

Volunteer Development

The 4-H program must have volunteers. County Extension agents need to understand the role of volunteers in managing 4-H FCS projects. This includes working with task forces, training and developing project leaders, and recognizing volunteers for their work. This section focuses on:

- Volunteer Roles and Definitions
- Using a Task Force
- Task Force Sample Agenda
- Project Leader Position Description
- Role of 4-H Project Leaders
- Project Leader Training Sample Agenda
- Organizing a Project Group
- Helping 4-H Volunteers Become Educators
- Teaching Techniques
- Child Growth and Development
- Recognition of Volunteers
- Parental Involvement

Volunteer Roles and Definitions

Volunteers are vital to the Texas 4-H Youth Development Program. Both adult and youth volunteers can help with FCS projects in the various roles described below.

Adult volunteers

Direct volunteer: Any enrolled volunteer who:

- Provides unpaid support for the 4-H program through face-to-face contact
- Provides a learning experience for members
- Has an individual volunteer application on file in the county Extension office
- Has been screened through the Youth Protection Standards process or another approved screening entity
- Has a position description on file

Examples of direct volunteers are club managers, project leaders, activity leaders, camp counselors, teachers, and coaches.

Project leader: Any enrolled volunteer who provides structured learning experiences or personal guidance in project-related activities to 4-H members enrolled in the project group. Junior leaders help project leaders by taking responsibility for specific tasks as requested by the leader.

Activity leader: Any enrolled volunteer who helps during a structured learning experience and/or provides leadership and personal guidance for 4-H members involved in an activity such as educational presentations, judging events, contests, community service, or fund-raising.

Project leader coordinator: If the club has six or more project leaders, it may be a good idea to have a project leader coordinator who helps the project leaders get information, provides extra training and information on teaching, and/or coordinates all project meetings and activities. Club managers may also serve in this role.

Youth volunteers

4-H members may also serve as volunteers. This gives them the opportunity to exhibit and enhance the leadership skills they have gained through their 4-H projects and share with others what they have learned.

Youth volunteer: Any enrolled 4-H member who has experience and expertise in the project area and exhibits leadership qualities. Youth volunteers typically work under the guidance of an enrolled adult volunteer. Two leadership roles for 4-H members are:

Junior leader: Any 4-H member, age 10 to 19, who has been an active member for at least 1 year and helps an adult volunteer. Junior leadership gives older 4-H members opportunities to help the club/project group and develop leadership skills. Junior leaders may:

- Help plan 4-H activities.
- Teach younger or new members.
- Recruit members and leaders.
- Call members and encourage participation.
- Lead by example.

Teen leader: Any 4-H member, age 13 to 19, who accepts primary leadership responsibility for a project group or club activity. Teen leaders recruit adult advisors and plan and coordinate activities associated with a project. Their role is the same as that of adult volunteers, but they work under the supervision of an adult.



Using a Task Force

Assemble a 4-H Family and Consumer Sciences Task Force to help you and to support FCS projects. Serve as the advisor to the task force and allow the task force members to work as a team to increase the quality of learning experiences for 4-H members.

Each county should have at least one FCS Project Task Force. Some counties have one task force to help coordinate all 4-H FCS projects; others have individual task forces for each project.

Purpose

- Guide the project by training project/teen leaders and supplying a curriculum, educational tools, and recognition.
- Plan educational events for the project.
- Help plan and conduct the contests affiliated with the project.
- Generate ideas for project group activities (project learning experiences, community service ideas, leadership opportunities).

Key elements

- Task forces should include adults and young people:
 - **Adults:** The task force helps maximize the use of volunteers.
 - **Young people:** When coordinating project areas, remember that your target audiences are young people.
- **Goals:** Task force members can help identify goals for a specific project or for all FCS projects.
- **Education:** The task force should focus on the educational aspect of each FCS project by developing meaningful educational programs for 4-H members.

