



Talking With Your Children About Current Events

Bayside STEM Academy
Parent Workshop

November 30, 2016



Who am I? Why this?

Lauren Alexander

Counselor for 7th graders and 8th graders with last names Lo - Z

Schoolloop, 650-312-7660, LAAlexander@smfcsd.net

Why this?

Developmentally Appropriate

- Understand ideas like power and influence
- Question things and people!
- Think about how current actions affect the future
- Begin developing their own set of values
- Are interested in having more discussions and arguments

The Bottom Line...

The better we are able to show our children that we:

care about their feelings and opinions,

can help them answer questions,

can help them feel safe,

the **more connected** to us they will feel and the **more empowered** they can be

A Task To Get Us Thinking...

1. A moment in the news from your childhood you wished your parents had talked to you about
1. One topic you'd like to have a conversation with your kids about
1. A worry you have about talking to your children about current events



Colin Kaepernick

49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick takes a knee during National Anthem



Shooting at Orlando's Pulse Nightclub

“Crazy Clown”
scares and hoaxes
across the US and
here in the
Bay Area





2016 Election

Where does their information come from?

- Parents, family, siblings
- Friends
- Teachers and school
- Groups students belong to (religious groups, teams, clubs)
- Media (TV, radio, newspapers)
- Social Media

By middle school, children spend 7 ½ hours a day

Remember...

Your child's reaction may be impacted by:

- Their developmental level
- Other diagnoses like a processing disorder or being on the Autism Spectrum
- Anxiety, depression, or other mental health needs
- Past experiences, like community violence or interactions with immigration officials or police officers

Our Game Plan - AOVER

Ask

Preguntar

Observe

Observar

Validate

Validar

Explore

Explorar

Reassure

Tranquilizar

STEP 1: Ask

“How are you feeling about what is going on _____?”

“Are you friends talking about _____?”

“What do you know about _____?”

“How are you feeling about what you know?”

|

|

|

|

STEP 2: Observe

I

“I notice that you’ve seemed more _____ lately. I’m wondering if something is going on or if you feel upset about something.”

“I see that every time the news about _____ comes on, you seem upset. Would you like to talk about how you’re feeling?”

If they talk to you, great! If they don't...

“It seems like you’re not interested in talking with me about _____. I respect that. If something were bothering you and you don’t want to talk to me about it, who is an adult you trust you *could* talk to about it?”

“I can tell that you’re don’t want to talk about _____ right now. I want you to know that I am always available to talk with about how you’re feeling. I care about what you’re feeling and would love to hear your opinions.”

STEP 3: Validate

“Thank you for telling me that. It must be hard to be feeling so anxious about what’s going on.”

“It makes total sense that you’d be angry! To be honest with you, that’s how I felt when I heard the news, too.”

“There is no right or wrong way to be feeling about what’s happening. I feel so lucky that you can tell me how this is making you feel. I bet we can find ways to help this feel less overwhelming.”

STEP 4: Explore!

“What questions do you have about _____? I wonder if we could do research together.”

“What is your opinion about _____? How would you respond if you were the president/the leader/a police officer?”

Expand the conversation → Use the story of a natural disaster to talk about philanthropy, cooperation, the ability of people to cope with hardships

Relate to other events → Talk about the Civil Rights Movement and how people came together to stand up for what they believed in

STEP 4: Explore!

“Why do you think they say it that way?”

“Why did that story come out now?”

“Why do you think they chose that photo for the story?”

“What do you think the goal of this writer/advertisement is? How do they want to make people feel? Why?”

STEP 5: Reassure

“One thing I can tell you for sure is that there are so many people working to keep you safe and to make things better.”

“You can be a part of the solution to this problem - What are ways that you could help make things better? What does this inspire you to do or learn?”

“You’re right - solutions to this problem aren’t easy. What I do know though is that when people work together, listen to each other, and respect one another, good things happen.”

STEP 5: Reassure

Think about ways you may want to safety plan with your kids. Encourage your children to see ways to OWN their safety.

- Earthquake preparedness
- Interactions with law enforcement
- Awareness of immigration and deportation laws
- Who to talk to if something happens

Pay Attention To...

Sleep problems - difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep

Physical complaints - headaches, stomachaches, changes in eating

Changes in behavior - becomes clingy or resistant, arguing more than usual, being more demanding, tantrums or meltdowns, risky behaviors, obsessive behaviors, anxious behaviors

Emotional changes - constant or long periods of sadness, irritability, withdrawal, loss of interest in activities

Best Practices for Family Coping

Spend time together as a family doing things you love

Make family agreements about technology free time

Monitor your own feelings and behaviors in response to news

Keep routines, which provide a sense of security

Here At School...

We will do everything possible to keep them safe.

Respect is an essential value.

We will teach them to listen to and to try to understand others, even if they disagree.

We will help them learn to speak up when something isn't right.

Think Back To The Beginning...

Could you go ahead and talk to your kids about what you wrote for question #2?

Do you still have your worry from question #3?

Comments?

Questions?

STAY IN TOUCH!

Lauren Alexander

Schoolloop, 650-312-7660, LAAlexander@smfcsd.net

Upcoming Parent Workshops

dates TBD, topics based on your input!