Review these tips to help get the most out of your family’s time together.

- **Commit to being present.** This means being on time, prepared and focused. Do not let phones, computers, other people, etc., interrupt your family meeting time.

- **Involve every family member age 3 and older.** People will not “buy into” an idea unless they feel like they are a valued part of a group. Adults (parents) still make all adult decisions. Family wellness meetings are a time to decide on how to spend time together and who will help with which chores, do a weekly check of everyone’s calendars and solve household problems while learning about productive meetings.

- **Only allow one person to speak at a time.** Everyone deserves to be heard. If you need a visual, use a “talking spoon.” Only the person who holds the spoon can talk. Once finished, pass the talking spoon to the next person for his or her turn to speak.

- **Talk in a calm fashion.** If a family member is experiencing very strong emotions, take a break from the meeting until everyone is calm and ready to resume.

- **Use “I” statements.** Blaming others can be an easy thing to do. Instead of saying “you do this” or “you don’t do that,” use “I” statements to share your thoughts and feelings and take ownership of them. “I feel frustrated when food is left out of the fridge.”

- **Listen to everyone.** Be respectful and listen with your eyes and ears. Restate important points of others to show them you are listening.

- **Make decisions based on consensus.** Don’t let one family member call all the shots. If everyone is really in agreement, the plan likely will become reality.

- **Rotate meeting responsibilities.** Share responsibilities with other family members who are able to perform the tasks. Take turns to have a different leader at each meeting. Rotate who is the note taker. Let all who are able take on active roles in family wellness meetings. Remember to keep responsibilities age appropriate, though. Babies and young children should be included when sharing affirmations, but they may be more of a distraction during the meeting. Consider holding family wellness meetings at naptime or after babies and toddlers are in bed to avoid distractions.

- **Begin or end the meeting by taking turns affirming each family member.** Share your love and respect for each other by highlighting each other’s greatness. Tell each other the positive energy each person brings to the family. A side benefit is that everyone will love attending family wellness meetings.

- **Some families end with a group activity, game, special meal or dessert.**

- **Establish a specific meeting time.** Weekly, short and fun is a good way to start. Use the same time of day and location when possible.

- **Post a list** where everyone can add items throughout the week. Use the list as the agenda for the next meeting.

- **Establish and stick to time limits.**

- **Keep a family meeting log or notebook.** Add photos from your family activities, and this becomes a cherished family history book.