Tasks

- Recruit volunteers (youth and adults) for each of the 4-H FCS project areas.
- Host a project leader training for project leaders from each club. This can be done in one day or periodically throughout the year.
- Plan and sponsor a countywide educational event related to the FCS project area. Task force members may know local resource people who can speak or teach a workshop.
- Secure curriculum and educational resources for the project area to share with volunteers and 4-H members.
- Help plan and coordinate county 4-H FCS contests. A task force can definitely lighten the load for a county Extension agent, while ensuring the integrity of the contests. Task force members can help secure contest judges, serve as timekeepers, coordinate the awards program, and secure donations and prizes.
- Help with district 4-H FCS educational events and contests. They can serve on district planning committees or help on the day of the contest by serving as judges, timekeepers, or runners.

Development

- Based on the needs of your county program, determine whether it is best to have one FCS project task force or a separate task force for each FCS project.
- A broad representation strengthens the task force. Try to get members from various 4-H clubs, areas of the county, and all FCS project areas, and members who have different tenures as volunteers or 4-H members. Diversity will give balance to your task force.
- When recruiting task force members, don't just put an announcement in the newspaper and/or newsletter and expect people to show up. Take time to get to know the volunteers and 4-H members. Learn about their interests and then invite them to serve on the task force.
- When recruiting adult volunteers, look at the industry in the county. Some volunteers may have a profession in a certain area that relates to the project. If they have a passion for the subject matter, they will be committed.
- Volunteers can also be identified by the areas of interest they indicate on their volunteer applications.

Task force meetings

- At the first meeting, give the group time to get to know one another. Coordinate an icebreaker or get-acquainted activity that will allow them to learn about each other. This activity can also help you learn what each member's interest may be.
- Don't get immediately wrapped up in the tasks that need to be done or the planning of a contest. Take time to listen to the members and their ideas.
- Facilitate discussion within the group so that members feel their input is valued and everyone has a chance to share ideas. Some questions to facilitate discussion.
 - ☒ How can we enhance the project experience?
 - ☒ What tools and resources do we need to enhance the project?
 - ☒ How can we market the project to new 4-H members and volunteers?



Task Force Sample Agenda

Welcome

Given by the county Extension agent leading the project

Introductions

Ask task force members to introduce themselves and say why they are a part of the task force, what their project interests are, and what they would like to see the group accomplish.

Purpose

Give an overview of the responsibilities of the task force members.

Roles and responsibilities

Outline what the expectations of the task force are, what accomplishments you (the CEA) would like to see in the projects, and how the task force members can help.

Develop a calendar/timeline

Based on major activities (contests, deadlines, etc.), have the task force members develop a timeline of events to show when activities will take place throughout the cycle of the project.

Use the project timeline and contest planning guide provided in the FCS project information section to help you develop the project calendar.

Plan an activity

The task force should have a role in planning an event (project workshop, community service activity, etc.). This will give them the opportunity to fulfill additional leadership roles and see the importance of the task force.

Throughout the planning process, be sure that notes are kept about what needs to be accomplished, who is responsible for each task, and by when tasks need to be completed.

Develop a communication plan

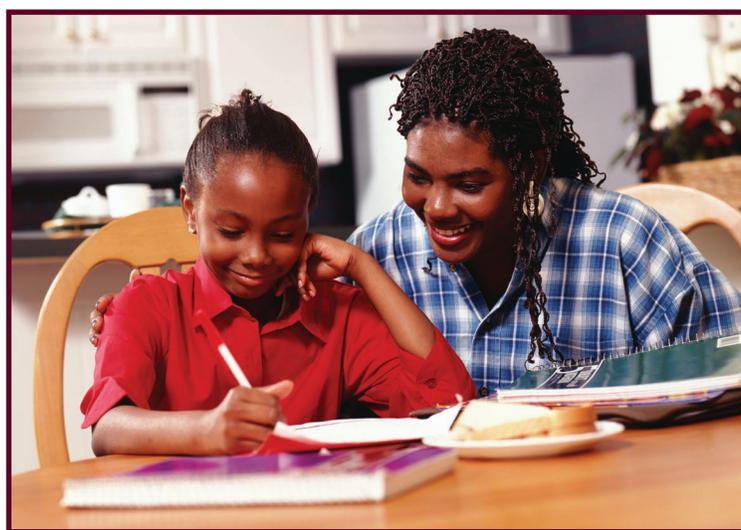
Gather and discuss ideas for communication. Develop a process to ensure that all activity and contest information will be distributed to all 4-H members and their families, and to all project leaders.

