

# HELPING KIDS FEEL BETTER ABOUT THE FUTURE

Try these 3 techniques when talking to your children about how they feel about what's happening in the world.



## 1. HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD SEE THINGS WILL BE OKAY?

Remind your child of a time in the past when things seemed challenging but then became something good. Get them to describe the positive feelings they now have surrounding that activity and write down those feelings next to the old ones.



You can start by saying:

- *"Do you remember when we moved house and you were sad because you missed your old bedroom? Think about how much you love our house now and how much fun you have playing in your room."*
- *"You used to be nervous about riding your bike without training wheels. But you're not nervous anymore and going on bike rides is one of our favourite things to do."*
- *"On your first day of kindy you had butterflies in your tummy and said you were worried that you wouldn't know anybody. But now you have so many friends and you love your teacher."*

## 2. HOW CAN I ANSWER QUESTIONS MY KIDS HAVE IF I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER?

Being honest with children about difficult topics can be hard, especially if you don't know the answers.



Try the following tips:

- **Answer honestly and succinctly.** It's okay to say, *"I don't know right now, but I can do some reading and then we can talk about it again."*
- **There's such a thing as too much information.** When you've answered the question as best you can and your child seems satisfied, move on to a different topic. Say something like, *"I think we've talked about this enough for today. Let's talk about what movie we'd like to watch on Friday, or where we can go for a bike ride later."*
- **Do your research.** Read reliable stories from respected news or information outlets — such as the **WHO** or **ABC** — ahead of time to ensure they're age appropriate. Summarise the main points to reduce the risk of exposing them to information that's too adult.

## 3. HOW CAN I GET MORE THAN A ONE-WORD ANSWER?

Getting a young person to talk about how they feel can be challenging.



Here are some ways to help them relax and open up:

- **Use open-ended questions.** Rather than *"Are you happy?"*, which may just prompt a yes or no answer, say *"What made you laugh today?"* or *"What was the best thing about your day?"*
- **Don't lead the conversation.** Instead of *"I think you might be missing your netball team"*, say something like *"I was really looking forward to watching you play netball this year. I can't wait for that to start. I bet you feel the same."*
- **Don't interrupt.** Wait through the silence. Children may pause, then continue their thought and reveal more about how they're feeling if no-one fills the gap.