

A QUICKSTART GUIDE FOR GROUP FACILITATORS



Digital Check-Ins to Keep Connected

**Pilot
Edition**
(May 2020)

Overview

Digital Check-Ins to Keep Connected has been developed in response to a need to stay engaged with families during the COVID-19 stay-at-home orders across many states. It provides a structure for family-serving practitioners to connect with parents and guardians that focuses on creating a community among parents and guardians while also providing resources for families to use at home that emphasize positive parent-youth relationships by spending enjoyable and meaningful time together.

Structure: This resource has two main parts:

- 1. Virtual parent check-in group:** Each session is a brief, 30-minute virtual (phone or videoconference) small-group discussion with 6 – 10 parents and guardians, which does not require parenting adults to gather in person. The sessions are led by a facilitator from a local school or organization. Each session focuses on:
 - Building peer support for the participating parents and guardians;
 - Introducing the relationship-building and parenting themes for at-home activities and discussion-starters for the next week (or time until the next session); and
 - Debriefing and reflecting on activities and conversations at home from the previous week's topic.
- 2. Family activities at home:** The facilitator sends parents and guardians a PDF document prepared by Search Institute that has suggestions of a quiz, family activities, and discussion-starter questions. Parents use these with their families throughout the week (or until the next session) to explore the topic of the just-completed session. Activities are designed primarily for families with middle-school children, but kids of all ages may participate.

How to Use

1. Selected the technology you will use that is accessible to the families (videoconference or teleconference).
2. Access all session material from the www.KeepConnected.info/digital-checkin (available by May 15, 2020).
3. Invite parents and guardians to participate. The sessions are designed for groups of 6 – 10 parents, not more. Personal invitations that describes what to expect will be most effective.
4. Review the facilitator guide for each session, and prepare for the check-in session.
5. **One or two days in advance, send each participating parent/guardian the material for the session.** Try these ideas to distribute it:
 - *Post the session material on your organization's website* with links to www.KeepConnected.info/digital-checkins. Send parents/guardians a link to your page via email or text.
 - *Distribute the session material for parents/guardians as a PDF attachment to email.* Include the link to Keep Connected in the e-mail itself, too, for easy access.

- *Convert the session material for parents/guardians to the body of an email, being sure all the links stay active. Send the email to everyone who has registered for the class.*
6. Send an email or text reminder to parents and guardians the day before the check-in session.
 7. Facilitate the 30-minute online session. Be sure to maintain the time limit. If some want to continue talking, make it clear that the session is over and people are free to leave. Some may continue (if that's okay).
 8. Follow up with the parents, sending another copy of the session materials and a link to the quiz.

Session Topics

Search Institute is developing a “Digital Check-In to Keep Connected” for each of the topics on KeepConnected.info. This includes the five keys to a developmental relationship as well as the topics in the “growing up responsibly” menu on www.KeepConnected.info. The complete list of topics being released in Spring 2020 is:

Strengthening Your Family Relationships

- [Developmental Relationships Introduction](#)
- [Express Care](#)
- [Challenge Growth](#)
- [Provide Support](#)
- [Share Power](#)
- [Expand Possibilities](#)

Growing Up Responsibly

- [Set Family Goals Together](#)
- [Prevent Alcohol & Tobacco Use](#)
- [Manage Money Well](#)

These sessions are provided in the order that they are presented in the Developmental Relationships Framework and on the Keep Connected website. However, they are each standalone sessions that you may use in the order that fits your own program, calendar, and community. They may be used on their own or as a series. Use them in any way that works for the families that you support!

Please Provide Feedback

Search Institute asks everyone who uses these resources to provide feedback so that we can continue to improve them for use. After each session, please provide your feedback by completing this brief survey after each session: <https://survey.search-institute.org/s3/KC-DChk-Feedback>. (It can be completed on a computer tablet, or smartphone.) There is also a link to the survey at the end of the guide for each session.