



Michigan FCCLA

Tips for New Advisers: Top 10 Advising Myths

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Why do some Family & Consumer Sciences teachers refuse the rewards of advising an FCCLA chapter? Advisers to national officers helped The Adviser identify some myths that may keep them away—and keep some current advisers from reaching out for the full benefits FCCLA offers. You may even find some of your own views rejected.

On these pages, local FCCLA advisers explain why the myths just aren't necessarily true. Read their insights, examine your own advising myths, and reach out for all the advantages of advising an active chapter.

1. MYTH: Allowing your chapter to become really active just takes too much time.

“The more active students become, the more advantages FCCLA provides. Students become involved when they are given a responsibility and allowed to make decisions about chapter projects. I integrate FCCLA into the curriculum. This motivates students for classroom learning and creates time for FCCLA experiences. Both are big rewards for the adviser.”

--Teresa Dossman, Westfield High, Houston, Texas

2. MYTH: To have a good FCCLA chapter, you have to have a lot of after-school and weekend meetings and activities.

“I've integrated FCCLA programs into classes and, with other student organization advisers, persuaded the administration to create a once-a-month organization meeting period. It's eliminated the need for most after-school FCCLA meetings. Students are still motivated, involved and aware they're part of a national organization.”

--Vicki Shaffer-White, East Valley High, Yakima, Washington

3. MYTH: As the adviser, I have to “do it all” for my FCCLA chapter.

“Absolutely not! In fact, I strongly believe we must empower the *students* to ‘do it all.’ They need to learn the skills of leading a group, filling out paperwork, meeting deadlines and being responsible. As the adviser, you can set standards and clarify expectations. Then hold members accountable and help them think through a process for accomplishing their goals. They will live up to your expectations. Sometimes it may actually be easier to do things yourself, but that defeats the whole purpose of learning through FCCLA.”

--Karen LaRoche, White Mountains Regional High, Whitefield, New Hampshire

4. MYTH: STAR Events are a waste of time, because my members won't win anyway.

“STAR Events provide students with experiences and opportunities that mean more than gold medals. Students develop leadership, build confidence and compete against nationally established criteria. AND, your students just might make it all the way to national events – mine did last year. From our small school, I didn't think there was much of a chance of that. It was a great opportunity to meet others and provide their skills.”

--Emily Rigdon, *Crecent City Senior High, Florida*

5. MYTH: Some advisers are lucky and get strong chapter members. Some aren't lucky and get weaker members.

“The members I work with aren't considered the school's stars, and many of them don't quite fit in anywhere else. Some teachers would think they could never succeed. But once they see what they can do in FCCLA, they do great things. I help them recognize they can succeed by integrating several aspects into class requirements – like class speeches that follow the Illustrated Talk guidelines and a simple Power of One project. It's important to keep an open mind and not label students. Give them a chance, and watch them take off!”

--Coleen Globke, *Parkston High, South Dakota*

6. MYTH: FCCLA only offers rewards for students.

“Advising a chapter gives me as much as it gives the students. It's very rewarding to have young people share their lives with you. Watching them grow adds a real joy to teaching. My FCCLA chapter has also become a real 'plus' as our state emphasizes school-to-career. Now, my administrator realizes what a good thing we have going and looks to us as an example of how to make school-to-career work.”

--Linda Combs, *Knott County Central High, Hindman, Kentucky*

7. MYTH: I does no good to share reports with state and national FCCLA.

“ I used to think this, too. Then one day I had a phone call at school and the *Teen Times* staff wanted to interview two of my students. Our chapter was mentioned twice in the next issue, and it was only because we sent in a report that I thought no one would ever read. It created good publicity in our school, too.”

--Diane Cluff, *Provo High, Utah*

8. MYTH: Advising a state officer is just extra work.

“I've found that having a state officer leads to a better local chapter. You get first-hand information and stay up on what resources are available. It also means more recognition for your students and your program. Sure, there's work involved, but the more you put into FCCLA, the more you get out of it. The rewards are worth the effort.”

--Kay Powell, *Habersham Central High, Mt. Airy, Georgia*

9. MYTH: FCCLA programs don't work with middle-level students.

“Actually, I think middle-level chapters can be more successful than high school ones. Younger students have fewer things going on, and they're easy to excite as long as the adviser is enthusiastic. Once you plan a way to get kids involved and provide some rewards, they can take over – whether it's national program or a local project they develop using the planning process.”

--Karen Rodriguez, Ed White Middle School, Huntsville, Alabama

Middle-Level Favorites

Middle-level FCCLA advisers say the following national programs are especially easy to use with their members:

- ◆ *Power of One*
- ◆ *FACTS*
- ◆ *Families First*
- ◆ *STAR Events*
- ◆ *Community Service*
- ◆ *Step One*

10. MYTH: There's no one to help me learn about and carry out adviser responsibilities.

“I've found that other advisers are very willing to help. In Ohio, we have a formal mentoring program between veteran and new advisers, plus 'key advisers' who can be called for information. You can also watch for workshops at FCCLA events and professional meetings. Don't be timid – ask for help! It's important to get involved so you can learn how things are done.”

--Barb Hoffman, Cadiz Jr./Sr. High, Ohio

Questions? Need some advice?

**Call Michigan FCCLA at
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