

Tip Sheet of Parliamentary Procedures for Policy Groups

Tips on general rules and procedures for policy-making groups to conduct business are delineated. This tip sheet can be used by program staff and policy groups in furthering their understanding of basic parliamentary procedures and tips for conducting effective meetings.

Parliamentary Procedures exist to facilitate the transaction of business and to promote cooperation and harmony among its members.

1. All members have equal rights, privileges, and obligations.
2. The majority has the right to decide.
3. The minority has rights, which must be protected.
4. A **Quorum** must be present for the group to act.
5. Full and free discussion of every motion considered is a basic right.
6. Only one question at a time can be considered at any given time.
7. No member can speak until recognized by the Chairperson.
8. The Chairperson should be strictly impartial.

Suggestions for Effective Meetings

1. Effective meetings require planning in advance, both on the part of the person who chairs them and of the people who participate.
2. Do not have meetings unless it is necessary.
3. Don't engage in political game playing or parliamentary maneuvering. Members must commit themselves to the group purpose.
4. Listen to what others at the meeting have to say.
5. Make sure you understand the reason for a meeting and do your homework in accordance with this understanding.
6. Actively engage in the discussion.
7. Recognize that five kinds of knowledge are all needed for a successful meeting participant:
 - Knowledge of the subject matter at hand
 - Knowledge of parliamentary rules of order
 - Knowledge of the power to persuade
 - Knowledge of problem solving and decision-making
 - Knowledge of human social-emotional dynamics
8. Be sure the purpose of each meeting, and each item on the agenda, is clear to the members:
 - To share ideas and information only
 - To brief members before action
 - To generate new ideas
 - To make a decision

- To make a recommendation
9. Be sensitive to the physical, informational, and social needs of others.
 10. Suggest committee work when an issue is too big for the group or the group hasn't adequately considered the topic. Demand hard work and good reports from the committee.

Motions and Voting

Steps:

1. Member makes a motion.
2. Another member seconds the motion.
3. The Chairperson states the question on the motion.
4. Debate/ Discussion of the motion.
5. The Chairperson puts the question to a vote by restating the question, asking "All in favor, say aye", then "Those opposed, say nay."
6. The Chairperson announces the results of the vote.

Source: Evanston Head Start