
SESSION 2: FACILITATOR GUIDE



Digital Check-Ins to Keep Connected

Express Care

Overview

This guide equips you to lead the second 30-minute videoconference or teleconference call with parents and guardians. It focuses on Express Care, one of the five key elements of strong parent-youth relationships, according to Search Institute research. (Visit www.searchinstitute.org/developmental-relationships.)

In this session, parents and guardians will . . .

- Check in with each other, providing mutual support;
- Learn the core ideas included in “express care” within the Developmental Relationships Framework; and
- Be oriented to activities they can try at home that will introduce new ways families can listen to each other and make other feel like they matter.

Preparation

1. **Invite parents/guardians** to participate. Be sure they have access to the equipment (computer/phone).
2. Review the parent sheet, quiz, and recommended activities so you can talk about them with families.
3. Send the **Express Care Guide for Parents and Guardians** to each participant. (See the distribution ideas in the quick-start guide.)
4. **Review the Learn About It section** on www.KeepConnected.info for background about [what it means to “express care.”](#)
5. **Review the Session Guide;** adapt the session as needed to fit the participating families.
6. 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. **Gather:** Start the videoconference or phone conference. Welcome parents or guardians by name as they come online. While they’re gathering, informally ask about their kids (but don’t reveal, or ask them to reveal, confidential or sensitive information).
2. **Check-in:** Ask for a high and low from the past week (or since you met last).
3. **Review:** If they have participated in another session, ask if they’ve taken a quiz, tried an activity, used a discussion question, or done something else that was inspired by the discussion or topic. What did they try? What went well? What didn’t? Congratulate them for the effort. Ask them what they might try differently the next time if something didn’t go well.

4. **Introduce the topic** by saying something like: *One of the ways we grow through relationships is by expressing care to each other. That is, we show up for each other. We really listen and pay attention to each other when we are together. We have fun together. The crisis we are living through right now with the COVID-19 pandemic is stressful. In times of stress, it can be especially important for us to do these things. So we're going to focus on some ways we have—or could—**express care** for each other.*
5. If you're using **videoconference**, show the [Express Care](#) video from the Keep Connected website.
If you're using a **voice conference call** (not video), say something like: *Expressing care is the foundation of family relationships (and other relationships, too). It's not enough to believe you care for each other. You have to show it. Here are five actions that express care:*
 - Be dependable: *Be someone I can trust.*
 - Listen: *Really pay attention when we're together.*
 - Believe in me: *Make me feel known and valued.*
 - Be warm: *Show me you enjoy being with me.*
 - Encourage: *Praise me for my efforts and achievements.*
6. **Conversation:** Discuss these questions as a group, giving each person who wants to contribute time.
 - What are meaningful ways that you express care in your family, culture, or tradition?
 - Which of the five areas of expressing care are most comfortable for you? Which are most challenging?
 - How has expressing care changed as your kids have grown up? How have you adjusted?
 - What are ways you maintain your warmth, dependability, and interest when your kids do things that you really don't enjoy—or even that you disapprove of?
7. Introduce the **Express Care Guide for Parents and Guardians**, which you distributed before the session. Share your screen to show them the guide if you're able and have time. Walk through the different elements (Check It, Try It, Talk About It), highlighting some of the activities families can choose to do in the coming week (or until your next session. If you have expectations about using the activities, be clear about them.
8. Ask parents if they have questions, ideas, or concerns.
9. Encourage parents to partner with each other to give each other encouragement, tips, or just a nudge with getting started as they're doing these activities with their families.
10. Encourage a few parents to volunteer some ways they felt cared for, valued, or listened to during this brief session together. As facilitator, you may conclude the conversation by specifically thanking parents for the ways you see them expressing care for their children and how they've listened and shown care to you and other participants as they have participated in these check-in conversations.
11. Thank parents again for their participation, and let them know when you'll get back together again.

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 "Session 2: Guide for Parents and Guardians: Express Care" in case some need another copy. Remind them of the time, date, and place for the next session.
- **Provide feedback on** what worked, what didn't, and how to improve this session on this [brief survey](#).