**Consensus**

To come to consensus requires a high degree of trust and mutual respect. Trust and respect develop when everything being done by the group is in the best interest of kids. When we need to come to consensus we will allow everyone to speak and hear all views. We will provide time to listen for understanding and seek to understand others perspectives.

The key components of consensus are:

* I believe that I understand your position.
* I believe that you understand my decision.
* I may not agree with the group’s decision, but I will fully support it because the process was fair and my concern was acknowledged.

We will use the following “Fist to Five” process when reaching consensus.

**STEPS TO REACHING CONSENSUS**

**FIST TO FIVE ACTIVITY**

**Goal:** To reach team consensus about an issue, decision, or activity.

**Roles:** 1 facilitator, team members

**Materials:** flip chart paper, markers

**Process:**

1. The list of issues is posted on flipchart paper.

2. The facilitator explains the Fist to Five process.

3. The facilitator demonstrates the Fist to Five and reminds team members what the hand configurations mean. A sign or poster of the hand configurations is visible during the Fist to Five activity. The facilitator presents one issue at a time.

4. Team members use the following hand configurations for deciding on each issue:

 5=Absolutely

 4=Yes

 3=OK

 2=I’d rather not, but I could change my mind if…..

 1=No, unless….

 Fist=Never

5. The facilitator records which items on the list received a 3 to 5 rating from all team members, and those that received a two rating.

6. Once all of the responses to the items have been recorded, the facilitator returns to the items that received a two rating.

7. The facilitator then asks those members who responded with a 1 or 2 rating what made them uncomfortable with the item.

8. The facilitator records the responses on a separate piece of flipchart paper. If the members who responded with a 2 rating have the same reasons for responding, the facilitator puts a √ by the item instead of rewriting it.

9. The facilitator using a round robin strategy asks each team member who responded with a three, four, or five, what the meaning of the item.

10. Again, the facilitator records the responses in the same manner as in Step 8.

11. The facilitator then asks those members who responded with a fist to two, if they would feel more comfortable with the decision if the decision was rewritten to include their concerns.

12. If the team members respond yes, the facilitator using round robin fashion if they agree with the changes. If they agree consensus is reached. If they do not agree, further discussion is given to the item until all team members feel comfortable with the changes.