



How to Have a Family Meeting

Weekly family meetings are an effective and enjoyable way to bring the family together and improve communication. You can use this time to set weekly goals, recognize and reward progress, and determine each member's needs and feelings.

Here are some tips to keep in mind:

1. Hold your family meetings at a regular, pleasant time—after dinner, for example.
2. Serve as a discussion leader and make sure that any ground rules are clearly explained and understood.
3. Make sure the meetings emphasize both individual and family needs, goals and accomplishments. Discuss positive events and efforts. During the meeting, you can give allowances and praise and reward behavior progress and changes. Share other relevant family information, such as an upcoming family vacation or school event to prepare for.
4. Let each family member speak without criticism or interruption. Each person should share their thoughts, feelings, achievements and hopes.
5. Don't dwell on the past. Remember that the meeting is not a time or place to scold, punish, recall past mistakes, blow off steam or single out a particular person. Those issues should be taken up separately and individually.
6. The meetings should last no more than 20 or 30 minutes unless your family wants to continue.
7. Everyone should understand and accept that parents have the final word in difficult decisions.
8. Keep a record should be kept of the main points, rewards, progress toward goals, new goals and agreements.
9. Before the meeting ends, anyone who wants to should have a chance to say how they think the meeting went. Ask what might be done to make the next meeting better.



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