



## ***Running Effective Parent Meetings***

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Parent meetings for your dance team are held to inform parents of important information, upcoming events, etc. and should be quick and concise. Schedule parent meetings when you feel they are appropriate. Some teams have regularly scheduled monthly meetings so that they can keep the parents informed and involved, while others meet only before big events (the beginning of football season, the start of competition season, etc.) and still others call meetings whenever they feel there is a lot of information to get out to the parents. No matter how often you meet with the parents, it is important as a coach to do all that you can to prepare for a parent meeting so that it doesn't turn into a multiple hour question and answer session. Here are a few things to keep in mind when planning for a parent meeting.

### ***Before the meeting***

1. **Notification.** This could be done on the team calendar, through email, by posting it on the team website, or via information being sent home. Notification should be a few weeks prior to the meeting to insure that parents can clear space in their schedule to attend.
2. **Know what you want to discuss at the meeting.** Have an outline prepared to guide you so that you can stay focused on the information that needs to be given out.
3. **Prepare paperwork.** Type up an agenda to pass out for parents so that they know what topics will be discussed. Be sure to include important dates/times on the agenda so that they can refer back to it later. Also have copies of any calendars, permission forms, itineraries, etc. that are being handed out ready to go.

### ***At the Meeting***

1. **Introduction.** Welcome parents to the meeting. Pass out the agendas as they are arriving to save time. Mention the main topics that you will be discussing and remind them that this meeting is informative. Let them know that if they have a question or concern about their dancer you will handle that on an individual basis at the conclusion of the meeting. Establishing that you will take care of questions and concerns at the end of the meeting individually will alleviate the meeting turning into one big question and answer session that you may or may not be prepared for.

2. **Agenda.** Stick to the agenda. Allow time for questions at the end of each topic if they need more specific information about what is being discussed.
3. **Handling questions.** If a question is asked that is off topic or a comment is mentioned that could cause other parents to feel the need to voice their opinions, be sure to turn the focus back to the agenda as quickly as possible. Let the parent know, that brought up the question or comment, that you will be happy to discuss that concern with them at the meeting's end. It is important not to allow the meeting to turn into an open forum so that you can maintain control of the topics that are being discussed. There could be a situation that many feel passionate about and you do not want parents to gang up against each other, or worse, you.
4. **Closing the Meeting.** Once you have gone through the agenda be sure to review the key points discussed. If you need to have parents stay after to sign up to volunteer for an upcoming event remind them of that. Close by welcoming them to speak with you if they have any questions, comments, or concerns that they feel you should be aware of.
5. **After the Meeting.** Stay present for a few minutes so that if a parent needs to approach you about a subject you are available. If you are approached by an overly aggressive parent do not get into a heated discussion. Welcome them to schedule a time that they may come back and discuss the matter with you and an administrator in a conference setting. Share your time with the parents that stay after. Each of them is concerned about what they want to speak with you about and you want to be fair and give them all an equal amount of time with you.

### ***The Day After the Meeting***

1. **Answer Questions.** Be sure to get back to any parents that you were unable to answer questions for the day before. If you promised to look into something, do it right away so that they have an answer to their concern.
2. **Contact.** Send out a mass email with the agenda and any important points that were brought up to all of the parents from the dance team. This is to insure that they have all of the information that was given out and to bring any parents up to date that were unable to attend the meeting.
3. **Website.** If there is an established website for your dance team, post the agenda from the meeting online. Also include any handouts and paperwork that were given out so that everyone has access to any information they may have missed.

Parent meetings don't have to be stressful. Keep in mind that they are a great way for you shine as a coach. Parents will appreciate your willingness to meet with them face to face to give them information and that you made yourself available to help them with individual concerns they may have had. The more prepared you are with the information you are giving out the more the parents will trust the fact that their dancer is in good hands during practices and performances.