

Cooperative Extension Sponsored Events

Extension Administration supports the 4-H Curriculum Development process by which 4-H rules and regulations are established for the purposes of educational program quality, consistency, and effective management. It is expected that the system will remain open to internal and external input and give consideration to changes that strengthen the program. Current rules have been interpreted and clarified by Extension Administration to state that:

1. Any young person 5-19 years of age is eligible to participate in 4-H youth development activities and other Extension sponsored youth activities.
2. Regarding Extension sponsored county activities and events, the Extension Administrative Council has established a policy of no peer to peer competition for youths ages 5-8. Best program management practices for youths ages 5-8 do not involve peer to peer competition. Peer to peer competition is defined as head to head absolute rankings of youths 5-8.
3. Latitude is given to provide opportunities for 5-8 year olds to compete against pre-determined standards of participation or excellence (Danish system.) Event committees, agents, and departments should provide input in establishing standards which provide for the safety and meaningful involvement of children and families.

In district and state 4-H activities and events, eligibility for competition is restricted by Cooperative Extension Service to youth aged 9-19.

In all of the above, event committees are encouraged to solicit participant/parent liability release and waiver forms. See the [Cooperative Extension Youth Competition Policy](http://intra.ces.ncsu.edu/DeskRef/handbook/eah-56.htm) (<http://intra.ces.ncsu.edu/DeskRef/handbook/eah-56.htm>).

Non-Extension Sponsored Events

Non-extension groups who sponsor activities and events obviously have their own criteria for participation. They also have responsibility for a reasonable level of care and safety of participants. Cooperative Extension personnel and volunteers representing Cooperative Extension are encouraged to work with these groups and events. They should be cognizant of issues such as developmental appropriateness, safety, and risk factors involved in educational programs. Extension personnel are expected to be educators in these inter-organizational roles, just as in any other teaching/learning setting.

If Extension workers are involved with non-extension sponsored events and activities which they or their immediate supervisor believe exposes themselves or the Cooperative Extension organization to liability risks they may:

- a. continue to provide educational support services and work with leadership of organizations to consistently make program improvements, but require signed statements of release of liability and indemnification from the sponsoring organization (where legally possible - see [Appendix 9-H: Competition Indemnification Letter](http://intra.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/fourh/staffguide/release1.pdf) [<http://intra.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/fourh/staffguide/release1.pdf>]) and/or participants/parents.
- b. discontinue professional involvement with the activity.

It is the goal of 4-H that more children benefit from the positive experiences that participation and various forms of competition afford. With this in mind 4-H planners continue to seek involvement

of many interested individuals and groups in program development, curriculum development, agent and volunteer training, and policy determination.

Activities primarily conducted for the purpose of marketing the organization are not considered peer-to-peer competition. Fair booths, floats, etc., usually involve a large number of persons of many ages in development of the marketing product.
