

How Can Fan Support Make A Difference For Your 4-H Members?

Positive, supportive and rewarding 4-H experiences begin and end with a great 4-H member support network. You, the 4-H club coach and advisor, are part of the essential network. Individuals supporting the member at home and throughout the 4-H project and club experience are as equally as important. Traditionally, the closest fan for most 4-H club members has been a parent/guardian. Yet, today's 4-H member may just as likely have a grandparent, sibling, other relative or significant adult serving in this role.

4-H fans help at practice, assist with game day preparation and cheer on the sidelines.

Essential Roles of Fan Support

Whoever serves as your member's fan support, they need to fulfill these essential roles:

1. **Assist With Project Selection and Program Choices:** Encourage parents/guardians and other fans to help member select projects based on the child's interest, needs and available resources including member and family time. Encourage the guiding adult to utilize project selection tools like [Select and Plan the Right 4-H Project for You, Ohio 4-H Family Guide](#) and [county project requirement guides](#) to help direct member project choices.
2. **Inspire by Showing Support and Interest:** Inspired and motivated members complete projects, attain personal, and project goals. Members need someone to prompt them to work on their project records or to remind them to complete another experiment. Who is not inspired "to do their best" when someone shows they care?
3. **Model Good Sportsmanship:** [Sportsmanship](#) on the field begins with good sportsmanship at home and on the sidelines. Parents and other fans should encourage fair play, responsibility and honesty while exhibiting these important character traits.
4. **Provide Any Necessary Transportation:** The ultimate responsibility to get a member to and from all 4-H club meetings, events and activities lies with their parent/guardian. We discourage advisors and parents from transporting members that are not their own children. In cases, where families choose to carpool, have adults follow the [OSU Transportation Guidelines](#).
5. **Lend a Teaching Hand:** Do not do the project for the member. Instead, have fans "learn by doing" along with their member. They can teach new skills and knowledge to help their member practice and experience first-hand project tasks that work towards mastery and achievement. Refer fans to [Learn the 4-H Way](#) for resources to assist in their teaching endeavors.
6. **Talk, Listen and Take Action:** Open [communication](#) between you, the member and his/her support network is critical to optimal involvement. However, it is a family's ACTION or lack there of that will determine the level of member participation and success. Provide written and oral information to families at club meetings. Remind families to read and take action on information shared through 4-H mailings, the web and to ask questions.

7. **Show Approval – Cheer, Applaud, and Praise:** Tender [words of encouragement](#) from people who care make us feel like winners even when we may have just failed. Praise often regardless of the outcome in the winner's circle. Encourage parents and fans to share their pride, explain how they enjoy spending time and to let their member know you are always there to listen and to help!

The [4-H Parent/Guardian Expectation List](#) is a simple, yet effective tool you can use to communicate the importance of parent/guardian participation and reinforce the difference this support makes to members. Have each family read and sign this form at the start of the 4-H year. What a great way to begin!

Utilize [Do's and Don'ts of Being a 4-H Fan](#) to remind member fans how to make a positive difference in their member's 4-H experience. Use during a Parent/Guardian/Family Orientation meeting or as a way to explain fan support roles to member 4-H success.