



UConn 4-H Fact Sheet



UConn | EXTENSION

Parents Guide to 4-H

Family involvement in 4-H is key to your youth's success in 4-H.

The Do's and Don'ts of being a 4-H Parent

- DO take time to learn about 4-H, what it stands for and how it operates.
- DO advise your youth in selecting 4-H projects.
- DO show interest and enthusiasm for the 4-H project selected. Find out what is suggested for members to do and learn. Encourage your youth to work on the project and record-keeping all year long and not to wait until the last minute.
- DO encourage your youth to participate in county and state events such as public presentations, camp, fair, workshops and other activities.
- DO keep the purpose of the 4-H project in perspective. Realize that a project is simply a teaching tool and a method for involving youth in a worthwhile activity. Above all, remember that your youth is more important than the 4-H project.
- DO give encouragement when your 4-Her succeeds and even more when they fail. Judging and awards are not final exams. Whatever ratings are given or scores received, help your youth to see progress made, things that have been learned and goals that have been reached.
- DO volunteer your hobbies and talents to 4-H leaders.
- DO be tactful with 4-H leaders, educators, judges and your youth.
- DO remember that 4-H leaders and judges are often volunteering their own time for the benefit of your child; don't forget to show them your appreciation.
- DO keep in mind that the 4-H experience should be an educational one.
- DO communicate concerns with club leadership/county 4-H office.
- DO ASK QUESTIONS!

Don'ts

- DON'T do your youth's project for them, even though you may be able to do it faster, better, simpler and with much less mess. Doing this will take away their opportunity to learn and master this new skill.
- DON'T discourage a child's enthusiasm by providing too much corrective influence or criticism.
- DON'T let the desire to win overpower your youth's ability to learn. Always remember that the focus is usually on the process and the associated learning over the final result.
- DON'T schedule family vacations that conflict with your youth's 4H schedule. Try to work around important 4-H dates as much as possible for your family.
- DON'T relive your childhood experience through your youth.
- DON'T view your youth as an extension of yourself.
- DON'T view their success or failure as a reflection of your ability or worth.
- DON'T assume your youth is always right. It is often the times where they don't succeed where the greatest opportunity for learning occurs.

Ways you can help

- Assist with obtaining supplies for a club meeting or event.
- Volunteer at the county 4-H fair, your youth's club meetings or at a local, county or state 4-H event.
- Serve as a member on the county advisory board, event committee or extension council.
- Promote 4-H in the community to potential volunteers and families.
- Mentor a family new to 4-H and teach them the ropes.
- Provide an additional set of hands at club meetings by preparing activities, serving refreshments, etc.