

Understanding 4-H Events and Activities

Oklahoma 4-H Volunteer Development Series



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4-H events and activities provide many of the most unforgettable memories for 4-H members. Local, county, district, and state events and activities provide opportunities to meet new people, make new friends, enjoy new experiences, and learn more about ourselves, our project work and the 4-H program.

Events and activities are an extension of 4-H Project Work. Events are typically competitive educational programs. Activities are educational programs without a competitive component. The purpose for both is first and foremost education.



Philosophy of 4-H Events

Types of Evaluations

- Evaluation with Standards
- Evaluation without Established Standards
- Formal and Informal Evaluation
- Informal Evaluation
- Formal Evaluation

4-H events provide an opportunity for education, evaluation, and recognition. Examples of 4-H events include: Public Speaking, Communications, Design and Construction, Share the Fun, Achievement Program, Fairs and Stock Shows, Food Show, Horticulture Show, Meats Contest, Horse Show, etc. The evaluation may be formal or informal. The most common form of 4-H evaluation is judging –

the comparison of differences when selecting one article, animal, or product instead of another because of defined qualities and standards. To learn more about each form of recognition refer to Volunteer Development Series - 4H·VOL·107, "Judging".

Evaluation teaches knowledge and understanding of qualities

and standards; to choose wisely and to identify desired qualities in a finished product.

Evaluation with Standards

Some projects have established standards. If standards have been established the project manual or leader's guide will outline the standards. When standards are established all participants

meeting the criteria are recognized. This form of recognition is referred to as "Standards of Excellence."

Evaluation without Established Standards

General qualities to look for:

- Good overall appearance
- Quality work
- Attempt to master a new skill
- Practicality combined with creativity and versatility

The results of this evaluation process are winners and losers. The choice is solely based on the opinion of the judge on that chosen date. This form of recognition is referred to as "Peer Competition."

Formal and Informal Evaluation

The National 4-H Recognition Model is one way to help young people become self-directed, productive, and contributing citizens. 4-H uses five types of recognition. Each supports, motivates, and encourages young people in a unique way

1. Participation in educational experiences.
2. Making progress toward self-set goals.
3. Achieving standards of excellence.

4. Excelling in peer competition.
5. Demonstrating excellence in cooperation.

Progresses toward self-set goals, achieving standards of excellence and peer competition are the three most common forms of evaluation in 4-H events. To learn more about each form of recognition refer to Volunteer Development Series - 4H·VOL·105, "Recognition Model."

Informal Evaluation - Progress Toward Self-Set Goals

Progress Toward Self-Set Goals - An important part of 4-H is helping young people learn to set goals and then planning ways they can achieve their goals. From time-to-time, help them check progress toward their goals. The challenge is to help young people set realistic goals and then recognize them for making progress toward their goals, no matter how small or large the accomplishments. Recognition is an important way to help them feel good about their progress toward the goals. Recognition also encourages them to continue to work toward their goals.

The key part to this evaluation process is young people working cooperatively to review their work with concerned and

caring adult(s). Feedback is essential. Talking face-to-face to give feedback is best, but if it is not possible, give written feedback.

Remember that a youths' potential and available resources affect the goals set, progress made and the growth that the young person demonstrates. (Examples: positive private and/or public feedback, pins, memorabilia, certificates, stickers, and handwritten notes.)

Formal Evaluation - Achieving Standards of Excellence and Peer Competition

Achieving Standards of Excellence - An important goal of 4-H is to teach skills to young people that they can use now and later in life. Standards of Excellence help 4-H'ers to evaluate the skills they are learning. Standards of Excellence can be useful for products (animals, skirts, pumpkins, etc.) and skills (speaking, demonstrating, decision making, etc.) The Standards of Excellence often are printed on a scorecard.

4-H competitive events are used to provide youth opportunities to have their work compared with standards. The Danish Award System consists of awarding blue-red-white ribbons without ranking within the ribbon groups. All 4-H'ers who meet the

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standards are recognized. When a champion is named or exhibits are ranked within a group, then the experience becomes competitive. (Examples: ribbons, certificates, 4-H memorabilia, project equipment, or supplies.)

Peer Competition - This recognition results where individuals seek to be the best or do better than the other competitors. There are winners and losers (those who were not the best). 4-H members who are not first or champion can learn to improve their skills, but often the emphasis placed on the winner overshadows what others have done, learned, or achieved. The use of a first, second, and third place ribbon is considered peer competition.

The desire to win is a strong motivator for some, but not for all people. Often young people who are not motivated by competition don't take part in competitive programs or drop out. Peer competition is not recommended for younger children who cannot separate the experience or award from their own self-worth. This is why the Oklahoma Cloverbud program is non-competitive. (Examples: medals, trophies, plaques, scholarships, or media reports.)