Review responsibilities and assignments

Make sure that all task force members know their responsibilities as set out in the planning of a project activity. As soon as possible after the meeting, give each task force member a copy of the calendar/timeline and all other plans that were made. If you can, make copies for members before they leave. Or, email the information to them the next day.

Set the next meeting date

Depending on the timeline and need, set the date for the next task force meeting. This will keep the members engaged in the project planning process.



Project Leader Position Description

Purpose: To provide structured learning experiences and personal guidance for 4-H members enrolled in the FCS project

Advisor: County Extension agent responsible for 4-H FCS projects

Length of appointment: Varies with the project and as agreed upon with the county Extension agent

Responsibilities

- Share your knowledge with members through meetings, tours, individual help, and written resources.
- Conduct project meetings and activities using the “learn by doing” hands-on approach.
- Help 4-H members set goals, plan and carry out activities, and keep records of achievements in the project.
- Become acquainted with the project and the activities and resources related to it.
- Help members with exhibits, demonstrations, and the completion of their project recordbook and/or Member Achievement Plan.
- Request training and project materials from the club manager or county Extension agent.
- Attend project leader training programs at least twice a year. (These are offered at the county, district, region and/or state levels.)
- Submit required records and reports on time.
- Provide opportunities for 4-H members to participate in other 4-H activities and events.
- Involve members as junior and teen leaders.
- Be familiar with and adhere to the *Texas 4-H Rules and Guidelines*.

Qualifications

- Registered as a direct volunteer for the county 4-H program, meeting all associated requirements
- Knowledge of the project subject matter and a willingness to share that knowledge and talent with 4-H members
- Ability to plan and conduct a project activity using project resources
- Ability to communicate with young people and understand their developmental characteristics
- Willingness to maintain contact with parents to help them to support their child(ren) in project work
- Belief in the importance of youth development and the need to provide young people with out-of-school learning opportunities

Benefits of serving as a 4-H project leader

- Gain and/or enhance knowledge and skills in the subject matter area.
- Be a significant part of the educational and developmental process for young people.
- Foster the development and growth of successful youth-adult partnerships.
- See the effect of the 4-H and Youth Development Program in the county.
- Experience personal growth from serving as a project leader.
- Be recognized by others in the community and program.

Resources and support available

- Orientation, training, and support from the county Extension staff
- Project literature for members and leaders
- Various subject matter resources

Role of 4-H Project Leaders

4-H project leaders provide structured learning experiences and personal guidance to 4-H members enrolled in specific projects. Project leaders often plan and organize project clubs or groups of 4-H'ers within a club who are interested in the same project.

Responsibilities:

- Obtain a list of 4-H members in the club who are interested in the project.
- Become acquainted with the project and the activities associated with it.
- Develop a project plan based on:
 - Project educational objectives
 - Level of members' knowledge and experience
 - Members' specific interests
 - Resources available
- Conduct project meetings and activities.
- Help members set goals and keep records of their achievements in the project.
- Provide positive, structured learning experiences for members enrolled in the project.
- Provide opportunities for 4-H members to participate in 4-H activities and competitive events.
- See that the members and supporting parents/adults receive recognition.

Potential 4-H FCS project leaders

Parents are valuable resources when it comes to recruiting 4-H project leaders. However, other volunteers can fill the role of project leaders. Examples include:

Texas Extension Education Association (TEEA): This group of volunteers works with Extension to strengthen and enrich families through educational programs, leadership development, and community service. The members are organized into local clubs and are part of a county, district, and statewide association. TEEA is a strong supporter of the 4-H program.

