

Step 5



How can a family reduce stress during this time of uncertainty? What can help keep or bring happiness to your family during the COVID-19 crisis or anytime?

In the fourth post in this series, I shared how some of the procedures to make your new family system go! In this, the fifth post in the series, I will share what the important Weekly Family Planning Meeting is and does.

Just as the name suggests, this meeting allows the family to prepare the work for the next week. Careful planning and participation by each family member is important to reduce (maybe even avoid) “run-time surprises.” Examples of these are such things as:

“Mom, today is my day to bring snacks and I need 30 healthy snacks at school by 10.”

“The school play is at 1:30 today. Can you come?”

The Weekly Family Planning Meeting (WFPM) also provides family members an opportunity to see all they did and be appreciated for it; it also allows the kids to have a voice in the planning process. This is good to get by in and create a sense of ownership. The WFPM takes place on Sunday night and should not last more than 45 minutes.

The meeting is broken into 3 parts: retrospective, allowance and planning. Let’s start with the retrospective.

Any topic of family life is open for discussion and typical retrospective learning includes events from the week that parents were unaware of, such as:

“I didn’t like it when Sam hit me.” Or “Jason was really annoying when my friend was over.”

The retrospective seeks out answers to these questions. Not only is the process open for discussion but also the behaviors & experiences of the individuals.

1. What went well this week?
2. What things should be improved next week?
3. What will we commit to changing next week?

Everyone is called on and each person must answer these questions before moving on.

The resulting commitments can be posted by your board so that all can see them throughout the week. The list is for group and individual commitments. An example of something always on my list reads, “I will exercise 5 days this week-Dad.”

This step is very important for the kids because they begin to sense greater control in their lives. In this meeting, they can, with respect, criticize mom, dad or each other. This is an important skill that most don’t learn until adulthood. They can affect change in the plan & influence others to their position.

In step 6 we will talk about the next two pieces of the WFPM, allowance and planning.