How 4-H Events Happen

Well-planned events and activities help maintain interest, stimulate re-enrollment, and give members' valuable training. 4-H activities and events require a lot of time and human resources to conduct. 4-H committees are responsible for local, county, district and state events. The committee includes a team of 4-H volunteers (parents, leaders, and community resources), 4-H members (teen leaders and older members), and Extension Educator(s). These committees are the responsibility and an extension of the Parent-Volunteer Association in your county. The Extension Educators role is to act as an advisor and counselor, provide consistency and structure with the mission and vision of the state 4-H program, and encourage the growth and expansion of both the program being conducted, as well as, the members and volunteers involved

Preparation for Events

Local clubs or project groups should provide adequate training and preparation of members and parents for county events and activities. Preparation includes:

- Current Rules and Guidelines
- Score Sheets
- Fact Sheets or materials for preparing exhibits
- Project Meetings/work days
- Education about:
 - A. The 4-H Recognition Model
 - B. The Judging Process
 - C. The value and use of evaluation received at the event

The Extension Educator is responsible for providing training to local volunteers serving as local club Activity and Project Leaders. These volunteers are then responsible for training at the local level.

As an individual, a 4-H member should identify and relate the relevance of the event or activity to their project work. The next step is to research the subject matter, prepare, practice, present, and evaluate the work.

4-H members should seek opportunities for developing communication skills of all kinds through 4-H events. (Examples of communication opportunities: public speaking, working displays, displays, posters, photography, printed materials, website, PowerPoint presentations, posters, video, story, poetry, music, art, etc.)

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Philosophy of 4-H Activities

4-H activities provide an opportunity for education, participation, and fellowship. Through 4-H activities two other forms of recognition, from the National 4-H Recognition Model, are provided to our membership:

- Participation in educational experiences, and
- Demonstrating excellence in cooperation

Both forms of recognition provide informal evaluation for the participants. All participants may receive a certificate, participation ribbon or the satisfaction of

being included. Evaluation will take place in writing or through group discussion and processing.

4-H activities are very important because they develop and maintain interest in the 4-H program. Activities will vary from club to club and county to county. (Examples of county 4-H activities include: (4-H month, Camp, Field Days, Ronald McDonald Campaign, tours, fund raisers, parent-volunteer training, judging school, etc.) (Examples of local 4-H activities include: Parents' Night, tours, picnics, community service, etc.)

How 4-H Activities Happen

4-H activities occur in the same manner as 4-H events. 4-H activities require a lot of time and human resources to conduct. Committees need to be established and maintained by the club and/or Parent-Volunteer Association in your county. Refer back to "How 4-H Events Happen" for the membership of a committee and a committee's role and responsibility.

"To catch the reader's attention, place an interesting sentence or quote from the story here."

Effective Planning of Events and Activities

Each 4-H club and County Parent-Volunteer Association should plan a yearly calendar prior to the beginning of a program year. The calendar should include the date of events and activities

taking place. If times and locations can be included, that only strengthens the plan. The planning and process at all levels should include parents, volunteers, and youth.



4-H Events and Activities

The list below is not an all-inclusive list of 4-H events and activities. It does include the more popular programs. The following abbreviations will assist in identifying the level of participation.

(L = Local, C = County, D = District, S = State opportunities)

The sources of information regarding each event or activity should first be sought at the level in which it is being conducted.

Examples: County event – information source is the county extension office; State events – information source is county Extension office and Oklahoma 4-H Web page: <http://oklahoma4h.okstate.edu/>

Information regarding district and state events and activities are always sent directly to the county office for distribution. It is important to understand that some events and activities have guidelines regarding age and number of participants. Each county must establish a system for choosing participants. Please discuss the selection process with the Extension educator. Not all counties choose to participate in state trips.

ACHIEVEMENT

PROGRAMS (C) - The purpose is to recognize members, volunteers, supporters, and parents. Awards, medals, etc., are presented to members who have done outstanding work in their chosen project field. Awards are selected based on medal forms, record books and applications.

CAMP (C) - Camp is a time for members to learn about our environment while having fun in a natural setting. Provides opportunity to meet new people. Camp consists of educational workshops, swimming, sports, games, flag ceremonies, movies, and other forms of recreation.

CITIZENSHIP

WASHINGTON FOCUS

(S) - An eleven day trip to Washington DC. Delegates participate in programming which will increase their understanding of civic and social responsibilities.



DENVER WESTERN ROUNDUP (S)

Delegates participate in a variety of workshops, tour the National Western Complex, Denver Aquatic

Center and more.