Quilt guilds: Quilt guild members are natural volunteers for the 4-H Clothing and Textiles Project. These people love to quilt, are usually generous with their time, and have excellent ideas for community service. They have experience with community service projects and can give guidance as to the skill levels required for various projects. They often will serve as volunteers for workshops or will help put together quilt kits, etc. To find quilt guilds in your area, visit <http://www.quiltguilds.com/texas.htm>.

Retail stores: Many retail stores are happy to give tours of their facilities. On a tour, the manager could show how freight comes in, how the garments must be ironed and displayed, etc. Another fun idea is for 4-H members to dress mannequins for different functions and have a store's employees vote on the team that did the best job. Consumer decision-making scenarios are fun to do in a store situation. Some stores may donate gift certificates for your fashion show.

College students: If you have a university or college in your area that doesn't have a family and consumer sciences department, volunteer to help the career center conduct "mock interviews." There you will find students who have a background and interest in volunteering with youth programs. Many will have 4-H backgrounds. Some college campuses have collegiate 4-H groups as well. College students can be wonderful Food Show and Fashion Show judges.

Retired teachers: Offer to speak to your local retired teachers association and tell them your needs. They love young people and love to teach. They can make wonderful volunteers.

Master volunteers: Master volunteers gain knowledge and skills in a specific subject matter and are required to return hours of service in support of the Extension program. Master volunteers who may be willing to work with the 4-H and Youth Development Program are Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, and Master Wellness Volunteers.

Former 4-H members: This group of potential volunteers is often looking for some way to give back to the program. The familiarity they have with the 4-H program is a benefit.

Project Leader Training Sample Agenda

You are responsible for providing training for FCS project leaders before their projects begin. This is an example agenda for a project leader training.

Agenda

Welcome

Given by county Extension agent leading the project

Introductions

Ask project leaders to introduce themselves and say why they are project leaders and what they would like to see their project groups or clubs accomplish.

Volunteers as educators

See *Helping 4-H Volunteers Become Educators*, page 80, and *Child Growth and Development*, page 82.

4-H opportunities in a project

- Community service/service learning
- Curriculum
- Educational presentations
- Leadership
- Record keeping and recordbooks
- Resources
- Scholarships
- Upcoming events (county, district, and state competitions, tours, workshops, camps, etc.)

4-H subject matter topics

See the subject matter section for ideas for project meetings, workshops, etc. Offer some of these opportunities to your FCS project leaders so they can replicate the learning experiences for 4-H members in their project groups.

4-H competition resources

- Dates and deadlines
- Paperwork required
- Scorecards
- Suggested interview questions

Organizing a Project Group

Project work allows 4-H volunteer leaders to teach, and it enables the members to learn new skills and gain new knowledge. Organize each project group in cooperation with the club's organizational leader and/or the project task force.

Before the project meeting

- Speak with club managers or county Extension agents and develop a list of project meeting ideas.
- Inform 4-H members about the project. At the monthly club meeting, get names, email addresses, and phone numbers of members and parents who are interested in participating. Recruit project members through newsletter announcements.
- Set a date for the project organizational meeting, and invite the 4-H'ers and their parents.
- Encourage 4-H members to set goals before the first lesson.

At the first meeting

- Present outlines of project opportunities; explain when and where the project group will meet and the approximate number of meetings planned.
- Brainstorm ideas for project group activities, tours, and community service.
- Ask parents to serve as helpers.
- Present the first lesson to enable the members to begin project work.

How often to meet

- Plans and activities at the club and county level determine when a project group will begin and finish its activities for the year.
- Meet as often as necessary to complete the project.
- Typically, projects must consist of at least five learning experiences that last from 30 minutes to 1 hour each.
- Groups may choose from a variety of meeting formats. They might meet once a week or once or twice a month until the project is completed. Or they might have one all-day meeting with five lessons of at least 30 minutes each. Include learning experiences and community service in the project meetings.
- Projects usually are completed before they are exhibited.

