

How to Have Difficult Conversations With Our Kids

Building Connection, Courage & Authenticity

These conversations are hard — and you're doing your best. Today is not about perfection. It's about connection, courage, and planting seeds.

Why These Conversations Matter

Kids notice fairness, justice, difference, bodies, gender, race, and safety long before we think they are. If we don't talk about big topics, children fill in the blanks themselves. Your job: keep communication open and build a felt sense of safety.

The Parent Nervous System = The Curriculum

Before we talk, we regulate. Our tone, pace, posture, and breath communicate more than words. If you're grounded, your child feels grounded enough to explore.

Mental Models: What Stories Are Running the Show?

A mental model is the story your brain automatically creates about what it means to be a 'good parent,' a 'good kid,' or a 'good family.' They come from our own childhood, culture, and stress — and they're not moral. They're just data.

Updating Mental Models

Notice old stories, hold them with compassion, and update them: 'Curiosity is more important than perfection.' 'Talking about hard things helps my child feel safe.'

Parent Scripts for Hard Conversations

- "I'm learning right alongside you."
- "Wow, that's a big question. I'm so glad you asked."
- "Let's slow down and figure this out together."

Implicit Bias for Parents

Everyone has biases. Awareness + repair matter more than perfection. Kids benefit when we show that learning never stops.

Conversation Starters

- “What made you wonder about that?”
- “What have you heard?”
- “What part felt confusing or big?”

The Parent’s Core Job

Stay regulated. Stay curious. Keep the connection alive. Repair when needed. Grow alongside your child.

Recommended Resources for Parents

- Robyn Gobbel — Raising Kids with Big Baffling Behaviors
- Dan Siegel — The Whole-Brain Child
- Brené Brown — Atlas of the Heart
- Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum — Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?

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