

DRAFT



DEVELOPING FAMILY STRENGTHS



Dear 4-H Parent,

The Florida 4-H program is launching an effort to Strengthen Families in Florida through Involvement in 4-H. This 4-H project is one of the activities related to this effort. This project is different from other 4-H projects in some ways and like other projects in other ways. Unlike some other projects, you are encouraged to work through this project with your child.

One of the objectives of the project is to provide an activity for 4-H members in the 10 through 13 age range and their families to do together. Two additional objectives are:

- help 4-H members and their families understand and appreciate each other
- strengthen 4-H families

From this project your 4-H member can learn what a family is; what families do for individuals and society; and what strong families are like.

Reports of recent research tell us that strong families have some characteristics in common with each other. The members of strong families like each other and let each other know that; they have open communication patterns; they spend a considerable amount of time together; they are committed to their family; many of them have a high degree of spirituality; and they are able to cope with crises more effectively.

Strengthening families is a process that is never completed. Even strong families can become stronger. Hopefully, completing this project will help you with the process of strengthening your family.

Developing Family Strengths is written in such a way that either a parent or older sibling is required to work through the project with the younger 4-H member. It is preferred that all family members do the project together. If all family members are unable to work on the project, then an older family member and the younger 4-H member can do it as a team. This project can be completed in approximately one month. It is recommended that you work on it for no more than 30 to 45 minutes at a time.

At the end of the report form that is attached to this project, is a page for parents to give us their reaction to this project, and a page for 4-H members to give us their reactions. This project is being developed and I need your comments about it--what you like about it as well as suggestions for its improvement. Please fill out these pages, tear them off and return them to your 4-H agent.

I appreciate your helping me with this project. I hope that this experience has helped you strengthen your family and that you will tell other 4-H families about this project.

Sincerely,



Evelyn Rooks-Weir
Assistant Professor
Human Development Specialist

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INTRODUCTION

Most people really like their families. There may be moments when each of us feels that our family is not quite what we would most like. But, when asked, a very high percentage of people respond that their family is most prized.

Sometimes we take our families for granted. Doing this project with your family will help you remember not to take your family for granted. It can also help your family become an even stronger group than it may now be.

This project is different from other projects. It is designed for the 4-H member and his/her family. It is expected that completing this project will strengthen your family. In order to strengthen your family, all family members should be involved. It is always very difficult and sometimes impossible for one family member alone to strengthen a family. That is why this is a family project for all of your family members to work on together.

The goals of this project are:

- Provide an activity specifically designed for 4-H'ers and their families to do together.
- Help 4-H'ers and their families understand and appreciate each other.
- Strengthen 4-H families.

What are your family's goals for doing this project?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

By completing this project, you can learn:

- what a family is,
- what families do for individuals and society,
- some characteristics of strong families.

WHAT IS A FAMILY?



A family is a household establishment, or all the people living in the same house.¹

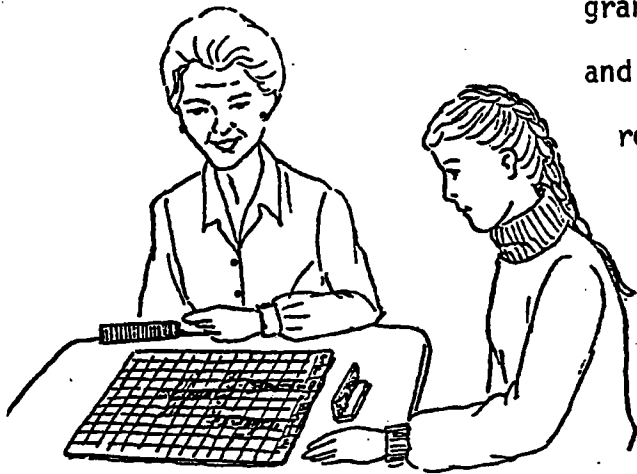
Exercise 1

List below, the names of people who live in your house or apartment.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

¹David B. Guralnick, ed. in chief. Webster's New World Dictionary of The American Language. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980), p. 505.

There are nuclear families, extended families and blended families. Nuclear families are parents and their children; extended families include grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins; and blended families are those that have remarried adults and children.



