

4-H: A Family Program



Welcome to 4-H

Congratulations! Your family is joining one of the largest educational youth organizations in the United States. 4-H is truly a family program. While the educational experience of 4-H is designed for youth, adult involvement is a key to their success. Your support keeps your child interested, enthusiastic, and active.

Some families have busy schedules, and you may be wondering about adding an additional activity if you already feel like your family doesn't have enough time to spend together. 4-H helps solve this problem by offering hundreds of projects in which youth and their families can learn and grow together.

4-H Benefits Families

Sharing activities builds strong family relationships. 4-H can help bring families together through a learning project that is of interest to the entire family. With so many projects to choose from, there is sure to be one that will spark the interest of your family.

4-H events are often family events. The 4-H member might have a main role to play, but the entire family can be part of the experience. Many clubs and county programs hold annual family picnics, family nights, contests, and recognition programs. These activities bring 4-H members and families together and provide a cooperative learning experience.

Families can take on supportive roles to encourage the member. By encouraging your child to complete 4-H projects, you help him or her learn many life skills as well as leadership and citizenship.

Participating in 4-H helps members and their families connect to and become involved in their community and expand their social network. This sense of belonging helps 4-H members become successful young adults.

Expectations for Adults

While 4-H is essentially a program for youth, the support of adults is beneficial. Following is a list of things you can do to help your child have a successful 4-H experience.

- Assist your child in selecting 4-H projects.
- Be a positive role model.
- Provide transportation to local meetings and county activities in which your child is interested.
- Attend 4-H meetings and other special activities.
- Take an interest in your child's 4-H projects and activities. Encourage your child to attend all meetings and to take an active role in planning activities.
- Be aware that there may be costs involved with projects. Help provide materials and equipment needed.
- Help your child be prepared, but allow him or her to complete projects independently.
- Encourage your child when he or she succeeds but even more so when things are not going well.
- Be available to help with community service projects, fundraisers, and county activities.
- Encourage your child to keep up-to-date records.
- Offer to assist the 4-H club leader and other volunteers.
- Become familiar with all aspects of the 4-H program.

Expectations for Youth

A member enrolled in his or her first 4-H project has the ability to learn many new things about this interest; share this knowledge with others at club meetings and county contests; and display success through exhibits, fairs, and other events. To help achieve all this, members are expected to do the following:

- Select projects with guidance from a 4-H volunteer and parents or guardians.
- Actively participate in chosen projects.
- Keep a record of project work.
- Attend club meetings, and participate in club activities.
- Abide by the 4-H Code of Conduct.

Members may take on additional roles in the 4-H program such as club officer, junior leader, or teen fair superintendent. As their involvement in the club or county program grows, so does their level of learning and confidence.

Extension Support

4-H is designed to provide a positive experience for members, clubs, and families. The 4-H program has a proven record of providing education, evaluation, recognition, and opportunity to succeed. As a 4-H family, you have access to an extensive support network and many helpful resources.

Your 4-H club leader is prepared to help members with project work and notify them of activities related to their project. **Families of other members** in the club are great resources for new 4-H families.

4-H staff, who work at local Extension offices, can answer many questions and provide good suggestions for helping with projects. The staff member in charge of the 4-H program is available to provide support, education, and help with problem solving.

Your local Extension office provides services that allow 4-H activities to occur. Local 4-H staff recruit and train volunteers, distribute 4-H project materials, facilitate events, teach educational programs and trainings, and work with the county 4-H leaders association.

Project materials, videos, and teaching aids are available from your local Extension office and online. Each office, working with Oregon State University, can provide materials for a project the state supports. Local 4-H staff and volunteers create materials for county-only projects and activities.

Websites for local Extension offices and OSU offer additional information. Visit the Oregon 4-H website (<http://oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/>) to become better informed and enjoy what 4-H and the OSU Extension Service have to offer.

**For more information on the 4-H program,
see *Facts About 4-H* (4-H 0244L).**

**And visit the Oregon 4-H website:
<http://oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/>**

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