



Session 5

Expand Possibilities

Handout Guide

Handout	Quantity Needed
Family Handout 5.1 Some Key Ideas about Expanding Possibilities	1 per family
Family Handout 5.2 How to Complete the Expand Possibilities Timeline	1 per parenting adult
Family Handout 5.3 Navigating Roadblocks to Expand Possibilities	1 per parenting adult
Family Handout 5.4a Expanding Possibilities: Explore What You're Curious About	1 per family
Family Handout 5.4b Examples: Explore What You're Curious About	1 per family
Family Handout 5.5a At-Home Activities Guide	1 per family
Family Handout 5.5b POST IT: A Guide for Your Week	1 per family
Family Handout 5.5c TRY IT: Explore What You're Curious About	1 per family
Family Handout 5.5d TRY IT: Getting Comfortable Meeting New People	1 per family



EXPAND
POSSIBILITIES

Some Key Ideas

We help each other grow when we encourage each other to try new things, go to new places, and meet new people. It expands opportunities when we . . .

“Connect each other with people and places that broaden our world.”



What Does Expand Possibilities Involve?

Three actions expand possibilities through our relationships:

Inspire: Inspire me to see possibilities for my future.

Enlarge: Expose me to new ideas, experiences, and places.

Connect: Introduce me to people who can help me grow.

Why Is It Important for Families to Expand Possibilities for Each Other?

Expanding possibilities is an important way to keep our minds fresh and growing. By connecting with the people, places, and experiences, we:

- Discover more about themselves and what matters.
- Find new opportunities, including careers, education, art, and recreation;
- Get experience playing meaningful, responsible roles in society.
- Connect with people who will look out for them. These connections can be really important if kids face crises, prejudice, or other challenges.

Are You Uneasy about Expanding Possibilities?

As children become teens, they spend more time with other people and ideas.

That can be worrisome. We want to protect our kids. What will they pick up from other adults, ideas, and experiences? Will our kids turn to them instead of to us?

But there’s good news:

1. Relationships with other adults usually **improve teens’ relationships with their parenting adults.**
2. When kids are exposed to other ideas, **they are more likely to learn and grow**—particularly when they talk about what they’re learning at home.



How to Complete the Expand Possibilities Timeline

1. Ask someone in your group to lead this activity.
2. Notice what age group you'll be focusing on. (All of the steps that follow focus on this age. Other groups are focusing on other ages.)
3. Each person takes 4-5 sticky notes. Working on your own, write 4-5 ways you encouraged your kids to try new things or exposed them to new experiences or ideas when they were this age. (If you're focused on an age your kids haven't reached yet, think of things you expect to encourage them to try in the future.)
4. When everyone has several ideas, add them to the flipchart.
5. When all the sticky notes are posted, discuss these questions:
 - What do you notice about the ways you encouraged your kids to expand their possibilities? What was hard or scary? What was rewarding?
6. Be prepared to report on just 2-3 key ideas from your discussion.

