



Welcome to the 4-H Family!

To help acquaint your family with 4-H, please take time to review the following highlights.

What is 4-H?

4-H is a program for youth and their families from all segments of society. It provides educational programs for diverse audiences of youth and adults based on practical skills of learning to learn, decision making, public speaking, goal setting, job skills and more.

4-H is the youth development phase of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, supported cooperatively by Oklahoma State University, USDA and local County Government.



How is 4-H Organized?

Locally- Most clubs have monthly meetings conducted by the local youth officers. Some clubs also have special project and activity meetings where members work in smaller groups to develop specific project skills.

Each club has a designated Organizational Leader. Organizational leaders are the primary contact between the local club and County Extension Office. Organizational leaders depend on the assistance of parents as volunteers in a variety of roles at the local and county level.

County - The 4-H program is managed through the

County Extension Office located at the Agriplex in Ada. Primary leadership is provided by the 4-H Youth Educator.

The office is responsible for setting an educational tone and direction for 4-H and youth programs, providing instructional materials and resources, training parents and volunteers and keeping families and local leadership informed through newsletters and general correspondence.

4-H parents/volunteers are essential to the county program. All county 4-H activities and events are planned, implemented, and evaluated by a committee of 4-H parents/volunteers.

4-H parents/ volunteers are encouraged to participate in the Adult Leaders Council, which meets quarterly.



What is my role as a parent/guardian?

4-H is a family affair! Members require the involvement and support of the entire family.

Your role will include supporting and helping members, *without doing it for them*; giving praise and encouragement; helping a member select appropriate projects and activities; staying informed about 4-H programs; asking questions; supporting your member in meeting deadlines and following through with

responsibilities and commitments; attending meetings and functions with members; and helping members focus on what's really important, not just winning!

Be a part of the 4-H team! The team is made up of volunteers, like yourself, helping to provide snacks, transportation, and a meeting place; serving as a project or activity volunteer; being a resource in your area of expertise; asking what you can do at the local and county level; and helping when called upon. 4-H members get more from their 4-H experience when the whole family gets involved.



Who and what is the role of the 4-H Youth Development Educator?

This individual is an Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service professional. This professional has two primary roles: educator and educational manager.

As an educator the extension professional is responsible for providing guidance and opportunities in educating volunteers, parents, teachers and other youth servicing volunteers and professionals.

The educational manager's role is to serve as a mentor, counselor, liaison and

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resource to local and county 4-H clubs, county 4-H committees, 4-H adult and youth councils, the county 4-H Foundation, schools, community committees and other youth servicing agencies.



What can 4-H teach my child?

4-H teaches members to set and accomplish goals for themselves through project work.

A member's project manual will assist them in learning to set goals, keep records, and evaluate what they did or did not accomplish.

4-H encourages members to record their goals and how they completed the goals. This is called record keeping.

There are several ways for members to keep up with what they do in 4-H. They can:

1. Use a county record book or medal form to record what is done in the project.
2. Keep a diary (write in it each day).
3. Write on a calendar (write down each day what was done).

A key to successful record keeping is to wait no longer than one week to record project work. The important details and/or simple things are forgotten quickly. The things that need to be written down include:

1. What you did (number of times, number of items made, number of animals, number of acres planted and harvested, hours spent working in project or project work done, etc.).
2. What you learned (what new knowledge and skills were learned, what funny or sad things happened, etc.).
3. Learning experiences participated in (demonstrations, speeches, tours, exhibits, judging, workshops attended, lessons at local club meetings, day camps, etc.).
4. Leadership experiences you participated in (volunteer leadership: teaching or assisting with teaching, committee work, officer, etc.).
5. Citizenship activities participated in (helping others, providing a service, etc.).
6. Awards and recognition received.

The result of keeping good records is that a member has learned to set goals and see how goals were accomplished.



The 4-H Philosophy

"It is better to build a boy than to mend a man."

To "learn by doing" is fundamental in any sound educational program and characteristics of the 4-H program.

Some other commonly accepted beliefs are:

- ◆ 4-H youth are more important than the 4-H project.
- ◆ Learning how to do the project is more important than the project itself.
- ◆ A blue ribbon 4-Her with a red ribbon project is more desirable than a red ribbon 4-Her with a blue ribbon project.
- ◆ Every 4-H member needs to be noticed, to feel important, to win, and to be praised.
- ◆ Our job is to teach 4-H members how to think, not what to think.



