

I Love You Rituals, the School Family Board, and the Friends and Family Board Tip Sheet

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Rituals

Children and adults cannot learn if they don't first feel safe and connected. Rituals are interactions between two people designed to build connections for each person in the interaction. This sense of connection optimizes brain function in children and adults. Connection builds self-confidence and provides a sense of belonging, which strengthens relationships. Connections on the outside with others build connections on the inside of the brain, wiring us for cooperation, impulse control, teaching, and learning.

The 4 Components of Connection

Connection with others requires intention. An intention to connect with the other person. An intention to focus on the other person despite distractions or obligations. An intention to prime the brain to access executive functioning skills, to teach, and to learn.

Connection requires 4 components:



Eye contact

Look all staff and family members in the eyes.

Be conscious of those this is uncomfortable for either for personal or cultural reasons.



Touch

Offer touch in your greeting.

Be conscious of those who aren't ready for this level of connection yet or are not feeling it today.



Presence

Make your presence felt by focusing on the person you are greeting (not your phone or other obligations)



A playful situation

Make the ritual fun! This can be through having fun greeting choices or even just through a genuine smile.

I Love You Rituals

I Love You Rituals are one-on-one interactions intentionally designed to build connections between both individuals. Connection is the glue that binds us together and helps us endure life's twists, turns, disappointments and hardships. A strong sense of connection also increases children's cooperation and attention spans while decreasing power struggles and attention-seeking behaviors.

I Love you Rituals are good for all children but are especially essential to fostering healthy development and connection with children with challenging behaviors. In fact, adding more intentional connections throughout the day is more effective at curbing negative behaviors than additional punishments or restrictions.

I Love You Rituals can be an intentional moment of connection with a staff member in the morning, and a nursery rhyme game with a child on the changing table. As with all structures, they require intention, consistency, and practice to be successful.

For the Center and the Classroom

While I Love You Rituals for children are found primarily in the classroom, administrators and support staff may find them useful tools of connection as well. Teachers (for the classroom) will perform I Love You Rituals throughout the day with the children in their care. I Love You Rituals involve an activity that the child enjoys and include the 4 Components of Connection. Respect everyone's right to pass but encourage everyone to participate next time.

- Materials Needed:
 1. Family and Staff Communication – to be sent out prior to starting I Love You Rituals
 2. Helpful – I Love You Rituals on a String
 3. Helpful – I Love You Rituals Poster
 4. Helpful – I Love You Rituals CDs and Book
- Steps to Success:
 1. Send out family and staff communications prior to starting, or changing, I Love You Rituals in your center or classroom. Communicate in as many ways as possible: meetings, letters home, emails, phone, text, etc.

2. Check your body language. Are you conveying safety and an intent to connect? If you are having a difficult day yourself, remember to smile and breathe. This ritual will make your day better by connecting you with others.
3. Check your intention. Are you there to connect with the child? If you are just trying to get this chore done, remember to smile and breathe. This ritual will make your day better by helping everyone to be calmer and more willing to work together.
4. Focus on the 4 Components of Connection:
5. One-on-one with a child, use words and movement to form a connection with the child. The ritual could be a: I Love Your Ritual from your string set, nursery rhyme, song, clapping game, silly dance, or anything else that you and the child enjoy.
6. Incorporate I Love You Rituals with every child at least once a day, more often if possible. You can incorporate them:
 - a. During the Greeting Ritual
 - b. During circle time
 - c. During or after transitions
 - d. During the Goodbye Ritual
7. For children in diapers – I Love You Rituals can transform time on the changing table from one of resistance and struggle to one of joy and connection.
8. Examples of I Love You Rituals

Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star

Twinkle, twinkle, little star.
 What a wonderful child you are.
 With big bright eyes(touch), and nice round cheeks
 (touch),
 A talented child from your head to your feet
 (touch),
 Twinkle, twinkle, little star.
 What a wonderful child you are! (hug)

Here is the Bunny!

Here is the bunny with ears so funny.
 Here is the hole in the ground.
 Bunny hears a sound - POP – Go his ears and he
 jumps in the hole in the ground! (Repeat making a
 large hole with your arm that the child jumps in
 and gets a hug.)

