The purpose of recognition are to reinforce the motivation of members and volunteers to successfully participate, create and achieve in the 4-H YDP; and to emphasize a sense of belonging and being valued in the 4-H YDP community. 4-H YDP recognition programs should provide all youth, regardless of ability, with this motivation and a sense of belonging.

In some cases, 4-H members may need accommodations to participate in recognition activities. The program is to be adapted so that all members can participate in these activities, including awards competitions.

Each youth is unique, so no single plan is right for every member. A few key tips are:

**Involving Parents/Guardians:** Before beginning an activity, the Community 4-H Club Leader, 4-H YDP staff, or a key adult volunteer should meet with the member’s parents/guardians to discuss what types of accommodations may be needed.

**Buddy System**: Many youth can benefit from a buddy system, where another 4-H member is partnered to provide advice, support and assistance.

**Mainstreaming**: Involves youth participating in the standard club, event, and programs. 4-H YDP educational programs are provided to all youth in a non-segregated and inclusive manner. All participants are provided with the same opportunity to develop life skills as they complete projects or participate in competitive activities.

**Modify & Involve**: Modify the project or activity to match the ability of the member. Look at the objectives of the project and help the member set obtainable goals. Setting goals and project adapting should include the member as much as possible. All modifications must be designed to meet the member’s ability while challenging the member to consistently improve his or her own personal best.

**An inclusive 4-H YDP Recognition Program is designed to accommodate and include all youth, including members with the following disabilities: mobility, hearing or vision impairments, speech and language disorders, mental or learning disabilities.** A range of abilities may or may not require accommodation. If an accommodation is needed, it must be provided.

**Written Recognition, such as 4-H Record Books**

* Written materials may be completed on a computer, transcribed onto an audio tape, or written by a note taker.
* Emphasis should be placed on the concepts and ideas learned.
* Review the evaluation form with the parent first. Determine if some criteria/categories need less emphasis or should be omitted.
* For any modification, include a note detailing the accommodation.

**Activity Based Recognition, such as Emerald Star Programs**

* + Ensure activities take place at accessible locations.
  + The program coordinator should work with the member and parent to ensure that the goals and plans are an appropriate challenge for the member.

**Project Judging at Field Days & County Fairs**

* Ensure the use of the Danish (criterion-based) evaluation system. Review the evaluation form with the parent first. Determine if some criteria/categories need less emphasis or omitted.

**Other Resources**

* “Youth With Special Needs: A Leaders’ Handbook” by the 4-H State Ambassador Team (2004) and revised in 2013. <http://4h.ucanr.edu/files/19693.pdf>
* “Incorporating Special Needs Youth into 4-H” by Goble, et al. (2008). <http://www.joe.org/joe/2008december/iw2.shtml>
* National Mentoring Center at <http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/index.php>

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