

Module 1



Participation in Educational Experiences

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Overview

For some youth- especially beginners, low resource, or youth who are disabled- just participating in a 4-H educational program is a significant accomplishment. We only need to look at the pride with which they wear T-shirts provided at camps or at livestock shows to see that this is true. The T-shirt is a way of proclaiming, “I was there; I participated.”

Recognizing youth for participating tells youth that they are important, significant people because they have been a part of a learning experience. It says, “We’re glad you are here.” This type of recognition can be a first step in building a 4-H’er’s self-esteem. Youth who are recognized for participating in a 4-H learning experience can show their friends, parents, and neighbors that they have participated in a 4-H program.

Young people should be able to earn this type of recognition relatively easily. The requirements should be simple and well publicized so youth know what they need to do to be recognized. 4-H’ers can be recognized as many times as they meet the requirements. The requirements for this type of recognition usually consist of attending, participating, and/or successful completion of an educational program.

Recognition for participation in educational experiences, while important for beginners is developmentally appropriate for all ages, for all levels of ability and opportunity, and in all types of activities. Individual awards do not need to be costly, but should be something that is appropriate for the 4-H’ers involved in the program, and above all, be valued by them.

Volunteers or staff responsible for the educational experience are the most appropriate presenters of recognition for participation. The recognition should be presented as a part of the learning experience. Some examples are T-shirts, caps, chevrons, stickers, certificates, and membership or participation cards. Publishing participants’ names in the local newspaper after the program is another way to recognize participants.

Participating in 4-H provides unique opportunities for young people to determine their own learning experiences. This opportunity enables 4-H’ers to have significant experiences that encourage them to feel valued and have control over their lives. Having

the opportunity to make choices and develop individual learning plans helps 4-H'ers feel positive about their accomplishments and contributions.

Recognizing young people for participation in 4-H starts with volunteers who accept and affirm youth as capable and significant persons. By asking questions, listening, and using encouragement, volunteers help young people find meaning, purpose, and significance in their lives.

Above all, adults should not dominate the young person's opportunities to learn. Adults who are able to talk freely about themselves, their feelings, dreams, accomplishments, and failures are modeling behavior that helps young people begin to understand how each person fits into this world.

When adults establish this type of environment, young people are more likely to participate in 4-H. By recognizing 4-H'ers, we enhance the likelihood of their continued involvement in learning experiences.

Appropriate recognition for participation adds to the learning environment for young people. A challenge for all adults (parents, volunteers, extension staff, teachers, etc.) who work with youth is to provide feedback that will enable young people to continue to grow and develop. Providing encouragement, rather than praise, is a key element in recognizing a young person's growth.

Praise has been highly recommended as a way for parents, teachers, and volunteers to help young people gain a positive self-concept and improve the way young people respond. Recently, educators, child development specialists, and others have begun to question the effectiveness of praise.

It's easy and often effective to praise young people who are excelling and/or behaving appropriately. However, when they are misbehaving, not excelling, or not feeling good about themselves, praise does not always generate the response expected. It has been recommended to use a concept called encouragement.

Praise is defined as commending another person for behavior or a product you find exceptional. It depends upon the judgment of others instead of helping the recipient to use their own self-judgment. Continually using praise causes young people (and adults) to believe "I'm OK *only* if someone tells me I'm OK."

Encouragement is different because it lets others know that what they do is separate from who they are. It conveys that they, as a person, are good enough as they are. It encourages the receiver to identify his or her own strengths.

The specific award we give to young people as a part of recognizing their participation is important. We tend to forget to look at the award through the eyes of the young person. It is easy to rely on our traditional awards because it is more convenient; we have a supply on hand; donors expect to give the same award; on our schedules are too busy to select something different. In addition, it is a challenge to find more attractive and appropriate awards that use good design principles and are affordable. It is important to remember that the interests and preferences of young people change from generation and from one developmental stage to another. In addition, we are working with a broader audience of young people who have diverse needs.

