

4-H Program Updates for Families

March 14, 2020

As information and recommendations continue to evolve, we too are updating our guidance on our Yolo County 4-H programming. There is much uncertainty, and we will do our best to keep you informed in a timely and on-going basis. We are following the national, state and local health departments, University and school districts guidance.

Knowing that children are commonly vectors for communicable diseases, their exposure to each other needs to be limited. As of this morning, the Davis Joint Unified School District has cancelled all classes and activities through April 12th. Woodland through April 20th, West Sacramento, Esparto and Winters through April 3rd. This is being done to slow the spread of the disease. While children themselves seem to have only mild cases of COVID-19, they still transmit it to others who may not be as able to fight off the infection. Some kids can come in direct contact with hundreds of people over the course of a week. For this reason, many schools are closing or moving to online coursework to try to limit children's influence on the spread of this disease. This is to benefit the entire community, and reduce the number who get sick, so that our hospitals can handle the influx of critically ill cases and save lives. For more background on why these efforts are being taken, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html>.

County Program Schedule Changes. In keeping with these goals, we are making the following changes to 4-H programming over the next two weeks:

3/18- The Community Club Leader training is being postponed. Date to be determined.

3/25- The County Leaders Council meeting is being cancelled.

At this time, we are not cancelling Spring Show. We will continue to assess the situation. We understand the importance of this event. If changes to the program need to be made, we will first explore scaled-down alternatives that would still allow for the basic functions of Spring Show to proceed without undue risk.

At this time, we are not cancelling Farm Connection Day. Again, we will continue to assess the situation as the date draws nearer. This will largely be dictated by the School Districts policy on field trips.

Club Level Program Schedule Changes. If you are in a leadership position for a meeting, activity or event, and need to make determinations on canceling, please use the following as a guideline:

- Can you accommodate health official's recommendations of a six foot space between participants?
- Can you ensure that any shared items are disinfected between use by each person?
- Can you proceed without food or beverages?
- Can you provide appropriate sanitary precautions, such as disinfected surfaces before and after the event and adequate hand-washing facilities?

If you can answer yes to these guidelines, then the risk is low and you may proceed with your planned activities. Otherwise, you should postpone or cancel the event. If you are unsure, please contact me to discuss. Also, please refer to my previous message on actionable items to reduce the risk of disease for additional suggestions and steps you can take to make your meeting as safe as possible (<https://ucanr.edu/sites/yolo4H/files/321837.pdf>). Please notify members as soon as the decision to postpone or cancel is made. If you would like details posted to the Yolo County 4-H website and calendar, please send them to kmchurchill@ucanr.edu.

Encourage your 4-H families to self-quarantine when sick. If a child or adult has had a fever in the past week, they should not attend activities. If in the past two weeks, they have had a fever and still have a cough, they should not attend. Siblings and parents who are not symptomatic should be strongly encouraged to also self-quarantine, just in case. This virus has roughly a fourteen day incubation period, meaning you could be carrying it, infecting others, and not know it yet. While at home, if possible, the sick person should stay in one room with the door closed as much as possible. The goal is to keep all the germs away from the rest of the family. If meals can be served to them, a water pitcher provided, and entertainment options available it will reduce the chances that others in the home will get sick. Disinfect commonly touched surfaces several times a day. Wash clothing, towels, and bedding on the sanitary cycle. For additional suggestions, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/index.html>.

Listen to each other and be respectful of concerns. We have many participants in 4-H who have health issues within their families. They are concerned for the welfare of their loved ones. We should make allowances for excused absences and try to come up with compromises or solutions whenever possible. No one should be forced to participate in, or host, any activity they are not comfortable attending. There should be extreme forgiveness and flexibility with each other. Find ways to be helpful and accommodating.

Help your child to deal with anxiety. These changes can produce a lot of anxiety for children and families. It can be tricky to find a balance between keeping children informed, and not scaring them. You will want to be sure to let them know that everyone is working to keep them safe. Limit the media in the house so that sometimes overhyped and scary news stories are not always on. Have everyone learn some new stress management skills, like yoga, meditation, prayer, doing art, and listening to soothing music. Research shows that learning to name emotions is an extremely important component of being able to talk about stressful things. Look up synonyms for fear, anxious, and worried and learn together what each means. Help your child to describe and discuss how they are feeling. Keep a routine as much as you can. For additional tips, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/talking-with-children.html>

Help your child learn the skills they are missing. Find ways to continue with the learning that was happening in school, sports, and 4-H. If teachers, coaches or leaders have not provided resources, take the time to plan lessons and activities that will help them continue their intellectual, physical and social growth. I will post ideas on our Yolo County 4-H Facebook page over the next several weeks. For immediate ideas on how to continue the learning specific to their 4-H project, visit <https://ucanr.edu/sites/UC4-H/files/206011.pdf>

Please be sure you are using accurate, research-based, informational sources to make the best decisions for your family. It seems there are some who will spread lies and misinformation to confuse people. There is very little controversy amongst the scientific experts, so if you are hearing conflicting information, go to the expert authorities to verify things. These are a few of the ones I am refer to:

World Health Organization

<https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

California Department of Public Health

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/ncov2019.aspx>

Yolo County Health and Human Services

<https://www.yolocounty.org/health-human-services/adults/communicable-disease-investigation-and-control/novel-coronavirus-2019/coronavirus-guidance>

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marcel Horowitz". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

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