

The Family Meeting

Establishing a regular and recurring “family meeting” in your household is a great way to build and strengthen family relationships. Setting aside a dedicated time each week to discuss upcoming events, family successes, household rules, and behavioral expectations can have a tremendous impact on the positive functioning of the household. A regularly occurring family meeting can help parents and caregivers stay focused on building positive behaviors and addressing challenging behaviors, reminds children of behavioral expectations, helps children stay motivated and focused on making positive behavioral choices, and provides a chance to reflect on upcoming family fun and other events. The family meeting helps the whole family stay on track, and gives the family a chance to connect amidst the hustle and bustle of our busy lives.

Suggestions for topics to discuss in your family meeting (with examples):

- The household rules and expectations
 - “Remember everyone, bedtime routines begin at 7:30.”
 - “Let’s keep working on our household rule of keeping hands on our own bodies.”
- Recognizing and praising the accomplishments of each member in the family over the past week
 - “John has been working so hard this week on earning stickers for his chart for *first-time listening*.”
 - “Mom had a great meeting this week with her boss. He was really proud of her hard work on the big presentation.”
 - “Dad made some really delicious dinners this week. Thanks for cooking for the family Dad.”
- Reviewing upcoming events
 - “We are going to Grandma’s house next weekend.”
 - “Daniel, your special event is this week at school.”
 - “Tomorrow night will be family game night!”
- Discussing plans for improvement in behaviors

- “Stephanie, I want you to remember to use an inside voice when you are at home. I know you are going to work hard on using an inside voice this week.”
- “Brad has been working so hard on cleaning up his toys before bed and he has been earning all of his stickers on his chart. Let’s add something new to your chart, Brad, since you have been doing so well. Let’s add putting your clothes in the hamper each night before bed. I know you can do it and earn your stickers for that too.”

Tips for a successful family meeting

- Select a regular meeting day and time
- Pick a time when all family members can be present at the meeting
- Put away electronic devices and turn off the television
- Parents/caregivers should meet prior to the meeting to plan and review items to discuss at the meeting – this helps the parents/caregivers show the family that they are a team and helps parent/caregiver brainstorm areas for behavioral improvement
- Keep meetings positive – put more focus on how to solve problems and improve behaviors rather than focusing on negative behaviors.
- Remember to plan for family fun and get input from all family members on fun activities that family can participate in together (both inside and outside the home)