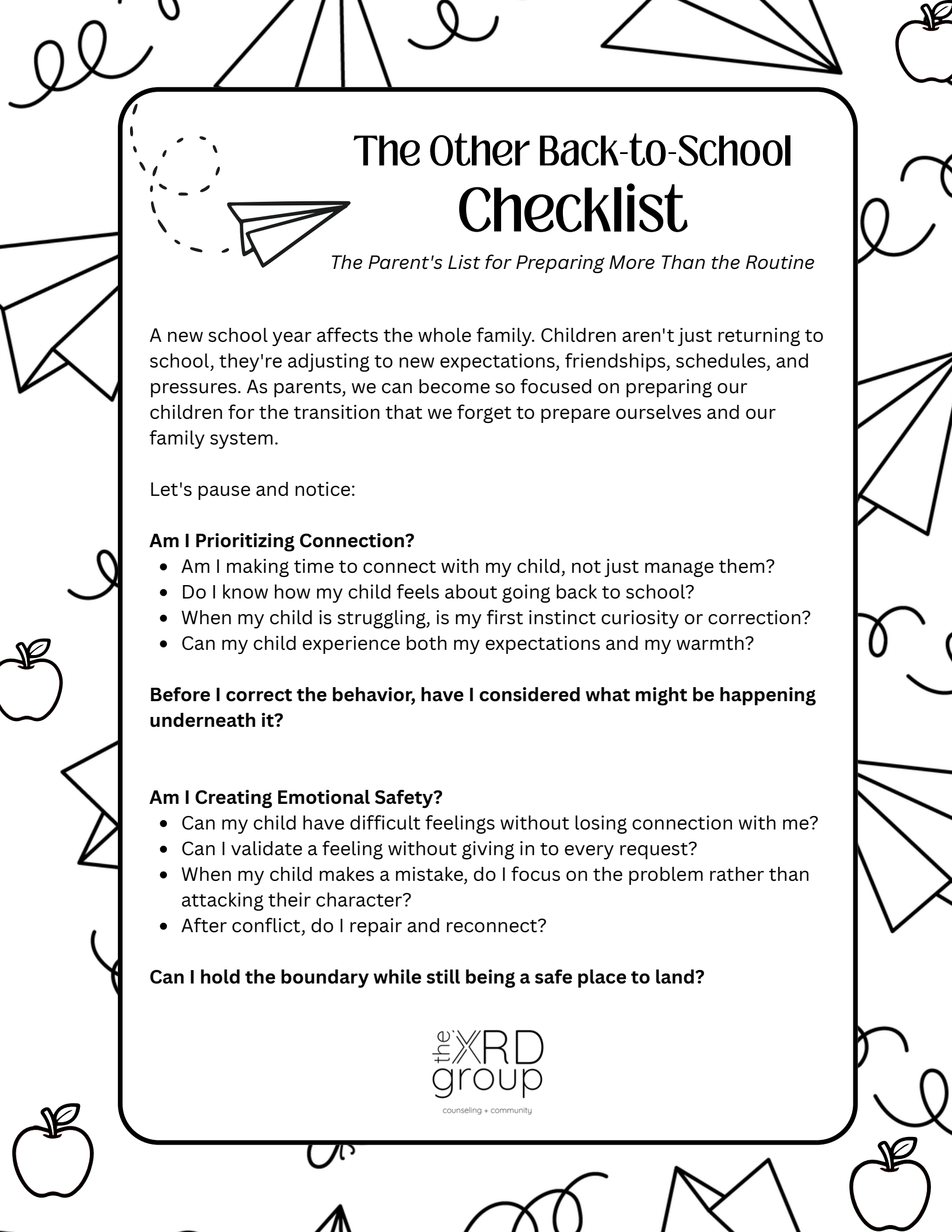


The Other Back-to-School Checklist

The Parent's List for Preparing More Than the Routine

A new school year affects the whole family. Children aren't just returning to school, they're adjusting to new expectations, friendships, schedules, and pressures. As parents, we can become so focused on preparing our children for the transition that we forget to prepare ourselves and our family system.

Let's pause and notice:

Am I Prioritizing Connection?

