



Wise & Wonderful

10 Ways to Talk to Kids About Events in the News

May 2013

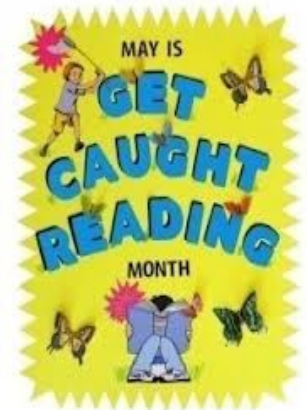
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When kids learn about current events, whether they overhear a conversation, catch a glimpse of the evening news, or see a newspaper photo, they may feel overwhelmed. It's difficult to predict what images will come on the evening news and when an image of war or natural disaster flashes across the screen, you can't always change the channel. As a result, says Caroline Knorr, Common Sense Media parenting editor, kids get exposed to information that may not be age appropriate.

Exposing kids to current events isn't necessarily bad, says Eric Rossen, PhD, National Association of School Psychologists director of professional development and standards, but make sure you control your child's interpretation of that event. Before you turn on tonight's news, here are 10 ways to talk to your kids about current events.

- Explain What Happened.** When your child sees an image and wants to know more, explain the basics and add some context. Through early adolescence, says Margret Nickels, PhD, Director of the Erikson Institute Center for Children and Families, kids perceive all events as happening nearby. If they see a picture of a plane on fire, or people fighting, they may not realize that they're seeing a conflict that's halfway around the world. Use a map or globe to give your child some perspective.
- But Don't Over-Explain.** Avoid giving kids too much information, advises Knorr. If your child sees an image of a wounded soldier returning from the war in Iraq, for example, you can tell her that it's a soldier who's going to the hospital to get better. You don't need to explain where the soldier was, or that our country is at war.
- Take Their Fears Seriously.** If your child's behavior changes, from talkative to quiet and thoughtful, for example, he may be processing information. Encourage any communication about what they're thinking. If your child brings up a news event, ask him open-ended questions. What did you see? How did you feel when you saw that? Letting him tell you what he saw ensures that you won't overwhelm him with too much information. Then, normalize his feelings by sharing how you felt when you learned about the event. (Continued Page 2)
- Limit Exposure to Images and Sound.** When an important event occurs, news channels often replay the same event over and over. But, says Rossen, "very young children may not recognize that they're watching replays of an event." Instead of images of one earthquake played again and again, young children may think that earthquakes are a daily occurrence. Turn off the TV if a traumatic event is being played over and over. Limit your child's exposure to graphic photos, as kids are more affected by images than words.



Quote of the Month

There is no trust more sacred than the one the world holds with children. There is no duty more important than ensuring that their rights are respected, that their welfare is protected, that their lives are free from fear and want and that they grow up in peace.

- Kofi Annan

Sharing Current Events (Continued from page 1)

- **Learn Together.** Older children, says Knorr, may want to research an event; learning more about hurricanes or earthquakes may relieve their fears. Research natural disasters online, or check out books about a location that's been in the news.
- **Be a Calming Reference.** When there's upsetting news, your child will look to you for guidance. Keep calm, no matter what images are flashing across the screen. If your child seems upset, acknowledge her feelings and reassure her that your family is safe; "I know it was scary to see pictures of the war in Iraq, but there is no war here."
- **Keep Your Schedule.** If your child is upset about an event, keep the daily schedule as normal as possible. Still, if she needs extra support going to bed or transitioning to school, take time to help her for a few days.
- **Encourage Play.** Kids often play through their worries or fears as a way to cope, says Nickels. If your child is re-enacting the news, pretending to be a firefighter running into a burning building, or using toy helicopters to rescue people from a tsunami, encourage it. Only intervene if his play becomes aggressive towards other children.
- **Emphasize the Positive.** After some events, like a terrorist attack, there's the risk of immediately focusing on the negative, by talking about the "bad people" who attacked us. Rossen suggests focusing on the positive instead. Talk with your child about people and organizations that are helping the people who were hurt.
- **Be Part of the Solution.** In response to any event, from a local emergency or a national crisis, ask your child if they'd like to help. Then, find a way for them to donate money or time, or raise awareness about a cause, selling lemonade to raise money for cancer research, for example.

Regardless of what today's top headline is, don't try to explain it away. Take the opportunity to encourage your child to build her connection to the world, one newscast at a time.

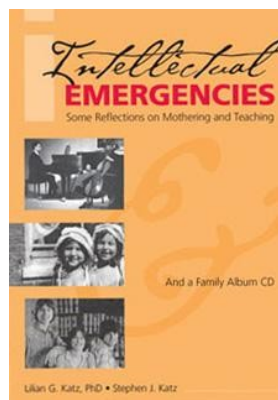


"Exposing kids to current events isn't necessarily bad; but, make sure you control your child's interpretation of that event."

