

# Judging Tips and Tricks

## Break the Ice

- Begin the interview by greeting the individual in a kind welcoming manor; introduce yourself and ask them to tell you a little about themselves to break the ice or ask an easy open-ended question.

## Ask Questions

- Ask questions based on the project, you can pull some from your list or create your own.
- Ask questions that are appropriate for the age, level, and experience of the 4-H member
- Great go-to questions for all projects:
  - What did you like *most/least* about this project?
  - What made you *interested* in this project?
  - What was the something *you learned* from this project?
  - Would you *recommend this project* to others? Why or why not?

## Focus on the Positives

- If a child seems to be struggling to answer, try to redirect the conversation positively or ask a simplified version of the question. Try not to let awkward silence go on for too long.
- If the project is incomplete or done poorly, make suggestions that will help them fulfil the requirements better for next year. Use the rule: “Two positives, before a correction.” you can write/say things like: “*I really like your enthusiasm about this project, and you did very well on the interview! Next year, try to keep weekly records all summer. This will help you fill in your project book more thoroughly next time.*”

## Be kind, Genuine, and Honest

- Use uplifting language during the interview and on the evaluation sheet such as: awesome, great job, good job, that’s so cool, very creative, I can tell you put in a lot of work into this, I really liked how you\_\_\_\_, I especially appreciated\_\_\_\_, etc. Make sure you give some feedback!
- Take your time and listen, act genuinely interested in what they have presented.
- Understand for some, interviewing is the hard part, book work was the easy part and vice versa.