

Reaching Out to Your Kids

After an incident of school violence, it's important for kids to feel like they can share their feelings, and to know that their fears and anxieties are understandable.

Rather than wait for your child to approach you, consider starting the conversation. You can ask what your child understands about these incidents and how they make him or her feel.

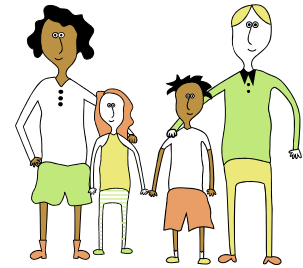
Share your own feelings too — during a tragedy, kids may look to adults for their reactions. It helps kids to know that they are not alone in their anxieties. Knowing that their parents have similar feelings will help kids legitimize their own.

At the same time, kids often need parents to help them feel safe. It may help to discuss in concrete terms what you have done and what the school is doing to help protect its students.

Tips for Parents

Keeping an eye on what TV news kids watch can go a long way toward monitoring the content of what they hear and see about events like school shootings. Here are some additional tips:

- Recognize that news doesn't have to be driven by disturbing pictures. Public television programs, newspapers, or newsmagazines specifically designed for kids can be less sensational — and less upsetting — ways for them to get information.
- Discuss current events with your child on a regular basis. It's important to help kids think through stories they hear about. Ask questions: What do you think about these events? How do you think these things happen? Such questions can encourage conversation about non-news topics as well.
- Put news stories in proper context. Showing that certain events are isolated or explaining how one event relates to another helps kids make better sense of what they hear.
- Watch the news with your child to filter stories together.
- Anticipate when guidance will be necessary and avoid shows that aren't appropriate for your child's age or level of development.



If you're uncomfortable with the content of the news or it's inappropriate for your child's age, turn it off.

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Date reviewed: March 2005

Please feel free to contact the Florence Sawyer Guidance staff with any concerns you or your child may be having.

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