

Restorative Parenting

Checking in as a family

Kids have lots of things to process throughout the day but what do they say when we ask, “What’s going on?” or “How was your day?” We usually get a shoulder shrug or the typical response, “I don’t know.” This can be frustrating, but we often do this as adults, too. Someone at work asks us how we are doing and we respond with “fine”, even when we are not.

Regularly checking in with one another is a great way to develop consistent and open communication. There are a lot of ways to check in using different questions and prompts to help express how we are feeling and doing. Some of them can be quick and some of them can take a little more time. If everyone is pressed for time or not feeling particularly chatty, then choose something that can still give you an idea of how others are feeling without requiring a dissertation.

Keep in mind that as the adult, it is your responsibility to model the type of depth and authenticity you want to see from your children. Also, it is important to remember that being vulnerable, open, and honest with how we are feeling, and sharing that with others is a PRACTICE. This means the more we do it, the better we get - both as adults and children!

“... being vulnerable, open, and honest with how we are feeling, and sharing that with others is a practice...”



Checking in as a whole family

6 Ways to Check In

Family check-ins are a great way to connect with your family and share how you are feeling. Here are six ways to check in with your family:

1. When they first wake up
2. When they get home from school
3. Before going to bed.

Consider doing your check in at one of these times, but remember to be consistent.

Check In with Highs and Lows

Once you have decided on a time to check in as a family, let everyone know they will be sharing a high point of their day (something that went really well, or that they were excited about) and a low point of their day (something that was disappointing or kind of a bummer).

Be ready to share first to model how you are feeling. If needed, direct the order of sharing by having everyone share in order of their birthdays, length of hair, etc.

Other Types of Check In Prompts

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, how are you feeling and why?
If you were to choose a color that represented how you are feeling, what color would you be and why?
2. If you were to describe how you are doing/feeling using the weather as an example (rainy, sunny, windy, hurricane, etc.) what type of weather would you be and why?

As a follow up, you can also ask, “what would help your number increase,” or “... become a brighter color” or “... feel a little sunnier?” to help understand what everyone might need that day.



“Research has shown the 3 most important times in a child’s day are:

1. When they first wake up
2. When they get home from school
3. Before going to bed”

For more information on restorative practices, visit:

<https://www.sdcoe.net/student-services/system-of-supports/Pages/Restorative-Practices.aspx>