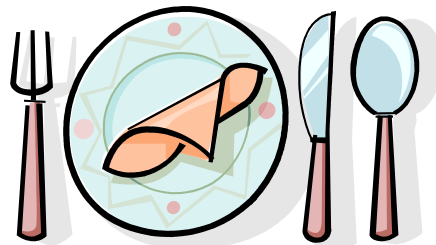


# Preparing for the Douglas-Sarpy



## Table Toppers Contest



Do you like to cook and create meals? Do you like to bake and prepare delicious desserts or breads? Then this fun contest is for you! 4-H youth will be inspired while they learn to pick a theme, plan a nutritious menu and learn table setting skills.



Why participate in the Table Toppers Contest?

- It's fun and lets you be creative!
- Shows off your cooking/baking skills.
- Shares your nutritional knowledge.
- Develops proper table setting etiquette.
- Develops public speaking skills & confidence.
- The 4-H Table Toppers Contest is open to all Douglas-Sarpy 4-H members ages 5-18.

## 4-H Table Toppers Contest Guidelines

1. Parents/Guardians, while your guidance is important, please remember that this is your child's project.
2. Select a theme, like "Holiday Meal," or "Summer Picnic"
3. Plan a well-balanced and colorful menu around the selected theme. **No buffet menus.** Menu should be age appropriate for the child participating. Prepare the entire menu at home to learn food preparation and time management skills.
4. Please note that youth are NOT to bring any food item for the judge to taste. If you would like to include an item in your menu that is eligible to be entered in the fair, please refer to the Food and Nutrition section of the fairbook for acceptable choices. You can include this food item in your menu, but do not bring any actual food items to the Table Toppers contest.
5. Select table decorations **and table setting for one.** Practice setting the table on a card table: plate, utensils, cup, napkin etc.
6. Plan a centerpiece to match your theme. Any candles used on the table should not be lit during the contest.
7. Write or type your menu (Using My Plate information as a guide) to be displayed on your table.
8. Choose one food item from your menu and make **one copy of the recipe for that item** to be placed on the table for the judge to view. A 3x5 or 4x6 recipe card is preferred but it may be presented on a larger piece if needed. Please allow your child to do this step. You may also include a photo of the prepared food item (optional).
9. 4-H contestants need to be prepared to:
  - Introduce themselves to the judge, as well as explain why they chose their theme and menu.
  - Be prepared to answer questions about meal preparation, time management, and food preparation as it relates to your chosen menu.
  - Have your child practice preparing the entire meal.
  - Relax and have fun with this!
10. Wear the outfit that you would wear if you were hosting the event, or a fun costume that reflects your theme.
11. Checklist: You must supply your own card table, table covering (place mat or table cloth), centerpiece, table setting (plate, cup, eating utensils, etc.), menu and recipe of selected baked item.
12. The table must be standard size square or round table. No additional side tables will be permitted.

For more specific information about this contest, please see the "Preparing for the 2023 Table Toppers Contest" manual which is available at this link <https://extension.unl.edu/statewide/douglas-sarpy/4-h-resources/> or contact Stephanie Thorson at [stephanie.thorson@unl.edu](mailto:stephanie.thorson@unl.edu) or 402-444-7949.

## Select a Theme

A theme will help you pull it all together. The following examples may help you get started.

- Formal (Bridal Luncheon)
- Informal (Family Dinner)
- Fun ( A favorite movie theme)
- Casual (Back yard BBQ)
- Party (Birthday Party)
- Picnic

Check out websites, magazines, & cookbooks for theme ideas.

## Plan the Menu

A well-planned menu should:

- Contain a variety of foods to meet the nutritional needs of those for whom it is planned. Meal should include all food groups, and #'s 1 - 4 in the My Plate Guidelines.
- Consider the time required for the main course and total preparation time.
- Be attractive, with a variety of colors, textures, shapes, sizes and flavors.
- Be suitable for the meal.
- Be readily prepared and easily served with equipment on hand.
- Show wise use of money and time.
- Utilize food in season, convenience and ready-to-serve foods.
- Incorporate proper food handling practices.