Helping 4-H Volunteers Become Educators

Although most 4-H volunteers can become effective teachers, they may need help to gain confidence, become organized, and start the project. They need help from the county Extension agents.

4-H leaders may feel uneasy about teaching. Remind them that teaching is:

- A matter leaders of sharing what they know with members
- Helping members learn (the most important part)
- A flexible process
- Understanding how children learn

Five main steps:

- The agents help the leaders learn the subject matter material.
 - ☐ Explain why it is important.
 - ☐ Go over it with them.
 - ☐ Help them gain a clear picture of their goal.
- The leaders develop overall plans with input from agents:
 - ☐ Make sure the plan covers all objectives that members need to achieve in the project for the year.
 - ☐ Set dates, assign responsibilities, and arrange meeting places.
 - ☐ Check to make sure that the club/group schedule does not conflict with other related events and activities.
- The leaders plan each meeting:
 - ☐ Agenda
 - ☐ Arrangements
 - ☐ Who does what
 - ☐ Notify everyone
- The leaders plan the lesson:
 - ☐ Purpose
 - ☐ Main points to cover
 - ☐ Equipment and teaching aids needed
 - ☐ Gather references and resources
 - ☐ Review information beforehand
- The leaders provide hands-on experiences:
 - ☐ Let members practice.
 - ☐ Ask members to help.
 - ☐ Discuss the material.
 - ☐ Let one member show another.
 - ☐ Demonstrate, judge, tour, present problems, and allow the members to work on solutions.

Teaching Techniques

Project leaders need to use a variety of teaching methods and techniques to help young people learn. Volunteers should ask themselves what they want to teach and how to help the 4-H members learn and understand.

Teaching techniques

- **Lecture:** This method is useful when new facts or information must be presented; however, it does not allow members to participate in hands-on learning activities. Therefore, it is best to couple a lecture with an activity or end it with discussion.
- **Illustrated talk:** This teaching method is similar to a lecture except that the presenter uses visual aids (posters, drawings, computer presentation).
- **Discussion:** Facilitating a discussion on a specific topic allows 4-H members to express their opinions, share ideas, and discuss their personal experiences. Dividing into small groups may give each member a better opportunity to participate in the discussion. To be effective, the group members must understand what they are to discuss, how much time is allotted for discussion, and how they will report their discussion.
- **Demonstration:** This technique involves showing the group how to do something.
- **Practical application or hands-on:** This is one of the most effective teaching techniques because it enables 4-H members to learn by doing. After a demonstration that shows members how to do something, they are given the opportunity to practice the skills themselves.
- **Experimentation:** Experimentation allows 4-H members to see if their ideas will work. The usual process is for members to develop a hypothesis, predict what will happen under given circumstances, conduct the experiment, and then report the results.
- **Tours and home visits:** This activity allows members to get out and see how others do things. It also allows them to visit places they may never have been, learn about career opportunities, or see how things operate.
- **Exhibits:** This method allows for sharing information through exhibits and demonstrations. It is often useful for 4-H members to share what they have learned through their project experiences.
- **Judging:** In judging, 4-H members learn to make decisions based on certain standards and qualities. Every time you make a decision you are judging. Judging activities can teach 4-H members to make wise decisions based on facts, and to be able to explain why they made their choices.
- **Games:** Games can be used to make learning easier. When you can use games to teach facts and ideas, you will get the interest of the 4-H members, and they are more apt to remember what they have learned. You and the young people you are working with can plan games to play at meetings. Ideas may come from game books or other sources. Perhaps you can adapt some of the games you already know to teach the project subject matter.
- **Guest speakers:** Involving guest speakers with special skills and interests can add to the project meeting.

Child Growth and Development

The role of a 4-H leader comes with great responsibility—helping young people develop into responsible, productive citizens and contributing members of society.

You don't have to be an expert in child development to do this, but there are some basic concepts you can learn that will help you communicate and work effectively with youth of all ages. Understanding the common physical, social/emotional, and cognitive development stages of young people will help you know what to expect of children and how to help them develop all of their abilities.

