



## Steps for Morning Check-in or "Morning Circle"

Each morning is an opportunity to set the stage for the day. Children (and adults!) thrive when they have some routine and structure built into the day. This is even more crucial during uncertain times, and for children/teens who have special needs. Even teenagers, who may say they don't like schedules, profit from having them.

Research shows that starting your day with something positive can prime your whole day for positivity.

You can start your day on a positive note with the morning circle or morning meeting. This can be done casually during breakfast or after breakfast in a different place in your home.

The morning meeting or check-in is a way to build social and emotional awareness as well as executive functioning and planning skills.

You can also pre-plan for challenges that might arise, using the Calming Strategies Menu tool from Video 3.

# Sample Questions You Can Ask During Morning Check In

## STEP ONE: POSITIVE START

- What is one thing you are grateful for?
- Tell me your favorite joke
- What is one thing you are looking forward to today?
- Draw a picture of something that makes you happy
- Share a favorite quote and why you like it.
- Tell a family member something you appreciate about them.
- Show your favorite animal video/picture

## STEP TWO: EMOTIONAL CHECK IN

- How are you feeling today?
- Draw a picture of how you feel right now
- Find a picture of a person in a book who matches the feeling you are having right now.
- If you were a character from Inside Out, which one would you be right now?
- Visit [www.emotionalabcs.com](http://www.emotionalabcs.com) for videos that show you how to check in emotionally.
- Be sure to acknowledge feelings and normalize them.

## STEP THREE: REVIEW YOUR DAY AND PRE-PLAN FOR CHALLENGES

- Review your family schedule for the day
- Give responsibility to your child for sharing out the plan for the day
- Ask for ideas on how to improve the plan
- Ask family members if they agree to the plan
- Ask family members if they have any concerns about the plan and address them in advance
- Use the "Calming Strategies Menu" to pre-plan if someone needs a break, calming time, or feels dysregulated and needs to "reboot" during the day.



*Video Two*

## Steps for an Afternoon/Evening Check-in or "Debrief"

At the end of each day, it is helpful to meet as a family and evaluate how the schedule went. This way you can adjust your schedule for the following day based on what is working and what is not. Every day is a chance to reboot!

As in the morning meeting, starting the meeting with something positive. This will help set the stage or "prime" your children for positive problem solving.

The afternoon or evening check-in is another opportunity to build social and emotional awareness, reflection skills, as well as executive functioning and problem-solving skills.

You can also evaluate how the family did with using calming strategies throughout the day to reinforce and praise successful use of coping skills.

# Sample Questions You Can Ask During Evening Debrief

## STEP ONE: POSITIVE START

- What is one thing you are grateful for?
- What is one thing you enjoyed about today?
- Say one appreciation for another family member

## STEP TWO: EMOTIONAL CHECK IN

- How are you feeling about how today went?
- Draw a picture of how you feel right now
- Find a picture of a person in a book who matches the feeling you are having right now.
- If you were a character from Inside Out, which one would you be right now?
- Visit [www.emotionalabcs.com](http://www.emotionalabcs.com) for videos that show you how to check in emotionally.
- Be sure to acknowledge feelings and normalize them.
- Review successes if anyone in the family used the "Calming Strategies Menu" when they needed a break, calming time, or needed to "reboot" during the day.

## STEP THREE: REVIEW YOUR DAY AND RESET FOR TOMORROW

- Share one positive thing about how the schedule went today (for younger kids, one "Yum")
- Share one thing you might want to change about how the schedule went today (for younger kids, one "Yuk")
- Share one idea how to change or improve on the schedule (for younger kids, turning a "Yuk" into a "Yum")
- Incorporate your child's feedback into the plan and make agreements that work for everyone in the family.
- Ask family members if they agree to the plan
- End with a celebration or appreciation ritual.