

# How to Debrief from the School Day

This handout includes a summary of our webinar and more resources listed at the end.

Remember, you can always reach out to the parent mentor who covers your school district with any specific questions or concerns. Find their information [here](#).

## *What does “Debrief” mean?*

Debriefing is a structured conversation aimed at reviewing events, experiences, and feelings. It helps to process the day's activities, address any issues, and plan. It is a supportive and informative process for students to reflect on their day. You can facilitate these conversations to help your student reflect on their days and better understand what their needs are in the school environment.

## *Effective Components of Debriefing*

- Find the **environment** that works best for your child.
- Choose a consistent **time of day** to have these conversations.
- Be sure to ask **open-ended questions**.
- Keep in mind the **age** of your child.
- Utilize the child's **preferred mode of communication** (AAC, ASL, limited eye contact, etc.)
- Participate in **active listening**.
- Offer support and **validation** when **discussing challenges**.
- Work together to develop an **action plan** to address relevant concerns.
- **Incorporate school communications** while debriefing: grades, behavior logs, etc.
- **Add debriefing conversations to your existing routine**.

## *Debriefing Activities*

### **Five Finger Debrief**

Thumb: Something that made you feel HAPPY

Index Finger: Something you're EXCITED about

Middle Finger: Something you're UNSURE about, or made you feel UNEASY

Ring Finger: Something you did today that you'd LIKE TO KEEP DOING

Pinky Finger: Something that made you LAUGH

### **Rose, Bud, Thorn**

Rose: Discuss a positive or something that made you feel good

Bud: Discuss something new or exciting, or something you look forward to this week

Thorn: Discuss something that made you feel sad, upset, or disappointed

## **Mad, Glad, Sad**

Mad: Talk about something that made you mad, angry, or frustrated

Glad: Talk about something that made you smile or feel happy

Sad: Talk about something that made you upset or feel like you might cry

## **Yah, Oops, Blah**

Yah: Talk about something you're excited about

Oops: Talk about a misunderstanding, mistake, or embarrassing moment

Blah: Talk about something hard or upsetting

### *How to Debrief AFTER Debriefing*

- Practice self-care
- Take notes to help organize thoughts
- Discuss major findings with coparent or support system

### *Resources*

## **Questions to ask while debriefing**

[50 Questions to ask your kids instead of asking, "how was your day?"](#)

[Questions to ask your child about school](#) (understood.org)

[How to get kids to talk about school](#) (understood.org)

## **Debriefing activities**

[The Daily Debrief: Tips on talking with your kids about their school day](#) (Calgary's Child)

## **Important skills for debriefing**

[Active Listening \(8 Tips\)](#) (tcea.org)

## **Important Resources for other special education related questions**

[Michigan Alliance for Families - Self Advocacy](#)

[Michigan Alliance for Families - Parent Participation](#)

[PACER Center - Parent Involvement](#)

[PACER Center - Elementary School Involvement](#)