



Ways for 4-H Judges to Communicate

As a judge, you have the power to encourage 4-Hers far more than you might imagine. By demonstrating positive communication techniques, you are able to influence 4-Hers in a very positive way.

Kids will listen to you after they feel listened to. Consider WAIT: “*Why Am I Talking?*”

Key words to use include:

1. Tell me more
2. I want to hear. . .
3. Keep going

Our goal is to remember that after they speak, get them to take another turn before we respond with suggestions. Ask questions like you were a news reporter, not a teacher or lawyer. Remember that your body language is as important as the words you use.

Provide encouragement, not praise. In the long run, encouragement empowers and praise discourages.

Praise:

- ★ You are such a good boy/girl.
- ★ I like what you did.
- ★ With more work, you will get it right.
- ★ You did it better than anyone else.

Encouragement:

- ★ You did your best.
- ★ You must be proud of yourself.
- ★ I trust your judgement.
- ★ You can decide what is best for you.
- ★ How do you feel about it?

Often we unintentionally shut down communication by denying kids their feelings. **DO NOT** say:

- ★ Don't worry.
- ★ I'm sure it will be ok.
- ★ Don't be silly.
- ★ It can't be that bad.

RESPECT is built by showing the kids we understand what they are saying before we say what to improve. Say:

- ★ So you are saying. . .
- ★ You think that. . .

The main idea is to replace “I understand, but” with “I understand that”

4-Hers need to know that they have been heard!!!