Round and Round the Garden

Round and round the garden goes the teddy bear
 (make little circles in child's palm), One step, two
 steps (finger walk up the child's arm)
 Tickle you under there! (gentle tickle under the
 child's arm)

The School Family Board/Book

The School Family Board provides a sense of connection that promotes a felt sense of safety. Everyone that comes into contact with children and families at your school should be included in the School Family board – from teachers, volunteers and admin, to cooks, custodians, and bus drivers. Doing so let's not only provides a sense of inclusion for those involved it also shows everyone that those included will keep everyone safe. It sets everyone up for success by providing a sense of safety that will allow access to the higher parts of our brains.

For the Center

- **Materials Needed:**
 1. Family and Staff Communication – to be sent out prior to starting the School Family Board
 2. Area to post the School Family (i.e. bulletin board)
 3. Photos of each staff member
 4. Decorations for the board
- **Steps to Success:**
 1. Send out family and staff communications prior to starting, or changing, your center level School Family Board. Communicate in as many ways as possible: meetings, letters home, emails, phone, text, etc.
 2. Have all staff provide a head shot of themselves to be included on the board.
 - a. Tip: Include a head shot in onboarding items for new hires.
 3. Be sure to keep the board updated throughout the year with any staffing changes.
 4. Create a School Family Book to be included in the Lending Library for families to check out. This can help ease transitions for new children or those going through a difficult time.
 - a. Optional: Create a copy of the School Family Book for each classroom to ease children's transition to a new room.
 5. Optional: Allow staff to provide a short bio, or topics of interest to add to their photo.
 6. Optional: Have the School Family Board be a job for a member of your staff that would like to volunteer.

Friends and Family Board/Book

The Friends and Family Board provides a sense of connection that promotes a felt sense of safety. Every child, family, teacher, and volunteer in your classroom should be included on the Friends and Family Board. Doing so let's not only provides a sense of inclusion for those involved it also provides children with a sense of safety to be reminded of those that help keep them safe.

For the Classroom

- Materials Needed:
 5. Family Communication – to be sent out prior to starting the School Family Board
 6. Area to post the Friends and Family Board (i.e. bulletin board)
 7. Photos of each child, family, teacher, and volunteer
 8. Decorations for the board
- Steps to Success:
 7. Send out family communications prior to starting, or changing, your center level Friends and Family Board. Communicate in as many ways as possible: meetings, letters home, emails, phone, text, etc.
 8. Have all families provide a family photo to be included on the board. Teachers and volunteers need to provide a photo as well.
 - a. Tip: Include a family photo in onboarding items for new families.
 9. Be sure to keep the board updated throughout the year with any changes.
 10. Create a Friends and Family Book to be used by children in the Safe Place, the Library, and in any other area that it might be useful.
 11. Optional: Allow families to provide a short bio, or topics of interest to add to their photo.

Resources

- Conscious Discipline: Building Resilient Classrooms by Dr. Becky Bailey
 - Chapter 3 – The School Family
 - <https://consciousdiscipline.com/free-resources/book-portal/chapter-3-school-family/>
 - Chapter 4 – Composure
 - <https://consciousdiscipline.com/free-resources/book-portal/chapter-4-composure/>
- Creating the School Family: Bully-Proofing Classrooms Through Emotional Intelligence by Dr. Becky Bailey
 - Chapter 4 – Friends and Family Board
- I Love You Rituals
 - <https://consciousdiscipline.com/e-learning/podcasts/podcast-episode058/>
 - <https://consciousdiscipline.com/e-learning/webinars/connecting-with-your-kids-with-i-love-you-rituals/>
 - <https://consciousdiscipline.com/free-resources/shubert/shuberts-classroom/i-love-you-rituals/>
 - <https://consciousdiscipline.com/free-resources/shubert/sophies-classroom/changing-table-and-i-love-you-rituals/>
 - <https://consciousdiscipline.com/free-resources/shuberts-home/kitchen/i-love-you-rituals/>
- School Family and Friends and Family Board/Book
 - <https://consciousdiscipline.com/free-resources/book-portal/chapter-3-school-family/>
 - <https://consciousdiscipline.com/free-resources/book-portal/chapter-4-composure/#8schoolfamilysongs>
 - <https://consciousdiscipline.com/free-resources/shubert/entrance/friends-and-family-board/>
 - <https://consciousdiscipline.com/free-resources/shubert/shuberts-classroom/friends-and-family-board/>

- <https://consciousdiscipline.com/free-resources/shubert/sophies-classroom/friends-and-family-board/>