

Tips for a Successful Group Discussion

1. Meet somewhere where parents feel comfortable speaking freely and openly and set some ground rules. Some suggestions are someone's home or a reserved room at a community center. Decide how to set up the room based on number attending and meeting format. Some options: lecture style, one long table or several round tables.
2. Decide how long the meeting will be and stick with it. One hour is good. Set aside a few minutes at the beginning for mingling. Folks can stay after to mingle as well.
3. Provide snacks! Snacks can be simple – water bottles and cookies are always a winner.
4. Be bold: at end of meeting, declare the group's intention to hold off on social media through middle school (or longer) and invite others to make the commitment alongside you. Example: "We plan to delay social media for our kids through 8th grade. There are seven families in this group already committed. We hope you will join us."
5. Recap major points made during meeting before you wrap up. For example, "Some recurring themes I heard today from our speaker (or panelists) were.....".
6. Thank parents & guardians for attending the meeting. "We appreciate you taking the time to discuss this important issue & band together for the best interest of our children."
7. Follow-up: send out an email reiterating key points made during the meeting (see #5 above). You might want to send out a Google survey afterwards to gauge commitment for delaying smart phones or social media. Consider a Facebook page for parents to post updates and relevant articles.
8. Decide how often your group will meet. Our group meets twice a year – May and November.
9. The discussion needs to be parent-led whenever possible to increase connection within the group. Even if you bring in an outside speaker, the opening and closing of the meeting should be parent-led. Maybe one parent opens the meeting and a parent from a different family closes the meeting. The more organic the discussion can be – the better – connection among the families is key.