

Welcoming New 4-H Members

We want others to be a part of this great organization we call 4-H. One way a club can help promote 4-H and get more members is to make “recruiting new members” a club goal.

But most importantly, clubs need to make a plan to welcome new members when they arrive at their first 4-H club meeting. Making a great first impression is important. If new members don't feel comfortable right away with the club, they won't come back.

Have a Plan: Design a plan for welcoming new members. Delegate this task to a specific person, called a *New Family Coordinator*, with this being their role at each monthly meeting. With 4-H, members can join at any time, so this is an ongoing task.

First Impression At First Meeting: When new members first attend a club meeting, be sure they are greeted and made to feel a part of the group by the *New Family Coordinator*.

The *New Family Coordinator* gives the new family a “4-H Greet Sheet.”

After they arrive and before the meeting begins, the *New Family Coordinator* takes the initiative of introducing his/herself, welcoming the new family to the club and introducing them to other club members on an informal basis.

The *New Family Coordinator* finds a spot for them to sit, children with the current members and the parents with the *New Family Coordinator*. If parents have questions during the meeting, the *New Family Coordinator* is close at hand to answer them. If a current family has invited the new family to the meeting, have the children sit with current 4-H members and the parents with those that invited them.

The *New Family Coordinator* should let the club president and secretary know there are guests present so that they can be introduced during the meeting after roll call has been taken.

Form a Buddy System: Developing a buddy system between a new member and a current member helps the relationship with the new member and the club stay intact. The *New Family Coordinator* should recruit current members to be “buddies” with the new member.

Communication Is Important: Keep the lines of communication open, so that the new family feels comfortable asking questions. 4-H seems to have a language of its own and may need to be interpreted for the new family. The *New Family Coordinator* should provide a New Family Handbook to the new family and review it with them.