

# Tips for Exhibiting 4-H Projects

## Enrollment and Registration

- There are always two deadlines for each exhibit opportunity. By the enrollment deadline, you must sign up for the project. By the registration deadline, you must notify Extension that you plan to participate in the event. Paperwork for both is available from your club leader and/or the DuPage Extension website: [www.extension.uiuc.edu/dupage](http://www.extension.uiuc.edu/dupage).
- Make sure you're enrolled in the appropriate level of your project. While the levels are age specific, if you're new to a project area and have no previous experience, you should enroll in the beginning level. If you complete the first level before the end of the year, you may enroll in the next level. You will be judged at whatever level you are enrolled, so if you enroll in an advanced level you will be judged at an advanced level.

## Preparing Projects

- The project you take to fair should reflect the knowledge and skill you've acquired since beginning the project. Projects that are completed in a day usually don't compete well.
- Make sure you read the fair book to know what is and is not acceptable in your project / class.
- The project must be the work of the 4-Her.
- Make sure you label all your pieces with your name. Make sure to follow the fair book guidelines.

## Reading the Fair Book

- Read not only the section that relates to your project area and class, but also the 4-H general rules.
- If you're exhibiting animals, make sure you also read the general rules for animal exhibitors.
- Check the fair book before you start your project to make sure your project idea fits the criteria for its class. As soon as they are complete, fair books for Mini Fair, the Dog Show and the County Fair are posted at [www.extension.uiuc.edu/dupage](http://www.extension.uiuc.edu/dupage).

## Preparing to Speak with the Judge

- Prior to meeting with the judge make sure you are prepared to answer the following questions:
  - ⇒ What process was followed in making the exhibit?
  - ⇒ What did you learn?
  - ⇒ What might you do different next time?
- If you are not able to attend conference judging, provide written responses to these questions and send them with your project.

## Check-in

- Late entries will be penalized. There is no guarantee that late entries will be judged. If late entries are judged, the exhibit will automatically be lowered one rating. If the exhibit can't be judged, the exhibitor will receive a participation ribbon. All projects must be checked in by the check-in deadline.
- Arrive early. It's the responsibility of each exhibitor to arrive with enough time to check in all his/her projects within the allotted check-in time.
- Be prepared to spend time waiting to be judged. Check-in and conference judging take time.
- Only 4-H members will be allowed to go to check-in and judging stations. Those requiring special accommodations must make prior arrangements with Christina Foster, Youth Development Educator, at least two weeks prior to the judging event.

## Judging

- Greet the judge and always use your best manners.
- Relax. The judge is excited to talk with you and hear what you've learned.
- It's okay to ask the judge questions about your project. Make this an opportunity to learn how you can do even better next year.
- Always thank the judge. Most of them are volunteering their time and expertise to provide this judging opportunity.

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## Awards

- All exhibits are judged in two ways: individually against project standards, and competitively against all others in the same class.
- The exhibit is first judged against standards. The judge uses a score sheet to determine to what degree the standards have been met. A ribbon is then awarded as follows:

- ⇒ Blue: Met the standards
- ⇒ Red: Needs improvement
- ⇒ White: Needs much improvement
- ⇒ Green: Acknowledges participation in the event

- If merited, Class Champions (purple ribbon) are awarded from among the blue ribbon winners in each project area, except livestock. Class Champions are those who have exceeded the project standards.
- Reserve and Champion winners will be selected from among the Class Champions in each project area\*, except livestock. The Champion winner is the highest award and is recognized with a trophy and a rosette ribbon. The Reserve Champion is the second best and is acknowledged with a rosette ribbon.

*\*Sometimes classes are combined so there isn't always a trophy for each project area or class. See the fair book to determine class groupings.*

## Handling Disputes

- Judges' decisions are final.
- If you have a question or concern during the judging process, only the 4-Her may raise the issue with a superintendent or Extension staff. This is a prime opportunity for youth to develop skills in communication and problem solving.

## Project Display During the Fair

- Please sign up for security. The safety of your project is dependent on 4-H members, families, and volunteers who help protect your project from theft or vandalism.
- Only those who are exhibiting and/or help in a designated role (e.g. security, superintendent, etc.) and are in compliance with DuPage County 4-H Policies will be issued an armband to get into the fair.

## Project Pick Up

- All projects must remain on display the entire exhibit time in order for premiums to be awarded. Check the fair book for project pick up times.
- A claim ticket must be presented to pick up projects. If someone other than the 4-H member is picking up the project, make sure they have the claim ticket.

## State Fair Delegates

- Each year the State 4-H Office determines the number of 4-H'er delegates who may go downstate.
- Not all projects are State Fair eligible. Consult the DuPage County Fair fair book for details.
- Only those who are 10 years old as of September 1 of the previous year will be eligible to go downstate.
- In eligible classes, champions are given first option. Reserve champions are given next option.
- Selected state fair delegates and alternates will be announced at each exhibit opportunity after all judging is complete. Delegates for projects displayed at mini fair and the county fair, with the exception of livestock, will be posted on a board at the County Fair after all judging is complete.
- All delegates must notify the Extension/4-H staff of their decision to go to the State Fair by a certain deadline. Details will be announced.
- As last year, most projects will not be conference judged. Projects will need to be dropped off at the Extension office, and volunteers will be needed to take them to Springfield on a predetermined date.
- This year a select number of project will be conference judged. Details will be announced at a later date.
- For some project areas, 4-Hers will not take their project but instead will participate in skill-a-thons at the State competition. Study guides may be available for these competitions. Check at the Extension/4-H office at the DuPage County Fairgrounds during the fair.

**Questions about 4-H exhibitions in DuPage County should be directed to Christine Birns at 630-653-4114, ext 17 or [cbirns@uiuc.edu](mailto:cbirns@uiuc.edu).**