



## Judges Orientation Checklist

Here are some elements to include when you are orienting judges for a 4-H event.

- ❁ Remember that all 4-H activities should be positive learning experiences.
- ❁ The member is more important than the product or competition.
- ❁ Youth develop at different rates. Consider carefully the expectation in relation to the child's age and ability. If the child is present, ask questions not only to assess the member's ability, but also to gather information that you need to provide appropriate feedback.
- ❁ Be open to new ways of doing things. Judging is done according to quality and standards and is not a matter of personal taste or preferences. If a technique or style is different, consider its effectiveness. Did it achieve the necessary results?
- ❁ Youth have differing amounts of resources available. The evidence of the member's learning and skill development is the most important value. The serviceability of a finished product is more important than the specific technique or the quality of the materials that went into the product.
- ❁ Fairness and consistency is critical. The last child/item seen must be evaluated using the same criteria as the first.
- ❁ Review the scoring and awards system. Make sure that written criteria is available and referred to during the evaluation process.
- ❁ More learning often results from the feedback than the actual score. Make sure that you communicate your thoughts as you judge – what was done well, what needs attention, what suggestions do you have for future work? Praise the member on their strengths and successes. Give tactful, constructive hints for improvements. Use messages like:

I really liked...

I wasn't sure about....

Maybe if.....because.....

I noticed.....

This part was effective because.....

The .....needs to be.....because.....

As a 4-H judge, you must believe that the member is more important than the end result. Be sensitive to and aware of the 4-Hers feelings and their efforts to do a good job. It takes some careful thought to be an effective judge. You will need to call on your abilities to:

- encourage
- help 4-Hers feel good about themselves
- build enthusiasm for future endeavors
- give praise and constructive criticism
- help this be a teachable moment
- help the child with self-evaluation

Thank you for helping us with this important role.

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