



4-H VOLUNTEER TRAINING SERIES

The Florida 4-H Recognition Program



- Everyone should be recognized at some level.
- A balance between all elements of the recognition model is essential.

Florida 4-H Recognition Program



Beliefs About Recognition

No matter how we say it, we need to continually recognize young people for their achievements in 4-H. Recognition comes in many forms, and can be linked to participation, achievement, cooperation, or competition. It's important to understand why youth need recognition, and how we can recognize them for their accomplishments.

- Recognition is a way to help young people meet their need to belong.
- Recognition should be a part of all 4-H learning experiences.
- Appropriate recognition takes many forms.
- Respect for individual differences is essential.
- Recognition must be structured to build positive self-esteem.
- Opportunities for self-assessment and reflection allow youth to learn.
- A range of opportunities and challenges provide choices to meet individual needs.
- Adult support is essential in youth learning and recognition.

Why : The purpose of recognition is to encourage and support the efforts of young people in learning to improve their knowledge and develop their life skills.

Who should be recognized? Individuals, Groups, Youth, Adults, Families, and Partners

When: This recognition program is useful at all levels of 4-H. Recognition committees and councils at the local, county, state, and national levels use this approach in all recognition programs. Using a comprehensive, recognition program will provide a way to say: "You are a valued and important member of our 4-H program."

What: Recognition, support, and encouragement for learning is provided equally in all five areas.

1. Participation
2. Progress Towards Goal
3. Standards of Excellence
4. Peer Competition
5. Cooperation

Written by Ginny Powell, 1990. Adapted by Keith G. Diem and Georgene Bender for use with Florida 4-H, 2014.

An Equal Opportunity Institution. 4-H is the nation's largest youth development organization. Over 230,000 members in the State of Florida help to make up the community of more than 6.5 million young people across America. 4-H is a non-formal, practical educational program for youth. Florida 4-H is the youth development program of Florida Cooperative Extension, a part of the University of Florida/IFAS.

Participation

It is important to acknowledge the participation of 4-H members, volunteers and parents in an educational activity. For younger members, especially Cloverbud age (ages 5-7), participation is the major form of recognition. It should be easy and simple for members to earn this type of recognition. Being recognized for a year of 4-H club work by receiving a year pin is one example of *participation recognition*.

Criteria for earning this recognition should be simple. All those who meet the criteria are recognized. Recognition can be earned several times. The awards should be part of the learning experience.

Progress Toward Self-Set Goals

An important part of 4-H is to help members learn to set goals and plan a way to achieve those goals. Setting goals is appropriate for all ages and all activities. A 4-H member may have a goal of learning to put in a zipper, or a 4-H club may have a goal of collecting food for a local homeless shelter. Personal goals set by a member allow for the unique growth of that member. Adults, both leaders and parents, should be part of this goal setting process to help the member set realistic and reasonable goals, as well as to evaluate progress toward achieving them. Setting and achieving small goals will lead to accomplishing a long-term goal, such as completing the year's project.

Goal setting questions:

1. What would you like to accomplish in your project or activity?
2. What resources do you need to reach your goal?
3. What are the steps you need to take to reach your goal?
4. In what ways is this goal worthy of your time and abilities?
5. In what ways are you happy or satisfied with your goal?
6. What steps have you identified to help reach your plan?

Achievement of Standards of Excellence

Measuring a member's accomplishments against a set of standards is one of the most common ways that 4-H members have been traditionally recognized. Fairs are excellent opportunities for youth to have their work compared to standards. The Danish system of judging allows members to receive colored ribbons (blue, red, yellow, white), based on a score determined according to established standards. However, when members are then ranked against one another and an overall winner is selected, recognition moves to the level of peer competition. When recognizing members' achievement of standards, it is important that the standards be well-defined, usually on a score sheet or a rubric. Using a judging rubric with the standards provides the participant with a snapshot of which standards were met and to what extent.

All participants should know and understand the standards they need to achieve. After members are evaluated, feedback from the judge is needed to help them learn how well they rated on a set of standards and to receive suggestions for improvement.

Peer Competition

Peer competition is recognition for the best team or individual at that specific time and place. It is a strong motivator for some but not all. Participation in peer competition should be optional, and is not appropriate for younger children (Cloverbud- 5-7 years).

This type of recognition is more extrinsic than intrinsic, with the award being a trophy, rosette, or plaque. If properly designed and implemented, this type of recognition showcases the best things produced by 4-H'ers. It is important to establish specific selection procedures. Rules must be stated, understood, and enforced.

Cooperation

Learning and working together promotes high achievement. Cooperation may take advantage of all the skills represented in the group, as well as the process by which the group approaches the learning task or goal.

Everyone is rewarded. Cooperative learning is especially useful with younger youth.

Summary

Working within a recognition system involves:

- Looking at the young people: their needs, interests, attitudes, and aspirations.
- Understanding differences between people: their background and experiences. Using recognition that encourages and supports learning, and satisfies intrinsic and extrinsic needs.

Balancing recognition for participation, progress toward self-set goals, achievement of standards of excellence, competition, and cooperation.

References

4-H Youth Development Education: A National Model for Recognition in 4-H Programs. National 4-H Council and 4-H Youth Development, ES-USDA. 200.