



Digital Check-Ins to Keep Connected

Express Care



In this stressful time during the Covid-19 pandemic, it is a good time to reflect on how we express care with each other. We express care when we are warm, really listen, and can count on each other. You can show care in many different ways, but it's important to *show* that you care, not just *assume* others know you that you care.



Family Quiz

With other family members, take the Express Care Quiz, which you'll find in the Check It tab on the [Express Care page](http://www.KeepConnected.info) on www.KeepConnected.info. As many people can complete the quiz as you'd like. Then compare your results with each other to prompt a lively discussion.



Family Activities

These activities invite your family to **explore what it means to express care** to each other.

If you want more activities or more detailed instructions on these activities, go to [Express Care on KeepConnected.info](http://www.KeepConnected.info). Click on the gray bar for each heading. You'll find several activities on each topic.

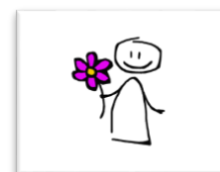
1. Be dependable

Be someone I can trust

Who You Can Count On

Get a sheet of paper for each person. Draw a small picture of the person in the middle of the sheet. At the top, write: "I can depend on _____ (person's name) to . . ." Pass the sheets around and have each family member write (or draw) two or three things they can count on the other person doing that they really like. They can be serious or funny things. Then, have people talk about what they wrote.

15 minutes



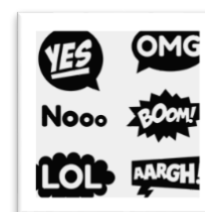
2. Listen

Really pay attention when we are together

Delights and Distractions

Brainstorm at least five or six times when your family was together in the past week. Write each time on a separate piece of paper. Then talk together about how much everyone felt like others were listening to them during those times. Come up with a joint "score" from 1 to 10:

25 minutes



- A "1" would be: *No one listened at all.*
- A "10" would be: *Wow! That was a fantastic conversation!*

Put the activities with a score of 1 to 5 on one side of a table. What was going that made it hard to listen? What were people doing? What was distracting people?

Put those with a 6 to 10 on the other side of the table. What made those times work so that you really listened? What was different about those times?

Compare the lists of things that got in the way of listening and things that made it easier. What could you do as a family to reduce distractions? What could you do to make good conversations happen more often?

3. Believe in Me

Make me feel known and valued

Thanks for Being Spectacular!

20 minutes

Write each other a letter describing what you enjoy most about each person in your family. In addition to saying what each other has done, write down the personal qualities behind those actions.

Share your letters with each other. Talk about what it like to write and receive the letter. What you can do together as a family to notice what you appreciate about each other in the next week?



4. Be Warm

Show me you enjoy being with me

More, Less, or the Same

15 minutes

Give each family member several notecards and a pen.

Individually write down ways you show affection in your family—one idea per card. Include both things you say (such as “I love you”) and things you do (such as giving hugs or high fives). Have each person come up with as many as they can. Then have them think about which ones they’d like the family to do more or less.



Next, have everyone share what they wrote. As you talk about each idea, have each person indicate whether they wish the family would do this more, less, or the same as you do it now.

Not everyone has to agree. We all like different things at different times. The goal is to find ways to express and receive affection in ways we appreciate and that make us feel respected.

5. Encourage

Praise me for my efforts and achievements

An Extra Dose of Courage

20 minutes

Cut sheets of paper into small strips (like the size that’s in a fortune cookie). Give each person a jar (or bottle, a cup, or bowl) where they can keep the notes others write for them. (People can decorate their own jar.)



Have each family member write five to ten notes of encouragement to every other family member. Focus on quotes, wise sayings, family memories, cultural proverbs, or personal insights to keep people going when they need it. Don’t show what you’re writing. Fold it in half and place it in the jar.

Talk about the ways people encourage each other when things get tough. Then have people keep their Encouragement Jars where they can pull out a note when they need it.



Try these discussion-starter questions with your family.

Family Conversation Starters

1. Tell about a time when someone wasn’t really listening that led to a funny moment. It might be in your extended family, among friends, at school, or at work.
2. When are times you’ve felt close as a family? Where were you? What were you doing? What made that time memorable?
3. What’s something you really enjoy doing that you haven’t had a chance to do lately? What do you enjoy about it?
4. What other people can you connect to who will warm, encouraging, and good listeners? How can you stay in touch without being physically together?
5. Who are people you know who may feel particularly isolated or discouraged right now? What might you as a family do to express care to them?