

News Notes To Parents

Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service of Adams County

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How To Talk To Your Kids About Mental Health; Tips for Talking To Your Preschooler

1 in 5 children lives with a serious, diagnosable mental illness. Think about your child's friends, their class, their school. That's a *lot* of kids. It's never been more important to be able to speak openly and honestly about mental health with your children. Fortunately, today's parents are more open to discussing these important issues than previous generations.

So, you're open to discussing mental health with your child, but how do you do it? Where do you start? As with most essential topics, start at the beginning. Talk with your children about their feelings, focus on their strengths, and most importantly **listen** to what they have to say. Here are some tips from our parenting experts to get the conversation started with your preschooler.

Preschool

It's never too early to begin talking to your child about mental health. For your younger children, keep it simple and speak in terms and contexts that they will be able to understand. Preschool-age children are likely not just going to tell you how they feel, but they may express their feelings in a variety of ways. Look for their clues and engage them when you see them expressing different emotions. Use these clues as an opportunity for you to help them understand their feelings as they are first experiencing them and help them navigate their reactions to those emotions.



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What to ask. And what to say to your preschooler.

- *What causes you to have butterflies in your stomach?*
 - This feeling of anxiety or nervousness is an easy one for children to recognize as it manifests itself physically. Help them identify what causes these feelings and help them cope with it by facing their feelings head-on.
- *Where do your feelings come from?*
 - Helping your children understand where their feelings come from, how and why they react to certain experiences and stimuli, can help them begin to work out what to do with those emotions.
- *Who can you talk to if your feelings get to be too much?*
 - Let your children know that you are there for them always. But also teach them to establish trust with other key adults in their lives.
- *What are some ways you can calm down/relax/feel better/control your feelings?*
 - However, you phrase it, making sure that your children understand basic coping techniques at an early age is important. It may be quiet time in their room, a certain song or playlist, drawing or coloring, or even snuggling with mom or dad. Once your children know they have a way to deal with their feelings, they are starting to build resilience.
- *Use media and daily experiences to normalize conversations about reacting to specific emotions.*
 - After watching a movie, TV show, or YouTube video together discuss how the characters interacted with each other and dealt with their feelings.

To read full article go to: <https://beechacres.org/how-to-talk-to-your-kids-about-mental-health-tips-for-talking-to-your-preschooler/>

Priceless Lessons: Understanding the True Value of Money

What is the value of money and how can you teach this concept? You can explain that money is a tool that helps us buy things. Be sure to emphasize that not all items cost the same. Some items are more expensive because they are bigger, better, or harder to make. For example, a small candy cost less than a new toy, and a toy car is cheaper than a bicycle. This example illustrates how prices vary based on the item's value.

How about needs vs. wants? Understanding the difference between needs and wants is crucial for our children. Take time to explain that needs are essential for survival, such as food and clothing, and should be prioritized when we spend money. Wants are non-essential items, like toys or games, which are nice to have but not necessary.

How about choices? Since money is often limited, we need to make choices about how to spend it wisely. We might decide between buying a few smaller items or saving for a larger purchase. By prioritizing what we need most or what offers the best value, we make informed decisions about our spending. Allowing children to make a choice when it comes to spending money will reinforce this concept.



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Shop & Save Activity: The goal of this activity is to teach children about money value and spending choices. You'll need: play money, small items to buy, price tags, stickers, or tape that you can write prices on, and containers for the child's money.



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Steps:

- **Set Up:** Display items with prices.
- **Distribute Money:** Give each child a set amount of play money.
- **Shop:** Let children choose items within their budget.
- **Discuss:** Ask about their choices and if they saved any money.
- **Introduce Saving:** Explain saving for future purchases and its benefits.

Source: OpenAI. (2024) ChatGPT [Large language model]. <https://chat.openai.com>

Lizzy Lenart, *Health & Human Sciences Educator*

www.extension.purdue.edu/adams

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