The teaching-learning experience involves the volunteers in an assessment of the awards being given in your county and in their local, individual groups. It may not provide immediate answers, but it does identify awards that need to be given some attention.

Participation in Educational Experiences

Frequently Asked Questions

What is *Participation*?

Put simply, participation is taking part in an activity. In 4-H participation means attending, involvement in, and/or the successful completion of an educational activity or project. Learning experiences in which youth participate need to be positive, inclusive, and structured. Youth value being recognized for participating as a group, attending a meeting or workshop, or taking part in a special program. Creating learning environments that help a young person feel positive about their participation in an activity is crucial.

Why is *Participation* a Part of the 4-H Recognition for Excellence Program?

Recognizing a youth for participating tells them that they are important people because of what they have learned and contributed to a 4-H learning experience. Recognizing youth for their participation also gives them a sense of belonging and that the 4-H organization values their membership. Recognizing youth participation helps build a 4-H member's self esteem.

Who Receives Recognition for *Participation*?

Recognition for participation is especially important for young or new participants. However, it must be provided for all age groups, all levels of ability and in all types of activities. 4-H'ers can be recognized as many times as they meet the requirements for participation.

What Form Does Recognition for *Participation* Take?

A membership card will be provided to all 4-H members by the County Extension Office and the State 4-H Program. Recognition for participation may also be done during a meeting, roll-call, with name tags, through certificates, or a celebration of individual successes that occur as a part of the meeting.

Who Awards the Members for *Participation*?

Volunteers responsible for the activities are the most appropriate presenters of awards. However, recognition for participation should occur at all levels of the 4-H program—club, county, regional, state, and national.

When are the Awards for *Participation* Given?

Recognition for participation should be a part of the learning experience, but can be presented at any time during the 4-H year.

What Type Of Recognition May Be Provided For Participation?

4-H Members	<p>4-H Membership Card –given to each member enrolled for the 4-H year. 4-H Folders – Some counties may provide such folders for new 4-H members Other types of recognition may include such things as listing new members’ names in the newspapers, providing stats or special items for member participating in a club tour or workshop, certificates, special treats, verbal acknowledgement, etc. Certificates or Celebration Items (participation, good job, attendance, great presentation, emerging leadership, noteworthy special accomplishments, etc.) 4-H Logo Products for participating in 4-H events and activities. Participation ribbons for non-competitive events. 4-H Alumni Pin –pin available to present to 4-H members, completing their last year of eligibility for 4-H membership, according to age policies. -Letter and Alumni pin to graduating seniors (county level) -Senior pin to seniors attending State Congress Year Completion Stickers or Pins</p>
4-H Volunteers	<p>4-H Volunteer Card –given upon completion of application and screening. Volunteer appreciation letters-following an event or during a special season County recognition banquet/luncheon -for all volunteers Coupons – ex. for free ice cream cone-for all who assisted Birthday cards to 4-H volunteers during appropriate month Year Completion Pins Volunteer Name Badges Newspaper Article during National Volunteer Week (April) listing all volunteers 4-H Logo products –given all volunteers during National 4-H Week (October)</p>
4-H Clubs	<p>4-H Club Charter County Newsletters with accounts of club activities 4-H Logo products, flags, songs Participation ribbons for non-judged events & displays Club celebrations Club banners</p>
4-H Groups in alternative delivery modes	<p>Name tags for each youth/adult Poster in classroom – We Learn Through 4-H T-shirts Certificates (e.g. Tropicana, Ag Awareness) Event/ group certificates 4-H Logo products</p>
Camps	<p>Nametags for each camper Group names for activity rotation Cabin recognition Evening programs Pledges / Flag Raising/ Lowering</p>

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Resources

Membership Cards

When 4-H members submit their enrollment form to their local 4-H office annually, they will receive a membership card for participation in the program. 4-H Membership Cards can be ordered through EDIS by county offices.