## 10 Tips: Build a Healthy Meal



**Each meal is a building block in your healthy eating style.** Make sure to include all the food groups throughout the day. Make fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy, and protein foods part of your daily meals and snacks. Also, limit added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Use the MyPlate Daily Checklist and the tips below to meet your needs throughout the day.



### **1. Make half your plate veggies and fruits**

Vegetables and fruits are full of nutrients that support good health. Choose fruits and red, orange, and dark-green vegetables such as tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and broccoli.



### **2. Include whole grains**

Aim to make at least half your grains whole grains. Look for the words “100% whole grain” or “100% whole wheat” on the food label. Whole grains provide more nutrients, like fiber, than refined grains.



### **3. Don't forget the dairy**

Complete your meal with a cup of fat-free or low-fat milk. You will get the same amount of calcium and other essential nutrients as whole milk but fewer calories. Don't drink milk? Try a soy beverage (soymilk) as your drink or include low-fat yogurt in your meal or snack.



### **4. Add lean protein**

Choose protein foods such as lean beef, pork, chicken, or turkey, and eggs, nuts, beans, or tofu. Twice a week, make seafood the protein on your plate.

### **5. Avoid extra fat**

Using heavy gravies or sauces will add fat and calories to otherwise healthy choices. Try steamed broccoli with a sprinkling of low-fat parmesan cheese or a squeeze of lemon.

### **6. Get creative in the kitchen**

Whether you are making a sandwich, a stir-fry, or a casserole, find ways to make them healthier. Try using less meat and cheese, which can be higher in saturated fat and sodium, and adding in more veggies that add new flavors and textures to your meals.



### **7. Take control of your food**

Eat at home more often so you know exactly what you are eating. If you eat out, check and compare the nutrition information. Choose options that are lower in calories, saturated fat, and sodium.

### **8. Try new foods**

Keep it interesting by picking out new foods you've never tried before, like mango, lentils, quinoa, kale, or sardines. You may find a new favorite! Trade fun and tasty recipes with friends or find them online.

### **9. Satisfy your sweet tooth in a healthy way**

Indulge in a naturally sweet dessert dish—fruit! Serve a fresh fruit salad or a fruit parfait made with yogurt. For a hot dessert, bake apples and top with cinnamon.

### **10. Everything you eat and drink matters**

The right mix of foods in your meals and snacks can help you be healthier now and into the future. Turn small changes in how you eat into your MyPlate, MyWins.

## **Plan Your Table Setting**

The table should be attractively set with everything neatly in place. A neat, clean and attractive table setting makes any meal more enjoyable. Can you set such a table? Let's learn how.

Table settings include any item used to set a table. Tablecloth, placemats, dinnerware, glassware, flatware, serving dishes, and the center piece are table appointments. Choose table appointments to fit the occasion. Paper plates, plastic ware, and paper napkins may be used for a picnic but they would not be appropriate for a formal dinner.

### **On Your Mark...**

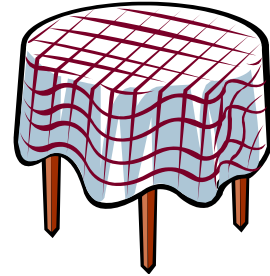
Wash your hands before handling any dishes. Determine how many will be served and what table appointments will be needed for the meal. A tray may be helpful to bring things to the table or to clear things from the table.

## Get Set...

### The Table Cover

The table covering is the background for the food and table appointments place on it. It protects the table and makes for less noise. Placemats or tablecloths may be used. Sometimes the table is left bare. Be sure that the covering or table is clean.

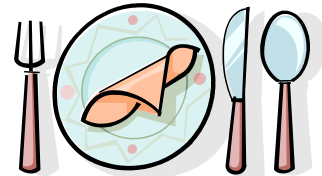
Choose a covering that is appropriate for the occasion. You may match or blend colors and textures in the dishes or use something quite different for contrast.



