

Sportsmanship Expectations for Youth Participants (4-H Leaders and Parents Included)

by Ohio Cooperative Extension Service

The development of sportsmanship is an important part of growing up. To become contributing, competent, caring, capable adults, youth must develop sportsmanship.

It is important for people to be fair and generous competitors, good losers, and graceful winners. All participants in 4-H and other youth programs are expected to demonstrate each of the following elements of sportsmanship before, during and after their participation.

1. **Conduct:** Demonstrate and maintain high standards of personal behavior and conduct which become you as an individual and as a representative of your family, your club, your community, and the 4-H program or other youth program in which you are involved.
2. **Fairness:** Learn and follow the rules. Do not cheat. Be objective, honest, and just in evaluating yourself and others.
3. **Honest:** Be truthful, fair, and straightforward in everything you say and do. Show integrity. Do not lie or deceive. Do your own work. Do not underestimate or overstate your abilities, skills, or accomplishments.
4. **Competition:** Accept that the nature of competition is seeking to get what others are seeking to get, involves rivalry between contestants to earn rewards, and results in both winners and losers.
5. **Courtesy:** Be well-mannered in your conduct. Be respectful, thoughtful, considerate, cooperative, friendly, and cheerful in your attitude and your behavior regardless of whether you do well or not, or whether you win or lose.

Do not argue with the judges or program organizers. When you have concerns, questions, or suggestions, be polite in expressing them.

Be pleasant and nice toward other participants, spectators, program officials, judges, the media, your advisors, parents, and others. Give others the benefit of the doubt. Treat people, animals, and things kindly. Hide ill humor, and keep your emotions under control.

6. **Graceful Acceptance of Results:** Accept judges' suggestions and results with positive attitude.

If you are not selected as a winner or if you receive a lower evaluation than you expect, do not gripe, complain, whine, pout, make excuses, or say you didn't feel well.

Congratulate those who do win and who performed better than you did. Recognize, appreciate, and try to learn from the accomplishments and admirable traits of others. Recognize, learn from, and try to improve your own shortcomings. Do not protest or make accusations unless you have proof and are willing to personally face the person(s) you are accusing.

If you are selected as a winner or receive a higher evaluation than you expect, graciously thank the people who congratulate you. Be happy, but do not gloat, brag, act conceited, or downplay your accomplishments.

Finally, regardless of the outcome, thank your parents, advisors, program organizers, sponsors, judges, and other who helped you.