Exercise 2

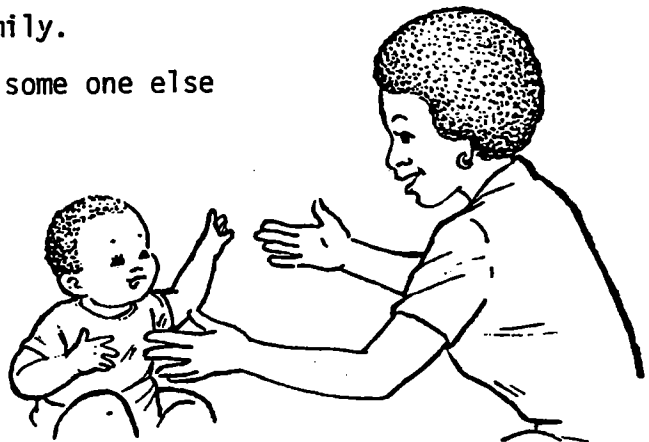
What are the names of 4 of your extended family members?

Name	Relationship to You
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____

WHAT PURPOSES DO FAMILIES SERVE?

The family is an institution that serves its members and society. It is important to recognize what your family does for you and society. This makes it easier to appreciate your family.

Human infants are dependent upon some one else for a relatively long period of time. Even older children may depend upon their family for some things. Adult family members also depend upon each other and upon the other members of their family for certain things.



WHAT DO FAMILIES DO FOR THEIR MEMBERS?

Families provide their members basic physical needs - food, shelter, and clothing.

Exercise 3

List below some examples of physical needs that your family provides its members. (Example: Daddy bought me a pair of shoes on October 26, 1983.)

Families also provide their members emotional support - love, caring, and understanding.

Exercise 4

What are some examples of emotional support that your family has provided its members recently? (Example: My Mom comforted me when I didn't make the cheer leader squad.)

Families protect their members.

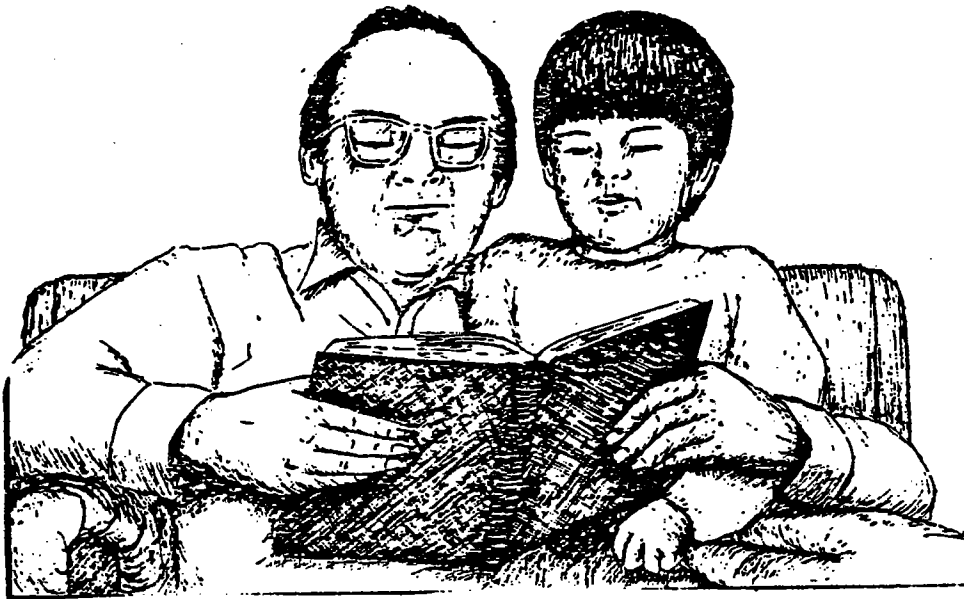
Exercise 5

List below two incidents that illustrate your family protecting its members. (Example: I helped Grandma cross the street.)

Families provide recreation for their members.

Exercise 6

What are some recreational activities that your family provides its members? (Example: We played the Ungame on the evening of January 4, 1987.)



Families teach young family members how to live and do many things.

Exercise 7

What are some things that your family taught you? (Example: My sister taught me how to make my bed.)

