

Event Guide

Suggestions for a Successful Event

Jr.FLL is a community based program. Interested individuals, teams, and organizations arrange local Jr.FLL events that enable community teams to share what they have done! Neither *FIRST* nor the Jr.FLL program organize or host any Jr.FLL events. They are all community based. Thank you for considering hosting an event and we hope this guide aids in your planning!

If you have additional tips or advice, please send it to us at jrfillteams@usfirst.org and share it with everyone in the forums.

An event for Jr.FLL teams can be as simple as 2 teams sharing their accomplishments with family or 30 teams sharing with each other, Reviewers, and the community. It all depends on the resources you have available. An event for Jr.FLL teams simply means providing participants with an opportunity to showcase and celebrate their achievements. This celebration is not a competition; rather it is an opportunity to share achievements, learn from others, and receive recognition for wonderful efforts!

How To Use This Guide

This guide provides suggestions and recommendations to aid in the planning of an event for Jr.FLL teams. Everything can be scaled up or down, but no matter what, we ask that you take the age range and developmental levels of the kids into consideration when planning your event. Remember, the most important thing is that the kids have fun.

This guide is also meant to be accessible to everyone. If you are planning an event at your local community center for 20 teams, hosting 2 teams in your backyard, or anything in between and beyond, this guide is meant to help you. We based the guide on a 10 team event. Please keep this in mind as you read, and remember that everything here is a suggestion and you can scale it up or down.

Hosting Your Own Event: Overview

The option to host your own event allows all teams to celebrate and showcase their accomplishments. It offers the opportunity to share projects with other teams and for them to learn from each other.

An extremely important aspect of the Jr.FLL program is that *it is a program and not a competition*. Very careful measures have been taken to not have children at this age level competing against each other, but rather to encourage an environment of cooperative learning and sharing. All events for Jr.FLL should follow this philosophy.

Requirements and Basic Elements

There are no mandatory requirements for your event!

This is your event so you can do with it what you can. Remember, the stars of the event are 6 to 9 year-old kids and the purpose is to showcase their work so they can receive positive feedback. Any number of teams can participate in your event, from 1 to 600. Again, it's your event so you determine the

capacity you can accommodate. When determining capacity, remember that Jr.FLL teams are comprised of up to 6 children and each child will likely have family members that attend. The only real requirement to hold a Jr.FLL event is having the space to hold it.

A few basic elements that we suggest are included in an event for Jr.FLL are:

- Reviewers – volunteers who visit each team, “review” their projects, and assign awards. Reviewers are similar to judges, but in Jr.FLL there is no judging!
- Hi-Five Ceremony – a method to recognize all the teams at your event. At the end of the event line up your Reviewers (and others if wanted) and call each team by name. The teams run along the line and receive “hi-fives” from all along the way!
- Awards – every team participating should be recognized in some way. Awards can be a simple, printed certificate or a trophy. Suggestions are included in this guide. Awards can be purchased through Crown Trophy.

At An Event

An event for Jr.FLL teams should not be a tournament or a competition of any sort. It should be a cooperative learning and sharing environment celebrating everyone’s work. At an event, Jr.FLL teams should display their model(s) and Show Me Poster. If you have willing volunteers to take the role, teams can meet with Reviewers (they are not judges!) to discuss their experience and explain their models. Teams should be given time to explore the work of other teams and time to enhance their own model. Because of the age range, we strongly recommend that each team receive an award. Every team participating is a winner!

Planning Committee

If you will be organizing a large event of 10 or more teams, we recommend that you have a Planning Committee to ease the workload and make coordinating the event more enjoyable. This will help you tremendously and make the day run smoother. Your Planning Committee could be comprised of you, a participating team member’s older sibling or grandparent, and a neighbor. The section, Planning, of this guide discusses some of the possible roles of a Planning Committee.

Planning Committee Roles and Responsibilities

Gathering a committee of volunteers to organize the event and share responsibilities on event day can be very helpful. Below is a list of those major committee positions that have proven helpful in the past. Please note that one person can take the role of multiple positions. For example, your Logistics Coordinator can also take on the role of Fundraising Coordinator. Parents, grandparents, and older siblings of team members are great recruits for these positions.

If your event is small and held in your home, you may not need any of the help detailed below. If your event is large and at a school gymnasium, however, you may want to expand this list even further.

Committee Roles

Lead Role – Event Coordinator

This individual is responsible for overseeing the entire event and is the principal liaison for most aspects of the event. He or she is the chairperson of the planning committee and manages the event and coordinates all the scheduling in conjunction with the teams, materials coordinator, and the opening and closing ceremonies.

