TALKING ABOUT VIOLENCE IN THE NEWS WITH SMALL CHILDREN

Tragic events, wars, terrorist attacks ...
Tragic events that occur in Québec and elsewhere in the world are reported in the news. As parents, we can find the disturbing and violent content broadcast by the media unsettling or troubling. Small children are sensitive to our emotions. At a very young age, children are already exposed to all types of information.

As parents, we ask ourselves questions such as:

- Can this affect my child?
- How should I react when a tragic event occurs?
- Should I talk about it?

When it comes to broaching hard subjects with our children, we sometimes feel powerless. It is important to provide our small children with support. Fortunately, there are tools available to help us do that. This leaflet provides some insight into how to broach hard subjects with preschool-age children at home, as well as some helpful resources.
HOW CHILDREN MIGHT REACT

- Every child is different. Children will react in different ways when faced with violent events. They may be scared, disturbed, angry, etc.

- Some children may want to avoid hearing about the event and escape the images. Others may ask a lot of questions.

- Some children may also have nightmares or trouble sleeping, or act out when something bothers them.

- Despite all this, when children have some understanding of what frightens them and feel protected, they are reassured.
• You can limit your small children’s exposure to violent or sad images, for example, by supervising or limiting television time. Also, when you watch the news with your children, you can explain what you see in a simple way.

• When violent images are shown, you can explain that violence is bad, and that it can be frightening. You can tell your children that, even though some images may be frightening, they are safe at home and at daycare.

• If your small children sense that you are sad or worried, it is important to tell them that it is not their fault.

• The important thing is to reassure your children and create some hope, for example, by emphasizing that coming together to support one another provides comfort and helps people who are going through hard times.
When you sense that something is bothering your children, wait until they are ready to talk about it. Avoid forcing them to talk if they don’t want to.

There are no perfect words. Choose simple language that your children can understand. Find a happy medium between providing too much detail and not talking about it at all.

Children often express themselves through play. Activities can be good ways to talk with your children and help them understand difficult events. For example, if your children reproduce what they saw in a game or a drawing, it can be a good opportunity to talk about it and answer questions.

If you still feel that your children are vulnerable and having trouble managing their emotions, or you want another opinion, don’t hesitate to call on other resources or seek out support services.

**IN SHORT**

Supervise media time, pay attention to reactions, use simple language, offer reassurance, use play as a space for communication, and ask for help if necessary.

Professional support for parents, available 24/7: Ligne Parents www.ligneparents.com Tel.: 1-800-361-5085
Ressources

Citoyen de demain
Thèmes : pratiques démocratiques en classe, dialogue et citoyenneté
www.citoyendedemain.net

Dessine-moi un petit prince
Thèmes : partage, générosité, entraide
Auteur : Michel Van Zeveren, Édition Pastel

Juste un petit bout !
Thèmes : partage, amitié, tolérance
Auteur : Émile Jadoul, Édition Pastel

La couleur des émotions
Thèmes : partage, dialogue
Auteurs : collectif, Édition Quatre fleuves

La Maison Théâtre
Thèmes : jeux, identités, situations émouvantes
www.maisontheatre.com/9-spectacles-pour-les-petits-jusqua-5-ans

Les enfants au service de garde
Thèmes : jeux, activités, vidéos
http://enfant0-12.ccdmd.qc.ca

Les enfants voient. Les enfants apprennent.
Thèmes : ressources multimédias et conseils variés
www.lesenfantsvoientlesenfantsapprennent.ca

Les mots et les images qui font peur
Thèmes : peur, vivre ensemble, détresse
Auteurs : Catherine Dolto-Tolitch et Colline Faure-Poirée, Gallimard Jeunesse

Les questions des tout-petits sur les méchants
Thèmes : éthique, violence, cruauté, quête de sens, polarisation
Auteure : Marie Aubinais, Gallimard Jeunesse

Moi Dieu merci qui vis ici
Thèmes : partage, dialogue, guerre, discrimination
Auteurs : Thierry Lenain et Olivier Balez, Les éditions Éditions Albin Michel Jeunesse

Naitre et grandir
Topics: information, issues, activities

Pilotin
Thèmes : peur, entraide
Auteur : Léo Lionni, L’École des loisirs

Rébellion chez les crayons
Thèmes : dialogue, créativité, tolérance et diversité
Auteurs : Drew Daywalt et Oliver Jeffers, Éditions Kaleidoscope

Sept milliards de visage
Thèmes : différences, tolérance, marginalisation, préjugés
Auteur : Peter Spier, L’École des loisirs

Si on parlait de la mort
Thèmes : parler de la mort, gestion des émotions
Auteures : Catherine Dolto et Colline Faure-Poirée, Gallimard Jeunesse
C R E D I T S

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