



4-H Leader-Parent Training Series

Parents: Helping Your 4-H'er Succeed

Doug Hovatter, WVU Associate Professor and 4-H Agent

The Do's and Don'ts of Being a 4-H Parent

DO'S

- *DO* take time to learn about 4-H, what it stands for and how it operates.
- *DO* advise your son or daughter in selecting 4-H projects. Help them select a project they are interested in, have the ability to accomplish and is one for which you can help furnish needed materials, facilities, financing and guidance.
- *DO* show your interest and enthusiasm for the 4-H projects selected. Find out what is suggested for members to do and learn. Encourage your child to work on the project and record keeping all year long, and not to wait until the last minute.
- *DO* encourage your child to participate in county and state events, such as public presentations, camp, fair, workshops and other activities.
- *DO* keep the purpose of the 4-H project in perspective. Realize that a project is simply a teaching tool and a method for involving boys and girls in a worthwhile activity. Above all, remember that your child is more important than the 4-H project.
- *DO* keep in mind that the most important goal of 4-H is personal growth of the individual.
- *DO* give encouragement when your 4-H'er succeeds and even more when he/she fails. Judging and awards are not final exams. Whatever ratings are given or scores received, help your child to see progress made, things that have been learned, and goals that have been reached.
- *DO* offer your home for 4-H meetings; volunteer your hobbies and talents to 4-H leaders; provide transportation to other members.
- *DO* be tactful—with 4-H leaders, agents, judges, and your child.
- *DO* remember that 4-H leaders, chairperson and judges are often volunteering their own time for the benefit of your child; don't forget to show them their appreciation.
- *DO ASK QUESTIONS!*

DON'T'S

- *DON'T* do your child's project for them, even though you may be able to do it faster, better, simpler and with much less mess.
- *DON'T* discourage a child's enthusiasm by providing too much corrective influence or criticism.
- *DON'T* let the desire to win overpower your child's ability to learn. Do keep in mind that the 4-H experience should be an educational one.
- *DON'T* schedule family vacations which conflict with your child's 4-H schedule.
- *DON'T* re-live your childhood experiences through your child.
- *DON'T* view your child as an extension of yourself. Don't view his/her success or failure as a reflection of your ability or worth.
- *DON'T* assume your child is always right.

Parent's 4-H Pledge

- ✚ I pledge my HEAD to give information to help my child see things clearly and to make wise decisions.
- ✚ I pledge my HEART to encourage and support my child, whether he 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.

Making the Best Better

Ask yourself why you wanted your child to join 4-H.

If it is to win, you will be disappointed.

If it is so your child can learn and become involved in a worthwhile activity, you will be satisfied.

Recognition comes with doing the best your child can do.

Be a supportive parent and help your child and 4-H leader to "Make the Best Better!"

BERKELEY COUNTY 4-H IS EDUCATION FOR LIFE!

Sources

Hovatter, D. (2013) First Year 4-H Member Orientation

Powell, G. (1994) Regional 4-H Agent, North Rutgers University

Pledge Adapted from unknown source

Programs and activities offered by the West Virginia University Extension Service are available to all persons without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, veteran status, political beliefs, sexual orientation, national origin, and marital or family status.