



** This news release from K-State Research and Extension is available at www.ksre.k-state.edu/news/stories/2021/02/4h-days-promote-public-speaking-skills.html

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Kansas 4-H Days help build youths' public speaking skill

Annual event also boosts college, career readiness

MANHATTAN, Kan. – Admit it: the thought of speaking in front of an audience makes your palms sweaty, maybe even your knees buckle.

Beth Hinshaw, a [Kansas 4-H](#) youth development specialist in southeast Kansas, knows that the nerves do not necessarily go away as we get older, but speaking in public does get easier.

“Honestly, it is all about learning how to organize information and deliver it,” she said. “Young people may have a lot of it written out the first time they give a presentation, but as they grow in that skill, they will get to where they are using an outline.”

Beginning in February and through March, youth are honing their public speaking skills across the state during Kansas 4-H Days hosted by their local clubs. Hinshaw said the annual events challenge youth to tell about a 4-H project they are working on in front of a judge, who then provides feedback.

“In 4-H, we think of these things as something that is necessary for college and career,” Hinshaw said. “Youth learn to organize thoughts in a logical manner; find information and research a subject; express ideas clearly and convincingly; prepare visuals to support the presentation; and accept feedback.”

Local clubs host Kansas 4-H Days for youth ages 7 to 11. Most of this year’s events are being held virtually. “If you have friends or family that are doing presentations, there’s a good possibility that there is a video somewhere that they could share with you,” Hinshaw said.

She added there is an [online publication](#) that guides youth through the process of organizing their talk. Most talks are done individually, though a few are demonstrations by teams of youth. Some youth also give illustrated talks, while others give talks that persuade, inform, entertain or inspire, according to Hinshaw.

“A lot of people will tell us they would not have had the communication skills and abilities (later in life) that they have if they had not their 4-H background,” Hinshaw said.

“Ultimately, the goal in any presentation experience is for members to complete the presentation with a good feeling about themselves and what they have accomplished and learned.”

Communication is one of nearly [three dozen project areas](#) offered by the Kansas 4-H program. More information about the state’s largest youth organization also is available at its [website](#).

-30-

FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this story
Kansas 4-H Youth Development, <https://www.kansas4-h.org>

Kansas 4-H Project Talks (publication), <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/4H979.pdf>

Kansas 4-H project areas, <https://www.kansas4-h.org/projects>

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