

Start a habit:

When kids are dealing with big feelings, it is important for them to have an outlet to process their emotions. It is easier for kids to talk about hard things when talking to a trusted adult about their questions in general is familiar, routine, and met with developmentally appropriate answers.

Try starting this routine with your kiddo. Before bed, ask this question:

“ DO YOU WANT TO
TALK ABOUT
ANYTHING THAT
YOU HEARD OR SAW
TODAY? ”

Talking is important, even when it's hard.

Our gut instinct is to avoid hard conversations. Adults and kids alike. It's important to model checking in with our loved ones, and normalizing kids asking whatever good questions they have about what they may have seen or heard throughout their day.

- We want kids to feel comfortable coming to us to clarify things, or get our perspective on what they've been exposed to
- We want kids to **trust that we're going to be their best source of accurate information**, delivered in a way that **we** think is developmentally appropriate for their unique situation.
- Their questions give us a window into the mental load we don't always see that they are carrying.

For older kids who are able to read and write, try sharing a journal with them. Give them 5 minutes around bedtime to write down their questions. Each night, respond to their questions by writing your answers.



Model with fun, not pressure

For younger kids, introduce the routine by saying this:

“I have a game I want to play with you. Think about things you heard or saw today. Now tell me something that you heard or saw that you have a question about, or maybe you just want to teach me about.”

“I'll go first. I saw your brother eat his booger and I was disgusted and wanted to see if you know why he'd do that. Do you know why?”

“Second, I see mom sign your folder in your backpack every Friday. Why does she do that?”

Light questions with easy answers are a great foundation to build comfort in dialogue.

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