

CRS and Youth Community Israel Update:

Our hearts break as we watch the news from Israel. Hundreds of innocent people have been killed, injured, and abducted. Our thoughts are with all of those who are suffering in the wake of these terrorist acts by Hamas.

The current war in Israel is dominating the news cycle around the world—no matter how much we try to protect our children, they are exposed to horrifying stories, images, and videos. Here are some resources that will help guide conversations with your children.

- Resilience in a time of war: Tips for parents and teachers of elementary school children
- How to Talk to Children About the Conflict in Israel
- Terrorism and War: How to talk to Children
- Videos to Help Parents and Kids Talk About Scary Situations

Guidelines on How to Address the War in Israel with Children

Prepare Yourself for the Conversation: As parents, it is important that we do our best to speak to our children from a place of calm. As difficult as it is at this time, children look to their parents for guidance and support. Before engaging with your children, take a few moments to regulate your emotions and gather your own thoughts.

Always use facts and encourage questions: It is important to acknowledge that this is difficult and painful for adults as well, and that we don't have all the answers. Talk to your children in a factual and age appropriate manner. It is essential that children hear facts from parents rather than using social media and other outside sources for their information. Closely monitor your child's use of social media during these times as explicit and graphic content can be traumatizing to children.

Validate your child's emotions: There are no "normal" reactions to abnormal situations. Validate whatever emotions your child is feeling and give them the opportunity to ask any questions they may have. Acknowledge that the unknown can be unsettling and anxiety-provoking. Additionally, remind your child that it is normal and okay to feel multiple emotions. Reassure your child that having fun with friends and enjoying school does not take away from any sadness or worry they may feel.

Model healthy coping strategies: Share with your child what your coping skills are and why they feel helpful to you (ex: “When I feel worried, I find it helpful to take a few deep breaths...”). While it is ok for them to see that it is difficult for you, it is also important that they see your strength and stability to maintain their sense of safety.

Reaching out for additional support: Check in with your child over the coming days as the situation develops to see how they are feeling. If your child experiences ongoing difficulties with sleep, changes in mood, changes in appetite, etc., consider reaching out for additional support.