

4-H Youth Development

Strengthening Goal-Centered Learning in the Exhibit Experience for Parents

Goals...Exhibits... Evaluation... How do the pieces fit together? How can you help your child set goals? How can you help your child understand how goals relate to exhibits? How will your child's exhibits be evaluated?

Parents and leaders perform important tasks: they help 4-H'ers set project goals and help youth see the connection between project goals and exhibit goals.

Goals

Helping 4-H'ers Set Project Goals

Having goals is like having a road map. It is a tool that helps you decide how to get to where you want to go. As you work with your child, think about the three parts of a measurable project goal:

- a) the action,
- b) the result, and
- c) the timetable.

How your child plans to do something is the action portion

of the goal. For example, for the goal, "I want to train my 4-H beef heifer to lead before county fair time," **I want to train** is the action portion of the goal. What a 4-H'er intends to do is the result—I want to train **my 4-H beef heifer to lead**. **When** is the amount of time it will take to complete the goal—I want to train my 4-H beef heifer to lead **before county fair time**.

If you are not certain that your child's goal can be carried out easily, you can give it a "control test." Does your child have control over what he or she wants to do? Does the action statement of your child's goal refer to what he or she will do? A 4-H'er has control over a goal such as "I will learn to put in a hand sewn hem." However, if the action mentioned in the goal is what someone else will do, it does not pass the control test. The goal statement, "I will have the champion steer at the Cedar County Fair," does not pass the control test because the beef

judge provides the action that decides whose steer will be the champion.

A resource is available to help you work with your child to set goals: *Achieving Goals through Record Keeping*, 4H 91.

Exhibit Goals—One More Piece to the Puzzle

As you work with your child when he or she thinks about exhibiting at the county fair, suggest starting with the project goals he or she set earlier. With the original goals in mind, help your child consider some exhibit possibilities that will relate to those goals.

Following are examples of project goals a 4-H'er might set. Under each of the project goals, list possible exhibit goals that might be an outgrowth of the project goals. As you work through that process, you can quickly see that many different exhibit goals emerge from one project goal. 4-H'ers also can meet their project goals in ways other than exhibits.

Project goal

I want to learn more about how to recycle aluminum cans and plastic jugs in my community by the end of the school year. I'm enrolled in the citizenship project.

Possible exhibit goals

Project goal

Our club will clean up the local church cemetery by June 1. All members are enrolled in the citizenship project.

Possible exhibit goals

Project goal

By July 1, I want to learn more about becoming a professional weaver. I'm enrolled in the visual art project.

Possible exhibit goals

Project goal

I want to take photos at my family reunion over Memorial Day weekend. I'm enrolled in the photography project.

Possible exhibit goals

Evaluation

Helping a 4-H'er prepare for the evaluation process, means coming back to the member's goals. These goals will form the basis for the evaluation process. Evaluation criteria include demonstrated learning, workmanship and techniques, and general appearance and design. A 4-H'er can demonstrate learning by the ability to explain, to apply information, and by the product itself. The judge will use the appropriate standards that relate to the member's goals and exhibit.

What outcomes for youth should result from the judging experience? The 4-H'er will:

- feel good about the experience.
- have increased knowledge about the exhibit and about herself or himself.
- be empowered to do self-evaluation and set new goals.
- receive recognition.

To achieve these outcomes, the judge will build rapport, gather information, encourage self-evaluation and reflection, provide feedback, and guide the 4-H'er in planning for the future.

The 4-H'er should be prepared to answer questions such as follows.

- What did you want to accomplish by creating this exhibit?
- How did you go about working toward your goals?
- What was the most important thing you learned as you worked toward your goals?
- What ideas or plans do you have for the future based on what you learned or discovered?
- What did you consider as you evaluated your work?

Evaluation Form

Refer to 4-H Exhibit Evaluation Form, VI-1067-SAS (at the county office), that will be used with your child. The judge will consider three major criteria.

- learning involved
- workmanship and techniques
- general appearance and design

The judge will use the appropriate standards in each category that relate to your child's goals and exhibit.