Logistics Coordinator (Technical Director / Team & Materials Coordinator)

This individual coordinates the supplies, materials, and movement of these resources for the day of the event. Logistics to consider include food, beverages, office supply needs, such as note pads, clipboards, and pens/pencils. There may also be power needs like power strips, extension cords, and audio/visual requirements. The Logistics Coordinator is critical in mapping the flow of the day, which includes planning supply locations and preventing crowd congestion. This person should also have a basic understanding of your sound system, even if it's a bull-horn and boom-box.

Volunteer Coordinator

The role of the Volunteer Coordinator is to recruit and train all necessary volunteers to ensure smooth operation on event day. Volunteers are the key to a successful event, so the Volunteer Coordinator position is key!

There are two main types of volunteers:

- Reviewers – interact with teams and assign awards
- General – assume various event roles, such as loading and registration

Reviewer Advisor

This individual is responsible for managing and training Reviewers for the event and ensuring they are properly trained and prepared. Be sure that the Reviewers have all necessary supplies, are fed, and are supported throughout event day as appropriate. The section, Reviewers, in this guide provides training tips.

Fundraising Coordinator

This individual will determine the cost of the event and establish the methods to secure and manage the funds.

Event Volunteers Roles and Functions

The following is a list of suggested roles to establish what will help ensure a fun and well organized event. If you are having a small gathering with just a few teams some of these roles may be unnecessary.

If you are planning a larger event, consider adding additional roles as appropriate. Be creative in filling the roles!

As you can see, you can combine some of these roles and reduce or expand responsibilities, depending upon the size of your event. For example, combine the info table and registration tables and associated staff.

Role	Qty	Function at the Event
Reviewers	2 per 5-7 teams	Review the teams' models and Show Me Posters, then collaborate with other Reviewers to assign awards to all teams
DJ	1	Bring equipment and appropriate music selection to add excitement to the event. Plays and stops music as directed. (<i>Note: this could be someone pushing play on a boom-box, iPod, or computer with CD's or tapes</i>).
M.C.	1	Announcer for the day. Conducts opening and closing ceremonies and comments/updates throughout the day.
Load-in Crew	4±	Bring all equipment (such as tables) into space and set-up. Also sets-up any technical equipment and food/beverage items.
Load-out Crew	4±	Break down all equipment, clean, and re-set space.
Registration Table Staff	1-2	Check teams in as they arrive; collect Consent and Release forms (<i>if applicable</i>), distribute team packets and programs.
Info Table Staff	1-2	Distribute informational materials such as: event map, safety/evacuation plan, Jr.FLL, FLL, and <i>FIRST</i> flyers, and info on local sponsors. Can also be used as a lost & found area.
Award Presenter	1	Hands the physical award to team members.
Traffic Control/ Security	1-2	Keep exit aisles clear and activities unobstructed.
Floater	1-2	Walk around to ensure all is in order and fill in as needed.
Photographer	1	Takes pictures and snapshots of event, both posed and action!
Timekeeper	1	Watches the clock and keeps the program moving on time. Generally will queue M.C. when next part of event should start.

Note: If your event is large, or will be held in an auditorium or gymnasium, have at least one person at the registration / info table for the duration of the event to help latecomers and manage the lost and found items

Reviewers

If you have the volunteers available and plan to have Reviewers at the event, it is important to train them. The job of a Jr.FLL Reviewer is uncomplicated and fun. There is no competition or scorekeeping. Instead, teach your Reviewers to look for team innovation, creativity, pride, and energy. They should ask questions, discuss the project, and really interact with teams!

Please remember that these kids are likely experiencing the elements and art of teamwork for the very first time. At this age egos can be very fragile - please consider all this when reviewing the Show Me Posters and models. Make sure that Reviewers are instructed not to judge teams. They should show interest in each team's ideas and experience. View and print sample Reviewer questions (*coming soon*).

Reviewers should complete prior to the start of the event. They can train a week before or early the day of the event. Reviewer training will probably take about 20-30 minutes. The Reviewer Advisor should go over the process with Reviewers to ensure they understand all facets of the Jr.FLL Challenge and the purpose of the event:

The Jr.FLL Challenge – the theme and what the kids were tasked to do
The model

- The Show Me Poster
- The Hi-Five Ceremony (if you plan to do one)
- The awards list (if you plan to assign awards)

Be sure Reviewers understand the age group, the sensitivity level of the kids' egos, and the fact that teamwork may be new to the kids.

- Packets

It can be helpful to your Reviewers if you prepare packets for them, which should include:

- Team list, which includes their review teams and their event location
- Question prompt sheets for each team they will review
- Notepad or blank paper for notes

Note: Stress to Reviewers that this is not a competition. The kids should think of it as a fun learning experience.

Display and Location Ideas

The Jr.FLL Event is an amazing opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of Jr.FLL teams, and the event location can range from a classroom, home basement, backyard, or school gymnasium.

