

New
Jersey **4-H**

Leader Training Series



Parent Involvement in 4-H

4-H is a family affair! Or it should be, and 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 + Parent + Active Parent = Successful
Attitudes Interests Cooperation 4-H Clubs**

Why Should Parents Participate in 4-H?

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

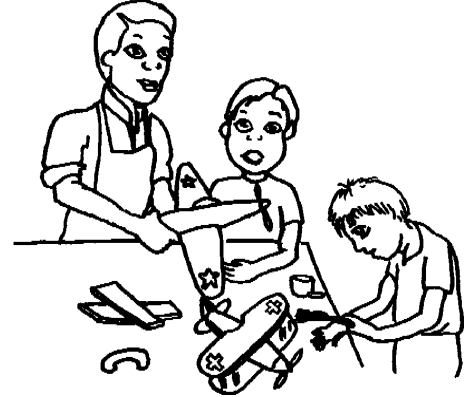
- 4-H is a family affair, offering many opportunities where both child and parent participate with common interest, strengthening family ties.
- Active parent participation can strengthen and broaden the 4-H program in any local club or in any county.
- When parental support is positive, the club is 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. 4-H can have a positive influence on the lives of thousands of boys and girls. This happens only when parents care enough to share their time, efforts, and talents.

*Written by: Erika U. Leal,
Regional 4-H Agent, North
1990, revised 1994*

Ideas to Help Inform and Interest Parents and Gain Their Cooperation

- Involve members and parents in setting goals and planning your club's program 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 Inventory* on the last page of this information sheet.



- 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.
- 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. Show parents that you are interested in their child by phone calls, letters, home visits,

and discussions 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 4-H staff to attend a parent-night program. Introduce parents to the 4-H 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 4-H fair and other activities and events where results of 4-H club workers are shown.
- Give parents a copy of *Parents: Helping Your 4-H'er Succeed*.

References:

Smith, Carolyn A., New York State 4-H Club Management, a Resource Guide, Cornell Cooperative Extension, November 1982.

Parents - Partners on the 4-H Team (tape-slide program), Cooperative Extension Service, The Ohio State University.

**RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
N.J. AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION
RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
NEW BRUNSWICK**

Distributed in cooperation with U.S. Department of Agriculture in furtherance of the Acts of Congress on May 8 and June 30, 1914. Rutgers Cooperative Extension works in agriculture, family and consumer sciences, and 4-H. Zane R. Helsel, Director of Extension Rutgers Cooperative Extension provides information and educational services to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Rutgers Cooperative Extension is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

4-H Parent Interest Survey

Dear 4-H Parents:

Welcome to the 4-H Family! 4-H helps youth to develop knowledge, attitude and skills they need to become competent, caring and contributing citizens of the world. Parents and 4-H leaders working together can do so much more for the girls and boys than either can do alone.

We hope you share in 4-H by encouraging your child to participate and, as the 4-H motto says, "Make the Best Better!"

Please check the things you are willing to do to provide learning opportunities for the 4-H members and return to the club leader.

Home

- _____ 1. Enable my child to attend all meetings and encourage him/her to be an active, contributing member of the club.
- _____ 2. Encourage my child to start and complete projects on time. I will take an active interest and encourage pride in his/her own achievements.
- _____ 3. Encourage my child to participate in county workshops, public presentations, fair, camp and other activities which enhance learning opportunities.
- _____ 4. Encourage my child to keep an up-to-date calendar of 4-H meetings and events.
- _____ 5. Encourage my child to maintain current records of 4-H projects and activities.
- _____ 6. Enable my child to meet financial responsibilities in monthly dues, project expenses, etc.

Club

- _____ 1. Provide an occasional meeting place for the club.
- _____ 2. Help provide light refreshments for a 4-H meeting.
- _____ 3. Share a special interest or hobby with the group. List _____.
- _____ 4. Help carpool transportation for meetings or field trips.
- _____ 5. Be a leader's helper for one project. List _____.
- _____ 6. Help youth prepare for public presentations or fair.
- _____ 7. Serve on committee to help plan and conduct events.
- _____ 8. Make telephone calls.

County

- _____ 1. Help carpool transportation to county meetings or events.
- _____ 2. Help at county events.
- _____ 3. Serve on county committee as an interested parent.
- _____ 4. Assist during the 4-H fair (set up, take down, staffing booths, etc.)

Thank you!

Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Telephone (day) _____ (evening) _____