

Classroom meetings are a school-wide strategy that develops prosocial skills so that students learn how to handle problems proactively and independently. Classroom meetings provide a safe place for healthy and respectful relationships to be developed in an authentic classroom context.

This learning guide is designed for use by instructional leaders and learning communities, or as a self-paced study to explore school-wide behavioural supports.



This learning guide is intended to be used after viewing the video clip [Classroom Meetings: Helping Children Develop Prosocial Skills](#).

**Big idea:** One of the first school-wide strategies implemented at Anne Fitzgerald School was teaching children the necessary language and thinking processes to solve their own problems. This was both a transparent and transportable strategy built in classroom meetings.

### Key understandings:

- Problem solving is the ability to think about how you are feeling, identify what the problem is, identify possible solutions, choose a solution and evaluate the outcome.
- One strategy for managing behaviour through teaching problem-solving skills is classroom meetings.

### Classroom Meetings:

- The teacher chooses the time of day and frequency of classroom meetings; the age of the students and dynamics of the class factor into making these decisions. For example, Grade 1 students may have a classroom meeting daily and Grade 5 students may have a classroom meeting weekly.
- There is a classroom meeting binder available for students to input their problems at any time.
- The students are taught that only one person talks at a time.
- The teacher facilitates the meeting by opening the binder and asking the student if he/she wants to share the problem or if it is solved.
- The student will share his/her feelings and the problem. The teacher will summarize the problem. If another student is involved, that student can share his/her side of the story. The teacher will summarize both students' perspectives.

- After hearing the problem, the student who has the problem is asked if he/she can think of a solution or if help is needed. If the student requests help, the teacher will ask for three suggestions from peers, then ask the student which solution he/she would like to try.
- Each meeting ends with a compliment circle.

### Questions for discussion:

- Why might you organize class meetings?
- How are students' problems defined? What kinds of problems do students bring forward on a continuous basis?
- How does the teacher facilitate the classroom meeting to empower the students?
- How can this help the teacher manage student problems such as recess problems, tattling, etc.?

### For more information:

- Styles, D. (2016). "Class meetings: A democratic approach to classroom management." Retrieved from [www.educationworld.com/a\\_curr/profdev/profdev012.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/profdev/profdev012.shtml)
- Kaveney, K., & W. Drewery (2011). "Classroom meetings as a restorative practice: A study of teachers' responses to an extended professional development innovation." *The International Journal on School Disaffection* 8(1), 5-12.
- Landau, B. M., & P. Gathercoal (2000). "Creating peaceful classrooms: Judicious discipline and class meetings." *Classroom Practice*, 450-454.

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