publication at the parents' meeting or during the home visit. This will help you find out how parents would rather be involved.

How Parents Can Be Recognized

We all like to know our efforts are appreciated. Parents are no different. Recognize their efforts and encourage members to say "thank you" to their parents for their help. Write personal notes of thanks for specific jobs. Recognize the help of parents by including

their names and, whenever possible, pictures in newspaper reports and newsletters.

The club may hold a "Parents Appreciation Night." This could include exhibits and refreshments or a meal prepared by the members. The program could include talent by members and recognition of the parents. Present certificates or 4-H "favors" in appreciation of their help.

Summary

The 4-H'er gains special support, confidence, assistance, and a feeling of security when his/her parent is involved in 4-H. Involvement in 4-H gives the parent a feeling of contributing to the community and of being helpful to young people. Help parents to be informed of the club work, ask them to do specific tasks related to their interests, and thank them for good cooperation and support.



Parent Interest Survey

Please check those things you will be willing to do when your local 4-H Club needs them.

- 1. Lend kitchen, backyard, living room, garage, or basement for meetings.
- 2. Help provide refreshments.
- 3. Organize a carpool for transportation to and from 4-H meetings.
- 4. Drive in a carpool for transportation to and from 4-H meetings.
- 5. Provide chaperone and/or transportation for a tour, picnic, contest, clinic, workshop, camp, party, or other 4-H activity.
- 6. Help telephone parents for last-minute announcements.
- 7. Encourage 4-H members to start and complete projects on time.
- 8. Help my son or daughter obtain materials or equipment needed for 4-H project and see to it that he or she brings them to the meeting when necessary.
- 9. Encourage my son or daughter to have exhibits and visual presentations completed and delivered on time, with all information as stated in project instructions and county rules.
- 10. Urge my child to attend all meetings.
- 11. Assist with 4-H projects (list). _____

- 12. Share a hobby with the group. Parent hobbies: _____

- 13. Other volunteers' interests. I am interested in helping with the following:
 - 4-H tours
 - 4-H picnic
 - 4-H achievement night/day
 - 4-H camp
 - Fund raising
 - Assist at fair or exhibit days
 - Community service project
 - Fashion revue
 - Public speaking
 - Visual presentations
 - Judging
 - Showmanship
 - Other _____

Name: _____ 4-H member's name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Occupation: _____



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