### The Place Setting

Allow at least 20 inches for each person's dishes. Each place setting at the table is set exactly the same. The place setting contains only the dinnerware and flatware for the meal served.

1. Put the plate in the center of the place setting about 1 inch from the edge of the table.
2. Place the knives and spoons on the right side, the forks on the left about 1 inch from the plate and 1 inch from the edge of the table. Turn the cutting edge of the knife towards the plate. If there is more than one piece in each place setting, such as one dinner fork and a salad fork or one teaspoon and a soup spoon, know which one will be used first and place it outside the other one.
3. The napkins are usually folded into oblongs and placed next to the forks. The fold of the oblong napkin should be to the left so it open like a book.



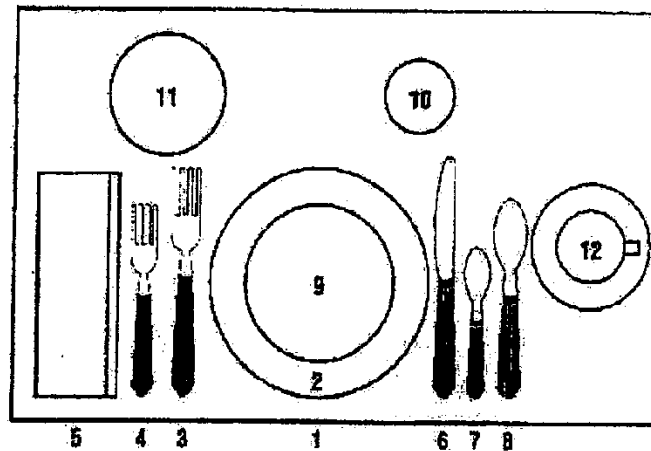
4. The beverage glass is placed about 1 inch above the tip of the knife.
5. If coffee or tea is served, the cup is placed on the saucer and set to the right of the spoon 1 inch from the edge of the table. Have the handle pointing to the right.
6. Salad and dessert bowls may be placed left of the forks and napkin or at the tip of the fork.

## Making Mealtimes Manners Matter!

The following guide is a basic set of rules for setting the table. It can be used in a formal as well as an informal one.

An attractive table adds to the enjoyment of a meal. To set the table, the 4-H'er needs a "place setting" for each person. Tablesetting contests will commonly require at least one tablesetting on display - check the county for specific details. A tablesetting should include the following items:

- ★ dinnerware (plates, cups, saucers, and bowls)
- ★ glassware (glasses of all shapes and sizes)
- ★ flatware (forks, spoons, and knives)
- ★ napkins
- ★ centerpiece
- ★ placemats or tablecloths (optional)



The following rules for setting a table correspond to the numbers seen in the table setting illustration.

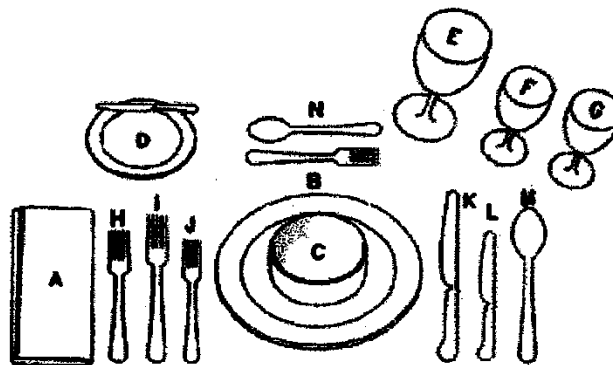
1. The flatware, plate, and napkin should be one inch from the edge of the table.
2. The plate is always in the center of the place setting.
3. The dinner fork is placed at the left of the plate.
4. If a salad fork is used, it is placed to the left of the dinner fork.
5. The napkin is placed to the left of the fork, with the fold on the left. It can also go under a fork, or on top of the plate.
6. The knife is placed to the right of the plate with the sharp blade facing in towards the plate.
7. The teaspoon is placed to the right of the knife.
8. If a soup spoon is needed, it is placed to the right of the teaspoon.
9. The soup bowl may be placed to the right of the teaspoon.
10. The drinking glass is placed at the top of the knife.
11. If a salad plate is used, place it just above the tip of the fork.
12. The cup or mug is placed to the top right of the spoons.