What is a 4-H Project?

At the beginning of each year a member will complete an enrollment card. On the card they will check 4-H projects that they are interested in learning about.

Most of these projects have a project manual which will guide the family in learning fundamentals and opening doors to other opportunities. Each manual is developed with age appropriate materials and projects. The activities and projects outlined in the manual can then be entered in the county fair and other activities throughout the year.

The county fair is considered the end of the 4-H year. It is the time to show the project work completed between July of the previous

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year until September of the current year.

4-H project work can be accomplished very easily by developing a simple plan to accomplish one project/activity each month during the year.



How to know what's going on.

Read your Newsletter!

Your family will receive a monthly 4-H Newsletter from the Extension Office. The newsletter is mailed the first of each month.

Read your yearbook! Use the calendar in the back of the yearbook! **All county activities and events are planned one year in advance.** Write them on your family calendar. Please note and comply with deadlines. The newsletter will supplement the yearbook and keep you updated as to times and locations.



How will my family get the most from this experience?

- ◆ Attend local club meetings. Ask questions of the local club leader and call the Extension Office (332-2153).
- ◆ Read the newsletter and yearbook. Keep them in a handy location at home.
- ◆ Set goals and work at completing the goals in a timely manner.

- ◆ Keep records of your project work. Do a talk or demonstration at the local club.
- ◆ Participate in local club citizenship projects.
- ◆ Participate in county activities and events.
- ◆ **Attend club meetings!** Local club leaders will make announcements regarding updated information, remind you of upcoming deadlines, and provide registration forms so you won't have to make a last minute dash to the Extension Office.

Each family is responsible for meeting deadlines and turning in forms.

If you can't make it to the Extension Office prior to the deadline, use the mail (must be postmarked before the deadline).



What Things Will My Local Club Do?

Each 4-H Club is encouraged to select a project or issue to focus on during the year. Suggested projects are:

Natural Resources and Environmental Education water conservation (use of water in homes), soil conservation, and environment (keeping the air we breathe and our surroundings clean). Conserving natural resources today and for the future.

Youth Issues Education, Depression, Child Abuse, Health,

Teenage Pregnancy, Substance Abuse, Career Selection, and Suicide.

Health and Wellness

Maintaining and improving physical, intellectual, emotional and social health. Learn about community health resources and environmental issues.

Safety - Learn how to reduce accidents and injuries, recognize and correct hazards, and think and practice safety. Encourage families, clubs and communities to become safety conscious.

Family Strengths - Preparing responsible youth by promoting family communication, leadership development and positive self-esteem. This will enhance the youth's parenting skills.

Science and

Technology - Focusing on the "why" of all 4-H projects (the way it is put together -the way it functions, etc.).

4-H Clubs who have a project to focus upon have more involvement of members and parents, and in turn achieve and learn more.



4-H Ribbons: What do they mean?

Ribbons are given to 4-H members as a way to evaluate how much a member has learned in completing and exhibiting a project. There are two systems being used to present ribbons in Pontotoc County.

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Blue, Red and White Award ribbons -This system does not mean first, second and third place. More than one individual can receive a blue, red, or white award in a category.

Blue Award -This ribbon is given to a member who exhibits a project which shows that the member has taken pride in learning how to construct or complete the project. The member has mastered a skill appropriate for their age or increased their knowledge relating to the project. The project has accurate information, is correctly completed, neat, clean, pleasing to the eye and presents a positive image of the member. A blue award means you as a member have gone an extra step to show pride and quality in your exhibit.

Red Award - A red ribbon is given to members whose project does not exhibit that polished sense of pride seen in a blue exhibit. Red means satisfactory. The exhibit shows the member has learned a skill but not mastered the skill. Information may not be complete or accurate.

White Award - A white ribbon is awarded when the judge feels the member does not show they have gained a good knowledge of a skill or the project being exhibited. The project is incomplete and could use improvement.

Ribbon placings - These are the first, second and third place ribbons which also have

blue, red and white colors respectively. This form of recognition means that exhibits are ranked. All of the exhibits might be *Blue Award quality*, but one exhibit is selected as the best in the class. A judge does not have to give a first place ribbon if they believe the quality is lacking in all exhibits.