Sometimes adult family members learn from younger family members.

Exercise 8

Try to think of some things that young members of your family taught older family members. (Example: I taught Uncle Charlie how to play my computer games!)

Families help their members develop morally and spiritually.

Exercise 9

What are some things that your family does to help its members develop morally and spiritually? (Example: My Mother made me return a small toy that I had stolen from a store once.)



WHAT DO FAMILIES DO FOR SOCIETY?

Families serve society too. Families provide society new members.

Exercise 10

Try to think of two examples. (Example: My Father and Stepmother have a new baby.)

Families help these new members learn how to live in an acceptable way in society.

Exercise 11

Think of some ways that your family has helped its new members learn how to live in socially acceptable ways.

(Example: We are helping my little brother learn to use a knife and fork to eat his food.)

Society depends upon families to supply its new members and to teach those new members how to function in society as productive members.

What are two things that families do for society?

1. _____
2. _____

WHAT ARE STRONG FAMILIES LIKE?

In order to strengthen your family, you will need to know what characteristics strong families have. People who have studied families have found that strong families have some common characteristics regardless of culture, ethnic group, or race.

Members of strong families appreciate each other and make sure that they express this appreciation to each other. They give sincere "warm fuzzies" to each other often. (Dr. Sidney Simon, an outstanding values clarification educator, points out that in our culture, we need to help



people learn how to accept compliments graciously. Positive self-esteem is developed by letting people know that they are worthy human beings.) Sincere praise is one of the most effective motivating forces.

To increase appreciation in your family, please complete the following exercise.

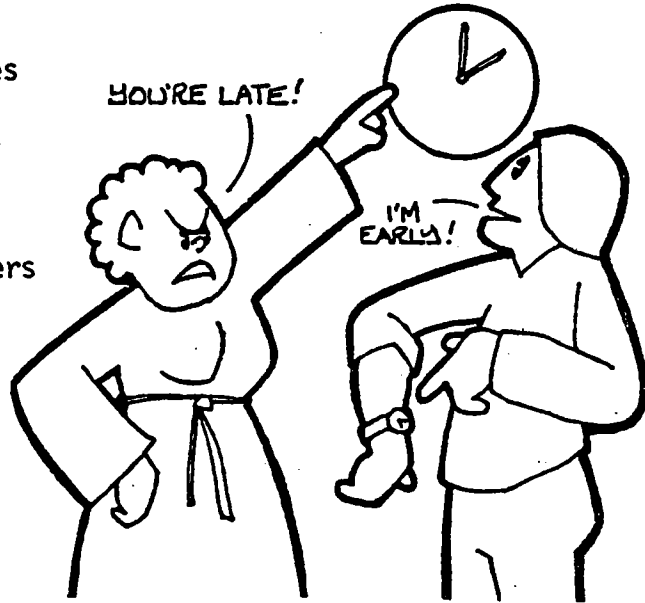
Exercise 12

Record the number of times any of your family members gave another family member a compliment (warm fuzzie, positive stroke) during the past week. Positive strokes may be given physically (a hug, a pat on the back); verbally ("You did that nicely," "I like you for being understanding when I was late"); or, non-verbally (a smile, nod of approval).

<u>Family Member</u>		S	M	T	W	T	F	S	TOTAL
1.	_____								
2.	_____								
3.	_____								
4.	_____								
5.	_____								
6.	_____								

Exercise 13

Now record the negative strokes (negative remarks or scolding; pushing, slapping, shoving; frowns) that your family members gave each other during the past week.



Family Member

	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	TOTAL
1. _____								
2. _____								
3. _____								
4. _____								
5. _____								
6. _____								

What was the total number of positive strokes that your family used?

_____ Can you get everyone in your family to commit himself/herself to increasing the number of times he/she expresses appreciation to other family members?

