



Cooperative Extension

Empowering Youth for 4-H Fairs

Spring ushers in excitement and planning for our summer 4-H Fairs. The local 4-H fairs are a great opportunity for youth to show off the 4-H projects that they have been working on all year. Here are some helpful tips to empower your 4-H youth to have a great fair experience while learning valuable life skills like responsibility, planning, time management, teamwork and community engagement.

BEFORE THE FAIR

DO

- Give 4-H youth and families information on registering as soon as you have it and send them reminders to register on time. You can also demonstrate how to register at a meeting or over Zoom.
- Encourage youth to do the hard work (training animals, feeding, grooming, finishing exhibits, framing art, finishing sewing..)
- Check in on youth and their progress
- Help youth get organized! Get a box for them to put completed exhibit hall entries into, encourage them to give you a list of supplies they need or are missing.

DON'T

- Register for the youth/family on their behalf. Often there are waivers and permission slips the parents and youth have to sign!
- Don't take over, youth will learn the joy of personal achievement if they did the work themselves!
- Don't try to push it if a project is not completed enough to go to the fair. If the hard work isn't done ahead of time, it's a lesson for next time to start earlier on project work.



AT THE FAIR

DO

- Remember that as youth make mistakes they will learn and grow.
- Allow youth to come up with solutions to challenges. Example: The wheelbarrow gets too heavy when full of manure. If youth are told they need to come up with a solution, they may empty it when it's half full, use manure buckets and empty more often, etc.
- Guide in a way that encourages growth and reaching new standards of achievement.
- Teach youth to respect judges and people's opinions or critiques of their projects. Handling other people's opinions is imperative to growing into a successful person.
- Teach youth that how you treat others says more about you than them!
- Remind people to ask questions! 4-H has a unique culture and language, so don't be afraid to ask questions.

DON'T

- Don't expect perfection from the start!
- Do not take the opportunity for problem solving away. Example: Empty the wheelbarrow the first time and then tell youth to come up with a solution for next time.
- Don't discourage enthusiasm or creativity with too much corrective influence or criticism.
- Don't allow the desire to win overpower your child's ability to learn.
- Don't forget that the judge's opinion is just one person's opinion on that day,
- Don't forget to remind people to put their best foot, display or hoof forward to show off all their great work!