

# FAMILY MEETING: Materials for Copying

## Contents

How to Get Started .....	Page 1
How to Run a Family Meeting .....	Page 2
Agenda page .....	Page 3
Front Cover (optional) .....	Page 4



## Note to Counselors/Therapists:

This document contains materials that you may copy and distribute to your clients to assist them in holding family meetings at home.

**Suggestion:** Make a ***Family Meeting Binder*** for the family to take home. The inexpensive binders available at office supply stores (we purchase them at Office Depot, under \$2.50 each) work well. For each binder:

1. Make one copy of page 1 (How to Get Started)
2. Make one copy of page 2 (How to Run a Family Meeting)
3. Make several copies of page 3 (Agenda)
4. (Optional) If you purchase a binder with a clear vinyl overlay that allows you to insert a page in the front cover of the binder, the family can customize their family meeting book. They can make thier own cover or copy page 5 and have them add their artwork to that page.



# Family Meetings: How to Get Started

**Who should attend:** Family meetings should include parents, children and others who live with the family, such as grandparents, aunts and uncles. In other words, anyone who has a stake in decisions affecting the daily life of the household should be present at family meetings.

**Time and Place:** Select a time that is convenient for everyone who will be attending. Sunday afternoons or evenings are often a good time. The family is more likely to be together at that time and the past week can be reviewed and the coming week anticipated. The meetings should be held in a comfortable spot, perhaps around a large table with room for everyone to pull up a chair.

**The First Meeting:** Make the first meeting a short one. Have just one item of new business on the agenda. (Perhaps plan a family outing or a time for fun together right after the meeting.) Later meetings can be longer and follow a more extensive agenda.

**Pinning Ahead:** Keep a blank Agenda page on the bulletin board or refrigerator. As problems, complaints, or questions come up during the week, have your children write them down on a list. The list becomes the basis for that week's Agenda.)

## What if ...

### **Some family members refuse to attend?**

Some family members may not be ready to discuss matters in a family meeting, or may think the idea is not a good one. This doesn't mean that you should abandon the idea altogether. Begin with those willing to attend. Those who do not attend at first may decide to attend later, when they see the advantages.

**Parents are separated or divorced?** Families affected by separation or divorce can still hold family meetings. In those cases, it is important to limit discussion to what happens at your own household, and not discuss matters pertaining to what happens at the home of the other parent. (If your child has a problem at the other household, you can certainly listen to your child's concerns, but this should happen outside of the family meeting.)

**After discussing a topic, family members can't agree on a decision?** Parents always have the final say. However, in most cases, an open-minded and respectful discussion will lead to a consensus--a plan that everyone feels comfortable with. Be sure to express appreciation to your children for their contributions to the final plan.

## Benefits of Family Meetings

**If you hold regular family meetings, you will see improvement in your child's:**

- **Communication skills**
- **Motivation to solve problems**
- **Problem solving skills**
- **Respect for others**
- **Cooperation**

### **Other benefits:**

Hold onto the weekly notes of your meetings. Over time, they will provide a wonderful record of your child's growth. Some day in the future, you and your child will enjoy looking over this record, reminiscing about the "old days", and appreciating how much your child has matured.

# How to Run a Family Meeting

## Leadership Roles at the Family Meeting

1) The **Chairperson** follows the Meeting Format (below). The chairperson's job is to keep the discussion on track and see to it that everyone's opinion is heard. An adult should take this role initially, but after a routine has been established, older children can take turn with this job.

2) The **Secretary** takes notes on the **Agenda** (next page) regarding any decisions made during the meeting.

## Meeting Format

### 1. Compliments

Say "Thanks!" to each other for good deeds done or for help given during the week. You can also acknowledge accomplishments and encourage efforts. Each person should take a turn to give a compliment to every family member.

### 2. Apologies

We all make mistakes sometimes. If, during the past week, you've been inconsiderate or hurt someone's feelings, take the opportunity to "clear the air." Don't make excuses, just give a simple but sincere apology.

### 3. Minutes.

Read the notes from the last meeting. Have the plans that you made been working?

**4. Old Business.** If the plans made at the last meeting haven't been working, those topics can be discussed further.

**5. New business.** Discuss new topics, questions, complaints, or problems listed on the agenda.

### 6. Fun.

After the meeting is adjourned, stay together for a game, outing, or a dessert. Enjoy each other's company!

## How to solve a problem: Brainstorm!

If your family has a problem that is tough to resolve, **brainstorm** for solutions. Brainstorming is a creative process, in which no idea is considered "wrong."

### Here's how:

1. On a piece of paper, write down *any and all* ideas that family members can come up with. **Don't reject any ideas** during this stage. Sometimes a silly idea leads to another idea, which leads to the perfect solution!
2. Try to come up with at least **five** ideas; **ten** is even better.
3. After the brainstorming is complete, go through the list and discuss the **pros and cons** of each idea. Give everyone a chance to speak.
4. Decide on a plan and try it out. If it doesn't work, bring the topic up again at another meeting. Keep working on it. Don't give up. **Every problem has a solution!**

# FAMILY MEETING

**AGENDA** During the week, use this space to write down questions, problems, and plans that might be discussed at the next family meeting.

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

## Meeting Format

### 1. Compliments.

Say thanks to each other for good deeds done or for help given during the week. You can also acknowledge accomplishments and encourage efforts.

### 2. Minutes.

Read minutes of the last meeting. Have plans that you made been working?

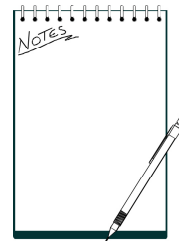
**3. Old Business.** Topics from last meeting can be discussed further.

**4. New business.** Discuss new topics, questions, complaints, or problems listed on the **AGENDA**.

### 5. Fun.

After the meeting is adjourned, stay together for a game, outing, or a dessert. Enjoy each other's company!

**Date of Meeting:** \_\_\_\_\_



Topics discussed:

Decisions made:

1	_____	_____
		_____
2	_____	_____
		_____
3	_____	_____
		_____
4	_____	_____
		_____

## Brainstorm!

If your family has a problem that is tough to resolve, **brainstorm** for solutions. Brainstorming is a creative process, in which no idea is considered wrong.

### Here's how:

1) On the back of this page, write down any and all ideas that family members can come up with. **Don't reject any ideas** during this stage. Sometimes a silly idea leads to another idea, which leads to the perfect solution! (Try to come up with at least 5 ideas; 10 is even better.)

2) After the brainstorming is complete, go through the list and discuss the **pros and cons** of each idea. Give everyone a chance to speak.

3) Decide on a plan and try it out. If it doesn't work, bring the topic up again at another meeting. Keep working on it. Don't give up. **Every problem has a solution!**