## How to Set a Proper Table

**Level: Any**

If you're planning a formal dinner party, business function or a wedding reception, a proper table setting is very important. The etiquette experts tell us it's real easy and with this easy-to-follow layout and description of items you can say the same thing!

The general rule with utensils is to start from the outside of your place setting, and work your way toward the service plate (the main meal plate): soup spoon first, then fish knife and fork, then service knife and fork.



- A - Serviette (Napkin)
- B - Service Plate
- C - Soup Bowl on Plate
- D - Bread and Butter Plate with Butter Knife
- E - Water Glass
- F - White Wine
- G - Red Wine
- H - Fish Fork
- I - Dinner Fork
- J - Salad Fork
- K - Service Knife
- L - Fish Knife
- M - Soup Spoon
- N - Dessert Spoon and Cake Fork

**Note:** It is often recommended that the salad fork (J) is placed to the left of the dinner fork (I). However, in this formal setting the dinner fork is placed before the salad fork because it is suggested that the guest waits for the main meal before helping him/herself to the salad.

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### **How to Set a Proper Table**

If you are planning a formal dinner party, business function or a wedding reception, a proper table setting is very important. The etiquette experts tell us it's real easy and with these easy-to-follow layout and description of items you can say the same thing!

- \* The general rule with utensils is to start from the outside of your place setting, and work your way toward the service plate (the main meal plate): soup spoon first, then fish knife and fork, then service knife and fork.
- \* If more than three or four courses are served, new silverware is brought to the table after all original silverware is used.
- \* When setting a table, align silverware one inch from table edge (no more than 2" if using place mats.)
- \* As for the order of the flatware, whichever piece is to be used first is placed furthest from center for correct table setting.
- \* Just remember, forks on left side and spoons and knives with cutting edge facing plate on right.

### **Exceptions to setting the table this way are:**

- \* Cocktail/Oyster fork goes right of dinner spoon.
- \* Butter knife lays across bread plate.
- \* Dessert fork and spoon placed above with fork tines pointing right underneath spoon pointing left. This is optional, they may be brought later with dessert.
- \* Dessert and salad fork is short tined and dinner is long.

### **Basic Table Manners:**

- \* It is inappropriate to ask for a doggy bag when you are a guest.
- \* It is best to order foods that can be eaten with a knife and fork. Finger foods can be messy and are best left for informal dining.
- \* Do not order alcohol.
- \* Do not smoke.
- \* Sit up straight at the table. It makes a good impression.
- \* When you are not eating, keep your hands on your lap.
- \* Do not season your food before you have tasted it.
- \* Never chew with your mouth open or make loud noises when you eat.
- \* Do not talk with your mouth full.
- \* Do not slurp soup from a spoon. Spoon soup away from you when you take it out of the bowl and sip it from the side of the spoon. If your soup is too hot to eat, let it sit to cool, do not blow on it.
- \* If food gets caught between your teeth and you can not remove it with your tongue, leave the table and go to a mirror where you can remove the food from your teeth in private.
- \* Eat rolls and breads by tearing off small bite size pieces and buttering only the piece you

are preparing to eat.

