

## Parents Care To Children For Their Mental Security

Always listen carefully in order to learn what children know and are thinking treat all children's questions with respect and seriousness; do not "shush," ignore or dismiss children. Elucidate children's questions so that you can understand what is being asked, what has led to the question and how much information a child wants. Children who ask: "Why was the World Trade Center attacked?" could be curious about the political issues of the attacks, or may be asking, "Could I or someone I love be hurt in an attack?" Very good way to clarify what a child wants to know is to repeat the question to the child. Herein way a child can say, "Yes, that is what I've been thinking," or can correct what you said in order to redirect the conversation to something he or she wants to discuss.

Every now and then, without repeating the exact words, it is helpful to reflect what you think a child is feeling, as a way of giving a child the opportunity to confirm that you have understood, or to clarify. Review the facts of what actually happened; reassure children in age-appropriate ways that they are safe. While talking to toddlers, responses can be simple and direct: "I love you and I will always do everything I can to make you safe." Allow children know that many people and organizations are working to make us safe. Always reassure children that while there are people who do things that are hard to understand, we live in a wonderful country and, for the vast majority of the time, we are safe.

Always answer questions as clearly and honestly as you can, using developmentally appropriate language and definitions. If you don't know the answer to a child's question, say so and make a plan to try to find out. Do correct yourself if you give incomplete or inaccurate information, don't be afraid of making a mistake; when we admit our mistakes, adults model for children how to admit their own mistakes. Try to be direct about acknowledging mistakes and avoid defensiveness; say, "I made a mistake." Recognize that there are people who hate other people, and that hateful actions can be threatening. Contribute to your perceptions and feelings but try to avoid conveying hopelessness, without diminishing the seriousness of a situation, it is important to keep perspective and convey it to children. Forever avoid giving young children more specific detail than necessary, be careful not to frighten children. Do limit children's exposure to media coverage of violent events. Kids need to know that people are not powerless in the face of hate; there are many things children and adults can do. Encompass regular discussions about ways people can address hate, brainstorm ways to address these concerns at home, in school and in the community.

## About the Author

Jennifer Fairbanks is a community supporter and researcher in [violence against women](#) along with her side business [family violence prevention fund](#).

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