



SUPPORTING KIDS DURING TURBULENT TIMES

5 TIPS AND IDEAS

HONESTY IS STILL THE BEST POLICY

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 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. You don't have to have all the answers, sometimes it's enough to just show interest and listen.

