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## **FAMILY MEETINGS\*\***

**PURPOSE:** To solve family problems; to teach respect for other family members; to teach communication and negotiation skills; to help children feel appropriate power within the family; to help children understand and respect the consequences of their behavior.

**TIME:** Once a week. (Select a time with minimal distractions.)

**LENGTH:** 20-30 minutes. (Set a timer to ensure focused meetings.)

**MATERIALS:** List posted where family members can write problems to be discussed at next meeting. Notebook for recording minutes of each meeting.

### **FORMAT:**

Start each meeting with compliments. Each member of the family compliments another member. The recipient of the compliment responds with "Thank you." (ex: Tom says, "I compliment Janice on helping me with my homework last night." Janice replies, "Thank you.")

Read minutes of the previous meeting. Ask how those decisions are working.

Read the first problem. Allow the writer of that problem to describe the situation. Ask others involved to explain their positions. Allow solutions or compromises to be worked out. Note decisions in minutes. Move on to next problem.

Proceed with each problem until time runs out.

End each meeting with a simple but special treat or activity.

**NOTE:** The success of family meetings depends on the ability of family members to create a safe environment in which negotiation can take place. Avoid all forms of hostility or condemnation.

\*\*Adapted from Jane Nelsen's book Positive Discipline.

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