

HOW TO

Set Up A Difficult

Conversation

With Your

Children



A *Earth School* workbook

GET READY

- Have a notebook or a print out of the workbook
- Have 15 minutes
- Find yourself a quiet spot

THIS WORKBOOK IS FOR YOU IF YOU WANT...

- to have meaningful conversations
- to know about child development and communication
- to learn what's the most important part of a discussion



DELICATE TOPICS

We all have topics where we are more or less comfortable: death, religion, politic, sexuality, violence, racism, etc. Our world isn't all unicorns, and we know we cannot hide it from our children. While at the same time, hoping that these conversations will be as late as possible. Well, better to start early!



Action Step

▶ GET CLEAR ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Depending on your child's age, you will not share the information the same way. Find out what they understand or not.

SET UP A MEANINGFUL CONVERSATION ▶

There are things that you can keep in mind to make it easier. You might have to step out of your comfort zone, but the essential is for the communication to work

▶ HOW TO MAKE IT COOPERATIVE

It's one thing to give information, it's another one to share around it. You want to know your child's opinion and questions. Let's make it happen.

ANY TOPIC CAN BE DISCUSSED AS A FAMILY, AS LONG AS PARENTS ADD SOME HUMILITY AND RESPECT TO THE MIX.



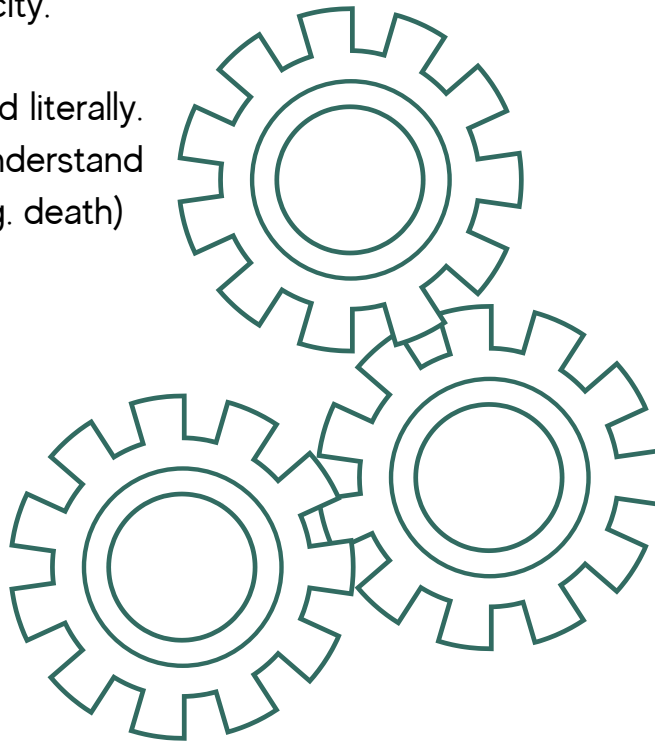


GET CLEAR ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Depending on your child's age, you will not share the information the same way. Find out what they actually understand or not.

Before 7 years old

- Concrete thinking.
- Egocentricity.
- Animism.
- Understand literally.
- Doesn't understand finality (e.g. death)



From 12 Years Old Onward

- Growing importance of the peers.
- Develops abstract thinking (completed around 14)
- Uses humor when hearing about delicate topics.
- Understands but still emotionally immature.

Between 7 and 12 years old

- Values models a lot.
- Grows awareness.
- Opens to the world.
- Start to understand abstract things.
- Desire to please.
- Fear to fail.



SET UP A MEANINGFUL CONVERSATION

There are things that you can keep in mind to make it easier. You might have to step out of your comfort zone, but the essential is for the communication to work.

Speak about it

Don't wait for your child to ask questions. When something comes up in the family, on the news, in your town,... Take the lead and speak about it.

Be honest

No matter your child's age, it is always better to answer honestly any questions. You can adapt the vocabulary, but always answer.

Ask concrete questions

Ask your child what he understood (not "if" he understood), how he feels about it, and if he has any more questions.

Be simple

Do not answer to more questions than the one your child had. If he has more questions, he will ask them in time.

Ask concrete questions

Ask your child what he understood (not "if" he understood), how he feels about it, if he has any more questions.

Take the time

If you are not available, do not start a conversation. Let your child know you'll make time for him. Better postpone than hurry.



SET UP A MEANINGFUL CONVERSATION

There are things that you can keep in mind to make it easier. You might have to step out of your comfort zone, but the essential is for the communication to work.

If you don't know something, be clear about it. There is no need to lie or hide information. Let your child know about your feelings too.

Be transparent

A conversation doesn't mean the subject is off the table. Make it clear to your child that he can come back any time to speak about it.

Keep it open

Being transparent and honest doesn't mean you have to scare your child. Show him positive examples (e.g. a nice stranger he met).

Reassure your child

Do not make your child be afraid of people. Yes, there are bad people, but most are nice and trustworthy.

Teach trust

If something happens in your town/country try not to change your habits out of fear. You will move your anxiety to your child.

Keep your routine





HOW TO MAKE IT COOPERATIVE

It's one thing to give information, it's another one to share around it. You want to know your child's opinion and questions. Let's make it happen.

• Your mother was diagnosed with cancer. Your children are very close to her and love to spend time at her place. Though, from now on, she will need to rest a lot. You know this cancer isn't the kind we can cure. Now you're facing your children and have to speak with them about it.

- **Be humble and respectful**

Children are smart. Maybe smarter than us. But they think in a differently. Do not look down on them. You're all together in this situation and what you want is cooperation not a one-way conversation.

- **Know the milestones of child development**

Look into the milestones and think before hand on how you can convey your message best. Maybe it will take several conversation: the younger the children, the shorter the attention span.

- **Be aware of communication road-blocks**

Get back to your booklet "How To Avoid Negative Communication Mistakes" and keep the roadblocks in mind when having a conversation with your children.



You did it!

You can now face the next difficult conversation with a lighter heart.

WRITE DOWN 3 POINTS YOU WANT TO REMEMBER FOR YOUR NEXT CONVERSATION

Congratulations

TODAY YOU LEARNED ABOUT HOW TO SET UP A MEANINGFUL CONVERSATION. YOU KNOW THAT AN OPEN COMMUNICATION AND A CONSCIOUS LISTENING ARE THE KEYSTONES. WELL DONE!

