

Family Meetings



Your family can use family meetings to communicate and solve problems. Your children can be meaningfully included as early as the preschool years. These meetings will teach your child to respect you and will give you an opportunity to demonstrate respect for your child. Family meetings also ensure that you will have an opportunity to instruct your child about your expectations. Family meetings are a highly effective way of dealing with siblings' complaints about one another.

Here are some suggestions for conducting effective family meetings:

- Make meetings official.
- Have meetings at a set time (ideally the same time every week), and end them on time.
- Be sure everyone follows some basic rules:
 - Let the person who is speaking finish without being interrupted.
 - Do not make fun of or judge others' ideas.
 - Promise not to use things others say during the meeting against them later.
- Ask each person for his views and feelings on the topic or problem being discussed.
- Discuss family activities as well as problems so the meetings include something positive.
- Express appreciation for each other, perhaps as a formal part of each meeting.
- Use a problem-solving strategy if necessary.
- Write down conclusions from the meeting and post them in a place where everyone can see them.
- Make the meetings fun. Consider serving dessert or pizza, or playing a game. Ask your children to suggest ideas for making the meetings a special time for the family.