Location Ideas

Locations for an event are endless! Use whatever is available to you and use your imagination. Here are some ideas to point you in the right direction:

- Someone's backyard
- Someone's Home - Living Room, Dining Room, Basement, or Garage
- Block party or Cul de sac
- Community Center or Library
- Local field or Playground
- School - Classroom, Gymnasium, Cafeteria, or Auditorium
- Local Children's Science Museum

Display Ideas

Each team will have a Show Me Poster and a Model that should fit into a 15"x15" footprint. The poster should be a tri-fold presentation board (36"x48") or flat poster board (22"x28"). There are lots of ways to display these projects. Remember that the stars of the event are little and can easily sit on the floor! Here are some display ideas:

- Each team can display its model and poster on its own 5' round table. You can request that teams bring a table to use.
- Teams can sit on the floor behind their model and hold their poster
- Using cafeteria tables, teams can line up their model and tape their poster to the front of the table under the model
- Place models on folding chairs and the team can hold or prop the poster
- Place models on the floor and stand the poster behind it or tape it to the wall
- Place models on large window sills with posters positioned or taped above or below them

As you can see, you can modify the display area to fit the restrictions of your event space. If each team can have their own table and a large space – great! If you only have room for lining up the models up close together – great! The kids will remember more important moments from the experience, like the wonderful feeling of someone clapping for them.

Site Setup and Cleanup

If you are holding the event somewhere other than your property, visit the site and find out all rules for dropping off equipment. Ask about clean-up requirements. Some facilities will allow equipment drop-off only through a certain door and require you to remove all trash to a dumpster at the end of the event.

Setting the Tone

After weeks of preparation, everyone will be able to see the results of hard work and dedication. Your event should be a fun experience for everyone involved. Here are some ideas and tips to keep the environment fun and festive:

- Play age-appropriate music
- Have extra LEGO pieces available so kids can play
- Encourage teams to bring extra LEGO bricks
- Encourage teams to talk to other teams and ask questions about their projects

If you have a large event, it may be helpful to prepare packets for visitors. Below are some suggestions for inclusion:

Suggested Information - Visitor Packets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of event • Sponsor list (if applicable) • Schedule for the day • List of Jr.FLL teams attending • The Jr.FLL Challenge • Hi-Five & award descriptions • Jr. FLL program information • FLL program for Jr.FLL "graduates" information

For more ideas on event day, here is a sample event schedule. Remember, you can adjust the schedule according to your needs.

Sample Schedule

Time allotted: 1pm-3:30pm, with doors opening at 12:30

12:30pm: Open Doors

Teams may arrive earlier than expected so be prepared. When promoting your event make sure teams know they should arrive early so they can absorb every minute of the event and not be bogged down by last minute check-in.

12:30 – 1:00pm: Check-in & Team Setup

Be sure to make signage so teams know where to go for check-in. Some teams may rush off to their table without checking in and you don't want to chase teams down during the event.

For a large event, consider creating a map of the event facility so teams know where they are going, and include an event schedule and any event-related handouts.

It can be helpful if you send teams the schedule, check-in information, and Consent & Release Forms (if you are using them) prior to the event. By providing teams with information prior to the event, you will help ensure that the check-in process goes smoothly.

Once teams check in, they can proceed to their assigned table and set up their models and Show-Me Poster

1:00pm – 1:10pm: Opening Ceremony

The opening ceremony is a kickoff for the event and should set the tone for the day. It does not have to be elaborate; teams can stay at their tables or they can congregate closer to the ceremony area. Your Master of Ceremonies should give a big welcome and thanks to everyone participating and attending. You may take on the job of MC.

1:15pm – 2:00pm: Reviewing

The Reviewing time will vary depending on the number of teams and number of Reviewers. Generally, you want one or two Reviewers for every five to seven teams and should allot six to seven minutes for a Reviewer to speak with each team.

Please make sure your Reviewers are well versed in the type of questions to ask the children. You can provide suggested questions to them. Allow enough time for Reviewers to speak with each team without having to rush through the interview process. Please stress to them that the children should feel valued at the end of the review.

2:00pm – 2:30pm: Reviewers Discussion

While teams are with Reviewers, other teams can be playing with the extra LEGO pieces they have brought. You could also design a game for teams to play while waiting for their turn, or you could provide a LEGO building table for teams to go to after they have presented.

Once the Reviewers have had a chance to look at all teams' models and any changes made, they should meet in a separate room or area to discuss what they have learned about the teams.

Reviewers should be aware that all Jr.FLL teams receive an award. If they find that two teams are excellent candidates for one award, they are welcome to give the same award to both teams – providing you have the trophy, certificate, or medal to do that.

Please make sure that you have enough awards so there is one for each team.

This Reviewers discussion time is the perfect opportunity for teams to walk around and explore each other's work. This sharing is an extremely important aspect of the event so please be sure to allow time and space.

