

Encouraging Your Child to Hope

Making sure your child has hope may seem like a daunting task, but it is easier than you think. Implementing four basic behaviors can go a long way for most children.



Introduce options and new ideas

- Read books and watch movies with your child that have positive themes, show different ways of life, and/or are about people overcoming tough times.
- Have regular conversations about each family member's highs and lows of the day. Celebrate the highs and troubleshoot how to work through the lows.
- Look at pictures or other items that stir up good memories and feelings. Engage in conversations about these memories.



Hold space for imagination

- Let your children dream about the future by encouraging them to write stories, draw pictures, play pretend, or put on plays-the sky is the limit!
- Avoid discouraging children from setting big goals for the future. It is healthy to dream about being the president, a rock star, an astronaut etc. Even if there are actual barriers that would make it extremely difficult- dreaming is vital for wellness!



Give your child unconditional positive regard

- When your child has earned a consequence for inappropriate behaviors remind him/her that they are loved and that consequences are given to help them learn and grow.
- Support your children when they make choices that you would not make (but are not harmful). This is especially important for teenagers who are developing autonomy. *(Examples: dropping basketball to take choir or making fashion choices that you do not like)*
- Show this type of support for your friends and family as well. When children see an adult treating others poorly or being judgmental, they often wonder if they will have to live up to that adult's standards to be accepted.



Maintain consistency

- Show consistent behaviors when around your children; never make a child guess which "you" they are going to get. This only adds uncertainty and anxiety to your child's life.
- Follow through with rewards.
- Follow through with consequences.