

Starting the conversation:

Find a good time and place. Try to choose a good moment. Pick an opportunity when you know you're not going to be interrupted and you are both going to feel comfortable and have enough time – without turning it into one of those 'special talks' moments.

Think about how you are going to introduce the subject. You could mention a recent news story or just explain why you would like to talk to them about something. Try to be clear. It's no good having a difficult conversation if at the end of it they don't really understand what you wanted to talk to them about.

Explain to them why you are worried. Your child might think that you are getting worried for no good reason, but if you explain why something is troubling you they will understand why you want to talk to them. Tell them if it is something you've noticed in their behaviour or maybe something you have read about or seen their friends doing. Help them to understand your worries so that together you can work them out.

Let them talk. It's hard sometimes when a child doesn't want to open up. Asking them a question like 'how are things going' and remembering to give them time to answer will help. It's tempting to keep talking at them to fill the space – try not to.

Listen more than you talk. A conversation has to have two people in it. It's important you listen to them and that you explain you'd like them to listen to you. Talking at them is never going to work.

Be loving and supportive. The most difficult conversations can be made easier if your child understands that you care about them and whatever the outcome you will love them just as much.

If your child tells you something that worries you:

Take a break. If your child is telling you things that worry you it is really important to stay calm and not to react immediately. Let them tell you what's going on and then decide together how you're going to deal with it.

Get help together. If your child tells you something which means they could be in danger you must report this to the relevant organisations. Try to agree to do this together. Don't take over unless you think that is your only option.

Get support for yourself. Your focus is going to be on looking after your child but remember to look after yourself as well and get support from your family and friends. You can get further [advice from Thinkuknow](#), [Parent Zone](#) and [Parent Info](#), and there are [other organisations that can help](#) you and your child.

What if your child doesn't want to talk?

If your child doesn't want to talk to you and you are still really worried don't give up. Try again another time or find a different way to start the conversation. Be patient and make sure they know where they can go themselves for support on difficult issues. You might want to talk to their teacher to see if they share your concerns – whatever you decide be ready when your child decides they want to talk to you.

If you have concerns about an adult your child is in contact with on or offline, you can report these concerns to [CEOP](#).

If you are concerned your child is in immediate danger, call 999.