

PARENTS



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INDIANA 4-H LEADER GUIDE

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The success of your 4-H club and the kind of experience members have depend greatly upon parent support and involvement. Time devoted to obtaining parent support is time well spent.

There is no magic or right way to work with parents. You will need to use a wide range of methods as you work with the many different kinds of parents.

Most parents consider their sons and daughters their most cherished possessions. Parents will cooperate if they believe that their child will have a meaningful and



purposeful experience. However, many parents are not aware of the purpose and true meaning of the 4-H experience. Often their lack of knowledge is due to our dependence upon the 4-H member to tell the parent about the 4-H program. Have you ever listened to a 4-H member, in an informal setting, tell about 4-H or the 4-H meeting? Many times only the funny and humorous happenings are told. After listening to their children, parents can easily believe that 4-H is only “fun and games.”

You cannot expect parents to become actively involved and supportive if they do not know about the program and believe in what it can do for their child. The key to parent support is to make them knowledgeable about the 4-H program. The following are suggestions for getting support:

1. Special Parents Meeting

At an early meeting, ask parents to attend a special 4-H meeting for parents. You, as well as the member, should invite the parents. Let parents know that attendance is expected, that their son or daughter will have a better 4-H experience by their attending this meeting. At this special meeting, explain the 4-H program and discuss parent involvement and their role. As a resource, you may want to use 4-H 682 “Indiana 4-H Leader Guide - What Is 4-H?” and discuss the 4-H pledge. Discuss what parents can do. Also, you may want to review the parents 4-H pledge, which is included in this leader guide. Parents need to be better informed about 4-H. They get information by reading newsletters, attending meetings, having meetings in their homes, assisting with tours, project meetings, and community service projects.

2. Frequent Talks with Parents

Talk to parents about 4-H at every opportunity. Make telephone calls, ask their advice, and take advantage of “chance” contacts at church, in the supermarket, etc. Appeal and ask for help to improve the 4-H club and to help boys and girls. Exhibit a positive attitude of wanting parents to help, rather than merely expecting them to volunteer. The most help comes from families when parents have been asked to assist.



3. Parent Night

Some clubs have special parents’ nights. This might be a fun night, dinner meeting, achievement meeting, recognizing 4-H members, etc. Remember, you and the member both invite the parents. If you depend only on the members for the invitation, the parents may not know about the occasion.

4. Recognize Parents

Recognize parents who have been good supporters. Use thank you notes, newspaper articles, telephone calls, and general recognition in front of the club to say “thank you” and show appreciation.

How Can Parents Help?

A variety of ways need to be developed through which parents of different talents, means, and varying amounts of time can participate. Not all people do the same thing well. It takes some analysis to find who can and will do certain tasks. For example, the man who will never appear in a public meeting may be willing to build a booth or float, etc.



The most successful 4-H members have the interest and support of their parents or another adult. Often parents are willing to help, but are not sure how, when, or where they may get involved. If you and parents are wondering how parents can help, here are some suggestions. Note that one through nine are suggestions that parents can help with at home. Ten through 15 reach beyond the home. You may wish to discuss, mail, or somehow see that parents are aware and understand the ways to help. If you think of others, do not hesitate to add to the list.

1. Learn about 4-H, what it stands for; how it operates; how it is funded.
2. Advise your child in selecting 4-H projects.
3. Show your interest and enthusiasm for the projects selected. Find out what is suggested for the members to do and learn.
4. Help guide your child, but don't do the job for him/her.
5. See that when a project is started, it is also completed.
6. Encourage your 4-H'er when he/she succeeds and even more when he/she fails. Help him/her see progress; not just the end result.
7. Be an example! Help your 4-H'er be a good sport and appreciate the successes of others.
8. Keep informed about 4-H through information that comes to members of your family. Be a 4-H booster in your community.
9. Make 4-H club work FAMILY work. But, let the boys and girls do their work and carry their own jobs to completion. Be their guide only.
10. Provide transportation to local meetings and county events in which your child and others of the club are interested. Or, provide refreshments for meetings or special functions. Don't wait to be asked, just volunteer this help!

11. Attend 4-H meetings and other special events.
12. Help your 4-H'er find a way to participate in special events that interest him/her such as county contests, camps, fairs, displays, or shows.
13. Support your local 4-H leaders. Get acquainted with them. Let them know you appreciate their efforts.
14. Offer your services to assist the local leader. You have knowledge and skills that are needed in 4-H.
15. If the need arises, help find local leaders for your 4-H club. Several kinds of leaders are needed: organizational, project, and activity leaders. Consider helping in one of these ways yourself. Applications are available in your local Extension office.
16. Remember that the real object of 4-H is to develop your sons and daughters into finer citizens. The way they do their work, projects, and meetings, and conduct themselves at competitive events, etc., will help set work and character standards for the rest of their lives.

Parents 4-H Pledge

I pledge my *HEAD* to give my child the information I can, to help him/her see things clearly and to make wise decisions.

I pledge my *HEART* to encourage and support my child no matter whether he/she has successes or disappointments.

I pledge my *HANDS* to help my child's club; if I cannot be a leader, I can help in many equally important ways.

I pledge my *HEALTH* to keep my child strong and well for a better world through 4-H, for my child's club, our community, our country, and our world.

The Indiana 4-H Program offers these additional 4-H Leader Guides:

- 4-H 682 What is 4-H?
- 4-H 683 4-H Program Planning
- 4-H 684 The 4-H Meeting
- 4-H 686 Recreation
- 4-H 687 Teaching Techniques
- 4-H 688 Fund Raising in 4-H

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