



The 4-H Recognition Model

Recognition is an acknowledgment and affirmation of the personal growth in an individual. It can be public or private. It can be within the individual or provided by others. 4-H uses recognition as one strategy to help youth become more capable and competent. It does this through recognizing and appreciating each person's effort and providing positive reinforcement to continue participating in learning activities. Young people come from varied backgrounds and with different experiences. They vary in their interests, values, needs, attitudes and aspirations. For some youth intrinsic, or internal, recognition is far more powerful than any extrinsic, or external, recognition. The 4-H recognition model provides for a balanced approach. It encourages a variety of forms of recognition to meet the diverse needs and interests of today's youth. It is based upon the principles that recognition is a basic human need that can be done in many forms and must be structured to build positive self-esteem.

1. Participation

This type of recognition emphasizes the importance of acknowledging young people who have been involved in 4-H educational experiences. For some youth, participation in a 4-H learning experience is an accomplishment.

2. Progress Toward Self-set Goals

Parents and other adults can help youth set realistic goals. Recognition for progress toward self-set goals, no matter how small, is an integral part of this type of recognition.

3. Achievement of Standards of Excellence

Standards of excellence are established by experts in a given area. By measuring personal progress against standards of excellence, youth can gain insight into their own efforts and abilities.

4. Peer Competition

Peer competition is a type of recognition which subjectively identifies, in a concrete time and place, the best team or individual. While it can be a strong motivator for some youth but not all, is inappropriate for youth under age eight.

5. Cooperation

Learning and working together promotes high achievement. Cooperation may take advantage of all the skills represented in the group, as well as the process by which the group approaches the learning task/goal. Everyone is rewarded. Recognition for cooperation helps youth learn and work cooperatively, preparing them for living in today's inter-dependent, global society.

Using recognition to encourage and supports learning, and satisfy intrinsic and extrinsic needs is an important motivator. To be the most effective, it has to balance recognition for participation, progress toward goals, achievement of standards of excellence, competition, and cooperation.