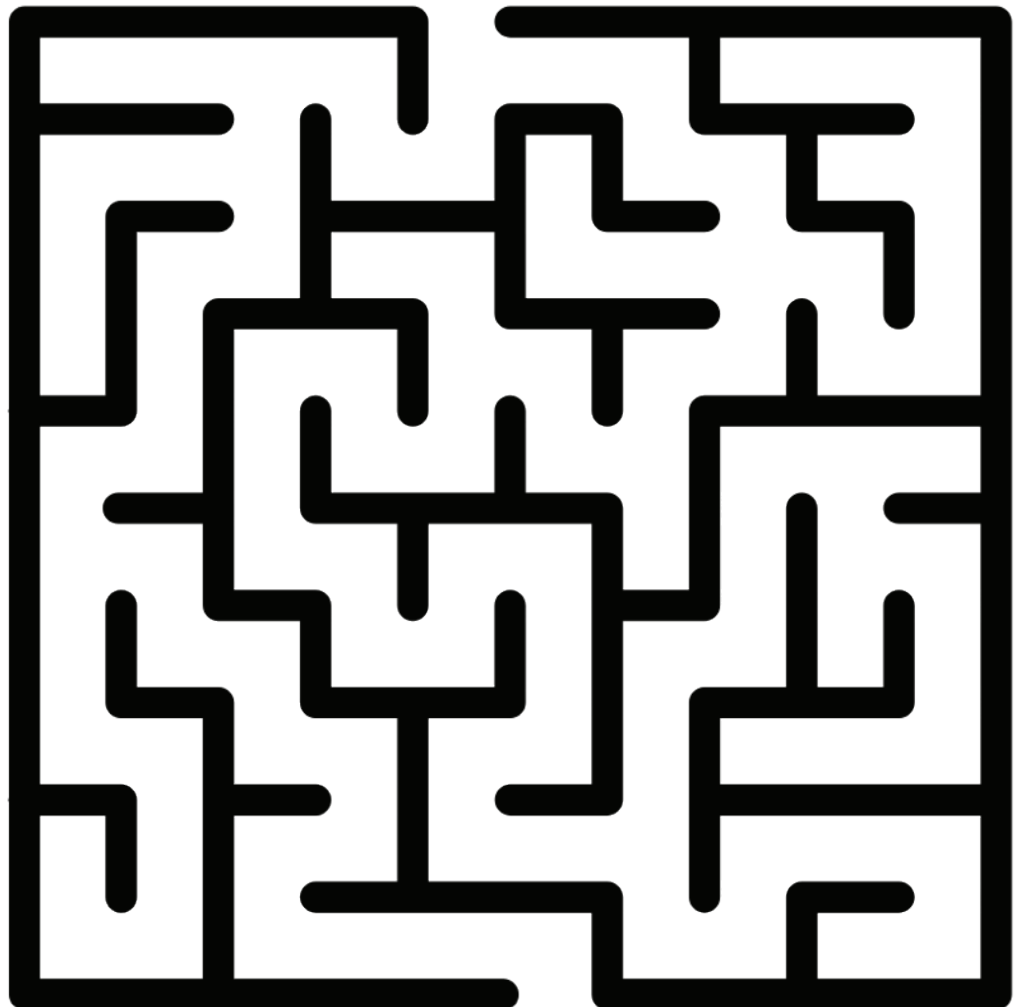
For more information on how your approach to expanding possibilities can change as your kids grow older, visit "Ages and Stages" at www.KeepConnected.info/understanding-ages-and-stages/.



Navigating Roadblocks

In what area do you want to expand your child's possibilities?

Think of an area where you would like to help expand your child's possibilities, but you see some barriers in the way. Write the area below. Then, begin tracing through the maze with a pencil. Each time you hit a dead end, write down one a barrier you have experienced or think you may experience. Then, turn around and trace your path back until you can take a different turn. In the spot where you can start a new route, write an alternative idea that helps you avoid the barrier you just encountered. Continue identifying barriers and brainstorming around them until you make it through the maze.





Explore What You're Curious About

Use this planning sheet to identify some ways your family can explore things you're curious about. The idea is to come up with lots of possibilities—even some that aren't realistic. For each question, choose some "Quick and Easy" options and some "Deeper Dive" options.

WHAT are you curious about, and WHY? Pick one thing you'll explore. You can do others later. Include ideas about why it's interesting from all family members.

Write your topic here: _____

	Quick-and-Easy Ideas Options that don't take many resources	Deeper Dive Ideas Options that require some extra resources
WHERE might you explore it?		
HOW might you learn more?		
WHO can you learn from? Think of people who can give you information about this thing or help you get involved.		
WHAT will it take? How much time, money, or other resources will it take?		
WHEN might you explore this? Begin thinking of a plan for getting started and trying it.		
HOW did it go? Afterwards, talk about what worked and what didn't so you can learn for the next time.		



At Home Activities

OVERVIEW: What Will Our Family Do?

If You Have:	Materials	Activity Name	Description	When Will Your Family Do This?
1 minute	Family Handout 5.5b	Post It: A Guide for Your Week	Post this guide somewhere all family members will see it. The refrigerator is a great spot!	
10 minutes	Family Handout 5.5c	Explore What You're Curious About	Revisit the handout you filled out during the workshop. Choose one or two of the ideas you brainstormed and plan to try them over the course of the week.	
15 minutes	Family Handout 5.5d	Getting Comfortable Meeting New People	Pick and practice ideas to try to make it easier to meet and talk with people you don't know well.	
10 minutes	Internet-enabled device	Online Exploration	Visit www.keepconnected.info to explore extra resources on family relationships.	



POST IT

A Guide for Your Week

Display this page where you will notice it through the week (such as on a refrigerator).

Think about it

Key ideas to remember

EXPANDING POSSIBILITIES involves connecting each other with people, ideas, and places that broaden our worlds.

- As we grow up, we discover new things about ourselves and each other when we explore new ideas, have new experiences, and get to know people and cultures that are different from us.
- A great way to expand possibilities with each other is to explore things you're curious about.
- Having a specific plan to try new things can be a fun way to expand possibilities for each other.

Talk about it

Discussion starters

1. What is one thing you really enjoy (such as music, hobbies, ideas) that someone in your family introduced you to? Tell about how they introduced you to it.
2. Who have been significant people beyond our immediate family who have had a big influence on you? How did they influence you?

