

Tips for

GETTING YOUR CHILD TO OPEN UP

- 1 Isolate the conversation.**

This allows your child to know that the conversation is safe and that they don't have to adjust what they say because others are around.
- 2 Be clear about your intentions.**

Let your child know from the start what you plan to discuss. This lets them know that you don't have a 'hidden agenda'.
- 3 Pick the right time.**

Choose to have the conversation at a time when you and your child are in a pleasant mood and there are minimal distractions around.
- 4 Encourage honesty.**

Encourage your child to be honest with you. This is not the time to blame or criticize. Discuss consequences, if necessary, at another time.
- 5 Encourage use of feeling words.**

Encourage your child to assign a feeling word to each action or choice that they made. Basic feeling words are *mad, sad, glad, and scared*.
- 6 Ask open-ended questions.**

Open-ended questions are designed to illicit more than a one word response.
"How do you think you can handle it differently next time?"
- 7 Offer advice, only if requested.**

Sometimes it is just better to listen than to offer words of wisdom. Ask your child if they want your advice before giving it.
- 8 Relate and validate.**

Sharing your own experiences and mistakes can help grow the connection with your child. This also helps normalize their experience.
- 9 Actively listen.**

Show your child that you are listening and that they have your undivided attention. Be mindful of your non-verbal communication.
- 10 Make it a reoccurrence.**

The more conversations that you have like this, the easier it becomes for your child to trust and open up to you!