Basic principles

Child development is multidimensional. Children develop in three broad areas, which child development experts (Berk, 2008) refer to as “domains” of development:

- **Physical development:** Changes in body size, shape, appearance, functioning of body systems, perceptual and motor capacities, and physical health
- **Social/emotional development:** Changes in a child's unique way of dealing with the world (e.g., understanding and expression of emotions, knowledge about others, interpersonal skills, self-awareness, friendships, moral reasoning, and behavior)
- **Cognitive development:** Changes in intellectual abilities, including learning, memory, reasoning, thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and language development

These domains of development overlap and often interact with each other. What happens in one domain can influence another domain greatly. For example, the toddlers' newly acquired ability to walk (physical development) can influence their potential to learn about new aspects of the environment (cognitive development).

On the other hand, a physical impairment, such as the inability to hear, can affect a child's social/emotional and cognitive development (e.g., language acquisition).

In addition, development can occur unevenly across the various domains. In some children, physical development outpaces social/emotional development, or vice-versa.

Children's development occurs in a predictable (orderly) sequence. While there are always exceptions, children's growth and development normally occurs in a predictable manner across the various domains (i.e., children tend to go through similar changes at certain intervals). Children's later abilities, skills, and knowledge are built upon those acquired at an earlier age (Bredekamp and Copple, 1997). This does not mean, however, that all children will develop in the same way or achieve certain developmental milestones at the same time. Every child is a unique person, with a unique personality, temperament, learning style, and family background.

There will always be variations in development from child to child. Developmental charts that identify key milestones for children at different ages and stages of development are not rigid. They provide parents with an idea of what tends to happen in a child's life within a particular age range. However, parents should know that if a child has not reached a certain developmental milestone at the expected time, it could be a sign of a problem that should be assessed by a pediatrician or specialist.

Children's development is affected by early experiences (NICHD, 2006). Depending on whether they are positive or negative, those experiences can help or hinder healthy development, particularly in a child's early brain development.

Researchers have discovered that there are optimal periods, also known as “sensitive periods” or “windows of opportunity,” for acquiring certain kinds of knowledge and skills (e.g., language development). Good prenatal care, warm and loving parent-child attachments, and positive stimulation from the time of birth provide children with an optimal environment for development.

A longitudinal study conducted by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD, 2006) found that good quality care in the early years, from parents and other caregivers, is associated with better social and thinking skills, better language ability, better math skills, higher levels of school readiness, and fewer reports of behavior problems.

Children's development occurs in a broader context. Parents are the most influential people in the lives of their children. But outside forces can also play a prominent role. For example, as children grow older, their peers become

increasingly influential. Parents must actively monitor and supervise their children at all times, which includes knowing where they are and who they are with.

This does not mean that a child’s desire for independence should be squelched; however, parents must find a balance between allowing their children more independence as they grow older and maintaining their own parental authority.

Children’s development depends on the interplay between genes and environment. For decades, researchers and practitioners disagreed about which plays a more prominent role in a child’s development—heredity (genes) or the environment. Today, there seems to be broad consensus that child development depends on the interplay between genes and environment (Berk, 2008; Bredekamp and Copple, 1997). Genes obviously set limits and boundaries on certain aspects of development (e.g., height, weight, and other physical characteristics), whereas the environment is thought to influence the entire process of development.

A child’s environment includes prenatal nutrition, the quality of the parent-child relationship, family structure, neighborhood safety, etc. In fact, genetic makeup and environment are so intertwined that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to determine the precise effect of each.