YES [] NO []

Comment: _____

Exercise 14

If you got commitment from you family to try to increase the number of sincere expressions of appreciation to family members, then one week later repeat Exercise 12, recording your findings below:

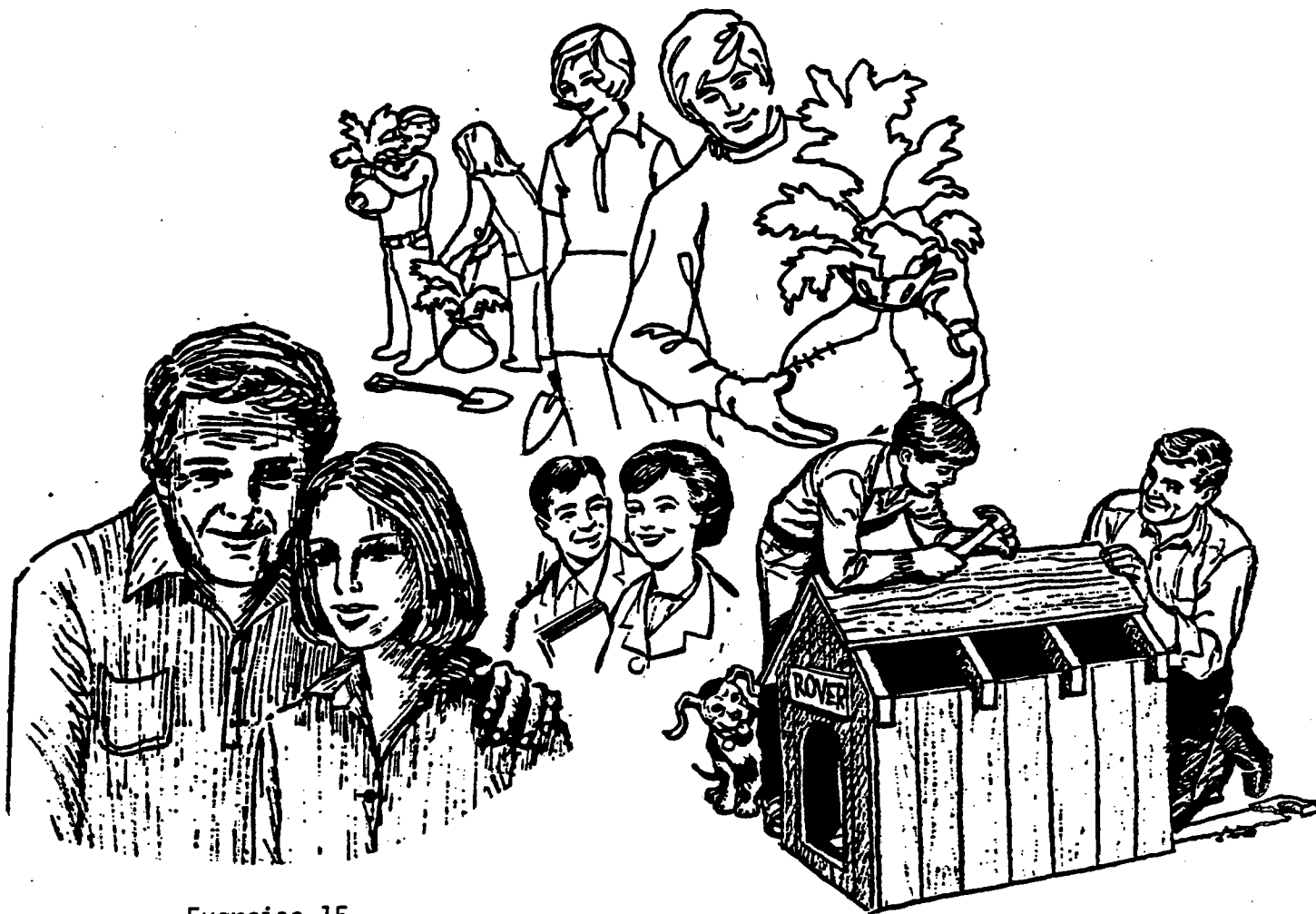
<u>Family Member</u>	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	TOTAL
1. _____								
2. _____								
3. _____								
4. _____								
5. _____								
6. _____								

Compare the total number of positive strokes with your total in Exercise 12. Did your family increase the number of times members expressed appreciation to each other? YES [] NO []

If your family was unsuccessful on this first try, be not discouraged. You can continue to work on this goal. It is very likely that by the time your family has finished this project, each member will have succeeded in improving his/her expression of appreciation for other family members.



