

PRACTICAL RESOURCES TO HELP YOUR FAMILY WELLNESS TODAY



Tips for Teaching Children to Ask for Help

Asking for help is an important skill that, unfortunately, often has stigmas attached to it. You can encourage your children to have courage to overcome the stigmas and teach them how to ask for help. Being able to ask for help can improve your children's mental health, resilience, social interaction or connections with others, and other skills.

- ◎ **Let them know you're there to help them.** Give examples of how you used to help them, how you could help now, and how you find help when you need it. Emphasize that everyone needs help sometimes, and it's nothing to be ashamed of.
- ◎ **Be prepared.** Make lists of:
 - ❖ People who could be helpers in different situations. For example, what trusted adults or peers are at school that your children could go to for help? At extracurricular activities?
 - ❖ How to ask for help. Some ideas include:
 - Communicate clearly what help is needed.
 - Avoid saying "sorry" when asking for help; they are not doing anything wrong by asking.
 - ❖ Specific phrases to use. For example, "I've tried ____ and ____, but I'm stuck now. Can you help me?"
- Consider role-playing help-seeking situations with your children so they can practice.
- ◎ **Help them become comfortable asking for help.** When your children ask you for help, make it a positive experience so they will want to ask in the future. Respond positively, give them your full attention, and validate their feelings.
- ◎ **Explore different methods for asking for help.** If needed, think of other ways to ease your children into learning how to ask for help. For example, create a system where they can leave notes in a box outside your bedroom door that you can address over dinner or during a one-on-one conversation with them.

How to Say "No"

Saying "no" often takes courage, but it's important when setting boundaries. Boundaries are self-set limits to protect oneself. Below are some ideas on how to teach your children to say "no."

- ◎ Encourage them to think about and set their boundaries before anyone crosses them. Saying "no" can be even harder if no boundaries are in place. To help them get started, ask them what their priorities are and how they want others to treat them.
- ◎ Come up with possible ways to say no.
 - ❖ "That doesn't work for me this time."
 - ❖ "I'll talk to my parents and let you know tomorrow."
 - ❖ "Thank you for thinking of me, but I have other commitments that night."
 - ❖ "Let me think about it and get back to you."
 - ❖ "No thank you, but I appreciate the offer."
- ◎ Role-play to practice saying "no." Encourage them to be direct (in a kind way) about saying no and to be truthful. They don't need to make up an elaborate excuse for why they're saying "no."

Note: The information in this newsletter is a starting point and may not be effective for all children or all situations. Individual counseling can be helpful in tailoring strategies to meet individual needs.



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