



FAMILIES

TACKLING TOUGH TIMES

TOGETHER



FAMILY

CHILDREN

We Share Our Feelings Constructively! Open Emotional Expression

As parents we cover difficult topics with our children. This has been especially true during the pandemic. It's important to encourage our children to share their feelings with us as they find their way through new, and sometimes difficult, territory. Positive interactions help us to share information and give comfort to our children by listening. Open communication with our children allows them to share how they feel as we listen and lets them know they are safe, even when they think life is too hard.

Listening During Play

Play can be a key component in how children understand and share their emotions. We can support our children in their play, allowing them to play without interruption and/or by joining in their play when they invite us. During play, we can listen to each other. Encouraging our children to tell us how they feel and being a good listener can help our children to handle the hard things they are experiencing and also help them to build resilience.

Activities

Infants

- Provide your infant the chance to explore their environment by laying a blanket on the floor and encouraging them to crawl around. If your infant is not mobile, consider placing a mirror beside them so they can look at themselves. As you watch and listen, respond by smiling, describing what they are doing, and talking with them. These interactions provide positive communication during their play and let infants know you are there and are listening.

Older children

- It is important to listen and answer your child's questions with honesty. But, you don't want to give them more information than they can understand. [Sesame Street Workshop offers some tips for talking to children about COVID-19.](#) Focus on supporting your child during hard talks and staying positive as you listen to their concerns.

To learn more about the science behind the benefits of communicating through play, you may wish to read the below research:

- [How do children communicate through play, and why is that important?](#)
- [The Case of Brain Science and Guided Play: A Developing Story](#)