



Supporting Our Children's Wellbeing Through Talk

1. Make some time every day to really listen to your child by removing distractions such as mobile phones, laptops, etc. The charity Young Minds suggests that parents 'Take 20' minutes each day to simply listen whilst our children talk.
2. Make talk time informal to enable your child to relax: you could chat whilst playing a game or going for a walk.
3. Ensure that you are listening more than talking to allow space for your child to talk. Let the child fill the silence if and when they are ready.
4. Role playing games with your child can give them a useful opportunity to share big feelings such as sadness, loneliness or fear without having to state directly that they *themselves* feel sad or lonely or afraid.
5. Some children may not yet have the vocabulary to accurately articulate their feelings, resulting in anger and frustration. Stay calm whilst the anger is expressed – let the storm pass. Then invite your child to talk about why they felt so angry. You may need to wait a few hours before doing this to give the child chance to recover.
6. Encourage children to consider how they might respond to difficult or upsetting situations in the future. Try rehearsing simple actions or phrases with them, such as choosing another toy or "I'm playing this...would you like to join in?" This kind of rehearsal can be equally useful for teenagers too, especially with regards to managing friendship issues.
7. Model the kind of emotional literacy you want to encourage in your child: If they only witness silence or anger when we are experiencing difficult feelings, that's the behaviour they'll reproduce.
8. Let's make the British 'stiff upper lip' a thing of the past and provide our children with the emotional toolkit for a happier future.