Try it

Tips for families

1. Introduce each other people, places, ideas, cultures, and vocations that are not familiar to you. Start with ones they're curious about. Investigate those that come up in the news.
2. Encourage each other to try things different family members might be interested in. Try them together.
3. Find ways for your family to spend time with people who are different from you. For example, attend movies, concerts, or festivals from cultures other than your own.



Visit www.KeepConnected.info

Find ideas, quizzes, activities, discussion starters, and more to strengthen family relationships.



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TRY IT

Getting Comfortable Meeting New People

Practice conversation starters together that can make it easier to get to know new people.

One of the challenges in expanding the size of our networks is that it can be hard to get to know new people—especially for some people. The conversations can be awkward, and they don’t seem to go anywhere.

However, becoming confident involves skills that most people can learn with practice. (It’s much more difficult for people with social anxiety.) You can begin getting more comfortable and building these skills by practicing at home.

This activity gives family members ways to practice breaking the ice and starting to get to know someone they’re meeting for the first time. (Many of these skills can also help with everyday conversations at home.)

1. As a family, brainstorm a list of some people you have a hard time talking to. For some kids, it may be a teacher, a doctor, or a parent of a friend. For some adults, it may be someone who works in a job they don’t understand or someone with a very different personality or set of interests.
2. Talk about what can make these conversations awkward. Jot some of the most common things on a piece of paper.
3. Remind each other that many people struggle with talking to people they don’t know. But you can learn skills that can help, with practice. Review the ideas in “Tips for Talking with People You Don’t Know (Yet).” Which ideas, if any, might make the conversations with these people less awkward or difficult?
4. Discuss the ideas on the tip sheet. What has worked for you? What hasn’t? Adjust the tips to work well for you and your family.
5. Pick someone you talked about earlier as being awkward to talk to, and ask a family member to role play being that person in a group conversation. (Pick the family member who knows this person the best.) Have other family members use some of the tips to have a made-up conversation with this person.
6. After two to three minutes of role playing, stop and talk about what worked and what didn’t, knowing that it’s a made-up situation. What might you try the next time you have an opportunity to talk with this person?
7. Look at the tip sheet again. Find one or two ideas that might improve conversations in your own family. Commit together to using those tips during the coming week when you’re having a conversation together.

NOTE: For almost one out of 10 people, any interactions with people, particularly people they don’t know well, can be very stressful. This can include making a phone call, talking to a cashier, or eating in front of people. If someone in your family struggles with anxiety like this, they may need additional professional help for social anxiety. Talk with your doctor or get more information at www.nimh.nih.gov/social-anxiety-disorder-more-than-just-shyness/index.shtml

Tips for Talking with People You Don't Know (Yet)

Try these when you're starting to get to know someone you don't know well. Even if it doesn't lead to an ongoing relationship, you'll learn something new about people and see the world from a new perspective.

- 1. Think ahead.** Prepare some questions in advance that you might ask. These could include their job, interests, hobbies, family, or places they have lived or visited. Stay away from controversial topics when you're just getting started.
- 2. Introduce yourself.** Smile and maintain good eye contact. Focus more on the conversation than worrying about how you're being perceived.
- 3. Start small.** Don't get too personal too quickly. Start with "small talk," or a general, non-controversial topic. It could be about something you see in the place where you're meeting, the weather, a current topic, or people you both know.
- 4. Show interest.** If you're curious about other people, you'll have better conversations. Really listen to what they say about themselves. Ask follow-up questions, such as: "I'm not familiar with that; can you tell me more about it?" "When did you learn this?"
- 5. Let go of preconceptions.** Almost everyone is really interested in or good at something—or has experiences different from your own. So if the first topic doesn't lead to a rich conversation, something else might.
- 6. Invite more information.** A person may have an interest, hobby, skill, or job that you've never thought about. Ask them to tell you more about it, what they enjoy about it, and how they first got interested.
- 7. Be open about yourself.** Give extra information that may make another connection. Reveal unique things about yourself. Pause when you're talking and ask other questions so you keep a two-way conversation going.
- 8. Bring up ideas,** and don't shoot others down. The goal isn't to impress, but to stimulate more conversation. If you criticize or judge ideas early in a conversation, others may not feel safe saying what they think.
- 9. Practice.** It takes a while to get comfortable talking to new people. At first it will be awkward. But, with practice, you can learn what works. You'll get more confident, and you'll learn to enjoy the ways new people expand your world.
- 10. Close the conversation warmly.** When the conversation is winding down, say that you have enjoyed getting to know the other person. Thank them for taking the time. If appropriate, say that you'll look forward to the next time you can talk.