- \* Engage in table conversation that is pleasant but entirely free of controversial subjects.
- \* You should not leave the table during the meal except in an emergency. If you must go to the bathroom or if you suddenly become sick, simply excuse yourself. Later you can apologize to the host by saying you did not feel well.
- \* If you need something you can not reach easily, politely ask the person closest to the item you need to pass it to you. For example, "After you have used them yourself, would you please pass me the salt and pepper?"
- \* If you drop a piece of your silverware, pick it up if you can reach it and let the server know you need a clean one. If you cannot reach it, tell the server you dropped a piece of your silverware and ask for a clean one.
- \* If you or someone you are dining with is left-handed, it is best for the left-handed person to sit at the left end of the table or at the head of the table. This arrangement helps ensure that everyone has adequate elbow room to eat comfortably.
- \* If food spills off your plate, you may pick it up with a piece of your silverware and place it on the edge of your plate.
- \* Never spit a piece of bad food or tough gristle into your napkin. Remove the food from your mouth using the same utensil it went in with. Place the piece of food on the edge of your plate. If possible, cover it with some other food from your plate.

#### **Foods You Can Eat With Your Fingers:**

1. Artichoke
  - \* To eat it, pull a leaf off, dip it, scrape the flesh from the base of the leaf with your top teeth and discard the leaf on the plate provided for that purpose.
2. Asparagus
  - \* Asparagus may be eaten with the fingers as long as it is not covered with sauce or otherwise prepared so it is too mushy to pick up easily.
3. Bacon
  - \* When bacon is cooked until it is very crisp, and there is not danger of getting the fingers wet with grease it is okay to pick it up to eat.
4. Bread
  - \* Bread must always be broken, never cut with a knife. Tear off a piece that is no bigger than two bites worth and eat that before tearing off another.
5. Cookies
  - \* It is never necessary to try to eat the cookie that comes as a garnish to your dessert with a spoon.
6. Corn on the Cob
  - \* It is unlikely to be served at a formal event, but if you do encounter it may be picked-up and eaten.
7. Chips, French Fries, Fried Chicken and Hamburgers
  - \* All these items will not be served in a formal setting. They are intended to be eaten with the hands.
8. Hors d'Oeuvres, Canapes, Crudites
  - \* Almost everything that is served at a cocktail party or during a pre-meal cocktail hour is intended to be eaten with the fingers.

- 
9. Sandwiches
    - \* Any sandwich with is not open faced, not to tall to fit into the mouth, not saturated with dripping sauces or loaded with mushy fillings.
  10. Small Fruits and Berries on the Stem
    - \* If you are served strawberries with the hulls on, cherries with stems, or grapes in bunches, then it is okay to eat them with your fingers.

### **Tips and Pitfalls:**

#### **Beginning**

- \* Developing the habit of taking a moment to observe with starting method with be operative at an event can be very useful in preventing awkward mistakes. It will ensure, for example, that a guest will not find himself with a laden fork pushed halfway into his mouth just as the host begins to say grace.

#### **Posture**

- \* Keep your elbows off the table! Proper posture at the table is very important. Sit up straight, with your arms held near your body.

#### **Eating Soup**

- \* Dip the spoon into the soup, moving it away from the body, until it is about two-thirds full, then sip the liquid (without slurping) from the side of the spoon. The theory behind this is that a diner who scoops the spoon toward himself is more likely to slosh soup onto his lap.

#### **Offering Food**

- \* Take note, when you are the host of a party, of the way you offer additional servings to your guests. Urging someone to "have another helping" can be seen as an unpleasant insinuation that the guest has eaten to much. It is best to phrase each offer of food as if the dish has just been brought out for the first time.

#### **Please Pass the Salt**

- \* The proper response to this very simple sounding request is to pick up both the salt and pepper and to place them on the table within reach of the person next to you, who will do the same and so on, until they reach the person who asked for them.

## The Serving Pieces

- This is included for your Information. Serving pieces are not required for the Table Toppers contest
1. Place the main dish in front of the head of the family. If it is hot, it will need a table protector or trivet underneath it.
  2. Foods that are used together should be placed together, such as potatoes and gravy, bread and butter.
  3. Serving spoons should be placed on the table beside the food bowls rather than in them until you begin serving the food.