Recommended Reading:

Intellectual Emergencies: Some Reflections on Mothering and Teaching by L. Katz

Lilian Katz has spent many years conducting workshops for teachers, parents, and students all over the world. During those workshops, she often refers to her son Stephen, and what she has termed the "intellectual emergencies" she experienced during the years he was growing up. Her responses to these "emergencies," the moments



when he analyzed her actions and challenged her decisions as a parent and a teacher, are presented in this insightful, witty book.

With music and words from Stephen incorporated into the book, Katz presents an inspirational work for parents and teachers, or anyone who has ever looked into the face of a child and wondered if she/he was making the right choices.



Mother's Love

Her love is like an island
 In life's ocean, vast and wide
 A peaceful, quiet shelter
 From the wind, the rain, the tide.
 'Tis bound on the North by hope,
 By patience on the West
 By tender counsel on the South
 And on the East by rest.
 Above it like a beacon light
 Shine faith, and truth, and prayer;
 And thro' the changing scenes of life
 I find a haven there.

- Author Unknown

Get Ready for Summer !

Enrollment in a summer program helps young children make new friends and further their love of learning. Sometimes new experiences, such as the last day of school, increase separation difficulties and create insecurity and dread – especially for the very young. Planning some transition strategies will not only help your child adjust and make the most of the summer months to come, it will also help you handle upcoming changes.

To help smooth transitions of all kinds at any time of the year, there are several things you can do to build confidence in yourself and your child:

- **Talk to your child about what is going to happen ahead of time.** The unknown is the core of discomfort with any change. Children under age 3 may need a week to adjust, while an older child may need more time to process an upcoming change.
- **Continue to provide continuity in your daily routines.** Keep as many scheduled elements of your child's day without drastic changes. As you take one day at a time, your child can learn

to do so too, without high anxiety over what is coming next. Before summer starts, make play dates with cherished friends who may not be in the same summer program as your child.

- **Share around themes that are related to transitions.** Responding to your own child's interests,

read books about new situations and the anticipation of change. Point out the many changes that are happening in nature this time of year.

- **Respect and acknowledge your child's emotions.** It eases emotional strain when feelings are honored and accepted. Most importantly, let children express whatever they feel. Remember that it may be hard for them to identify what they are feeling and why. Nonetheless, those emotions and attachments are real.



- **Allow your child to know your own emotions about transitions.** There is comfort in knowing we are not the only ones who feel the changes, whatever age we may be. Be sure to express your happiness about the good experiences of the past school year. Celebrate both the endings and beginnings with your child.

- **Meet and greet the new teacher with your child, if at all possible.** Children who are having fun now don't want the fun to end. Will the new teacher smile and be likeable? If your child and the teacher have met before the

summer program begins, then you will both know the answer is yes!

- **Ask your child's current teacher if there is anything in particular to share with the new teacher.** The experienced teacher may have some special insights about your child that would ease the transition to a new teacher or new environment.

ART EXHIBITS
SWIMMING EVERYDAY
FREE T-SHIRTS
AND MUCH MORE!

SUMMER AT BARRINGTON

SMART SUMMERTIME FUN at Barrington
Visit us at <http://barringtonacademy.com>

May 27th is Memorial Day

All gave some...
Some gave all

Remember them this Memorial Day

School Closed

What's Happening in May at Barrington ...

Teacher Appreciation Week

Let's show our teachers how much we love them!

- May 6 - Candy Day
- May 7 - Picture Frame Day
- May 8 - Candle day
- May 9 - Pamper your teacher (lotion, perfume, body spray, etc)
- May 10 - Gift card Day

Spirit Week

Let's celebrate the end of a great school year....show your spirit!

- May 20 - Sports Day
- May 21 - Wacky Tacky Day
- May 22 - Crazy Hat Day
- May 23 - Pajama/Movie Day

Things That Mom Does

ADVISES
ARRANGES
BELIEVES
CLEANS
COOKS
DRIVES
EVALUATES
HELPS
HUGS
KISSES
LAUGHS
LISTENS
LOVES
PAYS BILLS
PRAISES
PRETENDS
READS
REMINDS
SMILES
TEACHES
TRAVELS
VALUES

R K O Y C O O K S E V O L
E S H O S D N I M E R P A
A N S U S E U L A Y S O U
D A S E G N A R R A E F G
S E P A Y S B I L L S T H
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K C M M G V V E L A I D M
P R A I S E S H E T K R I
C A N P C I G C V E U I L
U O L S V L P A A S Z V E
B E S D N E T E R P M E S
H G A E Z B S T T P L S Z

Pinnacle

Classroom Themes for May 2013

Shades of Spring Magical Moms Lions, Tigers & Bears
Lovely Ladybugs Wacky Week