

# National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)

## [NASP Tips for Talking to Children about Violence](#)

This website has age-appropriate tips for parents and school personnel to help children feel safe following a scary event. Below is also an image from that website.

### SCHOOL SAFETY AND CRISIS

## TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT VIOLENCE: TIPS FOR FAMILIES AND EDUCATORS

Families and school personnel play a critical role in helping to reestablish a sense of normalcy and security for children after an act of violence occurs. Follow these key reminders and visit [www.nasponline.org/children-and-violence](http://www.nasponline.org/children-and-violence) to learn more.

### KEEP EXPLANATIONS DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE

#### Early Elementary

Provide simple information and concrete examples balanced by assurance of safety.

#### Upper Elementary and Early Middle School

Answer questions and assist in separating reality from fantasy.

#### Upper Middle & High School

Emphasize students' role in safety & how to access support.

### REAFFIRM SAFETY

- Emphasize that schools are very safe.
- Let children speak about their feelings and validate reactions to the event.
- Support the appropriate expression of their feelings and help to put them in perspective.



### MAKE TIME TO TALK

- Let children's questions guide the information provided. Be patient and look for clues that a child wants to talk.
- Young children may need concrete activities (e.g., imaginative play) while some older children may prefer writing or playing music.



### REVIEW SAFETY PROCEDURES

- Help children identify an adult at school and in the community that they can go to if they feel threatened or at risk.
- Review procedures and safeguards in school and home settings.



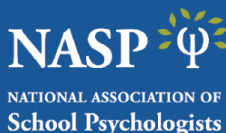
### MONITOR EMOTIONAL STATE

- Some children will not express themselves verbally but changes in behavior, appetite, or sleep patterns can indicate anxiety or stress.
- Seek help from a mental health professional for those with more intense reactions that last more than 2 weeks.



### MAINTAIN A NORMAL ROUTINE

- Keep a regular schedule and healthy nutrition, sleep and exercise to promote physical and mental health.
- Encourage maintenance of school work and extracurricular activities but do not push children who seem overwhelmed.
- Limit exposure to images or graphic reference to the event (e.g., TV and social media)..



For additional guidance, visit  
[www.nasponline.org/safety-and-crisis](http://www.nasponline.org/safety-and-crisis).  
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## **Common Sense Media**

### [How to Talk to Kids About Violence, Crime, and War](#)

The tips on this website are broken up appropriately by age group. These tips and conversation starters can help you talk to kids of different ages about the toughest topics. Get more advice about explaining distressing news, difficult subjects, and sexual harassment.

## **Child Mind Institute**

### [Helping Kids Cope with Frightening News](#)

An article available in both English and Spanish regarding what parents can do to aid scared kids in processing grief and fear in a healthy way.

## **Greater Good Media**

### [Talking with Kids About Scary News](#)

Researcher Abigail Gewirtz explains how parents can have conversations with kids about global conflict and humanitarian crises.

## **American Academy of Pediatrics**

### [Speaking with Children About Tragedy](#)

After any disaster or crisis, families struggle with what they should say to children and what's best not to share with them. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) encourages parents, teachers, child care providers, and others who work closely with children to filter information about the event and present it in a way that their child can understand, adjust to and cope with.

## **American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry**

### [Disaster: Helping Children Cope](#)

A child's age affects how the child will respond to the disaster. This article outlines behaviors that may be demonstrated by children following a traumatic event differing by age group. This website has an abundance of resources for families regarding the care for children following a disaster or community violence.