

Goals Of The Family Council



To give every family member a chance to express themselves freely and to listen to the ideas and concerns of other family members.



To provide all members opportunities to participate in the responsibilities of the family.



To provide a structure for resolving everyday problems of family members.



To make family life more enjoyable by creating a framework for discussion, problem solving and decision making.



To help prepare youngsters for accepting and fulfilling their personal, as well as family responsibilities.

“Communication is at the heart of a healthy family.”

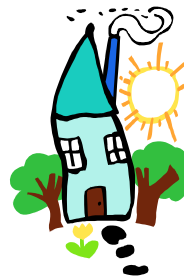
In The Family Council Model Children Learn...

The value of sharing ideas, using their own and the perspectives of others to find satisfying solutions to problems.

The habits of good communication, mutual collaborative problem solving and responsible family membership.

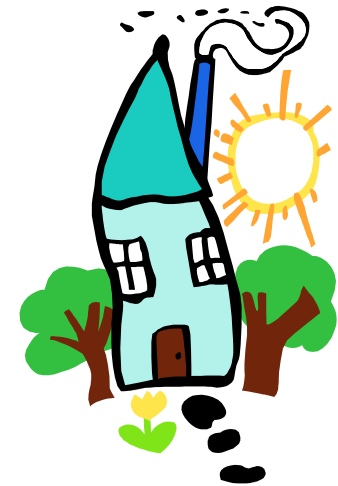
To consider the interests and concerns of others.

To cooperate, sacrifice, and share for the common good of the family.



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THE PEACEABLE HOME



Communication
Through
The Family Council

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THE FAMILY COUNCIL

The Family Council, at its simplest, is a gathering of all family members for the purpose of sharing ideas.

In detail, The Family Council is a forum where cooperative discussion of common interests take place and where all members of the family household sit together, encourage one another in their endeavors, and reach decisions concerning family matters.

ADVANTAGES OF THE FAMILY COUNCIL

- Every member who is old enough to express an opinion is included.
- Sensitivity to the needs of others is stimulated.
- Consideration for the other family members and their interests replaces satisfaction of solely personal desires.
- The Family Council draws attention to, and raises the awareness of all family members that no one person needs to, nor should have to shoulder the full responsibility for maintaining the home.
- All members of the family have a responsibility to make the family work.
- Assures all that there will be scheduled opportunities for family members to have their concerns, ideas and problems aired

PRINCIPLES OF THE FAMILY COUNCIL

Anytime there is a desire to shape a new way of doing things, the effort is made easier when there are clear principles to follow:

Principle: The Family Council is based first of all on mutual respect, trust, equality and collaboration. These are the foundational values of The Family Council model.

Principle: The Family Council is a vehicle to encourage responsibility and to promote initiative and cooperation among family members.

Principle: A Family Council provides each family member with a sense of “age appropriate” respected status within the family, both in regards to rights and responsibility.

Principle: A Family Council helps parents/caretakers to model and apply faith-filled family values and democratic principles into daily living.

Principle: The Family Council models and encourages the practice of listening earnestly and valuing what each family member has to say, no matter what the age or status in the family.

Principle: The Family Council provides a structure for working out family problems in the context of care, understanding, mutual respect and collaboration.

ESTABLISHING A FAMILY COUNCIL IN YOUR HOME

The challenge for parents /caretakers is to make The Family Council a reality

- First attempts at building a Family Council work best when orchestrated by the adults. Gradually, children can be nurtured into taking more responsibility in organizing and even chairing the meetings.
- As regularly as possible, have a prepared agenda. An agenda gives even the youngest member a chance to form thoughts or opinions about what will be discussed and decided. Children can be encouraged to place items on the agenda.
- At times, it may be impossible to reach an agreement on a particular agenda item such as vacations. It may be necessary to postpone a decision until the next meeting. All members are encouraged to think about the matter in the meantime and to be prepared to voice their opinions..
- When deciding chores, children ought to have choices in the jobs they do. Children can have choices as to when they do them, as long their choice does not interfere with the rest of the family members. If a child or adult fails to follow through with responsibility, the matter can be taken up at the next meeting. The family discusses and decides on ways to deal with the failure of the child or adult to follow through.
- Each person who expresses a complaint or problem is encouraged to present a possible solution(s).
- All members are to be encouraged and reminded to exercise patience to function under circumstances not completely to their liking.
- Sample meeting agenda items can include to: assignment of chores; vacation choices; rules for use of TV, computer, etc.; family prayer time; homework time; curfew; attendance at meal time, sharing, etc.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

Before holding the first meeting of The Family Council, discuss some rules and norms for how the meetings will be conducted. Then hold to the rules. If weekly meetings are used by the adults to preach, scold or impose their will, The Family Council will fail. Don't get discouraged if early Family Council meetings are not as successful or peaceful as you had hoped for. Model skills and behaviors that assure that meetings are “life giving” and promote peace and collaboration.

Both adults and children will learn from The Family Council.