3:05pm – 3:30pm: Awards & Hi-Fives Ceremony

The Hi-Fives Ceremony is a time of celebration and reflection on a job well done. As teams parade up to accept their awards, they go through a lively line of "Hi-Fives" from all the Reviewers, hence the ceremony's name. Make it entertaining; you can heighten the drama by having the DJ play a drum roll or other appropriate music when teams come up to accept their awards. Refer to the Awards section for information on awards and trophy options.

Once all teams have received their award, you should thank the volunteers, parents, coaches, mentors, and, of course, teams for making this a wonderful event and that you hope to see them next year!

Awards

The Hi-Fives Ceremony can be a very fun part of an event. It allows for celebration and reflection on what teams have accomplished throughout the season. It also is an opportunity for teams to congratulate one another on their achievements.

For a Hi-Fives ceremony, have your Reviewers line up in either one straight line or two parallel lines, creating a path to the area where the awards will be given. Invite others to join in if appropriate. As teams are called up to receive their award, they run past the Reviewers getting "hi-fives" as they go. This mirrors a sporting event when the team lineups are announced!

It is very important to recognize all teams participating in your event. Remember, the event is an opportunity to share and showcase accomplishments; it is not a competition. No "ranking" awards should be given out, such as first or second place. Acknowledge and celebrate all teams for their time, efforts, and talents.

Suggestions for Awards

Below are suggestions for presentation awards. Feel free to create your own since there is no official standard on what an award should be. Multiple teams can receive the same award. Another method to "stretch" awards is to repeat them across three categories: Model, Show Me Poster, and Teamwork.

Amazing Movement Award – For incorporating a unique movement into a team's design

Gracious Professionalism Award – For exemplifying gracious professionalism during the Event. This team was thoughtful, kind, and showed respect towards others.

Against All Odds Award – For overcoming incredible odds of an unforeseen nature. This team was able to improvise, adapt, and recover out of sheer determination.

Effort and Learning Award – For a strong effort and a willingness to learn and try new things. This team prepared for success.

Complexity and Decoration Award – For beautiful model construction, with great decorative touches.

Most Explosive Award – For explosive ideas, eye catching research poster, and explosive team energy.

Robust Design Award – The team whose understanding and application of construction knowledge allowed the team to produce the most solid and sturdiest design.

Construction Innovation Award – For demonstrating an ability to think creatively. This team created excellent designs and built quality components without any instructions or outside assistance.

Stick to It Award – In spite of repeated obstacles, this team stuck together, never giving up and always looking to the next step in the face of adversity.

Team Spirit Award – For a fun team environment, a positive attitude, and constant team support and cheering.

Teamwork Award – For hard work on teamwork. Success as a team came first. Always first to a team solution, this team knows that Together Everyone Achieves More.

Inquiring Minds – For interest in science and enjoyment of the building process. Always looking to find a solution, this team kept morale up while creating smart solutions.

Independent Leadership Award – For impressive and varied designs. This team created ideas with little outside guidance. They took ideas from each team member into consideration to produce quality results.

Out of the Box Award – For innovative ideas during model construction.

“Scientist” Award – Find a famous scientist in the field of the Challenge theme.

Ordering Your Jr.FLL Awards

You are welcome to obtain your own trophies, medals, and awards or order through the Jr.FLL vendor, Crown Trophy. We have selected an assortment of awards, all with Jr.FLL logo and language.

Fundraising Ideas

Below are some ideas to help raise money or recruit in-kind donations to reduce event costs and raise funds for the team. Be sure to visit the Forum for more fundraising ideas.

- If there is a site fee, will the site consider a reduced cost because of the nature of the event?
- If you have an accounting procedure in place, charge a small registration fee for the event to help offset your costs. Based on 10 teams attending an event at \$15 to \$20 per team, this gives the event a working budget of \$150 to \$200.
- Look into sponsorship opportunities for local businesses. A \$25 to \$75 fee is minimal, and can add several hundred dollars to the coffer. They may be willing to donate additional funds to become a higher-level sponsor in return for promotion of their businesses. Offer marketing opportunities, such as hanging a banner at the event, having their names in a program booklet, or by sponsoring a particular award. Again, be creative here!
- If a business is not in a position to donate dollars, can it donate things such as the copying of forms, computer use for the day, food/drink, electrical experience, or awards such as the pins, certificates, or small trophies? Would he or she be a member of your planning committee? Would they make a call to other businesses that might help?
- Have teams bring in food items to sell or give toward a potluck meal. You could charge a minimal fee of \$2.00. Be sure to check your venues rules and any insurance requirements.
- Is there a school or community group interested in making some money? Could they coordinate the food supply for the event, while providing a community service and earning money for their organization?

Posting Your Event Online

To invite other teams to your event, you can post your event on this web site. When posting, be sure to be clear about times and registration instructions. Full posting instructions and tips are provided on the post event form.