

## Family Meetings 101

Family meetings provide opportunities for feelings to be aired and validated. They also allow younger children to feel they are an important part of the decision-making process when it comes to family vacations and other major and minor family functions.

Before the first meeting commences, set a few ground rules such as:

- \* Speak in a calm tone.
- \* Avoid name-calling, finger-pointing, and sarcasm.
- \* Turn off the TV, radio and telephones.
- \* Allow each person to voice his or her concerns and ideas.
- \* Listen to all opinions before making a decision.
- \* If a person voices a complaint, they must also bring to the table at least one possible remedy to the situation.

Locations for future family meetings may also be brainstormed at the first meeting. Here are a few examples:

### \* Circle Time

Very simply, sit on the floor together, in a circle. Designate an object as a "talking token". This can be a small stuffed animal, a necklace to be worn, a hat, or any other item that will be passed around. Whoever holds the talking token may speak. Once they are finished, they must pass the token to the next person.

### \* Restaurant Rendezvous

Take turns choosing a favorite restaurant to host your family meetings. For this option, choose an afternoon or evening in the middle of the week, or at off-peak times, to avoid heavy crowds. End the meeting before dessert arrives, so everyone can indulge their sweet tooth happily.

### # Hobby Haven

I know of several families who hold their meetings at places that cater to their favorite hobbies. For instance, one family conducts their meeting at a bowling alley. Once the meeting is over, they enjoy bowling together. Another family combines their gathering with their love of books, by meeting at a café in their favorite bookstore. And yet another family I know holds their weekly meeting after a joyful round of put-put golf. This option combines family communication and fun.

However, and wherever, your family decides to host the meetings, remember this all-important point: Always end each meeting with a hug!

Deborah Shelton is a mother, freelance writer, and author of the brand new book, "The Five Minute Parent: Fun & Fast Activities for You and Your Little Ones.

By: Deborah Shelton

Source: [www.familyarticles.net](http://www.familyarticles.net)