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T.I.E.S.

TIME INTEREST ENTHUSIASM SAFETY

New 4-H Parent Guide



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Dear 4-H Parent,

Congratulations on joining the 4-H Program. Your child has become part of a nationwide youth program, with 6.5 million members and 540,000 adult volunteers leaders throughout the United States.

We commend you for wanting to help you child become a successful 4-H member.

Before we begin, it is assumed that you have read “*Welcome to 4-H: a Publication for Families*” and know that the purpose of 4-H is to help your child discover and develop his potential—you know that a project is planned work in an area of interest to your child, and you know that the responsibility of you child as a 4-H member is to work toward becoming an informed and involved member of his project group and club.

This guide has been written especially for you because you are the most important person in your child’s life. You are the person who can best help your child become a successful 4-H member. 4-H can give you an opportunity to develop some positive, lasting relationships with your young person as he develops skills that may be used for a lifetime.

To simplify the terminology used in this pamphlet, we will be using the male pronoun when referring to the 4-H member.



The T.I.E.S. Commitment

First, let us deal with a commitment that you, as a 4-H parent, must make in order to help your child develop into a successful 4-H member.

A New 4-H Parent Commitment

As a new 4-H parent, I am willing to make the following commitment in order to work towards helping my child become a successful 4-H member:

Time

I recognize that raising a successful 4-H member will take time and commitment on my part. I cannot expect him to become successful without my help. I am willing to commit some time to the development of my child into a successful 4-H member.

Interest

I recognize that to raise a successful 4-H member, I must be interested in my child’s involvement in the 4-H youth program, as well as in his school work, his friends, and all extracurricular activities. Most importantly, I recognize that I must make every effort to show and demonstrate my interest.

Enthusiasm

I recognize that if my child is to develop enthusiasm for being a 4-H member, I must show some enthusiasm myself. I will work on showing enthusiasm for my child trying new things, for having finished a task and for taking responsibility.

Safety

I recognize that I am responsible for training my child in acceptable social behavior. I also need to discuss with my child ways to protect himself in possible negative situations encountered in today’s world.

How to Help Your Child Feel Good About Himself

If you can raise a child who feels good about himself, you will have raised a successful 4-H member. A child who feels good about himself (sometimes called self-esteem), respects and likes himself and others; is not afraid to try new things; and has confidence in himself and his abilities.

How a child feels about himself is a direct result of the kind and amount of encouragement he receives from you on a daily basis. You can help your child feel good about himself by using some basic common sense and by setting a good example.



Children Learn Best by Example

Children learn more from what we do rather than by what we say. They learn by the example we adults and parents set on a daily basis. So why not work on setting a good example? Get your child to meetings on time; make sure he has all the supplies needed; when someone asks you to help, say “yes” with a cheerful smile; volunteer to do your share of making your club a great one for your child.

Remember, no one in the club gets paid a salary. All leaders in your child’s club

are volunteers, most of whom are parents just like yourself, who are interested in helping children develop their potential.



How to Raise a Successful 4-H'er

In addition to setting a positive example, the following are some techniques to use in helping your child to develop good feelings about himself:

- Encourage your child to try things he has never done before, and remind him that failure as a task doesn't mean failure as a person. If your child has never participated in a judging contest, encourage him to try one. If giving a demonstration sounds like fun to him, encourage him first to give one at the project level. Then praise the effort, whatever the outcome.
- Discourage your child from putting himself down. If you constantly hear “I can't, I can't,” recognize and admit with him that if he hasn't done something before, he most likely won't know how to do it. Also, remind him gently that “he can do anything he puts his mind to.” If he hears this often enough, he'll begin to believe it.



- Do not do your child's work- it then becomes your work, not his. You have the fun doing it, while he learns that “my work isn't good enough, so my parents do it for me!” We must keep in mind that the 4-H program is for your child to develop HIS potential.
- Do not over-emphasize 4-H awards and trophies. Ask the older members with a trunk full of 4-H ribbons what they mean to him- probably not too much. What will mean more to him will be the great people he has met in 4-H; the terrific haunted house the club had 2 years ago; how the younger members look up to him; or how easy it is to get up in front of a group without fainting. Remember, helping your child feel good about himself comes from within, not from material gains. The child who understands this can have a feeling of accomplishment, even without any external reward, and is headed for his own measure of success.



- When your child makes a mistake, is noisy at a meeting, takes off without notifying someone, etc. - reprimand and discipline him for his behavior, rather attacking his value as a person.
- Set aside time for “talking about 4-

H,” a time when your child has your complete undivided attention. He may talk about anything he wants—how his project is going, and if he should take it again next year; what was the best part of participating at an event, and what he will do differently next year; he may talk about a new friend he met at camp. Try to listen responsibly without being judgmental. Show that you're interested in his thoughts and feelings. Try to understand what he is saying.



Again, congratulations on joining the 4-H program. We're very glad your child is in 4-H. There is a lot to learn about 4-H in Sonoma County. If you hear all sorts of terms thrown around, ask the person using them what he is talking about—4-H is known for its people who are willing to help each other.

Remember, we are all working together towards helping your child develop into a successful 4-H'er!