

# TALKING TO KIDS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH



Did you know that talking about mental health early and often can help children to build resiliency? Here are some tips on how to get the conversations started:

- 1 Expand their emotional vocabulary. Try an emoji-emotion matching activity! Work to move beyond basic emotions like happiness, sadness, and anger to more complex ones like disappointment, frustration, and surprise. Post an emotion chart on your fridge to refer to.
- 2 Talk about body sensations that match with emotions such as heat, sweating, fast breathing, stomach pain, shakiness/jitters, fidgeting, and tightness or tension. The “zones of regulation” can help to start building emotional literacy.
- 3 Lead by example. Share openly and appropriately about your emotions, the body sensations related to them, and the healthy and helpful strategies you use to regulate them.
- 4 Teach them to think about thinking. Discuss how thoughts, feelings and actions are connected and how changing one of the three can help to change the others. This worksheet is a great place to start [here](#).
- 5 Set aside time to check in about mental health each week, and try some of these question prompts to strengthen your relationship [here](#).
- 6 Show empathy. What may not be a big deal for you, may be a big deal for them in their world. Validate their feelings and encourage ongoing conversation.
- 7 Problem solve. When challenges arise, work things out together instead of solving the problem for your child. This approach focuses on resiliency by building their sense of capacity and control.

follow along  
for more tips!

