

Parent and Caregiver Conversation Starters

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Tips for Talks

Use the prompts below to help start discussions with your child around social health, mental health, and personal health and safety.

In this document, you'll find a series of prompts organized by topic. Each topic includes the following:

- ▶ Child-friendly, age-appropriate definition of the topic;
- ▶ “Ask” section with an initial question;
- ▶ “Follow Up” section with additional question(s); and
- ▶ “Go Beyond” section that provides guidance and ideas on how you can continue the conversation to go a bit deeper.



Here are some tips for having meaningful conversations with your child:

- ✓ **Be curious** — Ask questions without judgement.
- ✓ **Be open-minded** — Remember what it was like to be a child at their age and what was important at that time.
- ✓ **Listen** — Let them do most of the talking and ask questions that can't be answered with one word.
- ✓ **Relate** — Look for opportunities to relate to what your child is saying and reaffirm their feelings.
- ✓ **Research together** — Sometimes we might not know an answer to a question (and that's OK!). Use this opportunity to model how to find reliable resources online with your child.

SOCIAL HEALTH

Social health means how we get along with others, make friends, and work together. It helps us share, listen, be kind, and solve problems in a positive way!

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health means how we think, feel, and handle our emotions. It helps us cope with challenges, make good choices, and enjoy life. Taking care of our mental health is just as important as taking care of our bodies!

PERSONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Personal health and safety means understanding and respecting our bodies, learning how to set personal boundaries, and treating others with kindness and respect. It also includes knowing how to stay safe and how to ask trusted adults for help when we have questions.





Social Health



Ask

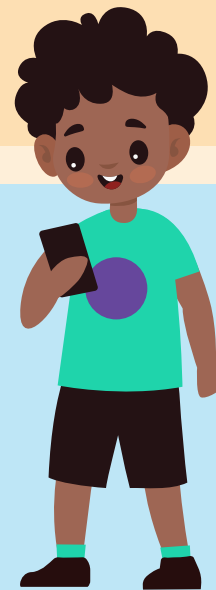
If we were going to the park, who would you bring from your class and why?

Follow Up

- ▶ If you were playing a game online and someone you didn't know messaged you, how would you respond?
- ▶ What are some ways you can tell if someone is safe to talk to or play with online?

Go Beyond

Use this prompt to start talking with your child about who they should or should not be talking to online. Work together to identify ways to know when it's okay to friend someone or to chat with someone online.



Ask

What kinds of activities do you like to do on your device?

Follow Up

- ▶ When you have time to play on your device, how do you decide what to play?
- ▶ How can you tell when you have spent too much time on your device?
- ▶ What are the activities that you do on your devices that are the most fun? Are there any activities that are frustrating?
- ▶ Are there activities you wish you knew how to do on your device?
- ▶ Do you notice the feelings you have when you have spent a lot of time on your device?
- ▶ How would you feel if you didn't have a chance to play on your device?
- ▶ If we spent less time on devices, what do you think would happen?

Go Beyond

This prompt can be used to have a discussion with your child about what they are doing online. The follow-up questions could lead to establishing an agreement about when they can use their device and for how long. Some examples include:

- ▶ Use sparingly (screen before bed)
- ▶ Use moderately (video games)
- ▶ Use freely (FaceTime with Grandma)



Mental Health



Ask

How were you kind today?

Follow Up

- ▶ How is kindness the same online as it is in person? How is it different?
- ▶ How is kindness easier online? How is it harder?

Go Beyond

Talk with your child about different ways you can show kindness. The follow-up questions can begin discussions around being kind in person and online (even if we don't see or know the person). For older children, you can compare the ways it's easier to be kind or even unkind in person or online.



Ask

Based on your day, what color do you feel like the most?

Follow Up

- ▶ What are things that make you happy? Sad? Mad?
- ▶ When you have a big feeling like being sad or mad, what are some things you can do to help yourself feel better?
- ▶ When you have these big feelings, what do you watch or listen to that helps you feel better, or sometimes makes it feel worse?

Go Beyond

This is a great prompt that can be used daily. This can lead to conversations around feelings and reaffirming your child's feelings. No feeling is good or bad, it's what we do with the feeling. An example would be telling your child that it's okay to be mad, but it's not okay to hit or throw things when you are mad.





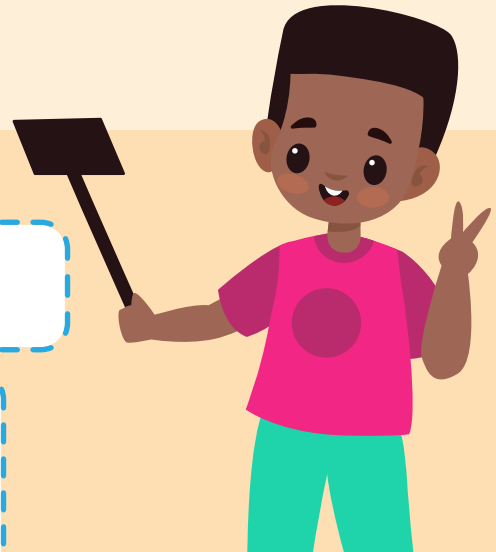
Personal Health and Safety

Ask

If you were in a bubble, who would you allow in your bubble space?

Follow Up

- ▶ How would you like someone to ask you if they can join you in your bubble?
- ▶ What are some reasons you might not want someone to join your bubble?



Go Beyond

Using the idea of being in a bubble helps children understand the concept of personal space and boundaries. The discussion can lead to helping your child know it's okay to not allow everyone in their bubble space and to share ways for them to communicate that they don't want someone in their bubble space anymore. In this conversation, your child should know it's okay to have boundaries and that they should have boundaries. Have your child practice communicating with you that they don't want someone in their bubble space.

Ask

Have you ever been around someone and you didn't like the way they made you feel? (If yes, ask them to explain.)

Follow Up

How would you tell someone that you no longer like how they are making you feel?

Go Beyond

In this conversation, talk with your child about different ways they can stand up for themselves or remove themselves from the situation when they don't feel comfortable around a person. Additional follow-up includes identifying trusted adults that your child can go to if they are at school, home or other places they go to regularly.