



# TALKING ABOUT VIOLENCE

STRATEGIES FOR HEALING CONVERSATIONS WITH CHILDREN

## UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE

Talking with children about violence, separation, or substance use can be daunting. But, having those conversations in open, caring ways can support a child's development and long term physical and mental health. Having these talks in loving ways can lead to more secure bonding for children and their caregivers.



## BUILDING COMFORT & TRUST

- You can build comfort and trust with your child by having a calming strategy for you both, having a predictable discipline plan, modeling loving and kind behavior, and providing your child with positive messages.
- For more on this, check out [www.philadelphiaaces.org/4-steps](http://www.philadelphiaaces.org/4-steps)

## USING WHAT'S ALREADY AVAILABLE

- Children's books can help by providing language to say what you'd like to say.
- Remember you don't need to start from scratch. Researching what media you can share with your child about their experience can take a lot of pressure off.

## STARTING THE CONVERSATION

- Your child may think that talking about what they saw will get them in trouble, cause more violence, or upset you. Taking the lead lets them know that you are a safe person to talk to.
- Begin with a message of support. You can try something like, "**I care about you, and I will listen to you.**" Ask your child what they saw, heard, and felt. Try to learn what they experienced, and how they experienced it. This will help you know how to help them feel safe.

## CONNECTING THROUGH PLAY

- Young children use play to make sense of the world around them, their experiences, and their relationships. Storytelling, magical thinking, art making, and pretend play are all ways children share their feelings and experiences.
- When a caregiver joins in on the play of children, it can be a great opportunity to bring up ideas about fear and nervousness, love and support, and safety.

## REACHING OUT

- For more age-specific information, to practice conversations, or to learn more trust-building activities, contact WIT's Play Care Coordinator, Kris Moore
  - [kmoore@helpwomen.org](mailto:kmoore@helpwomen.org), (215) 563-5301 x124
- Domestic violence counseling is available for children at Congreso de Latinos Unidos: [www.congreso.net](http://www.congreso.net)

## BOOKS THAT HELP

