



## Fist – to – Five Consensus – Building



**INTRODUCTION:** When a group comes to consensus on a matter, it means that everyone in the group can support the decision; they don't all have to think it's the best decision, but they all agree they can live with it. This tool is an easy-to-use way to build consensus among diverse groups.

**POINT TO PONDER:** "It is the law of love that rules mankind. Had violence, i.e. hate, ruled us we should have become extinct long ago. And yet, the tragedy of it is that the so-called civilized men and nations conduct themselves as if the basis of society was violence." - Mahatma Gandhi



**DIRECTIONS:** Whenever a group is discussing a possible solution or coming to a decision on any matter, Fist-to-Five is a good tool to determine what each person's opinion is at a given time.



### COMBINING YOUR TEAM'S IDEAS: BUILDING CONSENSUS USING FIST-TO-FIVE

To use this technique the Team Leader restates a decision the group may make and asks everyone to show their level of support. Each person responds by showing a fist or a number of fingers that corresponds to their opinion.



#### Fist

A no vote - a way to block consensus. I need to talk more on the proposal and require changes for it to pass.

#### 1 Finger

I still need to discuss certain issues and suggest changes that should be made.

#### 2 Fingers

I am more comfortable with the proposal but would like to discuss some minor issues.

#### 3 Fingers

I'm not in total agreement but feel comfortable to let this decision or a proposal pass without further discussion.

#### 4 Fingers

I think it's a good idea/decision and will work for it.

#### 5 Fingers

It's a great idea and I will be one of the leaders in implementing it.

If anyone holds up fewer than three fingers, they should be given the opportunity to state their objections and the team should address their concerns. Teams continue the Fist-to-Five process until they achieve consensus (a minimum of three fingers or higher) or determine they must move on to the next issue.

#### Suggested Citation

Fletcher, A. (2002). FireStarter Youth Power Curriculum: Participant Guidebook. Olympia, WA: Freechild Project.

**Tool Designer:** This tool was originally designed by the American Youth Foundation.