- **Learning Involved** (Consistent with exhibit goal, information used, decision-making process used, problem solving skills developed, application of information learned, etc.)
- **Workmanship and Techniques**
A. Exhibit is an actual **product** (Construction suitable for intended use; directions, recipes, patterns, etc. were followed appropriately; suitability of materials; appropriate finish, etc.)

B. Exhibit presents an idea (Information accurate, complete, organized, original, creative, practical, clearly presented, etc.)

- **General Appearance and Design** (Neat, attractive, design elements and art principles applied where suitable, etc.)

Peer Competition

4-H achievement shows or fairs provide an excellent opportunity for feedback on member exhibits. Two evaluation systems are common:

- 1) the Danish system of placing (blue-red-white ribbons to all without ranking within the ribbon groupings) or
- 2) the dual system (blue-red-white ribbons to all, and exhibits ranked in order of quality within the ribbon groupings).

However, when class champions are named, this moves the recognition system to another level because it rewards 4-H'ers for results from peer competition.

Peer Competition Can Be Positive

Selecting class champions is a form of peer competition and can cause pressure for 4-H'ers. Peer competition can be a positive experience if it is kept in perspective. You can help your child gain that perspective.

Note the following guidelines.

- Allow your child to choose his or her area of competition. This gives a young person a sense of control, and he or she will find that the consequence of winning or losing is easier to deal with when it's a self-selection.
- Offer a variety of competitive choices (judging of exhibits, beef showmanship) and cooperative choices (help decorate the club booth, work in the food stand). Consider your child's temperament, recognizing that personalities are different, even within the same family.
- Be positive. Praise your child for being actively involved in positive options that life offers.
- Make expectations realistic. Peer competition lets you teach your child about
 - 1) limits and strengths;
 - 2) setting goals; and
 - 3) personal and social benefits of sports, projects, and hobbies done alone or with friends.
- Support your child in his or her competitive efforts, but don't compete with them or through them for adult satisfaction. When youth achieve, their pride should come from accomplishing their goals rather than yours.
- Be a positive role model.
- Always place your child first and winning second in any competitive situation. *

Consider the following situation to see how one parent built a positive exhibit experience.

Brent, a 12-year-old 4-H'er, gets nervous when he shows his sheep at the county fair. He has even become sick right before entering the ring. How might you, as his parent, help out?
Brent: I really am not looking forward to showing my sheep tomorrow.

Mom/Dad: I'm sorry to hear that, Brent. Is there something you particularly dislike about showing your sheep?

Brent: Yes—I guess I'm worried about what ribbon the judge will give me.

Mom/Dad: One thing you might do is to think about what you've learned with your sheep project and try to focus on that, instead of just the ribbon.

Brent: Maybe that would help—that also would help me get ready for the judge's questions in the showing.

Mom/Dad: Have you thought about participating in the "Sheep and Ewe" program at the county fair? It's meant for youth who want to learn more about sheep. They can learn it from kids just like you. I'll help you find out where to sign up if you're interested.

Help Put the Exhibit Experience in Perspective

From your years of experience, you know that a single win-or-lose situation is only one moment of a lifetime and does not make you a successful or unsuccessful person. Your mature attitude toward competition will help your child learn how to deal with the pressure that comes with competition.

If you are with your child following the judging experience, help your child think through what happened by asking, “What did you learn? Did the judge help you think about your

next step? Did you enjoy the conference about your exhibit with the judge?”

Parent’s Role in Setting Goals

You have a big role in helping your child in the process of setting goals for his or her projects and exhibits. The process of goal setting should be ongoing for the 4-H’er, and you can encourage that to happen year round. Club meetings, project meetings, and achievement shows are excellent settings to help strengthen the skill of goal setting and to help 4-H’ers see other avenues for using the goal-setting skill, such

as record keeping. By doing so, you will have a part in helping your child develop positive self-concepts and become more effective as a communicator, decision maker, citizen, and leader. **


* What We Know about Youth and Competition, VI-1001-IYP

** Iowa State University Extension 4-H Youth Development pursues the goal of helping youth develop these life skills.

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