Ages and stages

Although every child is unique, children typically reach developmental milestones as they grow and mature. The following information can help you learn what to expect from children at various ages and stages of development.

| 5 to 8 Years | |
|--|--|
| Characteristics | Implications |
| Physical characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are learning how to use their bodies by mastering physical skills • Are skilled at using scissors and small tools • Can use large muscles better than small muscles • Long arms and legs may give a gawky, awkward appearance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have them do small and large muscle activities. • Use active learning experiences. • Plan activities that encourage physical activity—running, moving, cutting with scissors, painting, assembling, etc. • They are messy with meals, arts/crafts, so be ready to help. |
| Social/emotional characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are at a period of slow, steady growth • Want to be with friends • Girls tend to want to play with girls, boys with boys • Are sensitive to criticism; don’t accept failure well; seek a sense of security in groups, organized play, and clubs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make-believe activities allow them to imagine how others think and feel. • Plan activities that can be done alone or in small groups. Try to rotate the members of small groups. • Involve both sexes in activities. • Give positive encouragement and help. Plan activities that promote success instead of individual activities with a winner and a loser. |
| Cognitive (intellectual) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer attention spans • Can’t multi-task well • Problem-solving ability improves • Speaking and listening improves and vocabularies double | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on process, not the final product. • Plan short activities. • Give one to two tasks at a time. • Allow for exploration and inquiry. |

| 9–11 years | |
|---|---|
| Characteristics | Implications |
| Physical characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Girls generally as much as 2 years ahead of boys • Increased body and strength and hand dexterity • Improved coordination and reaction time • Lots of energy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide active learning experiences. • Avoid competition between boys and girls. |

| 9–11 years (continued) | |
|---|--|
| Characteristics | Implications |
| Social/emotional characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to see parents and authority figures as fallible human beings • Rituals, rules, secret codes, and made-up languages are common • Increased interest in competitive sports • Show independence by disobedience, backtalk, and rebelliousness, but still want guidance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work closely with this group. • Hold initiations and installation ceremonies for new members and officers. • Do some activities that allow children to work together. • Give children a voice in the decision-making process. |
| Cognitive (intellectual) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fantasize and daydream about the future • May develop special interest or hobbies • Can understand concepts without having direct hands-on experience | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a wide range of activities to ensure success. • Encourage children to ask questions and research answers. • Allow children to explore special interests. |

| Early Adolescence–Teenage Years | |
|---|---|
| Characteristics | Implications |
| Physical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tend to sleep longer • Tend to be more clumsy and self-conscious • Tend to compare themselves to peers | Offer varied opportunities to achieve and to have their competence recognized by others. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow them to have down time. |
| Social/emotional <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moodiness and parent-child conflict may increase • Often spend more time with peers than family members • Greater need for autonomy • May struggle with sense of identity • Looking for a sense of independence, but still want help from parents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage learning experiences related to getting along with others as well as getting to know themselves. • Encourage them to work with adults and other teen members on a project. • Provide activities that foster social interaction. • Develop an environment in which teens support each other. • Form planning committees for events. • Use peer pressure in a positive manner. |
| Cognitive (Intellectual) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop heightened level of self-consciousness • Become very cause oriented • Tend to exhibit a “justice” orientation • Self-regulation improves • Become better at everyday decision making | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage a greater development of leadership skills. • Provide opportunities in the community. • Let young people take responsibility for decision making. • Use activities that allow them to explore and identify their philosophies. • Encourage interest in national and world problems. |

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- Information is adapted from *Parenting Connections, Child Growth and Development* by Stephen Green, Associate Professor and Extension Specialist–Child Development.

Recognition of Volunteers

Everyone is motivated by feeling appreciated and important. Recognition in the Texas 4-H Youth Development Program is a tool for motivating self-improvement. It also stimulates a feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment in 4-H members, volunteers, and parents/supporting adults. Like 4-H members, volunteers need to be told that they are doing a good job.

Recognition helps volunteers feel valued and appreciated. They know that their work is honored and that they are making meaningful contributions to society. If recognition is to satisfy, it should come as a result of sincere effort on the part of the volunteer and should be in proportion to the quality of work achieved.

Recognizing volunteers' efforts benefits not only the volunteers but also the organization. When they are recognized, volunteers may improve their performance and continue serving 4-H.

