

TEDDY talks

BIG IDEARS for **LITTLE EARS**

™

How to Talk to Kids About Hard Things



**Have you ever wanted to talk
to your child about a difficult
topic but struggled to find the
“right” time or the “right” words?**

Here are 5 key reminders.



Visit teddytalks.com
to help you talk about
“big ideas for little ears” with
Dr. Rebecca and Grizzlette

Remember that Connection is Protection



Just being with your child during difficult times is a protective factor for any stressful event. Think back to a time when you felt comforted by another. Do you remember exactly what the person said? Or do you remember how you **felt**? Sometimes, just holding space for your child to talk or play with you is all they need to feel comforted.

Make Time to Talk



Timing can be key when broaching hard-to-talk-about topics. Think of the last time you had a chat with your child about something important. How did it go? Were there distractions? Was it in a calm space? On a walk? In the car? Over dinner? Saturday morning over pancakes? You know your child best and what setting will be most beneficial.



Remember that talking with kids about hard things is not a one-time event. Leave the door open to ask questions and look for opportunities later that a child wants to talk about the topic again.

Match Explanations with Your Child's Age



PreK and Early Elementary - provide simple information and concrete activities (e.g. drawing, role-play, imaginative play).



Upper Elementary and Early Middle - Provide more information, balanced with answering questions and providing options for coping.



Upper Middle and High School - Provide information and more details, if asked. Invite questions and talk through any concerns or ideas they may have for coping.

You Don't Need to Know "The Answer"



Many difficult topics don't have a clear answer and there's not a "right" way to talk about challenging things. Sometimes, we can simply tell our children, "I don't know, but we can figure it out together" or "I wish I had a good answer to that question, but I'm here for you to learn more."

Let Your Child Be the Guide



Let your child's question's guide the conversation. If they can't think of any questions, invite them to think about it and come back to you if they do.



Observe your child's emotions when talking about difficult things. Some children will not express themselves verbally, but will show you how they feel in other ways, like acting out, shutting down, or showing changes in their sleep, eating, or behavior. Be curious about this behavior, and invite your child to do some special one-on-one time with you, where you can then broach the topic (e.g. I noticed that after we talked about your grandma's death, you started staying in your room a lot. I'm here if you need to talk.).



Connection is protection... so let's do it. Let's connect and talk about important things kids want to know about ... strengthening children's mental health and building secure relationships in accessible, playful ways. We hope this resources help you and your family with talking about hard things!

XOXO,
Rebecca and Grizzlette