



## Parents and Club Leaders: Your Role in 4-H Youth Achievement Interpretation

Parents and club leaders have the responsibility of helping 4-H exhibitors evaluate their performance. This self-evaluation begins in the show ring itself.



While watching your member/child participate in an exhibition (show), make sure you are observing for pleasure rather than to signal changes in the youth's showing techniques. We often call this "rail coaching". Rather, smile and with non-verbal communication, let your exhibitor know you are proud of them for participating. Trying to remediate any mistakes during the show could increase the exhibitor's anxiety or reduce their confidence; each of these could result in decreased performance. Be supportive without communicating displeasure.

After the exhibition (show) is over, greet your child/member with enthusiasm, publicly talk up their efforts and restate your pride in their participation. Again, do not begin this interaction with criticism or evaluation of performance.

- Once your child/member's exhibit has been adequately secured (animals watered, fed, stalled; musical instruments put away, computers signed off and packed, etc.), find a place where you can talk with them about their performance.
- Begin by discussing their thoughts about the show, performance, etc. How did you do? Did you meet your goals? What went really well? What could have gone better? What would you do next time to improve?
- Next, comment on your praise for their performance: I am really proud that you ...? I saw you make some changes from the last show, GOOD JOB!, There are a lot of younger members that look up to you, you gave them a great example to watch!
- If the child asks for your thoughts on their performance, give examples of their use of good skills and how they could have done differently. Remember – discuss the skills/knowledge, not how the youth did poorly, or criticize preparation. Try to elicit those evaluations from the youth rather than impose your thoughts.
  - Finally, work with the youth to develop and plan for continued participation. Help them to revisit their goals and either keep or revise them based on their results.



If questions arise about the judges' decisions or placing, remember you are a role model for youth on appropriate sportsmanship. These are suggested actions to help them gain an understanding of the judge's duties

- Ask the youth why they feel they were wrongly judged
- Reassure the youth that judges are generally chosen based upon their expertise or abilities
- Explain that the judge's decision is only one interpretation on their performance
- Remind them that the judge is responsible for judging each exhibitor and may have missed something
- Help them to understand the importance of their own feelings about their results