The recognition process in 4-H is used to help each member grow personally and to continually learn more about their project work.

The recognition process is important to setting goals for future project work and personal development.



What is the 4-H Philosophy about Recognition?

Creating an environment that nurtures growth and development includes the careful, creative and balanced use of recognition. Recognition is the acknowledgment and affirmation of an individual or group and any personal growth they have experienced.

In 4-H, recognition is the encouragement and support for learning that is part of participation in the wide array of educational experiences the program provides.

Recognition in 4-H may be public or private. It can be within the individual or provided by others. Whatever its form, recognition in 4-H is a strategy for helping young people become more capable

and more competent. Through the acknowledgment, affirmation and positive reinforcement of each person's effort, feelings of competence and capability increase and participation continues.

The purpose of recognition is to encourage and support the efforts of young people in learning to improve their knowledge and develop their life skills.

Using a comprehensive recognition process can create a broad array of experiential learning environments. These learning environments must respect individual differences as related to the form of recognition that is most effective in encouraging and supporting development.



4-H Recognition Model

The recognition model is part of a comprehensive plan that rewards positive learning behaviors in youth. In all aspects of the model, recognition should be based on the young person's involvement, participation, and/or efforts and should be designed to meet the needs, interests, and aspirations of young people with different backgrounds and experiences.

Recognition should be focused on individual learning and not influenced by factors such as monetary resources to purchase high-quality project materials, top grade animals, and use of equipment.

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The recognition model can be used to design a recognition system to meet the needs of all youth.

The five parts of the 4-H Recognition Model include recognition for:

- ◆ *Participation* - The first step toward building a positive self concept in the participant is acknowledging his/her involvement.
- ◆ *Progress toward personal goals* - This enables youth to gain experience in goal setting and realistic self-assessment.
- ◆ *Standards of excellence* - These give young people an external predetermined set of criteria for their learning experiences against which they can assess their progress and gain insights into their own interests, efforts, and abilities.
- ◆ *Peer competition* - Peer competition subjectively identifies, in a concrete time and place, the best team or individual. It is not developmentally appropriate for younger children.
- ◆ *Cooperation* - Helps younger people learn and work cooperatively, preparing them for living in today's interdependent, global society.

Underlying principles of developmentally appropriate recognition.

- ◆ Recognition is a basic human need, along with security, new experiences and responses.
- ◆ Recognition should be part of all 4-H learning experiences.

- ◆ Appropriate recognition takes place.
- ◆ Respect for individual differences is essential.
- ◆ Recognition must be structured to build positive self-esteem.
- ◆ Opportunities for self-assessment and reflection allow youth to learn.
- ◆ A range of opportunities and challenges provide choices to meet individual needs.
- ◆ Adult support is essential in youth learning and recognition.
- ◆ Everyone should be recognized at some level.
- ◆ A balance between all elements of the recognition model is essential.

Assumptions about recognition in 4-H

- ◆ Recognition can be a motivator for some young people to excel and take pro-social risk.
- ◆ Recognition can foster self-appraisal skills, providing a strong foundation for each young person to engage in self-reflection and self-praise without the need for external rewards.
- ◆ The recognition can encourage and support the efforts of young people as they engage in all forms of learning.
- ◆ Recognition, used in all its forms, can provide balance to the recognition young people receive as they move through educational programs to more increasingly difficult challenges.²

Some key principles of recognizing youth for:

Participation

- ◆ Through participation young people can more clearly define self concept and strengthen self-image.
- ◆ Support and encouragement of young people in significant roles fosters ongoing participation.

Progress toward personal goals

- ◆ This form of recognition is appropriate for youth of all ages and fits many different interests.
- ◆ Goals should be realistic and reachable in a set time period.
- ◆ Goals are set by the youth with interaction with experienced persons.

Peer competition

- ◆ Competition involves a high risk activity with possible stress, conflict, disagreement, and hurt feelings.
- ◆ Participation in competition should be optional.

Standards of excellence

- ◆ Everyone can utilize standards in their life.
- ◆ When using standards developed by an expert, it is critical that those standards are available to all people involved.

Cooperation

- ◆ Life skills develop when young people learn and work cooperatively.
- ◆ Through joint problem solving, young people can strengthen their own self-concepts as well as understand and appreciate individual differences.