

Ways for 4-H Judges to Communicate

As a judge, you have the power to encourage 4-Hers far more than you might imagine. By demonstrating positive communication techniques, you are able to influence 4-Hers in a very positive way.

Kids will listen to you after they feel listened to. **Consider WAIT, Why Am I Talking?**

Key words to use include:

1. Tell me more
2. I want to hear...
3. Keep going

Our goal is to remember that after they speak, get them to take another turn before we respond with suggestions. Ask questions like you were a news reporter, not a teacher or lawyer. Remember that your body language is as important as the words you use.

Provide encouragement, not praise. In the long run, encouragement empowers and praise discourages.

Praise:

- ★ You are such a good boy/girl.
- ★ I like what you did.
- ★ With more work, you will get it right.
- ★ You did it better than anyone else.
- ★ I like what you did.

Encouragement:

- ★ You did your best.
- ★ You must be proud of yourself.
- ★ I trust your judgement.
- ★ You can decide what is best for you.
- ★ How do you feel about it?

Often we unintentionally shut down communication by denying kids their feelings. **DO NOT** say:

1. Don't worry.
2. I'm sure it will be ok.
3. Don't be silly.
4. It can't be that bad.

RESPECT is built by showing the kids we understand what they are saying before we say what to improve. Say:

1. So you are saying...
2. You think that...

The main idea is to replace "I understand, but" with "I understand that"

4-Hers need to know that they have been heard!!