Strong families have been found to spend a lot of pleasant time together. They planned their lives so that they could spend time together. Sometimes we each become so engrossed with individual activities that the time we spend with our family is very limited. The following exercise can help you know how much time your family is spending together.



Exercise 15

On the following chart, record times your family members spent together during the past week. (Example below)

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
6:00 a.m.		Mom, Dad Joey, Sue	Mom, Dad Joey	Mom, Dad Joey, Sue	Mom, Dad	Mom, Dad Sue	
7:00 a.m.							

	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
6:00 a.m.							
7:00 a.m.							
8:00 a.m.							
9:00 a.m.							
10:00 a.m.							
11:00 a.m.							
12:00 Noon							
1:00 p.m.							
2:00 p.m.							
3:00 p.m.							
4:00 p.m.							
5:00 p.m.							
6:00 p.m.							
7:00 p.m.							
8:00 p.m.							
9:00 p.m.							
10:00 p.m.							
11:00 p.m.							
12:00 Mid							
Total	<hr/>						

How many hours did the complete family spend together during the week? _____

How many meals did your family members eat together during the week? _____

How much time did your family spend together in other activities during the week? _____

People communicate by what they say; how they say what they say; and by what they do. Families may have their own unique communication pattern. Some families tease a lot, others are nearly always quite serious.

In the Couples Communication Program that was developed at the Family Study Center of the University of Minnesota, four styles of communication are described. They are:

- small talk - talk about insignificant trivia. "The weather is nice today." "The color of your hair is nice."
 - control talk - talk to control other people.
 - light control talk - "Go wash your hands before dinner."
"Get your homework done."
 - heavy control talk - "I told you to sweep the driveway right now." "Do not wear that outfit."
- (Much of the difference between light control talk and heavy control talk is in the tone of voice used.)
- searching talk - talk used to seek alternatives or solutions. "How can we go to Grandma's house and get Joey to the ballgame as we promised?" "Which toy shall we get for Susie?"
 - straight talk - A sharing of deep feelings. "I really felt proud when I won that race!" "I feel really badly about being greedy and taking more than my share."²

People who communicate effectively are able to use each of the four styles of communication.

²Sherod Miller, Elam Nunnaly, and Daniel Wackman. Talking Together. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Interpersonal Communication Programs, Inc., 1979, pp. 103-123.

Exercise 16

Recall and record your family members' styles of communication during one day.

Family Member	Small Talk	Control Talk		Searching Talk	Straight Talk
		Light	Heavy		
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					

Strong families have been found to have a high degree of commitment. Members are committed to promoting the welfare of each other, as well as that of the group. When individual family members find themselves too busy to spend time with their family, then they re-evaluate their goals and make changes to accommodate the family.

Placing your family high on your list of priorities is commitment. When tough decisions have to be made, is your family considered?

Yes []

Sometimes []

No []



Exercise 17

What are some recent decisions that your family members have made in which your family was given top priority?

(Example: Daddy gave up a hunting trip to be with Joey on his birthday.)

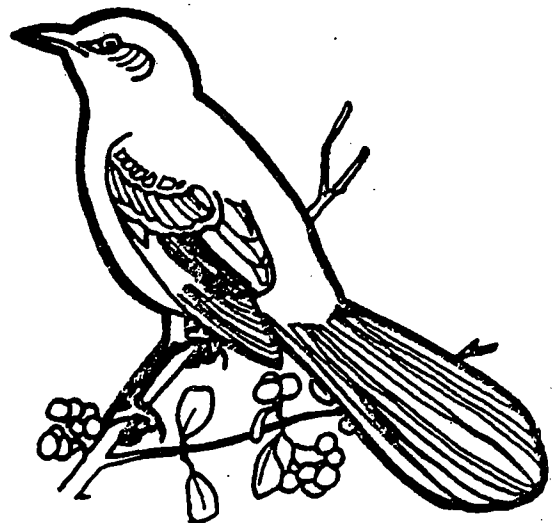
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Exercise 18

What sacrifices would your family be willing to make for individual members of the group? (Example: Joey picked up pecans and sold them to help Mom get money to visit Grandma.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Strong families are likely to have a high degree of spiritual orientation. This includes having moral values that they agree on. They may believe that it is wrong to tell a lie or steal. This family may or may not have a belief in a Supreme Being.



