

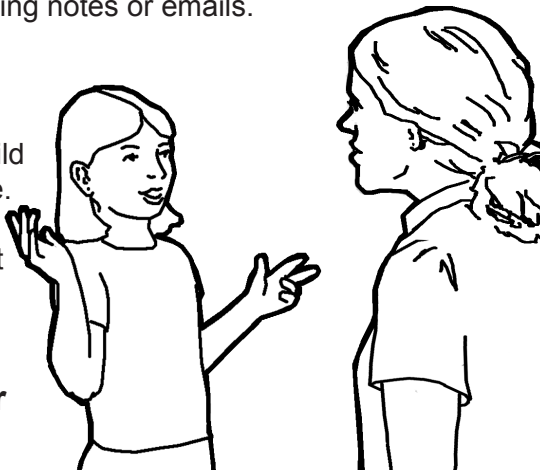
Helping Each Other

As parents, we do our best to encourage our children to help others. We model this behavior by helping neighbors with tasks when they are ill, taking friends to the doctor when they can't drive, or helping family members plan and prepare for a family celebration. We hope our example and encouragement will help our children see the importance of helping others.

There are many ways children can help others. They can walk the neighbor's dog when it's snowing. They can help clean up a neighborhood park. They can help a friend with schoolwork. They can help a grandmother who lives in a different city feel less lonely by sending notes or emails.

Asking for Adult Help

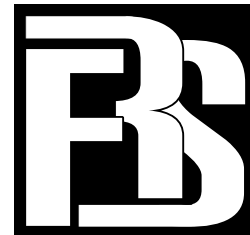
There are times when the best way a child can help is to ask an adult for assistance. In class, we learned "The Three D's for Telling." A child should tell an adult about a situation and ask for help if it is:



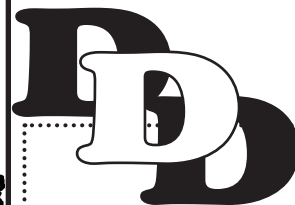
Dangerous, Destructive, or Disturbing.

Here are some examples of situations where children should ask an adult for help!

Dangerous	Destructive	Disturbing
A friend suggests using the grill when adults aren't home.	Someone wants to use spray paint on a fence around a park.	A stranger asks a child to go for a ride in his or her car.
A friend of an older brother or sister wants a child to drink alcohol.	A friend is going to break into a vacant building.	A friend has seemed very sad for a long time. He or she doesn't want to play with anyone.



FAMILY RESOURCE SHEET



Dangerous: something that could cause someone to get hurt

Destructive: something that could damage or ruin an item or property

Disturbing: something that causes worried or upset feelings; something that doesn't feel right

Asking for Help for Yourself

It is equally important for children to know that it is okay to ask for help when they need it. Sometimes our culture views asking for help as a sign of weakness. In fact, it is a sign of strength. The Three D's for Telling work here, too! If a child is thinking about doing something dangerous or destructive, he or she needs to talk with an adult. If a child finds a situation or person upsetting or has disturbing feelings for a long time, such as sadness, anger, or anxiety, he or she should ask for help.

Is It Normal Growing Up?

As your child grows, he or she goes through a variety of interesting stages. At times, it can be difficult to tell the difference between a normal "phase" and a sign that your child needs help. If you or your child's teacher notices a change in your child, take him or her to a pediatrician for a checkup. Your health care provider can tell you if there is a physical problem or if your child might need to be checked for another type of problem, such as depression.

Depression in Children

In the past, experts believed that it was not possible for children to suffer from depression. Unfortunately, as many as one in ten children between ages six and 12 experiences persistent feelings of sadness. This is the hallmark of depression. Children who have the following characteristics are most at risk:

- Experienced stress or loss
- Have attention, learning, or conduct disorders
- More likely to affect girls than boys
- Have a family history of depression



The signs of depression in children are different than in adults, so it may be overlooked. Depressed children may have these characteristics:

- Have stomach aches, headaches, and other aches and pains
- Say they feel “empty”
- Think no one likes them and that they have no friends
- Avoid school and other social events
- Have outbursts of anger, shouting, irritability, or crying
- Act aggressive and violent toward themselves or animals
- Have problems with sleeping, eating, bedwetting, and toileting
- Experience a drop in grades or school performance
- Cling to parent or worry their parent might die



Depression is the number one cause of suicide.

Over half of all kids who suffer with depression will attempt suicide at least once; more than seven percent will die as a result.

Depression is treatable.

Suicide is preventable.

What You Can Do

- Talk with your child about the importance of helping others and asking for help when he or she needs it.
- Let your child see you helping others and asking for help.
- Talk with your child about how he or she feels about different situations, such as a movie or story.
- Help your child practice ways to reduce strong feelings and feel calm.
- If you think your child might be struggling with a problem, take action to help your child or get an expert’s help. Our school can provide some resources for you to check out.

Helpful Resources

To subscribe to a free newsletter that supports parents, visit:

- New York University Child Study Center. *The Parent Letter*. Subscribe at http://www.aboutourkids.org/education/forparents.html?parameter=education_2

For more information on mental health, visit:

- Families for Depression Awareness. “Talking to Children.” <http://www.familyaware.org/teens/talking.php>
- American Academy of Pediatrics. “Children’s Mental Health—When to Seek Help.” http://www.aap.org/pubed/ZZZVZ2V979C.htm?&sub_cat=21
- American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry. “Facts for Families: The Depressed Child.” <http://aacap.org/page.ww?section=Facts%20for%20Families&name=The%20Depressed%20Child>

