

**GLOBAL
LEARNING
LONDON**



Having Difficult Conversations with Children



Published: March 2022





*"Kids signing a message banner - Refugee Children in Immigration Detention Protest Broadmeadows"
by John Englart (Takver) is marked with CC BY-SA 2.0.*

Introduction

Do you ever wonder how your child comes up with the most profound questions? Questions that leave you surprised, proud and bewildered all at the same time. Questions that make you realise that your child has been paying a lot more attention to the world around them. Questions that remind you how inquisitive, reflective, and aware our children are.

Sometimes, it can be worrying, knowing that no matter how much we try to shelter our children from the difficult parts of life, we also must prepare them for it.

“Unless one lives and loves in the trenches, it is difficult to remember that the war against dehumanization is ceaseless.”

Audre Lorde

Having difficult conversations with children

How do we have these difficult conversations with our children, considering what they may see on the news, or hear about at school or from their friends? How do we give space to answer or reflect on the questions our children have? How do we prepare them for a complex, volatile, and unpredictable world, while inspiring hope that this world can be and will be better?

Every family is unique, and we know when our child is worried or concerned about the wider world and their place in it. This resource provides information and links to help parents and carers to have difficult conversations with their children.

Here are 3 points from the resources that may help when holding difficult conversations with your children:

- ▲ **Create a calm safe space to listen** - find out what your child knows and how they are feeling.
- ▲ **Use age-appropriate language** - keep an eye on how your child reacts and be sensitive to their level of anxiety.
- ▲ **Reassure and check-in** - remind your child that you care for them and that you are here to listen to them. Check in with them to ensure that they are alright.

“Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.”

Maya Angelou



"The R Family - 2" by RebeccaVC1 is marked with CC BY-ND 2.0.



Resources we recommend

- ▲ [How to Talk to your Children about Conflict and War](#) is a resource from UNICEF.

When conflict or war makes the headlines, it can cause feelings such as fear, sadness, anger, and anxiety wherever you live. Children always look to their parents for a sense of *safety and security – even more so in times of crisis*.

The resource shares tips on how to approach the conversation with your child and to provide them with support and comfort.

- ▲ This article from Save the Children offers [Five Tips from a Psychologist and Child Counsellor](#) to help parents and carers navigate the overwhelming task of responding to children's fears and worries, when speaking to them about war.

The author is Ane Lemche, a psychologist and child counsellor at Save the Children.

- ▲ Clinicians at the Anna Freud Centre have developed a resource called [7 Ways to Support Children and Young People Who are Worried](#).

The resource includes ways the Centre considers to be best practice in responding to children and young people's fears.



Books to check out from your local library

Tower Hamlets Schools Library Services



Compiled by [Tower Hamlets Schools Library Services](#)

Author	Title	Keywords	Age
Arree Chung	Mixed: an inspiring story about colour	P4C, colours, cooperation, acceptance, differences, prejudice, racism	5-7
Nicola Davies	The day war came	Refugees, safety, rescue, war children	5-8
Sarah Garland	Azzi in between	Refugees, asylum, escape	7-9
Monika Singh Gangotra	Sunflower sisters	Anti-racism, colours, flower, colourism	5-8
Ibram X Kendi	Anti-racist baby	Diversity, anti-racism, empathy, rhyme	0-5
Ben Morley	The silence seeker	Asylum, friendship, peace, war, refugees	5-8
Chris Naylor-Ballesteros	The suitcase	Refugees, asylum, friends, home, helping	5-8
Bernard Ashley	Nadine dreams of home	Refugees, families, separation, war, immigration, Congo	7-9
Frank Cottrell Boyce	The unforgotten coat	Refugees, Mongolia, asylum, school, deportation	9-11
Helen Dumore	Amina's blanket	Refugees, dreams, quilts, war	6-9
Elizabeth Laird	Welcome to nowhere	War, refugees, Syria	10-12
Linda Sue Park	A long walk to water	Sudan, war, children, refugees	10-12
Coral Rumble	Mustafa's jumper	Immigrants, refugees, school, friendship	5-8



"A Rainbow Of Books" by Dawn Endico is marked with CC BY-SA 2.0.



This resource was produced by Faaria Ahmad, Triny Diaz and Fatema Zehra from [Global Learning London](#), with Sylvia Cummings from [Tower Hamlets Schools Library Services](#) (THSLS), of which we remain an integral part.

We are part of the [Consortium of Development Education Centres](#), which brings together independent, not-for-profit organisations that support and deliver global learning in schools and communities across England.

As part of this resource, we have included links and/or content from the following organisations:

- ▲ Anne Freud National Centre for Children and Families
- ▲ Save the Children
- ▲ Oxfam
- ▲ UNICEF

Images included are from [creativecommons.org](#). All, free to use under license [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#)



This material is licensed under the Creative Commons licence, 2020. This means that you are free to copy, distribute, and display portions or the full version of text and images, provided you give explicit credits to Global Learning London and the organisations mentioned in the resource.

However, if you intend to distribute a modified version of our material, you must ask us for permission first and distribute the resulting work only under the author's consent.

Version: 1.1 Published: March 2022

