



Family Council – Tips for Success

Build and sustain interest

- Place posters in the facility.
- Ask administration to include your information in mailouts.
- Talk to staff about the Family Council.
- Include your information in orientation packages for new families.
- Survey friends/families of residents to see what educational opportunities they would like the family council to offer.

Some challenges

- Everyone's busy, so build meeting schedules that will enable friends and families to attend.
- Families and friends of residents are often reluctant to offer ideas, suggestions, or complaints, so create a safe, comfortable, confidential environment for discussion in your meetings.
- Avoid meetings that are just full of despair. Depressing meetings discourage attendance. Include celebrating successes and focusing on improvement. Try to make meetings enjoyable.
- Some stakeholders will resist family councils. Make sure all others are aware of your goals. Collaborate with your administrators, help to identify needs, and offer ideas. Try to build relationships (and not walls) with all caregivers and administrators. Invite administrators to the meetings when you need their involvement. Learn and practice effective methods of advocacy.
- Family Councils have "turnover". Always work to attract new members.
- Sometimes change is slow. Be patient.
- Sometimes your advocacy efforts will take you outside of your community. Consider linking with the many voices that are available in a regional association of family councils.