

# THE INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL FAMILY MEETINGS

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Holding regular family meetings is the most efficient and effective way to discuss 'family stuff'. I wish we had known about family meetings when our kids were growing up. I know it would have made a world of difference to the running of our home.

Here are some of the **advantages** of formally meeting together.

- a) It is a quick, easy and accurate way to communicate information. (Everyone gets the same message and questions can be asked on the spot if someone is unclear).
- b) It is a place to learn how to express opinions, concerns, to share ideas and to voice big dreams.
- c) Kids learn how to solve problems and deal objectively with conflict.
- d) Families can discuss and set goals
- e) Families work on projects together, encouraging family members to learn to work as a team.
- f) It is a place where parents recognize their kids' achievements and praise them in front of the others for jobs well done.

To make these meetings **successful** here are some suggestions.

- a) Set a regular time and place.
- b) Meetings may be once every two weeks or monthly.
- c) An agenda for each meeting will ensure kids know what will be discussed. Knowing the content beforehand also gives the children a chance to prepare their contribution.
- d) Meetings need to be a fun time.
- e) Meetings should be up-beat and be kept moving forward.
- f) Ensure kids know this is a safe time and place to bring up concerns without repercussions.
- g) Rules should be set to ensure meetings run smoothly and peacefully.
  - Meetings should only be an hour maximum.
  - All family members should be present if possible.
  - Only one person should talk at a time.
  - Conversation should be respectful.
  - Nobody should feel chastised or put down. No idea is a dumb one.
  - There should be no distractions, so phones, games, TV, and computers are out.

Here are some suggestions for the **running and content of meetings**.

- a) A parent should be the chairperson initially,
- b) They ensure the agenda is followed.

- c) Start with a fun five-minute ice-breaker/game (Google 'Ice-breaker activities').
- d) Have each person relate something they like about the person to their right - this is a great way to teach kids to give and receive compliments graciously.
- e) There needs to be a short training time – a time for discussing a family value and explaining what your expectations for that value will look like in your home.
- f) Next, encourage each person to voice a concern, idea, or suggestion. Discuss solutions to any problems.
- g) Make plans for vacations or outings and set goals to fulfill them.
- h) Finish off by acknowledging good work or behavior.

Don't use meeting time to 'rip into' your kids. Remember, this is a safe place to talk about stuff. Meetings should be positive. Don't allow sabotage. If one child does not agree with decisions made, you need to be sure that they understand that the decision is for the benefit of everyone, not just them.

Kids love to meet expectations and they love to be praised. Family meetings allow every family member to appreciate the others, to share in their struggles and to witness their progress. A bond is created. It can happen to any family.

How about yours? If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at [sally@forefrontfamilies.org](mailto:sally@forefrontfamilies.org). We invite you to also check out our website at [www.forefrontfamilies.org](http://www.forefrontfamilies.org) and our blog site at [www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com](http://www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com) for further assistance.