

CONSTRUCTIVE COMMENT TIPS



The development of young people is our first consideration in 4-H. It is important that comments for the 4-H member be written in a constructive manner. Here are some suggestions to make your verbal and written comments more effective.



Use the child's first name.

Examples: "I enjoyed your performance, Mary"
"John, next time I suggest you..."



Use personal pronouns.

Examples: "I think", "I feel", "In my opinion",
"I suggest", "I like", "I appreciate"



Be positive.

Focus on: "Do" instead of "Don't"
"Could" instead of "Should"



Avoid labeling.

Try Saying: "Doing it this way might feel less awkward for you"
instead of "Don't be Clumsy."
"Practice working a little faster next time"
instead of "You were too slow"



Be specific.

Try Saying: "I'm not familiar with your method of" or "It might be easier to" instead of "You did it wrong"
"Slow down and take more time"
instead of "Your timing needs improvement"



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Be encouraging.

Examples: "I enjoyed judging your demo/speech/act."
"I can tell you've put a lot of work into this."
"You really make my job fun!"



Provide criticism and praise.

Try the "sandwich" approach - give praise/positive comment followed by a suggestion, then another positive comment.

Examples: "Your posters are colorful, neat and easy to read. Check correct spelling of the word 'recipe' on your poster. I especially like the attractive and creative way you used visual aids, Beth."
"Your voice is clear and distinct, Bob. Try slowing down a bit so that you're on beat with the music. You have a great voice! Nice poise and confidence."



Avoid "double-edged" compliments.

Try Saying: "That was a great performance"
instead of "You're a great dancer for a boy"
"You did a good job" **instead of** "You did a good job for your first time"
"Your overall presentation was lovely. Something that I have been taught is..." **instead of** "Great effort, but that was wrong"

