



## What Does Check Out Look Like?

### *Tips for Check Out and Partnering with Parents*

Check Out is more than a procedure to keep kids safe. It's an opportunity to show parents that Konnect isn't just a fun place to play—it's a place where their kid is known and loved! Here are tips to help you lead through Check Out like a pro!

### **Know Your Spot**

- **Emcees, Techs, and Coaches**
  - When parents show up, move to the exit door to compare name tags with check-out codes.
  - If you have enough people, one person can stand near the entrance to Konnect to greet parents and direct them to their kid's small group.
- **Small Group Leaders:** Stay with your kids for the duration of Check Out. If you need to assist with Check Out, leave your kids with another small group leader.

### **Keep Small Groups Together**

- **Why stay in small groups for Check Out?** Imagine a parent walks into Konnect and, instead of finding small groups where a leader knows their kid, everyone's playing and it's difficult to find their kid amongst the activity. If that happens, we miss out on an important opportunity to build parent confidence and partner with them, because they don't get to see how we "lead small."
- **Set clear expectations**
  - **Emcees**
    - During your Life Konnection, remind kids to stay in small groups during Check Out.
    - As parents start to show up, make an announcement to remind kids again.
  - **Small Group Leaders**
    - Before beginning discussion, tell kids you will stay together until Check Out is over.
    - When parents show up, remind kids again to stick with you.
    - During Check Out, have kids continue the activity from activity time, or they can play simple games like Charades, Telephone, Simon Says, I Spy, or 20 Questions.
  - **Coaches and Techs:** If you're not tied up checking name tags with parent check-out codes, walk wandering kids back to their small group leader and remind them to stay with them.
- **What if another leader lets their kids go play?**
  - **Small Group Leaders**
    - If another small group gets up to play, do not talk badly about them.
    - Remind your kids that your group is going to stick together, and play a game *while staying in your group*.

- After the experience, talk to the leader who dismissed early. Share any advice you have to help them. If they continue dismissing early, talk with your coach or a LifeKids staff member about it so they can help.
- **Coaches:** If you see (or another leader tells you about) a leader who lets their small group get up and play before parent Check Out is complete:
  - Pull the group back together to reduce chaos in the room.
  - Follow up to find out how you can better support the small group leader in the future.
- **Don't give up.** Once kids get used to playing, they expect it and ask for it. Thankfully, the reverse is also true. Once kids get used to staying in small groups until they're checked out, they expect it and will stop complaining, wandering off, or trying to play.

## Partner with Parents

- **Compliment their kid.** When a parent shows up, compliment their kid by name with a specific, true statement, like, "Kelon helped me pass out supplies during small group activity today," or, "I saw Jessica climb the rock wall like a pro with her friends." No matter how small the compliment, it will go far in letting parents know you care about their kid.
- **Stand up for security.** Make sure kids don't lose their name tags, and refer parents to your coach when something goes awry rather than fudging on Check Out procedure. The procedure we have in place sends a message to parents: Their kid is safe while they're under our care.
- **Write postcards.** As soon as your experience is over, write a postcard to one or two kids in your small group. Keep track of who you write to, and include their name, grade, and experience time on the card so LifeKids staff can address and send it for you. Your five minutes of writing means a lot to kids and parents during the week!

## Talk It Out Dos and Don'ts

- **Don't** lead a conversation with a parent by talking about the difficulties you had with their kid.
- **Do** lead conversations with parents by giving them a true compliment about their kid.
- **Don't** ignore problems until you're frustrated and burnt out.
- **Do** talk with your coach or a LifeKids staff member about difficulties you're having.
- **Don't** give up after talking through your challenges one time.
- **Do** bring up challenges until you, your coach, and your LifeKids staff member have come up with an action plan that works.
- **Don't** tell parents you think their kid needs a LifeKids Buddy.
- **Do** talk with your LifeKids staff member if you think a kid might be safer or find more success by having one-on-one leadership with a LifeKids Buddy.

## Talk It Over

1. What questions do you have about Check Out time? Who can answer those questions for you?
2. How do you think you partner well with parents during Check Out time? What could you do better?
3. What tricks have you learned to keep kids focused during Check Out time?

*A special thank you to Orange and the reThink Group for their ideas and research on their "lead small" philosophy referenced in this guide.*