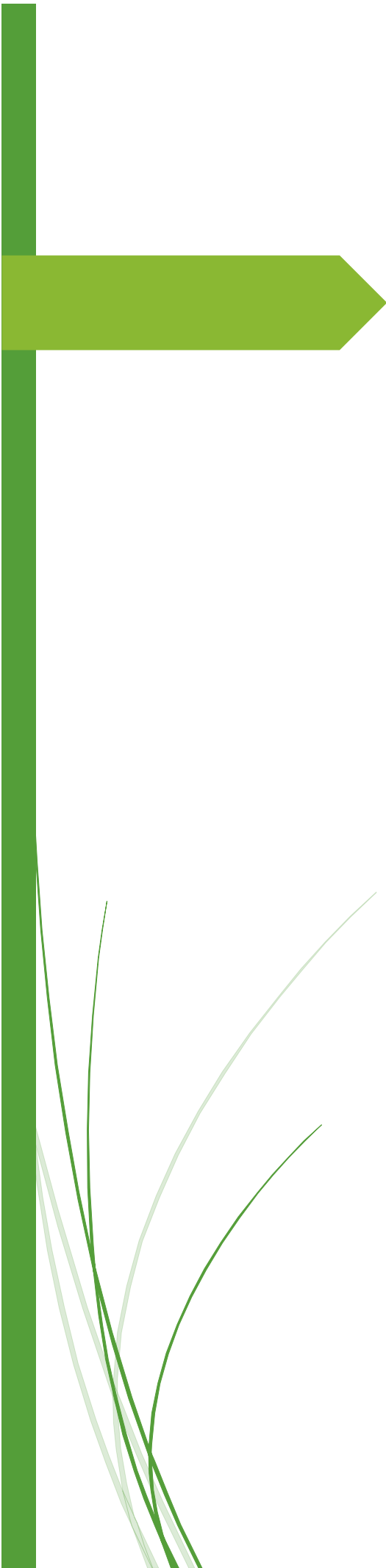


ASKING FOR HELP

A home learning activity lesson
for parents/carer



PARENT NOTES:

Everyone needs help sometimes, yet many children will not ask for it when they need it most. This can result in some children not being safe, struggling to cope with their feelings and those around them unaware that help is needed.

TO ACCESS HELP AND SUPPORT MY CHILD NEEDS TO BE ABLE TO:

- Recognise a situation or person is unsafe
- Be aware of who and where they can ask for help
- Know how to ask for help, and to keep asking until they get the help they need.

FOR MY CHILD TO BE COMFORTABLE TO JOIN IN THIS ACTIVITY, I CAN:

- Let my child know the learning will take place. *This will give them some time to think about what they might want to talk about and share.*
- Find a quiet space for the learning to take place. *This will make sure you are not interrupted, and they are not worried someone will overhear what you are talking about.*
- Make it comfortable. *Find a comfortable space to sit, provide a drink and snack as well as a small teddy or fidget toy for them to use if needed.*
- Make a simple 'conversation charter'. *This will support you both to feel as confident and comfortable as possible to discuss anything that the activities lead to.*

HOW TO MAKE A CONVERSATION CHARTER:

1. Take 4 pieces of paper and work together to agree 4 things you feel are important to help you be honest and open with each other.
2. Work together to put these in order of importance to you, making a diamond shape. **NOTE:** There is no right or wrong order, it is simply what works for you and your child.
3. You could both sign your name or illustrate this to say you have agreed to it.
4. Keep it on display to remind you both of what you have agreed to.
 - We can tell each other anything
 - We will not share what is said
 - We will listen and not interrupt
 - We will not make each other say something

HELP! I FIND IT DIFFICULT TO TALK TO MY CHILD ABOUT THESE THINGS...

Talking to your child about their feelings, relationships, changing body and experiences is important. Building good channels of communication throughout childhood can help your child communicate with you as future issues of increasing seriousness arise.

The aim of this resource is to provide you with structured activities to teach your child the information, values and skills to access help and support, when it is needed.

The activities will:

- Promote discussion, developing a healthy channel of communication between your child and yourself
- Develop the skills to ask for help, by being interactive and rehearsing how to do this
- Know everyone deserves help, and should receive this if they need it

The activities are designed in a way that will 'hold your hand' through them and support the discussion. **NOTE:** You are the expert on your child, so adapt the activities and approach them in the way that you know will work best for yourself and your child. You can go through the activities at your own pace; they don't have to be done all at the same time or even in the same week! The most important thing is to be as comfortable and confident as possible, role-modelling this will be teaching your child that you are someone they can talk to about any problem.

The activities may lead to your child telling you something that surprises or shocks you. Below are some 'Top Tips' for managing in the moment...

TOP TIPS FOR TALKING TO YOUR CHILD:

- Don't dive straight in! *Start by talking about something you both find comfortable, such as feelings and emotions about a film/story you have shared.*
- Use distancing: *If your child is struggling to start talking, ask your child what they think their friends/teddy (if very young) might know about the topic, as this provides a way for your child to share their thoughts indirectly.*
- Be prepared to listen. *Your child will want to have their voice heard without feeling judged. Feeling listened to will encourage your child to talk about issues now and in the future.*
- Stay calm! *Try to listen calmly, even if what they say surprises or concerns you. Remember that it is good they are comfortable to discuss these issues with you. They need to be able to trust you will not respond negatively.*
- If you don't know what to say, don't panic! *Sometimes a simple answer is fine. If your child asks you a question and you're not sure how to answer, let them know that you will find more information and answer at another time, making sure you remember to. If appropriate, you could work together to find the answer so your child develops the skills of finding information from safe places.*

MAKE SURE YOUR CHILD KNOWS THEY CAN ALWAYS TALK TO YOU ANYTIME, ABOUT ANYTHING

ACTIVITY 1: FEELINGS ARE FINE!



