

# TALKING TO OLDER CHILDREN ABOUT EVENTS IN THE NEWS

**News coverage of a high-profile child sexual abuse case can open the door for parents and caregivers to talk with preteens and teens about sexual abuse.**

The reality is that our children are exposed to headlines every day, whether on the TV or in the classroom. It's important for parents and caregivers to know the questions to ask to help their children interpret current events. Here are some tips that can help guide the conversation.

## TALKING TIPS: AT A GLANCE

### TIP ONE

Ask open-ended questions to discover children's knowledge about the event, and any opinions that may have already been formed. It will also give you an opportunity to clear up any misinformation.

### TIP TWO

Let children lead the discussion. Listen more than you talk and let them know you value their beliefs and opinions. Ask follow-up questions ("And then?") to keep the conversation going.

### TIP THREE

Keep your tone light and conversational to ensure children feel safe to open up.

A successful conversation promotes mutual learning and future conversation

### Have more questions?

You can reach out to the Darkness to Light Helpline 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 866-FOR-LIGHT.

## ALLOW THE YOUTH TO DIRECT THE CONVERSATION

Start by asking one of the following questions. Choose one that feels right to you, and then let your child be your guide:

- *What have you heard about this case?*
- *What do you know about child sexual abuse?*

These questions will help you determine your child's depth of knowledge on the subject, as well as clear up any misinformation.

- *How do you feel on behalf of the kids who were abused?*
- *How do you feel about the adults who covered it up?*

## RECOGNIZING TRUSTED ADULTS

Show affirmation for the answers you receive. This will help the child open up and feel comfortable asking questions.

- *What do you think could have been done to prevent it?*
- *What do you think should have been done to protect the abused kids?*

The preteen and teenage years are a great time to start furthering the conversation from protection to prevention.

- *Do you know of anything like this happening at your school, or anywhere else?*
- *Is there anything else you want to talk with me about?*

Be prepared in case your child discloses knowledge of abuse. If this does happen, remain calm and report immediately. Visit [www.D2L.org/reporting](http://www.D2L.org/reporting) for information and resources.

Remember to listen more than you talk and to keep your tone conversational. This will promote mutual learning and create open dialogue that can continue in the future. One or two questions may be all you need for a robust conversation!