4-H Volunteer Information Series

Nebraska 4-H Youth Development

Get Parents Involved in 4-H

4-H is a family affair! This means that parents of your 4-H members should be an important part of your program. Parental involvement is one of the keys to a successful 4-H club. It provides an ongoing base for club support and expands the potential for interesting and exciting 4-H club programs. Active parents mean active members:

Favorable Attitudes	+	Parent Interests	+	Active Parent Cooperation	=	Successful 4-H Clubs

Parent Participation in 4-H results in the following benefits:

- 4-H is a family affair, offering many opportunities where both child and parent participate with common interests, strengthening family ties.
- Active parent participation can strengthen and broaden the 4-H program in any local club or in any county.
- When parental support is positive, the club is likely to become stronger, larger, and more active.
- In clubs where parental support is evident, individual members receive more personal attention and guidance from leaders and parents.
- Club activities and events will develop and expand with the additional support of parents.
- Involve members and parents in setting goals and planning your club's programs each year.
- Become familiar with the interests and special talents of your members' parents. Ask for advice in areas where they can contribute, then make good use of good ideas. Be specific with requests. Use the Parent Interest Survey.
- When parents volunteer to help, make sure they are involved in something worthwhile. Make a mental note of their offer and return their call within a few days with some specific task in which they can help.

Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

The 4-H Youth Development program abides with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.

- Involve parents in sharing leadership as project leaders. Emphasize that they can teach a skill or project that may require only a few 4-H meetings for the entire year.

- Keep parents informed. Help them understand the 4-H objectives. Send notes and letters directly to parents about the club program.

- Invite parents to club meetings. This is especially important if you don't meet in homes. Hold a club meeting for parents where 4-H members present the program using presentations, judging, or exhibits.

- Let parents know what is expected from their child and your interest in their child by phone calls, letters, and discussion before and after club meetings.

- Recognize both members and their parents. Thank parents for their support both personally and in public. Compliment parents for their contributions to the club program.

- Maintain parent interest. Arrange a special social event with parents. Ask county Extension staff to attend a parent-night program. Introduce parents to the Extension staff so they can become better acquainted.

- Encourage members to make their 4-H work a topic of family conversation.

- Solicit parent involvement at the county fair and other activities and events where results of 4-H club members are shown.

Adapted from: *Piecing It All Together.* Etling, Melang, and Stanley. UNL Extension 4-H.