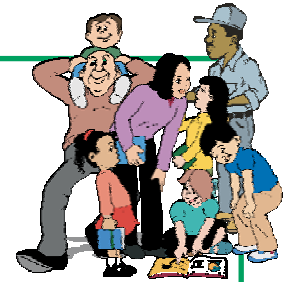




4-H for Families



“4-H Teaches Appreciation and Affection”

4-H

FAMILY

4-H

FAMILY

4-H

FAMILY

4-H

FAMILY

Researchers across the country and around the world have found that strong families have a wide variety of qualities, which contribute to the family members’ sense of personal worth and feelings of satisfaction with each other. One of the important qualities of strong families is the ability to deeply care for one another and the willingness to regularly demonstrate these feelings.

Families that have 4-H as a part of their lives have many opportunities to show appreciation and caring for others.

For some, showing appreciation and affection is not easy. In 4-H, it is. 4-H service projects are a great way to show others that you care. “Bake ‘n’ Take” days, Adopt a Grandparent, May Day Baskets for the elderly, collecting food for the food pantry, caring for animals and writing thank you notes are great ways for 4-H members to express affection and appreciation.

For some youth, their 4-H family may be the structure that provides an avenue to experience and nurture these qualities. 4-H members receive positive messages from leaders, judges and peers, who give them a feeling of self-worth. Recognition in the form of a smile, pat on the back, ribbons or trophies for jobs well done are affirming to young people. These learning experiences conducted by caring Extension staff, volunteer leaders, adults and parents provide youth with a sense of belonging and a feeling of appreciation.

For other families, 4-H may be the common link that involves all family members. Parents can show their children appreciation and affection in 4-H by attending 4-H club meetings and events, helping children learn new skills, celebrating successes, dealing with failures, and modeling caring behavior. 4-H can also help families establish family traditions that will be remembered long past the color of a ribbon. For example, every year after county fair, you could make homemade ice cream together to celebrate your 4-H successes and start planning next year’s projects.

As a 4-H club, you might select one or two projects each year that help 4-H members develop strengths related to showing appreciation and affection. Clubs could also develop traditions that support these qualities.

There are many ways 4-H clubs could support members by showing appreciation and expressing affection for others. During 4-H club meetings, members could:

- Develop a club cheer.
- Encourage members to watch family or club members compete at club, county, district and state events.
- End meetings with a group hug, special chant, song or poem.
- Write thank you notes or set up special displays showing appreciation to 4-H leaders, parents and community leaders.
- Do something every day to make someone smile.
- Practice introducing others with a welcoming hand shake.

4-H

FAMILY

4-H

FAMILY

4-H

FAMILY

4-H

FAMILY

4-H Club/Family Discussion Topics:

- What are your plans for Mother's Day/Father's Day?
- How do you know that you are appreciated?
- Give the person a compliment; the person receiving the comment should thank the person for the compliment.
- I enjoy helping my ...
- I made someone smile by ...
- I am thankful for ...

Examples of 4-H Projects and/or Activities that Teach Appreciation and Affection:

- Citizenship Projects:
 - "And My World"
 - "Citizenship Public Adventures"
- Theater Arts
- Home Environment
 - Celebrate Art
 - "Heirloom Treasures"
- Animal Project
- Pets Project
- "Project Learning Tree"

As you can see, appreciation and affection may be shown in many different ways. We encourage families to identify those areas that they would like to work on together to improve and those areas of strength which serve as the foundation for growth and positive change together. Take time to show someone you care.

For more information about this research, see: Nick Stinnett and John DeFrain. (1985). *Secrets of Strong Families*; David H. Olson and John DeFrain. (2000). *Marriage and Family: Diversity and Strengths*, 3rd Edition, Mountain View, California: Mayfield Publishing Co.; and John DeFrain and Nick Stinnett. (1992). *Building on the inherent strengths of families: A positive approach for family psychologists and counselors*. *Topics in Family Psychology and Counseling*, 1, (1), (January), 15-26.

This information, based on Family Strengths research by Dr. John DeFrain, was prepared by Myrna DeBois, UNL Extension Educator; Ann Fenton, UNL Extension Educator; Vickie L. Greve, UNL Extension 4-H Youth Specialist; Lisa Kaslon, 4-H Youth Assistant; Sandy Preston, UNL Extension Educator; and, Amy Topp, UNL Extension Educator.



Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

The 4-H Youth Development program abides with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.