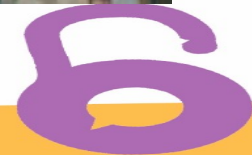


Family Meetings



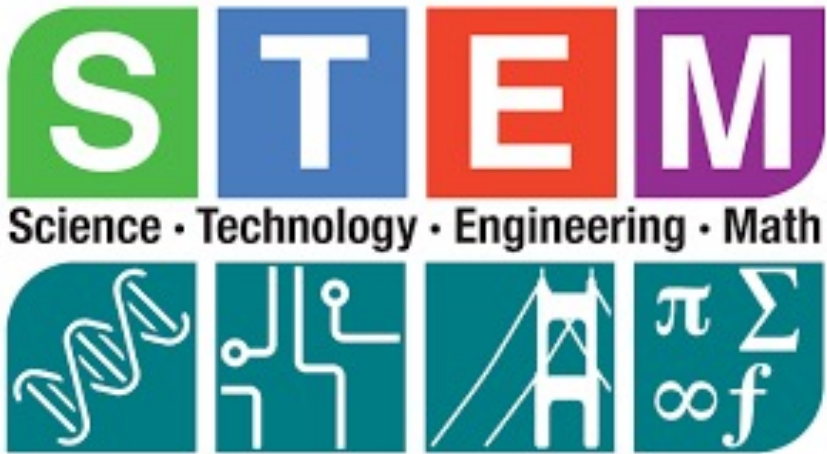
- family meetings usually serve one or more of the following purposes:



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BULLYING**

STEM Education

Family Meeting



Appropriate Topics For Consideration



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school-day 

Days of the Week

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Needed

Why Have Class Meetings

- **Kids are involved in constructive decisions making. It is a forum for students to voice and directly effect how they want their class to be.**
- **It creates a climate of trust and respect between kids and kids and teachers**
- **It helps build self esteem by having kids involved in decisions that affect their world.**



What is an Effective Class Meeting?

- The teacher “shares the control” with students by letting them help set the agenda. The focus is always on school, not home.
- Students do most of the talking and the teacher acts as facilitator. The teacher teaches students to really listen to and respect each others’ ideas.
- Students work together to improve the learning environment, friendships and cooperative group work through class plans.
- Individual students with problems or conflicts seek help and ongoing support from their classmates.



Seven Building Blocks for Effective Class Meetings

- Form a circle.
- Practice compliments and appreciations
- Create an agenda.
- Develop communication skills
- Learn about separate realities.
- Practice brainstorming and role playing.
- Recognize the reasons people do what they do



Sample Topics

- Relationships
 - What can I do when a person is bugging me?
 - What can I do when I'm feeling left out?
 - What can I do when someone hurts my feelings?
 - How can I help my friends do the right thing?
 - What can I do when my friend won't share me with my other friends?



- Working in small groups
 - What would help us bring the best out of everyone when we work in small groups?
 - What could we do to help from the teacher without getting too embarrassed?
 - What could we do when our group isn't working very well together?



- Attitude toward school
 - What really works for me at school?
 - What can I do when school is not much fun?
 - What can I do when I'm becoming turned off to school?
- Places and activities that are not routine

How can we make a field trip, guest speaker, or assembly work for everyone?



- Lunch and Free Time
 - How can we make lunch free-time enjoyable for everyone
 - How can we help our friends do the right thing during lunch and free time?
- Diversity/teasing
 - How can we help everyone feel respected?
 - What can we do when we see or are targets of teasing and harassment?



Establishing Ground Rules

- Listening and Getting a Turn to Speak
- *Important to help students see that class meetings are about them coming to understandings as a group, and that this requires them not to hog the floor and to speak and listen to teach other. Need to help students learn to speak to each other*
- *Older kids can learn to have conversations without raising hands, without interrupting, etc. with practice and time*
- Raising hands, teacher can still call on them, but direct with speech or nods to talk to others. NO one has hands up while someone is talking
- Teddy bear, talking stick, wand.
- **Avoiding put downs**
- Ground rule
- Discuss problems without naming names
- Eventually need to learn to speak respectfully but deal with problems and take responsibility
- Norm is on solving problems



Establishing Ground Rules

- **DURATION**
- Depends on age and experience of students
- Depends on topic(s) and purpose of the meeting
- Primary concern is not too long or too short
- Don't want students to feel abridged or frustrated because they didn't get to express their concerns.
- If an important topic comes up you want to be able to address it.



- How To Manage and Encourage Participation
 - Brainstorming
 - Small-Group Discussions
 - Partner Chats
 - Individual Reflection and Writing



- Partner Idea Lists - *you want them to brainstorm and record, encourage them to listen carefully to each other – no interrupting! Then have them discuss lists, telling each other what they do or do not like about each idea and star the ideas that are most important to both partners*
- Collected Ideas - *one group give one idea, all groups with same idea raise hands. Invite another group to offer a different idea.*



Troubleshooting

(I) Nobody talking - Is it because they are so interested? – Ask them to tell their idea to a partner. Is it because they are not interested - Rephrase the question, add interest, or drop. Check, is it because they have not heard the topic – Get their attention, check your timing, review the ground rules

(II) Side conversations - Do they understand – Rephrase the question and give more info? Are they interested – add interest or drop topic. Do they need to think more, to formulate their ideas – work with partners, or write ideas down.



Troubleshooting *cont.*

(III) Shocking or “funny” or “stupid” statements - Is it really in order to get attention or to cover up embarrassment – deal with this directly. Keep your sense of humor. Sometimes you may have a private talk with person if repeated. Check, is it from an inability to express themselves clearly – rephrase, “do you mean” or ask them to rephrase and give them time.



Troubleshooting *cont.*

(IV) Everybody talking - How can I stop the behavior and not build resentment? How can I help the person take responsibility for his behavior. Ask person to leave the group until she or he is able to return without being disruptive?



- Planning and Decision Making Meetings
- Ways we want our class to be
- Class name
- Back-to-school night/open house
- Substitutes
- Choosing to learn



- Check In Meetings
- Is this the way we want to be?
- What did we learn?
- How did it go with the substitute?



- Problem Solving Meetings
- My friends won't let me play
- Cliques
- Problem Solving





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THINGS TO THINK ABOUT



When is a problem suitable for a class meeting?

- Is this an issue that can be discussed in a climate of trust?
- Does this issue affect all of the children or most of them.
- Is this the best time to address the problem
- If the issue involves specific students, do all parties involved agree to have the problem taken to the class?



Ways to Begin Meetings

- Explain meetings
- Talk about student's hopes for the meeting
- Record student ideas
- Have a partner chat
- Engage students' personal experiences
- Introduce vocabulary or concepts
- Remind students of earlier meeting results or topics
- Read a related story



Ways to End Meetings

- Post a list and ask students to keep thinking about it
- Preview the next meeting
- Reflect on the meeting – process, results, learning
- Ask for volunteers to create a document about what you did
- Establish a timeline for completing activities
- Celebrate what you have accomplished
- Add final observations

