



Parent Involvement

To be successful, a 4-H program must have parent involvement. Although 4-H leaders and Extension agents may interest youths in becoming members, they need the parents' goodwill and support to keep them interested, enthusiastic and active.

Parents strongly influence the attitudes and accomplishments of their children.

The expectations of volunteer leaders, Extension agents and 4-H members greatly affect the kind and extent of parental cooperation received. When parents are involved only peripherally and not informed about club activities, little cooperation can be expected. We must inform parents about the 4-H program and give them opportunities to participate in club activities.

Parental involvement is important to:

The Leader:

4-H parents can save the 4-H leader much time and effort. They can help with skills the club leader may lack.

The 4-H Member:

When parents participate in the 4-H program, members gain support, confidence, assurance and a feeling of security they might lack otherwise.

The 4-H Parent:

Participation in the 4-H program can help the parents feel they are contributing to their community and to the development of their own child and that of other children. By offering many opportunities for families to do things together, the 4-H program can help develop family unity.

How to Interest Parents

- Encourage parents to attend club organizational meetings and other project experiences
- Explain the 4-H program.
- Outline what is expected of a 4-H member.
- Explain how parents can help.
- Tell parents what they can expect of adult volunteer leaders.
- Hold special parent meetings.



- Visit them at home, telephone or email them.
- Include parents in special activities and events.
- Hold meetings in the homes of 4-H members.
- Arrange tours to the homes of all members.
- Give credit to parents for their help.
- Be specific when asking parents for help, and be sure to ask for help that is meaningful. General announcements about needs for help are usually less productive than are asking a specific person to help with a specific task.
- Encourage record keeping.
- Help members get to meetings and events.
- Attend 4-H meeting and events.
- Serve on committees to help plan and conduct 4-H events.
- Help leaders conduct project work.
- Help leaders find other qualified adults to conduct project work and help with 4-H activities.
- Share special talents, such as piano playing, song leading, flower arranging, camp leadership and crafts.

What parents can do

- Hold 4-H meetings in their home.
- Help members select, finance and manage their projects.

Reference: This publication is an edited and updated version of the "Texas 4-H Leaders Handbook."

Produced by AgriLife Communications and Marketing, Texas A&M System
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