Getting Manitoba 4-H Parents Involved

Just as important as obtaining members is involving and informing parents, of the club members. Favorable parent attitude and interest is needed to have an effective club. To help parents understand what 4-H is and what is expected of them, you must take a special effort to inform, ask and involve them.

Why is parent involvement important?

- Parent involvement assists in developing a bond between parent and child and provided emotional support.
- If parents are keen, enthusiastic and willing to help in any way they can, it does much toward creating the same attitude in the club member.
- Parents can save leaders time and work.
- By informing parents, they gain a better understanding of 4-H and some may become 4-H leaders.

What parents want to know about 4-H

If we are going to interest parents in the 4-H program, then it is important that we understand something of what parents want to know about 4-H.

They want to know what their child will gain from participation in a 4-H club. Why would their child join a 4-H club? What are the objectives of the 4-H program? How does the club develop these traits and abilities? They want to know what is expected of their children as 4-H members. Will it interfere with school work? What is involved in the project?

Parents like to feel like they are part of the club...

They want to know what is expected of them as parents. What are they expected to provide in the way of project material? How often must they provide transportation? What assistance
should they give their child in project problems? Parents like to feel that they are part of the club, that they have an important role to play as parents of a member, and that they are not outsiders “buttin’ in” on something which does not concern them.

**Tips on Building Better Parent Co-operation**

**Ask Parents:**

- for their consent when their child joins the club.
- to attend meetings of the club whenever possible.
- to help with parts of the club program they may be interested in or have special ability for.
- to attend club, district or regional activities.

**Inform Parents:**

- by making them aware of the objectives of 4-H and how it can benefit their child.
- by making them aware of what materials or assistance their child will require to complete the project.
- by making them aware of what might be expected of them by way of duties or responsibilities and outlining the meaningful and challenging aspects of these responsibilities.
- by holding regular meetings in parents’ homes.
- by discussing objectives and projects at meetings, or with parents.
- by taking the opportunity during meetings to discuss the club program and their child’s progress. (Remember that the parents’ interest is almost always related to their child’s membership and progress.)
Involve Parents:

- by specially inviting them to public or community events planned by the club.
- by providing the opportunity for them to assume some of the duties and responsibilities in club work requiring adult assistance.
- by both privately and publicly giving recognition and expressing appreciation for their help.
- by asking for specific meaningful assistance.
- by matching tasks with the skills and interests of the parents.
- by teaming 4-H’ers and parents together in leadership roles such as song leaders, committee chairpersons or program presenters.
- by being flexible in tasks and timing and willing to accept their ideas...