DISCOVERY

UNLIMITED (D) - An overnight activity for 11-12 year olds. Its primary purpose is to make pre-teens aware of the opportunities available to 4-H members who remain active in their teen years. The activity also includes team building and leadership experiences.

DESIGN AND

CONSTRUCTION (C, S)

- Youth demonstrate the mastery of the design and construction process by selecting and using materials which produce an end product project (*Apparel, Interiors or Hobbies & Textile*) while integrating and applying the elements and principles of design and personal creativity.

FAIRS (C, S)

- County and state fairs are the culmination of the 4-H year. They provide an opportunity for youth to exhibit individual projects completed throughout the program year. Entries in the 4-H division at the state fair are selected at the county level. Exhibits should carefully follow guidelines printed in the fair

“Age for district and state events is based on age as of January 1 of the current year, unless specified otherwise in the activity or event guidelines.”

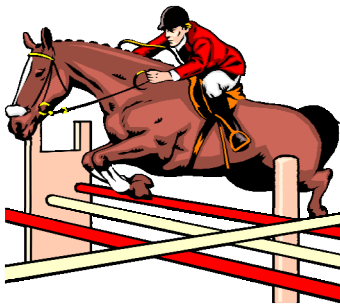
book, and/or project manuals.

FOOD SHOW DOWN (C, D, S) – The program is a culinary challenge where three member teams compete to create a dish while demonstrating their knowledge in foods and nutrition, kitchen safety, equipment and creativity in food preparation.

FORESTRY CAMP (S) - Camp held in SE Oklahoma. Its purpose is to teach and develop an appreciation for the environment while learning more about the forestry industry and career opportunities.

HORSE SHOW (C, D, S) - The district horse show is a qualifying event for the state show. There are eligibility requirements, ask for a copy of the “4-H Horse Show Rule Book” at the County Extension Office.

JOB READINESS (C, S) - This event prepares youth for assessing employment skills and researching job opportunities. It develops skills for completing a job application form, participating in an interview, and communicating a personal understanding of an ability to perform specific job requirements.



LAND JUDGING (C, S) - The state contest is held each spring to determine who will represent Oklahoma at the National Contest held in early May. Members learn to evaluate home site locations, range plans, and soil profiles.

MEATS CONTEST (C, D, S) - Youth learn how to identify proper cuts of meat from beef cattle, sheep, and swine, as well as, the most appropriate cooking methods for the cut.

NATIONAL 4-H CONFERENCE (S) - Must be a sophomore, junior, or senior in high school. Held in Washington D.C. at the National 4-H Center. This delegation researches, discusses, and recommends action on public issues related to youth. The team is responsible for preparing and implementing an action plan.

OKLAHOMA 4-H MONTH (L, C, S) - 4-H promotional activity held during the month of October. Local clubs, counties, and the state programs conduct a mass media campaign for 4-H through posters, displays, newspaper, radio, TV, etc. Each club and county are responsible for planning

activities.

PARENT-VOLUNTEER TRAINING (C, D, S) - Training opportunities take place at the county, district, and state level. Conferences are held at the district and state level.

PUBLIC SPEAKING (C, D, S) - Communication is key to our local, county, state, national, and global society. Communication events assist youth in developing a diverse set of verbal and nonverbal communication skills; acquiring the ability to speak convincingly in public; learning how to organize materials and present their ideas in a logical order; recognizing the need for obtaining pertinent and timely information on a given topic; developing a pleasing personal appearance and presence before an audience; and developing skills, knowledge, and attitudes for lifelong use. Public Speaking includes demonstrations, illustrated talks, drama and talks.

KIDS HELPING KIDS CAMPAIGN (L, C, S) - State community service project that financially benefits local 4-H clubs, county 4-H programs, the state 4-H program, and the

Ronald McDonald House located in OKC.

ROUNDUP (S) - Conference for 4-H members 13-19 years old. Held in July each year. Youth participate in educational and competitive events based on their interest and experience. Elections for state office occur at this conference. Some state competitive events and activities occur during Roundup.



SHARE THE FUN/4-H: GOT TALENT (C, D) - A time to share the fun with fellow 4-H members and families. Teaches cooperation, team building, and good sportsmanship. Members develop self-confidence and communication skills. Teaches participants how to organize materials and present their ideas in a logical order. County winners advance to the district level.

SHOOTING SPORTS (C, D, S) - Disciplines offered for competition include .22 Pistol, .22 Rifle, Archery, Air Rifle, Air Pistol Hunting and Wildlife, Muzzle Loader, Shotgun and Western Heritage.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE (D) - Held during fall break each year. Youth participate in programming on leadership and citizenship development. Elections for district office held during this conference.

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