



PIERCE COUNTY'S GOT TALENT!

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PART 1 THE PIERCE COUNTY 4-H PERFORMING ARTS PROJECT

I. Participation

- Performing Arts is open to 4-H members of any age, including primaries.
- You must be enrolled in the project to participate.
- Most members carry performing arts as a side project and work on it on their own.
- Organized performances are held at:
 - Pierce County Fair
 - Lacamas Fair
 - Washington State Fair
- Other performances, such as nursing home performances and Christmas caroling, could be arranged if there was enough interest.

A. Ways to Participate

- The most common ways 4-Hers participate are:
 - Singing
 - Playing an Instrument
 - Dancing
- Other popular choices are the dramatic arts:
 - Recitations
 - Mime
 - Puppetry
 - Skits/Plays
 - Clowning
 - Comedian
- You can also do variety acts, such as:
 - Baton twirling
 - Hula Hooping
 - Jump Roping
- Really, anything you want to do could probably be made into an act!

B. Behind the Scenes

- If you don't want to be on stage, there are other options:
 - Emcee
 - Sound Crew
 - Stage Crew
- You can also create things such as props or puppets and enter them at the fairs.

II. Pierce County Fair

- The Pierce County fair is the high point of the performing arts year.
- Here you will demonstrate what you've been working on in the project.

A. Sequence of Events

- The sequence leading to your fair performance is:
 - First Saturday of August – Evaluation for awards
 - During the Fair – Perform for fairgoers

B. Judging Procedure

- Acts are judged pre-fair when it's more quiet.
- This also gives you a chance to incorporate judge's suggestions into your act.
- You will be judged in two areas:
 - Entertainment value:
 - ✓ Projection
 - ✓ Innovation
 - ✓ Appearance
 - ✓ General Performance
 - Artistic talent:
 - ✓ Technical difficulty
 - ✓ Technical accuracy
 - ✓ Stage presence
- Comments are given at the evaluation, but ribbons are not awarded until your fair performance.

C. Important Things to Know

- For each type of act you can participate as a:
 - Solo
 - Duet
 - Ensemble of 3 or more

- You can enter each class no more than twice
- Age groups are judged separately.
- You can have a mixed-age group.
- Piano accompanists do not have to be performing arts members.
- We provide only the sound system and piano.
- Lyrics must be 4-H appropriate & must be submitted with your entry.

D. Still-Life Exhibits

- Everyone is encouraged to enter performing arts still-life exhibits to beautify our area and to help educate the public.
- Classes include:
 - Displays
 - Promotional Exhibits
 - Audio/Video Media
 - Costumes
 - Scores/Scripts
 - Portfolios
 - Props
 - Puppets



PART 2 YOU TOO CAN PARTICIPATE IN 4-H PERFORMING ARTS

I. The Talent Within

A. What Should I Do?

- The Performing Arts project is the perfect opportunity to strut your stuff in front of friends & strangers, and show them just what you've got.
- However, it can be difficult to come up with just the right act.
- If you need a few ideas, you've come to the right place.
- From the obvious to the original, you'll find plenty of choices here.

B. I've got Talent!

- If you've been taking performance lessons of any kind, such as acting, singing, dancing, or playing a musical instrument, then you're all set with an excellent stage act.

C. I Think I Can!

- If you haven't been taking lessons but have your heart set on singing, dancing or acting, go for it.

D. I've Got Sports!

- If you are involved in a sport, you can make an act of your abilities. Just make sure the stage is large enough and safe enough to perform your routine.
- Although karate isn't typically a stage act, it's exciting to watch and, with a little music, makes a great addition to a talent show.
- Can you bounce a basketball? Put it to music and you might have an act.

E. I'm an Artist!

- If your favorite talent is art, create a painting or drawing on the stage.
- Use the largest canvas or paper you can find, and have a spotlight put on it so that it can be seen easily by the audience.
- Add music for drama and excitement, and to fill any awkward silences.
- When you're finished, turn the easel to the audience, stand back, smile, and take a big bow.

F. Presto! I'm Magic!

- Magic acts are a talent show classic.
- Practice and experiment with tricks until you've mastered them and can pull them off with confidence.
- Costumes, music and an assistant add to the overall quality of the act.
- Your costume doesn't have to be fancy, but make sure you have at least a top hat and a cape.

G. Look what I can Do!

- Make your skills into a talent!
- Do you love your pogo stick? Come up with a few more tricks, so you have enough material for a routine.
- Yo-yoing is something not many people do these days, so the audience will be very interested and excited to see your tricks.
- Jumping rope is something most people can do, but when you make up a cool routine and set it to hip-hop or pop music, it becomes a great talent show act.
- Other skills-into-acts ideas include:
 - Juggling
 - Hula Hoop
 - Baton twirling



- A hand-clapping routine doesn't sound like it has much to offer, it is actually a really cool act that anyone can do.

H. Read My Lips!

- Love music, but can't sing? Why not lip sync!
- Just make sure you do more than standing there moving your lips.

II. I have No Talent

- Little Angelica next door has been taking ballet since she was 18 months old and can perform a flawless rendition of the Swan Lake solo.
- Gunnar over there has been working hard at his electric guitar lessons and can very nicely crank out a sweet Van Halen/ACDC medley.
- But what about you? You want to be in the show, but the only lessons you've ever had are the kind that involve a time-out.
- Don't worry. There are plenty of fun ideas for kids without a specific "stage" talent.
- The key is to put together an act that is fun, lighthearted and funny.
- Angelica and Gunnar might get the critics' choice awards, but you will bring down the house and be the talk of the fair the next day.