Each county should create a plan for recognizing volunteers and parents/supporting adults. Individuals appreciate different types of recognition, so offer several types and learn the individual preferences of volunteers.

Recognition can be formal or informal. Formal recognition is usually given in the Texas 4-H Youth Development Program at certain times of the year, for example, at the conclusion of the project, or at the end of the 4-H year. Formal recognition includes:

- An honor roll of volunteers posted in your reception area
- Annual recognition dinners or parties
- Certificates for designated hours of service
- Gift certificates/coupons
- Personal letters of appreciation (handwritten notes are best and a much better option than email)
- Publicity through media outlets, letters to employers, etc.
- Special awards for long-term volunteers
- Special pins or plaques

Informal recognition methods are often overlooked, but they should be an ongoing part of your program. The best forms of informal recognition are warm, specific thanks and simple respect every day. Informal recognition includes:

- Asking experienced volunteers to help train new volunteers
- Consulting with volunteers in their areas of expertise, allowing them to have a voice in the program plans
- Inviting volunteers to participate in staff meetings, staff training, and social events
- Making sure they know about new developments within the organization
- Paying for volunteers to attend training sessions related to their volunteer positions
- Providing a pleasant, comfortable work environment
- Saying "thank you," which can go a long way

Recognition should be purposeful and meaningful. When interacting with volunteers, enhance their satisfaction and self-esteem by demonstrating that you are familiar with them and their work. The more you know about a person, the more you can personalize the rewards for their volunteer work.

Remember: Recognition is best built on a relationship of respect and appreciation. Never give recognition because of what it will do for you and never give it when it is not deserved. Others will lose respect for the giver, and the receiver will usually feel belittled. Instead, give recognition because you sincerely want to honor others and they deserve it.

Each year, the Texas 4-H Youth Development Program provides awards and recognition for various volunteers (individuals and groups). The awards are presented at the annual Salute to Excellence Banquet during Texas 4-H Roundup. The awards are:

- 4-H Alumni Award
- 4-H Leader's Legacy Award
- Citation for Outstanding Service to 4-H
- Salute to Excellence (two awards given to volunteers in each district)

Parental Involvement

To be successful, a 4-H program must have parental involvement. Although 4-H leaders and Extension agents may interest young people in becoming members, they must have their parents' goodwill and support to remain 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. Expect little cooperation from parents who are involved only peripherally and uninformed about club activities. We must inform parents about the 4-H program and give them opportunities to participate in club activities.

Parental involvement in 4-H is important to:

- **Families:** By offering many opportunities for families to do things together, the 4-H program can help develop family unity.
- **Leaders:** Parents can save the 4-H leader much time and effort. They can help with skills the club leader may lack.
- **Members:** When parents participate in the 4-H program, members gain support, confidence, assurance, and a feeling of security that they might lack otherwise.
- **The parents themselves:** Parents who participate feel they are contributing to their community and to the development of children, including their own.

How to involve parents

- Be specific when asking parents for help, and be sure to ask for help that is meaningful.
- Encourage parents to attend club organizational meetings and other project experiences.
- Explain how parents can help.
- Explain the 4-H program.
- Facilitate idea-sharing opportunities.
- General announcements about needs for help are usually less productive than asking a specific person to help with a specific task.
- Give credit to parents for their help.
- Highlight the benefits of program involvement.
- Hold meetings in the homes of 4-H members.
- Hold special parent meetings.
- Include the parents in special activities and events.
- Outline what is expected of a 4-H member.
- Tell the parents what they can expect of adult volunteer leaders.
- Visit them at home and communicate by telephone or email.

What parents can do

- Attend 4-H meetings and events.
- Encourage record keeping.
- Find other qualified adults to conduct project work and help with 4-H activities.
- Help leaders conduct project work.
- Help members get to meetings and events.
- Help members select, finance, and manage their projects.
- Hold 4-H meetings in their homes.
- Serve on committees to help plan and conduct 4-H events.
- Share special talents such as playing the piano, leading songs, arranging flowers, leading at camp, and creating crafts.