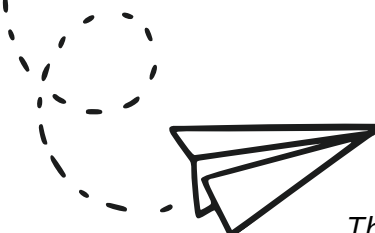
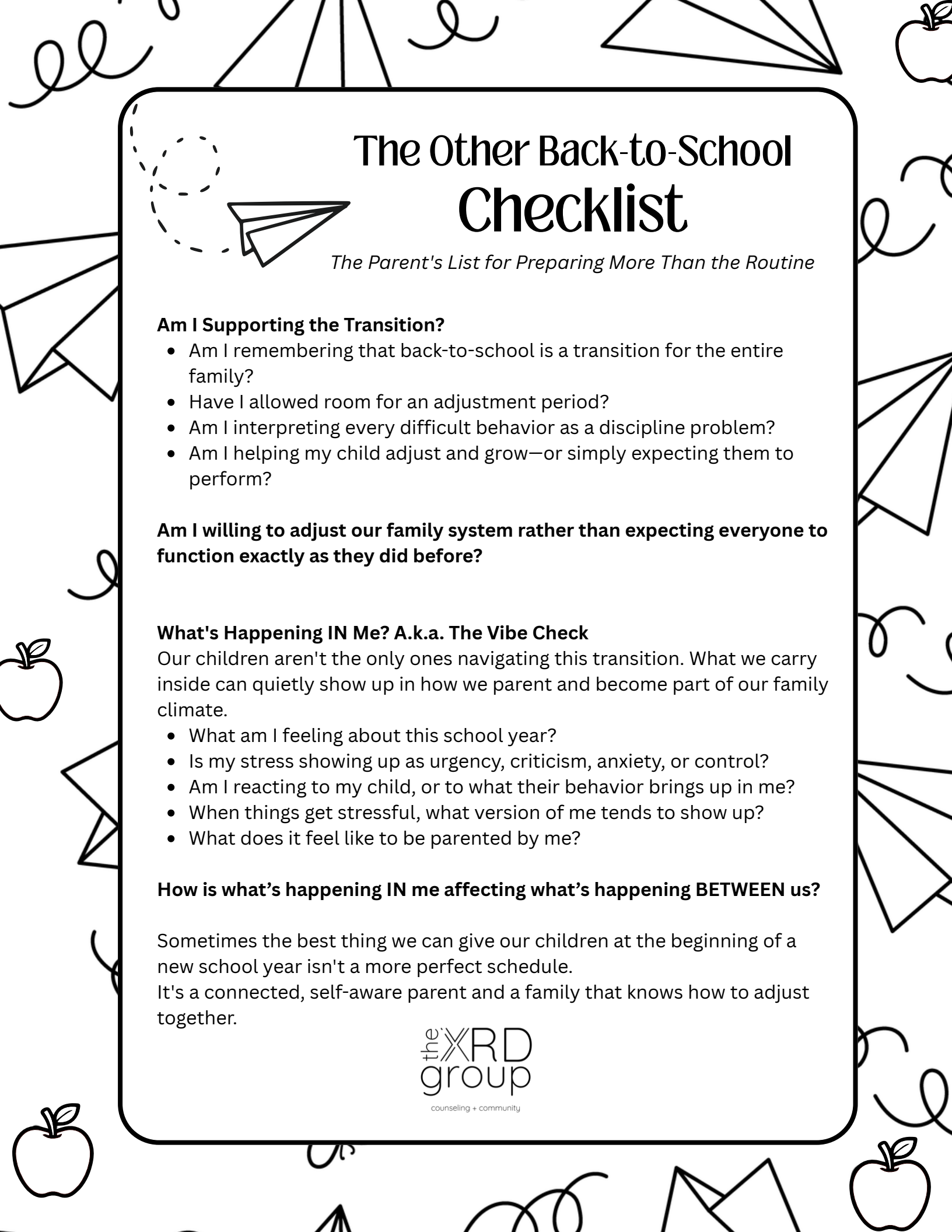
- Am I making time to connect with my child, not just manage them?
- Do I know how my child feels about going back to school?
- When my child is struggling, is my first instinct curiosity or correction?
- Can my child experience both my expectations and my warmth?

Before I correct the behavior, have I considered what might be happening underneath it?

Am I Creating Emotional Safety?

- Can my child have difficult feelings without losing connection with me?
- Can I validate a feeling without giving in to every request?
- When my child makes a mistake, do I focus on the problem rather than attacking their character?
- After conflict, do I repair and reconnect?

Can I hold the boundary while still being a safe place to land?



The Other Back-to-School Checklist

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Am I Supporting the Transition?

- Am I remembering that back-to-school is a transition for the entire family?
- Have I allowed room for an adjustment period?
- Am I interpreting every difficult behavior as a discipline problem?
- Am I helping my child adjust and grow—or simply expecting them to perform?

Am I willing to adjust our family system rather than expecting everyone to function exactly as they did before?

What's Happening IN Me? A.k.a. The Vibe Check

Our children aren't the only ones navigating this transition. What we carry inside can quietly show up in how we parent and become part of our family climate.

- What am I feeling about this school year?
- Is my stress showing up as urgency, criticism, anxiety, or control?
- Am I reacting to my child, or to what their behavior brings up in me?
- When things get stressful, what version of me tends to show up?
- What does it feel like to be parented by me?

How is what's happening IN me affecting what's happening BETWEEN us?

Sometimes the best thing we can give our children at the beginning of a new school year isn't a more perfect schedule. It's a connected, self-aware parent and a family that knows how to adjust together.