A. The Un-Talent!

- You don't have to know how to play to have a great instrumental act.
- Fake it and create a great comedy act!

B. So you Think you Can't Dance?

- Get a group friends together for some goofy out-of-water synchronized swimming. Wear swim suits, caps & goggles & make up a routine with plenty of exaggerated swimming movements.
- Another funny act is done by kids who work in pairs. One person is the head and "legs", the other is the arms. Put in some fun hip-hop or can-can music, make up some silly dance moves & you have a memorable, very funny act. (If you want to look it up on line it's called the "midget dance")

C. Fun's the Word

- A dramatic reading or monologue can be a serious act, but you can also make it into a comedy.
- The great thing about this idea is that it doesn't require special talent, other than the ability to ham it up for laughs.
- Another great thing is that most of them don't require special or hard-to-find props or costumes.
- Dr. Seuss books are full of rhymes and rhythms and are perfect for rapping. Mix a sweet children's book with tough gangsta attitude, and you have a funny act for a talent show.

D. I'm a Comedian!

- Do you know a lot of jokes? Put together a comedy act, with or without a partner.

E. The Skit is It

- Have a group of 4-H friends? Get them together and practice a skit or two.
- The key is using costumes and props and being as professional as you can.



PART 3 SHOWBIZ SUCCESS

I. Planning your Performing Arts Performance

- Song choice, whether for a competition, audition, or performance, will either make or break you.
- A song can hurt your performance & prevent it from moving forward if it:
 - Has a weak melody,
 - Is in a bad key for you,
 - Is too difficult for you or
 - Has a theme that doesn't resonate with others

A. Know Your Audience

- Trained musicians:
 - Understand the difficulty level
 - Hear your mistakes
- The General Public:
 - Doesn't care how hard a piece is.
 - Not as aware of mistakes, unless they're obvious
- Are they city folk or country folk?
- What is the age range of your audience?

B. Know Your Limits

- Length of study is considered in judging
- Stay a level or so below your actual level of difficulty.
- Musicality is more important than technical skill.

C. Who are You?

- Stay in your comfort zone.
- Make sure your performance is age appropriate.

D. Watch your Time

- Maximum length for performances:
 - 5 minutes for solos
 - 10 minutes for duets & ensembles
- Don't drag your act out past the audience's attention span.
- Even the best singer or the funniest skit can become boring if the act wears out its welcome.
- 2 to 3 minutes is a good amount of time for a song or a skit, but is only a guideline.
- There are terrific acts that are shorter and terrific acts that are longer.
 - Piece too long? Drop verses or fade out
 - Piece too short? Combine songs to make a medley

E. Know your Range

- Stay in your comfortable range
- Avoid extremes

F. Melody & Rhythm

- Strong, hum-able melodies work best
- Does the rhythm make you want to move?



- Audiences like songs they know.

G. Consider the Lyrics

- Make sure any lyrics are 4-H appropriate.
- Can you easily memorize the lyrics?
- Can you enunciate the lyrics clearly?

H. What will you Need?

- Will this piece require any special equipment to perform?
- The Performing Arts Department provides:
 - A mic on a stand
 - A CD player
 - A piano
- Excessive set-up needs will detract from your performance.

I. Accompaniment

- Will you need a piano?
- Accompanied is better than unaccompanied.
- Recorded accompaniment must have no lead vocal/instrument part.

II. Staging your Performance

A. Costumes

- Choose a costume that suits your piece.
- Make sure your costume is 4-H appropriate.
- Make sure your costume changing requirements are reasonable.

B. Choreography

- Do something!
 - Simple dance steps
 - Hand/arm gestures
 - Facial expression
- Don't let the choreography detract from the performance of the piece.

III. Tips for Success

A. Speak up and slow down.

- When people are up on stage, they often speak too quietly, too quickly, or both, making it impossible for the audience to hear & understand.
- Speak as plainly, loudly and slowly as possible. It will make all the difference.

B. Smile, smile, smile.

- Even if you're overcome with stage fright or embarrassed because you just made a mistake in your performance, smile & it will appear as though you are having fun.
- If a smile doesn't suit your act, show emotion that does. Don't be an emotionless talent show robot.

C. Posture makes a big difference.

- Stand or sit up straight, whether you're singing, dancing, acting a skit, showing off your skills or emceeing the show.



- Hold your head and chin up, your shoulders back and your back straight.
- Practice this during your rehearsals and it will become second nature.

D. Keep your eyes focused straight ahead at the audience.

- If you are nervous and don't want to make eye contact with anyone, look at the tops of the audience members' heads, or even the air above them -- just don't look down at the floor or your feet.

E. Consider sitting on a stool.

- If you're singing a sad song, slow song, or something gentle such as a folk song and you're not comfortable moving around on stage, consider sitting on a tall stool rather than just standing there.
- It will look more natural and relaxed, as opposed to standing there stiffly for the duration of the song.

F. Just keep going.

- If you forget your lines or lyrics, drop your baton or fall off of your pogo stick, just keep going like nothing happened.
- The audience will understand. They don't expect perfection.

G. End professionally.

- When your act is finished, stop, smile, wave to the audience, take a 3-second bow, wave again, then walk proudly off stage, smiling, with your head held high.

H. Be prepared for the unexpected.

- Make up a kit with emergency supplies.
- Knowing you're prepared will help you relax and have fun.

