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.