

Remember

- Ask your child what they may want or need from you in a conversation, such as advice, simply listening, help in dealing with feelings or help solving a problem.
- Children learn from imitating. Most often, they will follow your lead in how they deal with anger, solve problems and work through difficult feelings.
- Talk to your child-don't lecture, criticize, threaten or say hurtful things.
- Children learn from their own choices. As long as the consequences are not dangerous, don't feel you have to step in. Realize your children may test you by telling you a small part of what is bothering them. Listen carefully to what they say, encourage them to talk and they may share the rest of the story.

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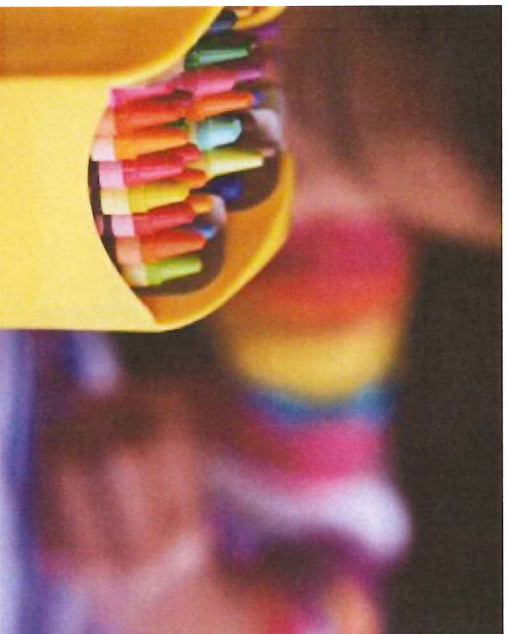
SEEK SUPPORT

If a parent is having problems over an extended period of time, they may want to consider consulting with a mental health professional to find out how they can help.



COMMUNICATION TIPS FOR PARENTS

Listening and talking is key to a healthy connection between a parent and their child.



Be available for your child

- Notice times when your child is most likely to talk. For example, at bedtime, before dinner, in the car- and be available.
- Start the conversation; it lets your child know you care about what's happening in their lives.
- Find time each week for a one-on-one activity with your child, and avoid scheduling other activities during that time.
- Learn about your child's interests. For example, favorite music and activities- and show interest in them
- Initiate conversations by sharing what you have been thinking about rather than beginning a conversation with a question.

Let your kids know you are listening

- When your child is talking about concerns, stop what you are doing and listen.
- Express interest in what they are saying without being overly intrusive.
- Listen to their point of view, even if it's difficult to hear.
- Let them complete their point before you respond.
- Repeat what you heard them say to ensure that you understand them correctly.

Respond in a way your child will hear

- Soften strong reactions; a child will tune you out if you appear angry or defensive.
- Express your opinion without putting down theirs; acknowledge that it's okay to disagree.
- Resist arguing about who is right. Instead say, "I know you disagree with me, but this is what I think."
- Focus on your child's feelings rather than your own during your conversation.

Talk through problems, consequences, and resolutions

- Point out there are often several ways to solve a problem. For example, if your child is falling behind on homework, you can talk through ways to remedy this and support them with some resolutions.
- Discuss social situations and some ways to make good decisions to continue a positive social development.
- Advise your child that if they have a tough situation to come to you or an adult to discuss options to reach a resolution.
- Talk to your child on the difference in bad and good choices and if bad choices are made there could be consequences. For example, using words that hurt themselves or others.

