



**UConn**  
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE,  
HEALTH AND NATURAL  
RESOURCES

EXTENSION

# UConn 4-H Fact Sheet

## Communication

### COMMUNICATION

Communication is a key element in the success of any organization. Communication builds relationships. Your relationship with your 4-H members will be built on the communication which takes place among all of you as a group.

### COMMUNICATION: A TWO-WAY PROCESS

Communication is a two-way process. It involves both parties sending and receiving messages. To communicate effectively, individuals involved in a communication exchange must be responsible speakers and listeners.

### COMMUNICATING AS A 4-H LEADER

How often does a 4-H leader communicate? The following are some examples of times you'll need to use your communication skills.

#### ⇒ Communicating with 4-H Leaders & Parents

- Teaching your 4-Hers a skill, helping with projects
- Reminding your 4-Hers/parents of meeting dates, supplies needed, etc.
- Informing 4-Hers/parents of upcoming county-wide events
- Assisting 4-Hers in preparing for the 4-H fair (filling out exhibit tags, etc.)
- Helping 4-Hers and parents complete 4-H member registration forms
- Training club officers
- Recruiting parents to assist with club communication with the local Extension office
- Receiving training from 4-H staff
- Reading 4-H newsletters
- Completing and submitting paperwork
- Requesting educational materials and information about the 4-H Program
- Volunteering to assist with county, state and regional events

#### ⇒ Communicating with other 4-H Volunteers

- Participating in 4-H Volunteers meetings
- Serving on advisory and program committees
- Training a co-leader/teen leader
- Asking for/lending moral support
- Sharing ideas informally
- Attending leader conferences

#### ⇒ Other Opportunities for Communication

- Informing local press of club activities
- Organizing a club fund raiser and/or soliciting donations from local businesses
- Serving on county or statewide 4-H advisory committees or programs

## TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

It is important to know that there are many ways to communicate. The two main types of communication are verbal and nonverbal.

**Verbal communication** entails one person speaking and the other listening.

**Nonverbal communication** comes in a variety of forms. It entails one person observing another person engaged in one of these activities:

- Facial expressions (i.e., smile, frown, rolling of the eyes, etc.)
- Gestures (i.e., handshake, nod, making a fist, etc.)
- Other forms of body language (i.e., turning away from someone, dozing off, etc.)
- Sounds that are not words (i.e., laughter, snort, groan, etc.)

Keep in mind when working with 4-H members that there are many ways to communicate. Be aware of facial expressions or other forms of nonverbal communication. Nonverbal communication often sends the strongest message and can cancel a verbal message. Listen by observing, and you'll be able to build better 4-H club relationships.

## 4-H LEADER COMMUNICATION TIPS

- Listen! This means working to understand what the speaker is saying.
- Maintain eye contact with children and adults – it lets them know they are communicating with you.
- If you don't understand what your 4-H member, parent or 4-H staff member is saying, ask!
- Be honest and straightforward – set a good example for your 4-H members.
- Be aware of the nonverbal communication going on among your 4-H members.
- When necessary, set aside an appropriate time and place for communication. (conference with a parent, etc.)
- Encourage your 4-Hers to communicate. Ask them, "What questions do you have?" and let them do the talking as often as possible.
- Respond to the requests made by the 4-H staff – that way, they know you're still out there and surviving!

## USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

- **Be Active:** Social media should be social. Engaging with others can be rewarding, when done constructively. Sometimes it is better to not engage too.
- **Be Respectful:** Social media is a unique social environment. Be respectful of others' views, regardless of how unartfully or inappropriately communicated.
- **Think Twice:** Social media is a public platform. Consider whether you would make a statement on social media at a conference or to the media before posting.



## TOOLS TO HELP YOU IMPROVE COMMUNICATION

### 9 Effective Communication Skills

<https://www.habitsforwellbeing.com/9-effective-communication-skills/>

### Active Listening Skills

<https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/active-listening.html>

### Saying What You Mean: A Children's Book About Communication Skills

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1hnLfnuIwZw>

### 7 Fun Communication Games That Increase Understanding

<https://www.userlike.com/en/blog/communication-games>

### UConn Social Media Policies & Procedures

[https://policy.uconn.edu/2015/02/12/https-policy-uconn-edu-wp-content-uploads/sites-243-2019-01-uconn-social-media-policy\\_rev-11-28-18-1-pdf/](https://policy.uconn.edu/2015/02/12/https-policy-uconn-edu-wp-content-uploads/sites-243-2019-01-uconn-social-media-policy_rev-11-28-18-1-pdf/)

For information on 4-H contact:

**Nancy Wilhelm**  
Program Coordinator  
State 4-H Office  
UConn Extension  
1376 Storrs Road

Storrs, CT 06269-4134

Phone: 860-486-4127

FAX: 860-486-0264

Email: [nancy.wilhelm@uconn.edu](mailto:nancy.wilhelm@uconn.edu)

Web: [s.uconn.edu/4-h](http://s.uconn.edu/4-h)

UConn complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding non-discrimination, equal opportunity, affirmative action, and providing reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Contact: Office of Institutional Equity; (860) 486-2943; [equity@uconn.edu](mailto:equity@uconn.edu); <http://www.equity.uconn.edu>.