

5 Things To Do To Support Kids During Turbulent Times

You cannot keep the birds of misfortune from flying overhead but you can keep them from nesting in your hair- Chinese Proverb

During times of crisis, change or loss anyone who has children they care about wants to do things to help, protect and encourage their kids. What is happening in our lives as adults impacts the children we are close to too but there are things we can do to make that impact as positive as possible or to provide an opportunity to teach skills that will make a lifetime of difference. One thing is for sure- kids know when something is going on and protecting them from it totally is rarely an option. These are some ideas to keep the birds of misfortune from nesting in your hair...or your home.

Honesty is still the best policy (but you set the guidelines). When children ask, you need to answer. Answer in the language they understand and answer the question they asked not everything you think they should know or just what you want to tell them. Sometimes kids ask questions indirectly so keep your ears open for statements or stories that are really questions.

Rock so you can roll. In hard times finding comfort is vital to keep plowing through the tough stuff. As humans, we are relational creatures who generally need contact with others. Hold and rock your kids as long as you can or start again if you have stopped- rocking is a physically comforting activity that can have neurological and emotional benefits for both you and your child. For older children, sit with them on the couch. For teens, if all else fails, text them! There is healing power in touch, so if they balk at rocking, just up the physical contact.

Steady goes it. Keep the rules steady and the boundaries predictable. When things feel crazy and out of control kids need to know the limits. They need you to be firm and pull them back from the edges of bad behavior, of drama meltdowns and too many late nights. As adults there is safety in knowing a stop sign means stop and a green light means go. Children need these clear signs too.

Revel in their resilience. Celebrate their strengths. Focus on the things your children do to cope that help and point them out. Let your kids know what you enjoy about them and learn from them. Play to their strong points encouraging them to use what comes naturally to manage change or loss. Are they cuddlers? Cuddle. Do they like to kick a ball...kick. And remember kids really are resilient and can manage difficult things with your help paving the way.

Prepare don't scare. If you anticipate upcoming losses or change open up the conversation and make a plan together to cope with those changes. Children often hear bits of conversation and piece together a story that is not true or worse than reality. Talking helps. Over-inform all the other adults who take care of your kids about what is coming and how to handle it. And you don't have to have all the answers, sometimes it's enough to just show interest and listen.



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