

Let's talk about...

U.S. News
"Best Children's
Hospitals" rankings


Ranked among the
nation's best in five
pediatric specialties



Having Difficult Conversations

Sharing difficult news with children can be hard. Staying open, honest, and as clear as possible is best and there are a few other things you'll want to keep in mind:

Some tips to keep in mind:

- Be honest and use simple words that your child will understand. Being honest does not mean that you need to share every detail all at once. It can be helpful to spread out the information for them to process at their own speed.
 - Listen to any questions your child has. Questions may come out during play which can help guide your conversations.
 - Start conversations with questions, books, or activities. For example, you can ask, "Can you tell me what you know or what you have been told about _____?".
 - Expect and allow different emotions to be shown during or after the conversation. They may include anger, frustration, sadness, guilt, numbness, relief, confusion, shame, fear, loneliness, embarrassment, or others. It is also normal for a child to not have any emotional response right away.
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- It is okay if you do not have all the answers. You can say, "I do not know the answer to that question right now, but if I find out, I will let you know." Let the child know that you will always be honest with them.
 - Allow your child to see your emotions. This gives your child permission to share their feelings openly as well.
 - Lean on your support system throughout this difficult time. This can be family, hospital support staff, or other resources. There are people who will be there for you.

For more information or to connect with a Child Life Specialist, please visit: <http://ucdavis.health/childlife>