

# Recognition Model

Oklahoma 4-H Volunteer Development Series



OSU EXTENSION  
4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

## National 4-H Recognition Model

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Recognition is one way to help young people become self-directed, productive and contributing citizens. 4-H uses five types of recognition. Each supports, motivates and encourages young people in a unique way. This

model presents a balanced approach to effectively using recognition as a way of motivating 4-H'ers.



1. Participation in educational experiences.
2. Making progress toward self-set goals.
3. Achieving standards of excellence.
4. Excelling in peer competition.
5. Demonstrating excellence in cooperation.

**"Recognition is one way to help young people become self-directed, productive and contributing citizens."**

## Participation

Participation is a type of recognition that emphasizes the importance of commending young people who have been involved in 4-H educational experiences. For some young people,

especially beginners, low resource, and those with disabilities, taking part in a 4-H learning experience is a significant



accomplishment. All youth find this recognition meaningful. This is the first step in building positive self-esteem. (Examples: stickers, pins, certificates, participation cards, news articles, t-shirts, caps.)

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director of Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma. This publication is printed and issued by Oklahoma State University as authorized by the Vice President, Dean, and Director of the Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources and has been prepared and distributed at a cost of 000 cents per copy.

## Progress Toward Self-Set Goals

### Basic Needs of Learners

- Belonging—"I'm in."
- Acceptance—"What I do and say counts."
- Security—"I feel safe."
- Achievement—"I can do it."
- Independence—"I can do it by myself."
- Recognition—"Others recognize me."

An important part of 4-H is helping young people learn to set goals and then planning ways they can achieve their goals. From time-to-time, you will help them check their progress toward the goals. The challenge is to help young people set realistic goals and then recognize them for making progress toward the goals, no matter how small or large the accomplishments. Recognition is an important way to help them feel good about progress toward their

goals. Recognition also encourages them to continue to work toward their goals.

The key to this recognition is young people working cooperatively to review their work with concerned and caring adult(s). Feedback is essential. Talking face-to-face to give feedback is best, but if it is not



possible, give written feedback. Remember that a youths potential and available resource affect the goals set, progress made, and the growth that the young person demonstrates. (Examples: Positive private and/or public feedback, pins, memorabilia, certificates, stickers, handwritten notes.)

## Achieving Standards of Excellence

**"Standards of excellence help a 4-H'er to evaluate the skills they are learning."**

An important goal of 4-H is to teach skills to young people that they can use now and later life. Standards of excellence help 4-H'ers to evaluate the skills they are learning. Standards of excellence can be useful

for products (animals, skirts,

pumpkins, etc.) and skills (speaking, demonstrating, decision making, etc.) The standards of excellence often are printed on a judge's scorecard.

4-H competitive events are used to provide youth opportunities to have their work compared with standards. The Danish Award System consists of awarding blue-red-white ribbons without ranking

within the ribbon groups. All 4-H'ers who meet the standards are recognized. When a champion is named or exhibits are ranked within a group, then the experience becomes competitive. (Examples: ribbons, certificates, 4-H memorabilia, project equipment or supplies.)



## Peer Competition

This recognition results where individuals seek to be the best or do better than the other competitors. There are winners and losers (those who were not the best). 4-H members who are not first or champion can learn to improve their skills, but often the emphasis placed on the winner overshadows what

others have done, learned or achieved. The use of a first, second and third place ribbon is considered peer competition.

The desire to win is a strong motivator for some, but not for all people. Often young people who are not motivated by competition

don't take part in competitive programs or drop out. (Examples: medals, trophies, plaques, scholarships, or media reports.)



## Cooperation

The main goal of 4-H is to help young people become self-directing, productive and contributing citizens. We are helping them to learn to work cooperatively in an increasingly interdependent global world. Recognizing young people who work together to learn and achieve goals is a natural



part of our recognition model.

When young people work together, they examine their own skills and abilities and explore solutions beyond their own ideas. At the same time, they affirm their own self-concept. They are learning how to succeed in today's world where

business is turning to group efforts to involve all levels of workers in the decision-making process.

(Examples: ribbons, certificates, newspaper articles, community recognition like highway clean-up signs, special trips for the group.)

A club and county program should work toward having a healthy blend of all five forms of recognition.

**“When young people work together, they examine their own skills and abilities and explore solutions beyond their own ideas. ”**