

Top tips on talking to your child about tricky topics!

- **Relax.** Think of an activity you enjoy doing with your child and choose a time when you are both calm.
- **Learn together!** Take some time to find out a bit more about the topic before talking to your child but don't worry if you don't know everything! It's okay for your child to see that you might not know everything, take this as a chance to learn together!



- **Be open.** Be careful not to jump to conclusions about what your child has been doing. Encourage your child to be honest with you and show them you are [actively listening](#).
- **Connect.** Use child friendly language appropriate to the age and stage of your child so they can understand what you are saying. Try to avoid words and body language which are confrontational or suggest blame.
- **Try 'sideways listening'!** *Have you ever noticed that your child chats more when you're driving somewhere or walking the dog? Talking like this can feel less scary and more relaxed and can help children open up about difficult things (as they don't need to see your reaction)! You can try sideways listening while on a drive or out for a walk, cooking or baking, doing crafts, or even playing a game!*
- Aim for **calm and respectful** discussions where you listen to your child's feelings and share your own.
- **Acknowledge** your child's feelings, "It's OK to feel scared, frustrated, or confused. Those feelings are understandable."
- **Reassure.** Let your child know that they can tell you anything and you will be there for them and love them. If they're worried about something, you can figure it out together.
- **Try to understand.** If your child is engaging in risky behaviours, it is important to find out why...It could be because of stress, peer pressure, to boost their confidence or another reason. Listening to what they say and how they feel can give ideas of how you can help.
- **Empower.** Teaching your child about the effects of the risky behaviours such as taking drugs or vaping can help them to make safer decisions for themselves!

See further guidance from NSPCC here – [Talking about difficult topics | NSPCC](#)