

Family Meetings

Family meeting is a prearranged time when family members come together to talk about what is happening in their home and in their lives. It is structured to allow for interaction that otherwise might not occur.

Goals:

- Bring the family together for planning, communicating, and having fun together
- Share positive experiences and learn more about each other
- Discuss problems while making an effort to resolve them
- Communicate the values of equality, mutuality, and peaceful coexistence

How-To:

- Conduct a weekly meeting of 30-60 minutes
- Each meeting should be aimed for "good vibes"
- Parents should plan ahead to make the event as enjoyable as possible
- Each member has the right to bring up a problem and be heard. Together, all seek a solution to the problem
- Review solutions to previous problems

Natural Benefits of Family Meetings

- Improve communication between parents and children and relationships as a whole
- Increase bonding and time together and create a better atmosphere
- Develop problem solving skills
- Help family life run more smoothly
- Teach voting, compromising, sharing, bargaining, being a team member, and gaining self-esteem

There are many good topics for Family Meetings. Some possibilities are bedtime, allowances, care for things, children's and parents' rights, personal feelings, and family activities. Chores (division of labor) are an excellent topic for Family Meetings. A Family Meeting Notebook is extremely important. It should contain a record of each consensual decision along with any notes or minutes of the meeting agreed to by all.

Sources:

Dreikurs, R., & Soltz, R. N. (1990). *Children: The challenge*. New York: A Plum Book.
Hall, L. D., & Angelelli, J. (1994) Oregon University Extension Service. Communication through family meetings. Retrieved July 4, 2003, from <http://eesc.orst.edu/agcomwebfile/edmat/EC1436.pdf>
Gana, C. A. (2001). Families are taking care of business, with a weekly meeting. Retrived July 1, 2003, from <http://www.fww.org/famnews/4272001.htm>