

A Staff Meeting “Family Style”

Spending quality time with your children can be tough in today's world of hectic schedules. Parents are busy working, transporting kids, attending meetings, and trying to meet the challenge of having a social life. How do families find the time and energy to spend it with one another? Many don't. Many are too tired to enjoy quality time with their children by the time their workday is over. It's not that they don't want to spend time with the kids, they simply are too burned out. Then, the weekend arrives which can consist of grocery shopping, completing chores, and running errands. Who has time for fun with the kids?

Don't give up. Although having quality time with your children is challenging, it isn't impossible. It simply takes some creativity and strategic planning. There are some basic business principles used in managing employees that can be emulated on the home front to assist you in creating quality time with your family. These standards revolve around organization and consistency. When you think of a business meeting or staff meeting, what comes to mind? Meetings in the workplace are very organized and they usually oc-

cur the same time of day, a given number of times per month. Creating “staff meetings” with your family members is an excellent way to take the time, on a regular basis, to assess where everyone is at with their lives. Meeting regularly ensures every family member is aware of what is going on. It allows for family input and support when problems arise. Furthermore, if you make the meeting positive and enjoyable, the children will actually look forward to getting together on a regular basis. Listed below are 5 steps towards creating a successful and productive meeting with your family members.

1). Schedule your weekly meeting on a Sunday. This allows each of you to review everyone's schedule for the upcoming week. This way, transportation needs can be finalized and scheduling conflicts can be minimized. Schedule it at a time when everyone has energy, perhaps before or immediately following a meal.

2). Make the meeting positive and fun. If you schedule it after a meal, eat dessert during your meeting. Or, have a special snack reserved only

for “family staff meetings”. Use a special tablecloth, napkins, plates, etc. to create the special time. If the children are small, reserve a special treat or sticker to reward them after the meeting is adjourned.

3). During your staff meeting, have each family member sum up how their week went.

State whether it was a good or bad week and why. Then, instruct each person to offer 2 or 3 things they are thankful for from this week. By voicing gratitude, each member comes away with a positive feeling. Parents can utilize this time to give positive feedback to their children by saying something like, “I'm thankful Nicole did well at camp this week by participating in all the activities”. The more specific you are, the better. If you want to take the meeting further, have each member state his or her goals for the upcoming week. To make it less intimidating, have each person choose one goal to focus on for the week. Then, each of you can discuss the results the following week. Keep in mind, the depth and duration of these meetings will correlate to the ages and attention spans of your chil-

dren. Little ones will need a short & sweet meeting time.

4). At the beginning of each month in your staff meeting, choose 1-2 days out of the month set aside for Family Fun Time.

This can be an all day event, as in a road trip. Or, it could consist of 4 hours at the museum. It can be fun for the children if all family members write on small pieces of paper places they would like to see or things they would like to do as a family. Fold each one and place in a jar or hat. At the beginning of each month, draw two (or however many you want to do) out of the jar and plan them out for the month. This assures each person has a chance at doing something s/he wants to do.

5). Also at the beginning of each month, create special days for just you and your child.

Moms and dads should reserve their own day with each child. Knowing that time is a premium, schedule whatever you can allow to be alone with your child. Some families may only be able to create one day for the month depending on the size of their family and their workload. That's okay. Once a month is better than nothing. It also doesn't have to be anything elaborate. Your special day could consist of going for a drive and getting ice cream. Or, it could be going to the ballpark or zoo for the day. The point is to schedule special time in which you and your child can connect. You will be surprised how your children will look forward to these special days with you.

Businesses schedule meetings for a reason. If they didn't, the company would lack organization, time management, communication, and team effectiveness. Families are no different. By scheduling regular family staff meetings, you will be more aware of each person's life and better prepared for the weeks ahead. You will feel more in control of your family's schedules and more organized in accommodating transportation needs, etc. More importantly, you will be satisfied knowing you are making the time to be with the ones you love most.



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