Exercise 19

What are some moral values that your family believe in?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Strong families are able to deal with crisis more positively. All families have problems at sometime. Strong family members support each other through such difficult times.

Exercise 20

List below some crises that your family has had and tell how your family responded to the crisis.



CRISIS	HOW FAMILY RESPONDED
(Example: Father lost his job.)	(Each child in family gave up allowance. Mother worked longer at her job. Father did housekeeping and cooking until he found another job.)
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____

Author's Comment:

We hope that this project has helped you recognize the valuable asset that you have in your family. Perhaps you are now motivated to do further study to strengthen your family. If you wish, you may ask your Extension 4-H Agent to recommend some books or workshops that would be helpful to you.

Most of all we hope that you have enjoyed doing this project together as a family unit. By participating in positive activities with your family members, each person develops good feelings about himself/herself. Positive self-esteem results in motivation to promote the welfare of the group; improve communication patterns; and generally enhance the environment of the family.

Other projects designed to strengthen your family are available from your 4-H leader or Extension 4-H Agent. We hope that you will want to complete those projects.

Finally, we encourage you to share with other families the good results of your experience with this project. You could be a significant factor in starting a trend to strengthen many families in Florida.

Special appreciation is given to Diana Mires of Hillsborough County and Alice Kearsy of Polk County for assistance with this project.

Prepared and Distributed by:

Evelyn Rooks-Weir

Assistant Professor

Human Development Specialist

January 1984

Report Form

County of Residence _____

Family Members who worked on this project:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What were your goals for completing this project?

What are 4 things that families do for individuals?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

What are 2 things that families do for society?

1. _____
2. _____

Plan a meal for your family where everyone is seated around a table. Beside each person's plate place a pen or pencil and as many small pieces of paper as there are members of the family minus one. (If there are 4 members of your family, then each person will need 3 pieces of paper.) When everyone has finished their meal, ask each person to take their pencil and paper and write

something that they really like about each of your family members. Write about each person on a separate piece of paper. Now distribute these pieces of paper to the individuals that you wrote about. Let each family member read aloud their compliments. Describe briefly how each family member felt about this exercise.

Plan a picnic or other similar outing with your family

What kind of outing did your family plan? _____

Where did you go for your family outing? _____

When did you have your family outing? _____

How did your family feel about this activity? _____

Does your family participate in any activities together as a result of this project?

Yes [] No []

If yes, what are some of these activities?

Does your family communicate more positively as a result of completing this 4-H project?

Yes [] No []

If yes, comment briefly about this.

Are your family members more committed to your family since completing this project?

Yes [] No []

If yes, please give 2 examples of this.

1. _____
2. _____

Has your family's participation in spiritual activities increased as a result of this project?

Yes [] No []

If yes, please describe briefly.

Since your family started this project, have you experienced a crisis?

Yes [] No []

If yes, briefly describe how your family responded.

If you would like to keep a picture of your family with this project, paste below.

Did your family tell others about this project?

Yes [] No []

If yes, briefly describe how many people were told, where these people were, and what they were told.

What suggestions do you have for improving this project?

What, if anything, did you particularly like about this project?

4-H Member Response Sheet

How many of your family members, including yourself, worked on this project?

After completing this project, does your family:

1. have better communication? ___ yes ___ no
2. spend more time together? ___ yes ___ no
3. have more commitment to your family? ___ yes ___ no
4. express appreciation to each other more? ___ yes ___ no
5. have more shared spirituality and values? ___ yes ___ no
6. have a stronger feeling of helping each other cope with crises?
 ___ yes ___ no

Was this project written so that you could understand it?

Yes [] No []

Would you recommend this project to other 4-H members?

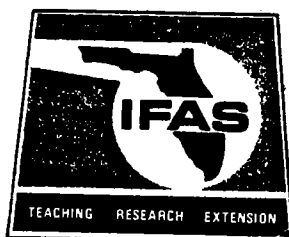
Yes [] No []

Would you like to see some changes made in this project?

Yes [] No []

If you would like to see changes made in this project, what are they?

What did you especially like about this project?



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