



GCAPP PARENT TOOLKIT:

Answering Difficult Questions

Parents sometimes feel uncomfortable starting conversations with their children because they aren't sure how to answer tough questions. Here are six tips to help make these conversations easier and more productive.

Key Tips for Answering Hard Questions:

1. VALIDATE THE QUESTION

- Start by saying something like: "Thank you for coming to me about this" or "I'm glad you feel comfortable asking that."
- Add phrases like "That's a good question!" to encourage your child to keep asking questions in the future.

2. ASK CLARIFYING QUESTIONS

- Make sure you understand what your child is asking.
- Ask questions like: "What do you already know about this?" or "What do you think?"
- This helps you respond appropriately without giving more information than needed.

3. DETERMINE THE TYPE OF QUESTION

- Most questions are either fact-based or values-based.
- Answer fact-based questions with the information you know. If you don't know the answer, it's okay to say so and offer to find out together.
- For values-based questions, share your own values and ask about your child's perspective. Many questions involve what is normal or expected, and this can be a chance to explore beliefs together.

4. USE IT AS A SPRINGBOARD

- Use the question to start a dialogue rather than just giving an answer.
- Encourage your child to continue asking questions in the future.
- Build conversations grounded in honesty, trust, and respect — this lays the foundation for lifelong communication.

5. PRACTICE

- Conversations about tough topics may feel uncomfortable at first.
- The more you practice, the easier and more natural it becomes over time.

6. BE PROACTIVE

- Model curiosity by asking your child questions as well.
- Invite them to share their thoughts, experiences, and knowledge on the topic.
- Demonstrating open dialogue encourages your child to feel safe sharing their ideas.

SOURCE:

- TalkingtoKids.org



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