



# UConn 4-H Fact Sheet



**UConn** | EXTENSION

## 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 ZSuite registration
- 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

- **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.)

## 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.
- Be aware of any nonverbal communication going on.
- 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.
- **Maintaining Branding:** Refer to social media policy, UConn 4-H Branding and language when making a post.