



It's sometimes tricky to be a 4-H parent at the fair. Here are some "Do's and Don'ts" to help you navigate the tricky process of letting your child show at the fair.

- ☺ **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 one for which you can help furnish needed materials, facilities, financing, and guidance.
- ☹ **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 discourage them from exploring interests and passions that are different from your own.
- ☺ **DO** help youth by guiding and supporting them, so they can develop their own life skills. This may include some bumps and bruises along the way, but in the end the 4-H member will be better off if they know that the 4-H project was their own work!
- ☹ **DON'T** do your child's projects for them, even though you may be able to do it faster, better, simpler, and with much less mess. Remember 4-H is Learning By Doing.
- ☺ **DO** keep in mind that the most important goal of 4-H is personal growth of the individual. Not the color of the ribbon or the amount of praise they get.
- ☹ **DON'T** let the desire to win overpower your child's ability to learn. Do keep in mind that the 4-H and fair experience should be an educational one.
- ☺ **DO** provide all the guidance and support that your child needs in order to be able to take part in showing and being judged. Let them know that you are there for them.
- ☹ **DON'T** show the item or answer the judges questions for your child. Judging — especially face-to-face judging — is more about what the youth learned while doing the project than how the project turned out.
- ☺ **DO** give your child the space to learn how to be independent. Allow them to participate in judging with a minimum amount of guidance and direction.
- ☹ **DON'T** hover when your child is being judged. Don't crowd them or the judge. Don't make them feel like you are also judging them.
- ☺ **DO** help your youth see the progress they have made and knowledge they have gained. Give them encouragement when they succeed and even more when they fail. Judging events are all about learning, not the awards. Whatever ratings are given or scores received, help your child to see progress made, things learned, goals that have been reached and areas to focus on in the future.
- ☹ **DON'T** be disrespectful to the judges when your child didn't get the award or color of ribbon you thought they should have received. Remember, the judge's opinion is just one person's opinion.
- ☺ **DO** be proud of your child's compliments and growth.
- ☹ **DON'T** make the event about how you are feeling. Part of showing at the fair is youth learning how to handle their own feelings of success and failure.
- ☺ **DO** listen to your child if they are upset or feel something is wrong. Be a safe person to share their feelings with.
- ☹ **DON'T** assume your child is always right. Always get the facts of the situation and understand both sides.