
SESSION 1: FACILITATOR GUIDE



Digital Check-Ins to Keep Connected

Strengthen Family Relationships

Overview

This guide equips you to lead a 30-minute introductory videoconference call (such as, Zoom, Google Hangouts, or GoToMeetings) or teleconference call with families, to launch a series of brief small-group conversations among parenting adults that focus on mutual support and strengthening parent-youth relationships. The sessions introduce five keys to strong parent-youth relationships based on Search Institute research. (Visit www.searchinstitute.org/developmental-relationships.) It also introduces the family quizzes, discussion starters, and activities from its website, www.KeepConnected.info, which are used throughout this series.

In this session, parenting adults and their children will . . .

- introduce themselves to other families;
- learn how the series will work; and
- be introduced to activities they can use at home to begin exporting their own relationships.

Preparation

1. For this first session, invite parents/guardians to **ask children to participate as well**. Be sure they have access to the equipment (computer/phone).
2. **Ask each family to be ready to share an activity** they enjoy together. If you are using videoconference, invite families to share something visually to illustrate this activity, such as the place at home where they do this activity, an object they use for the activity, or a photo of themselves doing the activity together. For example, if they like to cook together they could show their kitchen; if they play video games together they could show a controller; or if they like to ride bikes they could share a photo of a bike ride, etc.
3. **Review the parent sheet, quiz, and recommended activities** so you can talk about them with families.
4. One or two days in advance, **send each participating parent/guardian the material for the session**. (See the distribution ideas in the quick-start guide.)
5. **Review the [Strengthen Your Family Relationships](#) section** on Keep Connected.info to give you background information on the Developmental Relationships Framework.
6. **Review the Session Guide** (next page). Adapt it as needed to work well with the participating families.
7. A couple of hours before the session, send a reminder with the web link and/or phone number for the session.

Session Guide

30 Minutes

1. Start the videoconference or phone conference. Welcome each person individually as they join.
2. **Introductions:** Start by getting to know each other. Prompt each family (parenting adults and their children) to introduce themselves, including:
 - Names
 - Ages and/or grades of the kids, if they'd like to share
 - One activity each family enjoys doing together (and a visual to illustrate this activity, if you are on videoconference)
3. **Purpose:** Briefly review the purpose of these “digital check-ins,” which is to encourage families to reflect on their own family relationships while also connecting and sharing ideas and support with other families.
4. **Developmental relationships:** Highlight that the topics in this series are based on Search Institute’s research-based Developmental Relationships Framework.

Either briefly describe the developmental relationships using the information on the “Guide for Parents or Guardians, or [show this 3-minute video](#), which introduces the framework.

5. **How the sessions work:** Explain that each each session will introduce a different theme from the framework. Then they will use the “Guide for Parents and Guardians” that you will send them to do these things together as a family. Each guide will invite them to explore different parts of their relationships in their families through:
 - *Check It*—Family quizzes;
 - *Talk About It*—Discussion-starter questions; and
 - *Try It*—Family activities to do at home.

Ask parents and guardians to look at the Guide for Parents and Guardians that you distributed before this check-in call (or display it on your screen). Show them the different parts that they can use in their family. Note that if they want more information, they can find it at www.KeepConnected.info.

Explain how the quizzes work: When the first parent or guardian takes a quiz, they will get a Family Quiz Code. They should write it down and send it to everyone else who will take the quiz in their family. Then everyone else will enter that number when they start the quiz. At the end, the program will give results that compare results for everyone in the family.

6. **Digital check-ins:** Finally, say that the parents and guardians will gather each week (or based on the schedule you set) to debrief how it’s going, to check in, and for mutual support. They will share ideas, then also learn about the topic for the next week or so.
7. **Questions:** Invite participants to ask questions.
8. **Closing question:** Close by asking each family to share one thing they have done during the COVID-19 pandemic period that they cannot remember ever doing before.
9. **Remind** everyone about the home activities and the next digital check-in. Thank them for participating.

Session Follow Up

- **Send a text or email to participants**, thanking them for participating and reminding them about the next session. Also send a link to the family quiz (<https://keepconnected.searchinstitute.org/family-relationship-quiz/>) and resend the Session 1: Guide for Parents and Guardians” in case some need another copy.
- **Provide feedback on** what worked, what didn’t, and how to improve this session on this [brief survey](#).