Aim of this activity is to help your child identify a range of feelings, including words to describe them. This will help them to talk about safe and unsafe people/situations in readiness for being able to ask for help.



Resources:
Paper; colouring pens



Begin the activity by explaining to your child that we all have feelings. There are lots of different feelings. No feeling is bad, wrong or naughty; some feelings are more comfortable than others. Our feelings can be affected by things inside our body, like being tired, hungry or in pain. They can also be affected by things outside our body, like people being kind or unkind to us.



Taking it in turns with your child, say as many different feelings as you can think of. These can include: *Happy; Excited; Sad; Surprised; Worried; Scared; Pleased; Calm; Confused; Disappointed etc.* Next, take it in turns to say any of the feelings and both pull a face that you think expresses that feeling. If you can, also do an action to demonstrate how someone might behave while experiencing that feeling.



After each face, discuss together:

- Is this a comfortable or uncomfortable feeling?
- How might you behave if you felt this way?
- How might your behaviour make other people feel?
- If the feeling is an uncomfortable one, what could you do to help yourself?
- Can feelings change? What makes them change?



Provide your child with some paper and colouring pens. Ask them to draw a face that shows how they are feeling today.

Ask your child to discuss their feeling face with you:

- Is this a comfortable or uncomfortable feeling?
- Why do they feel this way?
- How might they behave today, because of how they are feeling?



Finish the activity by asking your child to share with you some of the feelings that they have learned about. Remind your child that all feelings are OK, but some are more comfortable than others and can cause us to behave in different ways. It is never OK to be unkind or for someone else to be unkind to them because of how they are feeling. Ask your child if they have any questions or if there is anything that they want to tell you.

ACTIVITY 2: PROBLEMS, PROBLEMS, PROBLEMS!



Aim of this activity is to reassure your child that everyone experiences problems; it is important to ask for help when they need it and to keep asking for help until the problem gets better.



Resources:

Unused, clean box; Colouring pens; Any available craft materials



Begin the activity by explaining to your child that everyone experiences problems sometimes. Some problems feel like big problems; some problems feel like small problems. Whatever the problem it is always OK to ask for help, especially if the problem is causing you to be upset, scared or in pain.



Taking it in turns with your child, say as many different problems that someone of their age might have. These can include: *Feeling unwell; Toileting accident; Bullying; Breaking something; Seeing something upsetting online; Getting lost; Fire; Someone stealing something from them; Someone touching them when they don't want them to (this could be another child or adult); Falling over and hurting yourself.*



Discuss together each of the problems in turn:

- Is this a problem that someone might need help with?
- Why might they need help?
- Who could they ask to help them?
- If that person didn't help them, who else could they ask to help them?



Provide your child with a clean, unwanted small box (*tissue box works well*), or similar. Tell them to decorate this by painting it, colouring it in, covering with any craft items, old wrapping paper etc. that you have available. Explain that this is a problem catcher. They can draw or write their problems onto paper and place inside the problem catcher. Agree a place that this can be kept in your home so you can check it with them. Explain that this is one way they can share a problem that they may find hard to talk about. *Make sure you check the problem catcher on a regular basis.*



Finish the activity by asking your child to share with you some of the problems that they have learned about. Remind your child that everyone has problems, big and small. Whatever the problem it is important to ask for help, especially if their problem is making them feel scared, upset or causing them pain. Ask your child if they have any questions or if there is anything that they want to tell you.

ACTIVITY 3: HELP IS ALWAYS AT HAND!



Aim of this activity is to help your child identify who they can ask for help, when they have a problem.



Resources:
Paper; Colouring Pens



Begin the activity by explaining to your child that there are lots of people who can help them when they have a problem. The types of people who can help us might be different, depending on where we are when we have the problem, and what the problem is. Sometimes, it takes more than one person to help with a problem.



Taking it in turns with your child, say as many different types of people that can help them if they have a problem. These can include: *Family; Family friends; Teacher; Doctor; Nurse; Police; Childline; Social worker; Fireman; Lifeguard; Youth club leaders (Sea cadets; Brownies; Street Dance; Karate; Football etc).*



Discuss together each of the different types of people in turn:

- What type of problem could you ask them for help with?
- When would be a good time to talk to them, without other people hearing if you don't want them to?
- How might they be able to help you?
- If that person didn't help you, who else could you ask to help?



Provide your child with a piece of paper and colouring pens. Tell your child to draw around their hand, turning each finger into a person that they would trust to share a problem with, knowing that person would help them. Taking each finger in turn, role-play with your child (you are being the person on each finger), while they demonstrate how they could ask that person for help. Share with your child what they have done well after each role-play. Explain that this is their helping hand. They can look at it whenever they have a problem to remind them that there are lots of people who can help them.



Finish the activity by asking your child to share with you some of the people they could ask for help with problems. Remind your child that everyone has problems they need help with and reassure them that people will want to help them. Ask your child if they have any questions or if there is anything that they want to tell you.

