

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING SCIENCE FAIR PROPOSALS

4th and 5th GRADES:

1. Is the question to be answered clearly identified?
2. Is it clear what data are to be observed, and recorded, and that the students know how they are going to do this?
3. If applicable, is a control group identified? They may need guidance on what an appropriate control group would be, so feel free to suggest one.
4. Is the experiment that they suggest doable? Will it answer the question that they have posed? If it is too diffuse, suggest ways to narrow it down. A common error is trying to do too much, resulting in not achieving a specific answer, or answering a different question than you have posed initially.
5. Related to #4, are the materials available? Have they thought this through? Use your judgement on whether to raise these sorts of questions.
6. We would like to avoid simply duplicating something from a science fair book; if they have picked an idea from a book, we'd like them to then also do a variation on that project as the "experiment" vs the book's way as the "control".

K thru 3rd GRADES:

1. The main criteria are practicality, and whether you think the child understands what the proposed project is about. We would like to avoid parent-driven projects where the concepts are at a level well above the child's level of comprehension. When a project looks too complex, encourage them to do the same topic but on a simpler level; to not try and do too much; and to emphasize that the child should understand the question they are trying to answer and the process they are going through to answer it.

No matches, fire, glass, or live animals should be brought to the Science Fair. Avoid weapons, toxic substances or materials that are valuable or hazardous. Avoid any unsteady displays. Animals can be used in the experiment (e.g. "what is my cat's favorite food?") but not in the display, you can show pictures instead.