Recognition Examples

The appendix contains examples of certificates, bookmarks, etc. to use for recognizing for participation.

Events and Activities Listings

For a list of State Level Competitive and Non-Competitive Events see the Florida 4-H Events and Activities Handbook which can be downloaded at www.florida4h.org

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Who Receives Recognition?

- Recognition is especially important for new or younger members.
- However, it must be provided for all age groups and level of ability.
- Can be recognized as many times as they meet the requirements for participation.

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What Form Does It Take?

- A membership card is provided to all members by the County Office & State Program.
- Can be done during a meeting through roll call, with name tags, certificates, or a celebration of individual successes as part of a meeting.

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Who Awards the Members?

- Volunteers responsible for activities are the most appropriate.
- Recognition for participation should occur at all levels: Club, County, Regional, State, National.

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When are the Awards given?

- Recognition for participation should be part of the learning experience.
- However, they can be presented at any time during the 4-H year.

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Types of Recognition

- Clubs- 4-H Club Charter, county newsletters with accounts of club activities, 4-H logo products, club celebration and banners.
- Groups- Name tags for each youth/adult poster in classroom- we learn through 4-H, t-shirts, certificates, 4-H logo products.

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Types of Recognition

- Members- membership card, certificates, name in newsletter, verbal acknowledgement, Alumni Pin, etc.
- Volunteers- volunteer card, appreciation letters, county recognition banquet, year completion pins, name badges, 4-H logo products.

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Types of Recognition

- Camps- nametags for each camper, group names for activity rotation, cabin rotation, cabin recognition, evening programs, pledges/flag raising/lowering.
- Donors- verbal acknowledgement, appreciation notes, letters, 4-H logo products.

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Praise vs. Encouragement

- Praise is defined as commending another person for behavior or a product you find exceptional.
- Encouragement lets others know that what they do is separate from who they are.

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ACTIVITY

- Please write your responses to the following 4 situations.
- Please write your first reactions.
- You will have 10 to 15 seconds before I read the next situation.

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SITUTATION A

- You have an unexpected guest for a meal. You add a can of mushrooms, some leftover turkey strips, and frozen peas to a box noodle mix. Your guest says, "You're a great cook!"
- Write down your first thought, not what you would say but what you would think.

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SITUATION B

- You quickly change from your work clothes and select a sweater and a pair of casual slacks .When you arrive at your community meeting, the first person you meet says to you, "You are always so nicely dressed."
- Write down your first thought, not what you would say but what you would think.

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SITUATION C

- At the last church committee meeting, there is a lively discussion about a new proposal. You actively participated. After the meeting, another committee member said, "You have a special ability to see solutions to problems."
- Write down your first thought, not what you would say but what you would think.

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SITUATION D

- You are invited to play cards with a group in your neighborhood. Although you only play once or twice a year, you win the game. A neighbor, who doesn't know you very well, says, "You really are a good card player-this is your game!"
- Write down your first thought, not what you would say but what you would think.

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Overview

- Praise sometimes does not give the response that we want or expect.
- Encouragement is a better way to give feedback to others-especially young people.

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Overview Continued

<p><u>Encouragement</u> "Tell me about your photo."</p> <p>"I appreciate that you put the chairs away after the meeting."</p> <p>"How do you feel about your presentation?"</p>	<p><u>Praise</u> "I like your photo."</p> <p>"I like the way you cleaned up after the meeting."</p> <p>"You did your presentation right. I am proud of you!"</p>
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Certificates

The following certificates are available to recognize 4-Hers and volunteers for their participation within 4-H programs. Files of the certificates are available at the Florida 4-H Awards and Recognition Web site for you to download and print.

- Participation Achievement
- Appreciation of Participation Completion
- Graduated Senior
- Appreciation for Service
- Friend of 4-H
- Authorized Partner of 4-H