



## Family Council Structure: Leadership Models

Although structure plays a part in an effective Family Council, there is no right or wrong way for a council to organize. Each Council is unique, therefore Council Structure and the leadership model used should reflect the skills and needs of council members.

### **No Leadership Model is recommended over the others.**



It is important for councils to remain open to changing their structure as they grow and evolve.

Leadership models should be reviewed at least once a year and discussed in a council's Terms of Reference.

Leadership models range from informal to highly structured. This resource outlines the characteristics of three models for family-led councils: (a) Volunteer, (b) Shared Roles /Committees, and (c) Formal/Traditional. Regardless of the model used by a council, it is crucial that meetings provide members with a forum to share their experiences, learn and advocate to improve the quality of life for all residents.

### **Questions to Consider**



Do you know the current leadership model your Family Council is using?

Which leadership model do you feel is the best fit for your Council? Explain your answer (Why?).

## Volunteer

In this approach, there is no need for an election. Council members interested will volunteer for a specific role. Their interest



in a role is shaped by their existing skills and experience. They will commit to this role for a specific period of time (i.e. 1 Meeting, 4 months, 1 year). This approach is useful when forming a council or for a smaller council.

### Questions to Consider



Does your Council have members with existing connections who would be comfortable in sharing a role (i.e. siblings)?

What skills and experience do you have that could be used in your Council?

## Shared/Committees

In this approach, several Council members share roles and the work of their Council equally. Councils can opt for this approach for their Council when no one is willing to volunteer to take on a role. Council goals are accomplished through the work of



groups/committees. Committees vary in size and can be permanent or temporary. **A committee should only exist as long as it serves a purpose.** Council members can volunteer to serve on one or several committees. Examples of Committees and roles are provided in **Table 1** below.

**Table 1:** Examples of Council Committees

| Name                            | Tasks During Meetings  | Tasks Between Meetings   |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Meeting Committee</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the meeting</li> <li>• Ensure all members have the opportunity to speak</li> <li>• Record meeting minutes</li> <li>• Oversees meeting sign in/attendance</li> <li>• Ensures meeting stays on time</li> <li>• Enforces Code of Conduct</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates meeting agenda</li> <li>• Relay information between council and administrator</li> <li>• Co-ordinates with other councils in the area for networking events</li> <li>• Types meeting minutes</li> <li>• Correspondence on behalf of council</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Welcoming Committee</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greet new families/members before meeting begins</li> <li>• Set up refreshments before meeting</li> <li>• Clears up refreshments after meeting</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates welcome packages for new families/friends of new residents</li> <li>• Introduce self/Council to new families/friends of new resident</li> <li>• Show families/friends where to find information about the Council</li> <li>• Invites family/friends to next Council meeting</li> <li>• Supports recruitment of Council Members</li> </ul> |
| <b>Program Committee</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides Council with updates on Council projects/events</li> <li>• Relays information about upcoming events for the Home, for Family Councils Ontario and other organizations of interest</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invites guest speakers to attend meetings</li> <li>• Supports the planning and implementation of Council Events</li> <li>• Supports staff of the Home in planning Events</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Communications Committee</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relays information from administration/staff</li> <li>• Shares resources with Council members</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Posts information about the Council on Family Council board in the home</li> <li>• Creates posters/materials to promote the Council (meetings, events)</li> </ul>   |

## **Formal/Traditional**

In this approach, a family council will hold an election.

Those who receive the most votes will serve as an

officer for a specific period of time. Individuals

interested in a specific role will submit a nomination

form outlining their skills and experience for a specific role. The nominations committee

will then support a formal election for the individual(s) who will serve as the

leader/officers for the next year. Council members elected to a role will have a clear role

and responsibility based on a written job description. Council leadership will include a

president/chair, vice-chair/vice-president, secretary and treasurer. Feel free to alter the

tasks associated with each role to suit your own Council.



### *Chair/President-*

- Leads Council meetings
- Creates meeting agendas
- Ensures the agenda is followed
- Enforces Council Terms of Reference & Code of Conduct
- Oversees the creation/ review of Terms of Reference & Code of Conduct
- Communicates issues on behalf of Council to Administration

### *Vice-Chair/Vice-President-*

- Supports the Chair/President
- Leads meetings when the Chair/President is absent

### *Secretary-*

- Take meeting notes/minutes
- Support the promotion of the Council (i.e. meetings, events)



For more information on Leadership Models for Councils, **see p. 49-61**  
in "***Your Guide to Starting and Maintaining a Family Council***"