

Working with Families

Lesson Plan:

Duration: 50 Minutes

Teaching Method: Lecture/Discussion

References: Student Guide & Slide Presentation

Teaching Aids/Handouts: Student Guide & Slide presentation

Reading Assignment: Student Guide

Lesson Objective: Comprehend the importance of establishing good relationships with members' families.

Desired Learning Outcomes:

1. Discuss the basic need for family involvement in Civil Air Patrol.
2. Explain the missions of CAP to members' families.
3. Identify opportunities to encourage family involvement.

Lesson Strategy:

This segment seeks to introduce the participants to a valuable, but sometimes forgotten resource: the families of the squadron's members. The member's morale and motivation levels have a direct correlation to the support and understanding they receive from their families.

Families are more apt to support the efforts, and sacrifices, of their CAP members when they understand the missions and benefits of CAP. This is also true when they feel they are included in the process. That's the message you must get to the commanders.

CAP Unit Commanders Course: Director/Instructor Guide

NOTE: Special thanks to the authors of the *Training Leaders of Cadets Course* for allowing us to adapt their family class for our use. Their work laid the foundation for the lesson and assisted the authors greatly in the formulation of this segment.

Encourage discussion as much as possible within the time frame allowed. Use the questions provided as stimulus for discussion. Emphasize when employing these techniques that they should be seamless. The families should not sense that this is work for the unit, though in some cases it can be; the specific roles for the families desired should be thought out well before implementation, in order to provide a strong foundation.

The teaching outline provides an introduction, outline of the main points, and a conclusion to be adapted as required to meet the needs of a particular wing. The presenter should personalize the lesson to reflect the unique characteristics of the wing.

Lesson Outline:

MAIN POINTS:

- I. Why include families?
- II. Explaining the missions of CAP to members' families.
- III. Opportunities to encourage family involvement.

Teaching Plan

Lesson Objective: Comprehend the importance of establishing good relationships with members' families.

ATTENTION:

You won't get the support of your people without the support of their families. If a member's family doesn't understand or even like CAP, the member will get a lot of grief for all the time s/he invests in us.

MOTIVATION:

Families provide moral support to their loved ones, they can help the unit with many tasks, and they can help raise funds. Most of all they can advise you on how your policies affect members at home. For instance, they can tell you if you've been relying too much on a member.

OVERVIEW:

In this segment of the Unit Commanders Course, we'll discuss how you can better understand and utilize family members.

TRANSITION:

STATE: CAP members' families are an invaluable, though sometimes forgotten resource. To be effective you must get them on your side!

Main Points:

MP I. Why include families?

- A. Their approval of membership influences the amount and quality of member participation.
- B. They can provide a variety of non-member assistance to the unit (explain).

MP II. Explaining the missions of CAP to members' families

- A. Begin the effort when recruits and their families walk in the door.
- B. Include family members in the recruit's orientation as much as possible.
- C. Assign a member to the family to answer questions.
- D. Provide the family with promotional materials.
- E. As the commander, send a letter of welcome to the family.
- F. Encourage members to share their experiences with their families.
- G. Address the squadron newsletter to the entire family.
- H. Always welcome family members when they visit.

MP III. Opportunities to encourage family involvement

- A. Make family members welcome at the first meeting:
 - 1. Don't ignore family members.
 - 2. Again, include them in the orientation.
 - 3. Talk to them yourself.
- B. Support and booster groups.
 - 1. Comparable to Officers' Spouses Clubs.
 - 2. Groups provide feedback about the effects squadrons have on families.
 - 3. Booster groups can provide excellent resources (explain).
- C. CAP squadron activities.
 - 1. Include family members whenever possible. Open houses are excellent ways to say "thanks."
 - 2. Families can have a valuable voice in planning and assisting with activities.

QUESTION AND ANSWERS:

Use the suggested questions to facilitate the discussion, and field any questions that the students may have.

Lesson Summary:

SUMMARY:

Developing a good relationship with the families of your members will pay big dividends for your unit – in help, possibly in money, and definitely in morale. Make them aware of your activities, how well their loved ones are doing, and how their support helps you. It will help smooth some of the rough edges that come along.

REMOTIVATION:

There are so many more things we can talk about. There's no way you can be fully prepared to be a unit commander by just taking a 16-hour course. Much of this is built upon the training you've already had, some things you really will have to learn with experience. The only thing we wanted to do here is show you things to look for and help make the transition from member to commander a little easier.

CLOSURE:

Families are the members' number one priority!

Suggested Questions:

1. Why is it important to receive the support of members' families?

Answer: The family is a very potent force in determining the nature and scope of the member's involvement. Families who don't know what CAP does, or otherwise don't support the member's participation in the program can stunt that member's involvement. Further, families may also assist the local units in many instances, through committees, direct assistance, or eventual membership. It is important the unit commander recognize and use the potential of this group.

2. What are some good ways to show the CAP mission to the families?

Answer: Include them in the recruiting process. Allow them to stay with the member throughout most or all of the orientation. Show them the promotional videos which are available. Construct a squadron scrapbook and provide back issues of the CAP news for sharing. Provide web links to CAP's website, as well as the local unit's.

When the member joins, send a letter to the spouse or parent (it doesn't have to be long) welcoming the member to CAP, and offering your services should they be needed. In the letter, again explain the mission of CAP, especially your squadron's specialties.

As members choose their specialties, encourage the member to explain to their families what they are doing. Highlight the missions at Open Houses, and the like.

3. **How do you make the families welcome at the first meeting?**

Answer: First and foremost, don't ignore them – recognize them! They, especially parents of potential cadets, have a large say as to whether the members join and stay. Making them feel important and needed is good business. As before, include them in the orientation as much as possible. Have another member stay with them and be ready to answer questions when they cannot be with the new member. Provide them a special showing of the video material.

Talk to them yourself. As commander you have a lot of power and prestige with the new members and their families. Show them you notice and care about them as much as with the new member.

4. **How can support and booster groups help the unit?**

Answer: Family support and booster groups assist the squadron not only by providing the families' point of view on member issues, but also to act as a fund raiser, administrative, and activities resource.

5. **How can family members assist in being a part of squadron activities?**

Answer: This question deals with assistance as well as with benefits. Members' families should be included in squadron activities whenever possible. Open Houses are an ideal way to thank the family members for their assistance and support, and also provide a forum for the unit to update them on squadron priorities.

Just as they should benefit, they can also have a valuable voice in planning activities. Families are a tremendous starting point when it comes to networking with the local communities. They can assist with set up, (unofficial) transportation, and administrative details. They have been known to organize child care, food, transport, fund raising (as their own group, not as a CAP entity), etc.

6. **What are some other ways to show support for families?**

Answer: Most importantly, remember the member's families are their number one priority. You as commander should constantly let the families know the member's family life comes first; and mean it. Do your best to keep out of pocket expenses low for members and their families. Remember, holidays aren't always invitations to fill the schedule. And finally, never, never take family support for granted.

Field any other questions that the students may have.