

Mental Health Check

At this stage, kids start to learn how to empathize with others. They grow in this as they read stories and connect with characters and when they make friends. As they develop emotionally and socially, they are going to experience self-awareness, peer pressure, and labeling or putting themselves and others into categories. It is important at this time to help support emotional health and social growth with mental health checks. You are the greatest influence on your kid's life. They need to know that you care. Here are a few things you can do to help facilitate mental health conversations with your kids.

Keep it simple:

Think about something that you want to ask your kid about. It doesn't have to be deep. They want to tell you things, you just have to be present and an active listener. As they talk ask questions, especially open-ended questions.

Ask:

How does that make you feel? This will help you encourage your kid to manage their emotions better. They are recognizing the emotion and are being guided by you on how to process that emotion in a healthy way.

What do you think about that? By asking this question you are allowing them to process their thoughts and it is an opportunity to teaching them how to reflect on what they are experiencing.

Why do you think that happened? Kids are just learning how to see things from another's perspective other than their own. Stories help them with this, but also asking perspective questions such as, "Why do you think so and so did that," guides them to thinking critically. As they practice this, they can be more empathic and begin to think ahead of what the consequences of their own words and actions might be.

Keep it safe:

Kids at this age see things as black and white. They haven't learned or experienced gray areas too much. With any relationship you want to build trust and you want to do that with your kid. It might be a cute secret or something small that is super sensitive for them to talk about, but it is a big deal to them. So, when they confide in you, honor that. Pray and believe in faith with them if they share a struggle they are going through. Rejoice and celebrate with them when they win in life. When you build trust with your kids it helps them know that you are a safe person to talk to about things going on in their life.

Keep it fun:

Kids connect through fun. Do something together with your kid where it is just you and them. It could be grabbing an ice cream or going for a walk. Pick activities where you can do something and have a conversation at the same time. By creating these one-on-one moments, you are showing them that you care.



Kid & Parent Date

As a parent you are always investing in your kid and juggling everything else. Sometimes you need some scheduled one on one time without any distractions to help build a relationship. That is where the kid and parent date comes into play. Once a month, pick a time to go on a date with your kid. This is a special time with just you and your kid to do something together and build your relationship with them.

When:

Pick a consistent day and time. It's okay to skip during a busy season like Christmas, but don't skip more than twice in a row. Put it on the calendar.

Day & Time:

Questions:

Pick 5 different starter questions you want to ask and explore with your kid. Keep it simple and safe.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

What:

Keep it simple & fun.

Follow Up:

What did I learn from my kid?

What is something special about my kid?

Is my kid struggling with anything?

How can I pray for and with my kid?

