

Families First Newsletter

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How to Talk to Kids about Difficult Subjects

By Caroline Knorr

One of the toughest jobs of parenting is talking to your kids about difficult subjects. It's hard to explain when Mr. Teddy Bear gets eaten by the washing machine. Or how their bike got stolen at school. It feels impossible to put into words the really big issues, such as violence, racism, drugs, and other weighty topics. But in the age of cell phone notifications, streaming video, and 24-hour news coverage -- when even little kids are exposed to really serious stories -- it's important to face this challenge head-on. Addressing the tough stuff makes your kids feel safer, strengthens your bond, and teaches them about the world. And when you show them how to gather and interpret information, ask questions, and cross-check sources, they become critical thinkers. It's always sad to confront the issues the world hasn't been able to solve, but by investing our kids with knowledge, compassion, and strong character, we can give them all the tools they need to make things better.

The tips listed below are a general guideline for discussing any difficult subject based on childhood-development guidelines.

AGES 2-6

Young children don't have enough life experience to understand some of the elements involved in complex, difficult topics. They also don't have a firm grasp on abstract concepts and cause and effect.

- Keep the news at bay
- Reassure with both words and gestures
- Address feelings - yours and theirs
- Find out what they know
- Break down issues to their simplest terms
- Catch your own biases
- Use vocabulary, ideas, and relationships that they're familiar with
- Use basic terms for feelings such as mad, sad, afraid, happy, and surprised
- Communicate that someone's in charge

AGES 7-12

As kids gain abstract-thinking skills, real-world experience, and the ability to express themselves, they can grapple with difficult subjects and understand different perspectives. They need to be able to discuss things without feeling shame or embarrassment.

- Wait for the right moment
- Find out what they know
- Create a safe space for discussion
- Provide context and perspective
- Address their curiosity
- Be sensitive to kids' emotions and temperament
- Encourage critical thinking
- Look for positives

TEENS

At this age, teens are engaged in media independently - reading it, interacting with it, and even making their own and sharing it. They often hear about difficult subjects in the news and from other places, such as in video chats or social media. They tend to bristle at lectures... so encourage them to find media that can enrich their knowledge and ask questions that prompt them to think through their arguments.

- Encourage open dialogue
- Ask open-ended questions and ask them to support their ideas
- Admit when you don't know something
- Get them to consider the complexities in difficult subjects
- Share your values
- Talk about "their" news
- Ask what they would do if they were in a really difficult situation
- Get them to consider solutions

Visit: <https://www.common sense media.org/blog/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-difficult-subjects> for in depth information on talk to your kids



"Every day is a new beginning. Take a deep breath, smile and start again."
- Unknown

SOLDIERS

FAMILIES

RETIREES

CIVILIANS

STEM Challenge: Hurricane Houses

Hurricanes are a fact of life for a lot of the US, but here in the Midwest we don't necessarily understand the power they have.

Try this STEM challenge at home with your kids by designing and building hurricane proof houses.

Materials needed:

- Play-doh
- Construction paper
- Tin tray
- Fan
- Popsicle sticks
- Tape
- Scissors

Directions:

1. Watch a couple of videos or read about hurricanes
2. Design your house
3. Use materials to build your house in the tin tray
4. When house is completed, pour water into tin tray, put tray in front of fan and turn fan on
5. Observe what happens as the fan speed gets more powerful



KIDS IN THE KITCHEN: HOMEMADE FUDGESICLE

Try this quick, tasty, and easy treat to beat the heat this summer!

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup unsweetened Cocoa Powder
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 2 cup milk
- 2 tbs corn syrup

Directions:

1. Whisk together cocoa powder & sugar in pot
2. Add corn syrup and vanilla to mixture
3. Place over low heat
4. Add milk, whisking constantly until everything is dissolved
5. Pour mixture into popsicle molds and freeze until solid

June Fun in the QCA

1-30: Ride the River Scavenger Hunt - visit riveraction.org/rideandseek to register

5: Movie in the Park - Frozen 2 - Greenvally Softball Complex

8: QCCT Paint the Town - Downtown Davenport

11-13: Tour of the Mississippi River Valley (TOMRV) - visit www.qcbc.org to register

11-30: Elephant and Plggie's "We Are In A Play" - Circa '21

18-19: Food Truck Fight - LeClaire, IA

All activities are subject to change or cancellation. Please check visitquadcities.com or business website for the most up to date event information.

Fun Father's Day Activities



Father's Day is on June 20th this year and will be here before you know it! Try one of these fun activities for something a little different with your dad.

- Rent his dream car for the day
- Have an outdoor movie night
- Make fondue
- Go bird-watching
- Host an At-Home Wine/Beer Tasting
- Tackle a new project together
- Make breakfast together
- Take an online cooking or fitness class together
- Put on a talent show
- Go to a car show
- Go on an outdoor adventure

Are you or your spouse an active military member?

Do you have young children?

Join us for Discovery Time Playgroup!

We meet on Thursday's from 10 AM-12 PM

For more information please contact Jennifer Kerr

at jennifer.a.kerr10.civ@mail.mil

MILITARY FATHERS!

Look for FREE monthly activities for father and their children. If you are a military father - meaning you or your spouse is active, retired, or a guard member - you are invited to be a part of our monthly fatherhood activities! Each month we plan an activity specifically for children and their fathers. Twice a year we open these activities up to the whole family! All events are free and are different at different community venues. Past outings have been bowling, fishing, skating, Michael's Fun World, Putnam Museum, and many more. To learn more about the next activity email Jennifer Kerr at jennifer.a.kerr10.civ@mail.mil or Alyssa Acton at AlyssaA@childabuseqc.org