

What is Check-In / Check-Out?



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Check-In / Check-Out is a powerful daily routine that is used in many settings — at home, at school, at work — to help families and teams grow as groups and individuals. It's a routine that prioritizes relationships and connection, which ultimately creates an environment where kids can feel safe and learn.

- A **Check-In** is a morning touchpoint to recognize feelings and get grounded.
- A **Check-Out** is an end-of-day touchpoint to share gratitude and takeaways.

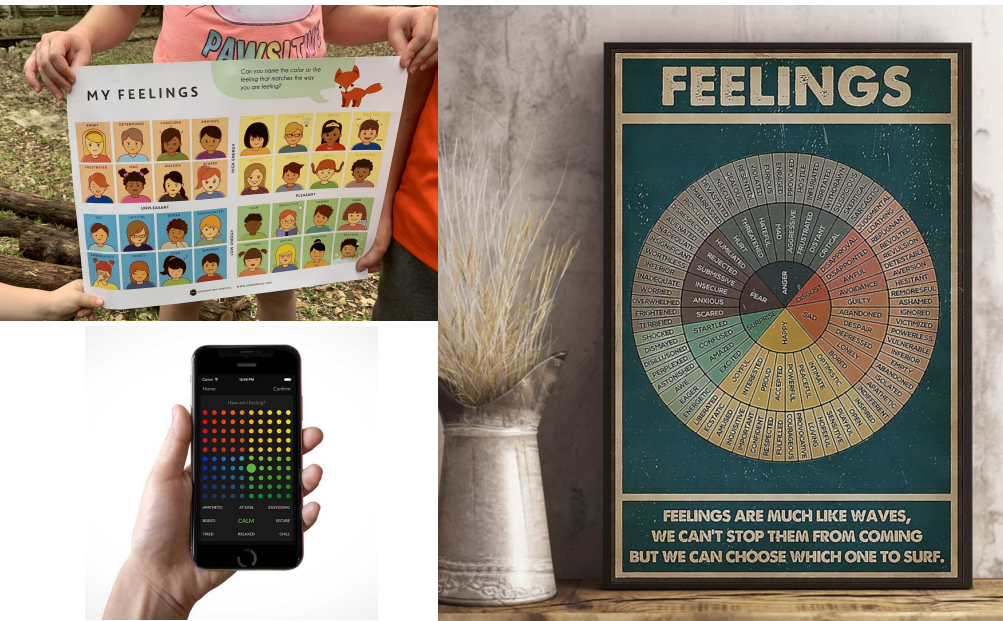
“Everyone is worried that students aren’t learning to read, write, and do math. However, the science tells us clearly that if students don’t feel safe and connected, their ability to learn anything is dramatically compromised. We must prioritize relationships and connection.”



Diane Tavenner

Author, *“Prepared: What Kids Need for a Fulfilled Life”*
and co-founder and CEO of Summit Public Schools

How do we Check-In?



How to do a Check-In:

Time: 5–10 minutes in the morning

Setup: Come together in a circle in a comfortable spot



What to do: Check-In with the following four steps:

1. **Share what you're feeling.** Go around the circle and have each group member choose 3 adjectives that describe how they are feeling. As a listener, be curious about what is behind these 3 adjectives.
Naming emotions can be hard, but there are handy tools that make it easier to go deeper than “happy” and “sad.” Check out the [“My Feelings”](#) poster from Generation Mindful, the Junto Institute’s [“Emotion Wheel,”](#) or the [“Mood Meter”](#) from the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence.
2. **Talk about those emotions.** Go back around the circle, letting each person talk for 1–2 minutes about the adjectives they named and why they chose those emotions. Everyone should listen carefully and think about what might be causing the other person’s feelings.
3. **Acknowledge the feelings of others.** Acknowledge where the group is emotionally. Do a round of “I noticed...,” “I wonder...,” or “I feel...” sentence starters to wrap up. For example, “I noticed we’re all feeling stressed today,” or “I wonder if there are ways we could calm our stress. How about...”
4. **Say “I’m in!”** At the end of the Check-In, everyone says “I’m in!” to signify that they are present and activated for the day to come!

How do we Check-Out?



How to do a Check-Out:

Time: 5–10 minutes in the evening

Setup: Come together in a circle in a comfortable spot



What to do: There are three steps to a Check-Out:

1. **Show gratitude.** Each group member shares something they are grateful for, whether it actually happened during the day or it's just something that's top-of-mind.
2. **Share takeaways.** Everyone shares one takeaway from the day.
3. **Say "I'm out!"** At the end of the Check-Out, everyone says "I'm out!" to provide a calming marker that the day of work, learning, and growth is done.

Now, go do it!

Explain the concept of Check-In / Check-Out to your kids and, if helpful, use the "Check-In / Check-Out activity" on the next page to get started. Ultimately, however, your goal should be to move away from the activity page in favor of engagement that happens naturally.

Do you have questions about using the Check-In / Check-Out daily routines? Write to us at info@preparedparents.org.

Best Practices for Check-In / Check-Out

Daily Check-Ins & Check-Outs

Check-In

In the morning to help kids get grounded and name emotions

Check-Out

At the end of the day to share gratitude and takeaways



What are the best practices for Check-In / Check-Out?

- **Come together:** Sit in a circle to promote unity. We call this “circling up.”
- **Start with a volunteer:** The first person to speak during a circle up should
 - always be a volunteer.
- **Keep it short:** Aim for each group member to speak for about 2 minutes.
- **Go deep:** Encourage everyone to be vulnerable during this time. It is their opportunity to connect on an emotional level, as well as yours. Their willingness to be open and authentic will be a gift to themselves and the group. Remember, vulnerability invites vulnerability. If your Check-Ins are feeling superficial, volunteer to go first and be vulnerable. Get honest with your feelings and how you’re preparing to overcome obstacles and tough emotions today.

What’s with “I’m in!” and “I’m out!”?

“I’m in!” and “I’m out!” during Check-In and Check-Out are verbal markers that indicate everyone is engaged in the experience of the day. It should feel activating to say “I’m in!” and calming to say “I’m out.”

These phrases also signify togetherness and belonging. In your group, you are a part of a team, a family, or class. You are connected, and each member is being seen and heard; no one is alone in their journey through life. Celebrations, failures, wins, losses—everyone is a part of a group that cares about them and wants them to succeed.

Check-In / Check-Out Activity

You can use this optional activity page to Check-In / Check-Out with your family or learning group each day. If desired, group members can fill in the blanks or simply use the questions as a guide for the activity.

Name _____ Date _____

Check-In: Let's recognize how we're feeling going into this day.

1. What three adjectives describe how you are feeling today?

2. Tell us more. Why are you feeling those ways?

3. After everyone has shared, acknowledge where the group is emotionally.

For example: "I noticed...", "I wonder...", and "I feel..."

Check-Out: Let's share gratitude and takeaways as we close this day.

1. What are you grateful for?

2. What was a key takeaway for you today?
