

From Jane Langley on morning circles with EY students.

I think a Check In Circle is a perfect strategy to implement in assisting little people transition into the school day and learning.

My experience has been that having a morning ritual of sitting in a circle provides a safe non threatening routine for children to begin the day.

It also helps build community of course and connect kids with their peers.

My usual Check In Circle Routine is

1. When the bell goes the children form a circle on the mat.
2. The teacher quickly greets the children as a group
3. The Talking stick is passed around the circle and children can either pass ..or say "Something I want to share with the grade is"

I reinforce that it's not a show and tell circle – but a check-in circle.

It's to let me know how you might be feeling – and how ready you are for the day's learning.

It's to let the class know that there may be something you are worried. Excited, angry about etc...

You could also of course place out feeling cards – or even start with a fun game/song that might tempt the little anxious person that being part of the group (and leaving mum is okay)

I think this would be a good starting point – and might take a couple of weeks for the little person to "buy in"

When the time is right I think it's okay to say to the group

"Gertrude is feeling a little sad this morning because she hates saying goodbye to her mum – Who else sometimes feels like this ? What do you do ? or.... What could we do right now to help her feel okay ?"

A consistent morning routine would be good too – you know – have a Visual Check list of what everyone is to do.

1. Hang your bag up
2. Change your reader
3. Read to Mum
4. Kiss Mum Goodbye
5. Practise your words/Draw a picture.

You could also have these as individual cards on a Velcro strip that children have to pull off/put on as they do each one.

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