## The Centerpiece

The centerpiece should be coordinated with the table theme and be appropriate for the occasion. If a centerpiece is used, it should not obstruct anyone's view. When candles are used, they should be lit with the flame above eye level.

### Guidelines for Writing the Menu

1. List the foods in the order in which they are served. Every menu will not include all the foods listed.

- ✓ Appetizer
- ✓ Main Dish
- ✓ Starchy vegetable
- ✓ Other vegetables
- ✓ Salad
- ✓ Bread
- ✓ Dessert
- ✓ Beverage

Broiled Ham Grilled Pineapple Slices Cole Slaw Hot Ginger Bread with Applesauce Coffee   Milk
---

Group foods served in one course. Use a single space between each course and a double space between courses.

Cream of Broccoli Soup Curried Toast Fingers
---

Fresh Fruit Salad Plate With Lime Sherbet Crescent Rolls
--

Glazed Chocolate Roll Coffee   Milk
--

Use capitals for all words except articles, conjunctions, and prepositions.

When an item on the menu has a accompaniment, place the main item to the left and the accompaniment to the right (A), or you may center the main item and write the accompanying item underneath (B), if more than one accompaniment appears, place one at each side on the same line (C), or place both on the same line below (D).

(A)

Braised Pork Chops   Applesauce

(B)

Braised Pork Chops  
Applesauce

(C)

Sesame Seed Wafers   Tomato Bouillon   Saltines

(D)

Tomato Bouillon  
Sesame Seed wafers   Saltines

2. When a food is commonly prepared in more than one way, avoid confusion by describing the method of cooking , such as:

(a) Roast Turkey

(b) French Fried Potatoes

3. List each food with the exception of butter, cream, sugar, or salad dressing, unless it is something special, such s Honey Butter or Poppy Seed Dressing.
4. List the beverage last.
5. Plan the spacing and arrangements of the items on the menu so that the written menu is symmetrical.

## Guidelines for Writing a Recipe

Many food entries for fairs call for the exhibitor to include the recipe used. The format used for writing the recipe is also considered in the judging. Guidelines for writing the recipe follow.

### Characteristics of a Good Recipe

1. It should be accurate.
2. It should be complete.
3. It should be simple and clear.
4. It should list all ingredients in the order used.
5. It should give exact measurements in the easiest unit (e.g., 1/4 Tablespoons).
6. If possible in the space allowed, do not abbreviate.
7. Use weights for meats, when possible.
8. Use weight of fluid measure of canned foods (don't say "one can pineapple," say "one 12 ounce can of pineapple").
9. Use short sentences and clear, simple descriptions of methods.
10. Give word pictures, if possible (foamy, syrupy, lemon-colored).
11. Specify pan sizes.
12. Give 2 tests for doneness, if possible. For example, a thermometer reading and a cold water test for candy. Include baking temperature and baking time.
13. Give total yield of number of servings, and state serving size.



### Recipe Construction/Standard Form:

1. The most widely used and easily read form. Excellent for recipes containing many ingredients.
2. List all ingredients first, including any modifications of the ingredient. For instance, if your recipe requires 1 cup chopped nuts-the nuts should be measured after chopping. However, if the ingredient listed is 1 cup nuts chopped-the nuts are measured first, then chopped.
3. The method of combining the ingredients follows the listing. It may be stated in a paragraph or numbered steps.

Example of a recipe written in the standard form:

### Waffles

1  $\frac{3}{4}$  cups sifted enriched flour  
3 teaspoons baking powder  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt  
2 beaten egg yolks

1  $\frac{1}{4}$  cups milk  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup melted shortening  
2 stiff-beaten egg whites

Preheat waffle iron. Sift dry ingredients: stir in combined egg yolk, milk and shortening. Fold in egg whites. Bake in hot waffle iron. Makes 8.

Or

1. Preheat waffle iron.
  2. Sift dry ingredients into a bowl.
  3. Combine egg yolks, milk and shortening.
  4. Stir into dry ingredients.
  5. Fold in beaten egg whites.
  6. Bake in a hot waffle iron.
- Makes 8 waffles.

