

Resources for Talking with Children About War

From the Children's Defense Fund

These are general resources that can be used by parents, teachers, and other caregivers to help children through these difficult days.

Some general advice from the experts includes:

1. Continuously reassure your children that you will help to keep them safe.
2. Turn off the TV. Overexposure to the media can be traumatizing. If your older children are watching the news, be sure to watch with them.
3. Be aware that your child's age will affect his or her response. Adolescents in particular may be hard hit by these kinds of events. Obtaining counseling for a child or adolescent soon after a disaster may reduce long-term effects.
4. Calmly express your emotions, but remember that a composed demeanor will provide a greater sense of security for your child.
5. Give your children extra time and attention and plan to spend more time with your children in the following months.
6. Let your children ask questions, talk about what happened, and express their feelings.
7. Play with children who can't talk yet to help them work out their fears and respond to the atmosphere around them.
8. Keep regular schedules for activities such as eating, playing and going to bed to help restore a sense of security and normalcy.
9. Consider how you and your child can help. Children are better able to regain their sense of power and security if they feel they can help in some way.

The following websites have useful information:

American Psychological Association:

<http://helping.apa.org/therapy/traumaticstress.html#children>

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry:

<http://www.aacap.org/>