# 4-H Table Toppers Contest

## Guidelines and Entry Form for 2023

Do you like to cook and create meals? Do you like to bake and prepare delicious desserts or breads? Then this fun contest is for you! 4-H youth will be inspired while they learn to pick a theme, plan a nutritious menu and learn table setting skills.

**Contest Date:** Thursday, June 29, 2023

**Times:** Set up from 2:30 -3:00 pm Judging from 3:00 pm – 5:30 pm; Awards ceremony following judging.

**Where:** Nebraska Extension in Douglas – Sarpy Counties, 8015 West Center Road, Omaha NE 68124

4-H Contact Person: Stephanie Thorson at [stephanie.thorson@unl.edu](mailto:stephanie.thorson@unl.edu), 402-444-7949

### Key Information:

- Entry Forms are DUE: Friday, June 23, 2023
  - Set up on contest day will be from 2:30-3:00 PM (Don't forget your card table!)
  - Parents/Guardians are not allowed in the auditorium during set up.
  - Interview Judging starts at 3:00 PM.
  - Youth should bring quiet activities to do while the other 4-H contestants interview judge.
  - Families can view all the tables/take pictures after the judging of all the tables is complete.
  - An awards ceremony will take place following the judging. If needed, ribbons can be mailed to participants after the contest.
  - Classes will be split by ages (see entry form below)
  - The Table Toppers contest is open to 4-H members ages 5 - 18 year olds.
-

**2023 Table Toppers Entry Form**  
**Due Friday, June 23, 2023**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ 4-H AGE (Age before January 1, 2023): \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL ADDRESS (PARENT/GUARDIAN): \_\_\_\_\_

*4-H age is determined by how old the youth was before January 1, 2023.*

**Please check which class category the 4-H member is to be entered in:**

CLASS 999      Clover Kids – ages 5-7   ☐

CLASS 901      Junior – ages 8-10   ☐

CLASS 902      Intermediate – ages 11-13   ☐

CLASS 903      Senior – ages 14-18   ☐

**Return entry form:**

**You can complete and submit the entry form online:** <https://go.unl.edu/4htabletoppers2023>

**OR**

**Mail** - Nebraska Extension Douglas-Sarpy Counties; Stephanie Thorson, 8015 West Center Rd  
Omaha, NE 68124

**Email**-Stephanie Thorson at [stephanie.thorson@unl.edu](mailto:stephanie.thorson@unl.edu)

# Table Toppers Contest Scoresheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Theme: \_\_\_\_\_

CLASS 999      Clover Kids – ages 5-7  
 CLASS 901      Junior – ages 8-10  
 CLASS 902      Intermediate – ages 11-13  
 CLASS 903      Senior – ages 14-18

CATEGORIES & DESCRIPTION	Possible Points	Points Received
<b>Menu</b>		
Does the meal contribute adequately to daily nutritional needs?	15	
Are the flavors & colors pleasingly combined?	10	
Is the recipe card included?	5	
Is the food suitable for the occasion?	10	
Comments:		
<b>Table Setting</b>		
Is the table set correctly?	10	
Are the dishes & flatware suitable for the menu?	5	
Is the overall effect pleasing?	10	
Comments:		
<b>Contestant</b>		
Does the contestant show understanding of:	10	
*Meal Planning	10	
*Food Preparation	10	
*Time Management	10	
Is the contestant dressed appropriately?	5	
Comments:		
<b>Total Points</b>	100	

**RIBBON PLACING**

**PURPLE   BLUE   RED   WHITE**

## Table Toppers Contest Clover Kids Scoresheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Table Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Theme: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Participated (yes or no)</b>
Appropriate Clover Kids project	
Smile/Enthusiasm/Confidence	
Menu Included	
Nutritious Meal Plan	
Recipe Card Included	
Basic knowledge of table setting	
Centerpiece	
Appropriate attire	

Comments: